

goddess of wisdom and the liberal arts; the lovely Venus, the alternately reviled and adored goddess of love. The spring-time was specially sacred to her, and, according to the poet laureate, is so still, for—

"In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished
dove,
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to
thoughts of love."

Then there is Aurora, goddess of morning, and Nox the sable goddess of night; Vesta, goddess of the hearth, no statue gracing her temple, but her living symbol, the eternal fire upon her altar, telling of the light and warmth of home life; Mars and Bellona, the god and goddess of war, and Pax, the god of peace—god and goddess of war—god of peace; Apollo, god of divination and president of the muses; Vulcan, the god of fire, and Pluto, the ruler of Hades itself. And we should not forget Mercury, who figures about as frequently as any of the gods. He was their messenger, and himself the god of merchants and commerce. Merchants, as a class, are, of course, a most highly estimable portion of the community, but, as a rule, they are rather prone to enjoy a joke at the expense of other classes who do not enjoy the good fortune to be merchants. The unhappy medical profession, sons of Æsculapius, and even some other extremely honest classes, are frequently made the targets of their trenchant wit. In their pleasantries there sometimes lies a covert suggestion that their brethren of the clergy, and of medicine, and of law, do not live with an eye single to the good of humanity. Not in a spirit of retaliation, but merely in friendly seeking after truth, as philosophy has been defined, it becomes expedient to enquire how Mercury came to be the god of merchants. Some pretend it was because, with winged feet, he went from place to place on errands for his brother divinities; but this is a most unsatisfactory solution, for it is evident that he must have been selected on account of his principal characteristic. Now, beyond the possibility of a doubt, his principal characteristic was that he stole everything that came within his reach. It was, according to the most authentic accounts, only a few hours after his birth that he displayed this distinguishing propensity, for, escaping from his cradle, he stole some of Apollo's oxen, and drove them off to Pylos. Apollo, being the god of divination, of course detected him at once. Mercury's poor, distracted mother pointed to the babe in the cradle as incapable of such depredation, but Apollo, nevertheless, haled him before Jupiter, when the young thief, hopelessly cornered, so charmed Apollo by playing upon a lyre he had constructed with a tortoise shell, that Apollo let him keep the oxen. Now, Mercury maintained the reputation this incident gave him to the very end of his history. You remember he stole Vulcan's tools; he stole the trident from Neptune; he stole the quiver and arrows from Apollo; he robbed Venus of her magic girdle; and far transcending the puny peculations of modern times, he even stole the sceptre of Jupiter himself. Sometimes he stole simply for the fun of stealing; for, you remember that, when the giant Typhon defeated Jupiter: in battle and cut

out his sinews, Mercury stole the sinews from the giant and restored them to Jupiter again. Of course, merchants, I had nothing to do with selecting your patron divinity, and have no responsibility, whatever, in the premises.

Of course, I take it for granted that there was no superfluous deity. Now, there were two goddesses of revenge or retribution, Ate and Nemesis; and, yet, there is Anteros, a god whose special duty it is to avenge slighted love. I once wondered whether Ate and Nemesis were kept so busy with ordinary matters of revenge, that they could not deal with those who failed to reciprocate the tender passion; but a moment's consideration reveals the reason. It lies in the sex of Ate and Nemesis, for their visitations would fall almost entirely upon their mundane sisters; man, as a matter of course, reciprocating all the affection ever bestowed upon him, and it could not be expected that they would deal with the offenders with sufficient impartiality and severity. A male god was, therefore, necessary to properly avenge unrequited love.

I have not pretended to run over the deities in anything like chronological order; indeed, I have altogether omitted to mention some of the most ancient and venerable. The oldest of all the gods was Chaos, his children Cœlus and Terra, producing Saturn, the father of Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto. In this advanced nineteenth century there are many who have gone back to Chaos as their divinity, as though, having exhausted the complete circuit of existence and thought, they were compelled to fall back upon first principles.

Before passing from the deities, I must mention one whose worship is more popular to-day than ever before in the world's history. I refer to Plutus, the god of wealth. He is represented as lame in his approach, but as winged in his departure. Many will recognize him by this description. Jupiter is said to have deprived him of sight, that he might distribute his favours without any regard to the merits or demerits of the recipients. This is the most comforting reflection to us, who are not possessed of his bounty, while those who are, will, I suppose, probably reason that in the nineteenth century the god Plutus has begun to wear glasses, and that now he does not pay his visits so indiscriminately as he used to. While he is most devoutly worshipped by the multitude, there is a wide spread feeling that his lameness in arriving is a serious defect in a peculiarly fast age, and the ingenuity of man is taxed to provide artificial means of hastening his halting approach. Too many are saying to themselves—"True, I am engaged in an honourable, a useful, and a necessary occupation, but if I simply pursue it steadily as I have begun, the tardy god of wealth, with his measured tread, will not reach me for ten, twenty, or thirty years." So we have an unwholesome straining, in almost every direction, to acquire wealth in defiance of the law of equivalents.

In a new country like ours, when natural increment in values is frequently very rapid, there is the greater temptation to seek riches without yielding any equivalent in time and labour, and our younger men will do well to look to it lest this mania for speculation