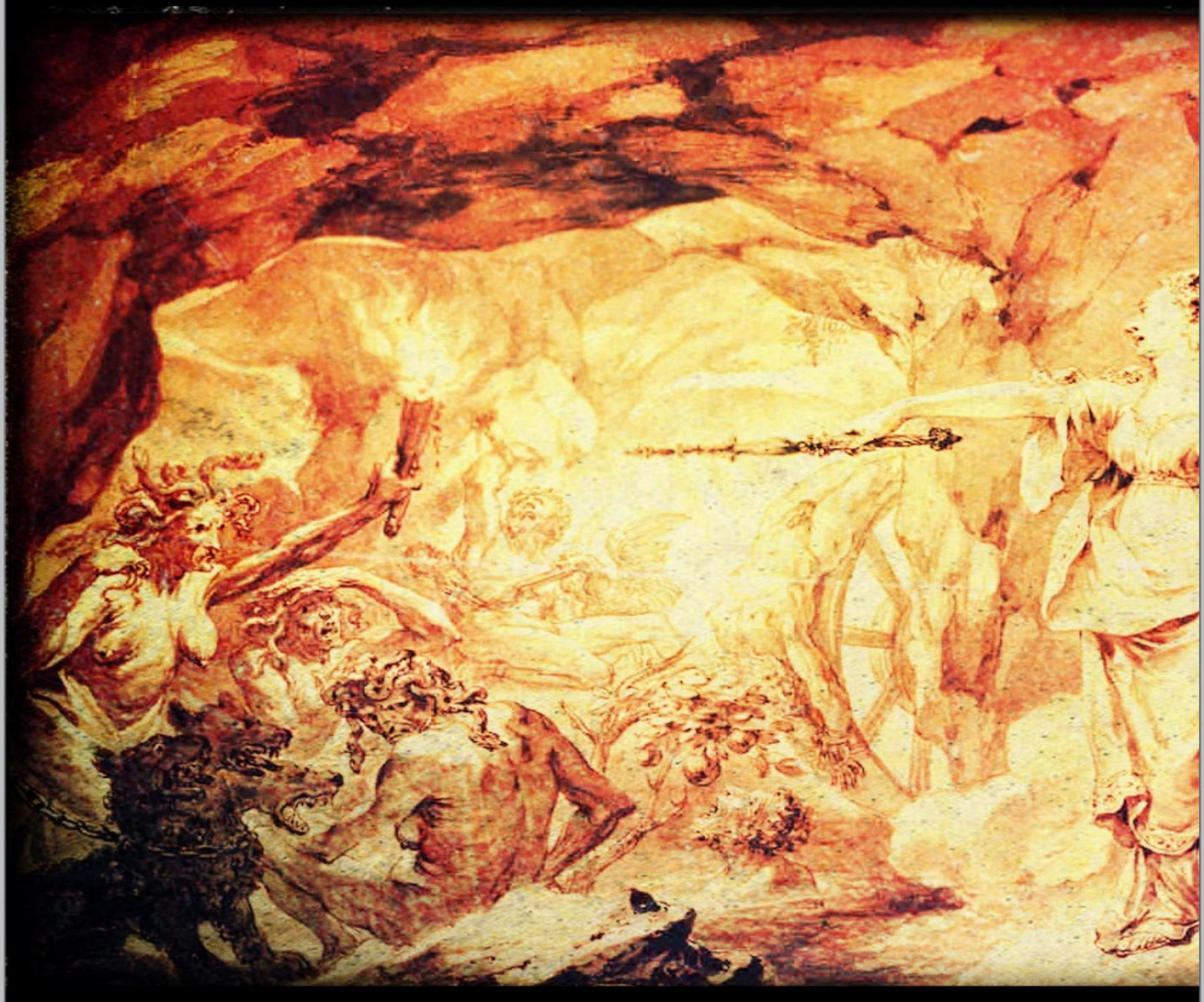
The Metamorphoses

Ovid



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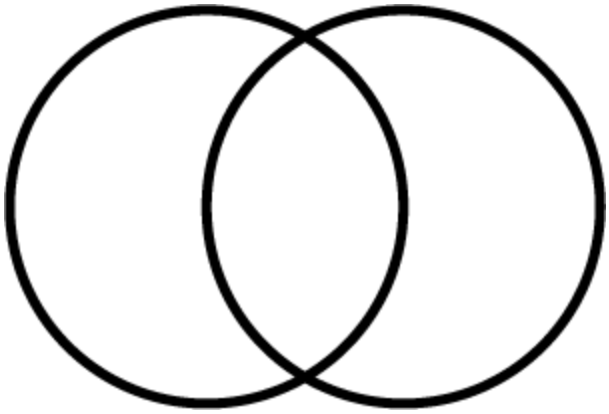
INTRODUCTION.



The Metamorphoses of Ovid are a compendium of the Mythological narratives of ancient Greece and Rome, so ingeniously framed, as to embrace a large amount of information upon almost every subject connected with the learning, traditions, manners, and customs of antiquity, and have afforded a fertile field of investigation to the learned of the civilized world. To present to the public a faithful translation of a work, universally esteemed, not only for its varied information, but as being the masterpiece of one of the greatest Poets of ancient Rome, is the object of the present volume.

To render the work, which, from its nature and design, must, of necessity, be replete with matter of obscure meaning, more inviting to the scholar, and more intelligible to those who are unversed in Classical literature, the translation is accompanied with Notes and Explanations, which, it is believed, will be found to throw considerable light upon the origin and meaning of some of the traditions of heathen Mythology.

In the translation, the text of the Delphin edition has been generally adopted; and no deviation has been made from it, except in a few instances, where the reason for such a step

is stated in the notes; at the same time, the texts of Burmann and Gierig have throughout been carefully consulted. The several editions vary materially in respect to punctuation; the Translator has consequently used his own discretion in adopting that which seemed to him the most fully to convey in each passage the intended meaning of the writer.

The Metamorphoses of Ovid have been frequently translated into the English language. On referring to Mr. Bohn's excellent Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Classics and their Translations, we find that the whole of the work has been twice translated into English Prose, while five translations in Verse are there enumerated. A prose version of the Metamorphoses was published by Joseph Davidson, about the middle of the last century, which professes to be "as near the original as the different idioms of the Latin and English will allow;" and to be "printed for the use of schools, as well as of private gentlemen." A few moments' perusal of this work will satisfy the reader that it has not the slightest pretension to be considered a literal translation, while, by its departure from the strict letter of the author, it has gained nothing in elegance of diction. It is accompanied by "critical, historical, geographical, and classical notes in English, from the best Commentators, both ancient and modern, beside a great number of notes, entirely new;" but notwithstanding this announcement, these annotations will be found to be but few in number, and, with some exceptions in the early part of the volume, to throw very little light on the obscurities of the text. A fifth edition of this translation was published so recently as 1822, but without any improvement, beyond the furbishing up of the old-fashioned language of the original preface. A far more literal translation of the Metamorphoses is that by John Clarke, which was first published about the year 1735, and had attained to a seventh edition in 1779. Although this version may be pronounced very nearly to fulfil the promise

set forth in its title page, of being “as literal as possible,” still, from the singular inelegance of its style, and the fact of its being couched in the conversational language of the early part of the last century, and being unaccompanied by any attempt at explanation, it may safely be pronounced to be ill adapted to the requirements of the present age. Indeed, it would not, perhaps, be too much to assert, that, although the translator may, in his own words, “have done an acceptable service to such gentlemen as are desirous of regaining or improving the skill they acquired at school,” he has, in many instances, burlesqued rather than translated his author. Some of the curiosities of his version will be found set forth in the notes; but, for the purpose of the more readily justifying this assertion, a few of them are adduced: the word “nitidus” is always rendered “neat,” whether applied to a fish, a cow, a chariot, a laurel, the steps of a temple, or the art of wrestling. He renders “horridus,” “in a rude pickle;” “virgo” is generally translated “the young lady;” “vir” is “a gentleman;” “senex” and “senior” are indifferently “the old blade,” “the old fellow,” or “the old gentleman;” while “summa arx” is “the very tip-top.” “Misera” is “poor soul;” “exsilio” means “to bounce forth;” “pellex” is “a miss;” “lumina” are “the peepers;” “turbatum fugere” is “to scower off in a mighty bustle;” “confundor” is “to be jumbled;” and “squalidus” is “in a sorry pickle.” “Importuna” is “a plaguy baggage;” “adulterium” is rendered “her pranks;” “ambages” becomes either “a long rabble of words,” “a long-winded detail,” or “a tale of a tub;” “miserabile carmen” is “a dismal ditty;” “increpare hos” is “to rattle these blades;” “penetralia” means “the parlour;” while “accingere,” more literally than elegantly, is translated “buckle to.” “Situs” is “nasty stuff;” “oscula jungere” is “to tip him a kiss;” “pingue ingenium” is a circumlocution for “a blockhead;” “anilia instrumenta” are “his old woman’s accoutrements;” and “repetito munere Bacchi” is conveyed to the sense of

the reader as, “they return again to their bottle, and take the other glass.” These are but a specimen of the blemishes which disfigure the most literal of the English translations of the Metamorphoses.

In the year 1656, a little volume was published, by J[ohn] B[ulloker,] entitled “Ovid’s Metamorphosis, translated grammatically, and, according to the propriety of our English tongue, so far as grammar and the verse will bear, written chiefly for the use of schools, to be used according to the directions in the preface to the painfull schoolmaster, and more fully in the book called, ‘Ludus Literarius, or the Grammar school, chap. 8.’” Notwithstanding a title so pretentious, it contains a translation of no more than the first 567 lines of the first Book, executed in a fanciful and pedantic manner; and its rarity is now the only merit of the volume. A literal interlinear translation of the first Book “on the plan recommended by Mr. Locke,” was published in 1839, which had been already preceded by “a selection from the Metamorphoses of Ovid, adapted to the Hamiltonian system, by a literal and interlineal translation,” published by James Hamilton, the author of the Hamiltonian system. This work contains selections only from the first six books, and consequently embraces but a very small portion of the entire work.

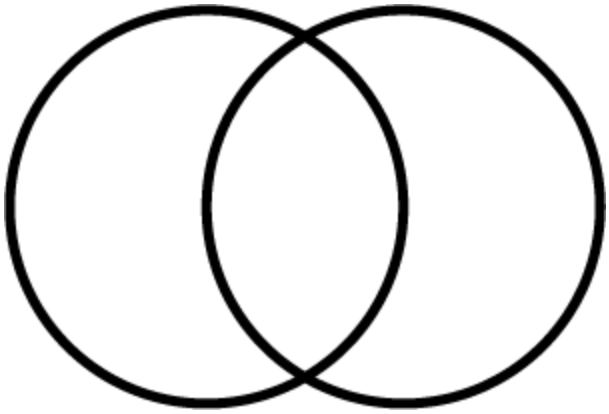
For the better elucidation of the different fabulous narratives and allusions, explanations have been added, which are principally derived from the writings of Herodotus, Apollodorus, Pausanias, Dio Cassius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Hyginus, Nonnus, and others of the historians, philosophers, and mythologists of antiquity. A great number of these illustrations are collected in the elaborate edition of Ovid, published by the Abbé Banier, one of the most learned scholars of the last century; who has, therein, and in his “Explanations of the Fables of Antiquity,” with indefatigable labour and research, culled from the works of ancient authors, all such information as

he considered likely to throw any light upon the Mythology and history of Greece and Rome.

This course has been adopted, because it was considered that a statement of the opinions of contemporary authors would be the most likely to enable the reader to form his own ideas upon the various subjects presented to his notice. Indeed, except in two or three instances, space has been found too limited to allow of more than an occasional reference to the opinions of modern scholars. Such being the object of the explanations, the reader will not be surprised at the absence of critical and lengthened discussions on many of those moot points of Mythology and early history which have occupied, with no very positive result, the attention of Niebuhr, Lobeck, Müller, Buttmann, and many other scholars of profound learning.

BOOK THE FIRST.

THE ARGUMENT. [I.1-4]



My design leads me to speak of forms changed into new bodies.[1] Ye Gods, (for you it was who changed them,) favor my attempts,[2] and bring down the lengthened narrative from the very beginning of the world, even to my own times.[3]

[Footnote 1: *Forms changed into new bodies.* —Ver. 1. Some commentators cite these words as an instance of Hypallage as being used for ‘corpora mutata in novas formas,’ ‘bodies changed into new forms;’ and they fancy that there is a certain beauty in the circumstance that the proposition of a subject which treats of the changes and variations of bodies should be framed with a transposition of words. This supposition is perhaps based rather on the exuberance of a fanciful imagination than on solid grounds, as if it is an instance of Hypallage, it is most probably quite accidental; while the passage may be explained without any reference to Hypallage, as the word ‘forma’ is sometimes used to signify the thing itself; thus the words ‘formæ deorum’ and ‘ferarum’ are used to signify ‘the Gods,’ or ‘the wild beasts’ themselves.]

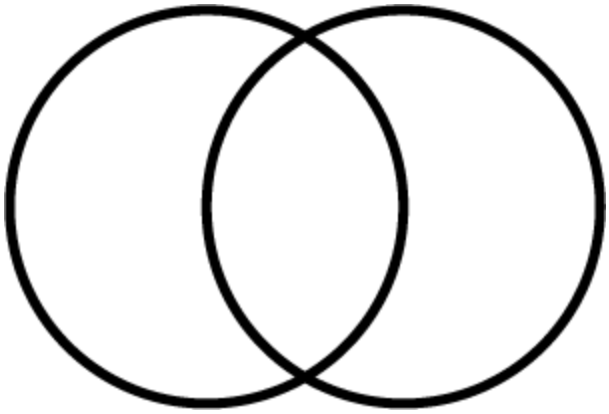
[Footnote 2: *Favor my attempts.* —Ver. 3. This use of the word ‘adspirate’ is a metaphor taken from the winds, which, while they fill the ship’s sails, were properly said

‘adspirare.’ It has been remarked, with some justice, that this invocation is not sufficiently long or elaborate for a work of so grave and dignified a nature as the Metamorphoses.]

[Footnote 3: *To my own times.* —Ver. 4. That is, to the days of

Augustus Cæsar.]

FABLE I. [I.5-31]



God reduces Chaos into order. He separates the four elements, and disposes the several bodies, of which the universe is formed, into their proper situations.

At first, the sea, the earth, and the heaven, which covers all things, were the only face of nature throughout the whole universe, which men have named Chaos; a rude and undigested mass,[4] and nothing {more} than an inert weight, and the discordant atoms of things not harmonizing, heaped together in the same spot. No Sun[5] as yet gave light to the world; nor did the Moon,[6] by increasing, recover her horns anew. The Earth did not {as yet} hang in the surrounding air, balanced by its own weight, nor had Amphitrite[7] stretched out her arms along the lengthened margin of the coasts. Wherever, too, was the land, there also was the sea and the air; {and} thus was the earth without firmness, the sea unnavigable, the air void of light; in no one {of them} did its {present} form exist. And one was {ever} obstructing the other; because in the same body the cold was striving with the hot, the moist with the dry, the soft with the hard, things having weight with {those} devoid of weight.

To this discord God and bounteous Nature[8] put an end; for he separated the earth from the heavens, and the

waters from the earth, and distinguished the clear heavens from the gross atmosphere. And after he had unravelled these {elements}, and released them from {that} confused heap, he combined them, {thus} disjoined, in harmonious unison, {each} in {its proper} place. The element of the vaulted heaven,[9] fiery and without weight, shone forth, and selected a place for itself in the highest region; next after it, {both} in lightness and in place, was the air; the Earth was more weighty than these, and drew {with it} the more ponderous atoms, and was pressed together by its own gravity. The encircling waters sank to the lowermost place,[10] and surrounded the solid globe.

[Footnote 4: *A rude and undigested mass.* —Ver. 7. This is very similar to the words of the Scriptures, 'And the earth was without form and void,' Genesis, ch. i. ver. 2.]

[Footnote 5: *No Sun.* —Ver. 10. Titan. The Sun is so called, on account of his supposed father, Hyperion, who was one of the Titans. Hyperion is thought to have been the first who, by assiduous observation, discovered the course of the Sun, Moon, and other luminaries. By them he regulated the time for the seasons, and imparted this knowledge to others. Being thus, as it were, the father of astronomy, he has been feigned by the poets to have been the father of the Sun and the Moon.]

[Footnote 6: *The Moon.* —Ver. 11. Phœbe. The Moon is so called from the Greek φοῖβος, 'shining,' and as being the sister of Phœbus, Apollo, or the Sun.]

[Footnote 7: *Amphitrite.* —Ver. 14. She was the daughter of Oceanus and Doris, and the wife of Neptune, God of the Sea. Being the Goddess of the Ocean, her name is here used to signify the ocean itself.]

[Footnote 8: *Nature.* —Ver. 21. 'Natura' is a word often used by the Poet without any determinate signification, and to its operations are ascribed all those phenomena which it is found difficult or impossible to explain upon known and established principles. In the present instance it may be

considered to mean the invisible agency of the Deity in reducing Chaos into a form of order and consistency. ‘Et’ is therefore here, as grammarians term it, an expositive particle; as if the Poet had said, ‘Deus sive natura,’ ‘God, or in other words, nature.’]

[Footnote 9: *The element of the vaulted heaven.* —Ver. 26. This is a periphrasis, signifying the regions of the firmament or upper air, in which the sun and stars move; which was supposed to be of the purest fire and the source of all flame. The heavens are called ‘convex,’ from being supposed to assume the same shape as the terrestrial globe which they surround.]

[Footnote 10: *The lowermost place.* —Ver. 31. ‘Ultima’ must not be here understood in the presence of ‘infima,’ or as signifying ‘last,’ or ‘lowest,’ in a strict philosophical sense, for that would contradict the account of the formation of the world given by Hesiod, and which is here closely followed by Ovid; indeed, it would contradict his own words,—‘Circumfluus humor coercuit solidum orbem.’ The meaning seems to be, that the waters possess the lowest place only in respect to the earth whereon we tread, and not relatively to the terrestrial globe, the supposed centre of the system, inasmuch as the external surface of the earth in some places rises considerably, and leaves the water to subside in channels.]

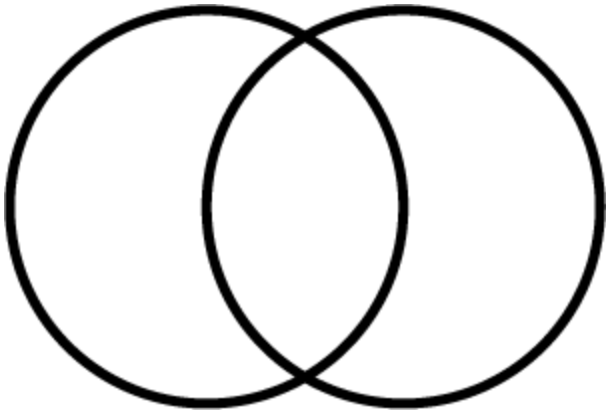
EXPLANATION.

The ancient philosophers, unable to comprehend how something could be produced out of nothing, supposed a matter pre-existent to the Earth in its present shape, which afterwards received form and order from some powerful cause. According to them, God was not the Creator, but the Architect of the universe, in ranging and disposing the elements in situations most suitable to their respective qualities. This is the Chaos so often sung of by the poets, and which Hesiod was the first to mention.

It is clear that this system was but a confused and disfigured tradition of the creation of the world, as mentioned by Moses; and thus, beneath these fictions, there lies some faint glimmering of truth. The first two chapters of the book of Genesis will be found to throw considerable light on the foundation of this Mythological system of the world's formation.

Hesiod, the most ancient of the heathen writers who have enlarged upon this subject, seems to have derived much of his information from the works of Sanchoniatho, who is supposed to have borrowed his ideas concerning Chaos from that passage in the second verse of the first Chapter of Genesis, which mentions the darkness that was spread over the whole universe—'and darkness was upon the face of the deep'—for he expresses himself almost in those words. Sanchoniatho lived before the Trojan war, and professed to have received his information respecting the original construction of the world from a priest of 'Jehovah,' named Jerombaal. He wrote in the Phœnician language; but we have only a translation of his works, by Philo Judæus, which is by many supposed to be spurious. It is, however, very probable, that from him the Greeks borrowed their notions regarding Chaos, which they mingled with fables of their own invention.

FABLE II. [I.32-88]



After the separation of matter, God gives form and regularity to the universe; and all other living creatures being produced, Prometheus moulds earth tempered with water, into a human form, which is animated by Minerva.

When thus he, whoever of the Gods he was,[11] had divided the mass {so} separated, and reduced it, so divided, into {distinct} members; in the first place, that it might not be unequal on any side, he gathered it up into the form of a vast globe; then he commanded the sea to be poured around it, and to grow boisterous with the raging winds, and to surround the shores of the Earth, encompassed {by it}; he added also springs, and numerous pools and lakes, and he bounded the rivers as they flowed downwards, with slanting banks. These, different in {different} places, are some of them swallowed up[12] by {the Earth} itself; some of them reach the ocean, and, received in the expanse of waters that take a freer range, beat against shores instead of banks.

He commanded the plains,[13] too, to be extended, the valleys to sink down, the woods to be clothed with green leaves, the craggy mountains to arise; and, as on the right-hand side,[14] two Zones intersect the heavens, and as many on the left; {and as} there is a fifth hotter than these,

so did the care of the Deity distinguish this enclosed mass {of the Earth} by the same number, and as many climates are marked out upon the Earth. Of these, that which is the middle one[15] is not habitable on account of the heat; deep snow covers two[16] {of them}. Between either these he placed as many more,[17] and gave them a temperate climate, heat being mingled with cold.

Over these hangs the air, which is heavier than fire, in the same degree that the weight of water is lighter than the weight of the earth. Here he ordered vapors, here too, the clouds to take their station; the thunder, too, to terrify the minds of mortals, and with the lightnings, the winds that bring on cold. The Contriver of the World did not allow these indiscriminately to take possession of the sky. Even now, (although they each of them govern their own blasts in a distinct tract) they are with great difficulty prevented from rending the world asunder, so great is the discord of the brothers.[18] Eurus took his way[19] towards {the rising of} Aurora and the realms of Nabath[20] and Persia, and the mountain ridges exposed to the rays of the morning. The Evening star, and the shores which are warm with the setting sun, are bordering upon Zephyrus.[21] The terrible Boreas invaded Scythia,[22] and the regions of the North. The opposite quarter is wet with continual clouds, and the drizzling South Wind.[23] Over these he placed the firmament, clear and devoid of gravity, and not containing anything of the dregs of earth.

Scarcely had he separated all these by fixed limits, when the stars, which had long lain hid, concealed beneath that mass {of Chaos}, began to glow through the range of the heavens. And that no region might be destitute of its own {peculiar} animated beings, the stars and the forms of the Gods[24] possess the tract of heaven; the waters fell to be inhabited by the smooth fishes;[25] the Earth received the wild beasts, {and} the yielding air the birds.

{But} an animated being, more holy than these, more fitted to receive higher faculties, and which could rule over the rest,[26] was still wanting. {Then} Man was formed. Whether it was that the Artificer of all things, the original of the world in its improved state, framed him from divine elements;[27] or whether, the Earth, being newly made, and but lately divided from the lofty æther, still retained some atoms of its kindred heaven, which, tempered with the waters of the stream, the son of Iapetus fashioned after the image of the Gods, who rule over all things. And, whereas other animals bend their looks downwards upon the Earth, to Man he gave a countenance to look on high and to behold the heavens, and to raise his face erect to the stars. Thus, that which had been lately rude earth, and without any regular shape, being changed, assumed the form of Man, {till then} unknown.

[Footnote 11: *Whoever of the Gods he was.* —Ver. 32. By this expression the Poet perhaps may intend to intimate that the God who created the world was some more mighty Divinity than those who were commonly accounted Deities.]

[Footnote 12: *Are some of them swallowed up.* —Ver. 40. He here refers to those rivers which, at some distance from their sources, disappear and continue their course under ground. Such was the stream of Arethusa, the Lycus in Asia, the Erasinus in Argolis, the Alpheus in Peloponnesus, the Arcas in Spain, and the Rhone in France. Most of these, however, after descending into the earth, appear again and discharge their waters into the sea.]

[Footnote 13: *He commanded the plains.* —Ver. 43. The use here of the word ‘jussit,’ signifying ‘ordered,’ or ‘commanded,’ is considered as being remarkably sublime and appropriate, and serving well to express the ease wherewith an infinitely powerful Being accomplishes the most difficult works. There is the same beauty here that was long since remarked by Longinus, one of the most celebrated critics among the ancients, in the words used by

Moses, 'And God said, Let there be light, and there was light,' Genesis, ch. i. ver. 3.]

[Footnote 14: *On the right-hand side.* —Ver. 45. The "right hand" here refers to the northern part of the globe, and the "left hand" to the southern. He here speaks of the zones. Astronomers have divided the heavens into five parallel circles. First, the equinoctial, which lies in the middle, between the poles of the earth, and obtains its name from the equality of days and nights on the earth while the sun is in its plane. On each side are the two tropics, at the distance of 23 deg. 30 min., and described by the sun when in his greatest declination north and south, or at the summer and winter solstices. That on the north side of the equinoctial is called the tropic of Cancer, because the sun describes it when in that sign of the ecliptic; and that on the south side is, for a similar reason, called the tropic of Capricorn. Again, at the distance of 23½ degrees from the poles are two other parallels called the polar circles, either because they are near to the poles, or because, if we suppose the whole frame of the heavens to turn round on the plane of the equinoctial, these circles are marked out by the poles of the ecliptic. By means of these parallels, astronomers have divided the heavens into four zones or tracks. The whole space between the two tropics is the middle or torrid zone, which the equinoctial divides into two equal parts. On each side of this are the temperate zones, which extend from the tropics to the two polar circles. And lastly, the portions enclosed by the polar circles make up the frigid zones. As the planes of these circles produced till they reached the earth, would also impress similar parallels upon it, and divide it in the same manner as they divide the heavens, astronomers have conceived five zones upon the earth, corresponding to those in the heavens, and bounded by the same circles.]

[Footnote 15: *That which is the middle one.* —Ver. 49. The ecliptic in which the sun moves, cuts the equator in two

opposite points, at an angle of 23½ degrees; and runs obliquely from one tropic to another, and returns again in a corresponding direction. Hence, the sun, which in the space of a year, performs the revolution of this circle, must in that time be twice vertical to every place in the torrid zone, except directly under the tropics, and his greatest distance from their zenith at noon, cannot exceed 47 degrees. Thus his rays being often perpendicular, or nearly so, and never very oblique, must strike more forcibly, and cause more intense heat in that spot. Being little acquainted with the extent and situation of the earth, the ancients believed it uninhabitable. Modern discovery has shown that this is not the case as to a considerable part of the torrid zone, though with some parts of it our acquaintance is still very limited.]

[Footnote 16: *Deep snow covers two.* —Ver. 50. The two polar or frigid zones. For as the sun never approaches these nearer than the tropic on that side, and is, during one part of the year, removed by the additional extent of the whole torrid zone, his rays must be very oblique and faint, so as to leave these tracts exposed to almost perpetual cold.]

[Footnote 17: *He placed as many more.* —Ver. 51. The temperate zones, lying between the torrid and the frigid, partake of the character of each in a modified degree, and are of a middle temperature between hot and cold. Here, too, the distinction of the seasons is manifest. For in either temperate zone, when the sun is in that tropic, which borders upon it, being nearly vertical, the heat must be considerable, and produce summer; but when he is removed to the other tropic by a distance of 47 degrees, his rays will strike but faintly, and winter will be the consequence. The intermediate spaces, while he is moving from one tropic to the other, make spring and autumn.]

[Footnote 18: *The brothers.* —Ver. 60. That is, the winds, who, according to the Theogony of Hesiod, were the sons of

Astreus, the giant, and Aurora.]

[Footnote 19: *Eurus took his way.* —Ver. 61. The Poet, after remarking that the air is the proper region of the winds, proceeds to take notice that God, to prevent them from making havoc of the creation, subjected them to particular laws, and assigned to each the quarter whence to direct his blasts. Eurus is the east wind, being so called from its name, because it blows from the east. As Aurora, or the morning, was always ushered in by the sun, who rises eastward, she was supposed to have her habitation in the eastern quarter of the world; and often, in the language of ancient poetry, her name signifies the east.]

[Footnote 20: *The realms of Nabath.* —Ver. 61. From Josephus we learn that Nabath, the son of Ishmael, with his eleven brothers, took possession of all the country from the river Euphrates to the Red Sea, and called it Nabathæa. Pliny the Elder and Strabo speak of the Nabatæi as situated between Babylon and Arabia Felix, and call their capital Petra. Tacitus, in his Annals (Book ii. ch. 57), speaks of them as having a king. Perhaps the term ‘Nabathæa regna’ implies here, generally, the whole of Arabia.]

[Footnote 21: *Are bordering upon Zephyrus.* —Ver. 63. The region where the sun sets, that is to say, the western part of the world, was assigned by the ancients to the Zephyrs, or west winds, so called by a Greek derivation because they cherish and enliven nature.]

[Footnote 22: *Boreas invaded Scythia.* —Ver. 34. Under the name of Scythia, the ancients generally comprehended all the countries situate in the extreme northern regions. ‘Septem trio,’ meaning the northern region of the world, is so called from the ‘Triones,’ a constellation of seven stars, near the North Pole, known also as the Ursa Major, or Greater Bear, and among the country people of our time by the name of Charles’s Wain. Boreas, one of the names of ‘Aquilo,’ or the ‘north wind,’ is derived from a Greek word,

signifying ‘an eddy.’ This name was probably given to it from its causing whirlwinds occasionally by its violence.]

[Footnote 23: *The drizzling South Wind.* —Ver. 66. The South Wind is especially called rainy, because, blowing from the Mediterranean sea on the coast of France and Italy, it generally brings with it clouds and rain.]

[Footnote 24: *The forms of the Gods.* —Ver. 73. There is some doubt what the Poet here means by the ‘forms of the Gods.’ Some think that the stars are meant, as if it were to be understood that they are forms of the Gods. But it is most probably only a poetical expression for the Gods themselves, and he here assigns the heavens as the habitation of the Gods and the stars; these last, according to the notion of the Platonic philosophers being either intelligent beings, or guided and actuated by such.]

[Footnote 25: *Inhabited by the smooth fishes.* —Ver. 74. ‘Cesserunt nitidis habitandæ piscibus;’ Clarke translates ‘fell to the neat fishes to inhabit.’]

[Footnote 26: *Could rule over the rest.* —Ver. 77. This strongly brings to mind the words of the Creator, described in the first chapter of Genesis, ver. 28. ‘And God said unto them— *have dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.’]

[Footnote 27: *Framed him from divine elements.* —Ver. 78. We have here strong grounds for contending that the ancient philosophers, and after them the poets, in their account of the creation of the world followed a tradition that had been copied from the Books of Moses. The formation of man, in Ovid, as well as in the Book of Genesis, is the last work of the Creator, and was, for the same purpose, that man might have dominion over the other animated works of the creation.]

EXPLANATION.

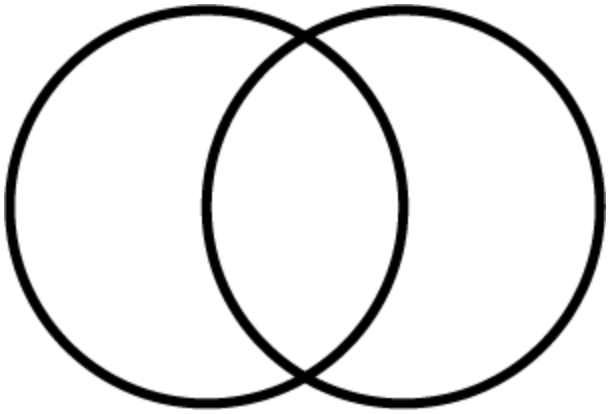
According to Ovid, as in the book of Genesis, man is the last work of the Creator. The information derived from Holy

Writ is here presented to us, in a disfigured form. Prometheus, who tempers the earth, and Minerva, who animates his workmanship, is God, who formed man, and ‘breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.’

Some writers have labored to prove that this Prometheus, of the heathen Mythology, was a Scriptural character. Bochart believes him to have been the same with Magog, mentioned in the book of Genesis. Prometheus was the son of Iapetus, and Magog was the son of Japhet, who, according to that learned writer, was identical with Iapetus. He says, that as Magog went to settle in Scythia, so did Prometheus; as Magog either invented, or improved, the art of founding metals, and forging iron, so, according to the heathen poets, did Prometheus. Diodorus Siculus asserts that Prometheus was the first to teach mankind how to produce fire from the flint and steel.

The fable of Prometheus being devoured by an eagle, according to some, is founded on the name of Magog, which signifies ‘a man devoured by sorrow.’ Le Clerc, in his notes on Hesiod, says, that Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus, was the same with the Gog of Scripture, the brother of Magog. Some writers, again, have exerted their ingenuity to prove that Prometheus is identical with the patriarch Noah.

FABLE III. [I.89-112]



The formation of man is followed by a succession of the four ages of the world. The first is the Golden Age, during which Innocence and Justice alone govern the world.

The Golden Age was first founded, which, without any avenger, of its own accord, without laws, practised both faith and rectitude. Punishment, and the fear {of it}, did not exist, and threatening decrees were not read upon the brazen {tables},[28] fixed up {to view}, nor {yet} did the suppliant multitude dread the countenance of its judge; but {all} were in safety without any avenger. The pine-tree, cut from its {native} mountains, had not yet descended to the flowing waves, that it might visit a foreign region; and mortals were acquainted with no shores beyond their own. Not as yet did deep ditches surround the towns; no trumpets of straightened, or clarions of crooked brass,[29] no helmets, no swords {then} existed. Without occasion for soldiers, the minds {of men}, free from care, enjoyed an easy tranquillity.

The Earth itself, too, in freedom, untouched by the harrow, and wounded by no ploughshares, of its own accord produced everything; and men, contented with the food created under no compulsion, gathered the fruit of the arbute-tree, and the strawberries of the mountain, and

cornels, and blackberries adhering to the prickly bramble-bushes, and acorns which had fallen from the wide-spreading tree of Jove. {Then} it was an eternal spring; and the gentle Zephyrs, with their soothing breezes, cherished the flowers produced without any seed. Soon, too, the Earth unploughed yielded crops of grain, and the land, without being renewed, was whitened with the heavy ears of corn. Then, rivers of milk, then, rivers of nectar were flowing, and the yellow honey was distilled from the green holm oak.

[Footnote 28: *Read upon the brazen tables.* —Ver. 91. It was the custom among the Romans to engrave their laws on tables of brass, and fix them in the Capitol, or some other conspicuous place, that they might be open to the view of all.]

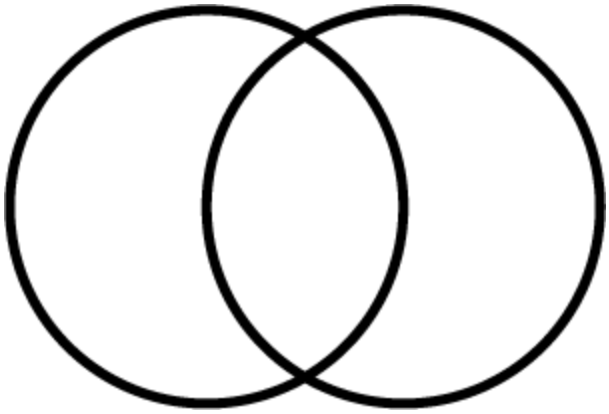
[Footnote 29: *Clarions of crooked brass.* —Ver. 98. 'Cornu' seems to have been a general name for the horn or trumpet; whereas the "tuba" was a straight trumpet, while the 'lituus' was bent into a spiral shape. Lydus says that the 'lituus' was the sacerdotal trumpet, and that it was employed by Romulus when he proclaimed the title of his newly-founded city. Acro says that it was peculiar to the cavalry, while the 'tuba' belonged to the infantry. The notes of the 'lituus' are usually described as harsh and shrill.]

EXPLANATION.

The heathen poets had learned, most probably from tradition, that our first parents lived for some time in peaceful innocence; that, without tillage, the garden of Eden furnished them with fruit and food in abundance; and that the animals were submissive to their commands: that after the fall the ground became unfruitful, and yielded nothing without labor; and that nature no longer spontaneously acknowledged man for its master. The more happy days of our first parents they seem to have styled the Golden Age, each writer being desirous to make his own country the scene of those times of innocence. The Latin

writers, for instance, have placed in Italy, and under the reign of Saturn and Janus, events, which, as they really happened, the Scriptures relate in the histories of Adam and of Noah.

FABLE IV. [I.113-150]



In the Silver Age, men begin not to be so just, nor, consequently, so happy, as in the Golden Age. In the Brazen Age, which succeeds, they become yet less virtuous; but their wickedness does not rise to its highest pitch until the Iron Age, when it makes its appearance in all its deformity.

Afterwards (Saturn being driven into the shady realms of Tartarus), the world was under the sway of Jupiter; {then} the Silver Age succeeded, inferior to {that of} gold, but more precious than {that of} yellow brass. Jupiter shortened the duration of the former spring, and divided the year into four periods by means of winters, and summers, and unsteady autumns, and short springs. Then, for the first time, did the parched air glow with sultry heat, and the ice, bound up by the winds, was pendant. Then, for the first time, did men enter houses; {those} houses were caverns, and thick shrubs, and twigs fastened together with bark. Then, for the first time, were the seeds of Ceres buried in long furrows, and the oxen groaned, pressed by the yoke {of the ploughshare}.

The Age of Brass succeeded, as the third {in order}, after these; fiercer in disposition, and more prone to horrible warfare, but yet free from impiety. The last {Age} was of hard iron. Immediately every species of crime burst forth,

in this age of degenerated tendencies;[30] modesty, truth, and honor took flight; in their place succeeded fraud, deceit, treachery, violence, and the cursed hankering for acquisition. The sailor now spread his sails to the winds, and with these, as yet, he was but little acquainted; and {the trees}, which had long stood on the lofty mountains, now, {as} ships bounded[31] through the unknown waves. The ground, too, hitherto common as the light of the sun and the breezes, the cautious measurer marked out with his lengthened boundary.

And not only was the rich soil required to furnish corn and due sustenance, but men even descended into the entrails of the Earth; and riches were dug up, the incentives to vice, which the Earth had hidden, and had removed to the Stygian shades.[32] Then destructive iron came forth, and gold, more destructive than iron; then War came forth, that fights through the means of both,[33] and that brandishes in his blood-stained hands the clattering arms. Men live by rapine; the guest is not safe from his entertainer, nor the father-in-law from the son-in-law; good feeling, too, between brothers is a rarity. The husband is eager for the death of the wife, she {for that} of her husband. Horrible stepmothers {then} mingle the ghastly wolfsbane; the son prematurely makes inquiry[34] into the years of his father. Piety lies vanquished, and the virgin Astræa[35] is the last of the heavenly {Deities} to abandon the Earth, {now} drenched in slaughter.

[Footnote 30: *Age of degenerated tendencies.* —Ver. 128. 'Vena' signifies among other things, a vein or track of metal as it lies in the mine. Literally, 'venæ pejoris' signifies 'of inferior metal.']

[Footnote 31: *Now as ships bounded.* —Ver. 134. 'Insultavere carinæ.' This line is translated by Clarke, 'The keel-pieces bounced over unknown waves.']

[Footnote 32: *To the Stygian shades.* —Ver. 139. That is, in deep caverns, and towards the centre of the earth; for Styx