

Interpretation of Ancient Myths

In the Light of the Bible

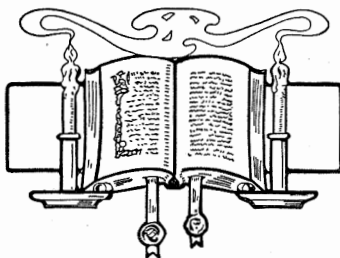
BY CORINNE S. DUNKLEE

ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

ONE of the loveliest legends of Grecian mythology we find in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus was the god of music, and the lyre or harp is the instrument which is usually associated with him. This was anciently represented as having been invented by Mercury, the god of wisdom. He gave it to his brother Apollo, the sun god, who later presented it to Orpheus.

Apollo had played divinely on this magic harp, and because a god had played upon it, it responded to the touch of the beautiful youth Orpheus in tones so pure and heavenly that the wild beasts were charmed and lost their ferocity. Wild birds were tamed, and great sea monsters came out of the ocean to hear him play. The power of his music was so great that rushing torrents slackened their course to hear him and the tall forests bent their heads; and the winds were stilled by his tones.

Orpheus had a bride whom he loved devotedly. She was Eurydice, the daughter of the sea god Nereus. One day while wandering in the fields Eurydice was fatally bitten by a serpent which lay concealed in the long grass. Orpheus filled the groves and valleys with his sorrowful lamentations and the music of his grief. At last, finding himself unable to live without her, he bravely walked into the cave that led to the entrance of Pluto's underworld. Here



he wandered among the shades or disembodied ones, playing upon his magic harp. His music was so divinely beautiful that it brought surcease of pain to those in purgatory.

“E'en Tantalus ceased from trying to sip
The cup that flies from his arid lip.”

Jupiter, moved to compassion at the sight of the suffering of Orpheus, granted his prayer that Eurydice return to earth with him, adding the one condition: “If you once glance behind you to see if Eurydice is following, you must lose her again.”

Striking notes of triumph and rejoicing Orpheus wended his way back up the steep ascent through the darkness, followed by Eurydice. But just as he was about to pass the extreme confines of Hades he grew afraid, and in order to convince himself that his beloved Eurydice was safe he turned back only to see her with her arms outstretched toward him, floating slowly backward into the dark place below.

The grief of Orpheus was more intense over this second loss than before. (The Great Master, Christ Jesus, said that the last state of such a one is worse than the first.) Half crazed with sorrow and remorse Orpheus wandered for seven days and nights without food or drink until the gods, attracted by the magic of his lyre and having compassion for his sorrow, changed him into a swan, and he

was placed in the heavens as the constellation Cygnus, which is near Lyra, the constellation of the Harp. This glorious Harp floats across the heavens on summer evenings with the great star Vega blazing like a blue jewel in its heart.

“Its celestial keys,
Its chords of air,
Its frets of fire.”

The lesson taught by the story of Orpheus and Eurydice is that the man who sets his feet upon the Path may not turn back to the ways of the world.

Our Christian Bible gives this same teaching in the story of Lot and his wife fleeing from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. They received this same command, “*Do not look back.*” This mandate was disobeyed by Lot’s wife, and so she became a pillar of salt, i.e., crystallization. A pertinent truth is here given to all followers of Christianity. Christ came proclaiming the new way, the broader vision. “Behold I make all things new,” was the keynote of His message. Let us follow Him and go forward, preparing ourselves as channels for the new Aquarian religion that is to be given to mankind.

Color-Blind

A Story of the Desert

BY HELEN LOCKWOOD COFFIN

(Concluded)

“SHE GOT tired of it; came out here—alone—took up a claim, started a little store, got appointed postmistress, and so on. She’s a real part of the life out here. Everybody depends on her. Nobody would know what to do or how to live without her.”

“Where are her folks?” Jerry demanded. “What are they thinking of to let her live out here alone that way?”

“I guess she hasn’t any. But even if she had, why should they interfere? She is old enough to be trusted.”

Jerry shook his head. “It isn’t right, honey; or natural. No woman ought to live like that. She ought to have a man to take care of her. Every woman ought.”

Marion smiled at him. “That’s an old exploded idea,” she told him. “Women are different these days. Rose doesn’t need a man. She is perfectly well able to take care of herself. She can cook and sew, of course; but she can also drive

a nail and shoot a gun. And make a garden. And run a store. And even”—and Marion shivered—“kill a snake. Ugh! how can she? The horrible, slithery, awful things!”

Jerry was interested. “The old man was telling me something about the snakes they have out here. Some snakes, I’ll say!”

“Oh, they are awful!” This was Marion’s pet abhorrence, and she gave full reign to it. “They have the most awful varieties out here. Rattlers and all the worst poisonous kinds. Whenever you find a rock there is sure to be a nest of them. I’ve had the most terrible times keeping away from them. It seems as if the best sketching places have been preempted by them for their homes. Whenever I find something that I just must put into my sketch book Old Tom will come running after me and shoo me away. They don’t like to be disturbed. They resent it. And their resentment is apt to be fatal. They spit their venom out