

# The Bible and Mythology

## Ceres--the Madonna of the Greeks

BY CORINNE S. DUNKLEE



IN THE constellation of Virgo is found that beautiful silvery-white star, Spica, called "the jewel of the virgin."

According to the Grecian legend, Virgo, the virgin, was once Astrae, goddess of purity and justice who lived on earth and mingled among men during the Golden Age when only harmony and happiness were known. During the Silver Age contentment yet prevailed and the gods still lingered, though men were less perfect and the world less tranquil. When the Bronze Age was ushered in, men became so evil they were no longer amenable to the influence of Astrae, or Virgo, and so in sorrow she left the earth and fled to the sky where Jupiter transformed her into that beautiful constellation which guards the eastern horizon on Holy Night, that night when the pure and holy Jesus returned to another earth life to prepare for his great mission.

This beautiful madonna of the skies still heralds Holy Night, marking the annual sacrifice of the great Christ Spirit who gives of Himself each year at this time for humanity.

In some way the goodness and purity of Astrae were incorporated in this one beautiful white star, Spica, and this star shone with such exceeding whiteness that the whole constellation became known as Virgo, the virgin.

The pictures of this goddess vision her with wings, carrying a palm branch in one hand and an ear of sacred wheat in the other. In very ancient times the people worshiped the constellation of Virgo with its great, luminous, white

V I R G O  
THE MADONNA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION



star hovering above them like a benediction.

Virgo is identified with the Egyptian Isis and with the Grecian goddess, Ceres. The temple dedicated to Ceres, the Goddess of Harvests, stood in the sacred city of Eleusis. Here all those who were worthy came to pay homage to her.

One day while Ceres was watching the harvests, Persephone, her lovely daughter, disappeared. Ovid relates the charming story in his *Metamorphoses*:

*"While like a child with busy speed and care,  
She gathers lilies here and violets there—  
While first to fill her little lap she strives,  
Hell's grizzly monarch at the shade arrives,*

*Sees her thus sporting on the flowery  
green,  
And loves the blooming maid as soon as  
seen.  
Swift as a thought he seized the beaute-  
ous prey,  
And bore her in his dusky car away."*

Ceres, frantic with grief, searched over land and sea for her beloved daughter. The ancient poets inform us that neither Aurora, the Spirit of the Dawn, nor Hesperus, the Evening Star, ever saw her take any rest.

In sympathy with her grief, the earth ceased to bear. Leaves dwarfed, flower petals fell, fruit ceased to ripen. Jupiter, fearing for the fate of man, sent Mercury to beseech Pluto for the return of Persephone. The Fates gave word that if she had eaten of the pomegranate, the fruit of death, she must remain forever. As Persephone had eaten of the fruit, Jupiter, in compassion for the grief of Ceres, persuaded Pluto to allow her to return and spend six months of every year with her mother.

In token of gladness for her return, the earth bedecks herself in her fairest raiment. And so in this lovely, poetical manner, the Greeks accounted for the change of seasons from winter to spring.

The occultist finds here the story of man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden and his fall into materiality, or "coats of skin." In this story the pomegranate takes the place of the apple. The return to the clear air of the sunlit earth symbolizes the light of immortality which is never quenched in the heart of man. Ceres is the symbol of purity, regeneration, and points the way of return to the Land of Eternal Life.

And so on every Holy Night, Virgo is shining in the eastern horizon, giving to mankind this same message of chastity and purity, the only way of true attainment.

The Madonna of the Immaculate Conception is the ideal for all humanity; the path of Initiation is the way of its consummation, and Holy Night the most propitious time for its realization.

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## GIFTS

(Opus XI)

BY BERNARD B. TRINSEY

*Two precious gifts have I received this year:  
The first, the happiness of knowing that  
I lived before and always will, evolving,  
Growing through many lives and varied deaths;  
The second, the vision of a natural law,  
Encompassing a thought, a word, an act;—  
The ill-sown seed, then, dying barrenly,  
And fertile soil, flowering in peace.  
They are my consolation; they dispel  
The limiting reality, the cynic  
Comfort of despair, the hurried violence  
Of changing form; they are my faith and hope:  
They shall unfold, and integrate the storm  
And chaos with The New Light of the World.*