

Appendix.

A Fragment Concerning the Execrable Gods of the Heathen.



So great blindness has fallen on the Roman race, that they call their enemy Lord, and preach the filcher of blessings as being their very giver, and to him they give thanks. They call those (deities), then, by human names, not by their own, for their own names they know not. That they are dæmons¹¹⁰¹ they understand: but they read histories of the old kings, and then, though they see that their character¹¹⁰² was mortal, they honour them with a deific name.

As for him whom they call Jupiter, and think to be the highest god, when he was born the years (that had elapsed) from the foundation of the world¹¹⁰³ to him¹¹⁰⁴ were some three thousand. He is born in Greece, from Saturnus and Ops; and, for fear he should be killed by his father (or else, if it is lawful to say so, should be begotten¹¹⁰⁵ anew), is by the advice of his mother carried down into Crete, and reared in a cave of Ida; is concealed from his father's search) by (the aid of) Cretans—born men!¹¹⁰⁶—rattling their arms; sucks a she-goat's dugs; flays her; clothes himself in her hide; and (thus) uses his own nurse's hide, after killing her, to be sure, with his own hand! but he sewed thereon three golden tassels worth the price of an hundred oxen each, as their author Homer¹¹⁰⁷ relates, if it is fair to believe it. This Jupiter, in adult age, waged war several years with his father; overcame him;

1101 Dæmons. Gr. δαίμων, which some hold to = δαίμων, “knowing,” “skilful,” in which case it would come to be used of any superhuman intelligence; others, again, derive from δαίω, “to divide, distribute,” in which case it would mean a distributor of destinies; which latter derivation and meaning Liddell and Scott incline to.

1102 Actum: or “career.”

1103 Mundi.

1104 i.e., till his time.

1105 Pareretur. As the word seems to be used here with reference to his father, this, although not by any means a usual meaning, would seem to be the sense. [As in the equivalent Greek.]

1106 A Cretibus, hominibus natis. The force seems to be in the absurdity of supposing that, 1st, there should be human beings (hominibus) *born*, (as Jupiter is said to have been “born,”) already existing at the time of the “birth” of “the highest god;” 2ndly, that these should have had the power to do him so essential service as to conceal him from the search of his own father, likewise a mighty deity, by the simple expedient of rattling their arms.

1107 See Hom. Il. ii. 446–9; but Homer says there were 100 such tassels.

made a parricidal raid on his home; violated his virgin sisters;¹¹⁰⁸ selected one of them in marriage; drave¹¹⁰⁹ his father by dint of arms. The remaining scenes, moreover, of that act have been recorded. Of other folks' wives, or else of violated virgins, he begat him sons; defiled freeborn boys; oppressed peoples lawlessly with despotic and kingly sway. The father, whom they erringly suppose to have been the *original* god, was ignorant that this (son of his) was lying concealed in Crete; the son, again, whom they believe the *mightier* god, knows not that the father whom himself had banished is lurking in Italy. If he was in heaven, when would he not see what was doing in Italy? For the Italian land is "not in a corner."¹¹¹⁰ And yet, had he been a god, nothing *ought* to have escaped him. But that he whom the Italians call Saturnus did lurk there, is clearly evidenced on the face of it, from the fact that from his lurking¹¹¹¹ the Hesperian¹¹¹² tongue is to this day called Latin,¹¹¹³ as likewise their author Virgil relates.¹¹¹⁴ (Jupiter,) then, is said to have been born on earth, while (Saturnus his father) fears lest he be driven by him from his kingdom, and seeks to kill him as being his own rival, and knows not that he has been stealthily carried off, and is in hiding; and afterwards the son-god pursues his father, immortal seeks to slay immortal (is it credible?¹¹¹⁵), and is disappointed by an interval of sea, and is ignorant of (his quarry's) flight; and while all this is going on between two gods on earth, heaven is deserted. No one dispensed the rains, no one thundered, no one governed all this mass of world.¹¹¹⁶ For they cannot even say that their action and wars took place in heaven; for all this was going on on Mount Olympus in Greece. Well, but heaven is not called Olympus, for heaven is heaven.

These, then, are the actions of theirs, which we will treat of first—nativity, lurking, ignorance, parricide, adulteries, obscenities—things committed not by a god, but by most impure and truculent human beings; beings who, had they been living in these days, would have lain under the impeachment of all laws—laws which are far more just and strict than *their* actions. "He drave his father by dint of arms." The Falcidian and Sempronian law would bind the parricide in a sack with beasts. "He violated his sisters." The Papinian law

1108 Oehler's "virginis" must mean "virgines."

1109 So Scott: "He drave my cows last Fastern's night."—*Lay of Last Minstrel*.

1110 See *Acts xxvi. 26*.

1111 Latitatio.

1112 i.e., Western: here=Italian, as being west of Greece.

1113 Latina.

1114 See Virg. *Æn. viii. 319–323*: see also *Ov. Fast. i. 234–238*.

1115 Oehler does not mark this as a question. If we follow him, we may render, "this can find belief." Above, it seemed necessary to introduce the parenthetical words to make some sense. The Latin is throughout very clumsy and incoherent.

1116 Orbis.

would punish the outrage with all penalties, limb by limb. “He invaded others’ wedlock.” The Julian law would visit its adulterous violator capitally. “He defiled freeborn boys.” The Cornelian law would condemn the crime of transgressing the sexual bond with novel severities, sacrilegiously guilty as it is of a novel union.¹¹¹⁷ This being is shown to have had no divinity either, for he was a human being; his father’s flight escaped him. To this human being, of such a character, to so wicked a king, so obscene and so cruel, God’s honour has been assigned by men. Now, to be sure, if *on earth* he were born and grew up through the advancing stages of life’s periods, and in it committed all these evils, and yet is no more in it, what is thought¹¹¹⁸ (of him) but that he is dead? Or else does foolish error think wings were born him in his old age, whence to fly heavenward? Why, even *this* may possibly find credit among men bereft of sense,¹¹¹⁹ if indeed they believe, (as they do,) that he turned into a swan, to beget the Castors;¹¹²⁰ an eagle, to contaminate Ganymede; a bull, to violate Europa; gold, to violate Danaë; a horse, to beget Pirithoüs; a goat, to beget Egypa¹¹²¹ from a she-goat; a Satyr, to embrace Antiope. Beholding these adulteries, to which sinners are prone, they therefore easily believe that sanctions of misdeed and of every filthiness are borrowed from their feigned god. Do they perceive how void of amendment are the rest of his career’s acts which can find credit, which are indeed true, and which, they say, he did without self transformation? Of Semele, he begets Liber;¹¹²² of Latona, Apollo and Diana; of Maia, Mercury; of Alcmena, Hercules. But the rest of his corruptions, which they themselves confess, I am unwilling to record, lest turpitude, once buried, be again called to men’s ears. But of these few (offsprings of his) I have made mention; off-springs whom in their error they believe to be themselves, too, gods—born, to wit, of an incestuous father; adulterous births, supposititious births. And the living,¹¹²³ eternal God, of sempiternal divinity,

1117 Lex Cornelia transgressi foederis ammissum novis exemplis novi coitus sacrilegum damnaret. After consulting Dr. Holmes, I have rendered, but not without hesitation, as above. “Foedus” seems to have been technically used, especially in later Latin, of the *marriage compact*; but what “lex Cornelia” is meant I have sought vainly to discover, and whether “lex Cornelia transgressi foederis” ought not to go together I am not sure. For “ammissum” (=admissum) Migne’s ed. reads “amissum,” a very different word. For “sacrilegus” with a genitive, see *de Res. Carn*, c. xlii. *med*.

1118 Quid putatur (Oehler) putatus (Migne).

1119 Or, “feeling”—“sensu.”

1120 The Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux.

1121 Perhaps Ægipana (marginal reading of the ms. as given in Oehler and Migne).

1122 i.e., Bacchus.

1123 Oehler reads “vide etem;” but Migne’s “viventem” seems better: indeed, Oehler’s is probably a misprint. The punctuation of this treatise in Oehler is very faulty throughout, and has been disregarded.

prescient of futurity, immeasurable,¹¹²⁴ they have dissipated (into nothing, by associating Him) with crimes so unspeakable.

1124 "Immensum," rendered "incomprehensible" in the "Athanasian Creed.