

one may ask whether after all Greek Religion was not a conglomeration of absurd beliefs culminating in crude and often immoral cults and rituals. It would be impossible to deny that crudity and immorality were involved in certain cults of the religion of ancient Greece. But this may be explained by the facts that the ancient Greeks attributed even their physical needs to their entire dependence on the gods. Neither must we despise their religion nor must we think that originally festivals and rituals were not conducted with sincerity and modesty. It is only when conviction is undermined by inferior elements that religion begins to degenerate, and conviction began to be undermined among the Greeks when the State regulated worship for political purposes. The main causes that accounted for the downfall of ancient Greek religion are thus put forth by Sir Paul Harvey:

"It (ancient Greek religion) possessed no authoritative theology, no sacred book inculcating immutable dogma and morality, no priestly caste to convey religious teaching (except perhaps in connection with the mysteries). Its mythology (which Homer did much to fix) was in large measure the outcome of imagination controlled only by the reasoning faculty, and the interpretation of the myths was open to all alike."

Nevertheless, we must never grudge to ancient Greek religion our grateful feelings for the noble heritage it has transmitted to us in the fields of Literature, Art and Philosophy.

Let us not forget that our cherished institution of the Drama was the outcome of the Athenian Dionysiac festival; that the gods and their stories were an inexhaustible source of inspiration to poetic genius; that the magnificence of the Olympic deities evoked wonders in sculpture and architecture, and that Platonism and Aristotelianism, the two supreme products of Greek thought and Greek culture, supplied the corner-stone respectively to the two magnificent and formidable edifices erected within the Catholic Church by St. Augustine and notably by St. Thomas Aquinas.

CARMELO MUSCAT.

From Virgil's Fourth Georgic.

(Vv. 360-373.)

And the cloven waters like a chasm of mountains  
 Stood, and received him in its mighty portal  
 And led him through the deep's untrampled fountains.

He went in wonder through the path immortal  
 Of his great Mother and her humid reign  
 And groves profaned not by the step of mortal  
 Which sounded as he passed, and lakes which rain  
 Replenished not, girt round by marble caves.  
 'Wildered by the watery motion of the main

Half 'wildered he beheld the bursting waves  
 Of every stream beneath the mighty earth  
 Phasis and Lycus which the sand paves,

The chasm where old Enipeus has its birth  
 And father Tyber and Anienes glow  
 And whence Caicus, Mysian stream, comes forth

And rock-resounding Hypanis, and thou  
 Eridanus who bearest like empire's sign  
 Two golden horns upon thy taurine brow

Thou than whom none of the streams divine  
 Through garden-fields and meads with fiercer power  
 Burst in their tumult on the purple brine.

Translated by P.B. SHELLEY.

From the Greek of Moschus

When winds that move not its calm surface sweep  
 The azure sea, I love the land no more;  
 The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep  
 Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar  
 Of Ocean's grey abyss resounds, and foam  
 Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,  
 I turn from the drear aspect to the home  
 Of Earth and its deep woods, where interspersed,  
 When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody,  
 Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea,  
 Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot  
 Has chosen . . . . But I my languid limbs will fling  
 Beneath the plane, where the brook's murmuring  
 Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

Translated by P.B. SHELLEY.