

Aratus' description of the ages of man, from his *Phaenomena*, excerpted from

Mair, A.W. and G.R. *Callimachus, Hymns and Epigrams. Lycophron. Aratus.* Loeb Classical Library Volume 129. London: William Heinemann, 1921.

Beneath both feet of Boötes mark the Maiden [Virgo], who in her hands bears the gleaming Ear of Corn [Spica]. Whether she be daughter of Astraeus, who, men say, was of old the father of the stars, or child of other sire, untroubled be her course! But another tale is current among men, how of old she dwelt on earth and met men face to face, nor ever disdained in olden time the tribes of men and women, but mingling with them took her seat, immortal though she was. Her men called Justice; but she assembling the elders, it might be in the market-place or in the wide-wayed streets, uttered her voice, ever urging on them judgements kinder to the people. Not yet in that age had men knowledge of hateful strife, or carping contention, or din of battle, but a simple life they lived. Far from them was the cruel sea and not yet from afar did ships bring their livelihood, but the oxen and the plough and Justice herself, queen of the peoples, giver of things just, abundantly supplied their every need. Even so long as the earth still nurtured the Golden Race, she had her dwelling on earth. But with the Silver Race only a little and no longer with utter readiness did she mingle, for that she yearned for the ways of the men of old. Yet in that Silver Age was she still upon the earth; but from the echoing hills at eventide she came alone, nor spake to any man in gentle words. But when she had filled the great heights with gathering crowds, then would she with threats rebuke their evil ways, and declare that never more at their prayer would she reveal her face to man. "Behold what manner of race the fathers of the Golden Age left behind them! Far meaner than themselves! But ye will breed a viler progeny! Verily wars and cruel bloodshed shall be unto men and grievous woe shall be laid upon them." Even so she spake and sought the hills and left the people all gazing towards her still. But when they, too, were dead, and when, more ruinous than they which went before, the Race of Bronze was born, who were the first to forge the sword of the highwayman, and the first to eat of the flesh of the ploughing-ox, then verily did Justice loathe that race of men and fly heavenward and took up that abode, where even now in the night time the Maiden is seen of men, established near to far-seen Boötes.