

Ellis Edward Sylvester

**1000 Mythological Characters
Briefly Described. Adapted
to Private Schools,...**



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Schools, High Schools and Academies**

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Содержание

INTRODUCTION	5
THE YOUTH'S	8
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INTRODUCTION

There are many expressions which, though simple in themselves, must forever remain beyond the grasp of human comprehension. Eternity, that which has neither end nor beginning, baffles the most profound human thought. It is impossible to think of a point beyond which there is absolutely nothing, or to imagine the passing of a million years without bringing us one day or one minute nearer to their close. Suppose that one could fix upon the terminal point, we would still fancy something beyond that, and then some period still more remote would present itself, and so on *ad infinitum*.

The same insurmountable difficulty confronts us when we seek to imagine a First Cause. God was the beginning, and yet it seems to our finite minds, that something must have brought Him into existence, and we conclude that back again of that creating Power must have been another originating cause, and perhaps still another, and so on without limitation.

And yet we know that there must have been a period when everything was void, or, in other words, when there was nothing. In the awful grandeur of that loneliness, desolation, and chaos, God we know, however, existed and called the universe into being. All that we, in our present finite condition, can ever comprehend of that stupendous birth is contained in the opening of the first chapter of Genesis.

That is the story of the creation as told by God Himself to His chosen people, the Hebrews, they alone being selected from the nations then existing upon the earth to receive the wonderful revelation.

Every people, no matter how degraded and sunken in barbarism, has some perception, some explanation of, and a more or less well-grounded belief in, a First Cause. Far back among the mists of antiquity, at the remotest beginnings of the shadowy centuries, sits enthroned a Being, who in His infinite might and power brought mankind, the universe, and all animate and inanimate things into existence, and who rewards those of His children who do His will, and punishes those who disobey His commands. That will, as interpreted by believers, is as various in its application to the conduct of man as are the standards of right and wrong among the civilized and even among the barbarous nations of to-day. What is virtue with one is vice with the other, as beauty and ugliness of form or feature, being relative terms, are opposites with many different peoples.

Since the Greeks and Romans were not among those who received the divine story of creation, they were forced to devise a theory to explain their own existence and account for the origin of all things. The foundation of this theory lay in the marvelous phenomena of nature around them. The growth of the mighty tree from the tiny seed, the bursting bud and blossom, the changing hues and the fragrance of flowers, the alternation of day and night, the flash of the rock-rending lightning, the rage of the tempest, the flow of the rivers; the towering mountains, the lovely valleys; dew, rain, the clouds, and the ever-shifting panorama on every hand; the majestic sweep of the blazing worlds through space – all these pointed unerringly to a First Cause, which originally launched them into being, and maintains the constant order of things and the miraculous procession of the planets and the orderly succession of the seasons in obedience to laws that know no change.

To the Greeks and Romans, there was a time more remote than history gives us any account of, when there was neither land nor water, and when the earth and all things within and upon it were

“without form and void.” Over that misty, nebulous mixing and mingling brooded the god Chaos, who shared his throne with Nox, the goddess of night. From this union the innumerable myths gradually sprang up and developed, which in their own imaginative though often grotesque way explained the various phases of creation. These finally became crystallized into a literature, or mythology, which has since been the inspiration alike of romancers and poets.

The most learned of mythologists differ in their analysis of the multitude of myths that have descended to us. Their varying analyses, however, may be separated into two distinct classes or divisions, each of which has its own adherents and supporters.

The first school is that of the philologists, and the second that of the anthropologists, or comparative mythologists.

Philology relates to the study of language, especially when treated in a philosophical manner. This school maintains that the myths had their origin in a “disease of the language, as the pearl is a result of a disease of the oyster.” The key, therefore, to all mythologies, they say, is found in language. The names originally applied to the gods generally referred to the phenomena of the clouds, winds, rain, sunshine, etc. Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit, the great languages of antiquity, they demonstrate, had their foundation in a single source which is still older. As further proof of their position, they point to the similarity in the most ordinary words in the various languages of the same family, and show that they have undergone few or very trifling changes.

The greatest authority among the philologists claims that during the “first period” there was a tribe in Central Asia, whose language consisted of one-syllable words, which contained the germs of the Turanian, Aryan, and Semitic tongues. This age is termed the Rhematic period, and was succeeded by the Nomadic or Agglutinative age, during which the language gradually “received, once for all, that peculiar impress of their formative system which we still find in all the dialects and national idioms comprised under the name of Aryan or Semitic,” which includes over three thousand dialects.

The same authority follows the Agglutinative period with one “represented everywhere by the same characteristic features, called the Mythological, or Mythopoeic age.”

As the name implies, this last-mentioned period saw the evolution and development of mythic lore. As do the American Indians of to-day, so primitive man, in his crude way, explained the operation of physical laws by giving to inanimate objects like passions and sentiments with himself. When the tempest rages, and the crashing lightning splinters the mountain oak, the Indian says that the Great Spirit is angry. When nature becomes serene and calm, the Great Spirit is pleased. The malign forces around him, which work ill to the warrior, are, they say, the direct doings of an evil spirit. Even the heavenly bodies are personified, and “poetry has so far kept alive in our minds the old animative theory of nature, that it is no great effort in us to fancy the waterspout a huge giant or sea-monster, and to depict, in what we call appropriate metaphor, its march across the field of ocean.”

Since the names of the Greek heroes and gods show a general correspondence with the Sanskrit appellations of physical things, it is comparatively easy to understand many of the first fancies and reflections of the earliest men who ever lived. It is the argument of the philologists that these fancies and reflections settled into definite shape in that far-away period when most of the nations, now spread to the remotest corners of the earth, dwelt together and used a common language. Following the gradual scattering of this single, unified people, the language became sensitive to the change, many words not only losing their original meaning, but, in some instances, acquiring an opposite significance. Other words, again, in the course of time were utterly lost. “As long as such personified beings as the Heaven or the Sun are consciously talked of in mythic language, the meaning of their legends is open to no question, and the action ascribed to them will, as a rule, be natural and appropriate.” The time came, however, when these names were considered simply as applying to heroes or deities, and amid the jumble and confusion of the succeeding ages it became well-nigh impossible to trace the myths back to their original source and meaning. Such is a brief outline of the myth interpretations, as made by the philologists.

Anthropology may be defined as the study of man, considered in his entire nature. In explaining mythology, the anthropologists say that “it is man, it is human thought and human language combined, which naturally and necessarily produced the strange conglomerate of ancient fable.” Instead, therefore, of seeking the source of myths in language, the second class find it in the “condition of thought through which all races have passed.”

The argument of the anthropologists is that while all nations have come from one parent-stock, as is claimed also by the philologists, yet the various peoples, in their primitive or savage state, have passed through a like low intellectual condition and growth. The folk-lore of all countries shows that the savages consider themselves of the same nature as beasts, and regard “even plants, inanimate objects, and the most abstract phenomena as persons with human parts and passions.” Every religion antedating Christianity has inculcated the worship of idols, which usually take the form of beasts, and it will be noted in the study of myths that the gods often assume the forms of birds and animals. If it were in our power mentally to become savages for a time, so as to look upon nature and our surroundings as do the Blackfeet Indians, or the Patagonians, or the South Africans, it would be a long step toward making clear this particular phase of the question.

From what has been stated, however, the young student will gain an idea of the meaning of the word “myth,” which may be termed a story whose origin can never be known with certainty. To most people it has the same significance as a fable, legendary tale, or fanciful falsehood. A collection of myths belonging to a particular age or people is “a mythology,” and the branch of inquiry which classifies and interprets them bears the same name.

E. S. E.

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THE YOUTH'S DICTIONARY OF MYTHOLOGY

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Abas (A'bas), a son of Meganira, was turned into a newt, or water-lizard, for deriding the ceremonies of the Sacrifice.

Absyrtus (Absy'rtus). After Jason had slain the dragon which guarded the golden fleece, he fled with Medea, the beautiful young sorceress, and daughter of Aeetes, who pursued with great energy, for Medea had taken with her the most precious treasure of the king, his only son and heir, Absyrtus. To delay the pursuit, Medea slew her little brother, cut the body in pieces, and dropped them over the side of the vessel. Thus the cruel daughter effected her escape.

Achelous (Achelo'us) was a river god, and the rival of Hercules in his love for Deianira. To decide who should have the bride, Hercules and Achelous had recourse to a wrestling bout, the fame of which extends through all the intervening centuries. In this fierce struggle, Achelous changed himself into the form of a bull and rushed upon his antagonist with lowered horns, intending to hurl him aside. Hercules eluded the onset, and seizing one of the huge horns, held it so firmly that it was broken off by the furious efforts of Achelous to free himself. He was defeated, and finally turned himself into a river, which has since been known by his name.

Acheron (Ach'eron) (see "The Youth's Classical Dictionary"). The current of the river Acheron, across which all souls had to pass to hear their decree from Pluto, was so swift that the boldest swimmer dare not attempt to breast it; and, since there was no bridge, the spirits were obliged to rely upon the aid of Charon, an aged boatman, who plied the only boat that was available. He would allow no soul to enter this leaky craft until he had received the obolus, or fare, which the ancients carefully placed under the tongue of the dead, that they might not be delayed in their passage to Pluto. Those who had not their fare were forced to wait one hundred years, when Charon reluctantly ferried them over without charge.

"Infernal rivers that disgorge
Into the burning lake their baleful streams
... Sad Acheron, of sorrow black and deep."

MILTON.

Achilles (Achil'les) was the most valiant of the Greek heroes in the Trojan War. He was the son of Peleus, King of Thessaly. His mother, Thetis, plunged him, when an infant, into the Stygian pool, which made him invulnerable wherever the waters had washed him; but the heel by which he was held was not wetted, and that part remained vulnerable. He was shot with an arrow in the heel by Paris, at the siege of Troy, and died of his wound.

Acidalia (Acida'lia), a name given to Venus, from a fountain in Boeotia.

Acis (A'cis). A Sicilian shepherd, loved by the nymph Galatea. One of the Cyclops who was jealous of him crushed him by hurling a rock on him. Galatea turned his blood into a river – the Acis at the foot of Mount Etna.

Actaeon (Actae'on) was the son of Aristaeus, a famous huntsman. He intruded himself on Diana while she was bathing, and was changed by her into a deer, in which form he was hunted by his own dogs and torn in pieces.

Ades (A'des), see Hades.

Adonis (Ado'nis), the beautiful attendant of Venus, who held her train. He was killed by a boar, and turned by Venus into an anemone.

“Even as the sun with purple-colored face
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn.
Rose-cheeked Adonis hied him to the chase;
Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn.”

SHAKESPEARE.

Adrastaea (Adrastae'a), another name of Nemesis, one of the goddesses of justice.

Adscriptitii Dii (Adscripti'tii Dii) were the gods of the second grade.

Adversity, see Echidna.

Aeacus (Ae'acus), one of the judges of hell, with Minos and Rhadamanthus. See Eacus.

Aecastor (Aecas'tor), an oath used only by women, referring to the Temple of Castor.

Aedepol (Aed'epol), an oath used by both men and women, referring to the Temple of Pollux.

Aetes (Aee'tes), a king of Colchis, and father of Medea.

Aegeon (Aege'on), a giant with fifty heads and one hundred hands, who was imprisoned by Jupiter under Mount Etna. See Briareus.

Aegis (Ae'gis), the shield of Jupiter, so called because it was made of goat-skin.

“Where was thine Aegis Pallas that appall'd?”

BYRON.

“Tremendous, Gorgon frowned upon its field,
And circling terrors filled the expressive shield.”

“Full on the crest the Gorgon's head they place,
With eyes that roll in death, and with distorted face.”

POPE.

Aegle (Ae'gle). The fairest of the Naiads.

Aello (Ael'lo), the name of one of the Harpies.

Aeneas (Aene'as) was the son of Anchises and Venus. He was one of the few great captains who escaped the destruction of Troy. He behaved with great valor during the siege, encountering Diomed, and even Achilles himself. When the Grecians had set the city on fire Aeneas took his aged father, Anchises, on his shoulders, while his son, Ascanius, and his wife Creusa, clung to his garments. He saved them all from the flames. After wandering about during several years, encountering numerous difficulties, he at length arrived in Italy, where he was hospitably received by Latinus, king of the Latins. After the death of Latinus Aeneas became king.

“His back, or rather burthen, showed
As if it stooped with its load;
For as Aeneas bore his sire
Upon his shoulders through the fire,
Our knight did bear no less a pack
Of his own buttocks on his back.”

BUTLER.

Aeolus (Aeo'lus) was the god of the winds. Jupiter was his reputed father, and his mother is said to have been a daughter of Hippotus. Aeolus is represented as having the power of holding the

winds confined in a cavern, and occasionally giving them liberty to blow over the world. So much command was he supposed to have over them that when Ulysses visited him on his return from Troy he gave him, tied up in a bag, all the winds that could prevent his voyage from being prosperous. The companions of Ulysses, fancying that the bag contained treasure, cut it open just as they came in sight of Ithaca, the port they were making for, and the contrary winds rushing out drove back the ship many leagues. The residence of Aeolus was at Strongyle, now called Strombolo.

“Aeolus from his airy throne
With power imperial curbs the struggling winds,
And sounding tempests in dark prisons binds.”

DRYDEN.

Aesculapius (Aescula'pius), the god of physic, was a son of Apollo. He was physician to the Argonauts in their famous expedition to Colchis. He became so noted for his cures that Pluto became jealous of him, and he requested Jupiter to kill him with a thunderbolt. To revenge his son's death Apollo slew the Cyclops who had forged the thunderbolt. By his marriage with Epione he had two sons, Machaon and Podalirius, both famous physicians, and four daughters, of whom Hygeia, the goddess of health, is the most renowned. Many temples were erected in honor of Aesculapius, and votive tablets were hung therein by people who had been healed by him; but his most famous shrine was at Epidaurus, where, every five years, games were held in his honor. This god is variously represented, but the most famous statue shows him seated on a throne of gold and ivory. His head is crowned with rays, and he wears a long beard. A knotty stick is in one hand, and a staff entwined with a serpent is in the other, while a dog lies at his feet.

“Thou that dost Aesculapius deride,
And o'er his gallipots in triumph ride.”

FENTON.

Aeson (Ae'son) was father of Jason, and was restored to youth by Medea.

Agamemnon (Agamem'non) was the son of Plisthenes and brother of Menelaus. He was king of the Argives. His brother's wife was the famous Helen, daughter of Tyndarus, king of Sparta; and when she eloped with Paris, Agamemnon was appointed leader of the Greeks in their expedition against Troy.

Aganippides (Aganip'pides), a name of the Muses, derived from the fountain of Aganippe.

Agineus (Agin'eus), see Apollo.

Aglaia (Agl'aia) was one of the Three Graces.

Agni (Ag'ni). The Hindoo god of lightning.

Ajax (A'jax) was one of the bravest of the Greek warriors in the Trojan War. His father was Telamon, and his mother Eriboea. Some writers say that he was killed by Ulysses; others aver that he was slain by Paris; while others again assert that he went mad after being defeated by Ulysses, and killed himself. Another Ajax, son of Oileus, also took a prominent part in the Trojan War.

Alcestis (Alces'tis), wife of Admetus, who, to save her husband's life, died in his stead, and was restored to life by Hercules.

Alcides (Alci'des), one of the names of Hercules.

Alcmena (Alcme'na), the mother of Hercules, was daughter of Electryon, a king of Argos.

Alecto (Alec'to) was one of the Furies. She is depicted as having serpents instead of hair on her head, and was supposed to breed pestilence wherever she went.

Alectryon (Alec'tryon), a servant of Mars, who was changed by him into a cock because he did not warn his master of the rising of the sun.

Alfadur (Al'fadur), in Scandinavian Mythology the Supreme Being – Father of all.

Alma Mammosa (Al'ma Mammo'sa), a name of Ceres.

Alpheus (Alphe'us), a river god. See Arethusa.

Altar. A structure on which a sacrifice was offered. The earliest altars were merely heaps of earth or turf or rough unhewn stone; but as the mode of sacrificing became more ceremonious grander altars were built. Some were of marble and brass, ornamented with carvings and bas-reliefs, and the corners with models of the heads of animals. They varied in height from two feet to twenty, and some were built solid; others were made hollow to retain the blood of the victims. Some were provided with a kind of dish, into which frankincense was thrown to overpower the smell of burning fat. This probably was the origin of the custom of burning incense at the altar.

Amalthaea (Amal'thae'a), the goat which nourished Jupiter.

Amazons (Am'azons) were a nation of women-soldiers who lived in Scythia. Hercules totally defeated them, and gave Hippolyte, their queen, to Theseus for a wife. The race seems to have been exterminated after this battle.

Ambarvalia (Ambarva'lia) were festivals in honor of Ceres, instituted by Roman husbandmen to purge their fields. At the spring festival the head of each family led an animal, usually a pig or ram, decked with oak boughs, round his grounds, and offered milk and new wine. After harvest there was another festival, at which Ceres was presented with the first-fruits of the season. See Ceres.

Amber, see Heliades.

Ambrosia (Ambro'sia) were Bacchanalian festivals.

Amica (Ami'ca), a name of Venus.

Amphion (Amphi'on) was the son of Jupiter and Antiope. He was greatly skilled in music; and it is said that, at the sound of his lute, the stones arranged themselves so regularly as to make the walls of the city of Thebes.

“Amphion, too, as story goes, could call
Obedient stones to make the Theban wall.”

HORACE.

“New walls to Thebes, Amphion thus began.”

WILLIAM KING.

“Such strains I sing as once Amphion played,
When list'ning flocks the powerful call obeyed.”

ELPHINSTON.

Amphitrite (Amphitri'te) (or **Salatia**), the wife of Neptune, was a daughter of Oceanus and Tethys. She was the mother of Triton, a sea god.

“His weary chariot sought the bowers
Of Amphitrite and her tending nymphs.”

THOMSON.

Amycus (Amy'cus) was king of Bebrycia. He was a son of Neptune, and was killed by Pollux.

Ancaeus (Ancae'us). A son of Neptune, who left a cup of wine to hunt a wild boar which killed him, and the wine was untasted. This was the origin of the proverb – “There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.”

Ancilia (Ancil'ia), the twelve sacred shields. The first Ancile was supposed to have fallen from heaven in answer to the prayer of Numa Pompilius. It was kept with the greatest care, as it was prophesied that the fate of the Roman people would depend upon its preservation. An order of priesthood was established to take care of the Ancilia, and on 1st March each year the shields were carried in procession, and in the evening there was a great feast, called Coena Saliaris.

Andromeda (Androm'eda), the daughter of Cepheus, king of the Ethiopians, was wife of Perseus, by whom she was rescued when she was chained to a rock and was about to be devoured by a sea-monster.

Anemone (Anem'one). Venus changed Adonis into this flower.

Angeronia (Angero'nia), otherwise Volupia, was the goddess who had the power of dispelling anguish of mind.

Anna Perenna (Anna Peren'na), one of the rural divinities.

Antaeus (Antae'us), a giant who was vanquished by Hercules. Each time that Hercules threw him the giant gained fresh strength from touching the earth, so Hercules lifted him off the ground and squeezed him to death.

Anteros (An'teros), one of the two Cupids, sons of Venus.

Anticlea (Antic'lea), the mother of Ulysses.

Antiope (Anti'o'pe) was the wife of Lycus, King of Thebes. Jupiter, disguised as a satyr, led her astray and corrupted her.

Anubis (Anu'bis) (or Hermanubis (Herman'ubis)). "A god half a dog, a dog half a man." Called *Barker* by Virgil and other poets.

Aonides (Aon'ides), a name of the Muses, from the country Aonia.

Apaturia (Apatur'ia), an Athenian festival, which received its name from a Greek word signifying deceit.

Aphrodite (Aph'rodi'te), a Greek name of Venus.

Apis, a name given to Jupiter by the inhabitants of the Lower Nile. Also the miraculous ox, worshiped in Egypt.

Apis (A'pis), King of Argivia. Afterward called Serapis, the greatest god of the Egyptians.

Apollo (Apol'lo). This famous god, some time King of Arcadia, was the son of Jupiter and Latona. He was known by several names, but principally by the following: – Sol (the sun); Cynthus, from the mountain called Cynthus in the Isle of Delos, and this same island being his native place obtained for him the name of Delius; Delphinus, from his occasionally assuming the shape of a dolphin. His name of Delphicus was derived from his connection with the splendid Temple at Delphi, where he uttered the famous oracles. Some writers record that this oracle became dumb when Jesus Christ was born. Other common names of Apollo were Didymaeus, Nomius, Paeon, and Phoebus. The Greeks called him Agineus, because the streets were under his guardianship, and he was called Pythius from having killed the serpent Python. Apollo is usually represented as a handsome young man without beard, crowned with laurel, and having in one hand a bow, and in the other a lyre. The favorite residence of Apollo was on Mount Parnassus, a mountain of Phocis, in Greece, where he presided over the Muses. Apollo was the accredited father of several children, but the two most renowned were Aesculapius and Phaeton.

"Wilt thou have music? Hark! Apollo plays.
And twenty caged nightingales do sing."

SHAKESPEARE.

Apotheosis (Apothe'osis). The consecration of a god. The ceremony of deification.

Arachne (Arach'ne), a Lydian princess, who challenged Minerva to a spinning contest, but Minerva struck her on the head with a spindle, and turned her into a spider.

“... So her disemboweled web,
Arachne, in a hall or kitchen spreads.
Obvious to vagrant flies.”

JOHN PHILLIPS.

Arcadia (Arca'dia), a delightful country in the center of Peloponnessus, a favorite place of the gods. Apollo was reputed to have been King of Arcadia.

Arcas (Ar'cas), a son of Calisto, was turned into a he-bear; and afterward into the constellation called Ursa Minor.

Archer, see Chiron.

Areopagitae (Areop'agi'tae), the judges who sat at the Areopagus.

Areopagus (Areop'agus), the hill at Athens where Mars was tried for murder before twelve of the gods.

Ares (A'res). The same as Mars, the god of war.

Arethusa (Arethu'sa) was one of the nymphs of Diana. She fled from Alpheus, a river god, and was enabled to escape by being turned by Diana into a rivulet which ran underground. She was as virtuous as she was beautiful.

Argonauts (Ar'gonauts). This name was given to the fifty heroes who sailed to Colchis in the ship Argo, under the command of Jason, to fetch the Golden Fleece.

Argus (Ar'gus) was a god who had a hundred eyes which slept and watched by turns. He was charged by Juno to watch Io, but, being slain by Mercury, was changed by Juno into a peacock.

Ariadne (Ariad'ne), daughter of Minos, King of Crete. After enabling Theseus to get out of the Labyrinth by means of a clew of thread, she fled with him to Naxos, where he ungratefully deserted her; but Bacchus wooed her and married her, and the crown of seven stars which he gave her was turned into a constellation.

Arion (Ari'on) was a famous lyric poet of Methymna, in the Island of Lesbos, where he gained great riches by his art. There is a pretty fable which has made the name of Arion famous. Once when traveling from Lesbos his companions robbed him, and proposed to throw him into the sea. He entreated the seamen to let him play upon his harp before they threw him overboard, and he played so sweetly that the dolphins flocked round the vessel. He then threw himself into the sea, and one of the dolphins took him up and carried him to Taenarus, near Corinth. For this act the dolphin was raised to heaven as a constellation.

Aristaeus (Aristae'us), son of Apollo and Cyrene, was the god of trees; he also taught mankind the use of honey, and how to get oil from olives. He was a celebrated hunter. His most famous son was Actaeon.

Armata (Arma'ta), one of the names of Venus, given to her by Spartan women.

Artemis (Ar'temis). This was the Grecian name of Diana, and the festivals at Delphi were called Artemisia.

Arts and Sciences, see Muses.

Aruspices (Arus'pices), sacrificial priests.

Ascalaphus (Ascal'aphus) was changed into an owl, the harbinger of misfortune, by Ceres, because he informed Pluto that Proserpine had partaken of food in the infernal regions, and thus prevented her return to earth.

Ascanius (Asca'nus), the son of Aeneas and Creusa.

Ascolia (Ascol'ia), Bacchanalian feasts, from a Greek word meaning a leather bottle. The bottles were used in the games to jump on.

Asopus (Aso'pus). A son of Jupiter, who was killed by one of his father's thunderbolts.

Assabinus (Assabi'nus), the Ethiopian name of Jupiter.

Ass's ears, see Midas.

Astarte (Astar'te), one of the Eastern names of Venus.

Asteria (Aste'ria), daughter of Caeus, was carried away by Jupiter, who assumed the shape of an eagle.

Astrea (Astre'a), mother of Nemesis, was the goddess of justice; she returned to heaven when the earth became corrupt.

“... Chaste Astrea fled,
And sought protection in her native sky.”

JOHN HUGHES.

Atalanta (Atalan'ta) was daughter of Caeneus. The oracle told her that marriage would be fatal to her, but, being very beautiful, she had many suitors. She was a very swift runner, and, to get rid of her admirers, she promised to marry any one of them who should outstrip her in a race, but that all who were defeated should be slain. Hippomenes, however, with the aid of Venus, was successful. That goddess gave him three golden apples, one of which he dropped whenever Atalanta caught up to him in the race. She stopped to pick them up, and he was victorious and married her. They were both afterward turned into lions by Cybele, for profaning her temple.

Ate (A'te). The goddess of revenge, also called the goddess of discord and all evil. She was banished from heaven by her father Jupiter.

“With Ate by his side come hot from hell.”

SHAKESPEARE.

Athena (Athe'na), a name obtained by Minerva as the tutelary goddess of Athens.

Atlas, was King of Mauritania, now Morocco, in Africa. He was also a great astronomer. He is depicted with the globe on his back, his name signifying great toil or labor. For his inhospitality to Perseus that king changed him into the mountain which bears his name of Atlas. A chain of mountains in Africa is called after him, and so is the Atlantic Ocean. He had seven daughters by his wife Pleione, they were called by one common name, Pleiades; and by his wife Aethra he had seven more, who were, in the same manner, called Hyades. Both the Pleiades and the Hyades are celestial constellations.

Atreus (At'reus), the type of fraternal hatred. His dislike of his brother Thyestes went to the extent of killing and roasting his nephews, and inviting their father to a feast, which Thyestes thought was a sign of reconciliation, but he was the victim of his brother's detestable cruelty.

“Media must not draw her murdering knife,
Nor Atreus there his horrid feast prepare.”

LORD ROSCOMMON.

Atropos (At'ropos), one of the three sisters called The Fates, who held the shears ready to cut the thread of life.

Atys (A'tys), son of Croesus, was born dumb, but when in a fight he saw a soldier about to kill the king he gained speech, and cried out, “Save the king!” and the string that held his tongue was broken.

Atys (A'tys) was a youth beloved by Aurora, and was slain by her father, but, according to Ovid, was afterward turned into a pine-tree.

Augaeas (Aug'aeas), a king of Elis, the owner of the stable which Hercules cleansed after three thousand oxen had been kept in it for thirty years. It was cleansed by turning the river Alpheus through

it. Augaeus promised to give Hercules a tenth part of his cattle for his trouble but, for neglecting to keep his promise, Hercules slew him.

Augury (Au'gury). This was a means adopted by the Romans of forming a judgment of futurity by the flight of birds, and the officiating priest was called an augur.

Aurora (Auro'ra), the goddess of the morning,

“Whose rosy fingers ope the gates of day.”

She was daughter of Sol, the sun, and was the mother of the stars and winds. She is represented as riding in a splendid golden chariot drawn by white horses. The goddess loved Tithonus, and begged the gods to grant him immortality, but forgot to ask at the same time that he should not get old and decrepit. See Tithonus.

“... So soon as the all-cheering sun
Should, in the farthest east, begin to draw
The shady curtains of Aurora's bed.”

SHAKESPEARE.

Auster (Aus'ter), the south wind, a son of Jupiter.

Avernus (Aver'nus), a poisonous lake, referred to by poets as being at the entrance of the infernal regions, but it was really a lake in Campania, in Italy.

Averruncus Deus (Averrun'cus Deus), a Roman god, who could divert people from evil-doing.

Axe, see Daedalus.

Baal (Ba'al), a god of the Phoenicians.

Baal-Peor (Ba'al-Pe'or), a Moabitish god, associated with licentiousness and obscenity. The modern name is Belphegor.

Babes, see Rumia Dea.

Bacchantes (Bac'chantes). The priestesses of Bacchus.

Bacchus (Bac'chus), the god of wine, was the son of Jupiter and Semele. He is said to have married Ariadne, daughter of Minos, King of Crete, after she was deserted by Theseus. The most distinguished of his children is Hymen, the god of marriage. Bacchus is sometimes referred to under the names of Dionysius, Biformis, Brisaesus, Iacchus, Lenaesus, Lyceus, Liber, and Liber Pater, the symbol of liberty. The god of wine is usually represented as crowned with vine and ivy leaves. In his left hand is a thyrsus, a kind of javelin, having a fir cone for the head, and being encircled with ivy or vine. His chariot is drawn by lions, tigers, or panthers.

“Jolly Bacchus, god of pleasure,
Charmed the world with drink and dances.”

T. PARNELL, 1700.

Balios (Ba'lios). A famous horse given by Neptune to Peleus as a wedding present, and was afterward given to Achilles.

Barker, see Anubis.

Bassarides (Bassar'ides). The priestesses of Bacchus were sometimes so called.

Battle, see Valhalla.

Bear, see Calisto.

Beauty, see Venus.

Bees, see Mellona.

Belisama (Belisa'ma), a goddess of the Gauls. The name means the Queen of Heaven.

Bellerophon (Beller'ophon), a hero who destroyed a monster called the Chimaera.

Bellona (Bello'na), the goddess of war, and wife of Mars. The 24th March was called Bellona's Day, when her votaries cut themselves with knives and drank the blood of the sacrifice.

“In Dirae's and in Discord's steps Bellona treads,
And shakes her iron rod above their heads.”

Belphegor (Belphe'gor), see Baal-Peor.

Belus (Be'lus). The Chaldean name of the sun.

Berecynthia (Berecyn'thia), a name of Cybele, from a mountain where she was worshiped.

Biformis (Bi'formis), a name of Bacchus, because he was accounted both bearded and beardless.

Birds, see Augury.

Births, see Lucina and Levana.

Blacksmith, see Brontes and Vulcan.

Blind, see Thamyris.

Blue eyes, see Glaukopsis.

Bona Dea (Bo'na De'a). “The bountiful goddess,” whose festival was celebrated by the Romans with much magnificence. See Ceres.

Bonus Eventus (Bo'nus Even'tus). The god of good success, a rural divinity.

Boreas (Bo'reas), the north wind, son of Astraeus and Aurora.

“... I snatched her from the rigid north,
Her native bed, on which bleak Boreas blew,
And bore her nearer to the sun...”

YOUNG, 1710.

Boundaries, see Terminus.

Boxing, see Pollux.

Brahma (Brah'ma). The great Indian deity, represented with four heads looking to the four quarters of the globe.

Briareus (Bri'areus), a famous giant. See Aegeon.

Brisaeus (Bris'aeus). A name of Bacchus, referring to the use of grapes and honey.

Brontes (Bront'es), one of the Cyclops. He is the personification of a blacksmith.

Bubona (Bubo'na), goddess of herdsmen, one of the rural divinities.

Buddha (Bud'dha). Primitively, a pagan deity, the Vishnu of the Hindoos.

Byblis (Byb'lis). A niece of Sol, mentioned by Ovid. She shed so many tears for unrequited love that she was turned into a fountain.

“Thus the Phoebeian Byblis, spent in tears,
Becomes a living fountain, which yet bears
Her name.”

OVID.

Cabiri (Cab'iri). The mysterious rites connected with the worship of these deities were so obscene that most writers refer to them as secrets which it was unlawful to reveal.

Cacodaemon (Cac'odae'mon). The Greek name of an evil spirit.

Cacus (Ca'cus), a three-headed monster and robber.

Cadmus (Cad'mus), one of the earliest of the Greek demi-gods. He was the reputed inventor of letters, and his alphabet consisted of sixteen letters. It was Cadmus who slew the Boeotian dragon, and sowed its teeth in the ground, from each of which sprang up an armed man.

Caduceus (Cadu'ceus). The rod carried by Mercury. It has two winged serpents entwined round the top end. It was supposed to possess the power of producing sleep, and Milton refers to it in *Paradise Lost* as the "opiate rod."

Calisto (Calis'to), an Arcadian nymph, who was turned into a she-bear by Jupiter. In that form she was hunted by her son Arcas, who would have killed her had not Jupiter turned him into a he-bear. The nymph and her son form the constellations known as the Great Bear and Little Bear.

Calliope (Calli'ope). The Muse who presided over epic poetry and rhetoric. She is generally depicted using a stylus and wax tablets, the ancient writing materials.

Calpe (Cal'pe). One of the pillars of Hercules.

Calypso (Calyp'so) was queen of the island of Ogygia, on which Ulysses was wrecked, and where he was persuaded to remain seven years.

Cama (Ca'ma). The Indian god of love and marriage.

Camillus (Camil'us), a name of Mercury, from his office of minister to the gods.

Canache (Can'ache). The name of one of Actaeon's hounds.

Canopus (Cano'pus). The Egyptian god of water, the conqueror of fire.

Capis (Cap'is) or **Capula** (Cap'ula). A peculiar cup with ears, used in drinking the health of the deities.

Capitolinus (Capitoli'nus). A name of Jupiter, from the Capitoline hill, on the top of which a temple was built and dedicated to him.

Capripedes (Cap'ri'pedes). Pan, the Egipans, the Satyrs, and Fauns, were so called from having goat's feet.

Caprotina (Caproti'na). A name of Juno.

Cassandra (Cassan'dra), a daughter of Priam and Hecuba, who was granted by Apollo the power of seeing into futurity, but having offended that god he prevented people from believing her predictions.

Cassiopeia (Cassiope'ia). The Ethiopian queen who set her beauty in comparison with that of the Nereides, who thereupon chained her to a rock and left her to be devoured by a sea-monster, but she was delivered by Perseus. See Andromeda.

Castalia (Casta'lia). One of the fountains in Mount Parnassus, sacred to the Muses.

Castalides (Casta'li'des), a name of the Muses, from the fountain Castalia or Castalius.

Castor (Cas'tor), son of Jupiter and Leda, twin brother of Pollux, noted for his skill in horsemanship. He went with Jason in quest of the Golden Fleece.

Cauther (Cau'ther), in Mohammedan mythology, is the lake of paradise, whose waters are as sweet as honey, as cold as snow, and as clear as crystal; and any believer who tastes thereof is said to thirst no more.

Celeno (Cel'eno) was one of the Harpies, progenitor of Zephyrus, the west wind.

Centaur (Cen'taur). A huntsman who had the forepart like a man, and the remainder of the body like a horse. The Centauri lived in Thessaly.

Cephalus (Cep'halus) was married to Procris, whom he accidentally slew by shooting her while she was secretly watching him, he thinking she was a wild beast. Cephalus was the type of constancy.

Ceraunius (Cerau'nus). A Greek name of Jupiter, meaning The Fulminator, from his thunderbolts.

Cerberus (Cer'berus). Pluto's famous three-headed dog, which guarded the gate of the infernal regions, preventing the living from entering, and the inhabitants from going out.

“Three-headed Cerberus, by fate

Posted at Pluto's iron gate;
Low crouching rolls his haggard eyes,
Ecstatic, and foregoes his prize.”

Ceremonies, see Themis.

Ceres (Ce'res), daughter of Saturn, the goddess of agriculture, and of the fruits of the earth. She taught Triptolemus how to grow corn, and sent him to teach the inhabitants of the earth. She was known by the names of Magna Dea, Bona Dea, Alma Mammosa, and Thesmophonis. Ceres was the mother of Proserpine. See Ambarvalia.

“To Ceres bland, her annual rites be paid
On the green turf beneath the fragrant shade. —
... Let all the hinds bend low at Ceres' shrine,
Mix honey sweet for her with milk and mellow wine,
Thrice lead the victim the new fruits around,
On Ceres call, and choral hymns resound.”

“Ceres was she who first our furrows plowed,
Who gave sweet fruits and every good allowed.”

POPE.

Cestus (Ces'tus), the girdle of Venus, which excited irresistible affection.

Chaos (Cha'os) allegorically represented the confused mass of matter supposed to have existed before the creation of the world, and out of which the world was formed.

“... Behold the throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful deep; with him enthroned
Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of all things,
The consort of his reign.”

MILTON.

Charon (Char'on) was the son of Nox and Erebus. He was the ferryman who conveyed the spirits of the dead, in a boat, over the rivers Acheron and Styx to the Elysian Fields. “Charon's toll” was a coin put into the hands of the dead with which to pay the grim ferryman.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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