

**OVID. SELECT
PASSAGES FROM THE
METAMORPHOSES**

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Ovid. Select passages from the metamorphoses by North Pinder

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NORTH PINDER

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SELECT PASSAGES FROM THE METAMORPHOSES.

WITH NOTES BY

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INTRODUCTION.

THE *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, composed (probably for recitation) about the same time as the *Fasti* just before his banishment in 8 A.D., contain a series of such Greek and Latin legends as involve processes of *transformation*, extending from the creation of the world to the change of Julius Caesar into a star. The outline and materials of the poem were perhaps derived from the *Ἐρεπιοθήκη* of Nicander [B.C. 185—135], and a similar work by Parthenius, the Greek preceptor of Virgil; but the grouping and treatment, the style, sentiment, and versification of the *Metamorphoses* are eminently characteristic of Ovid's genius. The work never received the final touch of its author, who, like Virgil, would fain have burnt his masterpiece, rather than let it descend to posterity incomplete and unrevised.

Of the following specimens the first traces the *Metamorphosis*, or deterioration, of the Ages from the Golden to the Iron. The second is part of a tale describing the petrification of a branch through contact with Medusa's head, laid on it by Perseus when rescuing Andromeda. The third is a Tragedy of Errors arising from misapprehensions, rather than alterations, of forms. The fourth represents the transformation of a statue into a living body. The fifth and sixth narrate the circumstances which led to the suicide of Ajax and the conversion of his blood into a flower; while the seventh exhibits the philosophy of transformation in general, as embodied in the doctrines, precepts, and experiences of Pythagoras.

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P. OVIDIUS NASO.
METAMORPHOSES.

I.—*The Four Ages.*

THE Golden Age came first, dispensing in its innocence with law, punishment, and tribunals (1—6). No ships or voyages were made (6—9). No sieges, implements of war, nor soldiers were required to maintain peace (9—13). Earth untilled gave her increase, and her children lived contented on wild fruits at first, presently on the corn and wine, milk, and honey yielded by the soil beneath the balmy atmosphere of perpetual spring (13—25). Next came the Silver Age and the rule of Jove, displacing Saturn (25—28). He curtailed the spring, and portioned out the four seasons of the year (28—33). Hence the need of houses, mere natural caves at first, or osier huts; then, too, began the tilling of the fields and the labour of the steers (33—37). The third was the Brazen Age, passionate and prone to war, but yet free from crime (37—39). With the fourth, the Iron Age, began the reign of wickedness; Violence, Fraud, and Avarice drove out before them Truth, Honour, and Self-restraint (39—44). Navigation is attempted by unpractised mariners (44—47). Next followed the division of common land and the digging of earth's hid treasures, iron and gold (47—54). With these appeared war and rapine, mutual hatred, and insecurity (54—58). Husband and wife plot each other's destruction; step-dames poison their husbands' children; the son calculates the hour of his father's death (58—61). Piety is crushed, and Astraea, the only Immortal left, quits earth at last (61—63).

Aurea prima sata est aetas, quae vindice nullo
sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat.
poena metusque aberant, nec verba minacia fixo
aere legebantur, nec supplex turba timebat
udicis ora sui, sed erant sine iudice tuti.

nondum caesa suis, peregrinum ut viseret orbem,
 montibus in liquidas pinus descenderat undas,
 nullaque mortales praeter sua litora norant.
 nondum praecipites cingebant oppida fossae :
 non tuba directi, non aeris cornua flexi, 10
 non galeae, non ensis erant. sine militis usu
 mollia securae peragebant otia gentes.
 ipsa quoque immunis rastroque intacta, nec ullis
 saucia vomeribus per se dabat omnia tellus :
 contentique cibus nullo cogente creatis, 15
 arbuteos fetus montanaque fraga legebant,
 cornaque et in duris haerentia mora rubetis,
 et quae deciderant patula Jovis arbore glandes.
 ver erat aeternum, placidique tepentibus auris
 mulcebant zephyri natos sine semine flores, 20
 mox etiam fruges tellus inarata ferebat,
 nec renovatus ager gravidis canebat aristas :
 flumina jam lactis, jam flumina nectaris ibant,
 flavaque de viridi stillabant ilice mella.

Postquam Saturno tenebrosa in Tartara misso 25
 sub Jove mundus erat, subiit argentea proles
 auro deterior, fulvo pretiosior aere.

Juppiter¹ antiqui contraxit tempora veris,
 perque hiemes aestusque et inaequales autumnos
 et breve ver spatii exegit quattuor annum. 30
 tum primum siccis aër fervoribus ustus
 canduit, et ventis glacies adstricta pependit.
 tum primum subiere domus. domus antra fuerunt
 et densi frutices et vinctae cortice virgae.
 semina tum primum longis Cerealia sulcis 35
 obruta sunt, pressique jugo genuere juveni.

Tertia post illam successit aënea proles,
 saevior ingeniis, et ad horrida promptior arma,
 non scelerata tamen. de duro est ultima ferro.
 protinus irrupit venae pejoris in aevum 40
 omne nefas. fugere pudor verumque fidesque :
 in quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolique
 insidiaeque et vis et amor sceleratus habendi.

¹ Jupiter.

vela dabant ventis, nec adhuc bene noverat illos
 navita. quaeque diu steterant in montibus altis, 45
 fluctibus ignotis insultavere carinae.
 communemque prius, ceu lumina solis et auras,
 cautus humum longo signavit limite mensor.
 nec tantum segetes alimentaue debita dives
 poscebatur humus, sed itum est in viscera terrae : 50
 quasque reconsiderat Stygiisque admoverat umbris,
 effodiuntur opes, irritamenta malorum.
 jamque nocens ferrum, ferroque nocentius aurum
 proderat. prodit bellum, quod pugnat utroque,
 sanguineaue manu crepitantia concutit arma. 55
 vivitur ex raptō. non hospes ab hospite tutus,
 non socer a genero. fratrum quoque gratia rara est.
 imminet exitio vir conjugis, illa mariti :
 lurida terribiles miscent aconita novercae :
 filius ante diem patrios inquirat in annos, 60
 victa jacet pietas. et virgo caede madentes,
 ultima caelestum, terras Astraea reliquit.

II.—*The Tale of Perseus and Andromeda.*

Perseus, in his journey through the air from Libya, had been driven about by storms of wind; sheltering from these for the night, in the calm of the morning he resumes his flight, Aeolus having imprisoned the winds (1—6). He descries Aethiopia, the realm of King Cepheus (6—8). There Andromeda, expiating by order of the oracle the impious boast of her mother, hangs bound to the cliff, weeping and motionless (8—13). Perseus, smitten with love, stops and asks the maiden her name and the cause of her punishment (13—19). She replies at first only with tears, but presently tells her history and that of her mother's sin (19—26). She is interrupted by the approach of the sea-monster. Amid the lamentations of the maiden and her parents, Perseus extracts a promise that he shall win Andromeda for his bride if he succeeds in rescuing her (26—44). Perseus soars into the air, thence darts down on the back of the monster, and in a fierce encounter stabs him over and over again (44—73). With shouts of joy and triumph, the maiden is loosed of her chains (73—78).

Cluserat Hippotades aeterno carcere ventos,
 admonitorque operum caelo clarissimus alto
 Lucifer ortus erat. pennis ligat ille resumptis

parte ab utraque pedes, teloque accingitur unco,
 et liquidum motis talaribus aëra findit. 5
 gentibus innumeris circumque infraque relictis
 Aethiopum populos, Cepheaque conspicit arva.
 illic inmeritam maternae pendere linguae
 Andromedan poenas inmitis¹ jusserat Ammon.
 quam simul ad duras religatam brachia² cautes 10
 vidit Abantiades, ... nisi quod levis aura capillos
 moverat, et tepido manabant lumina fletu,
 marmoreum ratus esset opus...trahit inscius ignes
 et stupet et visae correptus imagine formae
 paene suas quaterere est oblitus in aëre pennas. 15
 ut stetit, 'O' dixit 'non istis digna catenis,
 sed quibus inter se cupidi junguntur amantes,
 pande requirenti nomen terraeque tuumque,
 et cur vincla geras.' primo silet illa, nec audet
 appellare virum virgo. manibusque modestos 20
 celasset vultus, si non religata fuisset.
 lumina, quod potuit, lacrimis implevit obortis.
 saepius instanti, sua ne delicta fateri
 nolle videretur, nomen terraeque suumque,
 quantaque maternae fuerit fiducia formae, 25
 indicat. et nondum memoratis omnibus unda
 insonuit, veniensque immenso³ belua ponto
 eminent et latum sub pectore possidet aequor.
 conclamat virgo. genitor lugubris et una
 mater adest, ambo miseri, sed justius illa. 30
 nec secum auxilium, sed dignos tempore fletus
 plangoremque ferunt, vinctoque in corpore adhaerent :
 cum sic hospes ait : 'lacrimarum longa manere
 tempora vos poterunt: ad opem brevis hora ferendam est.
 hanc ego si peterem Perseus Jove natus et illa, 35
 quam clausam implevit fecundo Juppiter auro,
 Gorgonis anguicomae Perseus superator, et alis
 aetherias ausus jactatis ire per auras,
 praeferrer cunctis certe gener. addere tantis
 dotibus et meritum, faveant modo numina, tempto.⁴ 40

¹ inmitis.² brachia.³ immenso.⁴ tento.