



UNIVERSITÄTS-
BIBLIOTHEK
PADERBORN

Universitätsbibliothek Paderborn

The Works Of The Right Honourable Joseph Addison, Esq.

In Four Volumes

Addison, Joseph

London, 1721

Notes on some of the foregoing Stories in Ovid's Metamorphoses.

[urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53615](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:466:1-53615)

N O T E S
O N

*Some of the foregoing STORIES in
OVID'S Metamorphoses.*

On the Story of PHAETON, page 150:

THE Story of Phaeton is told with a greater air of majesty and grandeur than any other in all Ovid. It is indeed the most important subject he treats of, except the Deluge; and I cannot but believe that this is the Conflagration he hints at in the first Book;

Esse quoque in fati reminiscitur affore tempus
Quo mare, quo tellus, Correptaque Regia coeli
Ardeat et mundi moles operosa laboret.

(tho' the learned apply those verses to the future burning of the world) for it fully answers that description, if the

---Cœli miserere tui, circumspica utrumque,
Fumat uterque polus, ———

Fumat.

Fumat uterque polus — comes up to Correptaque Regia cœli—
Besides it is Ovid's custom to prepare the reader for a following story, by giving some intimations of it in a foregoing one, which was more particularly necessary to be done before he led us into so strange a story as this he is now upon.

P. 150. l. 7. For in the portal, &c.] *We have here the picture of the universe drawn in little.*

—Balænarumque prementem
 Ægeona suis immunia terga lacertis

Ægeon makes a diverting figure in it.

—Facies non omnibus Una
 Nec Diverfa tamen: qualem decet esse fororum.

The thought is very pretty, of giving Doris and her daughters such a difference in their looks as is natural to different persons, and yet such a likeness as show'd their affinity.

Terra viros, urbesque gerit, sylvasque, ferasque,
 Fluminaque, et Nymphas, et cætera numina Ruris.

The less important figures are well buddled together in the promiscuous description at the end, which very well represents what the Painters call a Groupe.

—Circum caput omne micantes
 Deposuit radios; propiusque accedere jussit.

P. 152. l. 9. And flung the blaze, &c.] *It gives us a great image of Phœbus, that the youth was forc'd to look on him at a distance,*

distance, and not able to approach him 'till he had lain aside the circle of rays that cast such a glory about his head. And indeed we may every where observe in Ovid, that he never fails of a due Loftiness in his Ideas, tho' he wants it in his Words. And this I think infinitely better than to have sublime expressions and mean thoughts, which is generally the true character of Claudian and Statius. But this is not consider'd by them who run down Ovid in the gross, for a low middle way of writing. What can be more simple and unador'd, than his description of Enceladus in the sixth book?

Nititur ille quidem, pugnatque resurgere sæpe,
 Dextra sed Ausonio manus est subjecta Peloro,
 Læva Pachyne tibi, Lilibæo crura premuntur,
 Degravat Ætna caput, sub quâ resupinus arenas
 Ejectat, flammamque fero vomit ore Typhæus.

But the image we have here is truly great and sublime, of a Giant vomiting out a tempest of fire, and heaving up all Sicily, with the body of an Island upon his Breast, and a vast Promontory on either Arm.

There are few books that have had worse Commentators on them than Ovid's Metamorphosis. Those of the graver sort have been wholly taken up in the Mythologies, and think they have appeared very judicious, if they have shewn us out of an old author that Ovid is mistaken in a Pedigree, or has turned such a person into a Wolf that ought to have been made a Tiger. Others have employed themselves on what never entered into the Poet's thoughts, in adapting a dull moral to every story, and making the persons of his poems to be only nick-names for such virtues or vices; particularly the pious Commentator, Alexander Ross, has dived deeper into our Author's design than any of the rest; for he discovers in
 him

him the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion, and finds almost in every page some typical representations of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. But if these writers have gone too deep, others have been wholly employed in the surface, most of them serving only to help out a School-boy in the construing part; or if they go out of their way, it is only to mark out the Gnomæ of the Author, as they call them, which are generally the heaviest pieces of a Poet, distinguished from the rest by Italian characters. The best of Ovid's Expositors is he that wrote for the Dauphin's use, who has very well shewn the meaning of the author, but seldom reflects on his beauties or imperfections; for in most places he rather acts the Geographer than the Critick, and instead of pointing out the fineness of a description, only tells you in what part of the world the place is situated. I shall therefore only consider Ovid under the character of a Poet, and endeavour to shew him impartially, without the usual prejudice of a Translator; which I am the more willing to do, because I believe such a comment would give the reader a truer taste of poetry than a comment on any other Poet would do; for in reflecting on the ancient Poets, men think they may venture to praise all they meet with in some, and scarce any thing in others; but Ovid is confest to have a mixture of both kinds, to have something of the best and worst poets, and by consequence to be the fairest subject for criticism.

P. 152. l. 22. My son, says he, &c.] Phoebus's speech is very nobly usher'd in, with the Terque quaterque Concutiens Illustre caput--- and well represents the danger and difficulty of the undertaking; but that which is its peculiar beauty, and makes it truly Ovid's, is the representing them just as a father would to his young son;

Per tamen adversi gradieris cornua Tauri,
Hæmoniosque arcus, violentique ora Leonis,

Savaque

Sævaque circuitu curvantem brachia longo
Scorpion, atque aliter curvantem brachia Cancrum.

for one while he scares him with bugbears in the way,

— Vasti quoque rector Olympi,
Qui fera terribili jaculetur fulmina Dextrâ
Non agat hos currus; *et quid Jove majus habetur?*

Deprecor hoc unum quod vero nomine Pœna,
Non honor est. *Pœnam, Phaeton, pro munere pascis.*

and in other places perfectly rattles like a Father, which by the way makes the length of the speech very natural, and concludes with all the fondness and concern of a tender Parent.

— Patrio Pater esse metu probor. aspice vultus
Ecce meos: utinamque oculos in pectore posses
Inferere, et Patrias intus deprendere curas! &c.

P. 155. l. 2. A golden axle, &c.] Ovid has more turns and repetitions in his words than any of the Latin Poets, which are always wonderfully easie and natural in him. The repetition of Aureus, and the transition to Argenteus, in the description of the Chariot, give these verses a great sweetness and majesty.

Aureus Axis erat, temo Aureus, Aurea summæ
Curvatura Rotæ; radiatorum Argenteus ordo.

Ibid. l. penult. Drive 'em not on directly, &c.] Several have endeavoured to vindicate Ovid against the old objection, that he mistakes the annual for the diurnal motion of the Sun. The Dauphin's notes tell us that Ovid knew very well the Sun did not pass

VOL. I.

H h

through

through all the Signs he names in one day, but that he makes Phœbus mention them only to frighten Phaeton from the undertaking. But though this may answer for what Phœbus says in his first speech, it cannot for what is said in this, where he is actually giving directions for his journey, and plainly

Sectus in obliquum est lato Curvamine limes.
Zonarumque trium contentus fine polumque
Effugit australem, junctamque Aquilonibus Arcton.

describes the motion through all the Zodiac.

P. 156. l. 15. And not my Chariot, &c.] Ovid's verse is *Consiliis non Curribus utere nostris*. This way of joining two such different Ideas as Chariot and Counsel to the same verb is mightily used by Ovid, but is a very low kind of wit, and has always in it a mixture of Pun, because the verb must be taken in a different sense when it is joined with one of the things, from what it has in conjunction with the other. Thus in the end of this story he tells you that Jupiter flung a thunderbolt at Phaeton—Pariterque, animâque, rotisque expulit Aurigam, where he makes a forced piece of Latin (*Animâ expulit aurigam*) that he may couple the Soul and the Wheels to the same verb.

P. 157. l. 14. Then the seven stars, &c.] I wonder none of Ovid's Commentators have taken notice of the oversight he has committed in this verse, where he makes the Triones grow warm before there was ever such a sign in the heavens; for he tells us in this very book, that Jupiter turned Calisto into this constellation, after he had repaired the ruins that Phaeton had made in the world.

Ibid. l. 11. The youth was in a maze, &c.] It is impossible for a man to be drawn in a greater confusion than Phaeton is; but
the

the Antithesis of light and darkness a little flattens the description.
Suntque Oculis tenebræ per tantum lumen abortæ.

P. 159. l. 12. *Athos and Tmolus, &c.*] Ovid has here, after the way of the old Poets, given us a catalogue of the mountains and rivers which were burnt. But, that I might not tire the English reader, I have left out some of them that make no figure in the description, and inverted the order of the rest according as the smoothness of my verse requir'd.

P. 160. l. 9. 'Twas then, they say, the swarthy Moor, &c.] This is the only Metamorphosis in all this long story, which contrary to custom is inserted in the middle of it. The Criticks may determine whether what follows it be not too great an excursion in him who proposes it as his whole design to let us know the changes of things. I dare say that if Ovid had not religiously observed the reports of the ancient Mythologists, we should have seen Phaeton turned into some creature or other that hates the light of the Sun; or perhaps into an Eagle that still takes pleasure to gaze on it.

P. 161. l. 1. *The frighted Nile, &c.*] Ovid has made a great many pleasant images towards the latter end of this story. His verses on the Nile

Nilus in extremum fugit perterritus orbem
Occulitque caput quod adhuc latet: ostia septem
Pulverulenta vacant, septem sine Flumine Valles.

are as noble as Virgil could have written; but then he ought not to have mentioned the channel of the sea afterwards,

Mare contrahitur, sicæque est campus Arenæ.

because the thought is too near the other. The image of the Cyclades is a very pretty one;

H h 2

---Quos

----Quos altum texerat æquor
Existunt montes, et sparsas Cycladas augent.

but to tell us that the Swans grew warm in Cæyster,

----Medio volucres caluere Cæystro.

and that the Dolphins durst not leap,

—Nec se super æquora curvi
Tollere consuetas audent Delphines in auras.

is intolerably trivial on so great a subject as the burning of the world.

Ibid. l. 23. The Earth at length, &c.] We have here a speech of the Earth, which will doubtless seem very unnatural to an English reader. It is I believe the boldest Profopopœia of any in the old Poets; or if it were never so natural, I cannot but think she speaks too much in any reason for one in her condition.

On EUROPA'S Rape, page 188.

P. 189. l. 3. The dignity of empire, &c.] *This story is prettily told, and very well brought in by those two serious lines,*

Non bene conveniunt, nec in unâ sede morantur,
Majestas et Amor. Sceptri gravitate relictâ, &c.

without which the whole fable would have appear'd very prophane.

P. 190. l. 15. The frighted Nymph looks, &c.] *This consternation and behaviour of Europa* — Elusam

— Elufam designat imagine tauri
 Europen: verum taurum, freta vera putaras.
 Ipsa videbatur terras spectare relictas,
 Et comites clamare suas, tactumque vereri
 Affilientis aquæ, timidæque reducere plantas.

is better described in Arachne's picture in the sixth book, than it is here; and in the beginning of Tatius his Clitophon and Leucippe, than in either place. It is indeed usual among the Latin Poets (who had more art and reflection than the Grecian) to take hold of all opportunities to describe the picture of any place or action, which they generally do better than they could the place or action it self; because in the description of a picture you have a double subject before you, either to describe the picture it self, or what is represented in it.

On the Stories in the Third Book, page 191.

F A B. I.

There is so great a variety in the arguments of the Metamorphoses, that he who would treat of 'em rightly, ought to be a master of all stiles, and every different way of writing. Ovid indeed shows himself most in a familiar story, where the chief grace is to be easie and natural; but wants neither strength of thought nor expression, when he endeavours after it, in the more sublime and manly subjects of his poem. In the present fable the Serpent is terribly described, and his behaviour very well imagined, the actions of both parties in the encounter are natural, and the language that represents them more strong and masculine than what we usually meet with in this Poet: if there be any faults in the narration, they are these, perhaps, which follow.

P. 193.

P. 193. l. 24. Spire above spire, &c.] Ovid, to make his Serpent more terrible, and to raise the character of his Champion, has given too great a loose to his imagination, and exceeded all the bounds of probability. He tells us, that when he raised up but half his body he over-looked a tall forest of Oaks, and that his whole body was as large as that of the Serpent in the skies. None but a madman would have attacked such a monster as this is described to be; nor can we have any notion of a mortal's standing against him. Virgil is not ashamed of making Æneas fly and tremble at the sight of a far less formidable foe, where he gives us the description of Polyphemus, in the third book; he knew very well that a monster was not a proper enemy for his hero to encounter: But we should certainly have seen Cadmus hewing down the Cyclops, had he fallen in Ovid's way; or if Statius's little Tydeus had been thrown on Sicily, it is probable he would not have spared one of the whole brotherhood.

-----Phœnicas, five illi tela parabant,
Sive fugam, five ipse timor prohibebat utrumque,
Occupat:-----

P. 194. l. 1. In vain the Tyrians, &c.] The Poet could not keep up his narration all along, in the grandeur and magnificence of an heroick stile: He has here sunk into the flatness of prose, where he tells us the behaviour of the Tyrians at the sight of the Serpent:

-----Tegimen direpta Leoni
Pellis erat; telum splendenti Lancea ferro,
Et Jaculum; teloque animus præstantior omni.

And in a few lines after lets drop the majesty of his verse, for the sake of one of his little turns. How does he languish in that which seems

seems a labour'd line? Tristia sanguineâ lambentem vulnera lingua. And what pains does he take to express the Serpent's breaking the force of the stroke, by shrinking back from it?

Sed leve vulnus erat, quia se retrahebat ab icu,
Læsaque colla dabat retrò, plagamque federe
Cedendo fecit, nec longius ire sinebat.

P. 196. l. ult. And flings the future, &c.] *The description of the men rising out of the ground is as beautiful a passage as any in Ovid: It strikes the imagination very strongly; we see their motion in the first part of it, and their multitude in the Messis virorum at last.*

P. 197. l. 5. The breathing harvest, &c.] *Messis clypeata virorum. The beauty in these words would have been greater, had only Messis virorum been expressed without clypeata; for the reader's mind would have been delighted with Two such different Ideas compounded together, but can scarce attend to such a complete image as is made out of all Three.*

*This way of mixing two different Ideas together in one image, as it is a great surprize to the reader, is a great beauty in poetry, if there be sufficient ground for it in the nature of the thing that is described. The Latin Poets are very full of it, especially the worst of them, for the more correct use it but sparingly, as indeed the nature of things will seldom afford a just occasion for it. When any thing we describe has accidentally in it some quality that seems repugnant to its nature, or is very extraordinary and uncommon in things of that species, such a compounded image as we are now speaking of is made, by turning this quality into an epithete of what we describe. Thus Claudian, having got a hollow ball of Chrystal with water in the midst of it for his subject, takes the advantage of considering the Chrystal as hard, stony, precious
Water,*

Water, and the Water as soft, fluid, imperfect Chrystal; and thus sports off above a dozen Epigrams, in setting his Words and Ideas at variance among one another. He has a great many beauties of this nature in him, but he gives himself up so much to this way of writing, that a man may easily know where to meet with them when he sees his subject, and often strains so hard for them that he many times makes his descriptions bombastic and unnatural. What work would he have made with Virgil's Golden Bough, had he been to describe it? We should certainly have seen the yellow Bark, golden Sprouts, radiant Leaves, blooming Metal, branching Gold, and all the Quarrels that could have been raised between words of such different natures: When we see Virgil contented with his Auri frondentis; and what is the same, though much finer expressed, -----Frondescit virga Metallo. This composition of different Ideas is often met with in a whole sentence, where circumstances are happily reconciled that seem wholly foreign to each other; and is often found among the Latin Poets, (for the Greeks wanted Art for it) in their descriptions of Pictures, Images, Dreams, Apparitions, Metamorphoses, and the like; where they bring together two such thwarting Ideas, by making one part of their descriptions relate to the representation, and the other to the thing that is represented. Of this nature is that verse, which, perhaps, is the Wittiest in Virgil; Attollens humeris Famamque et Fata nepotum, Æn. 8. where he describes Æneas carrying on his Shoulders the Reputation and Fortunes of his Posterity; which, though very odd and surprising, is plainly made out, when we consider how these disagreeing Ideas are reconciled, and his Posterity's fame and fate made portable by being engraven on the shield. Thus, when Ovid tells us that Pallas tore in pieces Arachne's work, where she had embroidered all the rapes that the Gods had committed, he says---Rupit cœlestia Crimina. I shall conclude this tedious reflection with an excellent stroke of this nature, out of Mr. Montagu's Poem to the King; where he tells us how the King of France would have

have been celebrated by his subjects, if he had ever gained such an honourable wound as King William's at the fight of the Boin:

His bleeding arm had furnish'd all their rooms,
And run for ever purple in the Looms.

F A B II.

P. 198. l. 3. Here Cadmus reign'd.] This is a pretty solemn transition to the story of Actæon, which is all naturally told. The Goddess, and her Maids undressing her, are described with diverting circumstances. Actæon's flight, confusion and griefs are passionately represented; but it is pity the whole Narration should be so carelessly closed up.

—————Ut abesse queruntur,
Nec capere oblatae segnem spectacula prædæ.
Vellent abesse quidem, sed adest, vellentque videre,
Non etiam sentire, Canum fera facta suorum.

P. 201. l. 18. A generous pack, &c.] I have not here troubled my self to call over Actæon's pack of dogs in rhyme: Spot and Whitefoot make but a mean figure in heroick verse, and the Greek names Ovid uses would sound a great deal worse. He closes up his own catalogue with a kind of a jest on it, Quosque referre mora est—which, by the way, is too light and full of humour for the other serious parts of this story.

This way of inserting Catalogues of proper names in their Poems, the Latins took from the Greeks, but have made them more pleasant than those they imitate, by adapting so many delightful characters to their persons names; in which part Ovid's copiousness of invention, and great insight into nature, has given him the precedence to all the Poets that ever came before or after him. The

smoothness of our English verse is too much lost by the repetition of proper names, which is otherwise very natural and absolutely necessary in some cases; as before a battel, to raise in our minds an answerable expectation of the event, and a lively Idea of the numbers that are engaged. For had Homer or Virgil only told us in two or three lines before their fights, that there were forty thousand of each side, our imagination could not possibly have been so affected, as when we see every Leader singled out, and every Regiment in a manner drawn up before our eyes.

F A B. III.

P. 203. l. 10. *How Semele, &c.] This is one of Ovid's finished stories. The transition to it is proper and unforced: Juno, in her two speeches, acts incomparably well the parts of a resenting Goddess and a tattling Nurse: Jupiter makes a very majestic figure with his Thunder and Lightning, but it is still such a one as shows who drew it; for who does not plainly discover Ovid's hand in the*

Quà tamen usque potest, vires sibi demere tentat.
Nec, quo centimanum dejecerat igne Typhoea,
Nunc armatur eo: nimium feritatis in illo.
Est aliud levius fulmen, cui dextra Cyclopi
Sævitiæ flammæque minus, minus addidit Iræ,
Tela Secunda vocant superi. —

P. 204. l. 12. *'Tis well, says she, &c.] Virgil has made a Beroë of one of his Goddesses in the fifth Æneid; but if we compare the speech she there makes with that of her name-sake in this story, we may find the genius of each Poet discovering it self in the language of the Nurse: Virgil's Iris could not have spoken more majestically in her own shape; but Juno is so much altered from her self in Ovid, that the Goddess is quite lost in the Old woman.*

F A B.

F. A. B. V.

P. 209. l. 7. She can't begin, &c.] *If playing on words be excusable in any Poem it is in this, where Echo is a speaker; but it is so mean a kind of wit, that if it deserves excuse it can claim no more.*

Mr. Locke, in his Essay of human understanding, has given us the best account of Wit in short, that can any where be met with. Wit, says he, lyes in the assemblage of Ideas, and putting those together with quickness and variety, wherein can be found any resemblance or congruity, thereby to make up pleasant pictures and agreeable visions in the fancy. Thus does True wit, as this incomparable Author observes, generally consist in the Likeness of Ideas, and is more or less Wit, as this likeness in Ideas is more surprizing and unexpected. But as True wit is nothing else but a similitude in Ideas, so is False wit the similitude in Words, whether it lyes in the likeness of Letters only, as in Anagram and Acrostic; or of Syllables, as in Doggrel rhimes; or whole Words, as Puns, Echo's, and the like. Beside these two kinds of False and True wit, there is another of a middle nature, that has something of both in it. When in two Ideas that have some resemblance with each other, and are both expressed by the same word, we make use of the ambiguity of the word to speak that of one Idea included under it, which is proper to the other. Thus, for example, most languages have hit on the word, which properly signifies Fire, to express Love by, (and therefore we may be sure there is some resemblance in the Ideas mankind have of them;) from hence the witty Poets of all languages, when they have once called Love a fire, consider it no longer as the passion, but speak of it under the notion of a real fire, and, as the turn of wit requires, make the same word in the same sentence stand for either of the Ideas that is annexed to it. When Ovid's Apollo falls in

love he burns with a new flame; when the Sea-Nymphs languish with this passion, they kindle in the water; the Greek Epigrammatist fell in love with one that flung a snow-ball at him, and therefore takes occasion to admire how fire could be thus concealed in snow. In short, whenever the Poet feels any thing in this love that resembles something in fire, he carries on this agreement into a kind of allegory; but if, as in the preceding instances, he finds any circumstance in his love contrary to the nature of fire, he calls his love a fire, and by joining this circumstance to it surprises his reader with a seeming contradiction. I should not have dwelt so long on this instance, had it not been so frequent in Ovid, who is the greatest admirer of this mixed wit of all the Ancients, as our Cowley is among the Moderns. Homer, Virgil, Horace, and the greatest Poets scorned it, as indeed it is only fit for Epigram and little copies of verses; one would wonder therefore how so sublime a genius as Milton could sometimes fall into it, in such a work as an Epic Poem. But we must attribute it to his humouring the vicious taste of the age he lived in, and the false judgment of our unlearned English readers in general, who have few of them a relish of the more masculine and noble beauties of Poetry.

F A B. VI.

Ovid seems particularly pleased with the subject of this story, but has notoriously fallen into a fault he is often taxed with, of not knowing when he has said enough, by his endeavouring to excel. How has he turned and twisted that one thought of Narcissus's being the person beloved, and the lover too?

Cunctaque miratur quibus est mirabilis ipse.

—Qui probat, ipse probatur.

Dumque petit petitur, pariterque incendit et ardet.

Atque oculos idem qui decipit incitat error.

Perque oculos perit ipse suos—

Uror amore mei flammam moveoque feroque, &c.

But we cannot meet with a better instance of the extravagance and wantonness of Ovid's fancy, than in that particular circumstance at the end of the story of Narcissus's gazing on his face after death in the Stygian waters. The design was very bold, of making a Boy fall in love with himself here on earth, but to torture him with the same passion after death, and not to let his ghost rest in quiet, was intolerably cruel and uncharitable.

P. 210. l. 10. But whilst within, &c.] Dumque fitim fedare cupit sitis altera crevit. We have here a touch of that Mixed wit I have before spoken of, but I think the measure of Pun in it outweighs the True wit; for if we express the thought in other words the turn is almost lost. This passage of Narcissus probably gave Milton the hint of applying it to Eve, though I think her surprize at the sight of her own face in the water, far more just and natural, than this of Narcissus. She was a raw unexperienced Being, just created, and therefore might easily be subject to the delusion; but Narcissus had been in the world sixteen years, was brother and son to the water-nymphs, and therefore to be supposed conversant with fountains long before this fatal mistake.

P. 211. l. 12. You trees, says he, &c.] Ovid is very justly celebrated for the passionate speeches of his Poem. They have generally abundance of Nature in them, but I leave it to better judgments to consider whether they are not often too witty and too tedious. The Poet never cares for smothering a good thought that comes in his way, and never thinks he can draw tears enough from his reader, by which means our grief is either diverted or spent before we come to his conclusion; for we cannot at the same time be delighted with the wit of the Poet, and concerned for the person that speaks it; and a great Critick has admirably well observed, Lamentationes debent esse breves et concisæ, nam Lachrymæ subito excrefcit, et difficile est Auditorem vel Lectorem in summo

summo animi affectu diu tenere. *Would any one in Narcissus's condition have cry'd out----Inopem me Copia fecit? Or can any thing be more unnatural than to turn off from his sorrows for the sake of a pretty reflection?*

O utinam nostro secedere corpore possem!
Votum in Amante novum; vellem, quod amamus, abesset.

None, I suppose, can be much grieved for one that is so witty on his own afflictions. But I think we may every where observe in Ovid, that he employs his Invention more than his Judgment, and speaks all the ingenious things that can be said on the subject, rather than those which are particularly proper to the person and circumstances of the speaker.

F A B. VII.

P. 215. l. 7. When *Pentheus* thus.] *There is a great deal of spirit and fire in this speech of Pentheus, but I believe none besides Ovid would have thought of the transformation of the Serpent's teeth for an incitement to the Thebans courage, when he desires them not to degenerate from their great Fore-father the Dragon, and draws a parallel between the behaviour of them both.*

Este, precor memores, quâ sitis stirpe creati,
Illiusque animos, qui multos perdidit unus,
Sumite serpentis; pro fontibus ille, lacuque
Interiit, at vos pro famâ vincite vestrâ.
Ille dedit Letho fortes, vos pellite molles,
Et patrium revocate Decus.----

F A B. VIII.

The story of Acetes has abundance of nature in all the parts of it, as well in the description of his own parentage and employment,

-as

as in that of the sailors characters and manners. But the short speeches scattered up and down in it, which make the Latin very natural, cannot appear so well in our language, which is much more stubborn and unpliant, and therefore are but as so many rubs in the story, that are still turning the narration out of its proper course. The transformation at the latter end is wonderfully beautiful.

F A B. IX.

Ovid has two very good Similes on Pentheus, where he compares him to a River in a former story, and to a War-horse in the present.

