# Longus



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## **Daphnis and Chloe**



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### Daphnis and Chloe (The 1890 Vizetelly Translation)

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Daphnis and Chloe A Pastoral Romance Translated from the Greek of Longus

Vizetelly & Co., 16 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London 1890

(vii>) Translator's Preface

Many of the masterpieces of modern literature rest upon a classical foundation and it is not surprising that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre should have borrowed the idea of 'Paul and Virginia' from Longus's 'Daphnis and Chloe.' It has been remarked that, so far as moral tone and elevation of sentiment are concerned, there is some analogy between Saint-Pierre's renowned masterpiece and Dio Chrysostom's so-called 'Euboean Story.' This may be admitted, but it is probably only a fortuitous coincidence, whereas the points of resemblance between the romance of Mauritius and the legend of Lesbos are so striking and numerous that the one can only have been based upon the other. Both tales describe the dawn and progress of love in the hearts of an unsophisticated youth and girl. In either case the budding sensations and sentiments of the lovers are the same. When Saint-Pierre describes Virginia awakening to a sense of the tender passion, he employs very much the same language

as (viii>) Longus in regard to Chloe. No doubt this is but a repetition of the eternal theme, as old as the world itself; but, again, in regard to the simple lives led by the heroes and heroines of the respective tales, their rustic occupations and amusements, many striking points of resemblance may be traced. M. Villemain in his well-known 'Essai sur les Romans Grecs, ' has instituted an elaborate comparison between the two stories, and to this the curious upon the subject may be referred. Villemain not unnaturally placed Saint-Pierre's romance above Longus's pastoral; but Goethe, it should be remembered, bestowed the palm upon the latter. However, whatever analogy may exist between the two stories, it is somewhat unfair to judge them side by side. In one important particular they are essentially different. The ethics of Longus's pastoral are pagan, whereas those of Saint-Pierre's narrative are inspired by the principles of Christianity.

Of the author of 'Daphnis and Chloe' very little indeed is known. Longus is not mentioned by either Photius or Suidas, who have preserved the names of so many Hellenic writers of romance, and some critics have assumed that he never existed, contending that a Greek author could not have borne a Latin name. From a remark prefixed to one of the most ancient manuscript copies of 'Daphnis and Chloe,' it would appear, however, that Longus did exist and that he was a sophist, one of those disputative philosophers who were distinguished for their subtleties and false axioms. There our information ends, meagre no doubt, but as full as that which we possess with regard to various other classic authors, whose names are equally famous.

In the original Greek 'Daphnis and Chloe' is written in an elegant but affected style, the author not only abusing of antithesis and reiteration, but frequently indulging in a play upon words, as is usual with writers of a period of decline. (ix>)

These and other characteristics of the text have led critics to assume that Longus lived in the fourth century of our era, probably during the reign of Theodosius the Great. His tale would appear to have exercised considerable influence upon subsequent Greek romances, both in regard to incident and style; and it is also said to have suggested the modern pastorals, particularly those which appeared in Italy in the sixteenth century. On this last point critics differ in opinion, but Dunlop has shown that the argument against the suggestion, based on the fact that the Greek text of the tale was never printed till close upon the seventeenth century, is of very little weight; for a French version of the pastoral had appeared in 1559, and a Latin one had been issued in Italy ten years later. Moreover, with regard to such pastoral pieces, either in the dramatic or narrative form, as appeared in Italy prior to 1559, it may be observed that manuscript copies of the Greek romance existed in various libraries, at Florence, Rome, and elsewhere, and, to these such writers as D'Urfé, Montemayor, Beccari, and Tasso may possibly have had access.

With regard to its influence upon English literature, Dunlop has pointed out that there is considerable analogy between Longus's pastoral and Ramsay's 'Gentle Shepherd' - the plot of which was suggested to Ramsay by a friend who had derived it from 'Daphnis and Chloe.' It may also be mentioned that Fletcher's 'Faithful Shepherdess'—which in its turn suggested many passages of Milton's 'Comus' was indirectly derived from Longus, being based upon the 'Pastor Fido' of Guarini, which is known to have been borrowed from the Greek story. Chloe, a model of fidelity in Longus's narrative, becomes, it is true, a thorough wanton in Fletcher's 'tragi-comedy.' Indeed, so far as the characters and incidents introduced into the two compositions are concerned there is little or no resemblance between them: nevertheless, it is more than probable that, (x>) but for the Lesbian tale, one of the most delightful pastorals of our literature would never have been written.

It was Jacques Amyot, afterwards Bishop of Auxerre and Grand Almoner of France, who first rendered Longus's story into a living European language. Since his time fifty editions of the Greek text, and as many editions of translations in various tongues, have issued from the press, testifying to the interest of the work for scholars, and to its popularity among readers in all parts of the civilized world. Amyot's version, first printed in 1559, and couched in quaint yet graceful French, long enjoyed a high reputation among men of letters. Based, however, upon an incomplete manuscript copy of the Greek text it was necessarily imperfect, and the same may be said of all the other translations that appeared prior to 1809.

The first Greek edition of the pastoral — still incomplete but containing various passages that did not appear in Amyot's work — was published at Florence in 1598; and during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries numerous scholars of well-nigh every nationality in Europe occupied themselves in examining and comparing all the known manuscript copies of the work, and in editing improved versions of the original text. Still, none of these were perfect, the narrative being interrupted in the first book of the tale by a 'hiatus' deflendus' which it seemed impossible to supply. In 1809, however, Paul Louis Courier, whilst making some researches in the Laurentian Library at Florence, discovered there a manuscript copy of the story containing the very passage which was deficient in all the other known versions, and the absence of which had for centuries excited the curiosity and baffled the learning of scholars. Courier's discovery caused a great stir in the world of letters, and many would have liked to verify it. But this did not prove practicable, (xi>) for scarcely had Courier transcribed the passage in question when he himself obliterated it by an unfortunate accident with his pen and ink.

Never did blot — a huge one, it is true — provoke a greater outcry or more wrangling. Napoleon was at that time changing the face of Europe, promenading an ever victorious army from one capital city to another. But scholars paid little heed to the feats of the French arms. Their great concern was Courier and his discovery, and especially that terrible blot which prevented them from verifying his transcription of the Greek text. The wrangling lasted for many years: whilst the attention of the world was claimed in turn by Wagram, Moscow, and Leipzig, Elba, Waterloo, and St. Helena, there were for Greek scholars but two subjects of interest — the pillage of the Parthenon by Lord Elgin and the blot which had obliterated that long missing passage in 'Daphnis and Chloe.'

It is possible, of course, that Courier may have made some trifling mistakes in his transcription of the original; but that he was a first-rate Greek scholar — and consequently fairly worthy of confidence in this matter of the obliterated passage — was afterwards shown by the skilful manner in which he remodelled Amyot's translation of the pastoral producing not only a more complete but also a more faithful French version of the work than any previously attempted. Nowadays this version of Courier's is the one most usually read in France.

The story of 'Daphnis and Chloe' was first rendered into our own language by George Thornley as far back as 1657; in 1764 another translation of it was made by James Craggs, and in 1803 a third English version appeared - the work of the Rev. C. V. Le Grice, who issued it anonymously, with a dedication to Robert Bloomfield, author of 'The Farmer's Boy.' It is upon this latter version that the present edition (xii>) is based. A rendering of the fragment subsequently discovered by Courier has been duly inserted together with other passages omitted from the Le Grice edition, so that the story as here given will be found virtually complete. It may be mentioned, however, that the language of Longus has, in certain instances, been very considerably chastened.

With regard to the illustrations of the present volume the page engravings are from the designs of the famous French artists Prudhon and Gérard, originally made for the 'Amyot edition' of the pastoral published by Pierre Didot in 1800, while the head and tailpieces are reproductions of the plates designed by the Regent, Philip of Orleans, for the edition which he caused to be issued in 1718.

Daphnis and Chloe

#### Author's Proem

In the island of Lesbos, whilst hunting in a wood sacred to the Nymphs, I beheld the most beauteous sight that I have seen in all my life — a painting which represented the incidents of a tale of love. The grove itself was charming; it contained no lack of flowers, trees thick with foliage and a cool spring, which nourished alike trees and flowers. But the picture was more pleasing than aught else, by reason both of its amorous character and its marvellous workmanship. So excellently was it wrought indeed that the many (2>) strangers who had heard speak of it came thither to render worship to the Nymphs and to view it. Women in the throes of childbirth were depicted in it, nurses wrapping infants in swathing clothes, little babes exposed to the mercy of

Fortune, animals suckling them, shepherds carrying them away, young people exchanging vows of love, pirates at sea, a hostile force scouring the country; with many other incidents, all amorous, which I viewed with so much pleasure and found so beautiful that I felt desirous of recording them in writing. Accordingly I sought for someone who could fully explain them to me, and having been informed of everything I composed these four books, which I dedicate as an offering to Cupid, to the Nymphs and to Pan; hoping that the tale will prove acceptable to many classes of people, inasmuch as it may serve to cure illness, console grief, refresh the memory of him who has already loved, and instruct him who as yet knows not what love is. Never was there and never will there be a man able to resist love, so long as beauty exists in the world and there are eyes to behold it.

The Gods grant that, whilst describing the emotions of others, I may remain undisturbed myself. (3>)

#### Book 1

Mitylene is a beautiful and extensive city of Lesbos intersected by various channels of the sea flowing through and around it, and adorned with bridges of polished white stone. You might imagine on beholding it that it was a collection of islets rather than a city. About twenty-four miles from Mitylene a rich man had an estate, none finer than which could be found in all the surrounding country. The neighbouring woods abounded with game, the fields yielded corn, the hillocks were covered with vines, there was