

As for the Penates, they presided over the houses and domestic affairs. Each head of a household was wont to choose his own Penates, whom he then invoked as his special patrons. The statues of the Penates were of clay, wax, ivory, silver, or gold, according to the wealth of the family whose hearth they graced, and the offerings generally made to them were a small part of each meal.

Upon removing from one house to another or from one place to another, it was customary for the head of the family to remove his household gods also, and establish them suitably before he thought of his own or his family's comfort, and in return for this kindly care the Penates blessed him with peace and prosperity.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## JANUS.

JANUS, god of the past, present, and future, of gates, entrances, war, and peace, and patron of all beginnings, although one of the most important of all the Roman divinities, was entirely unknown to the Greeks.

According to some mythologists, he was the son of Apollo; and, although born in Thessaly, he early in life came to Italy, where he founded a city on the Tiber, to which he gave the name Janiculum. Here he was joined by the exiled Saturn, with whom he generously shared his throne. Together they civilized the wild inhabitants of Italy, and blessed them with such prosperity that their reign has often been called the Age of Gold.

“ Saturn fled before victorious Jove,  
Driven down and banish'd from the realms above.  
He, by just laws, embodied all the train,  
Who roam'd the hills, and drew them to the plain;  
There fixed, and Latium called the new abode,  
Whose friendly shores concealed the latent god.  
These realms, in peace, the monarch long controlled,  
And blessed the nations with an age of gold.”

VIRGIL (C. Pitt's tr.).

Janus is generally represented with two faces, turned in opposite directions, because he was acquainted with the past and future as well as with the present, and because he is considered an emblem of the sun, which opens the day at its rising, and closes the day at its setting.

In some statues he is represented with one white-haired and bearded face, and the other quite youthful in appearance, while others represent him with three and even four heads.

“Janus am I; oldest of potentates;  
Forward I look, and backward, and below  
I count, as god of avenues and gates,  
The years that through my portals come and go.

I block the roads and drift the fields with snow;  
I chase the wild-fowl from the frozen fen;  
My frosts congeal the rivers in their flow;  
My fires light up the hearths and hearts of men.”

LONGFELLOW.

The commencement of every new year, month, and day was held sacred to Janus, and at that time special sacrifices and prayers were offered up at his shrines. He also presided over all gates and avenues, and through him alone prayers were supposed to reach the immortal gods: therefore in all religious ceremonies his name was always the first invoked. From this circumstance he often appears with a key in his right hand, and a rod in his left; or, when he presides over the year, he holds the number 300 in one hand, and 65 in the other.

He was also supposed to watch over peace and war, and had numerous temples throughout all Italy. One very celebrated temple was called Janus Quadrifons, because it was perfectly square. On each side of the building there was one door and three windows. These apertures were all symbolical,—the doors of the four seasons, and the windows of the twelve months, of the year.

In times of war the temple gates were opened wide, for the people, being in need of aid and comfort, were all anxious to enter and present their offerings; but when peace reigned, the doors were immediately closed, for the god's intercession was no longer necessary. The Romans, however, were such a belligerent people, that the temple gates were closed but thrice in more than seven centuries, and then only for a very short period.

Festivals in honor of Janus were celebrated on the first day of the new year; and one month bore the god's name, and was considered sacred to him. It was customary for friends and relatives to exchange calls, good wishes, and gifts on the first day of this month,—a Roman custom in force to this day.

Janus is not the only one among the Greek and Latin divinities whose name has been given to a part of the year or week; for in Latin the names of the days are *dies Solis* (Sun day), *dies Lunæ* (Moon day), *dies Martis* (Mars' day), *dies Mercurii* (Mercury's day), *dies Jovis* (Jove's day), *dies Veneris* (Venus' day), *dies Saturni* (Saturn's day); Latin names which are still in use in legislative and judiciary acts, while in English the common nomenclature is derived from the names of the corresponding Saxon divinities.

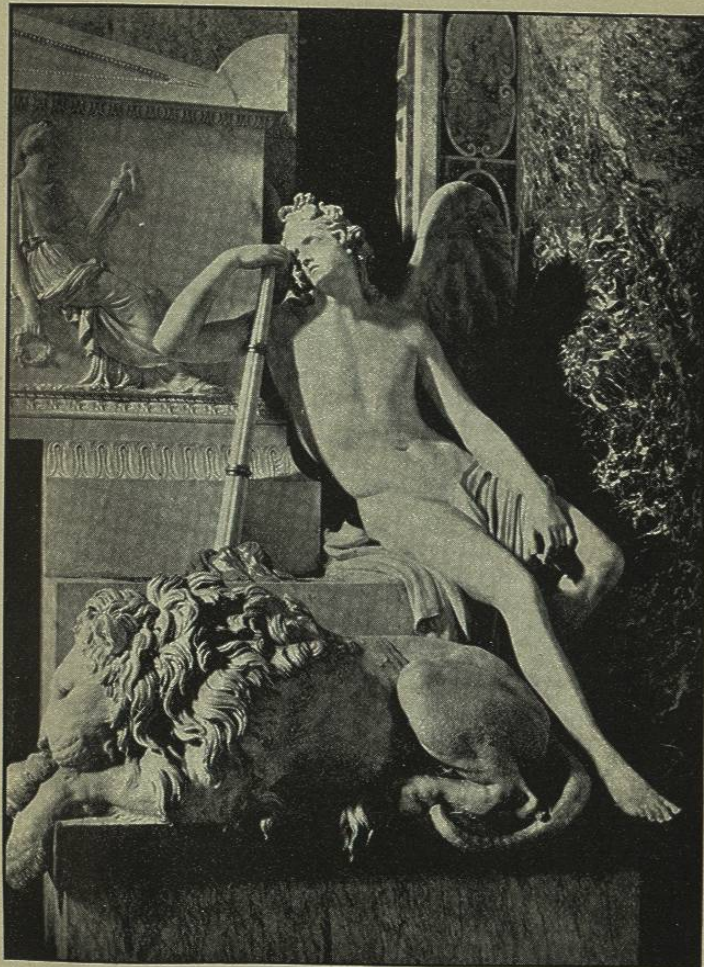
## CHAPTER XVII.

### SOMNUS AND MORS.

AFTER leaving the joyless regions of Pluto's realm, and following the even course of the Lethe River, the ancients fancied one reached a large cave in a remote and quiet valley. This cave was the dwelling of Somnus (or Hupnos), god of sleep, and of his twin brother Mors (or Thanatos), god of death; and both were sons of the Goddess of Night, who had once ruled the whole universe. Near the entrance of the cave, shadowy forms kept constant watch, gently shaking great bunches of poppies, and, with finger to lips, enjoining silence on all who ventured near. These forms were the genii of sleep and death, represented in art as crowned with poppies or amaranths, and sometimes holding a funeral urn or a reversed torch.

The cave was divided into chambers, each one darker and more silent than the one which preceded it. In one of the inner rooms, which was all draped with sable curtains, stood a downy couch, upon which reclined the monarch of sleep. His garments were also black, but all strewn with golden stars. He wore a crown of poppies on his head, and held a goblet full of poppy juice in his languid hand. His drowsy head was supported by Morpheus, his prime minister, who watched incessantly over his prolonged slumbers, and hindered any one from troubling his repose.

“Deep in a cavern dwells the drowsy god:  
Whose gloomy mansion nor the rising sun,  
Nor setting, visits, nor the lightsome noon:



GENIUS OF DEATH.—Canova.  
(Tomb of Clement XIII., St. Peter's, Rome.)

But lazy vapors round the region fly,  
 Perpetual twilight, and a doubtful sky;  
 No crowing cock does there his wings display,  
 Nor with his horny bill provoke the day:  
 Nor watchful dogs, nor the more wakeful geese,  
 Disturb with nightly noise the sacred peace:  
 Nor beast of nature, nor the tame, are nigh,  
 Nor trees with tempest rock'd, nor human cry;  
 But safe repose, without an air of breath,  
 Dwells here, and a dumb quiet next to death.

An arm of Lethe, with a gentle flow,  
 Arising upwards from the rock below,  
 The palace moats, and o'er the pebbles creeps,  
 And with soft murmurs calls the coming sleeps;  
 Around its entry nodding poppies grow,  
 And all cool simples that sweet rest bestow;  
 Night from the plants their sleepy virtue drains,  
 And passing, sheds it on the silent plains:  
 No door there was the unguarded house to keep,  
 On creaking hinges turn'd to break his sleep.

But in the gloomy court was rais'd a bed,  
 Stuff'd with black plumes, and on an ebon sted:  
 Black was the covering too, where lay the god,  
 And slept supine, his limbs display'd abroad.  
 About his head fantastic visions fly,  
 Which various images of things supply,  
 And mock their forms; the leaves on trees not more,  
 Nor bearded ears in fields, nor sands upon the shore."

OVID (Dryden's tr.).

All around the bed and over it hovered throngs of exquisite spirits, the Dreams, who stooped to whisper their pleasant messages in his ear; while in the distant corners of the apartment lurked the hideous Nightmares. The Dreams were often dispatched to earth under Mercury's charge, to visit mortals.

Two gates led out of the valley of sleep, — one of ivory, and the other of horn. The Dreams which passed through the glittering gates of ivory were delusive, while those which passed

through the homely gate of horn were destined to come true in the course of time.

"Of dreams, O stranger, some are meaningless  
 And idle, and can never be fulfilled.  
 Two portals are there for their shadowy shapes,  
 Of ivory one, and one of horn. The dreams  
 That come through the carved ivory deceive  
 With promises that never are made good;  
 But those which pass the doors of polished horn,  
 And are beheld of men, are ever true."

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Dreams were also frequently sent through the gates of horn to prepare mortals for misfortunes, as in the case of Halcyone.

Ceyx, King of Thessaly, was once forced to part from his beloved wife, Halcyone, to travel off to Delphi to consult the oracle. With many tears this loving couple parted, and Halcyone watched the lessening sail until it had quite vanished from sight; then she returned to her palace to pray for her husband's safe return. But, alas! the gods had decreed they should never meet again on earth; and, even while Halcyone prayed, a tempest arose which wrecked Ceyx's vessel, and caused him and all his crew to perish in the seething waves.

Day after day the queen hastened down to the seashore, followed by her attendants, to watch for the returning sails of her husband's vessel; and night after night she lay on her couch, anxiously expecting the morrow, which she ever fancied would prove auspicious. The gods, seeing her anxiety, and wishing to prepare her to receive the news of his death, and especially to view with some composure his corpse, which they had decided should be washed ashore, sent a Dream to visit her.

After assuming the face and form of Ceyx, the Dream glided away through the gate of horn, hastened to Halcyone's bedside, and whispered that her husband was dead, and that his body was even now being cast up on the smooth, sandy beach by the salt sea waves. With a wild cry of terror and grief, Halcyone awoke,

and hastened to the seashore to convince herself that the dream had been false; but she had no sooner reached the beach, than the waves washed her husband's corpse to her feet.

To endure life without him seemed too great a task for poor Halcyone, who immediately cast herself into the sea, to perish beside him. Touched by grief so real and intense, the gods changed both bodies into birds, since known as Halcyon birds, and decreed they should ever live on the waters. These birds were said to build their nests and hatch their young on the heaving billows, and to utter shrill cries of warning to the seamen whenever a storm threatened, bidding them prepare for the blast, and hasten to shelter in port, if they would not encounter the mournful fate of poor Ceyx.

Mors, god of death, occupied one of the corners of Somnus' cave. He was a hideous, cadaverous-looking deity, clad in a

**Mors.** winding sheet, and held an hourglass and a scythe in his hand. His hollow eyes were fixed upon the sands of time; and when they had run out, he knew some life was about to end, and sallied forth, scythe in hand, to mow down his prey with relentless joy.

Needless to say, this cruel deity was viewed by the ancients with fear and dislike, and no homage was offered him.

These two divinities were, however, but of slight importance in the general scheme of ancient mythology, in which Proserpina was generally regarded as the emblem of death, and they were therefore more like local divinities. The Lacedæmonians paid the most heed to them, and invariably placed their statues side by side.

As for Morpheus, the son as well as the prime minister of Somnus, he was also called the god of sleep, and mortals were

**Morpheus.** wont to intercede for his good offices. He is generally represented as a sleeping child of great corpulence, and with wings. Morpheus held a vase in one hand, and poppies in the other, which he gently shook to induce a state of drowsiness,—according to him, the acme of bliss.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## ÆOLUS.

NOT very far away from the quiet realm of Somnus and Mors, but on the surface of the earth, were the Æolian Islands, now known as the Lipari Islands, where Æolus, god of the storm and winds, governed a very unruly and turbulent population.

He is said to have received his royal dignity from the fair hands of Juno, and he was therefore specially eager to obey all her behests. He is commonly reputed to have married Aurora, or Eos, who gave him six sons: **Æolus' children.** i.e., Boreas, the north wind; Corus, the northwest wind; Aquilo, the west wind; Notus, the southwest wind; Eurus, the east wind; and lastly, Zephyrus, the gentle and lovable south wind, whose mission it was to announce to mortals the return of ever-welcome spring.

Æolus' five elder sons were of a noisy, roving, mischievous, turbulent disposition, and peace and quiet were utterly impossible to them. To prevent their causing serious disasters, he therefore ruled them with a very strict hand, kept them very closely confined in a great cave, and let them loose only one at a time, to stretch their limbs and take a little exercise.

“Æolus in a cavern vast  
With bolt and barrier fetters fast  
Rebellious storm and howling blast.  
They with the rock's reverberant roar  
Chafe blustering round their prison door:  
He, throned on high, the scepter sways,  
Controls their moods, their wrath allays.”

VIRGIL (Conington's tr.).

Although very unruly indeed, the winds always obeyed their father's voice, and at his command, however reluctant, returned to their gloomy prison, where they expended their impotent rage in trying to shake its strong walls.

According to his own mood, or in conformity with the gods' request, Æolus either sent the gentler winds to play among the flowers, or, recalling them, let the fiercest of all his children free, with orders to pile up the waves mountain-high, lash them to foam, tear the sails of all the vessels at sea, break their masts, uproot the trees, tear the roofs off the houses, etc., — in short, to do all the harm they possibly could.

“Now rising all at once, and unconfin'd,  
From every quarter roars the rushing wind:  
First, from the wide Atlantic Ocean's bed,  
Tempestuous Corus rears his dreadful head,  
Th' obedient deep his potent breath controls,  
And, mountain-high, the foamy flood he rolls;  
Him the Northeast encountering fierce, defied,  
And back rebuffed the yielding tide.  
The curling surges loud conflicting meet,  
Dash their proud heads, and bellow as they beat;  
While piercing Boreas, from the Scythian strand,  
Plows up the waves and scoops the lowest sand.  
Nor Eurus then, I ween, was left to dwell,  
Nor showery Notus in th' Æolian cell,  
But each from every side, his power to boast,  
Ranged his proud forces to defend the coast.”

LUCAN.

Æolus, king of the winds, shared with Dædalus the honor of inventing the sails which propel the ships so swiftly over the tide. It was he, too, who, according to Homer, bound all his children but one in a leather bag, which he gave to Ulysses when the latter visited Æolia. Thanks to this gift, Ulysses reached the shores of Ithaca, and would have landed in safety, had not his men, in view of port, untied the sack to investigate its contents, and thus

set free the angry winds, who stirred up the most frightful tempest in mythic annals.

The ancients, and especially the Athenians, paid particular attention to the winds, to whom they dedicated a temple, which is still extant, and generally known as the Tower of the Winds, or the Temple of Æolus. This temple is hexagonal, and on each side a flying figure of one of the winds is represented.

Eurus, the east wind, was generally depicted “as a young man flying with great impetuosity, and often appearing in a playful and wanton humor.” Notus, or Auster, the southwest wind, “appeared generally as an old man, with gray hair, a gloomy countenance, a head covered with clouds, a sable vesture, and dusky wings,” for he was considered the dispenser of rain and of all sudden and heavy showers. Zephyrus, mild and gentle, had a lapful of flowers, and, according to the Athenian belief, was wedded to Flora, with whom he was perfectly happy, and visited every land in turn. Corus, the northwest wind, drove clouds of snow before him; while Aquilo, dreadful in appearance, caused cold shivers to run down one's back at his mere sight. Boreas, rough and shivering too, was the father of rain, snow, hail, and tempests, and was therefore generally represented as veiled in impenetrable clouds. His favorite place of abode was in the Hyperborean Mountains, from whence he sallied forth on wild raids. During one of these excursions he carried off Orithyia, who always fled at his approach. But all her fleetness could not save her: she was overtaken, and borne away to the inaccessible regions of snow and ice, where he detained her, and made her his wife. She became the mother of Zetes and Calais, — who took part in the Argonautic expedition, and drove away the Harpies (p. 267), — and of two daughters, Cleopatra and Chione.

On another occasion, Boreas, having changed himself into a horse and united himself to the mares of Dardanus, King of Troy, became the father of twelve steeds so swift that none could overtake them.