The Metamorphoses of Ovid, Books I-VII

Ovid



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[Transcriber's Note:

In the original text, words and phrases supplied by the translator were printed in _italics_. In this e-text they are shown in {braces}. Italics in the notes and commentary are shown conventionally with _lines_, boldface by =marks=.

Line numbers from the original Latin poem were printed as headnotes on each page. For this e-text, only the line numbers of each complete "Fable" are given. Line numbers used in footnotes are retained from the original text; these, too, refer to the Latin poem and are independent of line divisions in the translation.

Parts of this e-text use material from another edition of the Riley translation of the _Metamorphoses_: George Bell (London, 1893). Details are given at the end of the text, before the Errata. Each segment of the introductory material is individually identified.]

THE METAMORPHOSES OF OVID

Vol. I--Books I-VII

LITERALLY TRANSLATED WITH NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS

by HENRY T. RILEY, M.A.

With an Introduction by EDWARD BROOKS, JR.

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INTRODUCTION.

[From Bell edition.]

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.

A SYNOPTICAL VIEW
of the Principal Transformations Mentioned in
THE METAMORPHOSES.

[From Bell edition, omitting Books VIII-XV.]

BOOK I.

Chaos is divided by the Deity into four Elements: to these their respective inhabitants are assigned, and man is created from earth and water. The four Ages follow, and in the last of these the Giants aspire

to the sovereignty of the heavens; being slain by Jupiter, a new race of men springs up from their blood. These becoming noted for their impiety, Jupiter not only transforms Lycaon into a wolf, but destroys the whole race of men and animals by a Deluge, with the exception of Deucalion and Pyrrha, who, when the waters have abated, renew the human race, by throwing stones behind them. Other animated beings are produced by heat and moisture: and, among them, the serpent Python. Phœbus slays him, and institutes the Pythian games as a memorial of the event, in which the conquerors are crowned with beech; for as yet the laurel does not exist, into which Daphne is changed soon after, while flying from Phœbus. On this taking place, the other rivers repair to her father Peneus, either to congratulate or to console him; but Inachus is not there, as he is grieving for his daughter Io, whom Jupiter, having first ravished her, has changed into a cow. She is entrusted by Juno to the care of Argus; Mercury having first related to him the transformation of the Nymph Syrinx into reeds, slays him, on which his eyes are placed by Juno in the tail of the peacock. Io, having recovered human shape, becomes the mother of Epaphus.

BOOK II.

Epaphus, having accused Phaëton of falsely asserting that Phœbus is his father, Phaëton requests Phœbus, as a proof of his affection towards his child, to allow him the guidance of the chariot of the Sun for one day. This being granted, the whole earth is set on fire by him, and the Æthiopians are turned black by the heat. Jupiter strikes Phaëton with a thunderbolt, and while his sisters and his kinsman

Cyenus are lamenting him, the former are changed into trees, and Cyenus into a swan. On visiting the earth, that he may repair the damage caused by the conflagration, Jupiter sees Calisto, and, assuming the form of Diana, he debauches her. Juno, being enraged, changes Calisto into a bear; and her own son Arcas being about to pierce her with an arrow, Jupiter places them both among the Constellations. Juno having complained of this to Oceanus, is borne back to the heavens by her peacocks, who have so lately changed their colour; a thing which has also happened to the raven, which has been lately changed from white to black, he having refused to listen to the warnings of the crow (who relates the story of its own transformation, and of that of Nyctimene into an owl), and having persisted in informing Phœbus of the intrigues of Coronis. Her son Æsculapius being cut out of the womb of Coronis and carried to the cave of Chiron the Centaur, Ocyrrhoë, the daughter of Chiron, is changed into a mare, while she is prophesying. Her father in vain invokes the assistance of Apollo, for he, in the guise of a shepherd, is tending his oxen in the country of Elis. He neglecting his herd, Mercury takes the opportunity of stealing it; after which he changes Battus into a touchstone, for betraying him. Flying thence, Mercury beholds Herse, the daughter of Cecrops, and debauches her. Her sister Aglauros, being envious of her, is changed into a rock. Mercury returns to heaven, on which Jupiter orders him to drive the herds of Agenor towards the shore; and then, assuming the form of a bull, he carries Europa over the sea to the isle of Crete.

BOOK III.

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