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JUNO.  
(Vatican, Rome.)

### CHAPTER III.

#### JUNO.

JUNO (Hera, Here), queen of heaven, and goddess of the atmosphere and of marriage, was the daughter of Cronus and Rhea, and consequently the sister of Jupiter; but, as soon as the latter had dethroned his parents and seized the scepter, he began to look about him for a suitable help-mate. Juno won his affections by her great beauty; and he immediately began his courtship, which he carried on in the guise of a cuckoo, to infuse a little romance into it. He evidently found favor in her sight, and won her consent to share his throne; for shortly afterward their wedding was celebrated with great pomp on Mount Olympus. It was on this solemn occasion that the immortal conclave of the gods declared that Juno should be henceforth honored as goddess of marriage.

“Juno, who presides  
Supreme o'er bridegrooms and o'er brides.”

VIRGIL (Conington's tr.).

But although in the beginning this union seemed very happy, there soon arose subjects for contention; for unfortunately Jupiter was inclined to be faithless, and Juno jealous, and, like the element she personified, exceedingly variable in her moods. On such occasions she gave way to her violent temper, and bitterly reproached her husband, who, impatient of her censure, punished her severely, and, instead of reforming, merely continued his numerous intrigues with renewed zest.

On one occasion he fell deeply in love with a maiden named



Callisto, gentle, fair, and slender; but, in spite of all the precautions which he took when visiting her, Juno discovered the object of his affections. Night and day she thought and planned, until she devised a species of revenge which seemed adequate. The graceful girl was suddenly bereft of speech, changed into a rough, ungainly bear, and driven out into the solitudes of the great forests, which were from that time forth to be her home. Jupiter vainly sought his missing ladylove, and it was only long afterward that he discovered her and her little bear son Arcas. In pity for all they had suffered, he transferred them both to the sky, where they are still known as the constellations of the Great and Little Bear.

Juno, like her husband, had also her special attendant, Iris (the Rainbow), whom she frequently employed as messenger, — a task which this deity accomplished with as much celerity as Mercury. Her flight through the air was so rapid, that she was seldom seen; and no one would have known she had passed, had it not been for the brilliant trail her many-colored robe left behind her in the sky.

“Like fiery clouds, that flush with ruddy glare,  
Or Iris, gliding through the purple air;  
When loosely girt her dazzling mantle flows,  
And 'gainst the sun in arching colors glows.”

FLACCUS (Elton's tr.).

Juno is the mother of Mars, Hebe, and Vulcan, and is always described and represented as a beautiful, majestic woman, clad in flowing robes, with a diadem and scepter. The peacock and cuckoo were both sacred to her, and are therefore often seen at her side.

Her principal places of worship were at Mycenæ, Sparta, Argos, Rome, and Heræum. She had also numerous other sanctuaries scattered throughout the ancient world, and was worshiped in the same temples as Jupiter. Many fine statues of this goddess were found in Greece and Italy, some



IRIS.—Tito Conti.



of which are still extant, and serve to show the ancients' exalted conception of the Queen of Heaven.

Juno's festivals, the Matronalia, in Rome, were always celebrated with great pomp. Less important feasts were held in

each city where a temple was dedicated to her.

Story of Cleobis and Biton. On one of these occasions an old priestess was very anxious to go to the temple at Argos, where she had ministered to the goddess for many years, and which she had left only to be married. The way was long and dusty: so the aged woman, who could no longer walk such a distance, bade her sons, Cleobis and Biton, harness her white heifers to her car. The youths hastened to do her bidding; but, although they searched diligently, the heifers could not be found. Rather than disappoint their aged mother, who had set her heart upon attending the services, these kind-hearted sons harnessed themselves to the cart, and drew her through the city to the temple gates, amid the acclamations of all the people, who admired this trait of filial devotion.

The mother was so touched by her sons' affection, that, as she knelt before the altar, she fervently prayed Juno to bestow upon them the greatest boon in her power. At the conclusion of the services the ex-priestess went into the portico, where her sons had thrown themselves to rest after their unwonted exertions; but instead of finding them merely asleep, as she expected, she found them dead. The Queen of Heaven had transported them while asleep to the Elysian Fields, the place of endless bliss, where such as they enjoyed eternal life.

## CHAPTER IV.

## MINERVA.

ALTHOUGH immortal, the gods were not exempt from physical pain. One day Jupiter suffered intensely from a sudden headache, and, in hopes that some mode of alleviation would be devised, he summoned all the gods to Olympus. Their united efforts were vain, however; and even the remedies suggested by Apollo, god of medicine, proved inefficacious. Unwilling, or perchance unable, to endure the racking pain any longer, Jupiter bade one of his sons, Vulcan, cleave his head open with an ax. With cheerful alacrity the dutiful god obeyed; and no sooner was the operation performed, than Minerva (Pallas, Athene) sprang out of her father's head, full-grown, clad in glittering armor, with poised spear, and chanting a triumphant song of victory.

Birth of  
Minerva.

“From his awful head  
Whom Jove brought forth, in warlike armor drest,  
Golden, all radiant.”

SHELLEY.

The assembled gods recoiled in fear before this unexpected apparition, while at the same time a mighty commotion over land and sea proclaimed the advent of a great divinity.

The goddess, who had thus joined the inhabitants of Olympus, was destined to preside over peace, defensive war, and needlework, to be the incarnation of wisdom, and to put to flight the obscure deity called Dullness, who until then had ruled the world.