

GROUP I.

—♦—  
*SOME SELF-EVIDENT NATURE MYTHS.*  
—♦—

NIGHT. Latin, *Nox* or *Nyx*.

“Night, sable goddess, from her ebon throne,  
In rayless majesty, now stretches forth  
Her leaden scepter o’er a still and pulseless world.  
Silence, how dread! and darkness, how profound!”

YOUNG’S “Night Thoughts.”

THE MYTH OF NYX, THE NIGHT.

Nyx was the daughter of Chaos and the wife of Er'-e-bus. Her children were the Fates, — Clō'tho, Lāch'esis, and At'ropos, — Death, Sleep, Dreams, Laughter, Woe, Vengeance, Strife, and the Hēspēr'ides, four maidens who, with the aid of a terrible dragon that never slept, guarded the golden apples growing on a tree that had been given to Juno on her wedding-day.

Nyx with her two sons, Death and Sleep, dwelt in a cave in the west, “behind where Atlas supports the heavens.”

In art there have been many ways of representing Nyx. Sometimes she has a woman's form, with or without wings, clothed in black drapery and having a starry veil; and she is riding in a chariot drawn by black

steeds, and accompanied by the stars. Again, she floats through the air, clothed in a long black robe, carrying in her arms Death and Sleep. Death is draped in black and holds an inverted torch; while Sleep is robed in white and has for his symbol the poppy.

The author of Sheridan's *Ride* must have had the former of these two pictures in mind when he wrote:—

“A steed as black as the steeds of Night  
Was seen to pass as with eagle flight.”

Compare these pictures with the poetical representations.

#### HYMN TO THE NIGHT.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

I heard the trailing garments of the Night  
Sweep through her marble halls!  
I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light  
From the celestial walls!

I felt her presence, by its spell of might,  
Stoop o'er me from above;  
The calm majestic presence of the Night  
As of the one I love.

I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,  
The manifold, soft chimes,  
That fill the haunted chambers of the Night  
Like some old poet's rhymes.

From the cool cisterns of the midnight air  
My spirit drank repose;  
The fountain of perpetual peace flows there,—  
From those deep cisterns flows.



“She floats through the air, carrying in her arms Death and Sleep.”

O holy Night ! from thee I learn to bear  
What man has borne before !  
Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,  
And they complain no more.

Peace ! Peace ! Orestes-like <sup>1</sup> I breathe this prayer !  
Descend with broad-winged flight  
The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,  
The best-beloved Night.

## TO NIGHT.

SHELLEY.

Swiftly walk o'er the western wave,  
Spirit of Night !  
Out of the misty eastern cave,  
Where all the long and lone daylight,  
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,  
Which make thee terrible and dear —  
Swift be thy flight !

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,  
Star-inwrought !  
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day,  
Kiss her until she be wearied out,  
Then wander o'er city and sea and land,  
Touching all with thine opiate wand —  
Come, long sought !

When I arose and saw the dawn,  
I sighed for thee ;  
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,

<sup>1</sup> For the story of Orestes read Goethe's "Iphigenia in Tauris," a selection from which will be found in Group III.

And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,  
 And the weary Day turned to her rest,  
 Lingered like an unloved guest,  
 I sighed for thee.

Thy brother, Death, came, and cried,  
 "Wouldst thou me?"

Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,  
 Murmured like a noontide bee,  
 "Shall I nestle near thy side?  
 Wouldst thou me?" — And I replied,  
 "No, not thee!"

Death will come when thou art dead,  
 Soon, too soon —  
 Sleep will come when thou art fled;  
 Of neither would I ask the boon  
 I ask of thee, beloved Night —  
 Swift be thine approaching flight,  
 Come soon, soon!

AURORA, *Lat.*; EOS, *Gr.*

AURORA, the goddess of the dawn, was the daughter of Hyperion and Thea, and a sister of Apollo, the Sun-god, and of Diana, the Moon-goddess. She was married to Astræ'us, and became the mother of the winds, — Bō'reas, the North; Zeph'yru's, the West; Eū'ru's, the East; and Nō'tus, the South.

She was also the mother of Lucifer, the light-bringer, and of the Stars of Heaven.

She afterwards married Tithō'nus, son of Lāōm'edon, king of Troy. She stole him away, and prevailed on

Jupiter to grant him immortality; but forgetting to have perpetual youth joined in the gift, after some time she began to discern, to her great mortification, that he was growing old. When his hair was quite white she left his society; but he still had the range of her palace, lived on ambrosial food, and was clad in celestial raiment.

At length he lost the power of using his limbs, and then she shut him up in his chamber, whence his feeble voice might be heard at times. Finally she turned him into a grasshopper.

Memnon, king of Ethiopia, celebrated in the story of the Trojan War, was the son of Aurora and Tithonus. He came with his warriors to assist the kindred of his father in the war. King Priam received him with great honors, and the very next day after his arrival, Memnon, impatient of repose, led his troops to the field. A long and doubtful contest ensued between him and Achilles; at length victory declared for Achilles, Memnon fell, and the Trojans fled in dismay. Aurora, who, from her station in the sky, had seen the danger of her son and finally his fall, directed his brothers, the Winds, to convey his body to the banks of the river Esepus in Paphlagonia. In the evening she came, accompanied by the Hours and the Pleiads, and wept and lamented for her son. Night, in sympathy with her grief, spread the heavens with clouds; all nature mourned for the offspring of the Dawn. Aurora remains inconsolable for the loss of her son. Her tears still flow, and may be seen at early morning in the form of dew-drops on the grass.

Aurora had her own chariot, which she drove across the vast horizon both morning and night, before and after the sun-god. Hence she is also the goddess of twilight. She is described by the poets as a beautiful maiden with rosy arms and fingers; she bears a star on her forehead and a torch in her hand.

Wrapping around her the rich folds of her violet-tinged mantle, she leaves her couch before the break of day and yokes her horses to her glorious chariot. She then hastens cheerfully to open the gates of heaven, in order to herald the approach of her brother, while the tender plants and flowers, reviving by the morning dew, lift up their heads to welcome her as she passes.

Some quotations from Pope's translation of the "Iliad" will show how Aurora was mentioned by Homer. The opening lines, Book VIII. :—

"Aurora now, fair daughter of the dawn,  
Sprinkled with rosy light the dewy lawn,  
When Jove convened the senate of the skies  
Where high Olympus' cloudy tops arise."

The opening lines, Book XI. :—

"The saffron morn with early blushes spread,  
Now rose refulgent from Tithonus' bed  
With new-born day to gladden mortal sight  
And gild the courts of heaven with sacred light."

The opening lines, Book XIX. :—

"Soon as Aurora heaved her orient head  
Above the waves that blushed with early red  
(With new-born day to gladden mortal sight



"The saffron morn, with early blushes spread,  
Now rose refulgent from Tithonus' bed."

And gild the courts of heaven with sacred light)  
The immortal arms the goddess-mother bears  
Swift to her son."

The story of Aurora's mortal husband, Tithonus, has been told by Tennyson in the following matchless monologue :—

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
The vapors weep their burden to the ground,  
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,  
And after many a summer dies the swan.  
Me only cruel immortality  
Consumes : I wither slowly in thine arms,  
Here at the quiet limit of the world,  
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream  
The ever silent spaces of the East,  
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas ! for this gray shadow, once a man—  
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,  
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd  
To his great heart none other than a god !  
I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."  
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,  
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.  
But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,  
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,  
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd  
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,  
Immortal age beside immortal youth,  
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,  
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,  
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,  
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears

To hear me? Let me go; take back thy gift:  
 Why should a man desire in any way  
 To vary from the kindly race of men,  
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
 Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes  
 A glimpse of that dark world where I was born;  
 Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
 From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,  
 And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.  
 Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,  
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine  
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team  
 Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise  
 And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,  
 And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
 In silence, then before thine answer given  
 Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.  
 Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,  
 And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,  
 In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?  
 "The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart  
 In days far-off, and with what other eyes  
 I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —  
 The lucid outline forming round thee: saw  
 The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;  
 Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood  
 Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all  
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay  
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm

With kisses balmier than half-opening buds  
 Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd  
 Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet  
 Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,  
 While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not forever in thine East:  
 How can my nature longer mix with thine?  
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
 Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
 Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
 Of happy men that have the power to die,  
 And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
 Release me, and restore me to the ground;  
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:  
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;  
 I earth in earth forget these empty courts  
 And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

An antistrophe of one of Euripides' dramas, "The Troades," contains this beautiful allusion to Aurora:—

"And Eos' self, the fair, white-steeded Morning, —  
 Her light which blesses other lands, returning  
 Has changed to a gloomy pall!  
 She looked across the land with eyes of amber, —  
 She saw the city's fall, —  
 She who, in pure embraces,  
 Had held there, in the hymeneal chamber,  
 Her children's father, bright Tithonus old,  
 Whom the four steeds with starry brows and paces  
 Bore on, snatched upward, on the car of gold,  
 And with him, all the land's full hope of joy!  
 The love-charms of the gods are vain for Troy."

APOLLO, OR PHŒBUS APOLLO, *Lat.*; HELIOS, *Gr.*

THE office of Apollo was to give light to men and gods during the day. He is described as rising every morning in the east, preceded by his sister Aurora, who, with her rosy fingers, paints the tips of the mountains, and draws aside the misty veil through which her brother is about to appear.

When he has burst forth in all the glorious light of day, Aurora disappears, and Apollo drives his flame-darting chariot along the accustomed track.

This chariot, which is of burnished gold, is drawn by four fire-breathing steeds, behind which the young god stands erect with flashing eyes, his head surrounded with rays, holding in one hand the reins of those fiery coursers which in all hands save his are unmanageable. When towards evening he descends the curve in order to cool his burning forehead in the waters of the sea, he is followed closely by his sister Sēlē'ne (the moon), who is now prepared to take charge of the world and light up the dusky night.

When Apollo had finished his daily course, a winged boat or cup which had been made for him by Hēphæstus (Vulcan) conveyed him, with his chariot and horses, to the east, where he began again his bright journey.

This is what Milton alludes to in "Comus":—

" Now the gilded car of day  
His golden axle doth allay  
In the steep Atlantic stream

And the slope-Sun his upward beam  
Shoots against the dusky pole,  
Pacing toward the other goal  
Of his chamber in the east."

With the first beams of the light of the sun all nature awakens to renewed life, and the woods re-echo with the songs of the birds. Hence, Apollo is the god of music. He is himself the musician among the Olympic gods.

He attained his greatest importance among the Greeks as a god of prophecy. His oracle at Delphi was in high repute all over the world. That which raised the whole moral tone of the Greek nation was the belief that he was the god who accepted repentance as an atonement for sin, who pardoned the contrite sinner, and who acted as the protector of those who had committed a crime which required long years of expiation.

The most splendid temple of Apollo was at Delphi, which was considered the centre of the earth. The serpent, Python, was a monster that inhabited the valley near Delphi and destroyed both men and cattle. Apollo slew the Python, and in honor of this event the Pythian games were celebrated in the third year of every Olympiad.

Soon after his victory over the Python, Apollo saw Eros (Cupid) bending his bow, and mocked at his efforts. Eros, to punish him, shot him in the heart with his golden arrow of love, and at the same time discharged his leaden arrow of aversion into the heart



of Daphne, the daughter of the river-god Peneus. Daphne fled from Apollo, and calling to her father for aid, was transformed into a laurel bush. Apollo sorrowfully crowned himself with the leaves, and declared that, in memory of his love, it should henceforth remain ever green, and be held sacred to him.<sup>1</sup>

Apollo afterwards married Corō'nis. One day his favorite bird, the raven, flew to him with the intelligence that his wife had transferred her affections to another. Apollo instantly destroyed her with one of his death-dealing darts. He repented when too late. He punished the raven for its garrulity by changing its color from white to black. Coronis left an infant son named Asclē'pius (Æsculapius), who was educated by the Centaur, Chī'ron.

He became a celebrated physician, and was so skilful that he could restore the dead to life. Pluto complained to Jupiter, who killed Asclepius with one of his thunder-bolts. Apollo was so exasperated that he killed the Cyclops who had forged it. For this offence he was banished from Olympus. Coming to earth, he for nine years served Admē'tus as a shepherd, and was treated by him with the utmost kindness. By the aid of Apollo, Admetus gained the hand of Alces'tis, daughter of Pēlias.

The exiled god obtained from the Fates the gift of immortality for Admetus, on condition that when his last hour approached, some member of his family should

<sup>1</sup> In "A Fable for Critics," James Russell Lowell turns this story to account, with much wit as well as wisdom.

be willing to die in his place. When the fatal time came, Alcestis took his place. But Her'acles (Hercules), happening to arrive at the house of Admetus, engaged and overcame death, and restored Alcestis to her family.

All of these stories have furnished themes for poets. Euripides wrote his tragedy of "Alcestis" about 450 B.C., and Lowell, in his poem called "The Shepherd of King Admetus," gives us his impressions of Apollo's powers as a musician.

The following poem presents another admirable trait in the character of Apollo.

A SONG OF APOLLO: A LEGEND OF ANCIENT GREECE.

BY LILLIÉ E. BARR.

(From *Harper's Young People*. Copyright, 1881, by Harper & Brothers.)

After the burning of Troy, to Argos there came

A soldier aged and weary :  
Naught had he gained in the contest, treasure nor fame,  
So now he lifted his lyre, and day after day  
Stood in the streets or the market, and strove to play.

No one gave him a lepton,<sup>1</sup> no one waited to hear

A song so ancient and simple ;  
Hungry and hopeless, he ceased ; then a youth drew near —  
A youth with a beautiful face — and he said, " Old man,  
Now strike on thy lyre and sing, for I know thou can."

" O Greek," said old Akera'tos, " I have lost the power,  
With handling of swords and lances."

<sup>1</sup> Lepton : a small thing.

"Then here's a didrachmon<sup>1</sup>—lend me thy lyre an hour;  
Thou hold out the cap in thine hand, and I will play:  
Surely these men that are deaf shall listen to-day."

Then with a mighty hand sweeping the trembling strings,  
Over the tumult and chatting,  
Like the call of a clear sweet trumpet, the young voice rings;  
For he sings of the taking of Troy, and the chords  
Sound like the trampling of hoofs and the clashing of swords.

There in the market of Argos is Hector slain,  
There in their midst is Achilles.  
Breathless, they listen, again and again,  
Fill up the cap with coins, and shout in the crowded street,  
"Strike up thy lyre once more, O Singer strange and sweet."

Ah! then came magical notes, soft melodies low;  
The air grew purple and amber,  
Scented with honey, and spices, and roses a-blow:  
And there in the glory sat Love—Mother and Queen—  
And eyes grew misty with tears for days that had been.

Eyes grew misty, hearts grew tender, tender and free:  
Every one gave to the soldier  
Bracelets, and rings, and perfumes from over the sea.  
Then said the Singer, "Now, soldier, gather thy store,  
The hands that have fought for Greece need never beg more.

"Greeks, dwelling in Argos, this is a shameful sight—  
A soldier wounded and begging."  
The Singer grew splendid and godlike, and rose in unbearable  
light:  
Then they knew it was Phœbus Apollo, and said,  
"Never again in Argos shall the brave beg bread."

<sup>1</sup> *Didrachmon*: a two-drachma piece; an ancient Greek silver coin worth nearly forty cents.

Chaucer, "the Father of English poetry," shows himself "the heir of all the ages" of literature that had preceded him. One of the many merits of the "Canterbury Tales" is that each of the story-tellers entertains his hearers with a tale suited to his particular walk in life. This is noticeable in the Manciple's tale.

The steward of a college, coming in daily contact with professors and students, might naturally be expected to pick up bits of classic lore, and so, after giving an account of the most notable exploits of Apollo, he tells how the raven became black. Chaucer uses the name *crow*, though *raven* seems to be the name generally accepted by the mythologies.

#### THE MANCIPLÉ'S TALE.

When Phœbus dwelled here in earth adown,  
As oldë bookës makë mentioun,  
He was the mostë lusty bachelér  
Of all this world, and eke the best archér.  
He slew Python the serpent, as he lay  
Sleeping against the sun upon a day;  
And many another noble worthy deed  
He with his bow wrought, as men mayë read,  
Playen he could on every minstrelsy,  
And singë, that it was a melody  
To hearen of his clearë voice the soun',  
Certes the king of Thebes, Amphioún,  
That with his singing walled the city,  
Could never singë half so well as he.  
Thereto he was the seemliestë man  
That is, or was since that the world began;

What needeth it his features to describe?  
 For in this world is none so fair alive.  
 He was therewith full fill'd of gentleness,  
 Of honour, and of perfect worthiness.

This Phœbus, that was flower of bach'lery,  
 As well in freedom as in chivalry,  
 For his disport, in sign eke of victóry  
 Of Python, so as telleth us the story,  
 Was wont to bearen in his hand a bow.  
 Now had this Phœbus in his house a crow,  
 Which in a cage he fostered many a day,  
 And taught it speaken, as men teach a jay.  
 White was this crow, as is a snow-white swan,  
 And counterfeit the speech of every man  
 He couldē when he shouldē tell a tale,  
 Therewith in all this world no' nightingale  
 Ne couldē by an hundred thousand deal  
 Singē so wondrous merrily and well.  
 Now had this Phœbus in his house a wife,  
 Which that he loved morē than his life,  
 And night and day did ever his diligence  
 Her for to please, and do her reverence:  
 Save only, if that I the sooth shall sayn,  
 Jealous he was, and would have kept her fain.  
 But all for nought, for it availeth nought.

\* \* \* \* \*

But now to purpose, as I first began.  
 This worthy Phœbus did all that he can  
 To pleasē her, weening through such pleasáncē,  
 And for his manhood and his governáncē,  
 That no man should have put him from her grace;

\* \* \* \* \*

Take any bird, and put it in a cage  
 And do all thine intent, and thy coráge,

To foster it tenderly with meat and drink  
 Of allē dainties that thou canst bethink,  
 And keep it all so cleanly as thou may;  
 Although the cage of gold be never so gay,  
 Yet had this bird, by twenty thousand fold,  
 Lever in a forest, both wild and cold,  
 Go eatē wormēs, and such wretchedness,  
 For ever this bird will make it his business  
 T' escape out of his cage when that he may:  
 His liberty the bird desireth aye.  
 Let take a cat, and foster her with milk  
 And tender flesh, and make her couch of silk,  
 And let her see a mouse go by the wall,  
 Anon she weiveth milk, and flesh, and all,  
 And every dainty that is in that house,  
 Such appetite hath she to eat the mouse.  
 So, here hath kind her domination,  
 And appetite drives out discretion.

\* \* \* \* \*

This Phœbus, which that thought upon no guile  
 Deceived was for all his jollity  
 For besides him another haddē she  
 A man of little reputation,  
 Nought worth to Phœbus in comparison,  
 And so befell when Phœbus was absent  
 His wife anon hath for her lover sent.

\* \* \* \* \*

This white crow that hung aye in the cage  
 Beheld them meet and said never a word;  
 And when that home was come Phœbus the lord,  
 This crowē sung "Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo!"  
 "What? bird," quoth Phœbus, "what song sing'st thou now?"

Wert thou not wont so merrily to sing,  
 That to my heart it was a rejoicing  
 To hear thy voice? alas! what song is this?"  
 "My lord," quoth he, "I singē not amiss:  
 Phœbus," quoth he, "for all thy worthiness,  
 For all thy beauty, and all thy gentleness,  
 For all thy song, for all thy minstrelsy,  
 For all thy watching, bleared is thine eye."

\* \* \* \* \*

What will ye more?

The crow anon him told  
 How that his wife was false to him,  
 To his great shame and his great villainy;  
 And told him oft he saw it with his eyen.  
 This Phœbus gan awayward for to wrien;  
 Him thought his woeful heartē burst in two,  
 His bow he bent and set therein a flo,  
 And in his ire he hath his wifē slain;  
 This is th' effect, there is no more to sayn.  
 For sorrow of which he brake his minstrelsy,  
 Both harp and lute, gitern and psaltery;  
 And eke he brake his arrows and his bow;  
 And after that thus spake he to the crow.  
 "Traitor," quoth he, with tongue of scorpion,  
 "Thou hast me brought to my confusion;  
 Alas, that I was wrought! why n'ere I dead?  
 O dearē wife that wert to me so sad,  
 And eke so true, now liest thou dead  
 With facē pale of hue,  
 Full guiltless, that durst I swear y-wis!  
 O, hasty hand, to do so foul amiss!  
 O troubled wit, O irē reckless,  
 That unadvised smit'st the guiltless."

\* \* \* \* \*

And to the crow, "O falsē thief," said he,  
 "I will thee quite anon thy falsē tale.  
 Thou sung whilom like any nightingale,  
 Now shalt thou, falsē thief, thy song foregon,  
 And eke thy whitē feathers every one,  
 Nor ever in all thy lifē shalt thou speak;  
 Thus shall men on a traitor be awarek;  
 Thou and thine offspring ever shall be black.  
 Nor ever sweetē noisē shall ye make,  
 But ever cry against tempēst and rain,  
 In token that through thee my wife is slain."  
 And to the crow he start, and that anon,  
 And pull'd his whitē feathers every one,  
 And made him black, and reft him all his song,  
 And eke his speech, and out at door him flung  
 Unto the devil, which I him betake;  
 And for this causē be all crowēs black.

A poet of our own times, John G. Saxe, has rendered the same story into verse in his own lively serio-comic fashion. We select from his works, however, the story of Phaëthon, son of Apollo.

PHAËTHON; OR, THE AMATEUR COACHMAN.

Dan Phaëthon — so the histories run —  
 Was a jolly young chap, and a son of the Sun,—  
 Or rather of Phœbus; but as to his mother,  
 Genealogists make a deuce of a pother,  
 Some going for one, and some for another!  
 For myself, I must say, as a careful explorer,  
 This roaring young blade was the son of Aurora.

Now old Father Phœbus, ere railways begun  
 To elevate funds and depreciate fun,

Drove a very fast coach by the name of "The Sun,"  
 Running, they say,  
 Trips every day,  
 (On Sundays and all in a heathenish way,)  
 All lighted up with a famous array  
 Of lanterns that shone with a brilliant display,  
 And dashing along like a gentleman's 'shay,'  
 With never a fare, and nothing to pay!  
 Now Phaëthon begged of his doting old father,  
 To grant him a favor, and this the rather,  
 Since some one had hinted the youth to annoy,  
 That he wasn't by any means Phœbus's boy!  
 Intending, the rascally son of a gun,  
 To darken the brow of the son of the Sun!  
 "By the terrible Styx!" said the angry sire,  
 While his eyes flashed volumes of fury and fire,  
 "To prove your reviler an infamous liar,  
 I swear I will grant you whate'er you desire."  
 "Then, by my head,"  
 The youngster said,  
 "I'll mount the coach when the horses are fed!—  
 For there's nothing I'd choose, as I'm alive,  
 Like a seat on the box and a dashing drive!"  
 "Nay, Phaëthon, don't,—  
 I beg you won't,—  
 Just stop a moment and think upon't!  
 You're quite too young," continued the sage,  
 "To tend a coach at your tender age!  
 Besides, you see,  
 'Twill really be  
 Your first appearance on any stage!  
 Desist, my child,  
 The cattle are wild,  
 And when their mettle is thoroughly 'riled,'  
 Depend upon't, the coach'll be 'spiled,'—

They're not the fellows to draw it mild!  
 Desist, I say,  
 You'll rue the day,—  
 So mind and don't be foolish, Pha!"  
 But the youth was proud,  
 And swore aloud,  
 'Twas just the thing to astonish the crowd,—  
 He'd have the horses and wouldn't be cowed!  
 In vain the boy was cautioned at large,  
 He called for the chargers, unheeding the charge,  
 And vowed that any young fellow of force  
 Could manage a dozen coursers, of course!  
 Now Phœbus felt exceedingly sorry  
 He had given his word in such a hurry,  
 But having sworn by the Styx, no doubt  
 He was in for it now and couldn't back out.  
 So calling Phaëthon up in a trice,  
 He gave the youth a bit of advice;—  
 (A 'stage direction' of which the core is,  
 "Don't use the whip,— they're ticklish things,—  
 But, whatever you do, hold on to the strings!)  
 Mind your eye, and spare your goad,  
 Be shy of the stones, and keep in the road!"  
 Now Phaëthon, perched in the coachman's place  
 Drove off the steeds at a furious pace,  
 Fast as coursers running a race,  
 Or bounding along in a steeple-chase.  
 Of whip and shout there was no lack,  
 Crack — whack —  
 Whack — crack —  
 Resounded along the horses' backs!—  
 Frightened beneath the stinging lash,  
 Cutting their flanks in many a gash,  
 On — on they sped as swift as a flash,