

Selections from Ovid's *Fasti*, translated by Sir J. G. Frazer

[1] Come, warlike Mars; lay down thy shield and spear for a brief space, and from thy helmet loose thy glistering locks. Haply thou mayest ask, What has a poet to do with Mars? From thee the month which now I sing doth take its name. Thyself dost see that fierce wars are waged by Minerva's hands. Is she for that the less at leisure for the liberal arts? After the pattern of Pallas take a time to put aside the lance. Thou shalt find something to do unarmed. Then, too, wast thou unarmed when the Roman priestess¹ captivated thee, that thou mightest bestow upon this city a great seed.

[11] Silvia the Vestal (for why not start from her?) went in the morning to fetch water to wash the holy things. When she had come to where the path ran gently down the sloping bank, she set down her earthenware pitcher from her head. Weary, she sat her on the ground and opened her bosom to catch the breezes, and composed her ruffled hair. While she sat, the shady willows and the tuneful birds and the soft murmur of the water induced to sleep. Sweet slumber overpowered and crept stealthily over her eyes, and her languid hand dropped from her chin. Mars saw her; the sight inspired him with desire, and his desire was followed by possession, but by his power divine he hid his stolen joys. Sleep left her; she lay big, for already within her womb there was Rome's founder. Languid she rose, nor knew why she rose so languid, and leaning on a tree she spake these words: "Useful and fortunate, I pray, may that turn out which I saw in a vision of sleep. Or was the vision too clear for sleep? Methought I was by the fire of Ilium, when the woolen fillet slipped from my hair and fell before the sacred hearth. From the fillet there sprang a wondrous sight – two palm-trees side by side. Of them one was the taller and by its heavy boughs spread a canopy over the whole world, and with its foliage touched the topmost stars. Lo, mine uncle² wielded an axe against the trees; the warning terrified me and my heart did throb with fear. A woodpecker – the bird of Mars and a she-wolf fought in defence of the twin trunks, and by their help both of the palms were saved." She finished speaking, and by a feeble effort lifted the full pitcher; she had filed it while she was telling her vision. Meanwhile her belly swelled with a heavenly burden, for Remus was growing, and growing, too, was Quirinus.

[43] When now two heavenly signs remained for the bright god to traverse, before the year could complete its course and run out, Silvia became a mother. The images of Vesta are said to have covered their eyes with their virgin hands; certainly the altar of the goddess trembled, when her priestess was brought to bed, and the terrified flame sank under its own ashes. When Amulius learned of this, scorner of justice that he was (for he had vanquished his brother and robbed him of power), he ordered the twins to be sunk in the river. The water shrank from such a crime, and the boys were left on dry land. Who knows not that the infants thrived on the milk of a wild beast, and that a woodpecker often brought food to the abandoned babes? Nor would I pass thee by in silence, Larentia, nurse of so great a nation, nor the help that thou didst give, poor Faustulus. Your honour will find its place when I come to tell of the Larentalia; that festival falls in December, the month dear to the mirthful spirits. Thrice six years old was the progeny of Mars, and already under their yellow hair sprouted a fresh young beard: to all the husbandmen and masters of herds the brothers, sons of Ilia,³ gave judgement by request. Often they came home glad at blood of robbers spilt, and to their own domain drove back the raided kine. When they heard the secret of their birth, their spirits rose with the revelation of their sire, and they thought shame to have a name in a few huts. Amulius fell, pierced by the sword of Romulus, and the kingdom was restored to their aged grandfather. Walls were built, which, small though they were, it had been better for Remus not to have overleaped. And now what of late had been woods and pastoral solitudes was a city, when thus the father of the eternal city spake: "Umpire of war, from whose blood I am believed to have sprung (and to confirm that belief I will give many proofs), we name the beginning of the Roman year after thee; the first month shall be called by my father's name." The promise was kept; he did call the month by his father's name: this pious deed is said to have been well pleasing to the god. And yet the earlier ages had worshipped Mars above all gods⁴; therein a warlike folk followed their bent. Pallas is worshipped by the sons of Cecrops, Diana by Minoan Crete, Vulcan by the Hypsipylia land,⁵ Juno by Sparta and Pelopid Mycenae, while the Maenalian country⁶ worships Faunus, whose head is crowned with pine., Mars was the god to be

revered by Latium, for that he is the patron of the sword; 'twas the sword that won for a fierce race empire and glory.

[87] If you are at leixure, look into the foreign calendars, and you shall find in them also a month named after Mars. It was the third month in the Alban calendar, the fifth in the Faliscan, the sixth among thy peoples, land of the Hernicans. The Arician calendar is in agreement with the Alban and with that of the city⁷ whose lofty walls were built by the hand of Telegonus. It is the fifth month in the calendar of the Laurentines, the tenth in the calendar of the hardy Aequians, the fourth in the calendar of the folk of Cures, and the soldierly Pelignians agree with their Sabine forefathers; both peoples reckon Mars the god of the fourth month.⁸ In order that he might take precedence of all these, Romulus assigned the beginning of the year to the author of his being.

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KAL. MART. 1st

[167] "If bards may list to secret promptings of the gods, as surely rumour thinks they may, tell me, thou Marching God (*Gradivus*), why matrons keep thy feast, whereas thou art apter to receive service from men." Thus I inquired, and thus did Mars answer me, laying aside his helmet, though in his right hand he kept his throwing spear: "Now for the first time in the year am I, a god of war, invoked to promote the pursuits of peace, and I march into new camps, nor does it irk me so to do; upon this function also do I love to dwell, lest Minerva should fancy that such power is hers alone. They answer take, laborious singer of the Latin days, and write my words on memory's tablets. If you would trace it back to its beginning, Rome was but little, nevertheless in that little town was hope of this great city. The walls were already standing, boundaries too cramped for future peoples, but then deemed to large for their inhabitants. If you ask what my son's palace was, behold yon house of reeds and straw.²⁰ There on the litter did he take the boon of peaceful sleep, and yet from that same bed he passed among the stars.

[187] Already the Roman had a name that reached beyond his city, but neither wife nor wife's father had he. Wealthy neighbours scorned to take poor men for their sons-in-law; hardly did they believe that I myself was the author of the breed. It told against the Romans that they dwelt in cattle-stalls, and fed sheep, and owned a few acres of waste land. Birds and beasts mate each with its kind, and a snake has some female of which to breed. The right of intermarriage is granted to peoples far away; yet was there no people that would wed with Romans. I chafed and bestowed on thee, Romulus, thy father's temper. 'A truce to prayers!' I said, 'What thou seekest, arms will give.' Romulus prepared a feast for Consus.²¹ The rest that happened on that day Consus will tell thee, when thou shalt come to sing of his rites. Cures and all who suffered the same wrong were furious: then for the first time did a father wage war upon his daughters' husbands.²² And now the ravished brides could claim the style of mothers also, and yet the war between the kindred folks kept lingering on, when the wives assembled by appointment in the temple of Juno. Among them my son's²³ wife thus made bold to speak: 'O wives ravished alike – for that is a trait we have in common – no longer may we dawdle in our duties to our kin. The battle is set in array, but choose for which side ye will pray the gods to intervene: on one side stand our husbands in arms and on the other side your sires: the question is whether ye prefer to be widows or orphans. I will give you a piece of advice both bold and dutiful.' She gave the advice: they obeyed, and unbound their hair, and clad their bodies in the sad weeds of mourners. Already the armies were drawn up in array, alert for carnage; already the bugle was about to give the signal for battle, when the ravished wives interposed between their fathers and husbands, bearing at their bosom the dear pledges of love, their babes. When with their streaming hair they reached the middle of the plain, they knelt down on the ground, and the grandchildren stretched out their little arms to their grandfathers with winsome cries, as if they understood. Such as could cried 'Grandfather!' to him whom then they saw for the first time; such as could hardly do it were forced to try. The weapons and the passions of the warriors fall, and laying their swords aside fathers-in-law and sons-in-law grasp each other's hands. They praise and embrace their daughters, and the

grandsire carried his grandchild on his shield; that was a sweeter use to which to put the shield.

[229] Hence the duty, no light one, of celebrating the first day, my Kalends, is incumbent on Oebalian²⁴ mothers, either because, boldly thrusting themselves on the bare blades, they by their tears did end these martial wars; or else mothers duly observe the rites on my day, because Ilia was happily made a mother by me. Moreover, frosty winter then at last retires, and shorn by the cold, return to the trees, and moist within the tender shoot the bud doth swell; now too the rank grass, long hidden, discovers secret paths whereby to lift its head in air. Now is the field fruitful, now is the hour for breeding cattle, now doth the bird upon the bough construct a nest and home; 'tis right that Latin mothers should observe the fruitful season, for in their travail they both fight and pray. Add to this that where the Roman king kept watch, on the hill which now bears the name of Esquiline,²⁵ a temple was founded, if I remember aright, on this very day by the Latin matrons in honour of Juno.

[249] But why should I spin out the time and burden your memory with various reasons? The answer that you seek stands out plainly before your eyes. My mother loves brides; a crowd of mothers throngs my temple; so pious a reason is above all becoming to her and me.”²⁶ Bring ye flowers to the goddess; this goddess delights in flowering plants; with fresh flowers wreath your heads. Say ye, “Thou, Lucina, hast bestowed on us the light (*lucem*) of life”; say ye, “thou dost hear the prayer of women in travail.” But let her who is with child unbind her hair before she prays, in order that the goddess may gently unbind her teeming womb.

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PR. NON. 6th

[415] When the sixth sun climbs up Olympus' steep from ocean, and through the ether takes his way on his winged steeds, all ye, whoe'er ye are, who worship at the shrine of the chaste Vesta, wish the goddess joy and offer incense on the Ilian hearth. To Caesar's countless titles, which he has preferred to earn, was added the honour of the

pontificate.⁴⁰ Over the eternal fire the divinity of Caesar, no less eternal, doth preside: the pledges of empire thou seest side by side. Ye gods of ancient Troy, ye worthiest prize to him who bore ye, ye whose weight did save Aeneas from the foe, a priest of the line of Aeneas handles your kindred divinities; Vesta, do thou guard his kindred head!⁴¹ Nursed by his sacred hand, ye fires live well. O live undying, flame and leader both, I pray.

NON. 7th

[429] The Nones of March have only one mark⁴² in the calendar, because they think that on that day the temple of Veiovis was consecrated in front of the two groves.⁴³ When Romulus surrounded the grove with a high stone wall, "Take refuge here," said he, "whoe'er thou art; thou shalt be safe." O from how small a beginning the Roman took his rise! How little to be envied was that multitude of old! But that the strangeness of the name may not prove a stumbling-block to you in your ignorance, learn who that god is, and why he is so called. He is the Young Jupiter: look on his youthful face; look then on his hand, its holds no thunderbolts. Jupiter assumed the thunderbolts after the giants dared attempt to win the sky; at first he was unarmed. Ossa balzed with the new fires (of his thunderbolts); Pelion, too, higher than Ossa, and Olympus, fixed in the solid ground. A she-goat also stands (beside the image of Veiovis); the Cretan nymphs are said to have fed the god; it was the she-goat that gave her milk to the infant Jove. Now I am called on to explain the name. Countrymen call stunted spelt *vegrandia*, and what is little they call *vesca*. If that is the meaning of the word, may I not suspect that the shrine of Veiovis is the shrine of the little Jupiter?⁴⁴

[449] And now when the stars shall spangle the blue sky, look up: you will see the neck of the Gorgonian steed.⁴⁵ He is said to have leaped forth from the teeming neck of the slain Medusa, his mane bespattered with blood. As he glided above the clouds and beneath the stars, the sky served him as solid ground, and his wing served him for a foot. Soon indignantly he champed the unwonted bit, when his light hoof struck out the Aonian spring.⁴⁶ Now he enjoys the sky, to which aforetime he soared on wings, and he sparkles bright with fifteen stars.

VII. ID. 8th

[459] Straightway at the fall of night shalt thou see the Cnossian Crown.⁴⁷ It was through the fault of Theseus that Ariadne was made a goddess. Already had she happily exchanged a perjured spouse for Bacchus, she who gave to a thankless man a clue to gather up.⁴⁸ Joying in her lot of love, “Why like a rustic maiden did I weep?” quoth she; “his faithlessness has been my gain.” Meantime Liber had conquered the straight-haired Indians and returned, loaded with treasure, from the eastern world. Amongst the fair captive girls there was one, the daughter of a king, who pleased Bacchus all too well. His loving spouse wept, and pacing the winding shore with dishevelled locks she uttered these words: “Lo, yet again, ye billows, list to my like complaint! Lo, yet again, ye sands, receive my tears! I used to say, I remember, ‘Foresworn and faithless Theseus!’ He deserted me: now Bacchus does me the same wrong. Now again I will cry, ‘Let no woman trust a man!’ My case has been repeated, only the name is changed. Would that my lot had ended where it first began! So at this moment had I been no more. Why, Liber, didst thou save me to die on desert sands? I might have ended my griefs once and for all. Bacchus, thou light o’ love! lighter than the leaves that wreath thy brows! Bacchus, whom I have known only that I should weep! Hast thou dared to trouble our so harmonious loves by bringing a leman before mine eyes? Ah, where is plighted troth? Where are the oaths that thou wast wont to swear? Woe’s me, how often must I speak these self-same words! Thou wast wont to blame Theseus; thou wast wont thyself to dub him deceiver; judged by thyself, thine is the fouler sin. Let no man know of this, and let me burn with pangs unuttered, lest they should think that I deserve to be deceived so oft. Above all I would desire the thing were kept from Theseus, that he may not joy to know thee a partner in his guilt. But I suppose a leman fair has been preferred to dusky me: - may that hue fall to my foes! But what does that matter? She is dearer to thee for the very blemish. What art thou about? She defiles thee by her embrace. Bacchus, keep faith, nor prefer any woman to a wife’s love. I have learned to love my love for ever. The horns of a handsome bull won my mother’s heart,⁴⁹ thine won mine. But my love was cause for praise: hers was shameful. Let me not suffer for my love; thou thyself, Bacchus, didst not suffer for avowing thy flame to me. No wonder that thou dost make me burn;

they say thou wert born in the fire and wert snatched from the fire by thy father's hand.⁵⁰ I am she to whom thou wert wont to promise heaven. Ah me! what guerdon to I reap instead of heaven!" She finished speaking. Long time had Liber heard her plaint, for as it chanced he followed close behind. He put his arms about her, with kisses dried her tears, and "Let us fare together," quoth he, "to heaven's height. As thou hast shared my bed, so shalt thou share my name, for in thy changed state thy name shall be Libera; and I will see to it that with thee there shall be a memorial of thy crown, that crown which Vulcan gave to Venus, and she to thee." He did as he had said and changed the nine jewels of her crown into fires. Now the golden crown doth sparkle with nine stars.

PR. ID. 14th

[517] When he who bears the purple day on his swift car shall six times have lifted up his disc and as often sunk it low, thou shalt a second time behold horse races (*Equirria*) on that grassy plain whose side is hugged by Tiber's winding waters. But if perchance the wave has overflowed and floods the plain, the dusty Caelian hill shall receive the horses.

IDUS 15th

[523] On the Ides is held the jovial feast of Anna Perenna⁵¹ not far from the banks, O Tiber, who comest from afar. The common folk come, and scattered here and there over the green grass they drink, every lad reclining beside his lass. Some camp under the open sky; a few pitch tents; some make a leafy hut of boughs. Others set up reeds in place of rigid pillars, and stretching out their robes place them upon the reeds. But they grow warm with sun and wine, and they pray for as many years as they take cups, and they count the cups they drink. There shall you find a man who drains as many goblets as Nestor numbered years, and a woman who would live to the Sibyl's age if cups could work the charm. There they sing the ditties they picked up in the theatres, beating time to the words with nimble hands; they set the bowl down, and trip in dances, lubberly, while the spruce sweetheart skips about with streaming hair. On the way home they reel, a spectacle for vulgar eyes, and the crowd that meets them calls them "blest." I met the procession lately; I thought it notable; a drunk old woman lugged a drunk old man.

[543] But since erroneous rumours are rife as to who this goddess is, I am resolved to throw no cloak about her tale. Poor Dido had burned with the fire of love for Aeneas; she had burned, too, on a pyre built for her doom. Her ashes were collected, and on the marble of her tomb was this short stanza, which she herself dying had left: "Aeneas caused her death and lent the blade: Dido by her own hand in dust was laid."

[531] Straightway the Numidians invaded the defenceless realm, and Iarbas the Moor⁵² captured and took possession of the palace; and remembering how she had spurned his suit, "Lo, now," quoth he, "I enjoy Elissa's bridal bower, I whom she so oft repelled." The Tyrians⁵³ fled hither and thither, as each one chanced to stray, even as bees oft wander doubtingly when they have lost their king. Anna⁵⁴ was driven from home, and weeping left her sister's walls; but first she paid the honours due to her dead sister. The soft ashes drank unguents mixed with tears, and they received an offering of hair clipped from her head. And thrice she said, "Farewell!" thrice she took the ashes up and pressed them to her lips, and under them she thought she saw her sister. Having found a ship and comrades to share her flight, she glided before the wind, looking back at the city's walls, her sister's darling work.

[567] There is a fertile island Melite,⁵⁵ lashed by the waves of the Libyan sea and neighbour to the barren Cosyra.⁵⁶ Anna steered for it, trusting to the king's hospitality, which she had known of old; for Battus there was king, a wealthy host. When he learned the misfortunes of the two sisters, "This land," said he, "small though it be, is thine," and he would have observed the duties of hospitality to the end, but that he feared Pygmalion's⁵⁷ mighty power. For the third time the reaped corn had been carried to the threshing-floor to be stripped of the husk, and for the third time the new wine had poured into the hollow vats. Twice had the sun traversed the signs of the zodiac, and a third year was passing, when Anna was compelled to seek a new land of exile. Her brother came and demanded her surrender with threat of war. The king loathed arms and said to Anna, "We are unwarlike. Do thou seek safety in flight." At his bidding she fled and committed her bark to the wind and the waves. Her brother was more cruel than any sea. Near the fishy streams of stony Crathis there is a champain small; the natives call it

Camere.⁵⁸ Thither she bent her course, and was no farther off than nine shots of a sling, when the sails at first dropped and flapped in the puffs of wind. "Cleave the water with the oars," the seaman said. And while they made ready to furl the sails with the ropes, the swift south wind struck the curved poop and swept the ship, despite the captain's efforts, into the open sea; the land receded from their sight. The surge assails them, and from its lowest depths the ocean is upheaved: the hull gulps down the foaming waters. Seamanship is powerless against the wind, and the steersman no longer handles the helm, so he too resorts to prayers for help. The Phoenician exile is tossed on the swelling waves and hides her wet eyes in her robe: then for the first time did she call her sister Dido happy, and happy any woman who anywhere did tread dry land. A mighty blast pulled the ship to the Laurentine shore; she went down and perished, but all on board got safe to land.

[601] By this time Aeneas had gained the kingdom and the daughter of Latinus and had blended the two peoples. While, accompanied by Achates alone, he paced barefoot a lonely path on the shore with which his wife had dowered him, he spied Anna wandering, nor could bring himself to think that it was she. Why should she come into the Latin land? thought he to himself. Meantime, "'Tis Anna!" cried Achates. At the sound of the name she looked up. Alas! what should she do? should she flee? where should she look for the earth to yawn for her? Her hapless sister's fate rose up before her eyes. The Cytherean⁵⁹ hero perceived her distress and accosted her; yet did he weep, touched by memory of thee, Elissa. "Anna, by this land which in days gone by thou usedst to hear a happier fate had granted me; and by the gods who followed me and here of late have found a home, I see that they did often chide my loiterings. Nor yet did I dread her death; far from me was that fear. Woe's me! her courage surpassed belief. Tell not the tale. I saw the unseemly wounds upon her body what time I dared to visit the house of Tartarus. But thou, whether thine own resolve or some god has brought thee to our shores, do thou enjoy my kingdom's comforts. Much our gratitude doth owe to thee, and something, too, to Elissa. Welcome shalt thou be for thine own sake and welcome for thy sister's." She believed his words, for no other hope was left her, and she told her wanderings. And when she entered the palace, clad in Tyrian finery, Aeneas opened his

lips, while the rest of the assembly kept silence: "My wife Lavinia, I have a dutiful reason for entrusting this lady to thy care; when I was shipwrecked I consumed her substance. She is of Tyrian descent; she owns a kingdom on the Libyan coast; I pray thee, love her as a dear sister."

[633] Lavinia promised everything, but in the silence of her heart she hid her fancied wrong and dissembled her fears; and though she saw many presents carried before her eyes, still she thought that many were also sent secretly. She had not decided what to do. She hated like a fury, and hatched a plot, and longed to die avenged. 'Twas night: before her sister's bed it seemed that Dido stood, her unkempt hair dabbled in blood. "Fly, fly this dismal house," she seemed to say, "O falter not!!" At the word a blast did slam the creaking door. Up she leaped, and quick she threw herself out of the low window upon the ground: her very fear had made her bold. And as soon as terror carried her clad in her ungirt tunic, she ran as runs a frightened doe that hears the wolves. 'Tis thought the horned Numicius⁶⁰ swept her away in his swollen stream and hid her in his pools. Meanwhile a clamour loud they sought the lost Sidonian lady through the fields: traces and footprints met their eyes: on coming to the banks they found her tracks upon the banks. The conscious river checked and hushed his stream. Herself appeared to speak: "I am a nymph of the calm Numicius. In a perennial river I hide, and Anna Perenna is my name." Straightway they feast joyfully in the fields over which they had roamed, and toast themselves and the day in deep draughts of wine.

[657] Some think that this goddess is the moon, because the moon fills up the measure of the year (*annus*) by her months; others deem that she is Themis; others suppose that she is the Inachian cow.⁶¹ You shall find some to say that thou, Anna, art a nymph, daughter of Azan, and that thou didst give Jupiter his first food. Yet another report, which I will relate, ahs come to my ears, and it is not far from what we may take as true. The common folk of old, not yet protected by tribunes, had fled, and abode upon the top of the Sacred Mount⁶²; now, too, the provisions which they had brought with them and the bread fit for human use had failed them. There was a certain Anna, born at suburban Bovillae, a poor old woman, but very industrious.⁶³ She, with her grey hair bound up in a

light cap, used to mould country cakes with tremulous hand, and it was her wont at morn to distribute them piping hot among the people: the supply was welcome to the people. When peace was made at home, they set up a statue to Perenna, because she had supplied them in their time of need.

[675] Now it remains for me to tell why girls chant ribald songs; for they assemble and sing certain scurrilous verses. When Anna had been but lately made a goddess, the Marching God (*Gradivus*) came to her, and taking her aside spoke as follows: "Thou art worshipping in my month, I have joined my season to thine: I have great hope in the serve that thou canst render me. An armed god myself, I have fallen in love with the armed goddess Minerva⁶⁴; I burn and for a long time have nursed this wound. She and I are deities alike in our pursuits; contrive to unite us. That office well befits thee, kind old dame." So he spoke. She duped the god by a false promise, and kept him dangling on in foolish hope by dubious delays. When he often pressed her, "I have done thy bidding," said she, "she is conquered and has yielded at last to thine entreaties." The lover believed her and made ready the bridal chamber. Thither they escorted Anna, like a bride, with a veil upon her face. When he would have kissed her, Mars suddenly perceived Anna; now shame, now anger moved the god befooled. The new goddess laughed at dear Minerva's lover. Never did anything please Venus more than that. So old jokes are cracked and ribald songs are sung, and people love to remember how Anna choused the great god.

[697] I was about to pass by in silence the swords that stabbed the prince,⁶⁵ when Vesta spoke thus from her chaste hearth: "Doubt not to recall them: he was my priest,⁶⁶ it was at me these sacrilegious hands struck with the steel. I myself carried the man away, and left naught but his wraith behind; what fell by the sword was Caesar's shade." Transported to the sky he saw the halls of Jupiter, and in the great Forum he owns a temple dedicated to him. But all the daring sinners who, in defiance of the gods' will, profaned the pontiff's head, lie low in death, the death they merited. Witness Philippi and they whose scattered bones whiten the ground. This, this was Caesar's work, his duty, his first task by righteous arms to avenge his father.

XVII. KAL. APR. 16th

[711] When the next dawn shall have refreshed the tender grass, the Scorpion will be visible in his first part.

XVI. KAL. 17th

[713] The third day after the Ides is a very popular celebration of Bacchus. O Bacchus, be gracious to thy bard while he sings of thy festival. But I shall not tell of Semele⁶⁷; if Jupiter had not brought his thunderbolts with him to her, thou hadst been born an unarmed wight. Nor shall I tell how, in order that thou mightest be born as a boy in due time, the function of a mother was completed in thy father's body. It were long to relate the triumphs won by the god over the Sithonians and the Scythians, and how he subdued the peoples of India, that incense-bearing land. I will say naught of him who fell a mournful prey to his own Theban mother,⁶⁸ nor of Lycurgus, whom frenzy drove to hack at his own son. Lo now, fain would I speak of the Tyrrhenian monsters, men suddenly transformed into fish,⁶⁹ but that is not the business of this song; the business of this song is to set forth the reasons why a planter of vines hawks cakes to the people. Before they birth, Liber, the altars were without offerings, and grass grew on the cold hearths. They tell how, after subjugating the Ganges and the whole East, though didst set apart first-fruits for great Jupiter. Thou were the first to offer cinnamon and incense from the conquered lands, and the roast flesh of oxen led in triumph.

[735] Libations (*libamina*) derive their name from their author, and so do cakes (*liba*), because part of them is offered on the hallowed hearths. Cakes are made for the god, because he delights in sweet juices, and they say that honey was discovered by Bacchus. Attended by the satyrs he was going from sandy Hebrus (my tale includes a pleasant jest), and had come to Rhodope and flowery Pangaeus, when the cymbals in the hands of his companions clashed. Lo, drawn by the tinkle, winged things, as yet unknown, assemble, and the bees follow the sounding brass. Liber collected the stranglers and shut them up in a hollow tree; and he was rewarded by the discovery of honey. Once the satyrs and the bald-pated ancient⁷⁰ had tasted it, they sought for the

yellow combs in every grove. In a hollow elm the old fellow heard the humming of a swarm; he spied the combs and kept his counsel. And sitting lazily on the back of an ass, and leaning upon a branch stump he greedily reached at the honey stored in the bole. Thousands of hornets gathered, and thrust their stings into his bald pate, and left their mark on his snub-nosed face. Headlong he fell, and the ass kicked him, while he called to his comrades and implored their help. The satyrs ran to the spot and laughed at their parent's swollen face: he limped on his hurt knee. Bacchus himself laughed and taught him to smear mud on his wounds; Silenus took the hint and smudged his face with mire. The father god⁷¹ enjoys honey, and it is right that we should give to its discoverer golden honey infused in hot cakes.

[763] The reason why a woman presides at the festival is plain enough: Bacchus rouses bands of women by his thyrsus. You ask why it is an old woman who does it. That age is more addicted to wine, and loves the bounty of the teeming vine. Why is she wreathed with ivy? Ivy is most dear to Bacchus. Why that is so can also soon be told. They say that when the stepmother⁷² was searching for the boy, the nymphs of Nysa screened the cradle in ivy leaves.

[771] It remains for me to discover why the gown of liberty⁷³ is given to boys, fair Bacchus, on thy day, and a youth, and thy age is midway between the two; or it may be that, because thou art a father, fathers commend to thy care and divine keeping the pledges that they love, their sons; or it may be that because thou art Liber, the gown of liberty is assumed and a freer (*liberior*) life is entered upon under thine auspices. Or was it because, in the days when the ancients tilled the fields more diligently, and a senator laboured on his ancestral land, when a consul exchanged the bent plough for the rods and exes of office, and it was no crime to have horny hands, the country folk used to come to the City for the games (but that was an honour paid to the gods, not a concession to the popular tastes, the discoverer of the grape⁷⁴ held on his own day those games which now he shares with the torch-bearing goddess⁷⁵); and the day therefore seemed not unsuitable for conferring the gown, in order that a crowd might gather round the novice? Thou Father God, hither turn thy horned head, mild and propitious, and to the favouring breezes spread the sails of my poetic art!

[792] On this day, if I remember aright, and on the preceding day, there is a procession to the Argei. What the Argei are, will be told in the proper place.⁷⁶ The star of the Kite⁷⁷ slopes downwards towards the Lycaonian Bear: on that night it becomes visible. If you would know what raised the bird to heaven. Saturn had been dethroned by Jupiter. In his wrath he stirred up the strong Titans to take arms and sought the help the Fates allowed him. There was a bull born of its mother Earth, a wondrous monster, the hinder part whereof was a serpent: him, at the warning of the three Fates, grim Styx had shut up in gloomy woods enclosed by a triple wall. There was an oracle that he who should burn the inwards of the bull in the flames would be able to conquer the eternal gods. Briareus sacrificed him with an axe made of adamant, and was just about to put the entrails on the fire: Jupiter commanded the birds to snatch them away; the kite brought them to him and was promoted to the stars for his services.

1. Silvia. See also ii. 383.

2. Amulius, king of Alba.

3. Romulus and Remus, sons of Ilia (Silvia), or descendants of Ilus (founder of Troy).

4. Mars was worshipped by the Latin and other Italian peoples before the foundation of Rome. He was peculiarly the god of Rome, as Athena was of Athens, Dictynna or Britomartis of Crete, Hephaestus of Lemnos, Hera of Sparta, and Pan of Arcadia.

5. Lemnos, after its queen Hypsipyle.

6. Arcadia.

7. Tusculum.

8. These are local Italian calendars.

9. Phoenicians.

10. Little Bear, *kunos oura*, the dog's tail.

11. Great Bear, *helikê*, the twister.

12. Apollo and Diana, the sun and moon, and the signs of the Zodiac.

13. See ii. 527 note.

14. Vesta.
15. See below, l. 523.
16. If Hannibal is meant here, Ovid refers to the Second Punic War, which began in 218 B.C., but the practice really varied until it was finally fixed in 153 B.C. for January 1.
17. Pythagoras.
18. In 46 B.C.
19. Really a fourth. Ovid seems to have thought that the intercalary day was added in each period of five years.
20. The Casa Romuli on the Palatine; see i. 199.
21. There are two festivals of Consus (Consualia), on August 21 and December 15. When he comes to these the poet will tell of the Rape of the Sabines. In the last battle, the wives threw themselves between the combatants, and persuaded them to make peace. Livy i. 13.
22. A covert allusion to the Civil Wars: Pompey's wife Julia was Caesar's daughter.
23. Romulus, for Mars is speaking.
24. Sabine. See i. 260 note.
25. He derives the name from excubiae. It may come from aesculus, "beech." Romulus had a post here set to watch Titus Tatius on the neighbouring hill.
26. The Matronalia, in honour of Juno Lucina.
27. Dancing priests. They carried a spear and one of the ancilia or sacred shields. See 377 note, below.
28. Lacus Nemoensis. See 377 note, below.
29. Hippolytus, after being torn to pieces by his horses near Troezen, was restored to life by Aesculapius and transported by Diana to the woods of Aricia, where he took the name of Virbius.
30. A runaway slave reigns there as Rex Nemoensis, until a stronger runaway slave dispossesses him. This is the theme of the Golden Bough.
31. Egeria was one of the Camenae, water-nymphs whose spring flowed in a sacred grove outside the Porta Capena; but these came to be identified with the Muses.
32. Faunus, or Faunus Fatuus, son of Picus, the woodpecker. The Greeks told a like story of Silenus.
33. The onion, human hair, and fish, are prescribed as expiation for a thunderstroke. No one knows why, but Ovid suggests that they are a substitute for human sacrifice.
34. As though from ancisus (in Varro ambecisus).
35. Probably an Oscan name of Mars.
36. He wore a cap with an apex, a point or peak.

37. One was called Notios, one Boreios.
38. Aurora.
39. The Greek ampelos, "vine."
40. Augustus accepted the title Pontifex Maximus on March 6, 12 B.C. As such, he should preside over the Vestal Virgins. He claimed descent from Aeneas, though his adoption by Julius Caesar, and so from Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn, brother of Vesta.
41. Cf. iv. 949.
42. F. for Fastus. That is, there is no meeting of the Comitia or the Senate.
43. The space between the two peaks of the Capitol, on each of which were trees originally. Here Romulus enclosed his lucus, the asylum for fugitives.
44. The meaning of ve- in Veiovis is uncertain. In other words it does imply "without" in some form.
45. Pegasus, which sprang from the severed neck of the Gorgon Medusa.
46. Hippocrene, the "Horse's Fountain" on Helicon.
47. Ariadne, daughter of Minos, king of Cnossos in Crete, had a golden crown set with gems; which at her death was set in the sky, and the gems became stars.
48. She gave Theseus a clue of thread to guide him out of the Labyrinth; Theseus deserted her, and Bacchus found and wedded her. Bacchus is said to have conquered India.
49. Pasiphaë, who was enamoured of a bull, and brought forth the Minotaur. [Dionysos was bull-horned].
50. See l. 715 note.
51. See above, l. 146.
52. Iarbas was a suitor for Dido (Virgil, Aen. iv. 36, 196); Elissa was Dido's name.
53. The Carthaginians came from Tyre.
54. Dido's sister.
55. Malta.
56. Now Pantellaria, about 150 miles from Malta.
57. Brother of Dido and Anna, and their enemy.
58. Unknown.
59. Aeneas was son of Venus, called Cytherea for her sacred island Cythera.
60. A river in Latium; rivers are called horned, being personified as bulls.

61. He probably means Isis, who was identified with Io.
62. This refers to the Secession of the Plebs in 494 B.C.
63. This story seems told to account for the worship of Anna Perenna at Bovillae.
64. Minerva in this story has probably taken the place of Nerio, an old goddess, the wife of Mars.
65. The murder of Julius Caesar, 44 B.C., on the Ides of March.
66. Pontifex Maximus.
67. Semele, mother of Bacchus, requested Jupiter to show himself in full majesty. His lightning blasted her, and Jupiter caught up her unborn child, and sewed him into his own thigh, until the proper time for birth.
68. When Bacchus brought his rites to Thebes, the king, Pentheus, disbelieved him; and he was torn to pieces by his mother Agave and the bacchant women. Lycurgus, king of the Edonians, expelled Bacchus; he was driven mad, and killed his own son with an axe, in mistake for a vine: then lopped off his own extremities.
69. Bacchus was captured at sea by pirates; but he drove them mad, they leaped overboard, and became dolphins.
70. Silenus, the merry companion of the satyrs.
71. Liber pater.
72. Juno, who as Jupiter's wife pursued Semele's son with a stepmother's hatred.
73. Toga virilis.
74. Bacchus.
75. Ceres (Demeter). The games are the Cerealia. April 19.
76. See v. 621.
77. The star is unknown; but the coming of the bird was a sign of spring. The Bear was supposed to be Callisto, daughter of Lycaon.
78. Quinquatrus, QVIN in the calendar, properly the name of one day, the fifth after the Ides; but it was commonly taken to mean a period of five days.
79. For gladiatorial shows.
80. Tychius is said to have invented shoe-making. Homer calls him the best of leather-cutters, *Il. vii.* 219-223.
81. Who made the Wooden Horse.
82. Minerva Medica.
83. The Quinquatrus was a holiday: the master on that day collected pennies from his boys, which it appears he had to hand over to Minerva. Ovid suggests that the boys might defraud their schoolmasters, (or, reading *fraudante*, exhorts the masters not to cheat the goddess of her little earnings).

84. He suggests that *capta* comes from *caput*, and adds that *Minerva* is *capitalis*, “tiptop.”

85. This is probably the right reason.

86. *Tubilustrium*.

87. *Mars*.

88. That is, entered the sign of the Ram. *Athamas*, king of *Boeotia*, had a son *Phrixus* and a daughter *Helle*. Their mother, *Nephele*, departed, and he married *Ino*. She plotted their death as described here.

89. *Ino*.

90. *Nephele*, “the cloud.”

91. *Thebes*.

92. *Hellespont*.