

The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER



PAN, THE ARCADIAN GOD.
From an antique bronze lamp.

The Open Court Publishing Company
CHICAGO

Per copy, 10 cents (sixpence). Yearly, \$1.00 (in the U.P.U., 5s. 6d.).

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THE FAUN OF PRAXITELES.

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TAMMUZ, PAN AND CHRIST.

NOTES ON A TYPICAL CASE OF MYTH-TRANSFERENCE AND
DEVELOPMENT.

BY WILFRED H. SCHOFF.

SOME four millennia before the Christian era, there lived on the alluvial plain brought down by the Euphrates and Tigris rivers, and bordering the Persian Gulf, a Turanian people, who had attained to a considerable degree of civilization, who tilled and irrigated the soil, undertook large public works, and ventured long distances by sea for the exchange of goods. They worshiped a sea-god Ea, and included in their mythology was another god, Dumuzi, or *dumu-si-abzu*, "true son of the deep water." Concerning his attributes it is not necessary to elaborate; the reader may find them fully discussed by competent authorities.¹ This same god was adopted into the pantheon of the Semitic peoples who associated with, absorbed or expelled (according to various assertions) these Turanian plain-dwellers and sea-farers; and in Semitic Babylonia the Turanian Dumuzi became Tammuz, the god of youthful joy and beauty, personifying the annual death and revival of natural life according to the sequence of winter and summer. His attributes, also, have been thoroughly studied, so that for reference one need only cite J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, of which the third edition contains two volumes, *Adonis, Attis and Osiris*, and *The Dying God*, wherein all this literature is marshalled. Frazer's summary follows:

¹L. W. King, *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, London, 1899; P. Jensen, *Assyrisch-babylonische Mythen und Epen*, Berlin, 1900; M. Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*; M. J. Lagrange, *Etudes sur les religions semitiques*, Paris, 1905.

"We first meet with Tammuz in the religious literature of Babylon. He there appears as the youthful spouse or lover of Ishtar, the great mother-goddess, the embodiment of the reproductive energies of nature. . . . Every year Tammuz was believed to die, passing away from the cheerful earth to the gloomy subterranean world, and every year his divine mistress journeyed in quest of him 'to the land from which there is no returning, to the house of darkness, where dust lies on door and bolt.' During her absence the passion of love ceased to operate; men and beasts alike forgot to reproduce their kinds; all life was threatened with extinction. So intimately bound up with the goddess were the sexual functions of the whole animal kingdom that without her presence they could not be discharged. A messenger of the great god Ea was accordingly despatched to rescue the goddess on whom so much depended. The stern queen of the infernal regions, Allatu or Eresh-kigal by name, reluctantly allowed Ishtar to be sprinkled with the Water of Life and to depart, in company probably with her lover Tammuz, that the two might return together to the upper world, and that with their return all nature might revive. Laments for the departed Tammuz are contained in several Babylonian hymns, which liken him to plants that quickly fade. His death appears to have been annually mourned, to the shrill music of flutes, by men and women about midsummer in the month named after him, the month of Tammuz. The dirges were seemingly chanted over an effigy of the dead god, which was washed with pure water, anointed with oil, and clad in a red robe, while the fumes of incense rose into the air, as if to stir his dormant senses by their pungent fragrance and wake him from the sleep of death."

These ceremonies are described in the Babylonian account of the "Descent of Ishtar into Hades,"² wherein the worshiper of Ishtar seeking to know whether the dead may return is warned how to obtain their release from Allatu:

"If she does not give to thee her release, then turn thyself to her.
Unto Tammuz, the husband of her youth.

Pour out pure water, with goodly oil anoint him,
In fine raiment clothe him, a flute of lapis lazuli let him play,
May the goddess Belili destroy her ornaments.

.....
The lament of her brother she heard, and Belili destroyed her ornaments.

.....
O my only brother, do not let me perish!

²R. F. Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature*, pp. 408-413. Note also the poetical version of Ishtar's descent given by Edward Gilchrist in "The Weird of Love and Death" in *The Monist*, April, 1912.

On the day of Tammuz play for me the flute of lapis lazuli,
 The samdu flute also play for me:
 At that time play for me, O male mourners and female mourners.
 On instruments let them play, let them inhale the incense."

This annual mourning of Tammuz was spread among all Semitic peoples and continued for many centuries. That it was carried by sea wherever the Phœnician traders ventured is undoubted, and where they introduced the custom it was continued under various modifications by the natives themselves. The prophet Ezekiel is sufficient witness to its prevalence in monotheistic Palestine (viii. 14):

"Then he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and behold there sat the women weeping for Tammuz. Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? thou shalt again see yet greater abominations than these."

Similar rites were observed in Asia Minor for a god named Attis, and in Egypt for Osiris; with these the present inquiry is not concerned. They are fully described by Frazer in the volumes above cited.

The Babylonian Tammuz, carried to the Syrian coast and there specially localized, in the worship of the Phœnicians and Syrians, was translated to Greece, given various different names, and adopted bodily into the Greek religion. His own name was soon forgotten; but around the name Adonis (Hellenized from *adoni*, lord, an appellation of Tammuz) some of the loveliest of Greek myths were gathered; while by another way, equally accidental, came a god named Linus, annually mourned to the formula *ai Awos*, a mere pun on the Semitic phrase *ai lanu*, "woe is me," appearing in the mourning for Tammuz!

"At the festivals of Adonis," says Frazer,³ which were held in Western Asia and in Greek lands, the death of the god was annually mourned, with a bitter wailing, chiefly by women; images of him dressed to resemble corpses, were carried out as to be buried and then thrown into the sea or into springs; and in some places his revival was celebrated on the following day."

And again,⁴

"In Attica, certainly, the festival fell at the height of summer. For the fleet which Athens fitted out against Syracuse, and by the destruction of which her power was permanently crippled, sailed at midsummer, and by an ominous coincidence the sombre rites of

³ *Golden Bough*, IV, 183.

⁴ *Ibid.*, IV, 185.

Adonis were being celebrated at the very time. As the troops marched down to the harbor to embark, the streets through which they passed were lined with coffins and corpselike effigies, and the air was rent with the noise of women wailing for the dead Adonis. The circumstances cast a gloom over the sailing of the most splendid armament that Athens ever sent to sea. Many ages afterwards, when the Emperor Julian made his first entry into Antioch, he found in like manner the gay, the luxurious capital of the East plunged in mimic grief for the annual death of Adonis; and if he had any presentiment of coming evil, the voices of lamentation which struck upon his ear must have seemed to sound his knell."

In Greek mythology the relations of Tammuz to Ishtar and Allatu became those of Adonis to Aphrodite and Persephone. This was a matter of general knowledge among men of inquiring minds; it was explicitly stated by St. Jerome in his commentary on Ezekiel, also in his Epistles (No. 58, 3). The development of the Adonis story in Greece it is unnecessary to follow. An interesting continuance of the Babylonian story is provided by Shakespeare's poem of *Venus and Adonis*,⁵ wherein the unresponsive nature of the god is more fully outlined than was usual with the Greeks.

"I know not love,' quoth he, 'nor will not know it,
 Unless it be a boar, and then I chase it;
 'Tis much to borrow, and I will not owe it;
 My love to love is love but to disgrace it;
 For I have heard it is a life in death,
 That laughs and weeps, and all but with a breath.'"

So in the Gilgamesh epic,⁶ where the fickle Ishtar woos that hero and is repulsed by him because of the fate that overtook Tammuz and her other lovers:

"Where is thy husband Tammuz, who was to be forever?
 What, indeed, has become of the allallu-bird?
 I will tell thee plainly the dire result of thy coquetries,
 To Tammuz, the husband of thy youth,
 Thou didst cause weeping and didst bring grief before him every year.
 The allallu-bird, so bright of colors thou didst love;
 But its wing thou didst break and crush,
 So that now it sits in the woods crying, 'O my wing.'"

The Greek Adonis thus appears composite of two Babylonian heroes, Tammuz and Gilgamesh!

⁵ Lines 409-414.

⁶ Harper, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

The story shifts now to a god of another sort entirely; to Pan, the shepherd-god of Arcadia. Pan, Πάν (the pasturer) was said to be the son of Hermes and one of the daughters of the oak-man Dryops; or, by another legend, of Zeus and the nymph Callisto. He was described as having the horns, beard, feet and tail of a goat, and his body was covered with hair. His abode was in the woods, caves or mountain-tops; he was a shepherd, hunter and fisher, and spent his idle hours sporting and dancing with the mountain nymphs. When one of these named Syrinx fled from his embraces, she was changed into a reed, from which, so Ovid tells us,⁷ Pan devised the shepherd's pipe:

“And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.”⁸

This Pan was an inconsiderate deity, prone to appear at unexpected times to the confusion of his devotees, whence the word “panic,” fear.⁹ He was said to possess the power of inspiration and prophecy, in which he instructed Apollo; to whom the great Oracle at Delphi was consecrated. This, it will appear, is Pan's closest real connection with our present inquiry.

The original home of this jolly, if ribald, god was Arcadia. His cult found its way to Athens during the Persian War. Herodotus tells us¹⁰ that just before the battle of Marathon, certain Athenian envoys on their way to Sparta were stopped by this god and commanded to set up an altar to him, in return for which his support would be given them against the invaders. This was done, a cave being built on the Acropolis, where there were annual sacrifices and torch-races in his honor.

Later, by referring his name to a Greek word in more familiar use, or possibly by identification with the ram-headed Egyptian god Chnum, creator of the world, he was conceived as the universal god of nature, τὸ πᾶν (the *a* long instead of short), the pantheistic divinity.

In Christian legend, it will be well to recall, this horned and tailed deity supplied some of the distinctive features of the popular conception of Satan.

So much for Tammuz, Adonis and Pan. We come now to the circumstances under which they were supposed to have been destroyed—or as some would have it, absorbed—by Christ. The sole

⁷ *Metamorph.*, l. 691 *et seqq.*

⁸ Milton, *Lycidas*, 123-4.

⁹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., XX, 662-3.

¹⁰ VI, 105.

authority is a passage in Plutarch's dialogue *De Defectu Oraculorum*; and as it has been taken bodily from its proper context, it may be well to recall the general course of that dialogue, and the character of its author.

Plutarch is known to have lived about A. D. 46-120. He was born at Chæronea in Bœotia, trained in philosophy at Athens, and spent his active days in Rome, where he lectured on philosophy and taught the youthful Hadrian. He achieved political honors, being made consul by Trajan and procurator of Greece by Hadrian. In his old age he retired to his native town of Chæronea, where he was archon and priest of the Pythian Apollo. There he compiled the great series of "Parallel Lives" which are still a universal authority for the life and activities of the ancient world, and, there, too, he composed a series of philosophical essays, remarkable for their skilful interpretation of ancient ideas rather than for original thought; which remain a necessary stepping-stone between the system of Plato and that of the Neo-Platonists. Assuredly, then, Plutarch was not the man to whom any one might correctly ascribe an admission that the gods of Greece were dead.

Now for the dialogue *De Defectu Oraculorum*. It begins by noting the decline of belief in oracles in Greece. "There is no reason to inquire about this matter," says Plutarch in § V, "or to discuss the decay of the oracle, but rather, as we see the extinction of them all in general, except one or two, to consider this subject—for what reason they have so decayed:" and the decay is said to have dated from the Peloponnesian War.

(This will later prove to be of importance. Plutarch notes that the decay was not of his own time, but had already progressed for nearly five centuries.)

One of the speakers in the dialogue, Didymus the Cynic, flatly charges that the oracles are silent because the gods will no longer deign to converse with corrupt mankind: "It were a wonder, when so much wickedness is spread abroad, if not merely Modesty and Shame (as Hesiod said of old) should have abandoned mankind, but if the divine Providence should not have packed up its oracles out of every quarter, and taken its departure!"

The dialogue proceeds by considering whether the oracle were the direct communication of the god, or whether it proceeded indirectly by means of lesser spirits, or "dæmons." It leans to the latter view, and suggests that these dæmons may not be immortal; citing several instances, of which the much quoted passage is one. Its conclusion (§ LI) is, that the power of the exhalation, or oracle,

“is in reality due to a god, and to a dæmon, yet it is not exempt from cessation, imperishable, undecaying, or capable of lasting to all eternity of time—by which all things between Earth and Moon are worn out, according to our theory. Some there be who hold that everything *above* that sphere do not hold out to all eternity and infinity, but are subject to violent revolutions and renewals.” And, far from reaching any final explanation, the dialogue leaves the question unanswered (§LII): “These subjects I exhort both you and myself to examine frequently; inasmuch as they present many holds for objections, and grounds for the opposite opinion; which time does not allow us to enumerate at length. So they must lie over, as also the question Philip raised about the sun and Apollo.”

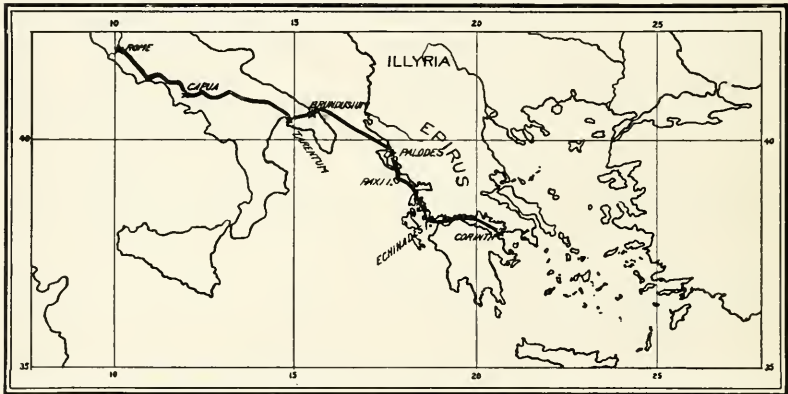
We come now to the single passage of this dialogue (§XVII) on which the whole of the ensuing discussion depends; and which is, nevertheless, a remarkable instance of misconception in news-reporting, and of impossible reasoning based on the erroneous report. The passage in question is as follows:

“With respect to the mortality of beings of the kind [dæmons] I have heard a tale from a man who is neither a fool nor an idle talker—from that Aemilian the rhetorician, whom some of you know well; Epitherses was his father, a townsman of mine, and a teacher of grammar. This man (the latter) said, that once upon a time he made a voyage to Italy and embarked on board a ship conveying merchandise and several passengers. When it was now evening, off the Echinad Islands, the wind dropped, and the ship, carried by the current was come near Paxi; most of the passengers were awake, and many were still drinking, after having had supper. All of a sudden, a voice was heard from the Isle of Paxi, of some one calling ‘*Thamus*’ with so loud a cry as to fill them with amazement. This *Thamus* was an Egyptian pilot, known by name to many of those on board. Called twice, he kept silence; but on the third summons he replied to the caller, and the latter, raising yet higher his voice, said, ‘When thou comest over against Palodes, announce that the great Pan is dead.’ All, upon hearing this, said Epitherses, were filled with consternation, and debated with themselves whether it were better to do as ordered, or not to make themselves too busy, and to let it alone. So *Thamus* decided that if there should be a wind he would sail past and hold his tongue; but should there fall a calm and smooth sea off the island, he would proclaim what he had heard. When, therefore, they were come over against Palodes, there being neither wind nor swell of sea, *Thamus*, looking out from the stern, called out to the land what he had heard, namely, ‘That

the great Pan is dead'; and hardly had he finished speaking than there was a mighty cry, not of one, but of many voices mingled together in wondrous manner. And inasmuch as many persons were then present, the story got spread about Rome, and Thamus was sent for by Tiberius Cæsar; and Tiberius gave so much credence to the tale that he made inquiry and research concerning this Pan; and that the learned men about him, who were numerous, conjectured he was the one who was born from Hermes and Penelope."

This story, torn from its context, served for eighteen centuries as ground for the belief that at the crucifixion—or the birth—or by the life—of Christ, the gods of the ancient world, real and living divinities, came to their end, and a new order was instituted.

The sailing course described is the direct course from Greece to Italy, more especially from Corinth to Brundisium, the southern



port of Rome. The Echinades Islands are at the entrance to the Gulf of Corinth; Paxi is just south of Corcyra, and Palodes (Pelodes Portus, the harbor of Buthrotum in Epirus) is at the northern end of the channel of Corcyra. From Echinades to Paxi is about 65 miles and from Paxi to Palodes about 30 more. Thence north of Corcyra and across to Brundisium in Italy, about 100 miles.

The passengers aboard this vessel were probably Romans, returning from sightseeing in Greece; if Greeks they were probably from Corinth or Athens; the poverty and depopulation of Greece being such that country-folk traveled but little. They were, therefore, unlikely in that age to be familiar with the folklore or ancient local beliefs of Greece. The pilot, an Egyptian, was equally a stranger to them.

What actually happened at Paxi and a few hours later at Palodes, is sufficiently evident from the text itself, and is abundantly

proved by M. Salomon Reinach. (*Bulletin des correspondances helléniques*, 1907, Vol. XXXI, pp. 5-19; also *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, III, 1-15.) It was the annual mourning of Tammuz. The effigy was cast into the sea, and the assembled throng chanted some brief ritual, including the line:

Θαμους Θαμους Θαμους πανμεγας τεθνηκε
 "Tammuz, Tammuz, Tammuz, the very great, is dead."

The pilot, an Egyptian, named Thamus or Tammuz, took the first half of the line as a call to himself. Why he did not know of the god for whom he was named, we need not inquire. Not every Jew of Munich or Vienna who bears the name Isidor could pass an examination in the mysteries of Isis. The name Tammuz being excluded from consideration, there remained only the phrase, reported inaccurately by Epitherses,

Πάν ὁ μέγας τέθνηκε,
 "Pan the great is dead."

Πανμεγας is merely a superlative of *μεγας*, like, for instance, our "almighty"; but this the Roman passengers were not sufficient Hellenists to know. Gravely pondering the meaning of the announcement, they decided that the particle *παν* must refer, not to the adjective *μεγας*, but to the god Pan; they adopted Epitherses's article *ὁ* to the half line of the Greek ritual, and following the directions of those at Paxi, the pilot Thamus announced on arriving off Palodes, again altering the diction of the misunderstood half line, that

ὁ μέγας Πάν τέθνηκεν,
 "The great Pan is dead,"

supposing that they were bearers of news of terrible import, news of the death of a god; whereas to their hearers on shore, they were but announcing that the mourning was completed at Paxi, whereupon an answering cry, as of recognition of fellow worshipers, was set up by those at Palodes.

As M. Reinach puts it, this was "a nocturnal misunderstanding, due to a double confusion of a divine name with a human name, and of a superlative epithet with a divine name."

The sequel was remarkable. Imagine the grave councils at the behest of the brutal materialist Tiberius, to determine whether anything so terrifying as the death of a god had actually occurred, and the conclusion that Pan being only a demigod, hero or *dæmon*, son of a god and a mortal, no danger could accrue to mankind from his demise!

One might wonder that among the whole shipload of passengers was none to associate that mourning cry on a midsummer night,

πανμεγας τεθνηκε,

with the worship of Adonis, still prevalent in Greece, particularly in the country districts of the Peloponnesus, so near the spot where the cry was heard. Pausanias notes the practice in Argos, which possessed "a building where the Argive women bewail Adonis."¹¹

At Amathus in Cyprus he describes an ancient sanctuary of Adonis and Aphrodite where the worship was still maintained,¹² and in Elis, so familiar was the story even in his day, that he refers to it specifically in describing "a sanctuary of the Graces; their images are of wood, their drapery being gilded, but the faces, hands and feet are of white marble. One of them holds a rose, the middle one a die, and the third a sprig of myrtle. The reason why they hold these things may be conjectured to be this: as the rose and the myrtle are sacred to Aphrodite, and associated with the story of Adonis, so of all deities the Graces are most akin to Aphrodite; and the die is a plaything of youths and maidens whom age has not yet robbed of youthful grace."¹³

Pausanias was an antiquarian, full of the ancient faiths of his native land, and our shipload of tourists were evidently not of his sort. Yet even they must have known their Ovid! An indifferent and yet credulous lot they must have been. It was indeed an age when the ancient gods were dead to the minds of men. Greece, for two centuries a province of Rome, impoverished and depopulated, a pleasure ground for the Roman vacationist, had adopted the fashions and the faith—or the lack thereof—of her conquerors.

Finlay sufficiently describes the indifference of the time:¹⁴

"Though ancient superstitions were still practiced, old religious feelings were extinct. The oracles, which had once formed the most remarkable of the sacred institutions of the Greeks, had fallen into decay.¹⁵ It is, however, incorrect to suppose that the Pythoness ceased to deliver her responses from the time of our Saviour's birth, for she was consulted by the Emperor long after. Many oracles continued to be in considerable repute, even after the introduction of Christianity into Greece. Pausanias mentions the oracle of Mal-

¹¹ II, 20, 6.

¹² IX, 41, 2.

¹³ VI, 24, 7.

¹⁴ *Greece under the Romans*, Sect. XII.

¹⁵ Plutarch, *De Orac. Defect.*, VII, 709.

los, in Cilicia, as the most veracious in his time.¹⁶ Claros and Didymi were famous, and much consulted in the time of Lucian; and even new oracles were commenced as a profitable speculation.¹⁷ The oracles continued to give their responses to fervent votaries, long after they had fallen into general neglect. Julian endeavored to revive their influence, and he consulted those of Delphi, Delos and Dodona, concerning the result of his Persian expedition.¹⁸ He vainly attempted to restore Delphi and Daphne, near Antioch, to their ancient splendor.¹⁹ Even so late as the reign of Theodosius the Great, those at Delphi, Didymi and Jupiter Ammon were in existence, but from that period they became utterly silent.²⁰ The reverence which had formerly been paid to them was transferred to astrologers, who were consulted by all ranks and on all occasions. Tiberius, Otho, Hadrian, and Severus, are all mentioned as votaries of this mode of searching into the secrets of futurity.²¹ Yet hidden divination, to which astrology belonged, had been prohibited by the laws of the twelve tables, and was condemned both by express law and by the spirit of the Roman state religion. It was regarded even by the Greeks, as an illicit and disgraceful practice."²²

In explaining the cry to Tammuz rather than Adonis, which would have been more natural in Greece, M. Reinach supposes the existence of Syrian colonies, and cites Bréhier as to the wide dispersion of such. But the Syrians were apt to settle where trade was attractive, and this was assuredly not the case on an islet off the rock-bound coast of Epirus. It seems likely that a hint may be borrowed from Pausanias. Illyria, he says, was settled by Phenicians in the ancient days; Cadmus after settling his kin in Bœotia and founding Thebes, "had gone away to dwell among the Illyrian tribe of the Encheleans," where "his son Polydorus succeeded to the throne."²³

Now the Illyrians were never close to the Hellenes, and the Greek culture was not widespread among them. Here the ancient Semitic ceremony might have been handed down without the corrup-

¹⁶ *Attica*, XXXIV, 2.

¹⁷ Lucian's *Alexander and Peregrinus*.

¹⁸ Theodoretus, *Hist. Eccles.*, III, 16.

¹⁹ Cedrenus, *Hist. Comp.*, p. 304; Ammianus Marcellinus, XXII, 12.

²⁰ Van Limburg Brouwer, *Histoire de la civilisation morale et religieuse des Grecs*, VI, 32; *Symmachus Epist.*, IV, 35.

²¹ Tacitus, *Ann.*, VI, 20; *Hist.*, I, 22; Spartianus, *Hadrian* 2; Severus, p. 65, ed. Paris, 1620.

²² *Cod. Just.*, 9, 8, 2.

²³ IX, 5, 3.

tion of name from Tammuz into Adonis, for which the Greeks were responsible. And later, Pausanias tells us, the Illyrians moved southward and conquered Epirus: "When the kingly government came to an end in Epirus," (that is, after the fall of Pyrrhus) "the common people grew saucy and set all authority at naught. Hence the Illyrians, who inhabit the coast of the Ionian Sea north of Epirus, overran and subdued them."²⁴

If this leads us in the right direction, we may suppose that the dwellers on Paxi were a colony, perhaps of fishermen, from the district of Buthrotum in Epirus; by race and tradition Illyrian, and versed in the ancient worship of Tammuz as taught their forefathers by the Phenician traders in the Adriatic. This gives the more probability to their request that the pilot of a passing vessel should acquaint those on the mainland with the completion of their annual ceremony. They were sending word home, and those left at home were interested in their doings. Here seems at least to be a more probable state of affairs than a chain of Syrian settlements on a rock-bound and primitive shore.

With the decision of the council of Tiberius this event might have been left to oblivion in the imperial archives but for the chance reference in a dialogue of Plutarch, whose writings were valued and preserved among those by whom they were neither appreciated, understood, nor, it would appear, even read. For upon this tale were made to rest the dealings of Christ with the shepherd-god Pan.

In the struggle of Christianity for recognition among those holding the tradition, even if no longer actively observing the worship, of the gods of Olympus, the time was not yet come to conceive that the ancient pantheon had been of man's imagining. The gods were thought to have lived, but to have been in reality evil spirits, formerly permitted to mislead mankind, but now powerless after the sacrifice of the Cross. In the philosophical statement of the case, so little was at issue between the latter-day Platonists and the teachers of the Fourth Gospel, that assent to their doctrine of dæmons might have brought the Greeks into the Christian fold. But the concession involved too much, and the dæmons of the Platonists, the beneficent influences uplifting mankind, were translated into the demons of the Christian church, the imps and devils that lay in wait for the capture of souls. And in support of this course, as well as of the new religion as a whole, the Christian Fathers drew, with more diligence and ingenuity than fairness, upon the literature

²⁴ IV, 35, 5.

of those whom they would convert. Out of their own mouths should they be convinced. One fears that they may not always have been above writing history to their own ends, as when Tertullian gravely asserts²⁵ that "Tiberius, in whose days the Christian name made its entry into the world, having himself received intelligence from Palestine of events which had clearly shown the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the Senate with his own decision in favor of Christ. The Senate, because it had not given the approval itself, rejected this proposal."

But Christianity grew apace, and it was to a world more interested in new philosophical reasons for the faith, than in new historical proofs, that Eusebius of Cæsarea directed his ministry. Reared and trained in the well-stocked library of Pamphilus, the literature of Greece and Rome was at his disposal, and was, one might almost say, shredded to supply meat for his daily discourses. At that distance of time and place and with a mind so little appreciative of the thought of the earlier literature, it was not to be supposed that an entire work would be digested; a chapter or text snatched at random would suffice. We have already followed the plan of Plutarch's dialogue *De Defectu Oraculorum*, his statement that the oracles had been in decline since the Peloponnesian War, and his failure to arrive at any final conclusion concerning them. Incidentally we have noted Pausanias's interest in the oracles almost in Eusebius's own time. But behold, now, the new meaning, the Christian meaning, asserted by Eusebius for this modest and inconclusive exercise of Plutarch, the priest of Apollo. In his *Præparatio Evangelica*, Book V, he refers to the whole subject of oracles. In § 14 he quotes Porphyry on the philosophy to be derived from oracles. In § 15 he concludes that the gods "were found to be demons haunting the earth and enslaved to passions; wherefore it seems to me that I have followed sound reason in turning away from them." In § 16 he refers to Plutarch's dialogue, and in § 17 quotes the story of Epitherses entire, ending with the following:

"So far Plutarch. But it is important to observe the time at which he says that the death of the dæmon took place. For it was at the time of Tiberius, in which our Saviour, making his sojourn among men, is recorded to have been ridding human life from dæmons of every kind; so that there were some of them now kneeling before Him and beseeching Him not to deliver them over to the Tartarus that awaited them.

"You have therefore the date of the overthrow of the dæmons,

²⁵ *Apol.*, V.

of which there was no record at any other time; just as you had the abolition of human sacrifice among the Gentiles as not having occurred until after the preaching of the doctrine of the Gospel had reached all mankind. Let these refutations from recent history suffice."

One may almost infer from this statement of the case that Eusebius was not altogether convinced by his own argument, but that he put it forth believing that it might fortify some of his hearers and more of his readers at a later day. Plato himself, whose ideas were thus distorted beyond recognition, might almost reply out of his *Republic*,²⁶ "Can you suggest any device by which we can make them believe this fiction? None at all by which we could persuade the men with whom we begin. . . .but their sons, and the next generation, and all subsequent generations, might be taught to believe it."

The heathen gods *were* dead to men's minds; the Gospel of Christ *had* annihilated them; conceived as a struggle of ideas, the Christian claim was true. But to visualize the claim and fix it in minds used to dealing with material things, the lapse of an idea must be presented under the guise of the death of an earthly being; therefore these fisher-folk on the isle of Paxi, in conscious fiction weeping Tammuz, misunderstood and misreported by Plutarch as in actual fact weeping Pan, became the material witnesses for the medieval church, of the physical struggle of Christ with Antichrist, of the downfall of the demons and the liberation of man. Surely an idea so spiritually comprehensive needed no little tawdry piece of materialism such as this to bring it down to earth!

During the Middle Ages there was much grave discussion about the death of "Pan" and as to his nature. The main conclusions are stated by Abbé Anselme, cited by Reinach, as "whether the god Pan was, as some have thought, Jesus Christ himself, as if the divine Saviour had needed to borrow the name of one of his enemies; or whether the devil was forced himself to confess his total defeat by the Cross."

Another medieval explanation, quoted by Rabelais, is gravely criticized by Reinach. A reading of the whole passage will rather indicate that Rabelais was making game of it, with a great laugh thrown in. Plutarch's story is put without change into the mouth of the absurd Pantagrue, who tells of the decision of Tiberius's council, that the supposed "Pan" was the son of Mercury and Penel-

²⁶ III, 415.

ope, and who then offers the medieval explanation as his own:²⁷ "For my part, I understand it of that great Saviour of the faithful, who was shamefully put to death at Jerusalem, by the envy and wickedness of the doctors, priests and monks of the Mosaic law [Surely M. Reinach need not take umbrage at the monks!] and methinks, my interpretation is not improper; for he may lawfully be said in the Greek tongue to be *Pan* since he is our *all*. For all that we are, all that we live, all that we have, all that we hope, is him, by him, from him, and in him. He is the good Pan, the great shepherd, who, as the loving shepherd Corydon affirms, hath not only a tender love and affection for his sheep, but also for their shepherds. At his death, complaints, sighs, fears, and lamentations were spread through the whole fabric of the universe, whether heavens, land, sea, or hell. The time also concurs with this interpretation of mine; for this most good, most mighty Pan, our only Saviour, died near Jerusalem, during the reign of Tiberius Cæsar."

A noble piece of reasoning, truly, based on a cheap pun (on the Greek words *Păn* and *Pān*) identifying the crucified Saviour with the laughing shepherd-god, seducer of Syrinx; worthy of M. Reinach's contempt. But is it the reasoning of Rabelais? Observe, on the contrary, how Pantagruel's medievalism is kicked into the dust-hole: "Pantagruel, having ended this discourse, remained silent, and full of contemplation. A little while after, we saw the tears flow out of his eyes as big as ostrich's eggs. God take me presently, if I tell you one single syllable of a lie in the matter."

What Rabelais thus ridiculed, Milton carried bodily into his noble verse, but in such manner as to keep the imagery on the ideal plane rather than the material. The general idea of a struggle between Christ and the elder gods is expressed in *Paradise Lost*:²⁸

"So spake this Oracle, then verified,
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,
Saw Satan fall like lightning down from Heaven,
Prince of the air; then, rising from his grave,
Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed
In open show, and, with ascension bright,
Captivity led captive through the air."

In this passage the allusion is rather to the Apocalypse, but in the splendid "Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity" the Plutarch-Pan story bears its full share.

²⁷ Pantagruel IV. xxviii.

²⁸ X, 182 *et seqq.*

"The Shepherds on the lawn,
 Or ere the point of dawn,
 Sat simply chatting in a rustic row;
 Full little thought they then,
 That the mighty Pan
 Was kindly come to live with them below;
 Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
 Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep."

Here we have Pantagruel's identification of Pan with Christ in all seriousness! And the hymn proceeds to Plutarch *via* Eusebius:

"The oracles are dumb,
 No voice or hideous hum
 Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving,
 Apollo from his shrine
 Can no more divine,
 With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
 No nightly trance, or breathèd spell,
 Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

"The lonely mountains o'er
 And the resounding shore,
 A voice of weeping heard and loud lament:
 From haunted spring and dale,
 Edgèd with poplar pale,
 The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
 With flower-inwoven tresses torn
 The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

"In consecrated earth,
 And on the holy hearth,
 The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint:
 In urns and altars round,
 A drear and dying sound
 Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint;
 And the chill marble seems to sweat,
 While each peculiar Power foregoes his wonted seat."

The cold perspiration of the altar-stone is a touch not found in Eusebius; while in the next stanza, had he but known it, Milton carries Plutarch's story back to its true original:

"Peor and Baalim
 Forsake their temples dim,
 With that twice-battered god of Palestine
 And moonèd Ashtaroth,
 Heaven's queen and mother both,
 Now sits not girt with taper's holy shrine;
 The Lybic Hammon shrinks his horn,
 In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thammut mourn."

With Milton's "solemn music" this ancient story might have rested, had not Schiller composed a poem, *Die Götter Griechenlands*, in which he mourned the general loss of the love of beauty which followed the destruction of classic mythology by the Christian world, and called for its revival. A few representative stanzas follow in Lord Lytton's translation:

"More glorious than the meeds
To Labor choosing Virtue's path sublime,
The grand archives of renownèd deeds
Up to the seats of Gods themselves could climb.
Before the dauntless Rescuer of the dead,
Bowed down the silent and Immortal Host;
And the twin Stars their guiding luster shed,
On the bark tempest-tossed!

"Art thou, fair world, no more?
Return, thou virgin-bloom, on Nature's face;
Ah, only on the Minstrel's magic shore,
Can we the footstep of sweet Fable trace!
The meadows mourn for the old hallowing life;
Vainly we search the earth of gods bereft;
And where the image with such warmth was rife,
A shade alone is left!

"Cold, from the North, has gone
Over the flowers the blast that killed their May;
And to enrich the worship of the ONE,
A Universe of Gods must pass away.
Mourning, I search on yonder starry steeps,
But thee no more, Selene, there I see!
And through the woods I call, and o'er the deeps.
No voice replies to me."

Schiller's longing for the joy and art and beauty of the Greek civilization was hardly more than had already found such abundant expression in the European Renaissance. It was the natural reaction against the arid formalism of the Middle Ages; but it troubled the devout soul of Mrs. Browning, and she replied with the poem of "The Dead Pan," in which Plutarch's story, with Eusebius's additions, was reduced to verse, with improvements of her own, as proof that the ancient gods had lived, but that they died at the hour of Calvary.²⁹ The stanzas essential to the story are the following:

²⁹ What she might have said in reply to Swinburne's homage to one of the classic pantheon we can better leave to the imagination:

"Alas, Lord, surely thou art great and fair.
But lo, her wonderfully woven hair!
And thou didst heal us with thy piteous kiss;
But see now, Lord; her mouth is lovelier."

—*Laus Veneris*, V.

“Calm, of old, the bark went onward,
 When a cry more loud than wind,
 Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward,
 From the pilèd Dark behind;
 And the sun shrank, and grew pale,
 Breathed against by the great wail—
 ‘Pan, Pan, is dead.’

“And the rowers from the benches
 Fell, each shuddering, on his face,
 While departing Influences
 Struck a cold back through the place;
 And the shadow of the ship
 Reeled along the passive deep—
 ‘Pan, Pan, is dead.’

“And that dismal cry rose slowly
 And sank slowly through the air,
 Full of spirits’ melancholy
 And eternity’s despair!
 And they heard the words it said—
 ‘*Pan is dead—Great Pan is dead—*
Pan, Pan, is dead.’

“’Twas the hour when One in Zion
 Hung for love’s sake on the cross;
 When his brow was chill with dying,
 And his soul was faint with loss;
 When his priestly blood dropped downward—
 And his kingly eyes looked throneward—
 Then Pan was dead.

“By the love he stood alone in,
 His sole Godhead rose complete,
 And the false gods fell down moaning,
 Each from off his golden seat;
 All the false gods with a cry
 Rendered up their deity—
 Pan, Pan, was dead.

“Wailing wide across the islands,
 They rent, vest-like, their Divine;
 And a darkness and a silence
 Quenched the light of every shrine;
 And Dodona’s oak swang lonely,
 Henceforth to the tempest only,
 Pan, Pan, was dead.”

Out of these stanzas the first impression is that Mrs. Browning’s thought is as free and careless as her rhymes. See now her conclusion:

“Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
 Sung beside her in her youth,
 And those debonair romances
 Sound but dull beside the truth.
 Phœbus’ chariot-course is run;
 Look up, poets, to the sun!
 Pan, Pan, is dead.

“Christ hath sent us down the angels,
 And the whole earth and the skies
 Are illumed by altar-candles
 Lit for blessed mysteries,
 And a priest’s hand through creation
 Waveth calm and consecration—
 Pan, Pan, is dead.”

Here are some notable additions to the legend, arising from the fervor of Mrs. Browning. The sun “shrank and grew pale,” at the fearsome hour of sunset; the rowers fell shuddering on their faces; the annual cry of mourning (followed next day by an orgy of celebration) voiced “eternity’s despair”! When the head of the crucified Christ fell on the Cross, “then Pan was dead”; and all the false gods yielded up their deity;²⁰ they rent their divinity as a garment; “as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed,” and from that moment disappeared the light from every shrine. Even Eusebius would have difficulty in recognizing his explanation under this restatement!

But the particular contribution of this poem lies, if one may so say, not in its stanzas but in its introduction. Here Mrs. Browning reproves Schiller for his paganism, reminding him that heathendom was no more, and citing against him “a well-known tradition mentioned in a treatise of Plutarch (*De Oraculorum Defectu*) according to which at the hour of the Saviour’s agony, a cry of ‘Great Pan is dead!’ swept across the waves in the hearing of certain mariners, and the oracles ceased.”

Did Mrs. Browning ever read Plutarch at all? Or was her knowledge of the story derived from some 18th century commentary on Milton?²¹ A more complete misquotation it would be hard

²⁰ (If false, how acquired they it?)

²¹ Followers of Swedenborg are fond of claiming Mrs. Browning as one of themselves. While the concordance to his works contains no reference to this particular legend, there are numerous passages in which he states that the demigods, demons and heroes of the pagan world were evil spirits, who were able to command human allegiance before the Advent of Christ, but were thereupon returned to the hells from which they came. It is not impossible that Mrs. Browning had in mind some passage from *Heaven and Hell*, or even the following from *Arcana Celestia*:

“6373. The Divine which transflowed through the Celestial kingdom

to imagine. Plutarch nowhere said that the oracles ceased; he noted their decline through a period of 500 years; he nowhere mentioned the Saviour's agony,—how could he have done so, being priest of the Pythian Apollo for his native town, and as procurator of Greece under the Emperor Hadrian responsible for the enforcement of the laws of the Empire against Christian assemblies whenever complaint arose? His position was exactly that of the younger Pliny,³² whom as proprætor of Pontica the Emperor Trajan instructed "in investigating the charges against the Christians who are brought before you, it is not possible to lay down any general rule. Do not go out of your way to look for them. If indeed they should be brought before you and the crime is proved, they must be punished."

And yet in spite of the laws of the Empire, which he was sworn to execute, and of his sincere Hellenism, which he was initiated to uphold, Plutarch was made the authority for one of the most absurd of all the theological misconceptions of medieval Christianity.

So the myth runs its course. Dumu-zi-abzu, demigod of the Accadians, perhaps helping their fisheries in the Persian Gulf, became Tammuz of the Babylonians, typifying the decay and revival of vegetation. Tammuz, because an Egyptian pilot happened to bear his name and a Roman grammarian misunderstood his title, was translated by Plutarch into Pan, the merry protector of the Arcadian shepherds; and the death of Tammuz, wrongly ascribed to Pan, was laid by Eusebius to the ministration of Jesus Christ. Pan himself became Christ, or Antichrist, or was killed by Christ, according to the imagination of the Christians. Ridiculed by Rabelais, used imaginatively by Milton, the story was nailed down to earth by Mrs. Browning. And had the myth been formulated by a papal council instead of an English poetess, the western world might today be expected to uphold it as an article of faith.

could not be pure. . . . and therefore at that time infernal and diabolical spirits issued from the Hells, and exercised dominion over the Souls who came from the world. . . .

"6858. Before the Advent of the Lord into the world, evil Genii and Spirits occupied all that region of Heaven to which the spiritual were afterwards elevated. . . . But after the Lord's Advent, they were all thrust down into their Hells. . . .

"6914. . . . It has been given to know what was the nature of the state of the evil Genii and Spirits, who, before the Lord's Advent, occupied the lower region of Heaven. . . ."

³² *Epist.*, XCVIII.