

the Chimæra (the monster of drought), whom he overcomes, thanks to his weapon and to Pegasus (the clouds), born from the mist of the sea, beneath whose hoofs fresh fountains were wont to spring.

Bellerophon, after many journeys, is finally united to Philonoe, a personification of the twilight, and ends his career by being hurled from the zenith into utter darkness by one of Jupiter's deadly thunderbolts.

"The fall of Bellerophon is the rapid descent of the sun toward evening, and the Aëlin plain is that broad expanse of somber light through which the sun sometimes seems to travel sullenly and alone to his setting."

In the story of the Trojan war there are several sun myths; for Paris, Menelaus, Agamemnon, and Achilles have equal claims to be considered personifications of the sun.

Trojan war. They love Cœnone, Helen, Clytæmnestra, Briseis, various impersonations of the dawn, and forsake, or are forsaken by, their ladyloves, whom they meet again at the end of their career: for Paris sees Cœnone, and expires with her on the burning pile; Menelaus recovers Helen, with whom he vanishes in the far west; Agamemnon rejoins Clytæmnestra, and dies by her hand in a bloody bath; while Achilles, after a period of sullen gloom, meets with an untimely death shortly after recovering the beautiful Briseis.

Like Perseus and Cœdipus, Paris is exposed in early infancy, and lives to fulfill his destiny, and cause, though indirectly, the death of his parents.

In this myth, Helen (the beautiful dawn or twilight), whose name corresponds phonetically with the Sanskrit *Sarama*, born of the sky (Jupiter) and of the night (Leda, derived from the same root as "Leto," "Latmus," and "Laius"), is carried away by Paris, whom some mythologists identify with the Hindoo *Panis* (or "night demons") instead of the sun. In this character he entices away the fickle twilight (Helen) during her husband's temporary absence, and bears her off to the far east, where, after struggling

for a while to retain possession of her and her treasures, he is finally forced to relinquish her, and she returns to her husband and her allegiance.

The siege of Troy has thus been interpreted to signify "a repetition of the daily siege of the east by the solar powers, that every evening are robbed of their brightest treasures in the west."

Achilles, like several of his brother heroes, "fights in no quarrel of his own; his wrath is the sun hiding his face behind the clouds; the Myrmidons are his attendant beams, who no longer appear when the sun is hidden; Patroclus is the feeble reflection of the sun's splendor, and stands to him in precisely the same relation as Phaeton to Helios," and, like him, meets with an early death.

In the story of Ulysses we find a reproduction of the story of Hercules and Perseus: for Ulysses, early in life, after wedding Penelope, is forced to leave her to fight for another; and on his return, although longing to re-join his morning bride, he cannot turn aside from the course marked out for him. He is detained by Circe (the moon), who weaves airy tissues, and by Calypso (the nymph of darkness); but neither can keep him forever, and he returns home enveloped in an impenetrable disguise, after having visited the Phæacian land (the land of clouds or mists). It is only after he has slain the suitors of Penelope (the weaver of bright evening clouds) that he casts aside his beggar's garb to linger for a short time beside her ere he vanishes in the west.

The greater part of the dawn myths have been explained simultaneously with the sun myths, with which they are inextricably interwoven. One personification of the dawn, however, stands apart. It is Minerva, whose Greek name, Athene, is derived, like Daphne, from the Sanskrit *Dahana*, or *ahana* (meaning "the light of daybreak"), and we are thus enabled to understand why the Greeks described her as sprung from the forehead of Zeus (the heavens). She gradually became the impersonation of the illuminating and knowledge-

giving light of the sky; for in Sanskrit the same word also means "to wake" and "to know," while the Latins connected her name of Minerva with *mens*, the same as the Greek *ménos* and the English *mind*.

MOON MYTHS.

In the moon myths the most important personification is first Diana, the horned huntress, "for to the ancients the moon was not a lifeless ball of stones and clods." Diana, like Apollo, her twin brother, was also a child of the sky (Jupiter) and of night (Latona), and, like him, was born in the "bright land" (Delos). She also possessed bright and unerring arrows, and in the course of her nightly journey she looked lovingly down upon the sleeping face of the setting sun (Endymion).

Io and Circe, already mentioned, are also personifications of the moon, and Io's wanderings represent its journeys across the sky.

EARTH MYTHS.

In the earth myths, beside those already mentioned in connection with the sun myths, we have Gæa and Rhea, the mothers and consorts of the Sky and of Time, who swallows his own children, "the Days, as they come each in order."

We have also Ceres or Demeter, "the mother of all things," and more particularly of "the maiden" Cora (or Proserpina), whose loss she grievously mourned; for she had been carried away by Pluto to the underworld, whence she could only emerge at the command of Jupiter. During the time of Ceres' mourning, the earth remained barren, and it seemed as though all mortal things must die. But when Proserpina (the spring or vegetation) returned from her sojourn under the ground, people said "that the daughter of the earth was returning in all her beauty; and when summer faded into winter, they said that the beautiful child had been stolen away

from her mother by dark beings, who kept her imprisoned beneath the earth." The sorrow of Ceres was therefore merely a poetical way of expressing "the gloom which falls on the earth during the cheerless months of winter."

Danae, as a personification of the earth, was quickened by the golden shower, the light of the morning, which streamed in upon the darkness of the night. Semele has also been interpreted as the earth, the chosen bride of the sky, who brings forth her offspring in the midst of the thunder and lightning of a summer storm.

SEA MYTHS.

The myths of the sea comprise, of course, Oceanus and Neptune (the earth-shaker), whose name is connected with such words as "potent" and "despot," and whose "green hair circles all the earth." We are further informed that he loves the earth (Ceres), whom he embraces, and that he marries the graceful undulating Amphitrite, whose gliding charms appeal to him. Neptune's palace is beneath the deep waters near Greece, and he is said to ride about his realm in a swift chariot drawn by golden or white maned steeds.

Nereus, another personification of the sea, whose name is derived from *nao* ("to flow"), is quite inseparable from his native element, even in the Greeks' conception of him, as are also the Tritons, Oceanides, Nereides, and the alluring Sirens; who, however, have also been viewed as personifications of the winds.

CLOUD MYTHS.

The cloud myths, to which frequent allusion has already been made, comprise not only the cattle of the sun, the Centaurs, Nephele, Phryxus, Helle, and Pegasus, but as, "in primitive Aryan lore, the sky itself was a blue sea, and the clouds were ships sailing over it," so Charon's boat was supposed to be one of these vessels, and the gilded shallop

in which the sun daily made his pilgrimage back to the far east, another.

As the ancient Aryan had the same word to denote cloud and mountain ("for the piles of vapor on the horizon were so like Alpine ranges"), the cloud and mountain myths

Niobe. are often the same. In the story of Niobe we have one of the cloud myths. According to some mythologists, Niobe herself is a personification of the clouds. Her many children, the mists, are fully as beautiful as Apollo and Diana, by whose bright darts they are ruthlessly slain. Niobe grieves so sorely at their untimely death, that she dissolves in a rain of tears, which turns into hard ice on the mountain summit. According to other authorities, she was a personification of winter, and her tears represented the thaw occasioned by the sunbeams (Apollo's arrows).

FIRE MYTHS.

The fire myths also form quite a large class, and comprise the Cyclopes (the thunder and lightning), children of Heaven and Earth, whose single blazing eye has been considered an emblem of the sun. They forge the terrible thunderbolts, the weapons of the sky (Jupiter), by means

Cyclopes. of which he is enabled to triumph over all his enemies, and rule supreme.

The Titans are emblems of the subterranean fires and the volcanic forces of nature, which, hidden deep underground, occasionally emerge, heave up great masses of rock, and hurl them about with an accompaniment of deafening roars, while their ponderous tread causes the very earth beneath them to tremble.

Titans. In this group we also find Prometheus, whose name has been traced to the Sanskrit *pramantha* (or "fire drill"). Learned men have therefore proved that the "beneficent Titan, who stole fire from heaven and bestowed it upon mankind as the richest of boons," was originally nothing but

the lightning ("the celestial drill which churns fire out of the clouds"); but the Greeks had so entirely forgotten this etymological meaning, that they interpreted his name as the "fore-thinker," and considered him endowed with extraordinary prophetic powers.

Vulcan (or Hephæstus), strictly "the brightness of the flame," another fire hero, is represented as very puny at birth, because the flame comes from a tiny spark. His name is derived from the Hindoo *agni*, whence come the Latin *ignis* and the English verb *to ignite*. Vulcan dwells by preference in the heart of volcanoes, where the intense heat keeps the metals in fusion, and so malleable that he can mold them at will; and, as "the association of the heavenly fire with the life-giving forces of nature is very common," the Hindoo Agni was considered the patron of marriage as well as of fire; and the Greeks, to carry out this idea, united their fire god, Hephæstus, to the goddess of marriage, Aphrodite.

Vulcan. The Greek Hestia (or Latin Vesta) was also a personification of fire; and, her name having retained its primitive meaning to a great extent, "she continued to the end, as she had been from the beginning, the household altar, the sanctuary of peace and equity, and the source of all happiness and wealth." Her office was not limited merely to the hearths of households and cities, for it was supposed "that in the center of the earth there was a hearth which answered to the hearth placed in the center of the universe."

WIND MYTHS.

In the myths of the wind, Mercury (or Hermes) was one of the principal personifications. According to the ancients, he was born of the sky (Jupiter) and the plains (Maia), and after a very few hours' existence assumed gigantic proportions, stole away the cattle of the sun (the clouds), and, after fanning up a great fire in which he consumed some of the herd, glided back into his cradle at dawn. With a low,

Mercury.

mocking chuckle at the recollection of the pranks he had played, he sank finally into rest. His name, derived from the Sanskrit *Saramcias*, means "the breeze of a summer morning;" and it is in his capacity of god of the wind that he is supposed to waft away the souls of the dead; for "the ancients held that in the wind were the souls of the dead." Mercury is the "lying, trick-some wind god who invented music," for his music is but "the melody of the winds, which can awaken feelings of joy and sorrow, of regret and yearning, of fear and hope, of vehement gladness and utter despair."

Another personification of the wind was Mars (or Ares), born of the sky (Jupiter) and of the heavenly light (Juno) in the bleak land of Thrace, rejoicing in din and in the noise of

Mars.

warfare. His nature is further revealed by his inconstancy and capriciousness; and whenever he is overcome, he is noted for his great roar. His name comes from the same root as Maruts, the Indian god, and means the "grinder" or "crusher." It was first applied "to the storms which throw heaven and earth into confusion, and hence the idea of Ares is confined to mere disorder and tumult."

Otus and Ephialtes, the gigantic sons of Neptune, were also at first merely personifications of the wind and hurricanes. The name of the latter indicates "one who leaps." Although very short-lived, these giants were supposed to increase rapidly in size, and assume colossal proportions, which inspired the hearts of men and gods with terror, until they saw them finally slain by the unfailing arrows of the sun.

Otus and Ephialtes.

Pan, Æolus, his numerous progeny, and the Harpies, were also wind divinities who never entirely lost their original character with the Greeks, and were therefore worshiped merely as personifications of the elements.

Pan, Æolus, and the Harpies.

UNDERWORLD MYTHS.

The myths of drought, darkness, and of the underworld have sufficiently been dwelt upon as personified by Python, the Hydra,

Geryones, the Gorgons, Grææ, Minotaur, Sphinx, Chimæra, etc.; but their main personifications were Cerberus (the grim three-headed guardian of the nether world) and Pluto (or Aïdes), whose name means "the wealth-giver," or "the unseen," who greedily drew all things down into his realm, never to relinquish his grasp upon them.

Cerberus and Pluto.

Such is the physical explanation of the various poetical myths which form the staple of classic literature, and which have been a fount of inspiration for poets and artists of all ages.

GENEALOGICAL TABLE.

NOTE.—Double vertical lines indicate that several generations intervene.

