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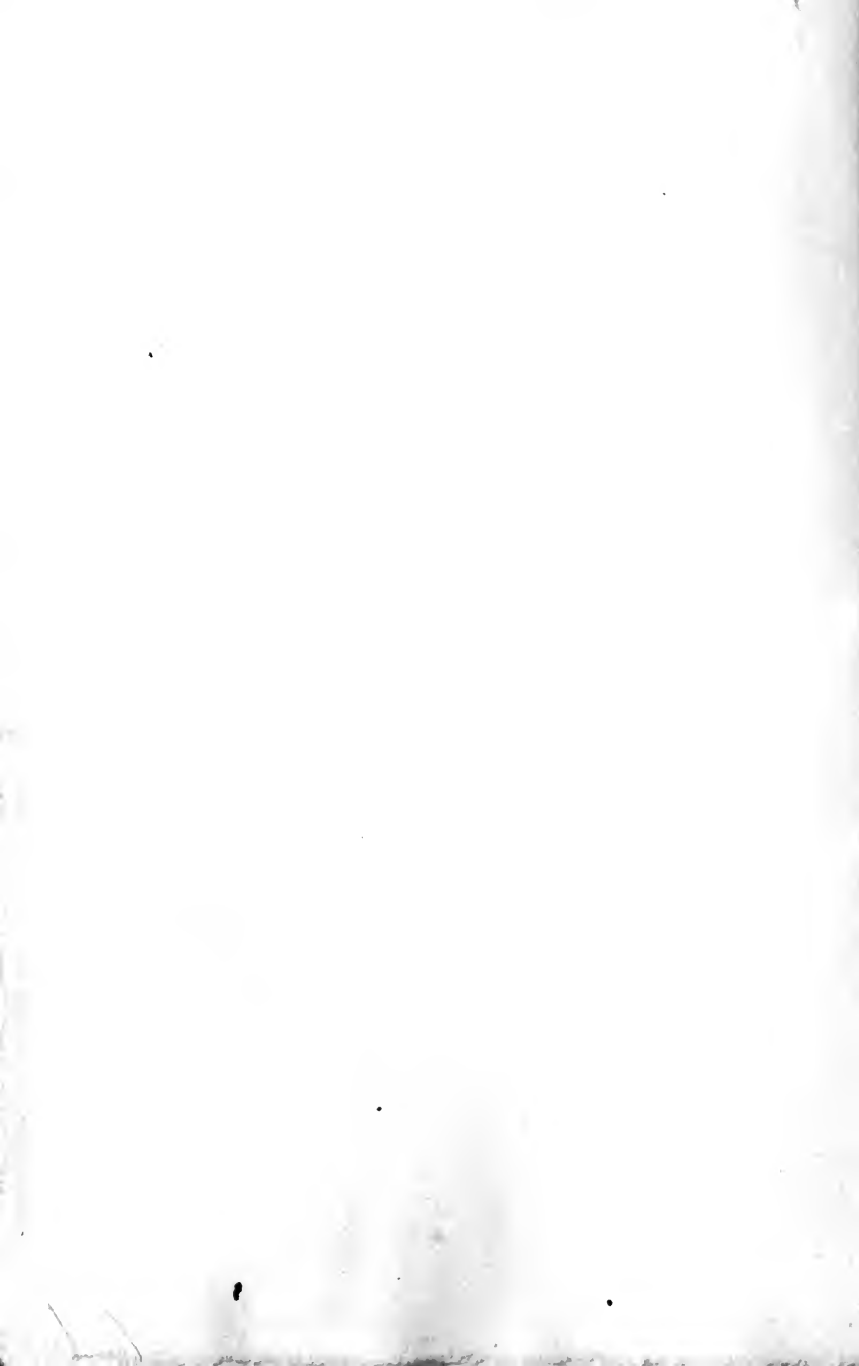


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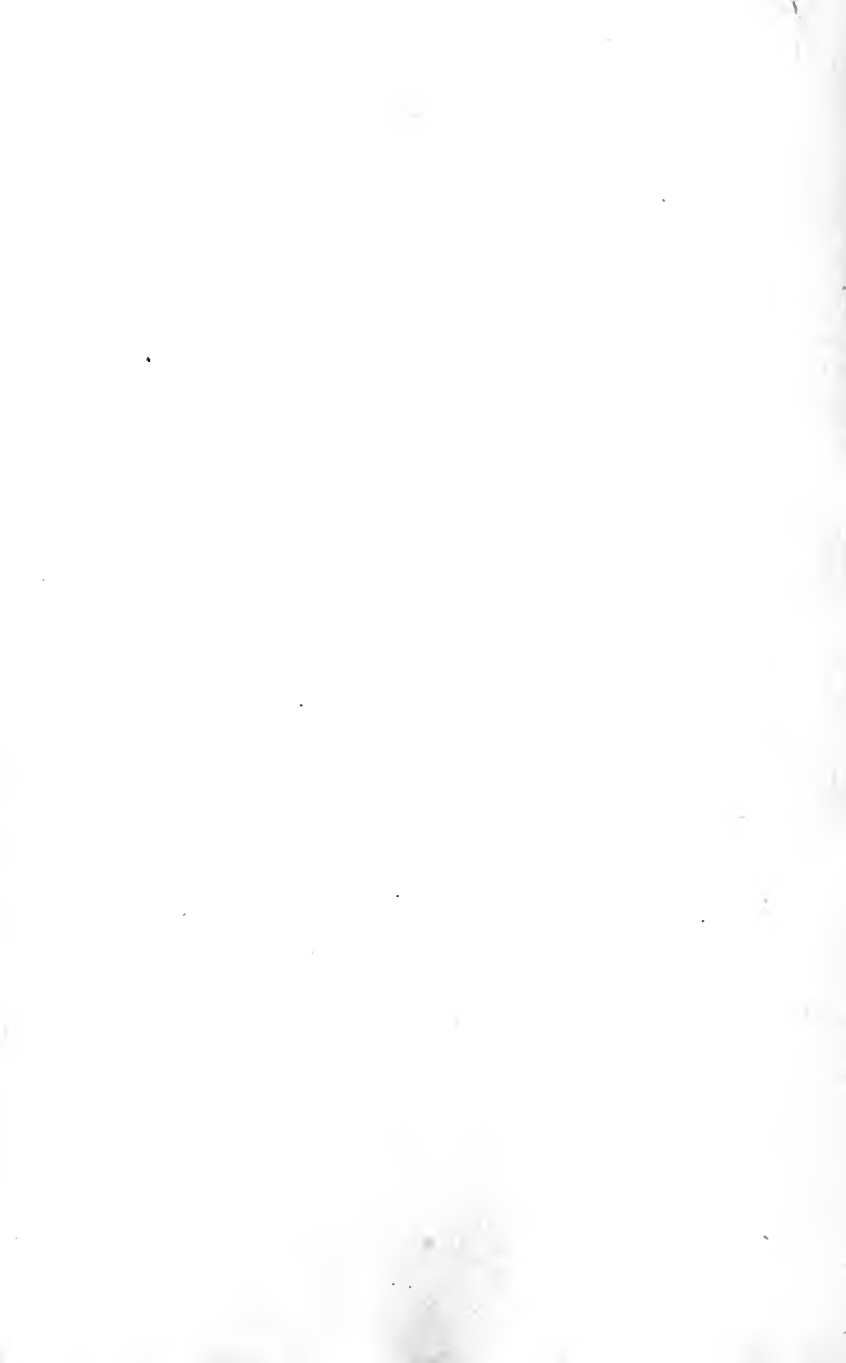


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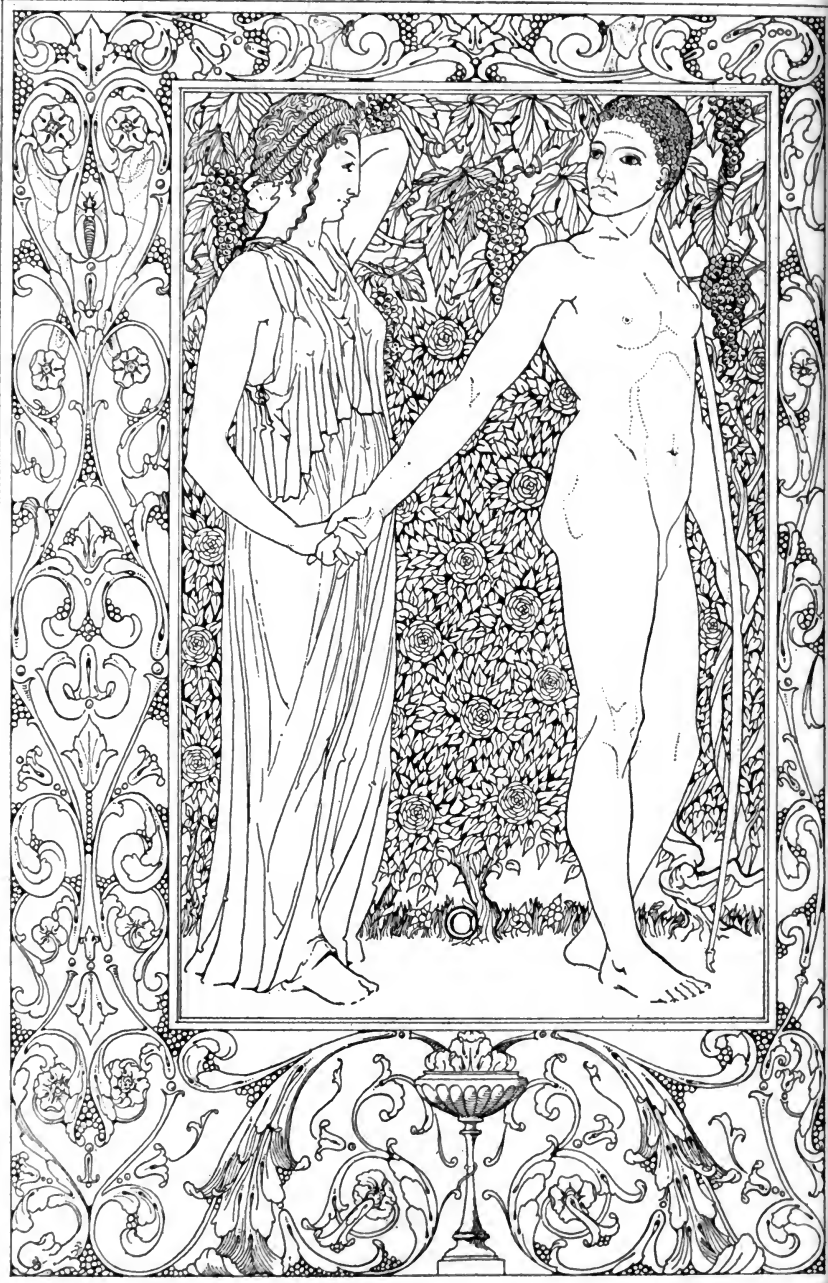
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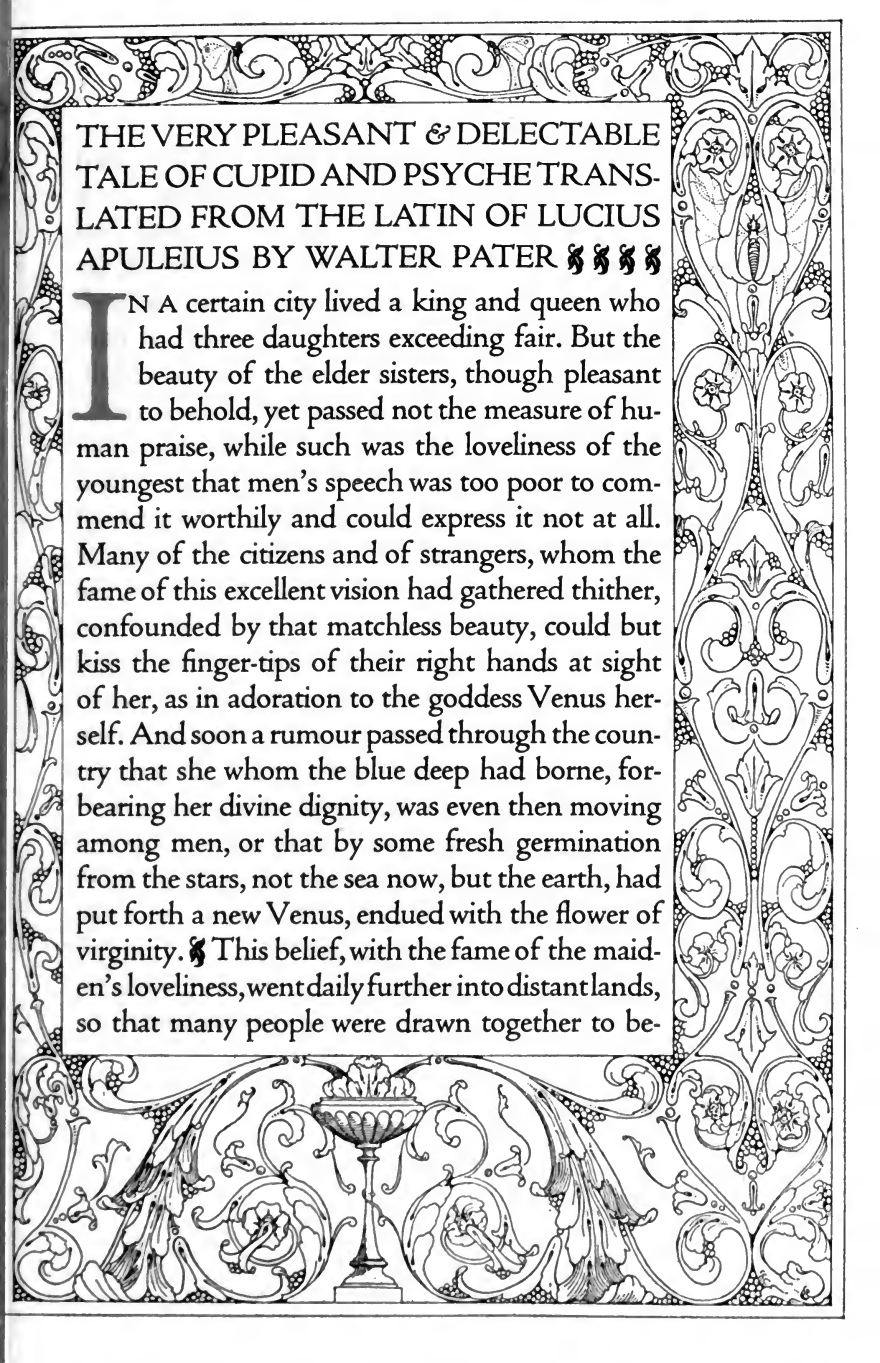






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THE VERY PLEASANT & DELECTABLE
TALE OF CUPID AND PSYCHE TRANS-
LATED FROM THE LATIN OF LUCIUS
APULEIUS BY WALTER PATER ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧

IN A certain city lived a king and queen who had three daughters exceeding fair. But the beauty of the elder sisters, though pleasant to behold, yet passed not the measure of human praise, while such was the loveliness of the youngest that men's speech was too poor to commend it worthily and could express it not at all. Many of the citizens and of strangers, whom the fame of this excellent vision had gathered thither, confounded by that matchless beauty, could but kiss the finger-tips of their right hands at sight of her, as in adoration to the goddess Venus herself. And soon a rumour passed through the country that she whom the blue deep had borne, forbearing her divine dignity, was even then moving among men, or that by some fresh germination from the stars, not the sea now, but the earth, had put forth a new Venus, endued with the flower of virginity. ❧ This belief, with the fame of the maiden's loveliness, went daily further into distant lands, so that many people were drawn together to be-

Cupid hold that glorious model of the age. Men sailed
& no longer to Paphos, to Cnidus or Cythera, to the
Psyche presence of the goddess Venus: her sacred rites
were neglected, her images stood uncrowned, the
cold ashes were left to disfigure her forsaken altars. It was to a maiden that men's prayers were offered, to a human countenance they looked, in propitiating so great a godhead: when the girl went forth in the morning they strewed flowers on her way, and the victims proper to that unseen goddess were presented as she passed along. This conveyance of divine worship to a mortal kindled meantime the anger of the true Venus. "Lo! now, the ancient parent of nature," she cried, "the fountain of all elements! Behold me, Venus, benign mother of the world, sharing my honours with a mortal maiden, while my name, built up in heaven, is profaned by the mean things of earth! Shall a perishable woman bear my image about with her? In vain did the shepherd of Ida prefer me! Yet shall she have little joy, whosoever she be, of her usurped and unlawful loveliness!" Thereupon she called to her that winged, bold boy, of evil ways, who wanders armed by night through men's houses, spoiling their marriages; & stirring yet more by her

speech his inborn wantonness, she led him to the city, and showed him Psyche as she walked. ¶ “I pray thee,” she said, “give thy mother a full revenge. Let this maid become the slave of an unworthy love.” Then, embracing him closely, she departed to the shore and took her throne upon the crest of the wave. And lo! at her unuttered will, her ocean-servants are in waiting: the daughters of Nereus are there singing their song, and Portunus, and Salacia, and the tiny charioteer of the dolphin, with a host of Tritons leaping through the billows. And one blows softly through his sounding sea-shell, another spreads a silken web against the sun, a third presents the mirror to the eyes of his mistress, while the others swim side by side below, drawing her chariot. Such was the escort of Venus as she went upon the sea. ¶ Psyche meantime, aware of her loveliness, had no fruit thereof. All people regarded and admired, but none sought her in marriage. It was but as on the finished work of the craftsman that they gazed upon that divine likeness. Her sisters, less fair than she, were happily wedded. She, even as a widow, sitting at home, wept over her desolation, hating in her heart the beauty in which all men

Cupid
&
Psyche

Cupid were pleased. ¶ And the king, supposing the gods
& were angry, inquired of the oracle of Apollo, and
Psyche Apollo answered him thus: "Let the damsel be
placed on the top of a certain mountain, adorned
as for the bed of marriage & of death. Look not
for a son-in-law of mortal birth; but for that evil
serpent-thing, by reason of whom even the gods
tremble and the shadows of Styx are afraid." ¶ So
the king returned home and made known the or-
acle to his wife. For many days she lamented, but
at last the fulfilment of the divine precept is ur-
gent upon her, and the company make ready to
conduct the maiden to her deadly bridal. And
now the nuptial torch gathers dark smoke and
ashes: the pleasant sound of the pipe is changed
into a cry: the marriage hymn concludes in a sor-
rowful wailing: below her yellow wedding-veil the
bride shook away her tears; insomuch that the
whole city was afflicted together at the ill-luck of
the stricken house. ¶ But the mandate of the god
impelled the hapless *Psyche* to her fate, and, these
solemnities being ended, the funeral of the living
soul goes forth, all the people following. *Psyche*,
bitterly weeping, assists not at her marriage but
at her own obsequies, and while the parents hesi-

tate to accomplish a thing so unholy the daughter cries to them: "Wherefore torment your luckless age by long weeping? This was the prize of my extraordinary beauty! When all people celebrated us with divine honours, and in one voice named the New Venus, it was then ye should have wept for me as one dead. Now at last I understand that that one name of Venus has been my ruin. Lead me and set me upon the appointed place. I am in haste to submit to that well-omened marriage, to behold that goodly spouse. Why delay the coming of him who was born for the destruction of the whole world?" ¶ She was silent, and with firm step went on the way. And they proceeded to the appointed place on a steep mountain, and left there the maiden alone, and took their way homewards dejectedly. The wretched parents, in their close-shut house, yielded themselves to perpetual night; while to Psyche, fearful and trembling and weeping sore upon the mountain-top, comes the gentle Zephyrus. He lifts her mildly, and, with vesture afloat on either side, bears her by his own soft breathing over the windings of the hills, and sets her lightly among the flowers in the bosom of a valley below. ¶ Psyche, in

*Cupid
&
Psyche*

Cupid those delicate grassy places, lying sweetly on her
& dewy bed, rested from the agitation of her soul
Psyche and arose in peace. And lo! a grove of mighty
trees, with a fount of water, clear as glass, in the
midst; and hard by the water, a dwelling-place,
built not by human hands but by some divine
cunning. One recognized, even at the entering, the
delightful hostelry of a god. Golden pillars sus-
tained the roof, arched most curiously in cedar-
wood and ivory. The walls were hidden under
wrought silver:—all tame and woodland creatures
leaping forward to the visitor's gaze. Wonderful
indeed was the craftsman, divine or half-divine,
who by the subtlety of his art had breathed so
wild a soul into the silver! The very pavement
was distinct with pictures in goodly stones. In the
glow of its precious metal the house is its own
daylight, having no need of the sun. Well might
it seem a place fashioned for the conversation of
gods with men! ¶ *Psyche*, drawn forward by the
delight of it, came near, and, her courage growing,
stood within the doorway. One by one, she ad-
mired the beautiful things she saw; and, most
wonderful of all! no lock, no chain, nor living
guardian protected that great treasure-house. But

as she gazed there came a voice—a voice, as it were unclothed of bodily vesture—“Mistress!” it said, “all these things are thine. Lie down, and relieve thy weariness, and rise again for the bath when thou wilt. We thy servants, whose voice thou hearest, will be beforehand with our service, and a royal feast shall be ready.” ¶ And Psyche understood that some divine care was providing, and, refreshed with sleep and the bath, sat down to the feast. Still she saw no one: only she heard words falling here and there, and had voices alone to serve her. And the feast being ended, one entered the chamber and sang to her unseen, while another struck the chords of a harp, invisible with him who played on it. Afterwards the sound of a company singing together came to her, but still so that none was present to sight; yet it appeared that a great multitude of singers was there. ¶ And the hour of evening inviting her, she climbed into the bed; and as the night was far advanced, behold a sound of a certain clemency approaches her. Then, fearing for her maidenhood in so great solitude, she trembled, and more than any evil she knew dreaded that she knew not. And now the husband, that unknown husband, drew near, and

Cupid

&

Psyche

Cupid ascended the couch, and made her his wife; and
& lo! before the rise of dawn he had departed hast-
Psyche ily. And the attendant voices ministered to the
needs of the newly married. And so it happened
with her for a long season. And as nature has
willed, this new thing, by continual use, became
a delight to her: the sound of the voice grew to
be her solace in that condition of loneliness and
uncertainty. ¶ One night the bridegroom spoke
thus to his beloved, "O Psyche, most pleasant
bride! Fortune is grown stern with us, and threat-
ens thee with mortal peril. Thy sisters, troubled at
the report of thy death and seeking some trace of
thee, will come to the mountain's top. But if by
chance their cries reach thee, answer not, neither
look forth at all, lest thou bring sorrow upon
me and destruction upon thyself." Then Psyche
promised that she would do according to his will.
But the bridegroom was fled away again with the
night. And all that day she spent in tears, repeat-
ing that she was now dead indeed, shut up in that
golden prison, powerless to console her sisters sor-
rowing after her, or to see their faces; & so went to
rest weeping. ¶ And after a while came the bride-
groom again, and lay down beside her, and em-

bracing her as she wept, complained, "Was this thy promise, my Psyche? What have I to hope from thee? Even in the arms of thy husband thou ceasest not from pain. Do now as thou wilt. Indulge thine own desire, though it seeks what will ruin thee. Yet wilt thou remember my warning, repentant too late." Then, protesting that she is like to die, she obtains from him that he suffer her to see her sisters, and present to them moreover what gifts she would of golden ornaments; but therewith he oftentimes advised her never at any time, yielding to pernicious counsel, to enquire concerning his bodily form, lest she fall, through unholy curiosity, from so great a height of fortune, nor feel ever his embrace again. "I would die a hundred times," she said, cheerful at last, "rather than be deprived of thy most sweet usage. I love thee as my own soul, beyond comparison even with Love himself. Only bid thy servant Zephyrus bring hither my sisters, as he brought me. My honeycomb! My husband! Thy Psyche's breath of life!" So he promised; and after the embraces of the night, ere the light appeared, vanished from the hands of his bride. ¶ And the sisters, coming to the place where Psyche was abandoned, wept

Cupid
&
Psyche

Cupid loudly among the rocks, and called upon her by
& name, so that the sound came down to her, and
Psyche running out of the palace distraught, she cried,
"Wherefore afflict your souls with lamentation?
I whom you mourn am here." Then, summoning
Zephyrus, she reminded him of her husband's
bidding; and he bare them down with a gentle
blast. "Enter now," she said, "into my house, and
relieve your sorrow in the company of Psyche your
sister." ¶ And Psyche displayed to them all the
treasures of the golden house, and its great family
of ministering voices, nursing in them the malice
which was already at their hearts. And at last one
of them asks curiously who the lord of that cele-
stial array may be, and what manner of man her
husband? And Psyche answered dissemblingly,
"A young man, handsome and mannerly, with a
goodly beard. For the most part he hunts upon
the mountains." And lest the secret should slip
from her in the way of further speech, loading
her sisters with gold and gems, she commanded
Zephyrus to bear them away. ¶ And they returned
home, on fire with envy. "See now the injustice
of fortune!" cried one. "We, the elder children,
are given like servants to be the wives of strang-

ers, while the youngest is possessed of so great riches, who scarcely knows how to use them. You saw, Sister! what a hoard of wealth lies in the house; what glittering gowns; what splendour of precious gems, besides all that gold trodden under foot. If she indeed hath, as she said, a bridegroom so goodly, then no one in all the world is happier. And it may be that this husband, being of divine nature, will make her too a goddess. Nay! so in truth it is. It was even thus she bore herself. Already she looks aloft and breathes divinity, who, though but a woman, has voices for her handmaidens, and can command the winds." "Think," answered the other, "how arrogantly she dealt with us, grudging us these trifling gifts out of all that store, and when our company became a burden, causing us to be hissed and driven away from her through the air! But I am no woman if she keep her hold on this great fortune; and if the insult done us has touched thee too, take we counsel together. Meanwhile let us hold our peace, and know nought of her, alive or dead. For they are not truly happy of whose happiness other folk are unaware." ¶ And the bridegroom, whom still she knows not, warns her thus a second time, as

Cupid he talks with her by night: "Seest thou what peril
& besets thee? Those cunning wolves have made
Psyche ready for thee their snares, of which the sum is
that they persuade thee to search into the fashion
of my countenance, the seeing of which, as I have
told thee often, will be the seeing of it no more
for ever. But do thou neither listen nor make an-
swer to aught regarding thy husband. Besides, we
have sown also the seed of our race. Even now
this bosom grows with a child to be born to us,
a child, if thou but keep our secret, of divine qual-
ity; if thou profane it, subject to death." And
Psyche was glad at the tidings, rejoicing in that
solace of a divine seed, and in the glory of that
pledge of love to be, and the dignity of the name
of mother. Anxiously she notes the increase of the
days, the waning months. And again, as he tarries
briefly beside her, the bridegroom repeats his warn-
ing: "Even now the sword is drawn with which
thy sisters seek thy life. Have pity on thyself,
sweet wife, and upon our child, and see not those
evil women again." But the sisters make their way
into the palace once more, crying to her in wily
tones, "O Psyche! and thou too wilt be a mother!
How great will be the joy at home! Happy indeed

shall we be to have the nursing of the golden child. Truly if he be answerable to the beauty of his parents, it will be a birth of Cupid himself." So, little by little, they stole upon the heart of their sister. She, meanwhile, bids the lyre to sound for their delight, and the playing is heard: she bids the pipes to move, the quire to sing, and the music and the singing come invisibly, soothing the mind of the listener with sweetest modulation. Yet not even thereby was their malice put to sleep: once more they seek to know what manner of husband she has, and whence that seed. And Psyche, simple overmuch, forgetful of her first story, answers, "My husband comes from a far country, trading for great sums. He is already of middle age, with whitening locks." And therewith she dismisses them again. And returning home upon the soft breath of Zephyrus one cried to the other, "What shall be said of so ugly a lie? He who was a young man with goodly beard is now in middle life. It must be that she told a false tale: else is she in very truth ignorant what manner of man he is. Howsoever it be, let us destroy her quickly. For if she indeed knows not, be sure that her bridegroom is one of the gods: it is a god she bears in

Cupid her womb. And let that be far from us! If she be
& called mother of a god, then will life be more than
Psyche I can bear." ¶ So, full of rage against her, they re-
turned to Psyche, and said to her craftily, "Thou
lives in an ignorant bliss, all incurious of thy real
danger. It is a deadly serpent, as we certainly know,
that comes to sleep at thy side. Remember the
words of the oracle, which declared thee destined
to a cruel beast. There are those who have seen
it at nightfall, coming back from its feeding. In
no long time, they say, it will end its blandish-
ments. It but waits for the babe to be formed in
thee, that it may devour thee by so much the
richer. If indeed the solitude of this musical place,
or it may be the loathsome commerce of a hidden
love, delight thee, we at least in sisterly piety have
done our part." And at last the unhappy Psyche,
simple and frail of soul, carried away by the terror
of their words, losing memory of her husband's
precepts and her own promise, brought upon her-
self a great calamity. Trembling and turning pale,
she answers them, "And they who tell those things,
it may be, speak the truth. For in very deed never
have I seen the face of my husband, nor know I at
all what manner of man he is. Always he frights

me diligently from the sight of him, threatening some great evil should I too curiously look upon his face. Do ye, if ye can help your sister in her great peril, stand by her now." § Her sisters answered her, "The way of safety we have well considered, and will teach thee. Take a sharp knife, and hide it in that part of the couch where thou art wont to lie: take also a lamp filled with oil, and set it privily behind the curtain. And when he shall have drawn up his coils into the accustomed place, and thou hearest him breathe in sleep, slip then from his side and discover the lamp, and, knife in hand, put forth thy strength, and strike off the serpent's head." And so they departed in haste. § And Psyche left alone (alone but for the furies which beset her) is tossed up and down in her distress, like a wave of the sea; and though her will is firm, yet, in the moment of putting hand to the deed, she falters, and is torn asunder by various apprehension of the great calamity upon her. She hastens and anon delays, now full of distrust, and now of angry courage: under one bodily form she loathes the monster and loves the bridegroom. But twilight ushers in the night; and at length in haste she makes ready for the terrible deed. Dark-

Cupid
&
Psyche

Cupid ness came, and the bridegroom; and he first, after
& some faint essay of love, falls into a deep sleep. ❧
Psyche And she, erewhile of no strength, the hard purpose of destiny assisting her, is confirmed in force. With lamp plucked forth, knife in hand, she put by her sex; and lo! as the secrets of the bed became manifest, the sweetest and most gentle of all creatures, Love himself, reclined there, in his own proper loveliness! At sight of him the very flame of the lamp kindled more gladly! But Psyche was afraid at the vision, and, faint of soul, trembled back upon her knees, and would have hidden the steel in her own bosom. But the knife slipped from her hand; and now, undone, yet oftentimes looking upon the beauty of that divine countenance, she lives again. She sees the locks of that golden head, pleasant with the unction of the gods, shed down in graceful entanglement behind and before, about the ruddy cheeks and white throat. The pinions of the winged god, yet fresh with the dew, are spotless upon his shoulders, the delicate plumage wavering over them as they lie at rest. Smooth he was, and, touched with light, worthy of Venus his mother. At the foot of the couch lay his bow and arrows, the instruments of his power, propitious

to men. ¶ And Psyche, gazing hungrily thereon, draws an arrow from the quiver, and trying the point upon her thumb, tremulous still, drave in the barb, so that a drop of blood came forth. Thus fell she, by her own act, and unaware, into the love of Love. Falling upon the bridegroom, with in-drawn breath, in a hurry of kisses from eager and open lips, she shuddered as she thought how brief that sleep might be. And it chanced that a drop of burning oil fell from the lamp upon the god's shoulder. Ah! maladroit minister of love, thus to wound him from whom all fire comes; though 'twas a lover, I trow, first devised thee, to have the fruit of his desire even in the darkness! At the touch of the fire the god started up, and beholding the overthrow of her faith, quietly took flight from her embraces. ¶ And Psyche, as he rose upon the wing, laid hold on him with her two hands, hanging upon him in his passage through the air, till she sinks to the earth through weariness. And as she lay there, the divine lover, tarrying still, lighted upon a cypress tree which grew near, and, from the top of it, spake thus to her, in great emotion. "Foolish one! unmindful of the command of Venus, my mother, who had devoted

Cupid
&
Psyche

Cupid thee to one of base degree, I fled to thee in his
& stead. Now know I that this was vainly done. Into
Psyche mine own flesh pierced mine arrow, and I made
thee my wife, only that I might seem a monster
beside thee—that thou shouldst seek to wound the
head wherein lay the eyes so full of love to thee!
Again and again, I thought to put thee on thy
guard concerning these things, and warned thee
in loving-kindness. Now I would but punish thee
by my flight hence.” And therewith he winged his
way into the deep sky. ¶ *Psyche*, prostrate upon
the earth, and following far as sight might reach
the flight of the bridegroom, wept and lamented;
and when the breadth of space had parted him
wholly from her, cast herself down from the bank
of a river which was nigh. But the stream, turning
gentle in honour of the god, put her forth again
unhurt upon its margin. And as it happened, *Pan*,
the rustic god, was sitting just then by the water-
side, embracing, in the body of a reed, the god-
dess *Canna*; teaching her to respond to him in all
varieties of slender sound. Hard by, his flock of
goats browsed at will. And the shaggy god called
her, wounded and outworn, kindly to him and
said, “I am but a rustic herdsman, pretty maiden,

yet wise, by favour of my great age and long ex-
perience; and if I guess truly by those faltering
steps, by thy sorrowful eyes and continual sigh-
ing, thou labourest with excess of love. Listen then
to me, and seek not death again, in the stream or
otherwise. Put aside thy woe, and turn thy prayers
to Cupid. He is in truth a delicate youth: win him
by the delicacy of thy service." § So the shepherd-
god spoke, and Psyche, answering nothing, but
with a reverence to his serviceable deity, went on
her way. And while she, in her search after Cupid,
wandered through many lands, he was lying in
the chamber of his mother, heart-sick. And the
white bird which floats over the waves plunged
in haste into the sea, and approaching Venus, as
she bathed, made known to her that her son lies
afflicted with some grievous hurt, doubtful of life.
And Venus cried, angrily, "My son, then, has a
mistress! And it is Psyche, who witched away my
beauty and was the rival of my godhead, whom
he loves!" § Therewith she issued from the sea,
and returning to her golden chamber, found there
the lad, sick, as she had heard, and cried from the
doorway, "Well done, truly! to trample thy moth-
er's precepts under foot, to spare my enemy that

Cupid

&

Psyche

Cupid cross of an unworthy love; nay, unite her to thy-
& self, child as thou art, that I might have a daugh-
Psyche ter-in-law who hates me! I will make thee repent
of thy sport, and the savour of thy marriage bitter.
There is one who shall chasten this body of thine,
put out thy torch and unstring thy bow. Not till
she has plucked forth that hair, into which so oft
these hands have smoothed the golden light, and
sheared away thy wings, shall I feel the injury done
me avenged." And with this she hastened in anger
from the doors. ¶ And Ceres and Juno met her,
and sought to know the meaning of her troubled
countenance. "Ye come in season," she cried; "I
pray you, find for me Psyche. It must needs be
that ye have heard the disgrace of my house." And
they, ignorant of what was done, would have
soothed her anger, saying, "What fault, Mistress,
hath thy son committed, that thou wouldst destroy
the girl he loves? Knowest thou not that he is now
of age? Because he wears his years so lightly must
he seem to thee ever but a child? Wilt thou for
ever thus pry into the pastimes of thy son, always
accusing his wantonness, and blaming in him those
delicate wiles which are all thine own?" Thus, in
secret fear of the boy's bow, did they seek to please

him with their gracious patronage. But Venus, angry at their light taking of her wrongs, turned her back upon them, and with hasty steps made her way once more to the sea. § Meanwhile Psyche, tost in soul, wandering hither and thither, rested not night or day in the pursuit of her husband, desiring, if she might not soothe his anger by the endearments of a wife, at the least to propitiate him with the prayers of a handmaid. And seeing a certain temple on the top of a high mountain, she said, "Who knows whether yonder place be not the abode of my lord?" Thither, therefore, she turned her steps, hastening now the more because desire and hope pressed her on, weary as she was with the labours of the way, and so, painfully measuring out the highest ridges of the mountain, drew near to the sacred couches. She sees ears of wheat, in heaps or twisted into chaplets; ears of barley also, with sickles and all the instruments of harvest, lying there in disorder, thrown at random from the hands of the labourers in the great heat. These she curiously sets apart, one by one, duly ordering them; for she said within herself, "I may not neglect the shrines, nor the holy service, of any god there be, but must rather win by suppli-

*Cupid
&
Psyche*

Cupid cation the kindly mercy of them all." ¶ And Ceres
& found her bending sadly upon her task, and cried
Psyche aloud, "Alas, Psyche! Venus, in the furiousness of
her anger, tracks thy footsteps through the world,
seeking for thee to pay her the utmost penalty;
and thou, thinking of anything rather than thine
own safety, hast taken on thee the care of what
belongs to me!" Then Psyche fell down at her
feet, and sweeping the floor with her hair, washing
the footsteps of the goddess in her tears, besought
her mercy, with many prayers:—"By the gladden-
ing rites of harvest, by the lighted lamps and mystic
marches of the Marriage and mysterious Inven-
tion of thy daughter Proserpine, and by all beside
that the holy place of Attica veils in silence, min-
ister, I pray thee, to the sorrowful heart of Psyche!
Suffer me to hide myself but for a few days among
the heaps of corn, till time have softened the anger
of the goddess, and my strength, out-worn in my
long travail, be recovered by a little rest." ¶ But
Ceres answered her, "Truly thy tears move me, and
I would fain help thee; only I dare not incur the
ill-will of my kinswoman. Depart hence as quickly
as may be." And Psyche, repelled against hope,
afflicted now with twofold sorrow, making her

way back again, beheld among the half-lighted *Cupid*
woods of the valley below a sanctuary builded with *&*
cunning art. And that she might lose no way of *Psyche*
hope, howsoever doubtful, she drew near to the
sacred doors. She sees there gifts of price, and
garments fixed upon the door-posts and to the
branches of the trees, wrought with letters of gold
which told the name of the goddess to whom they
were dedicated, with thanksgiving for that she had
done. So, with bent knee and hands laid about the
glowing altar, she prayed saying, "Sister and spouse
of Jupiter! be thou to these my desperate fortunes,
Juno the Auspicious! I know that thou dost will-
ingly help those in travail with child; deliver
me from the peril that is upon me." And as she
prayed thus, Juno, in the majesty of her godhead,
was straightway present, and answered, "Would
that I might incline favourably to thee; but against
the will of Venus, whom I have ever loved as a
daughter, I may not, for very shame, grant thy
prayer." ¶ And Psyche, dismayed by this new ship-
wreck of her hope, communed thus with herself,
"Whither, from the midst of the snares that be-
set me, shall I take my way once more? In what
dark solitude shall I hide me from the all-seeing

Cupid eye of Venus? What if I put on at length a man's
& courage, and yielding myself unto her as my mis-
Psyche tress, soften by a humility not yet too late the
fierceness of her purpose? Who knows but that I
may find him also whom my soul seeketh after,
in the abode of his mother?" ¶ And Venus, re-
nouncing all earthly aid in her search, prepared
to return to heaven. She ordered the chariot to
be made ready, wrought for her by Vulcan as a
marriage-gift, with a cunning of hand which had
left his work so much the richer by the weight of
gold it lost under his tool. From the multitude
which housed about the bed-chamber of their mis-
tress, white doves came forth, and with joyful mo-
tions bent their painted necks beneath the yoke.
Behind it, with playful riot, the sparrows sped on-
ward, & other birds sweet of song, making known
by their soft notes the approach of the goddess.
Eagle and cruel hawk alarmed not the quireful
family of Venus. And the clouds broke away, as
the uttermost ether opened to receive her, daughter
and goddess, with great joy. ¶ And Venus passed
straightway to the house of Jupiter to beg from
him the service of Mercury, the god of speech.
And Jupiter refused not her prayer. And Venus

and Mercury descended from heaven together; *Cupid*
and as they went, the former said to the latter, &
“Thou knowest, my brother of Arcady, that never *Psyche*
at any time have I done anything without thy help;
for how long time, moreover, I have sought a cer-
tain maiden in vain. And now nought remains but
that, by thy heraldry, I proclaim a reward for whom-
soever shall find her. Do thou my bidding quickly.”
And therewith she conveyed to him a little scrip,
in the which was written the name of Psyche, with
other things; and so returned home. ¶ And Mer-
cury failed not in his office; but departing into all
lands, proclaimed that whosoever delivered up to
Venus the fugitive girl, should receive from herself
seven kisses—one thereof full of the inmost honey
of her throat. With that the doubt of Psyche was
ended. And now, as she came near to the doors
of Venus, one of the household, whose name was
Use-and-Wont, ran out to her crying, “Hast thou
learned, Wicked Maid! now at last! that thou hast
a mistress?” and seizing her roughly by the hair,
drew her into the presence of Venus. And when
Venus saw her, she cried out, saying, “Thou hast
deigned then to make thy salutations to thy mother-
in-law. Now will I in turn treat thee as becometh a

Cupid dutiful daughter-in-law!" § And she took barley &
& millet and poppy-seed, every kind of grain and seed,
Psyche and mixed them together, and laughed, and said
to her: "Methinks so plain a maiden can earn lovers
only by industrious ministry: now will I also
make trial of thy service. Sort me this heap of
seed, the one kind from the others, grain by grain;
and get thy task done before the evening." And
Psyche, stunned by the cruelty of her bidding, was
silent, and moved not her hand to the inextricable
heap. And there came forth a little ant, which had
understanding of the difficulty of her task, and
took pity upon the consort of the god of Love;
and he ran deftly hither and thither, and called
together the whole army of his fellows. "Have
pity," he cried, "nimble scholars of the Earth,
Mother of all things!—have pity upon the wife
of Love, and hasten to help her in her perilous
effort." Then, one upon the other, the hosts of
the insect people hurried together; and they sorted
asunder the whole heap of seed, separating every
grain after its kind, and so departed quickly out
of sight. § And at nightfall Venus returned, and
seeing that task finished with so wonderful dili-
gence, she cried, "The work is not thine, thou

naughty maid, but his in whose eyes thou hast found favour." And calling her again in the morning, "See now the grove," she said, "beyond yonder torrent. Certain sheep feed there, whose fleeces shine with gold. Fetch me straightway a lock of that precious stuff, having gotten it as thou mayst."

¶ And Psyche went forth willingly, not to obey the command of Venus, but even to seek a rest from her labour in the depths of the river. But from the river, the green reed, lowly mother of music, spake to her: "O Psyche! pollute not these waters by self-destruction, nor approach that terrible flock; for, as the heat groweth, they wax fierce. Lie down under yon plane-tree, till the quiet of the river's breath have soothed them. Thereafter thou mayst shake down the fleecy gold from the trees of the grove, for it holdeth by the leaves."

¶ And Psyche, instructed thus by the simple reed, in the humanity of its heart, filled her bosom with the soft golden stuff, and returned to Venus. But the goddess smiled bitterly, and said to her, "Well know I who was the author of this thing also. I will make further trial of thy discretion, and the boldness of thy heart. Seest thou the utmost peak of yonder steep mountain? The dark stream which

Cupid
&
Psyche

Cupid flows down thence waters the Stygian fields, and
& swells the flood of Cocytus. Bring me now, in this
Psyche little urn, a draught from its innermost source.”

And therewith she put into her hands a vessel of wrought crystal. ¶ And Psyche set forth in haste on her way to the mountain, looking there at last to find the end of her hapless life. But when she came to the region which borders on the cliff that was showed to her, she understood the deadly nature of her task. From a great rock, steep and slippery, a horrible river of water poured forth, falling straightway by a channel exceeding narrow into the unseen gulf below. And lo! creeping from the rocks on either hand, angry serpents, with their long necks and sleepless eyes. The very waters found a voice and bade her depart, in smothered cries of, *Depart hence!* and *What doest thou here? Look around thee!* and *Destruction is upon thee!* And then sense left her, in the immensity of her peril, as one changed to stone. ¶ Yet not even then did the distress of this innocent soul escape the steady eye of a gentle providence. For the bird of Jupiter spread his wings and took flight to her, and asked her, “Didst thou think, simple one, even thou! that thou couldst steal one drop of that

relentless stream, the holy river of Styx, terrible even to the gods? But give me thine urn." And the bird took the urn, and filled it at the source, and returned to her quickly from among the teeth of the serpents, bringing with him of the waters, all unwilling—nay! warning him to depart away and not molest them. ¶ And she, receiving the urn with great joy, ran back quickly that she might deliver it to Venus, and yet again satisfied not the angry goddess. "My child!" she said, "in this one thing further must thou serve me. Take now this tiny casket, and get thee down even unto hell, and deliver it to Proserpine. Tell her that Venus would have of her beauty so much at least as may suffice for but one day's use, that beauty she possessed erewhile being foreworn and spoiled, through her tendance upon the sick-bed of her son; and be not slow in returning." ¶ And Psyche perceived there the last ebbing of her fortune—that she was now thrust openly upon death, who must go down, of her own motion, to Hades and the Shades. And straightway she climbed to the top of an exceeding high tower, thinking within herself, "I will cast myself down thence: so shall I descend most quickly into the kingdom of the dead." And the

Cupid
&
Psyche

Cupid tower, again, broke forth into speech: "Wretched
& Maid! Wretched Maid! Wilt thou destroy thy-
Psyche self? If the breath quit thy body, then wilt thou
indeed go down into Hades, but by no means re-
turn hither. Listen to me. Among the pathless
wilds not far from this place lies a certain moun-
tain, and therein one of hell's vent-holes. Through
the breach a rough way lies open, following which
thou wilt come, by straight course, to the castle of
Orcus. And thou must not go empty-handed. Take
in each hand a morsel of barley-bread, soaked in
hydromel; and in thy mouth two pieces of money.
And when thou shalt be now well onward in the
way of death, then wilt thou overtake a lame ass
laden with wood, and a lame driver, who will pray
thee reach him certain cords to fasten the burden
which is falling from the ass: but be thou cautious
to pass on in silence. And soon as thou comest to
the river of the dead, Charon, in that crazy bark
he hath, will put thee over upon the further side.
There is greed even among the dead: and thou
shalt deliver to him, for the ferrying, one of those
two pieces of money, in such wise that he take it
with his hand from between thy lips. And as thou
passest over the stream, a dead old man, rising on

the water, will put up to thee his mouldering hands, *Cupid*
and pray thee draw him into the ferry-boat. But &
beware thou yield not to unlawful pity. ¶ "When *Psyche*
thou shalt be come over, and art upon the cause-
way, certain aged women, spinning, will cry to thee
to lend thy hand to their work; and beware again
that thou take no part therein; for this also is the
snare of Venus, whereby she would cause thee to
cast away one at least of those cakes thou bearest
in thy hands. And think not that a slight matter;
for the loss of either one of them will be to thee
the losing of the light of day. For a watch-dog ex-
ceeding fierce lies ever before the threshold of that
lonely house of Proserpine. Close his mouth with
one of thy cakes; so shalt thou pass by him, and
enter straightway into the presence of Proserpine
herself. Then do thou deliver thy message, and
taking what she shall give thee, return back again;
offering to the watch-dog the other cake, and to
the ferryman that other piece of money thou hast
in thy mouth. After this manner mayst thou re-
turn again beneath the stars. But withal, I charge
thee, think not to look into, nor open, the casket
thou bearest, with that treasure of the beauty of the
divine countenance hidden therein." ¶ So spake

Cupid the stones of the tower; and *Psyche* delayed not,
& but proceeding diligently after the manner en-
Psyche joined, entered into the house of Proserpine, at
whose feet she sat down humbly, and would nei-
ther the delicate couch nor that divine food the
goddess offered her, but did straightway the busi-
ness of Venus. And Proserpine filled the casket
secretly, and shut the lid, and delivered it to *Psy-
che*, who fled therewith from Hades with new
strength. But coming back into the light of day,
even as she hasted now to the ending of her ser-
vice, she was seized by a rash curiosity. "Lo! now,"
she said within herself, "my simpleness! who bear-
ing in my hands the divine loveliness, heed not to
touch myself with a particle at least therefrom,
that I may please the more, by the favour of it,
my fair one, my beloved." Even as she spoke she
lifted the lid; and behold! within, neither beauty,
nor anything beside, save sleep only, the sleep of
the dead, which took hold upon her, filling all her
members with its drowsy vapour, so that she lay
down in the way and moved not, as in the slum-
ber of death. ¶ And *Cupid* being healed of his
wound, because he would endure no longer the
absence of her he loved, gliding through the nar-

row window of the chamber wherein he was hold-
en, his pinions being now repaired by a little rest,
fled forth swiftly upon them, and coming to the
place where Psyche was, shook that sleep away
from her, and set him in his prison again, awak-
ing her with the innocent point of his arrow. "Lo!
thine old error again," he said, "which had like
once more to have destroyed thee! But do thou now
what is lacking of the command of my mother:
the rest shall be my care." With these words, the
lover rose upon the air; and being consumed in-
wardly with the greatness of his love, penetrated
with vehement wing into the highest place of heav-
en, to lay his cause before the father of the gods.
And the father of gods took his hand in his, and
kissed his face, and said to him, "At no time, my
son, hast thou regarded me with due honour. Often
hast thou vexed my bosom, wherein lies the dis-
position of the stars, with those busy darts of
thine. Nevertheless, because thou hast grown up
between these mine hands, I will accomplish thy
desire." And straightway he bade Mercury call the
gods together; and, the council-chamber being
filled, sitting upon a high throne, "Ye gods," he
said, "all ye whose names are in the white book

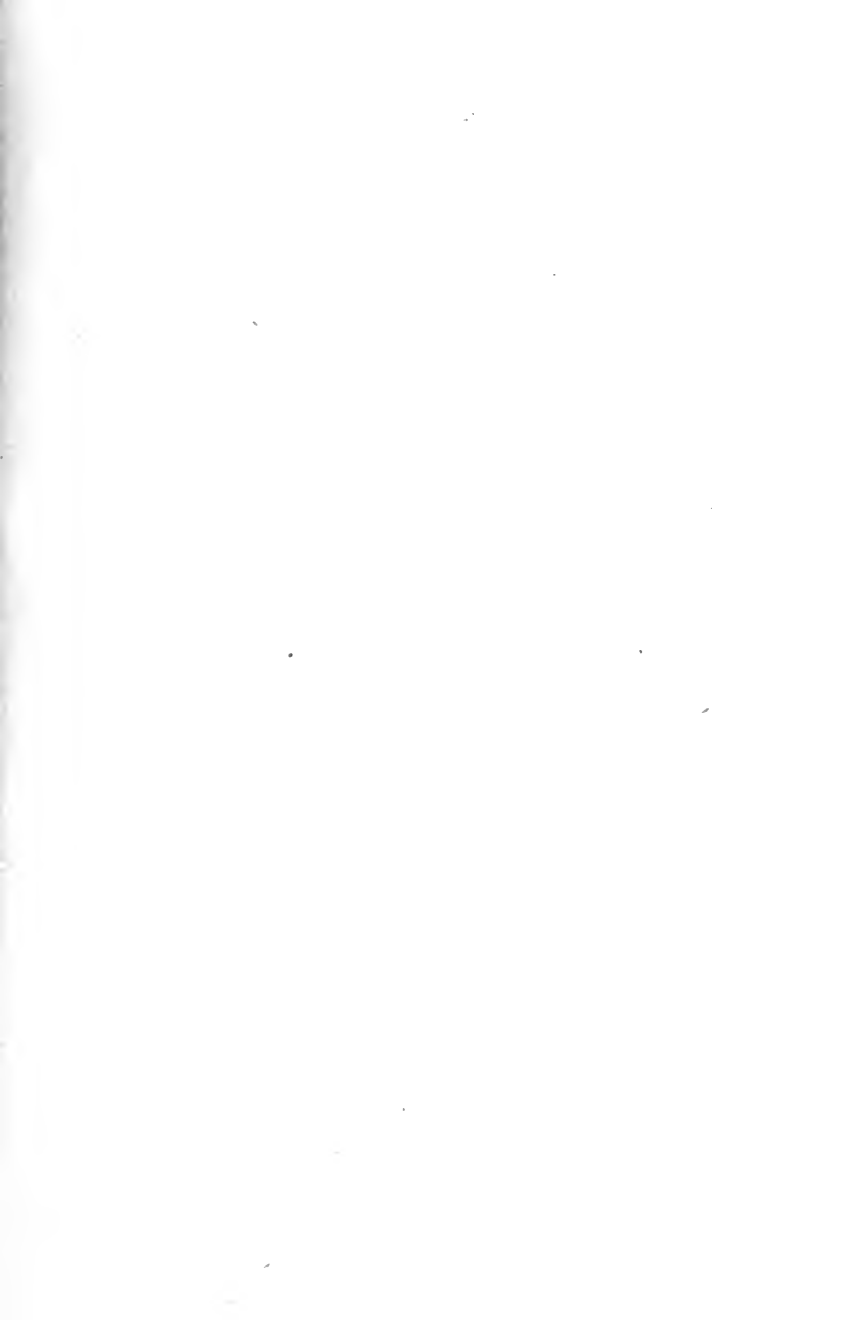
*Cupid
&
Psyche*

Cupid of the Muses, ye know yonder lad. It seems good
& to me that his youthful heats should by some means
Psyche be restrained. And that all occasion may be taken
from him, I would even confine him in the bonds
of marriage. He has chosen and embraced a mortal
maiden. Let him have fruit of his love, and pos-
sess her for ever." ¶ Thereupon he bade Mercury
produce Psyche in heaven; and holding out to her
his ambrosial cup, "Take it," he said, "and live for
ever; nor shall Cupid ever depart from thee." And
the gods sat down together to the marriage-feast.
On the first couch lay the bridegroom, and Psyche
in his bosom. His rustic serving-boy bare the wine
to Jupiter; and Bacchus to the rest. The Seasons
crimsoned all things with their roses. Apollo sang
to the lyre, while a little Pan prattled on his reeds,
and Venus danced very sweetly to the soft music.
Thus, with due rites, did Psyche pass into the
power of Cupid; and from them was born the
daughter whom men called Voluptas. ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶

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