

A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT¹

WHAT was he doing, the great god Pan,
Down in the reeds by the river;
Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat,
And breaking the golden lilies afloat 5
With the dragon-fly on the river.

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
From the deep cool bed of the river:
The limpid water turbidly ran,
And the broken lilies a-dying lay, 10
And the dragon-fly had fled away.
Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sat the great god Pan
While turbidly flowed the river;
And hacked and hewed as a great god can, 15
With his hard bleak steel at the patient reed,
Till there was not a sign of the leaf indeed
To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
(How tall it stood in the river!) 20
Then drew the pith, like the heart of a man,
Steadily from the outside ring,
And notched the poor dry empty thing
In holes, as he sat by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan 25
(Laughed while he sat by the river),
"The only way, since gods began

¹ **Pan**—Pan, the god of shepherds, is represented with the head and body of an old man, and the legs, ears and horns of a goat. He was very fond of music, and is credited with the invention of the shepherd's flute.