

OF THE NAMES OF RIVERS AND MOUNTAINS, AND OF  
SUCH THINGS AS ARE TO BE FOUND THEREIN.\*

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I. HYDASPES.

THIS is a river of India, which falls with an extraordinary swift stream into the Saronitic Syrtis. Chrysispe, by the impulse of Venus, whom she had offended, fell in love with her father Hydaspes, and not being able to curb her preternatural desires, by the help of her nurse, in the dead of the night got to his bed and received his caresses; after which, the king proving unfortunate in his affairs, he buried alive the old bawd that had betrayed him, and crucified his daughter. Nevertheless such was the excess of his grief for the loss of Chrysispe, that he threw himself into the river Indus, which was afterwards called by his name Hydaspes.

Moreover in this river there grows a stone, which is called lychnis, which resembles the color of oil, and is very bright in appearance. And when they are searching after it, which they do when the moon increases, the pipers play all the while. Nor is it to be worn by any but the richer sort. Also near that part of the river which is called Pylae, there grows an herb which is very like a heliotrope, with the juice of which the people anoint their skins to prevent sunburning, and to secure them against the scorching of the excessive heat.

\* A very slight inspection of this strange treatise will convince the reader that it is justly placed among the Pseudoplutarchea. It is reprinted here merely because it was included in the original translation. (G.)

The natives whenever they take their virgins tardy, nail them to a wooden cross, and fling them into this river, singing at the same time in their own language a hymn to Venus. Every year also they bury a condemned old woman near the top of the hill called Therogonos; at which time an infinite multitude of creeping creatures come down from the top of the hill, and devour the insects that hover about the buried carcass. This Chrysermus relates in his History of India, though Archelaus gives a more exact account of these things in his Treatise of Rivers.

Near to this river lies the mountain Elephas, so called upon this occasion. When Alexander the Macedonian advanced with his army into India, and the natives were resolved to withstand him with all their force, the elephant upon which Porus, king of that region, was wont to ride, being of a sudden stung with a gad-bee, ran up to the top of the mountain of the sun, and there uttered these words distinctly in human speech: "O king, my lord, descended from the race of Gegasius, forbear to attempt any thing against Alexander, for he is descended from Jupiter." And having so said, he presently died. Which when Porus understood, afraid of Alexander, he fell at his feet and sued for peace. Which when he had obtained, he called the mountain Elephas; — as Dercyllus testifies in his Third Book of Mountains.

## II. ISMENUS.

ISMENUS is a river of Boeotia, that washes the walls of Thebes. It was formerly called the foot of Cadmus, upon this occasion. When Cadmus had slain the dragon which kept the fountain of Mars, he was afraid to taste of the water, believing it was poisoned; which forced him to wander about in search of another fountain to allay his

thirst. At length, by the help of Minerva, he came to the Corycian den, where his right leg stuck deep in the mire. And from that hole it was that, after he had pulled his leg out again, sprung a fair river, which the hero, after the solemnity of his sacrifices performed, called by the name of Cadmus's foot.

Some time after, Ismenus, the son of Amphion and Niobe, being wounded by Apollo and in great pain, threw himself into the said river, which was then from his name called Ismenus; — as Sostratus relates in his Second Book of Rivers.

Near to this river lies the mountain Cithaeron, formerly called Asterion for this reason. Boeotus the son of Neptune was desirous, of two noble ladies, to marry her that should be most beneficial to him; and while he tarried for both in the night-time upon the top of a certain nameless mountain, of a sudden a star fell from heaven upon the shoulders of Eurythemiste, and immediately vanished. Upon which Boeotus, understanding the meaning of the prodigy, married the virgin, and called the mountain Asterion from the accident that befell him. Afterwards it was called Cithaeron upon this occasion. Tisiphone, one of the Furies, falling in love with a most beautiful youth whose name was Cithaeron, and not being able to curb the impatience of her desires, declared her affection to him in a letter, to which he would not return any answer. Whereupon the Fury, missing her design, pulled one of the serpents from her locks, and flung it upon the young lad as he was keeping his sheep on the top of the mountain Asterion; where the serpent twining about his neck choked him to death. And thereupon by the will of the Gods the mountain was called Cithaeron; — as Leo of Byzantium writes in his History of Boeotia.

But Hermesianax of Cyprus tells the story quite otherwise. For he says, that Helicon and Cithaeron were two

brothers, quite different in their dispositions. For Helicon was affable and mild, and cherished his aged parents. But Cithaeron, being covetous and greedily gaping after the estate, first killed his father, and then treacherously threw his brother down from a steep precipice, but in striving together, fell himself along with him. Whence, by the providence of the Gods, the names of both the mountains were changed. Cithaeron, by reason of his impiety, became the haunt of the Furies. Helicon, for the young man's love to his parents, became the habitation of the Muses.

### III. HEBRUS.

HEBRUS is a river of Thrace, deriving its former name of Rhombus from the many gulfs and whirlpools in the water.

Cassander, king of that region, having married Crotonice, had by her a son whom he named Hebrus. But then being divorced from his first wife, he married Damasippe, the daughter of Atrax, and brought her home over his son's head; with whom the mother-in-law falling in love, invited him by letters to her embraces. But he, avoiding his mother-in-law as a Fury, gave himself over to the sport of hunting. On the other side the impious woman, missing her purpose, belied the chaste youth, and accused him of attempting to ravish her. Upon this Cassander, raging with jealousy, flew to the wood in a wild fury, and with his sword drawn pursued his son, as one that treacherously sought to defile his father's bed. Upon which the son, finding he could no way escape his father's wrath, threw himself into the river Rhombus, which was afterwards called Hebrus from the name of the young man;— as Timotheus testifies in his Eleventh Book of Rivers.

Near to this river lies the mountain Pangaeus, so called upon this occasion. Pangaeus, the son of Mars and Crito-

bule, by a mistake lay with his own daughter ; which perplexed him to that degree that he fled to the Carmanian mountain, where, overwhelmed with a sorrow that he could not master, he drew his sword and slew himself. Whence, by the providence of the Gods, the place was called Pangaeus.

In the river before mentioned, grows an herb not much unlike to origanum ; the tops of which the Thracians cropping off burn upon a fire, and after they are filled with the fruits of Ceres, they hold their heads over the smoke, and snuff it up into their nostrils, letting it go down their throats, till at last they fall into a profound sleep.

Also upon the mountain Pangaeus grows an herb, which is called the harp upon this occasion. The women that tore Orpheus in pieces cast his limbs into the river Hebrus ; and his head being changed, the whole body was turned into the shape of a dragon. But as for his harp, such was the will of Apollo, it remained in the same form. And from the streaming blood grew up the herb which was called the harp ; which, during the solemnity of the sacrifices to Bacchus, sends forth a sound like that of an harp when played upon. At which time the natives, being covered with the skins of young hinds and waving their thyrsuses in their hands, sing a hymn, of which these are part of the words,

When wisdom all in vain must be,  
Then be not wise at all ;—

as Clitonymus reports, in his Third Book of Thracian Relations.

#### IV. GANGES.

GANGES is a river in India, so called for this reason. A certain Calaurian nymph had by Indus a son called Ganges, conspicuous for his beauty. Who growing up to manhood,

being once desperately overcome with wine, in the heat of his intoxication lay with his mother. The next day he was informed by the nurse of what he had done; and such was the excess of his sorrow, that he threw himself into a river called Chliarus, afterwards called Ganges from his own name.

In this river grows an herb resembling bugloss, which the natives bruise, and keep the juice very charily. With this juice in the dead of the night they go and besprinkle the tigers' dens; the virtue of which is such, that the tigers, not being able to stir forth by reason of the strong scent of the juice, are starved to death; — as Callisthenes reports in his Third Book of Hunting.

Upon the banks of this river lies the mountain called the Anatole for this reason. The Sun, beholding the nymph Anaxibia innocently spending her time in dancing, fell passionately in love with her, and not able to curb his loose amours, pursued her with a purpose to ravish her. She therefore, finding no other way to escape him, fled to the temple of Orthian Diana, which was seated upon the mountain called Coryphe, and there immediately vanished away. Upon which the Sun, that followed her close at the heels, not knowing what was become of his beloved, overwhelmed with grief, rose in that very place. And from this accident it was that the natives called the top of that mountain Anatole, or the rising of the Sun; — as Caemaron reports in his Tenth Book of the Affairs of India.

#### V. PHASIS.

PHASIS is a river of Scythia, running by a city of the same name. It was formerly called Arcturus, deriving its name from the situation of the cold regions through which it runs. But the name of it was altered upon this occasion.

Phasis, the child of the Sun and Ocyrrhoe daughter of Oceanus, slew his mother, whom he took in the very act of adultery. For which being tormented by the Furies appearing to him, he threw himself into the river Arcturus, which was afterwards called by his own name Phasis.

In this river grows a reed, which is called leucophyllus, or the reed with the white leaf. This reed is found at the dawning of the morning light, at what time the sacrifices are offered to Hecate, at the time when the divinely inspired paeon is chanted, at the beginning of the spring; when they who are troubled with jealous heads gather this reed, and strew it in their wives' chambers to keep them chaste. And the nature of the reed is such, that if any wild extravagant person happens to come rashly in drink into the room where it lies, he presently becomes deprived of his rational thoughts, and immediately confesses whatever he has wickedly done and intended to do. At what time they that are present to hear him lay hold of him, sew him up in a sack, and throw him into a hole called the Mouth of the Wicked, which is round like the mouth of a well. This after thirty days empties the body into the Lake Maeotis, that is full of worms; where of a sudden the body is seized and torn to pieces by several vultures unseen before, nor is it known from whence they come; — as Ctesippus relates in his Second Book of Scythian Relations.

Near to this river lies the mountain Caucasus, which was before called Boreas's Bed, upon this occasion. Boreas in the heat of his amorous passion ravished away by force Chione, the daughter of Arcturus, and carried her to a certain hill which was called Niphantes, and upon her begot a son whom he called Hyrpax, who succeeded Heniochus in his kingdom. For which reason the mountain was first called Boreas's Bed; but afterwards Caucasus upon this occasion. After the fight of the Giants, Saturn,

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