

**NIGHTS
WITH THE GODS**

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Nights with the gods by Emil Reich

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EMIL REICH

**NIGHTS
WITH THE GODS**

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BY

EMIL REICH

DOCTOR JURIS

Author of

"Foundations of Modern Europe"

"Success among Nations" etc.



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FOREWORD

THE great spirits of the past, chiefly Hellenes, recently revisited England. With a view to an exchange of ideas on English contemporary life, they met at night in various towns of Italy, where, by the favour of Dionysus, the author was allowed to be present, and to take notes at the proceedings. The following pages contain some of the speeches delivered in the Assembly of the Gods and Heroes.

THE AUTHOR.

33 ST LUKE'S ROAD,
NOTTING HILL,
LONDON, W.

NIGHTS WITH THE GODS

THE FIRST NIGHT

ARISTOTLE ON SPECIALISM IN ENGLAND

THE first night the gods and heroes assembled on the heights around Florence. From the magnificent town there came only a faint glimmer of artificial light, and the Arno rolled its waves melodiously towards the sea. On a height full of convenient terraces, offering a view on the Lily of the Arno, on Fiesole, and on the finely undulating outlines of the Apennine Mountains, the Assembly sat down. From afar one could see the bold lines of the copy of Michelangelo's David on the hill. The evening was lovely and balmy. Zeus opened the meeting with a request directed to Alexander, King of Macedon, to ask his teacher Aristotle to entertain them with his experiences at the seats of modern learning and study. Alexander did so, and the grave Stagirite, mellowed by the years, addressed the Assembly as follows:

“All my mortal life I have tried, by reading, by making vast collections of natural objects and animals, and by the closest thinking on the facts furnished to me by men of all sorts of professions and crafts, to get at some unity of knowledge. I held, and still hold, that just as Nature is one, so ought Know-

ledge too to be. I have written a very large number of treatises, many of which, thanks to Thy Providence, O Zeus, have escaped the small-pox called commentaries, in that the little ones never got possession of those works. But while always loving detail and single facts, I never lost sight of the connection of facts. As a coin, whether a penny or a sovereign, has no currency unless the image of the prince is cut out on it, even so has no fact scientific value unless the image of an underlying general principle is grafted thereon. This great truth I taught all my pupils, and I hoped that men would carefully observe it in all their studies. When then I went amongst the little ones, I expected them to do as I had taught their teachers to do. However, what I found was, O Zeus, the funniest of all things.

“On my visit to what they call Universities I happened to call, in the first place, on a professor who said he studied history. In my time I believed that history was not as suggestive of philosophical truths as is poetry. Since then I have somewhat altered my view. Naturally enough I was curious to know what my Professor of History thought of that, and I asked him to that effect. He looked at me with a singular smile and said: ‘My young friend (—I had assumed the appearance of a student—), my young friend, history is neither more nor less than a science. As such it consists of a long array of specialities.’ ‘And which,’ I asked timidly, ‘is your special period?’ Whereupon the professor gravely said: ‘The afternoons of the year 1234 A.D.’” While everybody present in the Assembly, including even St Francis of Assisi, laughed at this point of Aristotle’s narrative,