

The monstrous forms assumed by clouds and vapours are seen in their most terrific aspect in Briareôs (X.), the giant with the hundred arms, while the majesty of the heaven when clothed in its robe of storms finds expression in the myth of Semelê (XI.), the daughter of the king who came to his home in the West from the purple land of morning. But the rain-storms quicken the vine plants; and the child of Semelê is born amid the din of the thunder and the blaze of the lightnings. Thus the lord of the vine and of the teeming fruits of earth grows up, like Hermes, a being of mighty strength, capable of doing wondrous things at will—soothing, irritating, or maddening the minds of men, whether as the Hellenic Dionysos (XII.) or as the Soma the Hindoo. The strange rites of the women who follow him are the frantic revels of worshippers excited by wine; but the story of his return to Thebes, of the resistance which he encounters at the hands of the Thracian Lykurgos or the Kadmeian Pentheus (XIII.), points to a change in the religious system of the Hellenic tribes, and would thus denote an historical fact. The myth would seem further to show that the change came from the East, and that in it we have a point of affinity to Syrian systems like that which is furnished by the myths of Tammuz and Adonis.

The desertion of Korônîs (XIV.) by Phœbus is precisely parallel to the desertion of Prokris (XXVIII.) by Kephalos. In both it is the crystallisation of the mythical phrase, "The sun kisses the dew, and the dew is faithless." Each dewdrop reflects its peculiar image, yet it is the image of the same object. Hence in the story of Prokris the new lover is Kephalos himself in disguise; in that of Asklepios, Korônîs gives her love to Ischys, a name which simply denotes the sun in his strength as contrasted with his gentler aspect on his rising. The doom which lies on Daphnê (IV.), Arethusa (XXXIV.), and Prokris, lies also on Korônîs; but her child Asklepios represents to men the wisdom and beneficence of the bright being who brings light and life to men. The sun wakens the earth to life when the winter is done; and