

Stories from Greek Mythology

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Stories from
Greek Mythology

Selected Authors

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Stories of Great Lives

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Table of Contents

The Greeks 1
Selections from *Old Greek Stories* 5
Preface 7
Jupiter and His Mighty Company 9
The Golden Age 12
The Story of Prometheus 16
The Flood 27
The Story of Io 32
The Lord of the Silver Bow 39
Admetus and Alcestis 55
Cadmus and Europa 65
The Quest of Medusa's Head 77
The Wonderful Weaver 101
The Horse and the Olive 106
Selected Stories from
Wonder Stories by Carolyn Bailey
Stories of Greek Gods by Caroline Harding
Myths of Old Greece, Vol. 2 by Mara Pratt
Myths of Old Greece, Vol. 3 by Mara Pratt . 115
Pegasus, the Horse Who Could Fly 117
Zeus, the King of the Gods 123
Poseidon, the God of the Sea 127

How Minerva Built a City 130
Hades, the King of the Dead 139
Hera, the Queen of the Gods 142
Echo and Narcissus 145
Apollo, the God of Light 149
Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom 153
How Vulcan Made the Best of Things . . 156
How Orion Found His Sight 163
Aphrodite, the Goddess of Beauty 170
The Wonders Venus Wrought 173
Hermes, the Messenger of the Gods 180
When Proserpine Was Lost 184
Hestia, the Goddess of the Hearth 192
Pan, the God of Shepherds 195
When Phaeton's Chariot Ran Away . . . 198
Psyche 207
Heracles 218
The Bee Man of Arcadia 224
Orpheus and Eurydice 233
The Golden Fleece 237
Baucis and Philemon 245

Old Greek Folk Stories Told Anew 251
The Wood-Folk 254
The Judgment of Midas 259
Prometheus 263
The Deluge 269
Orpheus and Eurydice 274
Icarus and Dædulus 279
Phaethon 282
Niobe 288
Admetus and the Shepherd 292
Alcestis 296
Apollo's Sister 299
The Calydonian Hunt 303
Atalanta's Race 307
Arachne 311
Pyramus and Thisbe 315
Pygmalion and Galatea 320
Œdipus 323
Cupid and Psyche 328
The Trial of Psyche 335

Greek vs. Roman

The major Greek deities and their Roman Counterparts:

Greek	Roman
Aphrodite	Venus
Aries	Mars
Artemis	Diana
Athena	Minerva
Demeter	Ceres
Eros	Cupid
Hades	Pluto
Hera	Juno
Heracles	Hercules
Hermes	Mercury
Hephaestus	Vulcan
Hestia	Vesta
Odysseus	Ulysses
Pan	Faunus
Persephone	Proserpina
Poseidon	Neptune
Zeus	Jupiter

The Greeks

Far, far away from our own country, across wide seas and many strange lands, is a beautiful country called Greece. There the sky is bluer than our own; the winters are short and mild, and the summers long and pleasant. In whatever direction you look, in that land, you may see the top of some tall mountain reaching up toward the sky. Between the mountains lie beautiful deep valleys, and small sunny plains, while almost all around the land stretches a bright blue sea.

The people who live in that country are called Greeks, and are not very different now from ourselves. But many centuries ago this was not true. In those long-ago days, there were no newspapers, no railroads, no telegraph lines, such as we are used to now. The people were obliged to live very simply then, and did not have a great many things that we think we could not possibly do without.

But although the old Greeks did not know anything of electric lights and steam engines, and ate the plainest food, and wore the simplest of woolen clothing, they were not at all a rude or savage people. In their cities were fine buildings, and pictures, and statues so beautiful that we can never hope to make better ones.

And they had lovely thoughts and fancies, too, for all the world about them.

When they saw the sun rise, they thought that it was a great being called a god, who came up out of the sea in the east, and then journeyed across the sky toward the west. When they saw the grass and flowers springing up out of the dark cold earth, they fancied that there must be another god who made them grow. They imagined that the lightning was the weapon of a mighty god, who ruled the earth and sky. And so they explained everything about them, by thinking that it was caused by some being much greater than themselves. Sometimes they even imagined that they could see their gods in the clouds or in the waves of the sea, and sometimes they thought that they heard them speaking in the rustling leaves of the forest.

The Greeks believed that the whole world was divided among three great gods, who were brothers. The first and greatest of these was the god of the heaven and the earth. The second was the god of the ocean, the rivers, and the brooks. The third was the god of the under-world, or the dark space beneath the surface of the ground. But besides these, there were many other gods, most of whom were the children of these three or related to them in some way.

The gods were always thought of as larger than men and more beautiful in face and figure. They remained always the same, never growing older or dying, as men

do. They were not always good, but would often quarrel among themselves, and sometimes do very cruel things. Indeed, they were very much like the men and women who imagined them, except that they could do wonderful things which would have been impossible for the people of the earth.

Besides the greater gods, the Greeks believed that less powerful spirits were all about them. They thought that the trees had guardian spirits who cared for them. Lovely maidens, called Nymphs, were supposed to live in the springs and brooks, and even in the bright waves of the sea. There were spirits, too, who lived in the woods, and wandered among the trees day and night; and still others who made their homes upon the mountain sides.

The Greeks loved their gods, but feared them a little also. They tried to gain their good-will by building beautiful marble temples in their honor, and by offering wine and meat and precious things to them. They never grew tired of thinking and talking about their gods. So they made up many beautiful stories about them, which they told and re-told, and which their children and grandchildren repeated after them for many hundreds of years.

Selections from
Old Greek Stories

James Baldwin

Preface

Perhaps no other stories have ever been told so often or listened to with so much pleasure as the classic tales of ancient Greece. For many ages they have been a source of delight to young people and old, to the ignorant and the learned, to all who love to hear about and contemplate things mysterious, beautiful, and grand. They have become so incorporated into our language and thought, and so interwoven with our literature, that we could not do away with them now if we would. They are a portion of our heritage from the distant past, and they form perhaps as important a part of our intellectual life as they did of that of the people among whom they originated.

That many of these tales should be read by children at an early age no intelligent person will deny. Sufficient reason for this is to be found in the real pleasure that every child derives from their perusal and in the preparation of this volume no other reason has been considered. I have here attempted to tell a few stories of Jupiter and his mighty company and of some of the old Greek heroes, simply as stories, nothing more. I have carefully avoided every suggestion of interpretation. Attempts at analysis and explanation

will always prove fatal to a child's appreciation and enjoyment of such stories. To inculcate the idea that these tales are merely descriptions of certain natural phenomena expressed in narrative and poetic form, is to deprive them of their highest charm; it is like turning precious gold into utilitarian iron. It is changing a delightful romance into a dull scientific treatise. The wise teacher will take heed not to be guilty of such an error.

It will be observed that while each of the stories in this volume is wholly independent of the others and may be read without any knowledge of those which precede it, there is nevertheless a certain continuity from the first to the last, giving to the collection a completeness like that of a single narrative. In order that the children of our own country and time may be the better able to read these stories in the light in which they were narrated long ago, I have told them in simple language, keeping the supernatural element as far as possible in the background, and nowhere referring to Jupiter and his mighty company as gods. I have hoped thus to free the narrative still more from everything that might detract from its interest simply as a story.

J.B.

Jupiter and His Mighty Company

A long time ago, when the world was much younger than it is now, people told and believed a great many wonderful stories about wonderful things which neither you nor I have ever seen. They often talked about a certain Mighty Being called Jupiter, or Zeus, who was king of the sky and the earth; and they said that he sat most of the time amid the clouds on the top of a very high mountain where he could look down and see everything that was going on in the earth beneath. He liked to ride on the storm-clouds and hurl burning thunderbolts right and left among the trees and rocks; and he was so very, very mighty that when he nodded, the earth quaked, the mountains trembled and smoked, the sky grew black, and the sun hid his face.

Jupiter had two brothers, both of them terrible fellows, but not nearly so great as himself. The name of one of them was Neptune, or Poseidon, and he was the king of the sea. He had a glittering, golden palace far down in the deep sea-caves where the fishes live and the red coral grows; and whenever he was angry the waves would rise mountain high, and the storm-winds would howl fearfully, and the sea would try to break

over the land; and men called him the Shaker of the Earth.

The other brother of Jupiter was a sad pale-faced being, whose kingdom was underneath the earth, where the sun never shone and where there was darkness and weeping and sorrow all the time. His name was Pluto, or Aidoneus, and his country was called the Lower World, or the Land of Shadows, or Hades. Men said that whenever any one died, Pluto would send his messenger, or Shadow Leader, to carry that one down into his cheerless kingdom; and for that reason they never spoke well of him, but thought of him only as the enemy of life.

A great number of other Mighty Beings lived with Jupiter amid the clouds on the mountain top, — so many that I can name a very few only. There was Venus, the queen of love and beauty, who was fairer by far than any woman that you or I have ever seen. There was Athena, or Minerva, the queen of the air, who gave people wisdom and taught them how to do very many useful things. There was Juno, the queen of earth and sky, who sat at the right hand of Jupiter and gave him all kinds of advice. There was Mars, the great warrior, whose delight was in the din of battle. There was Mercury, the swift messenger, who had wings on his cap and shoes, and who flew from place to place like the summer clouds when they are driven before the

wind. There was Vulcan, a skillful blacksmith, who had his forge in a burning mountain and wrought many wonderful things of iron and copper and gold. And besides these, there were many others about whom you will learn by and by, and about whom men told strange and beautiful stories.

They lived in glittering, golden mansions, high up among the clouds – so high indeed that the eyes of men could never see them. But they could look down and see what men were doing, and oftentimes they were said to leave their lofty homes and wander unknown across the land or over the sea.

And of all these Mighty Folk, Jupiter was by far the mightiest.

The Golden Age

Jupiter and his Mighty Folk had not always dwelt amid the clouds on the mountain top. In times long past, a wonderful family called Titans had lived there and had ruled over all the world. There were twelve of them — six brothers and six sisters — and they said that their father was the Sky and their mother the Earth. They had the form and looks of men and women, but they were much larger and far more beautiful.

The name of the youngest of these Titans was Saturn; and yet he was so very old that men often called him Father Time. He was the king of the Titans, and so, of course, was the king of all the earth besides.

Men were never so happy as they were during Saturn's reign. It was the true Golden Age then. The springtime lasted all the year. The woods and meadows were always full of blossoms, and the music of singing birds was heard every day and every hour. It was summer and autumn, too, at the same time. Apples and figs and oranges always hung ripe from the trees; and there were purple grapes on the vines, and melons and

berries of every kind, which the people had but to pick and eat.

Of course nobody had to do any kind of work in that happy time. There was no such thing as sickness or sorrow or old age. Men and women lived for hundreds and hundreds of years and never became gray or wrinkled or lame, but were always handsome and young. They had no need of houses, for there were no cold days nor storms nor anything to make them afraid.

Nobody was poor, for everybody had the same precious things — the sunlight, the pure air, the wholesome water of the springs, the grass for a carpet, the blue sky for a roof, the fruits and flowers of the woods and meadows. So, of course, no one was richer than another, and there was no money, nor any locks or bolts; for everybody was everybody's friend, and no man wanted to get more of anything than his neighbors had.

When these happy people had lived long enough they fell asleep, and their bodies were seen no more. They flitted away through the air, and over the mountains, and across the sea, to a flowery land in the distant west. And some men say that, even to this day, they are wandering happily hither and thither about the earth, causing babies to smile in their cradles,

easing the burdens of the toil worn and sick, and blessing mankind everywhere.

What a pity it is that this Golden Age should have come to an end! But it was Jupiter and his brothers who brought about the sad change.

It is hard to believe it, but men say that Jupiter was the son of the old Titan king, Saturn, and that he was hardly a year old when he began to plot how he might wage war against his father. As soon as he was grown up, he persuaded his brothers, Neptune and Pluto, and his sisters, Juno, Ceres, and Vesta, to join him; and they vowed that they would drive the Titans from the earth.

Then followed a long and terrible war. But Jupiter had many mighty helpers. A company of one-eyed monsters called Cyclopes were kept busy all the time, forging thunderbolts in the fire of burning mountains. Three other monsters, each with a hundred hands, were called in to throw rocks and trees against the stronghold of the Titans; and Jupiter himself hurled his sharp lightning darts so thick and fast that the woods were set on fire and the water in the rivers boiled with the heat.

Of course, good, quiet old Saturn and his brothers and sisters could not hold out always against such foes as these. At the end of ten years they had to give up and beg for peace. They were bound in chains of the

hardest rock and thrown into a prison in the Lower Worlds; and the Cyclopes and the hundred-handed monsters were sent there to be their jailers and to keep guard over them forever.

Then men began to grow dissatisfied with their lot. Some wanted to be rich and own all the good things in the world. Some wanted to be kings and rule over the others. Some who were strong wanted to make slaves of those who were weak. Some broke down the fruit trees in the woods, lest others should eat of the fruit. Some, for mere sport, hunted the timid animals which had always been their friends. Some even killed these poor creatures and ate their flesh for food.

At last, instead of everybody being everybody's friend, everybody was everybody's foe.

So, in all the world, instead of peace, there was war; instead of plenty, there was starvation; instead of innocence, there was crime; and instead of happiness, there was misery.

And that was the way in which Jupiter made himself so mighty; and that was the way in which the Golden Age came to an end.

The Story of Prometheus

I. How Fire was Given to Men

In those old, old times, there lived two brothers who were not like other men, nor yet like those Mighty Ones who lived upon the mountaintop. They were the sons of one of those Titans who had fought against Jupiter and been sent in chains to the strong prison-house of the Lower World.

The name of the elder of these brothers was Prometheus, or Forethought; for he was always thinking of the future and making things ready for what might happen tomorrow, or next week, or next year, or it may be in a hundred years to come. The younger was called Epimetheus, or Afterthought; for he was always so busy thinking of yesterday, or last year, or a hundred years ago, that he had no care at all for what might come to pass after a while.

For some cause Jupiter had not sent these brothers to prison with the rest of the Titans.

Prometheus did not care to live amid the clouds on the mountain top. He was too busy for that. While the Mighty Folk were spending their time in idleness, drinking nectar and eating ambrosia, he was intent

upon plans for making the world wiser and better than it had ever been before.

He went out amongst men to live with them and help them; for his heart was filled with sadness when he found that they were no longer happy as they had been during the golden days when Saturn was king. Ah, how very poor and wretched they were! He found them living in caves and in holes of the earth, shivering with the cold because there was no fire, dying of starvation, hunted by wild beasts and by one another — the most miserable of all living creatures.

"If they only had fire," said Prometheus to himself, "they could at least warm themselves and cook their food; and after a while they could learn to make tools and build themselves houses. Without fire, they are worse off than the beasts."

Then he went boldly to Jupiter and begged him to give fire to men, that so they might have a little comfort through the long, dreary months of winter.

"Not a spark will I give," said Jupiter. "No, indeed! Why, if men had fire they might become strong and wise like ourselves, and after a while they would drive us out of our kingdom. Let them shiver with cold, and let them live like the beasts. It is best for them to be poor and ignorant, that so we Mighty Ones may thrive and be happy."

Prometheus made no answer; but he had set his heart on helping mankind, and he did not give up. He turned away, and left Jupiter and his mighty company forever.

As he was walking by the shore of the sea he found a reed, or, as some say, a tall stalk of fennel, growing; and when he had broken it off he saw that its hollow center was filled with a dry, soft pith which would burn slowly and keep on fire a long time. He took the long stalk in his hands, and started with it towards the dwelling of the sun in the far east.

"Mankind shall have fire in spite of the tyrant who sits on the mountaintop," he said.

He reached the place of the sun in the early morning just as the glowing, golden orb was rising from the earth and beginning his daily journey through the sky. He touched the end of the long reed to the flames, and the dry pith caught on fire and burned slowly. Then he turned and hastened back to his own land, carrying with him the precious spark hidden in the hollow center of the plant.

He called some of the shivering men from their caves and built a fire for them, and showed them how to warm themselves by it and how to build other fires from the coals. Soon there was a cheerful blaze in every rude home in the land, and men and women gathered round it and were warm and happy, and thankful to

Prometheus for the wonderful gift which he had brought to them from the sun.

It was not long until they learned to cook their food and so to eat like men instead of like beasts. They began at once to leave off their wild and savage habits; and instead of lurking in the dark places of the world, they came out into the open air and the bright sunlight, and were glad because life had been given to them.

After that, Prometheus taught them, little by little, a thousand things. He showed them how to build houses of wood and stone, and how to tame sheep and cattle and make them useful, and how to plow and sow and reap, and how to protect themselves from the storms of winter and the beasts of the woods. Then he showed them how to dig in the earth for copper and iron, and how to melt the ore, and how to hammer it into shape and fashion from it the tools and weapons which they needed in peace and war; and when he saw how happy the world was becoming he cried out:

"A new Golden Age shall come, brighter and better by far than the old!"

II. How Diseases and Cares Came Among Men

Things might have gone on very happily indeed, and the Golden Age might really have come again, had

it not been for Jupiter. But one day, when he chanced to look down upon the earth, he saw the fires burning, and the people living in houses, and the flocks feeding on the hills, and the grain ripening in the fields, and this made him very angry.

"Who has done all this?" he asked.

And some one answered, "Prometheus!"

"What! that young Titan!" he cried. "Well, I will punish him in a way that will make him wish I had shut him up in the prison-house with his kinsfolk. But as for those puny men, let them keep their fire. I will make them ten times more miserable than they were before they had it."

Of course it would be easy enough to deal with Prometheus at any time, and so Jupiter was in no great haste about it. He made up his mind to distress mankind first; and he thought of a plan for doing it in a very strange, roundabout way.

In the first place, he ordered his blacksmith Vulcan, whose forge was in the crater of a burning mountain, to take a lump of clay which he gave him, and mold it into the form of a woman. Vulcan did as he was bidden; and when he had finished the image, he carried it up to Jupiter, who was sitting among the clouds with all the Mighty Folk around him. It was nothing but a mere lifeless body, but the great blacksmith had given it a

form more perfect than that of any statue that has ever been made.

"Come now!" said Jupiter, "let us all give some goodly gift to this woman;" and he began by giving her life.

Then the others came in their turn, each with a gift for the marvelous creature. One gave her beauty; and another a pleasant voice; and another good manners; and another a kind heart; and another skill in many arts; and, lastly, some one gave her curiosity. Then they called her Pandora, which means the all-gifted, because she had received gifts from them all.

Pandora was so beautiful and so wondrously gifted that no one could help loving her. When the Mighty Folk had admired her for a time, they gave her to Mercury, the light-footed; and he led her down the mountain side to the place where Prometheus and his brother were living and toiling for the good of mankind. He met Epimetheus first, and said to him:

"Epimetheus, here is a beautiful woman, whom Jupiter has sent to you to be your wife."

Prometheus had often warned his brother to beware of any gift that Jupiter might send, for he knew that the mighty tyrant could not be trusted; but when Epimetheus saw Pandora, how lovely and wise she was,

he forgot all warnings, and took her home to live with him and be his wife.

Pandora was very happy in her new home; and even Prometheus, when he saw her, was pleased with her loveliness. She had brought with her a golden casket, which Jupiter had given her at parting, and which he had told her held many precious things; but wise Athena, the queen of the air, had warned her never, never to open it, nor look at the things inside.

"They must be jewels," she said to herself; and then she thought of how they would add to her beauty if only she could wear them. "Why did Jupiter give them to me if I should never use them, nor so much as look at them?" she asked.

The more she thought about the golden casket, the more curious she was to see what was in it; and every day she took it down from its shelf and felt of the lid, and tried to peer inside of it without opening it.

"Why should I care for what Athena told me?" she said at last. "She is not beautiful, and jewels would be of no use to her. I think that I will look at them, at any rate. Athena will never know. Nobody else will ever know."

She opened the lid a very little, just to peep inside. All at once there was a whirring, rustling sound, and before she could shut it down again, out flew ten

thousand strange creatures with death-like faces and gaunt and dreadful forms, such as nobody in all the world had ever seen. They fluttered for a little while about the room, and then flew away to find dwelling-places wherever there were homes of men. They were diseases and cares; for up to that time mankind had not had any kind of sickness, nor felt any troubles of mind, nor worried about what the morrow might bring forth.

These creatures flew into every house, and, without any one seeing them, nestled down in the bosoms of men and women and children, and put an end to all their joy; and ever since that day they have been flitting and creeping, unseen and unheard, over all the land, bringing pain and sorrow and death into every household.

If Pandora had not shut down the lid so quickly, things would have gone much worse. But she closed it just in time to keep the last of the evil creatures from getting out. The name of this creature was Foreboding, and although he was almost half out of the casket, Pandora pushed him back and shut the lid so tight that he could never escape. If he had gone out into the world, men would have known from childhood just what troubles were going to come to them every day of their lives, and they would never have had any joy or hope so long as they lived.

And this was the way in which Jupiter sought to make mankind more miserable than they had been before Prometheus had befriended them.

III. How the Friend of Men was Punished

The next thing that Jupiter did was to punish Prometheus for stealing fire from the sun. He bade two of his servants, whose names were Strength and Force, to seize the bold Titan and carry him to the topmost peak of the Caucasus Mountains. Then he sent the blacksmith Vulcan to bind him with iron chains and fetter him to the rocks so that he could not move hand or foot.

Vulcan did not like to do this, for he was a friend of Prometheus, and yet he did not dare to disobey. And so the great friend of men, who had given them fire and lifted them out of their wretchedness and shown them how to live, was chained to the mountain peak; and there he hung, with the storm-winds whistling always around him, and the pitiless hail beating in his face, and fierce eagles shrieking in his ears and tearing his body with their cruel claws. Yet he bore all his sufferings without a groan, and never would he beg for mercy or say that he was sorry for what he had done.

Year after year, and age after age, Prometheus hung there. Now and then old Helios, the driver of the sun car, would look down upon him and smile; now and then flocks of birds would bring him messages from far-off lands; once the ocean nymphs came and sang wonderful songs in his hearing; and oftentimes men looked up to him with pitying eyes, and cried out against the tyrant who had placed him there.

Then, once upon a time, a white cow passed that way, — a strangely beautiful cow, with large sad eyes and a face that seemed almost human. She stopped and looked up at the cold gray peak and the giant body which was chained there. Prometheus saw her and spoke to her kindly:

"I know who you are," he said. "You are Io who was once a fair and happy maiden in distant Argos; and now, because of the tyrant Jupiter and his jealous queen, you are doomed to wander from land to land in that unhuman form. But do not lose hope. Go on to the southward and then to the west; and after many days you shall come to the great river Nile. There you shall again become a maiden, but fairer and more beautiful than before; and you shall become the wife of the king of that land, and shall give birth to a son, from whom shall spring the hero who will break my chains and set me free. As for me, I bide in patience the day which not even Jupiter can hasten or delay. Farewell!"

Poor Io would have spoken, but she could not. Her sorrowful eyes looked once more at the suffering hero on the peak, and then she turned and began her long and tiresome journey to the land of the Nile.

Ages passed, and at last a great hero whose name was Hercules came to the land of the Caucasus. In spite of Jupiter's dread thunderbolts and fearful storms of snow and sleet, he climbed the rugged mountain peak; he slew the fierce eagles that had so long tormented the helpless prisoner on those craggy heights; and with a mighty blow, he broke the fetters of Prometheus and set the grand old hero free.

"I knew that you would come," said Prometheus. "Ten generations ago I spoke of you to Io, who was afterwards the queen of the land of the Nile."

"And Io," said Hercules, "was the mother of the race from which I am sprung."

The Flood

In those very early times there was a man named Deucalion, and he was the son of Prometheus. He was only a common man and not a Titan like his great father, and yet he was known far and wide for his good deeds and the uprightness of his life. His wife's name was Pyrrha, and she was one of the fairest of the daughters of men.

After Jupiter had bound Prometheus on Mount Caucasus and had sent diseases and cares into the world, men became very, very wicked. They no longer built houses and tended their flocks and lived together in peace; but every man was at war with his neighbor, and there was no law nor safety in all the land. Things were in much worse case now than they had been before Prometheus had come among men, and that was just what Jupiter wanted. But as the world became wickeder and wickeder every day, he began to grow weary of seeing so much bloodshed and of hearing the cries of the oppressed and the poor.

"These men," he said to his mighty company, "are nothing but a source of trouble. When they were good and happy, we felt afraid lest they should become

greater than ourselves; and now they are so terribly wicked that we are in worse danger than before. There is only one thing to be done with them, and that is to destroy them every one."

So he sent a great rain-storm upon the earth, and it rained day and night for a long time; and the sea was filled to the brim, and the water ran over the land and covered first the plains and then the forests and then the hills. But men kept on fighting and robbing, even while the rain was pouring down and the sea was coming up over the land.

No one but Deucalion, the son of Prometheus, was ready for such a storm. He had never joined in any of the wrong doings of those around him, and had often told them that unless they left off their evil ways there would be a day of reckoning in the end. Once every year he had gone to the land of the Caucasus to talk with his father, who was hanging chained to the mountain peak.

"The day is coming," said Prometheus, "when Jupiter will send a flood to destroy mankind from the earth. Be sure that you are ready for it, my son."

And so when the rain began to fall, Deucalion drew from its shelter a boat which he had built for just such a time. He called fair Pyrrha, his wife, and the two sat in the boat and were floated safely on the rising waters. Day and night, day and night, I cannot tell how long,

the boat drifted hither and thither. The tops of the trees were hidden by the flood, and then the hills and then the mountains; and Deucalion and Pyrrha could see nothing anywhere but water, water, water — and they knew that all the people in the land had been drowned.

After a while the rain stopped falling, and the clouds cleared away, and the blue sky and the golden sun came out overhead. Then the water began to sink very fast and to run off the land towards the sea; and early the very next day the boat was drifted high upon a mountain called Parnassus, and Deucalion and Pyrrha stepped out upon the dry land. After that, it was only a short time until the whole country was laid bare, and the trees shook their leafy branches in the wind, and the fields were carpeted with grass and flowers more beautiful than in the days before the flood.

But Deucalion and Pyrrha were very sad, for they knew that they were the only persons who were left alive in all the land. At last they started to walk down the mountain side towards the plain, wondering what would become of them now, all alone as they were in the wide world. While they were talking and trying to think what they should do, they heard a voice behind them. They turned and saw a noble young prince standing on one of the rocks above them. He was very tall, with blue eyes and yellow hair. There were wings

on his shoes and on his cap, and in his hands he bore a staff with golden serpents twined around it. They knew at once that he was Mercury, the swift messenger of the Mighty Ones, and they waited to hear what he would say.

"Is there anything that you wish?" he asked. "Tell me, and you shall have whatever you desire."

"We should like, above all things," said Deucalion, "to see this land full of people once more; for without neighbors and friends, the world is a very lonely place indeed."

"Go on down the mountain," said Mercury, "and as you go, cast the bones of your mother over your shoulders behind you;" and, with these words, he leaped into the air and was seen no more.

"What did he mean?" asked Pyrrha.

"Surely I do not know," said Deucalion. "But let us think a moment. Who is our mother, if it is not the Earth, from whom all living things have sprung? And yet what could he mean by the bones of our mother?"

"Perhaps he meant the stones of the earth," said Pyrrha. "Let us go on down the mountain, and as we go, let us pick up the stones in our path and throw them over our shoulders behind us."

"It is rather a silly thing to do," said Deucalion; "and yet there can be no harm in it, and we shall see what will happen."

And so they walked on, down the steep slope of Mount Parnassus, and as they walked they picked up the loose stones in their way and cast the mover their shoulders; and strange to say, the stones which Deucalion threw sprang up as full-grown men, strong, and handsome, and brave; and the stones which Pyrrha threw sprang up as full-grown women, lovely and fair. When at last they reached the plain they found themselves at the head of a noble company of human beings, all eager to serve them.

So Deucalion became their king, and he set them in homes, and taught them how to till the ground, and how to do many useful things; and the land was filled with people who were happier and far better than those who had dwelt there before the flood. And they named the country Hellas, after Helen, the son of Deucalion and Pyrrha; and the people are to this day called Hellenes.

But we call the country GREECE.

The Story of Io

In the town of Argos there lived a maiden named Io. She was so fair and good that all who knew her loved her, and said that there was no one like her in the whole world. When Jupiter, in his home in the clouds, heard of her, he came down to Argos to see her. She pleased him so much, and was so kind and wise, that he came back the next day and the next and the next; and by and by he stayed in Argos all the time so that he might be near her. She did not know who he was, but thought that he was a prince from some far-off land; for he came in the guise of a young man, and did not look like the great king of earth and sky that he was.

But Juno, the queen who lived with Jupiter and shared his throne in the midst of the clouds, did not love Io at all. When she heard why Jupiter stayed from home so long, she made up her mind to do the fair girl all the harm that she could; and one day she went down to Argos to try what could be done.

Jupiter saw her while she was yet a great way off, and he knew why she had come. So, to save Io from her, he changed the maiden to a white cow. He

thought that when Juno had gone back home, it would not be hard to give Io her own form again.

But when the queen saw the cow, she knew that it was Io.

"Oh, what a fine cow you have there!" she said. "Give her to me, good Jupiter, give her to me!"

Jupiter did not like to do this; but she coaxed so hard that at last he gave up, and let her have the cow for her own. He thought that it would not be long till he could get her away from the queen, and change her to a girl once more. But Juno was too wise to trust him. She took the cow by her horns, and led her out of the town.

"Now, my sweet maid," she said, "I will see that you stay in this shape as long as you live."

Then she gave the cow in charge of a strange watchman named Argus, who had, not two eyes only, as you and I have, but ten times ten. And Argus led the cow to a grove, and tied her by a long rope to a tree, where she had to stand and eat grass, and cry, "Moo! moo!" from morn till night; and when the sun had set, and it was dark, she lay down on the cold ground and wept, and cried, "Moo! moo!" till she fell asleep.

But no kind friend heard her, and no one came to help her; for none but Jupiter and Juno knew that the white cow who stood in the grove was Io, whom all the

world loved. Day in and day out, Argus, who was all eyes, sat on a hill close by and kept watch; and you could not say that he went to sleep at all, for while half of his eyes were shut, the other half were wide awake, and thus they slept and watched by turns.

Jupiter was grieved when he saw to what a hard life Io had been doomed, and he tried to think of some plan to set her free. One day he called sly Mercury, who had wings on his shoes, and bade him go and lead the cow away from the grove where she was kept. Mercury went down and stood near the foot of the hill where Argus sat, and began to play sweet tunes on his flute. This was just what the strange watchman liked to hear; and so he called to Mercury, and asked him to come up and sit by his side and play still other tunes.

Mercury did as he wished, and played such strains of sweet music as no one in all the world has heard from that day to this. And as he played, queer old Argus lay down upon the grass and listened, and thought that he had not had so great a treat in all his life. But by and by those sweet sounds wrapped him in so strange a spell that all his eyes closed at once, and he fell into a deep sleep.

This was just what Mercury wished. It was not a brave thing to do, and yet he drew a long, sharp knife from his belt and cut off the head of poor Argus while

he slept. Then he ran down the hill to loose the cow and lead her to the town.

But Juno had seen him kill her watchman, and she met him on the road. She cried out to him and told him to let the cow go; and her face was so full of wrath that, as soon as he saw her, he turned and fled, and left poor Io to her fate.

Juno was so much grieved when she saw Argus stretched dead in the grass on the hilltop, that she took his hundred eyes and set them in the tail of a peacock; and there you may still see them to this day.

Then she found a great gadfly, as big as a bat, and sent it to buzz in the white cow's ears, and to bite her and sting her so that she could have no rest all day long. Poor Io ran from place to place to get out of its way; but it buzzed and buzzed, and stung and stung, till she was wild with fright and pain, and wished that she were dead. Day after day she ran, now through the thick woods, now in the long grass that grew on the treeless plains, and now by the shore of the sea.

By and by she came to a narrow neck of the sea, and, since the land on the other side looked as though she might find rest there, she leaped into the waves and swam across; and that place has been called Bosphorus — a word which means the Sea of the Cow — from that time till now, and you will find it so marked on the maps which you use at school. Then she went on

through a strange land on the other side, but, let her do what she would, she could not get rid of the gadfly.

After a time she came to a place where there were high mountains with snow-capped peaks which seemed to touch the sky. There she stopped to rest a while; and she looked up at the calm, cold cliffs above her and wished that she might die where all was so grand and still. But as she looked she saw a giant form stretched upon the rocks midway between earth and sky, and she knew at once that it was Prometheus, the young Titan, whom Jupiter had chained there because he had given fire to men.

"My sufferings are not so great as his," she thought; and her eyes were filled with tears.

Then Prometheus looked down and spoke to her, and his voice was very mild and kind.

"I know who you are," he said; and then he told her not to lose hope, but to go south and then west, and she would by and by find a place in which to rest.

She would have thanked him if she could; but when she tried to speak she could only say, "Moo! moo!"

Then Prometheus went on and told her that the time would come when she should be given her own form again, and that she should live to be the mother of a race of heroes. "As for me," said he, "I bide the time in

patience, for I know that one of those heroes will break my chains and set me free. Farewell!"

Then Io, with a brave heart, left the great Titan and journeyed, as he had told her, first south and then west. The gadfly was worse now than before, but she did not fear it half so much, for her heart was full of hope. For a whole year she wandered, and at last she came to the land of Egypt in Africa. She felt so tired now that she could go no farther, and so she lay down near the bank of the great River Nile to rest.

All this time Jupiter might have helped her had he not been so much afraid of Juno. But now it so chanced that when the poor cow lay down by the bank of the Nile, Queen Juno, in her high house in the clouds, also lay down to take a nap. As soon as she was sound asleep, Jupiter like a flash of light sped over the sea to Egypt. He killed the cruel gadfly and threw it into the river. Then he stroked the cow's head with his hand, and the cow was seen no more; but in her place stood the young girl Io, pale and frail, but fair and good as she had been in her old home in the town of Argos. Jupiter said not a word, nor even showed himself to the tired, trembling maiden. He hurried back with all speed to his high home in the clouds, for he feared that Juno might waken and find out what he had done.

The people of Egypt were kind to Io, and gave her a home in their sunny land; and by and by the king of

Egypt asked her to be his wife, and made her his queen; and she lived a long and happy life in his marble palace on the bank of the Nile. Ages afterward, the great-grandson of the great-grandson of Io's great-grandson broke the chains of Prometheus and set that mighty friend of mankind free.

The name of the hero was Hercules.

The Lord of the Silver Bow

I. Delos

Long before you or I or anybody else can remember, there lived with the mighty Folk on the mountain top a fair and gentle lady named Leto. So fair and gentle was she that Jupiter loved her and made her his wife. But when Juno, the queen of earth and sky, heard of this, she was very angry; and she drove Leto down from the mountain and bade all things great and small refuse to help her. So Leto fled like a wild deer from land to land and could find no place in which to rest. She could not stop, for then the ground would quake under her feet, and the stones would cry out, "Go on! go on!" and birds and beasts and trees and men would join in the cry; and no one in all the wide land took pity on her.

One day she came to the sea, and as she fled along the beach she lifted up her hands and called aloud to great Neptune to help her. Neptune, the king of the sea, heard her and was kind to her. He sent a huge fish, called a dolphin, to bear her away from the cruel land; and the fish, with Leto sitting on his broad back, swam through the waves to Delos, a little island which lay floating on top of the water like a boat. There the gentle lady found rest and a home; for the place

belonged to Neptune, and the words of cruel Juno were not obeyed there. Neptune put four marble pillars under the island so that it should rest firm upon them; and then he chained it fast, with great chains which reached to the bottom of the sea, so that the waves might never move it.

By and by twin babes were born to Leto in Delos. One was a boy whom she called Apollo, the other a girl whom she named Artemis, or Diana. When the news of their birth was carried to Jupiter and the Mighty Folk on the mountain top, all the world was glad. The sun danced on the waters, and singing swans flew seven times round the island of Delos. The moon stooped to kiss the babes in their cradle; and Juno forgot her anger, and bade all things on the earth and in the sky be kind to Leto.

The two children grew very fast. Apollo became tall and strong and graceful; his face was as bright as the sunbeams; and he carried joy and gladness with him wherever he went. Jupiter gave him a pair of swans and a golden chariot, which bore him over sea and land wherever he wanted to go; and he gave him a lyre on which he played the sweetest music that was ever heard, and a silver bow with sharp arrows which never missed the mark. When Apollo went out into the world, and men came to know about him, he was called

by some the Bringer of Light, by others the Master of Song, and by still others the Lord of the Silver Bow.

Diana was tall and graceful, too, and very handsome. She liked to wander in the woods with her maids, who were called nymphs; she took kind care of the timid deer and the helpless creatures which live among the trees; and she delighted in hunting wolves and bears and other savage beasts. She was loved and feared in every land, and Jupiter made her the queen of the green woods and the chase.

II. Delphi

"Where is the center of the world?"

This is the question which some one asked Jupiter as he sat in his golden hall. Of course the mighty ruler of earth and sky was too wise to be puzzled by so simple a thing, but he was too busy to answer it at once. So he said:

"Come again in one year from today, and I will show you the very place."

Then Jupiter took two swift eagles which could fly faster than the storm-wind, and trained them till the speed of the one was the same as that of the other. At the end of the year he said to his servants:

"Take this eagle to the eastern rim of the earth, where the sun rises out of the sea; and carry his fellow

to the far west, where the ocean is lost in darkness and nothing lies beyond. Then, when I give you the sign, loosen both at the same moment."

The servants did as they were bidden, and carried the eagles to the outermost edges of the world. Then Jupiter clapped his hands. The lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, and the two swift birds were set free. One of them flew straight back towards the west, the other flew straight back towards the east; and no arrow ever sped faster from the bow than did these two birds from the hands of those who had held them.

On and on they went like shooting stars rushing to meet each other; and Jupiter and all his mighty company sat amid the clouds and watched their flight. Nearer and nearer they came, but they swerved not to the right nor to the left. Nearer and nearer — and then with a crash like the meeting of two ships at sea, the eagles came together in mid-air and fell dead to the ground.

"Who asked where is the center of the world?" said Jupiter. "The spot where the two eagles lie--that is the center of the world."

They had fallen on the top of a mountain in Greece which men have ever since called Parnassus.

"If that is the center of the world," said young Apollo, "then I will make my home there, and I will

build a house in that place, so that my light may be seen in all lands."

So Apollo went down to Parnassus, and looked about for a spot in which to lay the foundations of his house. The mountain itself was savage and wild, and the valley below it was lonely and dark. The few people who lived there kept themselves hidden among the rocks as if in dread of some great danger. They told Apollo that near the foot of the mountain where the steep cliff seemed to be split in two there lived a huge serpent called the Python. This serpent often seized sheep and cattle, and sometimes even men and women and children, and carried them up to his dreadful den and devoured them.

"Can no one kill this beast?" said Apollo.

And they said, "No one; and we and our children and our flocks shall all be slain by him."

Then Apollo with his silver bow in his hands went up towards the place where the Python lay. The monster had worn great paths through the grass and among the rocks, and his lair was not hard to find. When he caught sight of Apollo, he uncoiled himself, and came out to meet him. The bright prince saw the creature's glaring eyes and blood-red mouth, and heard the rush of his scaly body over the stones. He fitted an arrow to his bow, and stood still. The Python saw that his foe was no common man, and turned to flee. Then

the arrow sped from the bow — and the monster was dead.

"Here I will build my house," said Apollo.

Close to the foot of the steep cliff, and beneath the spot where Jupiter's eagles had fallen, he laid the foundations; and soon where had been the lair of the Python, the white walls of Apollo's temple arose among the rocks. Then the poor people of the land came and built their houses near by; and Apollo lived among them many years, and taught them to be gentle and wise, and showed them how to be happy. The mountain was no longer savage and wild, but was a place of music and song; the valley was no longer dark and lonely, but was filled with beauty and light.

"What shall we call our city?" the people asked.

"Call it Delphi, or the Dolphin," said Apollo; "for it was a dolphin that carried my mother across the sea."

III. Daphne

In the Vale of Tempe, which lies far north of Delphi, there lived a young girl whose name was Daphne. She was a strange child, wild and shy as a fawn, and as fleet of foot as the deer that feed on the plains. But she was as fair and good as a day in June, and none could know her but to love her.

Daphne spent the most of her time in the fields and woods, with the birds and blossoms and trees; and she liked best of all to wander along the banks of the River Peneus, and listen to the ripple of the water as it flowed among the reeds or over the shining pebbles. Very often she would sing and talk to the river as if it were a living thing, and could hear her; and she fancied that it understood what she said, and that it whispered many a wonderful secret to her in return. The good people who knew her best said:

"She is the child of the river."

"Yes, dear river," she said, "let me be your child."

The river smiled and answered her in a way which she alone could understand; and always, after that, she called it "Father Peneus."

One day when the sun shone warm, and the air was filled with the perfume of flowers, Daphne wandered farther away from the river than she had ever gone before. She passed through a shady wood and climbed a hill, from the top of which she could see Father Peneus lying white and clear and smiling in the valley below. Beyond her were other hills, and then the green slopes and wooded top of great Mount Ossa. Ah, if she could only climb to the summit of Ossa, she might have a view of the sea, and of other mountains close by, and of the twin peaks of Mount Parnassus, far, far to the south!

"Good-by, Father Peneus," she said. "I am going to climb the mountain; but I will come back soon."

The river smiled, and Daphne ran onward, climbing one hill after another, and wondering why the great mountain seemed still so far away. By and by she came to the foot of a wooded slope where there was a pretty waterfall and the ground was bespangled with thousands of beautiful flowers; and she sat down there a moment to rest. Then from the grove on the hilltop above her, came the sound of the loveliest music she had ever heard. She stood up and listened. Some one was playing on a lyre, and some one was singing. She was frightened; and still the music was so charming that she could not run away.

Then, all at once, the sound ceased, and a young man, tall and fair and with a face as bright as the morning sun, came down the hillside towards her.

"Daphne!" he said; but she did not stop to hear. She turned and fled like a frightened deer, back towards the Vale of Tempe.

"Daphne!" cried the young man. She did not know that it was Apollo, the lord of the Silver Bow; she only knew that the stranger was following her, and she ran as fast as her fleet feet could carry her. No young man had ever spoken to her before, and the sound of his voice filled her heart with fear.

"She is the fairest maiden that I ever saw," said Apollo to himself. "If I could only look at her face again and speak with her, how happy I should be."

Through brake, through brier, over rocks and the trunks of fallen trees, down rugged slopes, across mountain streams, leaping, flying, panting, Daphne ran. She looked not once behind her, but she heard the swift footsteps of Apollo coming always nearer; she heard the rattle of the silver bow which hung from his shoulders; she heard his very breath. He was so close to her. At last she was in the valley where the ground was smooth and it was easier running, but her strength was fast leaving her. Right before her, however, lay the river, white and smiling in the sunlight. She stretched out her arms and cried:

"O Father Peneus, save me!"

Then it seemed as though the river rose up to meet her. The air was filled with a blinding mist. For a moment Apollo lost sight of the fleeing maiden. Then he saw her close by the river's bank, and so near to him that her long hair, streaming behind her, brushed his cheek. He thought that she was about to leap into the rushing, roaring waters, and he reached out his hands to save her. But it was not the fair, timid Daphne that he caught in his arms; it was the trunk of a laurel tree, its green leaves trembling in the breeze.

"O Daphne! Daphne!" he cried, "is this the way in which the river saves you? Does Father Peneus turn you into a tree to keep you from me?"

Whether Daphne had really been turned into a tree, I know not; nor does it matter now — it was so long ago. But Apollo believed that it was so, and hence he made a wreath of the laurel leaves and set it on his head like a crown, and said that he would wear it always in memory of the lovely maiden. And ever after that, the laurel was Apollo's favorite tree, and, even to this day, poets and musicians are crowned with its leaves.

IV. Deluded

Apollo did not care to live much of the time with his mighty kinsfolk on the mountain top. He liked better to go about from place to place and from land to land, seeing people at their work and making their lives happy. When men first saw his fair boyish face and his soft white hands, they sneered and said he was only an idle, good-for-nothing fellow. But when they heard him speak, they were so charmed that they stood, spellbound, to listen; and ever after that they made his words their law. They wondered how it was that he was so wise; for it seemed to them that he did nothing but stroll about, playing on his wonderful lyre and looking at the trees and blossoms and birds and bees. But when any of them were sick they came to him, and he told

them what to find in plants or stones or brooks that would heal them and make them strong again. They noticed that he did not grow old, as others did, but that he was always young and fair; and, even after he had gone away, — they knew not how, nor whither, — it seemed as though the earth were a brighter and sweeter place to live in than it had been before his coming.

In a mountain village beyond the Vale of Tempe, there lived a beautiful lady named Coronis. When Apollo saw her, he loved her and made her his wife; and for a long time the two lived together, and were happy. By and by a babe was born to them, — a boy with the most wonderful eyes that anybody ever saw, — and they named him Æsculapius. Then the mountains and the woods were filled with the music of Apollo's lyre, and even the mighty Folk on the mountain top were glad.

One day Apollo left Coronis and her child, and went on a journey to visit his favorite home on Mount Parnassus.

"I shall hear from you every day," he said at parting. "The crow will fly swiftly every morning to Parnassus, and tell me whether you and the child are well, and what you are doing while I am away."

For Apollo had a pet crow which was very wise, and could talk. The bird was not black, like the crows which

you have seen, but as white as snow. Men say that all crows were white until that time, but I doubt whether anybody knows.

Apollo's crow was a great tattler, and did not always tell the truth. It would see the beginning of something, and then, without waiting to know anything more about it, would hurry off and make up a great story about it. But there was no one else to carry news from Coronis to Apollo; for, as you know, there were no postmen in those days, and there was not a telegraph wire in the whole world.

All went well for several days. Every morning the white bird would wing its way over hills and plains and rivers and forests until it found Apollo, either in the groves on the top of Parnassus or in his own house at Delphi. Then it would alight upon his shoulder and say, "Coronis is well! Coronis is well!"

One day, however, it had a different story. It came much earlier than ever before, and seemed to be in great haste.

"Cor--Cor--Cor!" it cried; but it was so out of breath that it could not speak her whole name.

"What is the matter?" cried Apollo, in alarm. "Has anything happened to Coronis? Speak! Tell me the truth!"

"She does not love you! she does not love you!" cried the crow. "I saw a man — I saw a man, — " and then, without stopping to take breath, or to finish the story, it flew up into the air, and hurried homeward again.

Apollo, who had always been so wise, was now almost as foolish as his crow. He fancied that Coronis had really deserted him for another man, and his mind was filled with grief and rage. With his silver bow in his hands he started at once for his home. He did not stop to speak with any one; he had made up his mind to learn the truth for himself. His swan-team and his golden chariot were not at hand — for, now that he was living with men, he must travel like men. The journey had to be made on foot, and it was no short journey in those days when there were no roads. But after a time, he came to the village where he had lived happily for so many years, and soon he saw his own house half-hidden among the dark-leaved olive trees. In another minute he would know whether the crow had told him the truth.

He heard the footsteps of some one running in the grove. He caught a glimpse of a white robe among the trees. He felt sure that this was the man whom the crow had seen, and that he was trying to run away. He fitted an arrow to his bow quickly. He drew the string.

Twang! And the arrow which never missed sped like a flash of light through the air.

Apollo heard a sharp, wild cry of pain; and he bounded forward through the grove. There, stretched dying on the grass, he saw his dear Coronis. She had seen him coming, and was running gladly to greet him, when the cruel arrow pierced her heart. Apollo was overcome with grief. He took her form in his arms, and tried to call her back to life again. But it was all in vain. She could only whisper his name, and then she was dead.

A moment afterwards the crow alighted on one of the trees near by."Cor--Cor--Cor," it began; for it wanted now to finish its story. But Apollo bade it begone.

"Cursed bird," he cried, "you shall never say a word but 'Cor--Cor--Cor!' all your life; and the feathers of which you are so proud shall no longer be white, but black as midnight."

And from that time to this, as you very well know, all crows have been black; and they fly from one dead tree to another, always crying,"Cor--cor--cor!"

V. Disgraced

Soon after this, Apollo took the little Æsculapius in his arms and carried him to a wise old schoolmaster

named Cheiron, who lived in a cave under the gray cliffs of a mountain close by the sea.

"Take this child," he said, "and teach him all the lore of the mountains, the woods, and the fields. Teach him those things which he most needs to know in order to do great good to his fellow-men."

And Æsculapius proved to be a wise child, gentle and sweet and teachable; and among all the pupils of Cheiron he was the best loved.

He learned the lore of the mountains, the woods, and the fields. He found out what virtue there is in herbs and flowers and senseless stones; and he studied the habits of birds and beasts and men. But above all he became skillful in dressing wounds and healing diseases; and to this day physicians remember and honor him as the first and greatest of their craft. When he grew up to manhood his name was heard in every land, and people blessed him because he was the friend of life and the foe of death.

As time went by, Æsculapius cured so many people and saved so many lives that Pluto, the pale-faced king of the Lower World, became alarmed.

"I shall soon have nothing to do," he said, "if this physician does not stop keeping people away from my kingdom."

And he sent word to his brother Jupiter, and complained that Æsculapius was cheating him out of what was his due. Great Jupiter listened to his complaint, and stood up among the storm clouds, and hurled his thunderbolts at Æsculapius until the great physician was cruelly slain. Then all the world was filled with grief, and even the beasts and the trees and the stones wept because the friend of life was no more.

When Apollo heard of the death of his son, his grief and wrath were terrible. He could not do anything against Jupiter and Pluto, for they were stronger than he; but he went down into the smithy of Vulcan, underneath the smoking mountains, and slew the giant smiths who had made the deadly thunderbolts.

Then Jupiter, in his turn, was angry, and ordered Apollo to come before him and be punished for what he had done. He took away his bow and arrows and his wonderful lyre and all his beauty of form and feature; and after that Jupiter clothed him in the rags of a beggar and drove him down from the mountain, and told him that he should never come back nor be himself again until he had served some man a whole year as a slave.

And so Apollo went out, alone and friendless, into the world; and no one who saw him would have dreamed that he was once the sun-bright Lord of the Silver Bow.

Admetus and Alcestis

I. The Slave

In a little town north of Delphi, and not very far from the sea, there lived a young man named Admetus. He was the ruler of the town, and hence was called its king; but his kingdom was so small that he could walk all round it in half a day. He knew the name of every man and woman and child in the town, and everybody loved him because he was so gentle and kind and at the same time a king.

Late one day, when the rain was falling and the wind was blowing cold from the mountains, a beggar came to his door. The man was ragged and dirty and half starved, and Admetus knew that he must have come from some strange land, for in his own country no one ever went hungry. So the kind king took him into the house and fed him; and after the man had bathed he gave him his own warm cloak, and bade the servants make a place for him to sleep through the night.

In the morning Admetus asked the poor man his name, but he shook his head and made no answer. Then Admetus asked him about his home and his country; and all that the man would say was: "Make me

your slave, master! Make me your slave, and let me serve you for a year."

The young king did not need another servant. But he saw that the poorest slave in the land was better off than this man, and so he took pity on him. "I will do as you ask," he said. "I will give you a home and food and clothing; and you shall serve me and be my slave for one year."

There was but little that the stranger knew how to do, and so he was sent to the hills to take care of the king's sheep and goats. For a whole year he tended the flocks, finding the greenest pastures and the freshest water for them, and keeping the wolves away. Admetus was very kind to him, as he was to all his servants, and the food and clothing which he gave him were of the best in the land. But the stranger did not tell his name nor say anything about his kindred or his home.

When a year and a day had passed, it so happened that Admetus was walking out among the hills to see his sheep. All at once the sound of music fell upon his ear. It was no such music as shepherds play, but sweeter and richer than any he had ever heard before. He looked to see where the sound came from. Ah! who was that sitting on the hilltop, with the sheep around him listening to his music? Surely it was not his shepherd?

It was a tall and handsome young man, clad in robes lighter and finer than any king might wear. His face was as bright as sunbeams, and his eyes gleamed like lightning. Upon his shoulder was a silver bow, from his belt hung a quiver of sharp arrows, and in his hands was a golden lyre. Admetus stood still and wondered. Then the stranger spoke:

"King Admetus," he said, "I am the poor beggar whom you fed — your slave to whom you were so kind. I have served you, as I agreed, for a whole year, and now I am going home. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes," said Admetus; "tell me your name."

"My name is Apollo," was the answer. "Twelve months ago my father, mighty Jupiter, drove me away from before his face and bade me go out friendless and alone upon the earth; and he told me that I should not turn again towards home until I had served a year as some man's slave. I came to you, ragged and half starved, and you fed and clothed me; and I became your slave, and you were as kind to me as though I were your son. What shall I give you to reward you?"

"Lord of the Silver Bow," said the king, "I have all that any man can want. I am happy in the thought that I have been of some help to you. I can ask for nothing more."

"Very well," said Apollo; "but if the time should ever come when you need my help, let me know."

Then the bright prince walked swiftly away, playing sweet music as he went; and Admetus with glad heart returned to his home.

II. The Chariot

From the place where Admetus lived it was only a few miles to Iolcus, a rich city by the sea. The king of Iolcus was a cruel tyrant named Pelias, who cared for nobody in all the world but himself. This Pelias had a daughter named Alcestis, who was as fair as any rose in June and so gentle and good that everybody praised her. Many a prince from over the sea had come to woo Alcestis for his wife; and the noblest young men in Greece had tried to win her favor. But there was only one to whom she would listen, and that was her young neighbor, King Admetus.

So Admetus went before gruff King Pelias to ask him whether he might wed Alcestis.

"No one shall have my daughter," said the old king, "until he proves that he is worthy to be my son-in-law. If you want her, you must come for her in a chariot drawn by a lion and a wild boar. If you come in any other way, she shall not be your wife." And Pelias laughed, and drove the young man out of his palace.

Admetus went away feeling very sad; for who had ever heard of harnessing a lion and a wild boar together in a chariot? The bravest man in the world could not do such a thing as that.

As he walked along and saw the sheep and goats feeding on the hilltops near his own town, he chanced to think of Apollo and of the last words that he had heard him say: "When you need my help, let me know."

"I will let him know," said Admetus.

Early the next morning he built an altar of stones in the open field; and when he had killed the fattest goat of the flock, he built a fire on the altar and laid the thighs of the goat in the flames. Then when the smell of the burning flesh went up into the air, he lifted his hands towards the mountain tops and called to Apollo.

"Lord of the Silver Bow," he cried, "if ever I have shown kindness to the poor and the distressed, come now and help me. For I am in sore need, and I remember your promise."

Hardly was he done speaking when bright Apollo, bearing his bow and his quiver of arrows, came down and stood before him.

"Kindest of kings," he said, "tell me how I can help you."

Then Admetus told him all about the fair Alcestis, and how her father would give her only to the man

who should come for her in a chariot drawn by a lion and a wild boar.

"Come with me," said Apollo, "and I will help you."

Then the two went together into the forest, the Lord of the Silver Bow leading the way. Soon they started a lion from its lair and gave chase to it. The fleet-footed Apollo seized the beast by its mane, and although it howled and snapped with its fierce jaws it did not touch him. Then Admetus started a wild boar from a thicket. Apollo gave chase to it, too, making the lion run beside him like a dog. When he had caught the boar, he went on through the forest, leading the two beasts, one with his right hand, the other with his left; and Admetus followed behind.

It was not yet noon when they came to the edge of the woods and saw the sea and the city of Iolcus only a little way off. A golden chariot stood by the roadside as if waiting for them, and the lion and the boar were soon harnessed to it. It was a strange team, and the two beasts tried hard to fight each other; but Apollo lashed them with a whip and tamed them until they lost their fierceness and were ready to mind the rein. Then Admetus climbed into the chariot; and Apollo stood by his side and held the reins and the whip, and drove into Iolcus.

Old King Pelias was astonished when he saw the wonderful chariot and the glorious charioteer; and

when Admetus again asked him for the fair Alcestis, he could not refuse. A day was set for the wedding, and Apollo drove his team back to the forest and set the lion and the wild boar free.

And so Admetus and Alcestis were married, and everybody in the two towns, except gruff old King Pelias, was glad. Apollo himself was one of the guests at the wedding feast, and he brought a present for the young bridegroom; it was a promise from the Mighty Folk upon the mountain top that if Admetus should ever be sick and in danger of death, he might become well again if some one who loved him would die for him.

III. The Shadow Leader

Admetus and Alcestis lived together happily for a long time, and all the people in their little kingdom loved and blessed them. But at last Admetus fell sick, and, as he grew worse and worse every day, all hope that he would ever get well was lost. Then those who loved him remembered the wedding gift which Apollo had given him, and they began to ask who would be willing to die in his stead.

His father and mother were very old and could hope to live but a short time at best, and so it was thought that one of them would be glad to give up life

for the sake of their son. But when some one asked them about it, they shook their heads and said that though life was short they would cling to it as long as they could.

Then his brothers and sisters were asked if they would die for Admetus, but they loved themselves better than their brother, and turned away and left him. There were men in the town whom he had befriended and who owed their lives to him; they would have done everything else for him, but this thing they would not do.

Now while all were shaking their heads and saying "Not I," the beautiful Alcestis went into her own room and called to Apollo and asked that she might give up her life to save her husband. Then without a thought of fear she lay down upon her bed and closed her eyes; and a little while afterward, when her maidens came into the room they found her dead.

At the very same time Admetus felt his sickness leave him, and he sprang up as well and strong as he had ever been. Wondering how it was that he had been so quickly cured, he made haste to find Alcestis and tell her the good news. But when he went into her room, he saw her lying lifeless on her couch, and he knew at once that she had died for him. His grief was so great that he could not speak, and he wished that death had taken him and spared the one whom he loved.

In all the land every eye was wet with weeping for Alcestis, and the cries of the mourners were heard in every house. Admetus sat by the couch where his young queen lay, and held her cold hand in his own. The day passed, and night came, but he would not leave her. All through the dark hours he sat there alone. The morning dawned, but he did not want to see the light.

At last the sun began to rise in the east, and then Admetus was surprised to feel the hand which he held growing warm. He saw a red tinge coming into the pale cheeks of Alcestis.

A moment later the fair lady opened her eyes and sat up, alive and well and glad.

How was it that Alcestis had been given back to life?

When she died and left her body, the Shadow Leader, who knows no pity, led her, as he led all others, to the cheerless halls of Proserpine, the queen of the Lower World.

"Who is this who comes so willingly?" asked the pale-faced queen.

And when she was told how Alcestis, so young and beautiful, had given her life to save that of her husband, she was moved with pity; and she bade the Shadow

Leader take her back again to the joy and sunlight of the Upper World.

So it was that Alcestis came to life; and for many years she and Admetus lived in their little kingdom not far from the sea; and the Mighty Ones on the mountain top blessed them; and, at last, when they had become very old, the Shadow Leader led them both away together.

Cadmus and Europa

I. The Bull

In Asia there lived a king who had two children, a boy and a girl. The boy's name was Cadmus, and the girl's name was Europa. The king's country was a very small one. He could stand on his house top and see the whole of it. On one side of it there were mountains, and on the other side was the sea. The king thought that it was the center of the world, and he did not know much about other lands and people.

Yet he was very happy in his own little kingdom, and very fond of his children. And he had good reason to be proud of them; for Cadmus grew up to be the bravest young man in the land, and Europa to be the fairest maiden that had ever been seen. But sad days came to them all at last.

One morning Europa went out into a field near the seashore to pick flowers. Her father's cattle were in the field, grazing among the sweet clover. They were all very tame, and Europa knew every one of them by name. The herdsman was lying in the shade under a tree, trying to make music on a little flute of straw. Europa had played in the field a thousand times before, and no one had ever thought of any harm befalling her.

That morning she noticed that there was a strange bull with the herd. He was very large and as white as snow; and he had soft brown eyes which somehow made him look very gentle and kind. At first he did not even look at Europa, but went here and there, eating the tender grass which grew among the clover. But when she had gathered her apron full of daisies and buttercups, he came slowly towards her. She was not at all afraid of him; and so she stopped to look at him, he was so handsome. He came close to her, and rubbed her arm with his nose to say "Good-morning!"

She stroked his head and neck, and he seemed much pleased. Then she made a wreath of daisies, and hung it round his neck. He looked at her with his soft kind eyes, and seemed to thank her; and in a little while, he lay down among the clover. Europa then made a smaller wreath, and climbed upon his back to twine it round his horns. But all at once he sprang up, and ran away so swiftly that Europa could not help herself. She did not dare to jump off while he was going so fast, and all that she could think to do was to hold fast to his neck and scream very loud.

The herdsman under the tree heard her scream, and jumped up to see what was the matter. He saw the bull running with her towards the shore. He ran after them as fast as he could, but it was of no use. The bull leaped into the sea, and swam swiftly away, with poor Europa

on his back. Several other people had seen him, and now they ran to tell the king. Soon the whole town was alarmed. Everybody ran out to the shore and looked. All that could be seen was something white moving very fast over the calm, blue water; and soon it was out of sight.

The king sent out his fastest ship to try to overtake the bull. The sailors rowed far out to sea, much farther than any ship had ever gone before; but no trace of Europa could be found. When they came back, everybody felt that there was no more hope. All the women and children in the town wept for the lost Europa. The king shut himself up in his house, and did not eat nor drink for three days. Then he called his son Cadmus, and bade him take a ship and go in search of his sister; and he told him that, no matter what dangers might be in his way, he must not come back until she was found.

Cadmus was glad to go. He chose twenty brave young men to go with him, and set sail the very next day. It was a great undertaking; for they were to pass through an unknown sea, and they did not know what lands they would come to. Indeed, it was feared that they would never come to any land at all. Ships did not dare to go far from the shore in those days. But Cadmus and his friends were not afraid. They were ready to face any danger.

In a few days they came to a large island called Cyprus. Cadmus went on shore, and tried to talk with the strange people who lived there. They were very kind to him, but they did not understand his language. At last he made out by signs to tell them who he was, and to ask them if they had seen his little sister Europa or the white bull that had carried her away. They shook their heads and pointed to the west.

Then the young men sailed on in their little ship. They came to many islands, and stopped at every one, to see if they could find any trace of Europa; but they heard no news of her at all. At last, they came to the country which we now call Greece. It was a new country then, and only a few people lived there, and Cadmus soon learned to speak their language well. For a long time he wandered from one little town to another, always telling the story of his lost sister.

II. The Pythia

One day an old man told Cadmus that if he would go to Delphi and ask the Pythia, perhaps she could tell him all about Europa. Cadmus had never heard of Delphi or of the Pythia, and he asked the old man what he meant.

"I will tell you," said the man. "Delphi is a town, built near the foot of Mount Parnassus, at the very

center of the earth. It is the town of Apollo, the Bringer of Light; and there is a temple there, built close to the spot where Apollo killed a black serpent, many, many years ago. The temple is the most wonderful place in the world. In the middle of the floor there is a wide crack, or crevice; and this crevice goes down, down into the rock, nobody knows how deep. A strange odor comes up out of the crevice; and if any one breathes much of it, he is apt to fall over and lose his senses."

"But who is the Pythia that you spoke about?" asked Cadmus.

"I will tell you," said the old man. "The Pythia is a wise woman, who lives in the temple. When anybody asks her a hard question, she takes a three-legged stool, called a tripod, and sets it over the crevice in the floor. Then she sits on the stool and breathes the strange odor; and instead of losing her senses as other people would do, she talks with Apollo; and Apollo tells her how to answer the question. Men from all parts of the world go there to ask about things which they would like to know. The temple is full of the beautiful and costly gifts which they have brought for the Pythia. Sometimes she answers them plainly, and sometimes she answers them in riddles; but what she says always comes true."

So Cadmus went to Delphi to ask the Pythia about his lost sister. The wise woman was very kind to him;

and when he had given her a beautiful golden cup to pay her for her trouble, she sat down on the tripod and breathed the strange odor which came up through the crevice in the rock. Then her face grew pale, and her eyes looked wild, and she seemed to be in great pain; but they said that she was talking with Apollo. Cadmus asked her to tell him what had become of Europa. She said that Jupiter, in the form of a white bull, had carried her away, and that it would be of no use to look for her any more.

"But what shall I do?" said Cadmus. "My father told me not to turn back till I should find her."

"Your father is dead," said the Pythia, "and a strange king rules in his place. You must stay in Greece, for there is work here for you to do."

"What must I do?" said Cadmus.

"Follow the white cow," said the Pythia; "and on the hill where she lies down, you must build a city."

Cadmus did not understand what she meant by this; but she would not speak another word.

"This must be one of her riddles," he said, and he left the temple.

III. The Dragon

When Cadmus went out of the temple, he saw a snow-white cow standing not far from the door. She seemed to be waiting for him, for she looked at him with her large brown eyes, and then turned and walked away. Cadmus thought of what the Pythia had just told him, and so he followed her. All day and all night he walked through a strange wild country where no one lived; and two of the young men who had sailed with Cadmus from his old home were with him.

When the sun rose the next morning, they saw that they were on the top of a beautiful hill, with woods on one side and a grassy meadow on the other. There the cow lay down.

"Here we will build our city," said Cadmus.

Then the young men made a fire of dry sticks, and Cadmus killed the cow. They thought that if they should burn some of her flesh, the smell of it would go up to the sky and be pleasing to Jupiter and the Mighty Folk who lived with him among the clouds; and in this way they hoped to make friends with Jupiter so that he would not hinder them in their work.

But they needed water to wash the flesh and their hands; and so one of the young men went down the hill to find some. He was gone so long that the other young man became uneasy and went after him.

Cadmus waited for them till the fire had burned low. He waited and waited till the sun was high in the sky. He called and shouted, but no one answered him. At last he took his sword in his hand and went down to see what was the matter.

He followed the path which his friends had taken, and soon came to a fine stream of cold water at the foot of a hill. He saw something move among the bushes which grew near it. It was a fierce dragon, waiting to spring upon him. There was blood on the grass and leaves, and it was not hard to guess what had become of the two young men.

The beast sprang at Cadmus, and tried to seize him with its sharp claws. But Cadmus leaped quickly aside and struck it in the neck with his long sword. A great stream of black blood gushed out, and the dragon soon fell to the ground dead. Cadmus had seen many fearful sights, but never anything so dreadful as this beast. He had never been in so great danger before. He sat down on the ground and trembled; and, all the time, he was weeping for his two friends. How now was he to build a city, with no one to help him?

IV. The City

While Cadmus was still weeping he was surprised to hear some one calling him. He stood up and looked

around. On the hillside before him was a tall woman who had a helmet on her head and a shield in her hand. Her eyes were gray, and her face, though not beautiful, was very noble. Cadmus knew at once that she was Athena, the queen of the air — she who gives wisdom to men.

Athena told Cadmus that he must take out the teeth of the dragon and sow them in the ground. He thought that would be a stange kind of seed. But she said that if he would do this, he would soon have men enough to help him build his city; and, before he could say a word, she had gone out of his sight.

The dragon had a great many teeth — so many that when Cadmus had taken them out they filled his helmet heaping full. The next thing was to find a good place to sow them. Just as he turned away from the stream, he saw a yoke of oxen standing a little way off. He went to them and found that they were hitched to a plow. What more could he want? The ground in the meadow was soft and black, and he drove the plow up and down, making long furrows as he went. Then he dropped the teeth, one by one, into the furrows and covered them over with the rich soil. When he had sown all of them in this way, he sat down on the hillside and watched to see what would happen.

In a little while the soil in the furrows began to stir. Then, at every place that a tooth had been dropped,

something bright grew up. It was a brass helmet. The helmets pushed their way up, and soon the faces of men were seen underneath, then their shoulders, then their arms, then their bodies; and then, before Cadmus could think, a thousand warriors leaped out of the furrows and shook off the black earth which was clinging to them. Every man was clothed in a suit of brass armor; and every one had a long spear in his right hand and a shield in his left.

Cadmus was frightened when he saw the strange crop which had grown up from the dragon's teeth. The men looked so fierce that he feared they would kill him if they saw him. He hid himself behind his plow and then began to throw stones at them. The warriors did not know where the stones came from, but each thought that his neighbor had struck him. Soon they began to fight among themselves. Man after man was killed, and in a little while only five were left alive. Then Cadmus ran towards them and called out:

"Hold! Stop fighting! You are my men, and must come with me. We will build a city here."

The men obeyed him. They followed Cadmus to the top of the hill; and they were such good workmen that in a few days they had built a house on the spot where the cow had lain down.

After that they built other houses, and people came to live in them. They called the town Cadmeia, after

Cadmus who was its first king. But when the place had grown to be a large city, it was known by the name of Thebes.

Cadmus was a wise king. The Mighty Folk who lived with Jupiter amid the clouds were well pleased with him and helped him in more ways than one. After a while he married Harmonia, the beautiful daughter of Mars. All the Mighty Ones were at the wedding; and Athena gave the bride a wonderful necklace about which you may learn something more at another time.

But the greatest thing that Cadmus did is yet to be told. He was the first schoolmaster of the Greeks, and taught them the letters which were used in his own country across the sea. They called the first of these letters alpha and the second beta, and that is why men speak of the alphabet to this day. And when the Greeks had learned the alphabet from Cadmus, they soon began to read and write, and to make beautiful and useful books.

As for the maiden Europa, she was carried safe over the sea to a distant shore. She may have been happy in the new, strange land to which she was taken — I cannot tell; but she never heard of friends or home again. Whether it was really Jupiter in the form of a bull that carried her away, nobody knows. It all happened so long ago that there may have been some mistake about the story; and I should not think it strange if it

were a sea robber who stole her from her home, and a swift ship with white sails that bore her away. Of one thing I am very sure: she was loved so well by all who knew her that the great unknown country to which she was taken has been called after her name ever since — Europe.

The Quest of Medusa's Head

I. The Wooden Chest

There was a king of Argos who had but one child, and that child was a girl. If he had had a son, he would have trained him up to be a brave man and great king; but he did not know what to do with this fair-haired daughter. When he saw her growing up to be tall and slender and wise, he wondered if, after all, he would have to die some time and leave his lands and his gold and his kingdom to her. So he sent to Delphi and asked the Pythia about it. The Pythia told him that he would not only have to die some time, but that the son of his daughter would cause his death.

This frightened the king very much, and he tried to think of some plan by which he could keep the Pythia's words from coming true. At last he made up his mind that he would build a prison for his daughter and keep her in it all her life. So he called his workmen and had them dig a deep round hole in the ground, and in this hole they built a house of brass which had but one room and no door at all, but only a small window at the top. When it was finished, the king put the maiden, whose name was Danae, into it; and with her he put her nurse and her toys and her pretty dresses and

everything that he thought she would need to make her happy.

"Now we shall see that the Pythia does not always tell the truth," he said.

So Danae was kept shut up in the prison of brass. She had no one to talk to but her old nurse; and she never saw the land or the sea, but only the blue sky above the open window and now and then a white cloud sailing across. Day after day she sat under the window and wondered why her father kept her in that lonely place, and whether he would ever come and take her out. I do not know how many years passed by, but Danae grew fairer every day, and by and by she was no longer a child, but a tall and beautiful woman; and Jupiter amid the clouds looked down and saw her and loved her.

One day it seemed to her that the sky opened and a shower of gold fell through the window into the room; and when the blinding shower had ceased, a noble young man stood smiling before her. She did not know — nor do I — that it was mighty Jupiter who had thus come down in the rain; but she thought that he was a brave prince who had come from over the sea to take her out of her prison-house.

After that he came often, but always as a tall and handsome youth; and by and by they were married, with only the nurse at the wedding feast, and Danae

was so happy that she was no longer lonesome even when he was away. But one day when he climbed out through the narrow window there was a great flash of light, and she never saw him again.

Not long afterwards a babe was born to Danae, a smiling boy whom she named Perseus. For four years she and the nurse kept him hidden, and not even the women who brought their food to the window knew about him. But one day the king chanced to be passing by and heard the child's prattle. When he learned the truth, he was very much alarmed, for he thought that now, in spite of all that he had done, the words of the Pythia might come true.

The only sure way to save himself would be to put the child to death before he was old enough to do any harm. But when he had taken the little Perseus and his mother out of the prison and had seen how helpless the child was, he could not bear the thought of having him killed outright. For the king, although a great coward, was really a kind-hearted man and did not like to see anything suffer pain. Yet something must be done.

So he bade his servants make a wooden chest that was roomy and watertight and strong; and when it was done, he put Danae and the child into it and had it taken far out to sea and left there to be tossed about by the waves. He thought that in this way he would rid himself of both daughter and grandson without seeing

them die; for surely the chest would sink after a while, or else the winds would cause it to drift to some strange shore so far away that they could never come back to Argos again.

All day and all night and then another day, fair Danae and her child drifted over the sea. The waves rippled and played before and around the floating chest, the west wind whistled cheerily, and the sea birds circled in the air above; and the child was not afraid, but dipped his hands in the curling waves and laughed at the merry breeze and shouted back at the screaming birds.

But on the second night all was changed. A storm arose, the sky was black, the billows were mountain high, the winds roared fearfully; yet through it all the child slept soundly in his mother's arms. And Danae sang over him this song:

"Sleep, sleep, dear child, and take your rest
Upon your troubled mother's breast;
For you can lie without one fear
Of dreadful danger lurking near.

"Wrapped in soft robes and warmly sleeping,
You do not hear your mother weeping;
You do not see the mad waves leaping,
Nor heed the winds their vigils keeping.

"The stars are hid, the night is drear,
The waves beat high, the storm is here;
But you can sleep, my darling child,
And know naught of the uproar wild."

At last the morning of the third day came, and the chest was tossed upon the sandy shore of a strange island where there were green fields and, beyond them, a little town. A man who happened to be walking near the shore saw it and dragged it far up on the beach. Then he looked inside, and there he saw the beautiful lady and the little boy. He helped them out and led them just as they were to his own house, where he cared for them very kindly. And when Danae had told him her story, he bade her feel no more fear; for they might have a home with him as long as they should choose to stay, and he would be a true friend to them both.

II. The Magic Slippers

So Danae and her son stayed in the house of the kind man who had saved them from the sea. Years passed by, and Perseus grew up to be a tall young man, handsome, and brave, and strong. The king of the island, when he saw Danae, was so pleased with her beauty that he wanted her to become his wife. But he was a dark, cruel man, and she did not like him at all; so

she told him that she would not marry him. The king thought that Perseus was to blame for this, and that if he could find some excuse to send the young man on a far journey, he might force Danae to have him whether she wished or not.

One day he called all the young men of his country together and told them that he was soon to be wedded to the queen of a certain land beyond the sea. Would not each of them bring him a present to be given to her father? For in those times it was the rule, that when any man was about to be married, he must offer costly gifts to the father of the bride.

"What kind of presents do you want?" said the young men.

"Horses," he answered; for he knew that Perseus had no horse.

"Why don't you ask for something worth the having?" said Perseus; for he was vexed at the way in which the king was treating him. "Why don't you ask for Medusa's head, for example?"

"Medusa's head it shall be!" cried the king. "These young men may give me horses, but you shall bring Medusa's head."

"I will bring it," said Perseus; and he went away in anger, while his young friends laughed at him because of his foolish words.

What was this Medusa's head which he had so rashly promised to bring? His mother had often told him about Medusa. Far, far away, on the very edge of the world, there lived three strange monsters, sisters, called Gorgons. They had the bodies and faces of women, but they had wings of gold, and terrible claws of brass, and hair that was full of living serpents. They were so awful to look upon, that no man could bear the sight of them, but whoever saw their faces was turned to stone. Two of these monsters had charmed lives, and no weapon could ever do them harm; but the youngest, whose name was Medusa, might be killed, if indeed anybody could find her and could give the fatal stroke.

When Perseus went away from the king's palace, he began to feel sorry that he had spoken so rashly. For how should he ever make good his promise and do the king's bidding? He did not know which way to go to find the Gorgons, and he had no weapon with which to slay the terrible Medusa. But at any rate he would never show his face to the king again, unless he could bring the head of terror with him. He went down to the shore and stood looking out over the sea towards Argos, his native land; and while he looked, the sun went down, and the moon arose, and a soft wind came blowing from the west. Then, all at once, two persons, a man and a woman, stood before him. Both were tall

and noble. The man looked like a prince; and there were wings on his cap and on his feet, and he carried a winged staff, around which two golden serpents were twined.

He asked Perseus what was the matter; and the young man told him how the king had treated him, and all about the rash words which he had spoken. Then the lady spoke to him very kindly; and he noticed that, although she was not beautiful, she had most wonderful gray eyes, and a stern but lovable face and a queenly form. And she told him not to fear, but to go out boldly in quest of the Gorgons; for she would help him obtain the terrible head of Medusa.

"But I have no ship, and how shall I go?" said Perseus. "You shall don my winged slippers," said the strange prince, "and they will bear you over sea and land."

"Shall I go north, or south, or east, or west?" asked Perseus.

"I will tell you," said the tall lady. "You must go first to the three Gray Sisters, who live beyond the frozen sea in the far, far north. They have a secret which nobody knows, and you must force them to tell it to you. Ask them where you shall find the three Maidens who guard the golden apples of the West; and when they shall have told you, turn about and go straight thither. The Maidens will give you three things,

without which you can never obtain the terrible head; and they will show you how to wing your way across the western ocean to the edge of the world where lies the home of the Gorgons."

Then the man took off his winged slippers, and put them on the feet of Perseus; and the woman whispered to him to be off at once, and to fear nothing, but be bold and true. And Perseus knew that she was none other than Athena, the queen of the air, and that her companion was Mercury, the lord of the summer clouds. But before he could thank them for their kindness, they had vanished in the dusky twilight.

Then he leaped into the air to try the Magic Slippers.

III. The Gray Sisters

Swifter than an eagle, Perseus flew up towards the sky. Then he turned, and the Magic Slippers bore him over the sea straight towards the north. On and on he went, and soon the sea was passed; and he came to a famous land, where there were cities and towns and many people. And then he flew over a range of snowy mountains, beyond which were mighty forests and a vast plain where many rivers wandered, seeking for the sea. And farther on was another range of mountains; and then there were frozen marshes and a wilderness of

snow, and after all the sea again, — but a sea of ice. On and on he winged his way, among toppling icebergs and over frozen billows and through air which the sun never warmed, and at last he came to the cavern where the three Gray Sisters dwelt.

These three creatures were so old that they had forgotten their own age, and nobody could count the years which they had lived. The long hair which covered their heads had been gray since they were born; and they had among them only a single eye and a single tooth which they passed back and forth from one to another. Perseus heard them mumbling and crooning in their dreary home, and he stood very still and listened.

"We know a secret which even the Great Folk who live on the mountain top can never learn; don't we, sisters?" said one.

"Ha! ha! That we do, that we do!" chattered the others. "Give me the tooth, sister, that I may feel young and handsome again," said the one nearest to Perseus.

"And give me the eye that I may look out and see what is going on in the busy world," said the sister who sat next to her.

"Ah, yes, yes, yes, yes!" mumbled the third, as she took the tooth and the eye and reached them blindly towards the others.

Then, quick as thought, Perseus leaped forward and snatched both of the precious things from her hand.

"Where is the tooth? Where is the eye?" screamed the two, reaching out their long arms and groping here and there. "Have you dropped them, sister? Have you lost them?"

Perseus laughed as he stood in the door of their cavern and saw their distress and terror.

"I have your tooth and your eye," he said, "and you shall never touch them again until you tell me your secret. Where are the Maidens who keep the golden apples of the Western Land? Which way shall I go to find them?"

"You are young, and we are old," said the Gray Sisters; "pray, do not deal so cruelly with us. Pity us, and give us our eye."

Then they wept and pleaded and coaxed and threatened. But Perseus stood a little way off and taunted them; and they moaned and mumbled and shrieked, as they found that their words did not move him.

"Sisters, we must tell him," at last said one.

"Ah, yes, we must tell him," said the others. "We must part with the secret to save our eye."

And then they told him how he should go to reach the Western Land, and what road he should follow to find the Maidens who kept the golden apples. When they had made everything plain to him Perseus gave them back their eye and their tooth.

"Ha! ha!" they laughed; "now the golden days of youth have come again!" And, from that day to this, no man has ever seen the three Gray Sisters, nor does any one know what became of them. But the winds still whistle through their cheerless cave, and the cold waves murmur on the shore of the wintry sea, and the ice mountains topple and crash, and no sound of living creature is heard in all that desolate land.

IV. The Western Maidens

As for Perseus, he leaped again into the air, and the Magic Slippers bore him southward with the speed of the wind. Very soon he left the frozen sea behind him and came to a sunny land, where there were green forests and flowery meadows and hills and valleys, and at last a pleasant garden where were all kinds of blossoms and fruits. He knew that this was the famous Western Land, for the Gray Sisters had told him what he should see there. So he alighted and walked among

the trees until he came to the center of the garden. There he saw the three Maidens of the West dancing around a tree which was full of golden apples, and singing as they danced. For the wonderful tree with its precious fruit belonged to Juno, the queen of earth and sky; it had been given to her as a wedding gift, and it was the duty of the Maidens to care for it and see that no one touched the golden apples.

Perseus stopped and listened to their song:

"We sing of the old, we sing of the new, –
Our joys are many, our sorrows are few;
    Singing, dancing,
    All hearts entrancing,
We wait to welcome the good and the true.

The daylight is waning, the evening is here,
The sun will soon set, the stars will appear.
    Singing, dancing,
    All hearts entrancing,
We wait for the dawn of a glad new year.

"The tree shall wither, the apples shall fall,
Sorrow shall come, and death shall call,
    Alarming, grieving,
    All hearts deceiving, –
But hope shall abide to comfort us all.

"Soon the tale shall be told, the song shall be sung,
The bow shall be broken, the harp unstrung,
Alarming, grieving,
All hearts deceiving,
Till every joy to the winds shall be flung.

"But a new tree shall spring from the roots of the old,
And many a blossom its leaves shall unfold,
Cheering, gladdening,
With joy maddening, –
For its boughs shall be laden with apples of gold."

Then Perseus went forward and spoke to the Maidens. They stopped singing, and stood still as if in alarm. But when they saw the Magic Slippers on his feet, they ran to him, and welcomed him to the Western Land and to their garden.

"We knew that you were coming," they said, "for the winds told us. But why do you come?"

Perseus told them of all that had happened to him since he was a child, and of his quest of Medusa's head; and he said that he had come to ask them to give him three things to help him in his fight with the Gorgons.

The Maidens answered that they would give him not three things, but four. Then one of them gave him a sharp sword, which was crooked like a sickle, and which she fastened to the belt at his waist; and another

gave him a shield, which was brighter than any looking-glass you ever saw; and the third gave him a magic pouch, which she hung by a long strap over his shoulder.

"These are three things which you must have in order to obtain Medusa's head; and now here is a fourth, for without it your quest must be in vain." And they gave him a magic cap, the Cap of Darkness; and when they had put it upon his head, there was no creature on the earth or in the sky — no, not even the Maidens themselves — that could see him.

When at last he was arrayed to their liking, they told him where he would find the Gorgons, and what he should do to obtain the terrible head and escape alive. Then they kissed him and wished him good luck, and bade him hasten to do the dangerous deed. And Perseus donned the Cap of Darkness, and sped away and away towards the farthermost edge of the earth; and the three Maidens went back to their tree to sing and to dance and to guard the golden apples until the old world should become young again.

V. The Dreadful Gorgons

With the sharp sword at his side and the bright shield upon his arm, Perseus flew bravely onward in search of the dreadful Gorgons; but he had the Cap of

Darkness upon his head, and you could no more have seen him than you can see the wind. He flew so swiftly that it was not long until he had crossed the mighty ocean which encircles the earth, and had come to the sunless land which lies beyond; and then he knew, from what the Maidens had told him, that the lair of the Gorgons could not be far away.

He heard a sound as of some one breathing heavily, and he looked around sharply to see where it came from. Among the foul weeds which grew close to the bank of a muddy river there was something which glittered in the pale light. He flew a little nearer; but he did not dare to look straight forward, lest he should all at once meet the gaze of a Gorgon, and be changed into stone. So he turned around, and held the shining shield before him in such a way that by looking into it he could see objects behind him as in a mirror.

Ah, what a dreadful sight it was! Half hidden among the weeds lay the three monsters, fast asleep, with their golden wings folded about them. Their brazen claws were stretched out as though ready to seize their prey; and their shoulders were covered with sleeping snakes. The two largest of the Gorgons lay with their heads tucked under their wings as birds hide their heads when they go to sleep. But the third, who lay between them, slept with her face turned up towards the sky; and Perseus knew that she was Medusa.

Very stealthily he went nearer and nearer, always with his back towards the monsters and always looking into his bright shield to see where to go. Then he drew his sharp sword and, dashing quickly downward, struck a back blow, so sure, so swift, that the head of Medusa was cut from her shoulders and the black blood gushed like a river from her neck. Quick as thought he thrust the terrible head into his magic pouch and leaped again into the air, and flew away with the speed of the wind.

Then the two older Gorgons awoke, and rose with dreadful screams, and spread their great wings, and dashed after him. They could not see him, for the Cap of Darkness hid him from even their eyes; but they scented the blood of the head which he carried in the pouch, and like hounds in the chase, they followed him, sniffing the air. And as he flew through the clouds he could hear their dreadful cries and the clatter of their golden wings and the snapping of their horrible jaws. But the Magic Slippers were faster than any wings, and in a little while the monsters were left far behind, and their cries were heard no more; and Perseus flew on alone.

VI. The Great Sea Beast

Perseus soon crossed the ocean and came again to the Land of the West. Far below him he could see the three Maidens dancing around the golden tree; but he

did not stop, for, now that he had the head of Medusa safe in the pouch at his side, he must hasten home. Straight east he flew over the great sea, and after a time he came to a country where there were palm trees and pyramids and a great river flowing from the south. Here, as he looked down, a strange sight met his eyes: he saw a beautiful girl chained to a rock by the seashore, and far away a huge sea beast swimming towards her to devour her. Quick as thought, he flew down and spoke to her; but, as she could not see him for the Cap of Darkness which he wore, his voice only frightened her.

Then Perseus took off his cap, and stood upon the rock; and when the girl saw him with his long hair and wonderful eyes and laughing face, she thought him the handsomest young man in the world.

"Oh, save me! save me!" she cried as she reached out her arms towards him.

Perseus drew his sharp sword and cut the chain which held her, and then lifted her high up upon the rock. But by this time the sea monster was close at hand, lashing the water with his tail and opening his wide jaws as though he would swallow not only Perseus and the young girl, but even the rock on which they were standing. He was a terrible fellow, and yet not half so terrible as the Gorgon. As he came roaring towards the shore, Perseus lifted the head of Medusa

from his pouch and held it up; and when the beast saw the dreadful face he stopped short and was turned into stone; and men say that the stone beast may be seen in that selfsame spot to this day.

Then Perseus slipped the Gorgon's head back into the pouch and hastened to speak with the young girl whom he had saved. She told him that her name was Andromeda, and that she was the daughter of the king of that land. She said that her mother, the queen, was very beautiful and very proud of her beauty; and every day she went down to the seashore to look at her face as it was pictured in the quiet water; and she had boasted that not even the nymphs who live in the sea were as handsome as she. When the sea nymphs heard about this, they were very angry and asked great Neptune, the king of the sea, to punish the queen for her pride. So Neptune sent a sea monster to crush the king's ships and kill the cattle along the shore and break down all the fishermen's huts. The people were so much distressed that they sent at last to ask the Pythia what they should do; and the Pythia said that there was only one way to save the land from destruction, — that they must give the king's daughter, Andromeda, to the monster to be devoured.

The king and the queen loved their daughter very dearly, for she was their only child; and for a long time they refused to do as the Pythia had told them. But day

after day the monster laid waste the land, and threatened to destroy not only the farms, but the towns; and so they were forced in the end to give up Andromeda to save their country. This, then, was why she had been chained to the rock by the shore and left there to perish in the jaws of the beast.

While Perseus was yet talking with Andromeda, the king and the queen and a great company of people came down the shore, weeping and tearing their hair; for they were sure that by this time the monster had devoured his prey. But when they saw her alive and well, and learned that she had been saved by the handsome young man who stood beside her, they could hardly hold themselves for joy. And Perseus was so delighted with Andromeda's beauty that he almost forgot his quest which was not yet finished; and when the king asked him what he should give him as a reward for saving Andromeda's life, he said:

"Give her to me for my wife."

This pleased the king very much; and so, on the seventh day, Perseus and Andromeda were married, and there was a great feast in the king's palace, and everybody was merry and glad. And the two young people lived happily for some time in the land of palms and pyramids; and, from the sea to the mountains, nothing was talked about but the courage of Perseus and the beauty of Andromeda.

VII. The Timely Rescue

But Perseus had not forgotten his mother; and so, one fine summer day, he and Andromeda sailed in a beautiful ship to his own home; for the Magic Slippers could not carry both him and his bride through the air. The ship came to land at the very spot where the wooden chest had been cast so many years before; and Perseus and his bride walked through the fields towards the town.

Now, the wicked king of that land had never ceased trying to persuade Danae to become his wife; but she would not listen to him, and the more he pleaded and threatened, the more she disliked him. At last when he found that she could not be made to have him, he declared that he would kill her; and on this very morning he had started out, sword in hand, to take her life.

So, as Perseus and Andromeda came into the town, whom should they meet but his mother fleeing to the altar of Jupiter, and the king following after, intent on killing her? Danae was so frightened that she did not see Perseus, but ran right on towards the only place of safety. For it was a law of that land that not even the king should be allowed to harm any one who took refuge on the altar of Jupiter.

When Perseus saw the king rushing like a madman after his mother, he threw himself before him and bade

him stop. But the king struck at him furiously with his sword. Perseus caught the blow on his shield, and at the same moment took the head of Medusa from his magic pouch.

"I promised to bring you a present, and here it is!" he cried.

The king saw it, and was turned into stone, just as he stood, with his sword uplifted and that terrible look of anger and passion in his face.

The people of the island were glad when they learned what had happened, for no one loved the wicked king. They were glad, too, because Perseus had come home again, and had brought with him his beautiful wife, Andromeda. So, after they had talked the matter over among themselves, they went to him and asked him to be their king. But he thanked them, and said that he would rule over them for one day only, and that then he would give the kingdom to another, so that he might take his mother back to her home and her kindred in distant Argos.

On the morrow therefore, he gave the kingdom to the kind man who had saved his mother and himself from the sea; and then he went on board his ship, with Andromeda and Danae, and sailed away across the sea towards Argos.

VIII. The Deadly Quoit

When Danae's old father, the king of Argos, heard that a strange ship was coming over the sea with his daughter and her son on board, he was in great distress; for he remembered what the Pythia had foretold about his death. So, without waiting to see the vessel, he left his palace in great haste and fled out of the country.

"My daughter's son cannot kill me if I will keep out of his way," he said.

But Perseus had no wish to harm him; and he was very sad when he learned that his poor grandfather had gone away in fear and without telling any one where he was going. The people of Argos welcomed Danae to her old home; and they were very proud of her handsome son, and begged that he would stay in their city, so that he might some time become their king.

It happened soon afterwards that the king of a certain country not far away was holding games and giving prizes to the best runners and leapers and quoit throwers. And Perseus went thither to try his strength with the other young men of the land; for if he should be able to gain a prize, his name would become known all over the world. No one in that country knew who he was, but all wondered at his noble stature and his strength and skill; and it was easy enough for him to win all the prizes.

One day, as he was showing what he could do, he threw a heavy quoit a great deal farther than any had been thrown before. It fell in the crowd of lookers-on, and struck a stranger who was standing there. The stranger threw up his hands and sank upon the ground; and when Perseus ran to help him, he saw that he was dead. Now this man was none other than Danae's father, the old king of Argos. He had fled from his kingdom to save his life, and in doing so had only met his death.

Perseus was overcome with grief, and tried in every way to pay honor to the memory of the unhappy king. The kingdom of Argos was now rightfully his own, but he could not bear to take it after having killed his grandfather. So he was glad to exchange with another king who ruled over two rich cities, not far away, called Mycenae and Tiryns. And he and Andromeda lived happily in Mycenae for many years.

The Wonderful Weaver

I. The Warp

There was a young girl in Greece whose name was Arachne. Her face was pale but fair, and her eyes were big and blue, and her hair was long and like gold. All that she cared to do from morn till noon was to sit in the sun and spin; and all that she cared to do from noon till night was to sit in the shade and weave.

And oh, how fine and fair were the things which she wove in her loom! Flax, wool, silk — she worked with them all; and when they came from her hands, the cloth which she had made of them was so thin and soft and bright that men came from all parts of the world to see it. And they said that cloth so rare could not be made of flax, or wool, or silk, but that the warp was of rays of sunlight and the woof was of threads of gold.

Then as, day by day, the girl sat in the sun and span, or sat in the shade and wove, she said: "In all the world there is no yarn so fine as mine, and in all the world there is no cloth so soft and smooth, nor silk so bright and rare."

"Who taught you to spin and weave so well?" some one asked.

"No one taught me," she said. "I learned how to do it as I sat in the sun and the shade; but no one showed me."

"But it may be that Athena, the queen of the air, taught you, and you did not know it."

"Athena, the queen of the air? Bah!" said Arachne. "How could she teach me? Can she spin such skeins of yarn as these? Can she weave goods like mine? I should like to see her try. I can teach her a thing or two."

She looked up and saw in the doorway a tall woman wrapped in a long cloak. Her face was fair to see, but stern, oh, so stern! and her gray eyes were so sharp and bright that Arachne could not meet her gaze.

"Arachne," said the woman, "I am Athena, the queen of the air, and I have heard your boast. Do you still mean to say that I have not taught you how to spin and weave?"

"No one has taught me," said Arachne; "and I thank no one for what I know;" and she stood up, straight and proud, by the side of her loom.

"And do you still think that you can spin and weave as well as I?" said Athena.

Arachne's cheeks grew pale, but she said: "Yes. I can weave as well as you."

"Then let me tell you what we will do," said Athena. "Three days from now we will both weave; you on your

loom, and I on mine. We will ask all the world to come and see us; and great Jupiter, who sits in the clouds, shall be the judge. And if your work is best, then I will weave no more so long as the world shall last; but if my work is best, then you shall never use loom or spindle or distaff again. Do you agree to this?" "I agree," said Arachne.

"It is well," said Athena. And she was gone.

II. The Woof

When the time came for the contest in weaving, all the world was there to see it, and great Jupiter sat among the clouds and looked on.

Arachne had set up her loom in the shade of a mulberry tree, where butterflies were flitting and grasshoppers chirping all through the livelong day. But Athena had set up her loom in the sky, where the breezes were blowing and the summer sun was shining; for she was the queen of the air.

Then Arachne took her skeins of finest silk and began to weave. And she wove a web of marvelous beauty, so thin and light that it would float in the air, and yet so strong that it could hold a lion in its meshes; and the threads of warp and woof were of many colors, so beautifully arranged and mingled one with another that all who saw were filled with delight.

"No wonder that the maiden boasted of her skill," said the people.

And Jupiter himself nodded.

Then Athena began to weave. And she took of the sunbeams that gilded the mountain top, and of the snowy fleece of the summer clouds, and of the blue ether of the summer sky, and of the bright green of the summer fields, and of the royal purple of the autumn woods, — and what do you suppose she wove?

The web which she wove in the sky was full of enchanting pictures of flowers and gardens, and of castles and towers, and of mountain heights, and of men and beasts, and of giants and dwarfs, and of the mighty beings who dwell in the clouds with Jupiter. And those who looked upon it were so filled with wonder and delight, that they forgot all about the beautiful web which Arachne had woven. And Arachne herself was ashamed and afraid when she saw it; and she hid her face in her hands and wept.

"Oh, how can I live," she cried, "now that I must never again use loom or spindle or distaff?"

And she kept on, weeping and weeping and weeping, and saying, "How can I live?"

Then, when Athena saw that the poor maiden would never have any joy unless she were allowed to spin and weave, she took pity on her and said:

"I would free you from your bargain if I could, but that is a thing which no one can do. You must hold to your agreement never to touch loom or spindle again. And yet, since you will never be happy unless you can spin and weave, I will give you a new form so that you can carry on your work with neither spindle nor loom."

Then she touched Arachne with the tip of the spear which she sometimes carried; and the maiden was changed at once into a nimble spider, which ran into a shady place in the grass and began merrily to spin and weave a beautiful web.

I have heard it said that all the spiders which have been in the world since then are the children of Arachne; but I doubt whether this be true. Yet, for aught I know, Arachne still lives and spins and weaves; and the very next spider that you see may be she herself.

The Horse and the Olive

I. Finding a King

On a steep stony hill in Greece there lived in early times a few very poor people who had not yet learned to build houses. They made their homes in little caves which they dug in the earth or hollowed out among the rocks; and their food was the flesh of wild animals, which they hunted in the woods, with now and then a few berries or nuts. They did not even know how to make bows and arrows, but used slings and clubs and sharp sticks for weapons; and the little clothing which they had was made of skins. They lived on the top of the hill, because they were safe there from the savage beasts of the great forest around them, and safe also from the wild men who sometimes roamed through the land. The hill was so steep on every side that there was no way of climbing it save by a single narrow footpath which was always guarded by some one at the top.

One day when the men were hunting in the woods, they found a strange youth whose face was so fair and who was dressed so beautifully that they could hardly believe him to be a man like themselves. His body was so slender and lithe, and he moved so nimbly among the trees, that they fancied him to be a serpent in the

guise of a human being; and they stood still in wonder and alarm. The young man spoke to them, but they could not understand a word that he said; then he made signs to them that he was hungry, and they gave him something to eat and were no longer afraid. Had they been like the wild men of the woods, they might have killed him at once. But they wanted their women and children to see the serpent man, as they called him, and hear him talk; and so they took him home with them to the top of the hill. They thought that after they had made a show of him for a few days, they would kill him and offer his body as a sacrifice to the unknown being whom they dimly fancied to have some sort of control over their lives.

But the young man was so fair and gentle that, after they had all taken a look at him, they began to think it would be a great pity to harm him. So they gave him food and treated him kindly; and he sang songs to them and played with their children, and made them happier than they had been for many a day. In a short time he learned to talk in their language; and he told them that his name was Cecrops, and that he had been shipwrecked on the seacoast not far away; and then he told them many strange things about the land from which he had come and to which he would never be able to return. The poor people listened and wondered; and it was not long until they began to love

him and to look up to him as one wiser than themselves. Then they came to ask him about everything that was to be done, and there was not one of them who refused to do his bidding.

So Cecrops — the serpent man, as they still called him — became the king of the poor people on the hill. He taught them how to make bows and arrows, and how to set nets for birds, and how to take fish with hooks. He led them against the savage wild men of the woods, and helped them kill the fierce beasts that had been so great a terror to them. He showed them how to build houses of wood and to thatch them with the reeds which grew in the marshes. He taught them how to live in families instead of herding together like senseless beasts as they had always done before. And he told them about great Jupiter and the Mighty Folk who lived amid the clouds on the mountain top.

II. Choosing a Name

By and by, instead of the wretched caves among the rocks, there was a little town on the top of the hill, with neat houses and a market place; and around it was a strong wall with a single narrow gate just where the footpath began to descend to the plain. But as yet the place had no name.

One morning while the king and his wise men were sitting together in the market place and planning how to make, the town become a rich, strong city, two strangers were seen in the street. Nobody could tell how they came there. The guard at the gate had not seen them; and no man had ever dared to climb the narrow footway without his leave. But there the two strangers stood. One was a man, the other a woman; and they were so tall, and their faces were so grand and noble, that those who saw them stood still and wondered and said not a word.

The man had a robe of purple and green wrapped round his body, and he bore in one hand a strong staff with three sharp spear points at one end. The woman was not beautiful, but she had wonderful gray eyes; and in one hand she carried a spear and in the other a shield of curious workmanship.

"What is the name of this town?" asked the man.

The people stared at him in wonder, and hardly understood his meaning. Then an old man answered and said, "It has no name. We who live on this hill used to be called Cranae; but since King Cecrops came, we have been so busy that we have had no time to think of names."

"Where is this King Cecrops?" asked the woman.

"He is in the market place with the wise men," was the answer.

"Lead us to him at once," said the man.

When Cecrops saw the two strangers coming into the market place, he stood up and waited for them to speak. The man spoke first:

"I am Neptune," said he, "and I rule the sea."

"And I am Athena," said the woman, "and I give wisdom to men."

"I hear that you are planning to make your town become a great city," said Neptune, "and I have come to help you. Give my name to the place, and let me be your protector and patron, and the wealth of the whole world shall be yours. Ships from every land shall bring you merchandise and gold and silver; and you shall be the masters of the sea."

"My uncle makes you fair promises," said Athena; "but listen to me. Give my name to your city, and let me be your patron, and I will give you that which gold cannot buy: I will teach you how to do a thousand things of which you now know nothing. I will make your city my favorite home, and I will give you wisdom that shall sway the minds and hearts of all men until the end of time."

The king bowed, and turned to the people, who had all crowded into the market place. "Which of these

mighty ones shall we elect to be the protector and patron of our city?" he asked. "Neptune offers us wealth; Athena promises us wisdom. Which shall we choose?"

"Neptune and wealth!" cried many.

"Athena and wisdom!" cried as many others.

At last when it was plain that the people could not agree, an old man whose advice was always heeded stood up and said:

"These mighty ones have only given us promises, and they have promised things of which we are ignorant. For who among us knows what wealth is or what wisdom is? Now, if they would only give us some real gift, right now and right here, which we can see and handle, we should know better how to choose."

"That is true! that is true!" cried the people.

"Very well, then," said the strangers, "we will each give you a gift, right now and right here, and then you may choose between us."

Neptune gave the first gift. He stood on the highest point of the hill where the rock was bare, and bade the people see his power. He raised his three-pointed spear high in the air, and then brought it down with great force. Lightning flashed, the earth shook, and the rock was split half way down to the bottom of the hill. Then out of the yawning crevice there sprang a wonderful

creature, white as milk, with long slender legs, an arching neck, and a mane and tail of silk.

The people had never seen anything like it before, and they thought it a new kind of bear or wolf or wild boar that had come out of the rock to devour them. Some of them ran and hid in their houses, while others climbed upon the wall, and still others grasped their weapons in alarm. But when they saw the creature stand quietly by the side of Neptune, they lost their fear and came closer to see and admire its beauty.

"This is my gift," said Neptune. "This animal will carry your burdens for you; he will draw your chariots; he will pull your wagons and your plows; he will let you sit on his back and will run with you faster than the wind."

"What is his name?" asked the king.

"His name is Horse," answered Neptune.

Then Athena came forward. She stood a moment on a green grassy plot where the children of the town liked to play in the evening. Then she drove the point of her spear deep down in the soil. At once the air was filled with music, and out of the earth there sprang a tree with slender branches and dark green leaves and white flowers and violet green fruit.

"This is my gift," said Athena. "This tree will give you food when you are hungry; it will shelter you from

the sun when you are faint; it will beautify your city; and the oil from its fruit will be sought by all the world."

"What is it called?" asked the king.

"It is called Olive," answered Athena.

Then the king and his wise men began to talk about the two gifts.

"I do not see that Horse will be of much use to us," said the old man who had spoken before. "For, as to the chariots and wagons and plows, we have none of them, and indeed do not know what they are; and who among us will ever want to sit on this creature's back and be borne faster than the wind? But Olive will be a thing of beauty and a joy for us and our children forever."

"Which shall we choose?" asked the king, turning to the people.

"Athena has given us the best gift," they all cried, "and we choose Athena and wisdom!"

"Be it so," said the king, "and the name of our city shall be Athens."

From that day the town grew and spread, and soon there was not room on the hilltop for all the people. Then houses were built in the plain around the foot of the hill, and a great road was built to the sea, three

miles away; and in all the world there was no city more fair than Athens.

In the old market place on the top of the hill the people built a temple to Athena, the ruins of which may still be seen. The olive tree grew and nourished; and, when you visit Athens, people will show you the very spot where it stood. Many other trees sprang from it, and in time became a blessing both to Greece and to all the other countries round the great sea. As for the horse, he wandered away across the plains towards the north and found a home at last in distant Thessaly beyond the River Peneus. And I have heard it said that all the horses in the world have descended from that one which Neptune brought out of the rock; but of the truth of this story there may be some doubts.

Selected Stories from

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by Carolyn Bailey

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by Mara Pratt

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by Mara Pratt

Pegasus, the Horse Who Could Fly

A very strange thing happened when Perseus so heroically cut off the head of Medusa, the Gorgon. On the spot where the blood dripped into the earth from Perseus' sword there arose a slender limbed, wonderful horse with wings on his shoulders. This horse was known as Pegasus, and there was never, before or since, so marvellous a creature.

At that time, a young hero, Bellerophon by name, made a journey from his own country to the court of King Iobates of Lycia. He brought two sealed messages in a kind of letter of introduction from the husband of this king's daughter, one of Bellerophon's own countrymen. The first message read,

"The bearer, Bellerophon, is an unconquerable hero. I pray you welcome him with all hospitality."

The second was this,

"I would advise you to put Bellerophon to death."

The truth of the matter was that the son-in-law of King Iobates was jealous of Bellerophon and really desired to have him put out of the way in order to satisfy his own ambitions.

The King of Lycia was at heart a friendly person and he was very much puzzled to know how to act upon the advice in the letter introducing Bellerophon. He was still puzzling over the matter when a dreadful monster, known as the Chimaera, descended upon the kingdom. It was a beast far beyond any of mortal kind in terror. It had a goat's rough body and the tail of a dragon. The head was that of a lion with wide spreading nostrils which breathed flames and a gaping throat that emitted poisonous breath whose touch was death. As the subjects of King Iobates appealed to him for protection from the Chimaera a sudden thought came to him. He decided to send the heroic stranger, Bellerophon, to meet and conquer the beast.

The hero had expected a period of rest at the court of Lycia. He had looked forward to a feast that might possibly be given in his honor and a chance to show his skill in throwing the discus and driving a chariot at the court games. But the day after Bellerophon arrived at the palace of King Iobates, he was sent out to hunt down and kill the Chimaera.

He had not the slightest idea where he was to go, and neither had he any plan for destroying the creature, but he decided that it would be a good plan to spend the night in the temple of Minerva before he met the danger face to face. Minerva was the goddess of

wisdom and might give him help in his hopeless adventure.

So Bellerophon journeyed to Athens, the chosen city of Minerva, and tarried for a night in her temple there, so weary that he fell asleep in the midst of his supplications to the goddess. But when he awoke in the morning, he found a golden bridle in his hands, and he heard a voice directing him to hasten with it to a well outside of the city.

Pegasus, the winged horse, had been pasturing meanwhile in the meadows of the Muses. There were nine of these Muses, all sisters and all presiding over the arts of song and of memory. One took care of poets and another of those who wrote history. There was a Muse of the dance, of comedy, of astronomy, and in fact of whatever made life more worth while in the sight of the gods. They needed a kind of dream horse like Pegasus with wings to carry them on his back to Mount Olympus whenever they wanted to return from the earth.

Bellerophon had never known of the existence even of Pegasus, but when he reached the well to which the oracle had directed him, there stood Pegasus, or, rather, this horse of the Muses poised there, for his wings buoyed him so that his hoofs could scarcely remain upon the earth. When Pegasus saw the golden bridle that the goddess of Wisdom had given

Bellerophon, he came directly up to the hero and stood quietly to be harnessed. A dark shadow crossed the sky just then; the dreaded Chimaera hovered over Bellerophon's head, its fiery jaws raining sparks down upon him.

Bellerophon mounted upon Pegasus and took the golden reins firmly in one hand as he brandished his sword in the other. He rose swiftly in the air and met the ravening creature in a fierce battle in the clouds. Not for an instant did the winged horse falter, and Bellerophon killed the Chimaera easily. It was a great relief to the people of Lycia, and indeed to people of all time. You may have heard of a Chimaera. It means nowadays any kind of terror that is not nearly so hard to conquer as it seemed in the beginning when people were afraid of it.

This story ought to end with the hero returning his winged steed to the Muses and entering the kingdom of Lycia in great triumph, but something very different happened. Bellerophon decided to keep Pegasus, and he rode him so long and so hard that he grew very full of pride and presumption in his success. One day Bellerophon made up his mind to drive Pegasus to the gates of the gods in the sky which was too great an ambition for a mortal who had received no invitation as yet from the dwellers on Mount Olympus. Jupiter saw this rider of the skies mounting higher and higher

and he became very angry with him. He sent a gadfly which stung Pegasus and made him throw Bellerophon to the earth. He was always lame and blind after that.

It really had not been the fault of Pegasus at all. He was only the steed of those who followed dreams, even if he did have wings. When his rider fell, Pegasus fell too, and he landed unhurt but a long distance from his old pastures. He did not know in which direction they lay or how to find the road that led back to his friends, the Muses. Pegasus' wings seemed to be of no use to him. He roamed from one end of the country to the other, driven from one field to the next by the rustics who mistook him for some sort of a dragon because of his wings. He grew old and lost his fleetness. It even seemed to him that his wings were nothing but a dragging weight and that he would never be able to use them again.

Finally the same thing happened to Pegasus that happens to old horses today that have enjoyed a wonderful youth as racers. He was sold to a farmer and fastened to a plough.

Pegasus was not used to this heavy work of the soil; his strength was better suited to climbing through the air than plodding along the surface of the earth. He used all the strength he could put forth in pulling the plough, but his wings dragged and were in the way and his master beat his aching back with an ox whip. That

might have been the end of this winged horse, but one day good fortune came to him.

There was a youth passing by who was beloved of the Muses. He was so poor that he had often no other shelter than the woods and hedges afforded, or any food save wild fruits and the herbs of the field. But this youth could put the beauties of the earth, its hills and valleys, its temples, flowers, and the desires and loves of its people into words that sang together as the notes of a lute sang. He was a young poet.

The poet felt a great compassion for the horse he saw in the field, bent low under the blows of his clownish master, and with wings dragging and tattered.

"Let me try to drive your horse," he begged, crossing the field and mounting upon Pegasus' back.

It was suddenly as if one of the gods were riding Pegasus. He lifted his head high, and his heavy feet left the clods of earth. His wings straightened and spread wide. Carrying the youth, Pegasus arose through the air as the country people gathered from all the neighboring farms to watch the wonder, a winged horse with a flowing golden mane rising and then hidden within the clouds that opened upon Mount Olympus.

Zeus, the King of the Gods

In the northern part of Greece there was a very high mountain called Mount Olympus; so high that during almost all the year its top was covered with snow, and often, too, it was wrapped in clouds. Its sides were very steep, and covered with thick forests of oak and beech trees.

The Greeks thought that the palaces of their gods were above the top of this mountain, far out of the reach of men, and hidden from their sight by the clouds. Here they thought that the gods met together in a grand council hall, and held great feasts, at which they talked over the affairs of the whole world.

Zeus, who ruled over the land and the air, was the king of the gods, and was the greatest and strongest among them. The strength of all the other gods put together could not overcome him. It was he who caused the clouds to form, and who sent the rain to refresh the thirsty earth. His great weapon was the thunderbolt, which he carried in his right hand. But the thunderbolt was seldom used, for the frown and angry nod of Zeus were enough to shake the palaces of the gods themselves.

Although Zeus was so powerful, he was also kind and generous to those who pleased him. The people who lived upon the earth loved as well as feared him, and called him father. He was the most just of all the gods. Once when there was a great war between the Greeks and another people, all the other gods took sides, and tried to help those whom they favored all they could. But Zeus did not. He tried to be just, and at last he gave the victory to the side which he thought deserved to have it.

The oak was thought to be sacred to Zeus because it was the strongest and grandest of all the trees. In one part of Greece there was a forest of these, which was called the forest of Dodona. It was so thick and dark that the sunbeams scarcely found their way through the leaves to the moss upon the ground. Here the wind made strange low sounds among the knotted branches, and people soon began to think that this was their great god Zeus speaking to men through the leaves of his favorite tree. So they set this forest apart as sacred to him; and only his servants, who were called priests, were allowed to live in it. People came to this place from all parts of Greece to ask the advice of the god; and the priests would consult with him, and hear his answers in the murmuring of the wind among the branches.

The Greeks also built beautiful temples for their gods, as we build churches. To these, temples they brought rich gifts of gold and silver and other precious things, to show how thankful they were for the help which the gods gave them. In each temple there was a great block of marble, called the altar, and on this a small fire was often kept burning by the priests. If anyone wished to get the help of one of the gods, he would bring a dove, or a goat, or an ox to the temple, so that the priests might kill it, and burn part of its flesh as an offering. For they thought that the smell of the burning flesh pleased the gods.

Since Zeus was the greatest of the gods, many of the most beautiful temples in Greece were built in his honor. A part of one of these temples to Zeus is still standing, and you can see it if you ever go to Greece. It was made of the finest white marble, and was surrounded on all sides by rows of tall columns beautifully carved.

In another temple there was a great statue of Zeus, made of ivory and gold. It was over sixty feet high, and showed the god seated on a great throne which was covered with carving. The robe of the god was of solid gold. But it was the face of the statue which the Greeks thought was most wonderful. It was so grand and beautiful that they said: "Either the sculptor must have gone up into heaven and seen Zeus upon his throne, or

the god must have come down to earth and shown his face to the artist."

Besides building temples for their gods, the Greeks held great festivals in their honor also. The greatest of these festivals was the one which was held in honor of Zeus at a place called Olympia. Every four years messengers would go about from town to town to give notice of it. Then all wars would cease, and people from all over Greece would come to Olympia to worship the god. There they would find the swiftest runners racing for a wreath of olive leaves as a prize. There they would also find chariot races and wrestling matches and other games. The Greeks believed that Zeus and the other gods loved to see men using their strength and skill to do them honor at their festivals. So for months and months beforehand men practiced for these games; and the one who gained the victory in them was looked upon as ever after the favorite of gods and men.

Poseidon, the God of the Sea

Poseidon was the brother of Zeus, and just as Zeus ruled over the land and the sky, Poseidon ruled over the rivers and the seas. He was always represented as carrying a trident, or fish-spear with three points. When he struck the sea with this, fierce storms would arise; then with a word he could quiet the dashing waves, and make the surface of the water as smooth as that of a pond.

The palace of Poseidon was said to be at the bottom of the sea. It was made of shells and coral, fastened together with gold and silver. The floors were of pearl, and were ornamented with all kinds of precious stones. Around the palace were great gardens filled with beautiful sea-plants and vines. The flowers were of the softest and most delicate tints, and were far more beautiful than those growing in the light of the sun. The leaves were not of the deep green which we see on land, but of a most lovely sea- green color. If you should ever go to the seacoast, and look down through the water, perhaps you also might see the gardens of Poseidon lying among the rocks at the bottom of the sea.

Poseidon rode over the surface of the sea in a chariot made of a huge seashell, which was drawn by great sea-horses with golden hoofs and manes. At the approach of the god, the waves would grow quiet, and strange fishes and huge sea-serpents and sea-lions would come to the surface to play about his chariot. Wonderful creatures called Tritons went before and beside his chariot, blowing upon shells as trumpets. These Tritons had green hair and eyes; their bodies were like those of men, but instead of legs they had tails like fishes.

Nymphs also swam along by the sea-god's chariot. Some of these were like the Tritons, half human and half fish. Others were like lovely maidens, with fair faces and hair. Some lived so much in the depths of the sea that their soft blue eyes could not bear the light of day. So they never left the water except in the evening, when they would find some quiet place upon the shore, and dance to the music which they made upon delicate sea-shells.

Poseidon once had a quarrel with one of the goddesses over a piece of land which each one wished to own, and at last they asked the other gods to settle the dispute for them. So at a meeting on Mount Olympus the gods decided that the one who should make the most useful gift to the people should have the land.

When the trial came, Poseidon thought that a spring of water would be an excellent gift. He struck a great blow with his trident upon a rocky hill that stood in the land, and a stream of water gushed forth. But Poseidon had lived so much in the sea that he had forgotten that men could drink only fresh water. The spring which he had made was as salt as salt could be, and it was of no use to the people at all. Then the goddess, in her turn, caused an olive-tree to spring up out of the ground. When the gods saw how much use men could make of its fruit and oil, they decided that the goddess had won. So Poseidon did not get the land; but ever afterward the people showed the salt spring and the olive-tree upon the hill-top as a proof that the trial had taken place.

Poseidon was worshiped most by the people who lived by the shore of the sea. Every city along the coast had a temple to Poseidon, where people came to pray to him for fair weather and happy voyages for themselves and for their friends.

How Minerva Built a City

The sea that broke in surf on the shore of Attica became suddenly as smooth as a floor of crystal. Over it, as if he had leaped from the caverns of rock in its depths, dashed Neptune, the god of the sea, his trident held high, his horses' golden manes flowing in the wind, and their bronze hoofs scarcely touching the water as they galloped toward the shore.

At the same moment a war-like goddess appeared on the edge of the land. She was as tall and straight and strong as Mars, but her armor shone like gold while his was often tarnished. She held the storm shield of her father, Jupiter and carried a dart of lightning for her spear. Minerva, the other god of war, she was, as fearful and powerful as a storm, but also as gentle and peaceful as the warmth of the sky when it shines down on the fields when the storm is over.

"Why have Neptune and Minerva met?" the fishermen and sailors who crowded the beach asked.

"They have come together for a contest to see which shall have the honor of building a City," some of the wise men told them, and then these Greeks drew aside and waited to see what would happen, for with them was to rest the judgment in the matter.

Neptune drove his chariot up onto the land, dismounted, and blew a mighty blast on his trumpet to call the nymphs of the waters and the spirits of the winds to his aid. Then he ascended to a barren rock that lifted its head above the surrounding hills, bleak and without a single blade of grass to soften it. The Greeks watched Neptune breathlessly as he stood on its top, a mighty figure in his cloak of dripping seaweed and the white of sea salt in his flowing, dark green hair. He raised his trident, struck the rocks with it, and the age-old stone cracked in a deep fissure. Out of the crack in the rock burst a spring of water where there had been not a drop through all the centuries before.

"Neptune wins! None of the gods can excel this feat of bringing water out of bare rock," the cry went up from the people.

But Minerva ascended now to this rock of the Acropolis and took her place beside Neptune. She, also, touched the barren stone with her spear that was forged and tempered by the gods. And as she did so, a marvel resulted to her honor as well.

The green shoot of a tree suddenly appeared, pushing its way up through the hard stone. The shoot grew tall and broadened to form a trunk and branches, and then covered itself with gray-green leaves that made a pleasant shade from the brilliancy of the sun. Last, this wonder tree was hung on every branch with

a strange new fruit, green balls of delicious flavor and full of oil that was healthful and healing and needed by the whole world.

The Greeks broke their ranks and gathered about the tree to taste and enjoy the fruit.

"Minerva wins!" they shouted. "Neptune's spring here in the Acropolis is like the sea, brackish in flavor, but Minerva has given Greece the olive tree."

That is just what had happened. Minerva had given the people something that they really needed, and the fair city of Athens was raised and awarded to this goddess of war as the prize of her kindness to the people.

But Neptune proved himself a very poor loser. He was a blustering, boastful old god, used from the days of his father Oceanus, when the waters were first separated from the land, to having his own way. He had wanted to own Athens himself, to be able to go and come in it whenever he liked, and it was particularly humiliating that he must give it up to a goddess. Neptune stormed down to the shore, blew another blast on his trumpet, and called all the deities of the sea and of tempests to come to his aid and destroy the city.

What an army they made as they obeyed his summons!

Triton, a son of Neptune, led the hosts and sounded the horn of battle as they approached the land, and all around him flew the Harpies, those birds as large as men with crooked claws and a hunger for human flesh. There were sea serpents that could crush a man with a single coil, and Boreas, the North Wind, drove the regiment of the high tides up on the coast. With these powers of the sea came a mighty rushing of water, and it seemed as if neither Athens or its people would be able to survive this arising of the sea.

But Minerva, the goddess of righteous, defensive war was there and on the side of the Greeks. She presided over battles, but only to lead on to victory and through victory to peace and prosperity. Few could withstand the straight glance of Minerva's eyes, valiant, conquering and terrifying, or the sight of her gloriously emblazoned shield. As the powers of Neptune advanced, Minerva raised her shield, and the tides rested and the waters receded. Then she drove the forces of Neptune back at the point of her spear, and Athens was saved.

You will remember that the gods were very much like men in wanting particular kinds of gifts which would be their very own, and which they could treasure. Jupiter had a special fondness for thunderbolts and kept piles of them behind his throne. Apollo treasured his lyre, and Mercury his shoes and

his cap. Venus never travelled without a jewelled girdle which she thought added to her beauty, but Minerva had always wanted a city. Now her wish had come true, for she had a very large and beautiful one, the fair Athens.

People began coming to Athens from all parts of Greece and from neighboring countries as well, because Minerva spent so much time there tending and spreading the olive orchards, and keeping the city free from invasion. Neptune had left a horse near the hill of the Acropolis when he had to retreat, and Minerva invented a harness for it and broke it to the bit and bridle with her own hands in the market square of Athens. Having horses for ploughing and carrying loads of lumber and stone and grain helped the prosperity of Athens and brought it wealth. And when the people were at peace, Minerva laid aside her armor and crossed the thresholds of the houses, teaching the women to spin, and weave, and extract the precious oil from her olives.

Everyone was growing very prosperous and very rich. It seemed that the olive tree had brought all this wealth, for it had spread throughout Attica and plenty followed wherever it bore fruit.

Not far from Athens lay the kingdom of the Persians who were invincible in battle, having devoted themselves for many years to the arts of warfare.

Through their interest in their own affairs the Athenians forgot about their warlike neighbors, until one fateful day when a runner breathlessly told them that the hosts of the Persian army waited at the boundaries of their cities.

Such confusion and terror as ensued! The Athenians were not ready for war. They consulted an oracle as to how to meet the Persian host and the oracle replied,

"Trust to your citadel of wood!"

The wise men of Athens quite misunderstood this advice and went busily to work erecting wooden fortifications around the hill of the Acropolis where Minerva's first olive tree stood as if it were guarding their prosperity. The oracle had meant for the Athenians to trust to their fleet and try to prevent the Persian army from entering along the coast, and by the time the wooden wall was built, the Persians had begun to fire Athens.

Minerva, with her flaming spear raised and her eyes filled with tears, went to her father, Jupiter, to beg for the safety of her city. She kneeled at the foot of his throne to make her plea, and it must have been hard indeed for Jupiter to refuse his favorite daughter as he looked down at Minerva, prostrate before him in her shining suit of mail. But the king of the gods told

Minerva something about her city which even he was powerless to change.

"Athens, in her prosperity, has forgotten the gods," Jupiter said. "She lives and works for herself and not for others. She must perish in order that a better and nobler city may rise from her ruins."

So Minerva was obliged to watch from the clouds as fire and sword consumed Athens and the smoke of the flaming city rose like incense to the seats of the gods. When there seemed to be nothing left except the stones which had been the foundation of Athens' beauty, and those of her heroes who had not perished had been obliged to take to the sea, Minerva descended to her hill, the Acropolis. She wanted to see if the roots, at least, of her olive tree had been spared, and she found a wonder.

As a sign that she had not forsaken Athens, even in ruins, Jupiter had allowed the roots of her tree to remain, and from them there sprang a new green shoot. With wonderful quickness it grew to a height of three yards in the barren waste that was all the Persians had left, a sign that Athens was not dead, but would live and arise a new, fairer city.

Minerva held her bright shield above her golden helmet and hastened to the sea coast, calling together the heroes to man the ships and set sail against the fleet of the enemy. The Persian fleet greatly outnumbered

that of the Greeks, but at last it was driven off with terrible rout and those of the Persians who were left on land were destroyed. The war was won for the Greeks through Minerva's help, but Jupiter's prophecy had been fulfilled. The old Athens was gone, and it was necessary to build a new city.

That was just the kind of undertaking that Minerva liked, to win a defensive war and then build so as to destroy all traces of it. She and the Greeks, with the help of all the other gods, went to work to make Athens such a city as had not been dreamed of before.

Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, restored the waste fields and orchards so that the olive grew again and plenty came once more. Minerva busied herself encouraging the women to do more beautiful handwork than before the war, and she taught them how to feed and tend little children so that they might grow up strong and well and be the glory of Greece. Large numbers of horses were trained and harnessed to war chariots. Apollo sent sunshine and music to the city, and the builders erected beautiful marble temples and statues and pillars and fountains.

The Athenians began doing things together, which always helps to make a city great and strong. There were parades of the soldiers and the athletes on the holidays, and public games and banquets and drills were held. The best holiday of all was Minerva's own.

First, there was a procession in which a new robe for the goddess, woven and embroidered by the most skillful women and girls of Athens, was carried through the city on a wagon built in the form of a ship, the robe spread like a sail on the front. It was like a great float in a parade. All Athens followed the wagon, the young of the nobility on horseback or in chariots, the soldiers fully armed, and the trades people and farmers with their wives and daughters in their best clothes. The new robe was intended for the statue of Minerva that stood in the Parthenon in Athens. They named her Pallas Athene at last, the guardian of their beloved city.

Then came games in which the athletes took part, and the most sought for prize was a large earthenware vase on one side of which there was painted a figure of Minerva striding forward as if she was hurling her spear, and having a column on each side of her to indicate a race-course. On the other side of the vase was a picture of the game in which it was won, and it was filled to brimming with pure olive oil from Minerva's tree. For the Greeks had learned that war is sometimes necessary, but Minerva would heal their wounds with the oil of her sacred tree and the new Athens was to be known always as one of the most perfect cities of the ages.

Hades, the King of the Dead

Hades, the god of the underworld, was also a brother of Zeus; but the Greeks did not think of him as being bright and beautiful like the other gods. They believed, indeed, that he helped make the seeds sprout and push their leaves above the surface of the earth, and that he gave men the gold and silver which they dug out of their mines. But more often they thought of him as the god of the gloomy world of the dead; so they imagined that he was dark and stern in appearance, and they feared him more than they did the other gods.

The Greeks thought that when any one died, his soul or shade went at once to the kingdom of Hades. The way to this underworld lay through a cave which was in the midst of a dark and gloomy forest, by the side of a still lake. When they had passed down through this cavern, the shades came to a broad, swift stream of black water. There they found a bent old man named Charon, whose duty it was to take the shades across the stream in a small, leaky boat. But only those spirits could cross whose bodies had been properly burned or buried in the world above; and those whose funerals had not been properly attended to were compelled to

wander for a hundred years upon the river-bank before Charon would take them across.

When the shades had crossed the river, they came upon a terrible creature, which guarded the path so that no one who had once passed into the kingdom of the dead could ever come out again. This was the great dog Cerberus, who had three heads, and who barked so fiercely that he could be heard through all the lower world.

Beyond him the shades entered the judgment room, where they were judged for what they had done on earth. If they had lived good lives, they were allowed to enter the fields of the blessed, where flowers of gold bloomed in beautiful meadows; and there they walked and talked with other shades, who had led good lives in the world above. But the Greeks thought that even these spirits were always longing to see the light of day again, for they believed that no life was so happy as that which they lived on the face of the earth.

The shades who had lived bad lives in the world above were dreadfully punished in the world of the dead. There was once a king named Sisyphus, who had been cruel and wicked all his life. When he died, and his shade went down to the underworld, the judge told him that his punishment would be to roll a great stone up a steep hill and down the other side. At first Sisyphus thought that this would be an easy thing to

do. But when he had got the stone almost to the top, and it seemed that one more push would send it over and end his task, it suddenly slipped from his hands, and rolled to the foot of the hill again. So it happened every time; and the Greeks believed that Sisyphus would have to keep working in this way as long as the world lasted, and that his task would never be done.

There was once another king, named Tantalus, who was wealthy and fortunate upon earth, and had been loved by the gods of heaven. Zeus had even invited him to sit at his table once, and had told him the secrets of the gods. But Tantalus had not proved worthy of all this honor. He had not been able to keep the secrets that had been trusted to him, but had told them to all the world. So when his shade came before the judge of the dead, he, too, was given a dreadful punishment. He was chained in the midst of a sparkling little lake where the water came up almost to his lips. He was always burning with thirst; but whenever he stooped to drink from the lake, the water sank into the ground before him. He was always hungry, and branches loaded with delicious fruits hung just over him. But whenever he raised his hand to gather them, the breeze swung them just out of his reach. In this way the Greeks thought that Tantalus was to be punished forever because he had told the secrets of the gods.

Hera, the Queen of the Gods

The wife of Zeus was the tall and beautiful goddess Hera. As Zeus was the king of all the gods, so she was their queen. She sat beside him in the council-hall of the gods, on a throne only a little less splendid than his own. She was the greatest of all the goddesses, and was extremely proud of her own strength and beauty.

Hera chose the peacock for her favorite bird, because its plumage was so beautiful. The goddess Iris was her servant and messenger, and flew swiftly through the air upon her errands. The rainbow, which seemed to join heaven and earth with its beautiful arch, was thought to be the road by which Iris traveled.

Hera was not only proud of her own beauty, but she was also very jealous of the beauty of any one else. She would even punish women that she thought were too beautiful, as if they had done something very wrong; she often did this by changing them into animals or birds. There was one woman whom Hera changed into the form of a savage bear, and turned out to wander in the forest because she hated her beautiful face. The poor creature was terribly frightened among the fierce animals of the woods; for although she herself now had

the form of a beast, her soul was still human. At last Zeus, who was kinder of heart than Hera, took pity upon her. He lifted her far above the earth, and placed her among the stars of heaven; and so, ever after that, the Greeks called one group of stars the Great Bear.

There was once a wood-nymph named Echo, who deceived Hera, and so made her very angry. Echo was a merry, beautiful girl, whose tongue was always going, and who was never satisfied unless she could have the last word. As a punishment for her deception, Hera took away her voice, leaving her only the power to repeat the last word that should be spoken to her. Echo now no longer cared to join her companions in their merry games, and so wandered through the forests all alone. But she longed to talk, and would often hide in the woods, and repeat the words of hunters and others who passed that way.

At last she learned to take delight in puzzling and mocking the people who listened to her.

" Who are you?" they would shout at her.

" You," would come her answer.

"Then, who am I?" they would ask, still more puzzled.

"I," Echo would answer in her sweet, teasing manner.

One day Echo met in the woods a young man named Narcissus, and loved him. But he was very unkind, and would take no notice of her except to tease her for the loss of her voice. She became very unhappy, and began to waste away from grief, until at last there was nothing left of her but her beautiful mocking voice.

When the gods found what had happened to the lovely Echo they were very angry. To punish Narcissus for his unkindness, they changed him from a strong young man to a weak, delicate flower, which is now always called by his name.

Echo and Narcissus

Echo was a beautiful maiden — a wood-nymph who spent her days in happy play upon the hillsides and in the valleys along the rivers.

No one would have supposed any harm could come to her, so innocent and beautiful was she. But one day Juno came hurrying along the riverside, evidently in great haste. She stopped to speak with Echo, and then attempted to hurry on.

Now, whether Echo intended to delay Juno, or whether she was flattered that the great goddess should speak to her, no one can tell; but one thing is sure, Juno was delayed by Echo's continual talking, which followed her even along the valley; so that when she reached her destination she was far too late, and her errand, whatever it was, was fruitless.

Juno was angry, indeed; and seeing the nymph on her return through the same valley and along the riverside, she fell upon her with words so angry and excited, that the poor child could not speak for fright.

"Never shall your voice come back to you," cried Juno, her angry brow growing blacker and blacker; "never shall you speak again to any companion; to you

shall be left only the power to echo the last word you hear."

Then Echo went away into the forest to weep, and Juno ascended to her home in Mt. Olympus.

By and by there came into Echo's valley the brave youth Narcissus. He was very beautiful, and a daring hunter; but alas, most foolishly vain; and, as vain people always are, selfish.

But Echo thought only of his great beauty, and longed to gain his admiration. If only she might speak to him! But no, she had no voice and could only echo now and then some last word he might speak.

One day the youth, while hunting in the valley, became separated from his companions and wandered near the home of Echo.

"Haloo!" he called.

"Haloo!" answered Echo.

"I'm lost!" he called again.

"Lost," answered Echo sadly.

"Is any one here?" he shouted loudly.

"Here," answered Echo.

"Then come," cried Narcissus, a little impatient.

"Come," answered Echo; and she did come. But when he saw it was only poor little Echo who had

come, he was very rude to her. So rude that she fled back, weeping, to the forests again.

Then Narcissus wandered on up and down the river by himself, trying to find his way back to his companions. Tired at last, he threw himself down by the waters to rest. He was thirsty, and so leaned over the bank to drink. Suddenly a beautiful face like his own confronted him, its large blue eyes looking up into his very own.

Now, a face like his own the vain Narcissus could love; for such he had only words of courtesy and kindness. "O beautiful one!" he said, "come to me." The face smiled up at him but did not come. Narcissus smiled more sweetly; the face, too, smiled more sweetly; still it came no nearer, nor could Narcissus approach it. More than once he plunged into the water to meet it; but no sooner did he ruffle the smooth waters than it would disappear; nor would it return until he had left the waters and lay quiet again upon the bank.

All day long Narcissus pleaded with the beautiful face, and when night came he fell asleep beside the waters, meaning to wait until the sun should come again to resume his entreaties with the beautiful face.

The sun came again, and with it again the face. Another day Narcissus spent by the riverside; another and another; another and another; until at last a sad,

sad fate overtook him. He pined and pined; he grew thin and pale, and at last he died — there by the pool of clear, still water.

And when his comrades came to search for him, they found, where he had died, a beautiful purple flower. "Is our Narcissus dead?" his comrades asked.

"Dead," answered Echo sadly.

Then the comrades looked down at the purple flower, whose purple reflection lay dancing on the waters.

"And from his dead body this flower has sprung," they said.

"This flower has sprung," answered Echo. And the comrades gathered the purple flower and carried it to the home of Narcissus, telling there the words that the voice in the river valley had spoken to them.

Apollo, the God of Light

Apollo was the son of Zeus, and was one of the greatest of the gods of Mount Olympus. He was often called the sun-god, because the Greeks thought that he brought the sun's light and warmth to men. As these are so necessary to every living thing, they thought that Apollo was also the god of health and manly beauty. So he was always represented by the Greeks in their pictures and statues as a strong and beautiful young man.

Apollo was very fond of music, and was in the habit of playing upon the lyre at the feasts of the gods, to the great delight of all who heard him. He was very proud of his skill, and would often have contests with the other gods, and sometimes even with men.

At one of these contests, a king named Midas was present. But instead of deciding, as was usual, that Apollo was much the more skillful player, he was better pleased with another.

Apollo became very angry at this, and to show his opinion of Midas he changed his ears into those of a donkey.

It was then the turn of Midas to be vexed. He wore a cap which hid his large, ugly ears; and he allowed no one to learn what had happened to him except the man who cut his hair. Midas made this man promise that he would tell no one of his misfortune. But the man longed so to tell that at last he could stand it no longer. He went to the edge of a stream, dug a hole in the earth, and whispered into it the secret. Then he filled up the hole, and went away satisfied. But up from that spot sprang a bunch of reeds, which immediately began to whisper on every breeze, " King Midas has donkey's ears; King Midas has donkey's ears." And so the story was soon known to the whole world.

The Greeks thought that Apollo caused sudden death among men by shooting swift arrows which never failed of their aim. In this way he punished the wicked, and gave welcome death to the good who were suffering and wished to die.

There was once a great queen named Niobe, who had six sons and six daughters. She was proud of her beauty, and proud of her wealth and power, but proudest of all of her twelve beautiful children. She thought that they were so beautiful, and she loved them so much, that she even dared to boast that she was greater than the mother of Apollo, who had but two children.

This made the goddess very angry, and she begged her son to punish the queen for her wicked pride. Apollo, with his bow and arrows at his side, floated down to the earth hid in a cloud. There he saw the sons of Niobe playing games among the other boys of the city. Quickly he pierced one after another of them with his arrows, and soon the six lay dead upon the ground. The frightened people took up the dead boys gently, and carried them home to their mother. She was broken-hearted, but cried,

"The gods have indeed punished me, but they have left me my beautiful daughters."

She had scarcely spoken when one after another her daughters fell dead at her feet. Niobe clasped the youngest in her arms to save her from the deadly arrows. When this one, too, was killed, the queen could bear no more. Her great grief turned her to stone, and the people thought that for many years her stone figure stood there with tears flowing constantly from its sad eyes.

One of the most famous temples in Greece was built to Apollo at a place called Delphi. Here there was always a priestess, whose duty it was to tell the people who came there the answers which the god gave to their questions. She would place herself on a seat over a crack in the earth out of which arose a thin stream of gases. By breathing this she was made light-headed for

the moment, and then she was supposed to be able to tell the answer which Apollo gave.

These answers were almost always in poetry; and though they were very wise sayings, it was sometimes hard to tell just what the god meant by them. Once a great king wished to begin a war, and asked the advice of Apollo about it at Delphi. The priestess answered, that if he went to war he would destroy a great nation. The king thought that this must mean that he would conquer his enemies, and so he began the war. But, alas, he was conquered himself, and found that it was his own nation which was to be destroyed.

Although these oracles, as they were called, were so hard to understand, the Greeks thought a great deal of them; and they would never begin anything important without first asking the advice of Apollo.

Athena, the Goddess of Wisdom

Athena was one of the most powerful of the goddesses. She was called the daughter of Zeus; but the Greeks believed that she had sprung full grown from his head, wearing her helmet and armor. She was more war-like than the other goddesses, and was almost always successful in her battles.

Athena was the goddess of wisdom and learning. The owl was her favorite bird, because of its wise and solemn look, and it is often represented with Athena in the images which the Greeks made of her.

While Artemis loved most the woods and mountains, Athena liked the cities better. There she watched over the work and occupations of men, and helped them to find out better ways of doing things. For them she invented the plow and the rake; and she taught men to yoke oxen to the plow that they might till the soil better and more easily.

She also made the first bridle, and showed men how to tame horses with it, and make them work for them. She invented the chariot, and the flute, and the trumpet; and she taught men how to count and use numbers. Besides all this, Athena was the goddess of

spinning and weaving; and she herself could weave the most beautiful cloths of many colors and of the most marvelous patterns.

There was once a girl named Arachne, who was a skillful weaver, and who was also very proud of her skill. Indeed, she was so proud that once she boasted that she could weave as well as the goddess Athena herself. The goddess heard this boast, and came to Arachne in the form of an old woman. She advised the girl to take back her words, but Arachne refused. Then the bent old woman changed suddenly into the goddess Athena. Arachne was startled and surprised, but in an instant she was ready for the test of skill which the goddess demanded. The two stood at looms side by side, and wove cloth covered with the most wonderful pictures. When the goddess discovered that she could find no fault with Arachne's work, she became terribly angry. She struck Arachne, and tore the cloth on her loom. Arachne was so frightened by the anger of the goddess that she tried to kill herself. Athena then became sorry for the girl, and saved her life by changing her into a spider. So Arachne lives to this day, and still weaves the most wonderful of all webs upon our walls and ceilings, and upon the grasses by the roadside.

It was not often, though, that Athena was so spiteful as you must think her from the story of Arachne.

Usually she was kind and generous; and nothing pleased her better than to help brave, honest men, especially if they were skillful and clever.

The Greeks loved to tell the story of one such man whom Athena helped. His name was Odysseus, and in a great war of the Greeks he had proved himself to be one of the bravest and most cunning of all their chiefs. But in some way he had displeased the god Poseidon so much that when the war was over, and all the other Greeks sailed away in safety, Poseidon would not permit him to reach his far-off home. So for ten years Odysseus was kept far from his wife and child. He was blown about by storms, his ship was wrecked, and he had to meet and overcome giants and all sorts of monsters. Indeed, he had to make a trip down into the dark world of the dead before he could find out how he might manage to get back to his home again. But through it all, Athena was his friend. She watched over him, and encouraged him, and in each difficulty she taught him some trick by which he could escape. At last, after he had suffered much, and had even lost all of the men who had started with him, she brought him safely home again, in spite of all that Poseidon could do to prevent it.

How Vulcan Made the Best of Things

No one wanted Vulcan at Olympus because he was a cripple. His mother, Juno, was ashamed of him, and his father, the great Jupiter, had the same kind of feeling, that it was a disgrace to have a son who was misshapen and must always limp as he took his way among the other straight limbed gods.

But Vulcan had a desire to be of service to his fellows. There was once an assemblage of the gods at which they were to discuss important matters of heaven and earth, and Vulcan offered his help as cup bearer for the company. He made a droll figure hobbling from seat to seat with the great golden cup, and some of the gods laughed at him.

At last they threw Vulcan out of the skies and he fell for an entire day, so far was it from Olympus to the earth. Near sunset he found himself lying on the ground beside a smoking mountain, bruised and more handicapped than he had ever been before. He had fallen to the island of Lemnos in the Aegean Sea.

It was a bare, unbeautiful place, for the coast was set thick with volcanoes that poured forth burning metal at intervals from one year's end to another. The

Sintians, who were the only inhabitants of the island of Lemnos, had scant means of subsistence because the land was unfertile and few ships dared anchor at their shores under the rain of fire from the volcano that might destroy them. These people of Lemnos were a kind, simple folk, though, and they had a great pity for Vulcan. They gathered about him and bound up his wounds with healing herbs. They shared their scanty store of fruit with him, and they hastened to prepare him a tent. But when the Sintians returned to the foot of the mountain Mosychlos where they had left Vulcan he was gone.

"We dreamed of this visitor from the gods," they decided. "It was only a falling star that we watched, dropped from the zenith."

Seasons passed and at last it was noticed that the fiery Mosychlos was only smoking. It no longer threatened the lives of the inhabitants of Lemnos with its red hot torrents. The same fact was to be noted about the other volcanoes; they seemed more like the smoking, sooty chimneys of our factories of today than the towers of death they had been before. And above the sound of the surf and the wailing of the wind there could be heard a new sound, the steady beating of a hammer on metal as a smith strikes his ringing blows from morning until night.

The bolder of the people of Lemnos went to the foot of the mountain and discovered, to their amazement, that the rock opened like a door. They went inside, following the sound of the hammer. In the very depths of the mountain they saw a sight that had never been seen on earth before. There was a dark smithy in the heart of the burning mountain with a forge fire in which the power of the volcano burned, a great forge upon which Vulcan was shaping metal into things of dazzling beauty, and all about the smithy were the materials for making more; white steel, glowing copper, shining silver, and burnished brass and gold.

A strange company of apprentices, the Cyclopes, served Vulcan here. They had once been shepherds, but their peaceful occupation had been taken away from them because they had neglected to pay tribute to Apollo. Each had but a single eye, placed in the middle of the forehead, but they were using their great strength in the smithy of Vulcan to forge thunderbolts for Jupiter, to make a trident for Neptune and a quiver of arrows for Apollo. Beside Vulcan stood two wonderful hand-maidens of gold, who, like living creatures, moved about and helped the lame smith as he worked.

Vulcan, the despised of the gods, had chained fire and conquered the metals of the earth that he might make gifts for the gods and for the heroes.

Wonderful objects appeared at the doorway of Vulcan's shop and were carried to Mount Olympus. He shaped golden shoes, wearing which, the celestials were able to walk upon land or sea, and travel faster than thought flies. He made gold chairs and tables which could move without hands in and out of the halls of the gods. The celestial steeds were brought to Vulcan at Lemnos and he shod them so cleverly with brass that they were able to whirl the chariots of the gods through the air or on the waters with all the speed of the wind. He was even shaping brass columns for the houses of the gods. Vulcan had become the architect, smith, armorer, chariot-builder and the artist of all the work in Mount Olympus.

He was accomplishing more than this. Because he had captured fire and made the metals of the earth serve the ends of peace, the island of Lemnos became a safe, fertile land. Vineyards were planted and yielded rich harvests, flocks fed in green meadows, and Vulcan forged tools with which agriculture could be carried on. Ships from the other islands of Greece sailed to Lemnos and commerce, the strength of a nation, began.

In those days there was a great war being waged between the Trojans and the Greeks, and many hearts beat with hope at the prowess of a young Greek hero, Achilles. Hector, at the head of the Trojans, had

stormed the Greek camp and set fire to many of their ships. A captain of the Greeks begged Achilles to lend him his armor that he might lead the soldiers against the forces of Troy.

"They may think me, in your mail, the brave Achilles," he said, "and pause from fighting, and the warlike sons of Greece, tired as they are, may breathe once more and gain a respite from the conflict."

So Achilles loaned this captain, Patroclus, his radiant armor and his chariot, and marshalled his men to follow into the field. At first the assault was successful, but there came a change of fortune. Patroclus' chariot driver was killed; then he met Hector in single combat, at the same time receiving a spear thrust at the back. So Patroclus fell, mortally wounded, and it was a great sorrow as well as a tragedy for Greece, for Patroclus had been Achilles' beloved friend, and Hector stole the armor of Achilles from his body. News of the defeat went even to Mount Olympus and Jupiter covered all the heavens with a black cloud.

But Thetis, the mother of Achilles, hastened to the smithy of Vulcan and told him that her son was in sore straits, having no suit of mail. She found the lame artisan of the gods at his forge, sweating and toiling, and with busy hands plying the bellows. But Vulcan laid by his work at once to weld a splendid suit of

armor for Achilles. There was, first of all, a shield decorated with the insignia of war; then a helmet crested with gold and a corselet and greaves of metal so tempered that no dart could penetrate them. The task was done in a night and Thetis carried the armor to her son and laid it at his feet at dawn of the next day. No man before had ever worn such sumptuous armor.

Arrayed in Vulcan's mail Achilles went forth to battle, and the bravest of the Trojan warriors fled before him or fell under his spear. Achilles, his armor flashing lightning, and he, himself, as terrible as Mars, pursued the entire army as far as the gates of Troy. His triumph would have been complete, but he had an enemy among the company of the gods on Mount Olympus. No arrow shot by the hand of man could have hurt Achilles, but Apollo's shaft wounded him mortally. Apollo and Mars were then, and will be for all time, enemies; light and music and song have no sympathy with war.

And Achilles, having been taken from the battle-fields of earth by a dart which Apollo directed, was carried to Olympus along a bright pathway through the skies. On his way he stopped at the palace of the sun. It was reared on stately columns that glittered with gold and precious stones. The ceilings were of ivory, polished and carved, and all the doors were of silver. There were pictures on the walls that

surpassed in their lines and colors the work of artists upon the earth. The whole world, the sea and the skies with their inhabitants were pictured. Nymphs played in the sea, rode on the backs of fishes or sat on the rocks and dried their long hair. The earth was lovely with its forests and rivers and valleys. There was a picture of Spring crowned with flowers. Summer wore a garland made of the heads of ripe, golden grain. Autumn carried his arms full of grapes, and Winter wore a mantle of bright ice and snow. Seeing this beauty, the hero forgot his wound.

Achilles had been obliged to leave his armor on the earth, an inheritance for other brave heroes who were to take his place in the siege of Troy, but Apollo had shown him the greatest work of Vulcan. It was the crippled one of the gods who had built this palace of the sun.

How Orion Found His Sight

Neptune, the burly old god of the sea, had a son named Orion who was almost as fond of the woods as he was of the ocean. From the time when Orion was old enough to catch a sea horse and ride on its back to shore he was gone from his home in the depths of the sea for days at a time. When Neptune blew his conch-shell to call the runaway home, Orion would return regretfully with the tales of the bear he had seen in the forest or the comb of wild honey he had found in an old oak tree.

Neptune wanted Orion to be happy, so he bestowed upon him at last the power of wading as far and in as deep water as he liked. No one had ever been able to wade right through the fathomless ocean before, but Orion could be seen any day, his dark head showing above the surface of the waters, and his feet paddling beneath without touching the bottom. He was not obliged to depend any more upon his father's chariot or the dolphins or the sea horses to carry him to shore.

So Orion began to spend a good deal of his time on land, and as he grew up to be a youth he became a

mighty hunter. His arrows seemed to have been charmed by Diana, so swift and sure they were. And every day Orion bagged great spoils of game and deer.

He was making his way through the forest one day with a mighty bear that he had just slain over his shoulder when he came suddenly upon a clearing and in its midst there stood a fair white castle, its towers reaching above the pine trees toward the sky. It was surrounded by a great wall, and when Orion approached and asked the gatekeeper why it was so fortified, he was told that the king of that country who lived in it was in constant terror, day and night, of wild beasts.

"He would give half of his kingdom to whoever could rid the forest of its ravening beasts," the gatekeeper told Orion.

As Orion listened, he glanced up at a window of one of the castle towers and there he saw the face of the king's daughter, Merope, looking down at him. Hers was a bright face, the blue eyes and smiling lips framed in her hair which fell in a golden shower and wrapped her about like a cloak. Orion delighted in the thought that Merope was smiling at him, although her eyes were really looking beyond this uncouth son of the sea and as far as the shores of Corinth where the heroes set sail for their adventures.

"Would the king, by any chance, do you think, give his daughter, Merope, to that hunter who rids the forest of wild beasts?" Orion asked.

The gatekeeper looked at Orion's shaggy hair, his bare feet and his mantle, made of a lion's skin. He turned away to conceal a smile as he answered.

"One could ask the king," he said.

Orion returned to the deep places where the night was made terrible by the crying of those beasts of prey that hunted for men, and Neptune did not see his son for many moons. Orion shot lions and wrestled single-handed with bears. He strangled great snakes with his own brawny hands and he hunted the wolf and the tiger with his spear. When the forest was rid of the pest of these man-eating creatures, Orion returned to the castle in the clearing, not waiting even to wash the gore of his mighty hunting from his hands and garments, and he presented himself to the king.

"The forest is free of wild beasts that kill, O King," Orion said. "You may tear down your ramparts and walk in safety among the trees. As my reward for the great deed I have done, I ask the hand of your daughter, Merope. I would take her home with me to my palace of coral and shell in Neptune's kingdom. And if you refuse her to me, I will take her by force."

The king was speechless at first. Then, when he realized the boon that this son of the sea was asking, he seemed to have no words with which to express his scorn. He raised his sceptre in anger and struck Orion's eyes.

"Begone from my court, boaster," he commanded.

Orion rose from his place where he had been kneeling at the foot of the king's throne and he put his hands to his eyes, for the room seemed suddenly as dark as night. He tried to find the door but he stumbled, groping for it, until the attendants of the court had to take his hands and lead him outside. They mocked at him as they pushed him through the palace gate and watched this mighty hunter, who had the strength of the sea in his limbs, stagger down the road like a blind beggar.

Orion was now sightless. The king, for his presumption in asking for Merope, had struck him blind.

Without sun by day or moon by night, Orion wandered up and down the earth, asking of whoever he met the way he must take to find the light again.

Once he came to a spot in the woods where he heard the sound of many soft footsteps dancing on the moss to the sound of merry piping. Orion stretched out his arms as he felt his way nearer to the

Hamadryads, those creatures of the forest who played all day long with Pan and his tunes for company.

"Can you, by any chance, direct me to Apollo who drives the chariot of the sun?" Orion asked.

"Oh, no," the Hamadryads answered, scattering at the sight of the blind wayfarer. "We seldom see Apollo, for he doesn't like the music Pan plays on his pipes."

So Orion stumbled on, and he heard in the course of his wanderings the clash and din of battle as two armies met in mortal combat on the edge of a city. War chariots crashed by him, and he heard the din of shield striking shield, and the groans of those heroes who fell wounded to death.

"These fighters must know the way to take to the light," Orion thought and, sheltering himself from the combat beside a column that still stood, he cried out to one of the warriors,

"Have you seen Apollo, driving the chariot of the sun, pass this way lately?"

"No," the man replied. "Apollo avoids the battle field. We cannot direct you to the god of light."

So Orion wandered on in his darkness until he came at last to the island of Lemnos and as he stumbled along a rocky road the sharp ringing of hammers beating on metal came to his ears.

"There must be a smithy close by," Orion thought, "a place as black and ugly as the world my blindness makes for me. I have heard tales of the Cyclopes, with only one eye apiece, who spend all their lives under the mountains shaping thunderbolts at their forges. Their master is the ill-shaped Vulcan, the despised of the gods. There is little use in my following the sound of a hammer."

But, against his will, Orion kept on. There was a call in the ringing of the hammer that drew him on faster than the merrymaking of Pan had, or the sound of battle. Before long the heat of the forge fire touching his face told Orion that he had reached the doorway of Vulcan's smithy at the foot of the mountain, and he asked again,

"Can you tell me the way to Apollo, who drives the chariot of the sun?"

How surprised he was to hear Vulcan reply,

"Apollo is here. We are sending some forgings of gold to his palace and he will take you with him to the sun, blind Orion."

That was a thrilling ride for Orion, away from the darkness he had walked in so long on the earth, and up along the road of stars that led to the sun. Apollo drove the chariot himself, and when they came to the stately gold columns that guarded the entrance to his palace,

he told Orion to look straight at the blazing light of the sun. As he looked, Orion's blindness passed. He opened his eyes and could see again.

The myths say that Orion never left the sky after that. The gods changed him into a giant, with a wide hunting belt, a sword, a lion's-skin mantle and a club made all of stars. And they even brought Sirius, his faithful hunting dog, to follow his master forever through the heavens.

Aphrodite, the Goddess of Beauty

The most beautiful of all the goddesses was Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. She was often called the "sea-born" goddess, because she was formed one evening from the foam of the sea, where its waves beat upon a rocky shore. Her eyes were as blue as the summer sky overhead, her skin as fair as the white sea-foam from which she came, and her hair as golden as the yellow rays of the setting sun. When she stepped from the water upon the beach, flowers sprang up under her feet; and when she was led into the assembly of the gods, every one admired and loved her.

Zeus, in order to make up for his cruelty to Hephaestus, gave him this beautiful goddess for, his wife. The gods prepared for them the grandest wedding possible. All the gods and goddesses were there, bringing with them magnificent gifts for the bride. But the most wonderful of all were the presents given her by Hephaestus himself.

He built many palaces for her, the most marvelous of which was on the island of Cyprus. In the middle of this island was a large blue lake, in which there was another island. Upon this Hephaestus built a palace of

white marble, with towers and ornaments of gold and silver. It was then filled with wonderful things which the skillful god made to please his wife. Among these were servants made of solid gold, that would obey the wishes of Aphrodite without word or sound. There were also golden harps, which made sweet music all day long, without any one playing upon them; and golden birds, which sang the sweetest of songs.

All birds were great favorites of Aphrodite, and they loved her as, much as she loved them. They taught her their bird language, so that she talked with them as though they had been persons. Of all of them, however, she liked the doves and swans the best. Doves fluttered around her head and alighted, on her arms and shoulders, wherever she went; and swans drew her back and forth in a beautiful boat across the waters between her palace and the shore of the lake.

Aphrodite was the kindest and gentlest of the goddesses. The Greeks did not pray to her for power, as they did to Zeus, or for learning and wisdom, as they did to Athena. Instead, they prayed to her to make the persons they cared for love them in return.

Once a sculptor, named Pygmalion, tried to make a statue that should be more lovely than the loveliest woman. He chose the finest ivory, and for months and months he worked patiently at his task. As it began to take the form of a beautiful maiden under his skillful

chisel, he became so interested in his work that he scarcely took time to eat or sleep. At last the work was finished, and everybody said that the statue was more beautiful than any woman that had ever lived.

But Pygmalion was not satisfied. All day long he would sit in front of his statue and look at it. He came to love it so much at last, that he wished over and over again that it were a real woman, so that it might talk to him, and love him in return. He longed for this in secret until at last he grew bold enough to ask the gods for help. Then he went to the temple of Aphrodite, and there before the altar he prayed to the goddess to change his statue into a real woman. As he finished his prayer, he saw the altar-fire flame up three times, and he knew that the goddess had heard him. He hastened home, and there he found that his statue of ivory had indeed been turned into a woman of flesh and blood; and all his life long he blessed the goddess Aphrodite for granting his wish.

The Wonders Venus Wrought

Of all the many strange things that happened in the days of the old gods and goddesses, the most wonderful of all came to pass one spring morning near the island of Cyprus.

One expects all kinds of surprises in spring, new leaves and flowers on bare branches, the nesting and singing of the wild birds and brighter sunshine than in months before, but this wonder of Greece was quite unexplainable. To this day no one seems to have been able to account for it or understand it. There was hardly a breeze to stir the blue sea and the waters lay like a turquoise mirror, smooth and still. Suddenly the fishermen who were casting their nets on the shore saw a bright, rose colored cloud that trembled and then began to drop lower toward the sea until it floated lightly on the surface of the water. It was so soft and ethereal that it seemed as if a breath would blow it away, but it rose and fell like mist and seemed to almost breathe.

No one spoke, watching the wonder, and suddenly the cloud began to take form and shape. It really breathed, and it blossomed into the most beautiful

woman who had ever been seen on earth or on Mount Olympus either. Her hair was as bright as sunlight and her face glowed with warm color like that of the rosy cloud from which she had come. Her flowing garments were as soft and lovely as the tinted sky at sunrise, and she stretched out her slender white arms toward the shore.

At once the four Zephyrs of the west who had not been anywhere about before came and surrounded this beauteous being, and with their help she glided toward the island of Cyprus. The four Seasons descended from Mount Olympus to meet her there, as the people of Cyprus watched and wondered at the marvel.

"Can it be possible that this heavenly being has come to remain with us?" they asked each other.

And even as they wondered the second strange thing happened.

Vulcan, the smith of Mount Olympus, had a shop on Cyprus. Here his anvil could be heard ringing every day from sunrise until sunset, for Vulcan was shaping and fitting together the parts of a gold throne for Jupiter. He was making other things with his skillful hands, weapons and armor for the gods and the heroes, and thunderbolts for Jupiter. He was a lonely smith, very much handicapped by his lameness, and seldom went about much unless it was to take his finished work home to Mount Olympus.

But this is what happened that long ago morning in spring. With amazing grace this lovely person who had been born in the foam of the sea made her way to the abode of Vulcan. She was the goddess of love, Venus, who is sometimes called Aphrodite. She had come to be the wife of Vulcan who was, in spite of his lameness, the god of fire.

Things were very different on the earth after the coming of Venus. The whole world had been looking for her and hoping for her coming although they had not really known this desire of their hearts. And one of the first matters that the goddess of love attended to was that of the wilful Atalanta who had caused so much sorrow among the heroes of Greece.

Atalanta was a princess, too boyish for a girl and too girlish for a boy. Many of the heroes had claimed her hand in marriage but she liked her own free wild ways too much to give them up for spinning and the household arts. To any prince or hero who asked for her hand Atalanta made the same reply,

"I will be the prize of him who shall conquer me in a race; but death shall be the penalty of all who try and fail!"

It was a cruel decree. How Atalanta could run! There had never been a boy even who was able to beat her in a race. The breezes seemed to give her wings, her bright hair blew over her shoulders, and the fringe of

her dress fluttered behind her. But as Atalanta raced, the ruddy hue of her skin seemed to fade and she became as white as marble, for her heart grew cold. All her suitors were outdistanced and they were put to death without mercy.

Then Hippomenes came and decided to risk his life in a race with Atalanta. He was a brave, bold youth and although he had been obliged to act as judge and condemn many of his friends whom Atalanta had defeated to death, he wanted to run. And he asked Venus to help him in the race.

In Venus' garden in her own island of Cyprus there was a tree with yellow leaves and yellow branches and golden fruit. Aphrodite gathered three golden apples from the tree and gave them, unseen, to Hippomenes, telling him how to use them.

The signal was given and Atalanta darted forward along the sand of the shore near Venus' temple with Hippomenes at her side. Hippomenes was a swift runner, with a tread so light that it seemed as if he might skim the water or a field of waving grain without leaving a foot print. At first he gained. Then he felt the beat of Atalanta's breath on his shoulder, and the goal was not yet in sight. At that moment Hippomenes threw down one of the golden apples.

Atalanta was so surprised that she stopped a second. She stooped and picked up the apple and as

she did so Hippomenes shot on ahead. But Atalanta redoubled her speed and soon overtook him. Again he threw down a golden apple. Atalanta could not bear to leave it, and she again stopped and picked it up. Then she ran on again. Hippomenes was almost to the goal but Atalanta reached and passed him. In a minute she would have won, but Hippomenes dropped the third golden apple. It glittered and shone so that Atalanta could not resist it. A third time she hesitated and as she did so Hippomenes won the race.

The two were very happy, Hippomenes in his success and Atalanta in her precious fruit. She at once wanted a house in which to keep it, and when Hippomenes built her one Atalanta began to spin and weave and take great pride in making her home beautiful and comfortable. Venus had been quite sure that this would happen. She had known that it would be better for Atalanta to forget her cruel races, so she gave her these golden apples to show her the prizes love brings.

The goddess of love had other work to do on earth. She was particularly fond of her garden in Cyprus and she busied herself for a long time tending and coaxing a new bush to live and blossom. It was different from any shoot that had been seen there before, tough, and dry, and covered with sharp thorns that pricked whoever touched them and drew blood like spear

points. But Venus handled and trimmed the stalks without fear until the bush spread and sent out branches that stretched up and covered the wall of her temple like a vine. It was noticed that the new shoots and leaves pushed their way up from underneath some of the thorns, which dried up at once and dropped off. Then flower buds appeared where there had been sharp thorns which opened, when summer decked Cyprus, into the loveliest blossoms the earth had ever seen. Their fragrance filled the island and their color was like that of the cloud from which Aphrodite had come.

It was the rose, Venus' own flower, and destined to be always the most loved flower of earth.

Venus watched over everything that was beautiful on earth. That is why she was sorry that Pygmalion, the King of Greece, was so hardhearted. Pygmalion was a sculptor as well as a king, and so skilled with clay and marble that he was able to mould likenesses of the beings of Mount Olympus, even. But he closed his heart to men and he felt that there was no woman living who was worthy to share his kingdom.

One spring Pygmalion decided to make a statue of ivory, and when it was finished it was so exquisite that there had never before been seen such beauty save that of Venus. Pygmalion was proud of his work and as he admired it Venus put a better feeling into his heart.

Pygmalion laid his hand upon his statue to see if it were living or not. He began to wish that it was not ivory, and he named it Galatea.

Pygmalion gave Galatea the presents that a young girl of Greece loved, bright shells and polished stones, birds in golden cages, flowers of many colors, beads, and amber. He dressed her in silk and put jewels on her fingers and a necklace about her neck. She wore ear rings and many strings of pearls. When he had done all this Venus rewarded him. Pygmalion, returning to his home one day, touched his statue and the ivory felt soft and yielded to his fingers as if it had been wax. Its pallor changed to the color of life, and Galatea opened her eyes and smiled at Pygmalion.

After that all Cyprus was changed for this king who had been selfish and hardhearted. He was able to hear the silvery song of his fountain that he had never noticed before. He began to love the forests, and flowers, and people, for Venus had given him Galatea to share his kingdom.

Venus and Vulcan began to spend about as much time with the gods as they did on the earth, for Mount Olympus was their real home. Venus carried her roses there to deck her hand-maidens, the Graces, who presided over the banquets, the dances, and the arts of the gods. She was watchful of mortals, though, for she knew that they would always have need of her.

Hermes, the Messenger of the Gods

The Greeks did not always think of their gods as grown-up persons. Sometimes they told stories of their youth and even of their babyhood. According to these stories the god Hermes, who was the son of Zeus, must have been a very wonderful child. They said that when he was but a day old his nurses left him asleep, as they supposed, in his cradle. But the moment that their backs were turned, he climbed out and ran away.

For quite a while he wandered about over the fields and hills, until, by and by, he came upon a herd of cattle that belonged to his elder brother Apollo. These he drove off, and hid in a cave in the mountains. Then, as he thought that by this time his nurses would be expecting him to wake up, he started for home. On the way he came upon a tortoise-shell in the road, and from this he made a harp or lyre by stretching strings tightly across it. He amused himself by playing upon this until he reached home, where he crept back into his cradle again.

Apollo soon discovered the loss of his fine cattle, and was told by an old man that the baby Hermes had driven them away. He went to the mother of Hermes

in great anger, and told her that her baby had stolen his cattle. She was astonished, of course, that any one should say such a thing of a baby only a day old, and showed Apollo the child lying in his cradle, fast asleep as it seemed. But Apollo was not deceived by the child's innocent look. He insisted upon taking him to Mount Olympus; and there before his father Zeus, and the other gods, he accused Hermes of having stolen the herd of oxen.

At first Hermes denied that he had done anything of the kind; and he talked so fast and so well, in defending himself, that all the gods were amused and delighted. Zeus, however, was the most pleased of all; for he was proud of a son who could do such wonderful things while he was so young. But for all his cleverness, Hermes at last had to confess that he had driven the cattle off, and had to go with Apollo, and show him where he had hidden them.

All this time Hermes had with him the lyre which he had made from the tortoise-shell, and as they went along he began to play upon this for Apollo. As you know, Apollo was very fond of music, so he was greatly delighted with this new instrument which Hermes had invented. When Hermes saw how pleased Apollo was he gave him the lyre. Apollo was so charmed with the gift, that he quite forgave Hermes for the trick he had

played him, and, indeed, gave him the whole herd of cattle for his own, in return for the little lyre.

As soon as he was grown, Hermes was made the messenger, or herald, of the gods. He was chosen for this position because he had shown so early that he was a good talker, and so would be able to deliver the messages well. In order that he might be able to do his errands quickly, he wore a pair of winged sandals on his feet, which carried him through the air as swiftly as a flash of lightning.

He was especially the herald of Zeus. The Greeks thought that their dreams came from Zeus himself, and that it was Hermes who brought them, flying swiftly downward through the darkness of the night. But besides this, Hermes served as messenger for all the gods, even for Hades in the underworld. When people died, the Greeks thought that it was Hermes who guided their shades to their dark home underneath the ground.

Because he traveled so much himself, Hermes was supposed to take care of all men who traveled upon the earth. In those days 'twas a far more dangerous thing to make a journey than it is now. Then men had to walk nearly always when they wished to go from one place to another. The roads were bad, and often were only narrow paths that one could scarcely follow. In some places, too, there were robbers who would lie in wait

for travelers coming along that way. So, before starting, travelers would offer sacrifices to Hermes, and pray to him to protect them, and grant them a safe journey. All along the roads, were posts of wood, upon which the head of Hermes was carved. These usually stood at the meeting of two roads, and were guideposts, to tell the travelers which way to take.

When Proserpine Was Lost

There were lilies and great blue violets growing wild on the banks of the lake in the vale of Enna. How could a little girl resist them, and particularly Proserpine whose mother was Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, and who had played and lived outdoors all her life? Proserpine had been racing through the forest with some of her boy and girls friends, farther than was wise.

"Don't go out of sight of our own home fields," Ceres had said that morning.

But here was Proserpine out of sight and sound of her playmates even. Violets like to grow in damp, dark places, and Proserpine had followed their blue trail until she was shut in the vale of Enna by the trees. She was quite alone and, suddenly, in danger.

There was the sound of racing chariot steeds and the crash of heavy wheels breaking the low branches and the bushes. A dark shadow made the vale darker than it had been before. A black chariot burst into sight, drawn by black horses and driven by a man who was dressed in black from head to foot. He was Pluto, the king of darkness, who had been waiting for a long time for this chance to kidnap fair little Proserpine. Her

flowers fell from her apron in which she had been holding them; she screamed, but there was no one to hear her. Pluto dragged her into his grasp and threw her in the chariot. The horses dashed away, and Proserpine left the land of springtime for Pluto's dark kingdom beneath the earth.

Pluto shouted to his steeds, calling each by name, and giving them the length of the iron colored reins over their heads and necks. He reached the River Cyane which had no bridge, but he struck the waters with his trident and they rolled back, giving him a passage down through the earth to Tartarus where his throne was.

It was a prison place that they reached by way of a deep gulf, and its recesses were as far beneath the level of the earth as Mount Olympus was high above their heads. A strange sound of singing came to Proserpine from the depths of the cave where Pluto led her:

> "Twist ye, twine ye! Even so,
> Mingle shades of joy and woe,
> Hope, and fear, and peace, and strife
> In the thread of human life."

And when Proserpine's eyes were a little more used to the dimness of the cave she saw three gray women, the Fates, with threads and shears, seated beside the throne and singing those words. One of them spun the

thread of life, and another twisted its bright and dark lines together. But the third Fate cut the threads apart whenever she liked.

Other grim and terrible creatures met Proserpine's frightened gaze. The Furies had spread their couches there as had also Fear and Hunger. The Hydra hissed with each one of its nine heads and the Chimaeras breathed fire. There was a giant with a hundred arms, and Discord whose hair was bound with a fillet made of vipers.

"Take me back to the light. I want to go home. Oh, I beg of you, take me home!" Proserpine cried, but her words only echoed through the vaults of the kingdom of darkness. And when she tried to make her escape, her frail little hands were bruised from beating against the thick iron door that shut her in.

The next morning Aurora rode through the sky to put away the stars and touch the clouds with the pink color of the dawn. Looking down to the earth, she saw a goddess who had arisen long before the dawn and was hurrying up and down the earth, wringing her hands and with tears in her eyes. She wore a chaplet woven of the golden heads of the grain, and she was straight and strong and beautiful in her flowing robes of green, but she did not lift her eyes from the earth, so deep was her sorrow.

That evening Hesperus, who followed in Aurora's course each sunset to lead out the stars, saw the same goddess. Her robes were torn and stained from her travels and bedraggled with the dew. She was still weeping, and still searching. She was going to search, without rest, all night.

Many others saw this goddess in the days that followed. She was always roaming from daylight until dark, in the open, in sunlight and moonlight, and in falling showers. She was weary and sad. In such a plight a peasant, named Celeus, found her one day. He had been out in a field gathering acorns and blackberries, and binding bundles of sticks for his fire. The goddess sat there on a stone, too tired to go on.

"Why do you sit here alone on the rocks?" Celeus asked her. He carried a heavy load, but he stopped to try and succor her. "Come to my cottage and rest," he entreated her. "My little son is very ill, and we have only a most humble roof, but such as it is we will be glad to share it with you."

The goddess rose and gathered her arms full of crimson poppies. Then she followed Celeus home.

They found deep distress in the cottage, for the little boy was so ill as to be almost past hope. His mother could scarcely speak for her sorrow, but she welcomed the wandering goddess and spread the table for her with curds and cream, apples, and golden honey

dripping from the comb. The goddess ate, but her eyes were on the sick child and when his mother poured milk into a goblet for him she mingled the juice of her poppies with it.

At last night came, and the peasants slept. Then the goddess arose and took the little boy in her arms. She touched his weak limbs with her strong, skillful hands, said a charm over him three times, and then laid him in the warm ashes of the fire.

"Would you kill my son? Wicked woman that you are to so abuse my hospitality!" the child's mother cried, awaking and seeing what the goddess had done.

But just then a strange thing happened. The cottage was filled with a splendor like white lightning, and a light seemed to shine from the skin of the goddess. A lovely perfume was scattered from her fragrant garments, and her hair was as bright as gold.

"Your son will not die, but live," she told the wife of Celeus. "He shall grow up and be great and useful. He shall teach men the use of the plough, and the rewards which labor can win from the cultivation of the soil."

"Who are you?" the woman asked in amazement as she saw the boy's white cheeks grow rosy with new life.

"I am Ceres," the goddess answered, "whose grief is greater than yours, for my child is lost. I search the earth for her, and never find her." With these words she

was gone, as if she had wrapped herself in a cloud and floated away to meet the dawning of another day of her journey.

That was who this wanderer of the earth was, the immortal Ceres, who still did not care to live without her loved little daughter, Proserpine.

She was obliged to neglect her work of caring for the earth in her search for Proserpine, and disaster came to the land for many seasons. The cattle died and no plough broke the furrows. The seed failed to come up. There was too much sun and too much rain. The birds stole the harvest, little as there was, and seeds and brambles were the main growth. Even Arethusa, the nymph of the fountain, was about to die as Ceres, in her search, came to the banks of the River Cyane, where Pluto had passed with Proserpine to his own domain. Ceres had almost given up hope.

"Ungrateful soil that I have clothed with herbs and fruits and grains," she said. "You have taken my child and shall enjoy my favors no longer."

But Arethusa spoke:

"Do not blame the earth, Mother Ceres," she said. "It opened unwillingly to take your daughter. I come from the waters. I know them so well that I can count the pebbles in the bottom of this river, the willows that shade it and the violets on the bank. I was at play not

long since in the river and Alpheus, the god of the stream, pursued me. I ran and he followed in an attempt to keep me from going back to my home in the fountain. As I tried to escape him, I plunged through the depths of the earth and into a cavern. While I passed through the bowels of the earth I saw your Proserpine. She was sad, but had no look of terror. Pluto had made her his queen in the realm of the dead. I have made my way back to tell you."

Ceres knew then that Proserpine was lost to her unless Jupiter helped in taking her away from the king of darkness. She summoned her chariot and rode to Mount Olympus, but even Jupiter had not complete power over Pluto.

"If Proserpine has taken food in Pluto's realm, the Fates will not allow her to return to earth," he told Ceres. "But I will send my swift messenger, Mercury, with Spring to try and bring her home."

In all that time Proserpine had eaten none of the rich food that Pluto had set before her, only six seeds of a red pomegranate as she had pressed the fruit to her lips to quench her thirst. But Spring, with all her strength that can bring new leaves and blooms from dead branches, with the help of Mercury, the god of the winged shoes, brought Proserpine the long way back to her mother for six months. The remaining six months of the year, one month for each pomegranate

seed that she had eaten, Proserpine was doomed to spend as queen of Pluto's kingdom of darkness.

No one, and particularly not her mother, worried very much, though, about those months of darkness because of the wonders that Proserpine brought when she returned to earth. Every tree that she touched with her garments burst into green, and wherever her feet pressed the earth the grass and wild flowers appeared and spread. Ploughing and planting were begun again, and the new shoots of the corn pushed up through the ground.

Indeed, it seemed to Ceres that her other child, the corn, was telling the story of lost Proserpine. The seed of the corn that is thrust into the earth and lies there, concealed in the dark, is like Proserpine carried off by the god of the underworld. Then Spring gives the seed a new form and it appears to bless the earth, just as Proserpine was led forth to her mother and to the light of day.

Hestia, the Goddess of the Hearth

Hestia had fewer temples than any of the other gods of Mount Olympus, but she was worshiped the most of all. This was because she was the hearth-goddess, that is, the goddess of the fireside, and so had part in all the worship of the Greek home.

The Greeks said that it was Hestia who first taught men how to build houses. As their houses were so very different from the ones in which we live, perhaps you would like to know something about them. In the days when these old Greeks were so brave and noble, and had such beautiful thoughts about the world, they did not care much what kind of houses they lived in. The weather in their country was so fine that they did not stay indoors very much. Besides, they cared more about building suitable temples for the gods, and putting up beautiful statues about the city, than they did about building fine houses for themselves.

So their houses were usually very small and plain. They did not have a yard around the houses, but built them close together, as we do in some of our large cities. Instead of having their yard in front, or at the sides of the house, they had it in the middle, with the

house built all around it. That is the way many people in other lands build their houses even now; and this inner yard they call a courtyard. Around three sides of the courtyard the Greeks had pleasant porches in which the boys and girls could play when it was too hot for them to be out in the open yard. And opening off on all sides from the porches were the rooms of the house.

In the middle of one of the largest of these rooms, there was always an altar to the goddess Hestia. This was a block of stone on which a fire was always kept burning. The Greeks did not have chimneys to their houses, so they would leave a square hole in the roof just over the altar to let the smoke out. And as they had no stoves, all the food for the family was usually cooked over this fire on the altar.

Whenever there was any change made in the family they offered sacrifices to Hestia. If a baby was born, or if there was a wedding, or if one of the family died, they must sacrifice to Hestia. Also whenever any one set out on a journey, or returned home from one, and even when a new slave was brought into the family, Hestia must be worshiped, or else they were afraid some evil would come upon their home

The Greeks thought that the people of a city were just a larger family, so they thought that every city, as well as every house, must have an altar to Hestia. In the

town-hall, where the men who ruled the city met together, there was an altar to the goddess of the hearth; and on it, too, a fire was always kept burning. These old Greeks were very careful never to let this altar-fire go out. If by any chance it did go out, then they were not allowed to start it again from another fire, or even to kindle it by striking a bit of flint and a piece of steel together, for of course they had no matches. They were obliged to kindle it either by rubbing two dry sticks together, or else by means of a burning-glass. Otherwise they thought Hestia would be displeased.

The Greeks were a daring people, and very fond of going to sea, and trading with distant countries. Sometimes, indeed, part of the people of a city would decide to leave their old home, and start a new city in some far-off place with which they traded. When such a party started out, they always carried with them some of the sacred fire from the altar of Hestia in the mother city. With this they would light the altar-fire in their new home. In this way the worship of Hestia helped to make the Greeks feel that they were all members of one great family, and prevented those who went away from forgetting the city from which they came.

Pan, the God of Shepherds

Pan was not one of the great gods of Mount Olympus. He lived upon the earth, and was the god of the fields and forests and wild mountain sides. Therefore the Greeks thought that he was the protector of herdsmen and hunters, who were obliged to wander far away from the cities and settled parts of the country.

Pan was not beautiful, like most of the gods; indeed, he was a very strange looking figure. He had legs and hoofs like a goat, and little horns upon his forehead, so that he seemed half man and half animal. He was a noisy fellow, with a great, deep voice which was so terrible that when he shouted the bravest men would run away in fear.

The people were usually afraid of Pan, and dreaded meeting him when they were obliged to pass through lonely parts of the country. But there was no reason for this; for in spite of his strange shape and his noisiness, Pan was a very gentle and good-natured old fellow. He loved music, and was fond of playing upon a kind of pipe which he made out of the reeds that grow by the rivers. The wood-nymphs and wood-spirits would

often gather around, and dance to his music when he played.

Pan was worshiped especially by the country people. But there was one city called Athens where he was honored as much as anywhere else in Greece, and this is the way it came about. Athens was once threatened by a great army, which was coming to destroy the city, and kill or make slaves of its people. The Athenians were afraid that they would not be able to defend themselves alone, and so determined to send to another city called Sparta for aid. For this purpose they chose their swiftest runner, whose name was Pheidippides; and he set out, alone and on foot, for Sparta.

The way lay through a rough, mountainous country, where the road became only a rocky path, winding over the mountains and down into the valleys. Pheidippides traveled with all speed, running most of the way, and scarcely stopping for rest or food. After two days and two nights, he entered the city of Sparta, and breathlessly begged them for help. But the Spartans received him coldly, and would give him no promise of aid. Then, without waiting for rest, Pheidippides was off again for Athens, to tell the Athenians that they must fight alone; but his heart was heavy as he thought how easily they might be conquered by so great an army.

As he was racing along the way back to Athens, he suddenly came upon a strange figure standing by the roadside. It was the god Pan, with his smiling eyes, curling beard, and great goat-legs. Pheidippides stood still in fear; but the god called to him kindly and said:

"Why is it, Pheidippides, that they do not worship me, and ask me for help, at Athens? I have helped them many times before this, and they may be sure that I will help them now."

Then the god disappeared, and Pheidippides' fear was changed to joy. He sprang forward upon the road, running faster than ever to carry the good news. When he reached Athens, the people were comforted by the promise which the god had given him, and they marched bravely out to battle with as large an army as they could gather. Their enemies had ten soldiers for every one that Athens had; but the thought of the god gave them courage, and they fought so well that they won the victory, and the city was saved. Many of the Athenians used to tell afterward how they saw the great god Pan fighting on their side that day, and overthrowing the enemy by hundreds. Perhaps they only imagined it, but at least they believed it very earnestly; and after that battle the Athenians always worshiped and honored Pan more than did any other people in Greece.

When Phaeton's Chariot Ran Away

"You are only boasting, Phaeton. I don't believe for a moment that your father is Apollo, the god of light," Cycnus, one of his schoolmates, said to the lad who had just made this proud statement.

"It is true," Phaeton replied. "You won't believe me because I am alone here in Greece, cared for by one of the nymphs and learning the lessons that all Greek boys do. I shall show you, though. I will take my way to the home of the gods and present myself to my father."

That was indeed a bold plan on the part of this youth who had not been beyond the shores of his native land in all his life. But Phaeton set out at once for India, since that was the place where the sun which lighted Greece seemed to rise. He felt sure that he would find Apollo at the palace of the Sun, so he did not stop until he had climbed mountains and then beyond and higher through the steeps of the clouds. Suddenly he was obliged to stop, covering his eyes with his hands to shut out the brilliant light that dazzled him. There, in front of Phaeton, reared aloft on shining columns, stood the palace of the Sun.

It glittered with gold and precious stones, and Phaeton made his way inside through heavy doors of solid silver. He had heard of the beautiful workmanship of Vulcan who had designed Apollo's palace, but when he stood beneath the polished ivory ceilings of the throne room it was more wonderful than anything he had ever imagined.

Apollo, in a royal purple robe, sat on the throne that was as bright as if it had been cut from a solid diamond, and about him stood his attendants who helped him in making the earth a pleasant, fruitful habitation for men. On Apollo's right hand and on his left stood the Days, the Months, and the Years, and at regular intervals the Hours. Spring was there, her head crowned with flowers, and Summer who wore a garland formed of spears of ripened grain. Autumn stood beside Apollo, his feet stained with the juice of the grape, and there was icy Winter, his hair stiffened with hoar frost. There was nothing hidden from Apollo in the whole world and he saw Phaeton the instant he entered the hall.

"What is your errand here, rash lad?" he asked sternly.

Phaeton went closer and knelt at the foot of the throne.

"Oh, my father, light of the boundless world!" he said. "I want to be known as your son. Give me some proof by which I can show mortals and the gods as well

that I am not of the earth but have a place with you on Mount Olympus!"

Apollo was pleased with the pleading of the youth and, laying aside the crown of bright beams that he wore on his head, stretched out his arms and embraced Phaeton.

"My son, you do not deserve to be disowned," he said. "To put an end to your doubts ask whatever favor you like of me and the gift shall be yours."

It was wonderful; Phaeton had never, in his dreams even, expected so great a boon as this. But he was as reckless and ambitious as many a boy of today who fancies himself able to carry on his father's work without all the skill and experience which earned his success. He knew at once the desire that was closest to his heart.

"For one day only, father, let me drive your chariot?" Phaeton begged.

Apollo drew back in dismay.

"I spoke rashly," he said. "That is the one request I ought to refuse you. It is not a safe adventure or suited to your youth and strength, Phaeton. Your arms are mortal and you ask what is beyond mortal's power. You aspire to do that which even the gods can not accomplish. No one but myself, not even Jupiter whose

terrible right arm hurls the thunderbolts and the lightning, may drive the flaming chariot of day."

"Why is it so difficult a task?" Phaeton asked, determined not to give up.

Apollo explained to him with great patience.

"It is a difficult track to keep through the skies," he said. "The beginning of the way is so steep that the horses, even when they are fresh in the morning, can hardly be urged to climb it. Then comes the middle of the course, so high up in the heavens and so narrow that I myself can scarcely look below without giddiness at the earth and its waters. The last part of the course descends rapidly and calls for most expert driving. Add to all this the constant, dizzy turning of the sky with its sea of stars. I must be always on my guard lest their movement, which sweeps everything along with it, should hurry me or throw me out of my course. If I lend you my chariot, what can you, a boy, do? Can you keep the road with all the spheres in the universe revolving around you?"

"I am sure that I can, father," Phaeton replied boldly. "What you say, of course, does not deter me from starting along it. I have a strong arm and a steady eye for driving. There is no danger other than this on the way, is there?" he asked.

"There are greater dangers," Apollo said. "Do you expect to pass cool forests and white cities, the abodes of the gods, and palaces, and temples on the way? The road goes through the domain of frightful monsters. You must run the gauntlet of the Archer's arrows and pass by the horns of the Bull. The Lion's jaws will be open to devour you, the Scorpion will stretch out its tentacles for you, and the great Crab its claws. And you will find it no easy feat to manage the horses, their breasts so full of fire that they breathe it out in flame through their nostrils. I can scarcely hold them myself when they are unruly and resist the reins."

"I have driven a chariot at the games of Athens," Phaeton boasted, "when wild beasts were close to the arena, and my steeds were most unmanageable."

Apollo made one last plea.

"Look the universe over, my son," he entreated, "and choose whatever is most precious in the earth or on the sea. This will I give you in proof that you are my son, but take back your other, rash request."

"I have only one wish, to drive the chariot of the Sun," Phaeton answered stubbornly.

There was but one course left then for Apollo, because a god could never break his promise. Without a word he led Phaeton to the great stable where he kept his lofty chariot.

The chariot was a gift of Vulcan to Apollo, and made of gold. The axle was of gold, the pole and wheels also of gold, and the spokes of the brightest silver. There were rows of chrysolites and diamonds along the seat that reflected the rays of the sun. Apollo ordered the Hours to harness the horses and they led the steeds, full fed with ambrosia, from the stalls, and attached the reins. As Phaeton, full of pride, watched he saw that Dawn had thrown open the purple gates of the east and his pathway, strewn with roses, stretched before him. He seated himself in the chariot and took the reins.

Apollo anointed his son's face with a powerful unguent that would make it possible for him to endure the flaming heat of the sun. He set the rays of light on his head and said sorrowfully,

"If you will be so rash, I beg of you to hold the reins more tightly than you ever did before and spare the whip. The horses go fast enough of their own accord, and the difficulty is to hold them in. You are not to take the direct road, but turn to the left. You will see the marks of my wheels and these will guide you. Go not too high, or you will set the heavenly dwellings on fire, or so low as to burn the earth, but keep to the middle course which is best. Night is just passing out of the western gates so you can delay no longer. Start the

chariot, and may your chance work better for you than you have planned."

Phaeton stood up in the gilded chariot, lifted the reins, and was off like a dart.

In an instant the snorting, fiery horses discovered that they were carrying a lighter load than usual and they dashed through the clouds as if the chariot had been empty. It reeled and was tossed about like a ship at sea without ballast. The bars of the sky were let down and the limitless plain of the universe lay before the horses. They left Apollo's travelled course and Phaeton was powerless to guide them. He looked down at the earth so far below him, and he grew pale and his knees shook with terror. He turned his eyes on the trackless heavens in front of him and was even more terrified to see the huge forms among which he rode as if he was driven by a tempest; the Archer, the Great Bear, the Lion and the Crab. All those monsters of whom Apollo had warned him were there, and others too.

Phaeton wished he had never left the earth, never made so bold a request of his father. He lost his self command and could not tell whether to draw the reins tightly or let them loose. He forgot the names of the steeds. At last, as he saw the Scorpion directly in his path, its two great arms extended and its fangs reeking with poison, he lost all his courage and the reins

dropped from his hands. As the horses felt their loosened harness, they dashed away headlong into unknown regions of the sky, now up in high heaven among the stars and then hurling the chariot down almost to the earth.

The mountain tops took fire and the clouds began to smoke. Plants withered, the leafy branches of the trees burned, the harvests blazed and the fields were parched with heat. The whole world was on fire. Great cities perished with their beautiful towers and high walls, and entire nations with all their people were reduced to ashes. It is said that the river Nile fled away and hid its head in the desert where it still lies concealed. The earth cracked and the sea shrank. Dry plains lay where there had been oceans before and the mountains that had been covered by the sea lifted up their heads and became islands. Even Neptune, the god of the sea, was driven back by the heat when he tried to lift his head above the surface of the waters, and the Earth looked up to Mount Olympus and called to Jupiter for help.

It was indeed time for the gods to act. Jupiter mounted to the tall tower where he kept his forked lightnings and from which he spread the rain clouds over the earth. He tossed his thunderbolts right and left and, brandishing a dart of lightning in his right hand, he aimed it at Phaeton and threw it, tossing him

from his chariot down, down through space. The charioteer fell in a trail of fire like a shooting star. One of the great rivers of the earth received him and tried to cool his burning frame, but he was never again to see the palace of the Sun. His recklessness had brought him, not honor, but destruction.

Phaeton's friend, Cycnus, stood beside the bank of the river mourning for him and even plunged beneath the surface of the water to see if he could bring him back to the earth. But this angered the gods and they changed Cycnus to the swan who floats always on the water, continually thrusting its head down as if it were still looking for the fated charioteer of the skies.

Even the sea shell tells the story of Phaeton. Hold it to your ear and listen to its plaintive singing of the lad who lost a place in the palace of the sun because he drove the chariot of light for his own pride and without thought of others.

Psyche

They were most beautiful maidens; but of them all, Psyche, the youngest, was most beautiful.

So beautiful indeed was she that people came from all the countries round about to gaze upon her as she came forth from her royal father's kingly palace.

All the youths and maidens up and down the kingdom talked of her, and for a time forgot to pay their homage at the altars of Venus.

Great offense was this against that goddess, whose jealousy was aroused. " Go," said she to her winged son Cupid, "down to the kingdom where this maiden dwells, and punish her as she deserves. How dares she claim a beauty so great that my altars are forsaken. Go fill her heart with love for some horrible, deformed, unworthy creature, so that she and all who dwell with her may suffer mortification as great as this I suffer now."

Readily Cupid sped down through the soft air to the palace where Psyche dwelt.

With him he carried a vial of the bitter water that should bring sorrow into the maiden's life, even as Venus wished.

But alas for Cupid's wicked plan! For when he looked upon her, lying upon her snowy couch of down, so pure and beautiful was she, that he himself bowed his head and fell upon his knees before her. Never, even among the goddesses on Mt. Olympus, had he seen such beauty; and, forgetting his mother's command, the youth's heart filled with but one thought to win her for his own bride.

Now it happened that, on the next day, the king and queen visited the Oracle to consult concerning matters of the kingdom; but Cupid, speeding on before them, took his place within the altar, and spoke to the king and queen from out his own overflowing heart.

Strange and unsatisfactory, so the king thought, were the Oracle's words, save when it spoke of his beautiful daughter Psyche.

" Prepare thy household," said Cupid, " as for a great wedding. Array thy daughter in rarest robes of white. Take her to the top of yonder mountain, and there leave her, and lead thy household back unto thy palace; for on the top of the mountain shall she find a palace more beautiful than any ever built by mortal king; and there shall her husband receive her; for this shall be the wedding festivity of the fair Psyche."

Sadly the king and queen returned to their home and told their daughter what the Oracle had said. The hearts of all were filled with fear; yet no one dared

disobey the command of the Oracle, and Psyche, arrayed in a long white robe, whose shimmering light trailed far out behind her on the way, and lay like a beautiful cloud upon the hillside, was led up the mountain side, just as the sun was sinking in the west. Sadly her father and her mother kissed their child, then turned back to their desolate home.

When they were far down the mountain side, and the darkness was already creeping over the sky, there came to Psyche a soft voice like the music of the western wind, saying, "Be not afraid, sweet maid; come with me to the beautiful home that thy husband has prepared for thee."

Then Psyche was led along the mountain top, down into a beautiful glen, where stood a beautiful palace of marble. The floors were inlaid with precious stones, and from the ceilings lamps of amber and of gold shed a soft and mellow light.

There was rich music in the air, and on every side kind voices bade her welcome.

By and by there was a burst of music rare, and a voice beside her said, "Thy husband cometh." But, alas, he too was invisible; and though he spoke to her in tenderest words, and was so kind to her that she could not but love him in return, he would not permit that she should look upon his face.

For a long time Psyche dwelt in her strange home, which soon she learned to love and be most happy in. By and by, however, there came to her a longing to see her sisters and to tell her father and her mother of her happy fate.

"I will bring them to you," said Cupid – for of course it was Cupid who had made this beautiful palace and had won her love – and away he sped to where the sisters dwelt.

In the guise of a mountain guide he appeared before them, delivered Psyche's words, and offered to lead them to their sister's palace on the mountain top.

Gladly did the sisters set forth upon the journey, and joyous indeed was the meeting of Psyche with them.

Through the palace, from floor to tower, she showed them the wonders of her new home; they heard the invisible servants receive their orders, and saw with what perfection the orders were carried out. All day long the soft music floated down from the trees above, and the mellow light shone through the purple windows.

"And now Psyche," said the sisters, "tell us about the Prince that has prepared for you this beautiful home."

"O he is very kind! " answered Psyche.

"But how does he look? "

"There is nothing in all the world that he will not bring to me if I but show even a faint desire for it."

"We can believe that easily; but how does the Prince look?"

" Never in all the world was there ever a husband so kind."

"But is he tall and handsome? "

"And he sings most beautifully; and . . ."

"Is his hair yellow? And are his eyes blue like your own beautiful eyes?"

Poor Psyche! she could not deceive her sisters, neither could she keep her secret from them longer. "O sisters," said she, weeping, " I – I – have never seen his face. He comes only after the darkness has settled upon the mountain, and he departs from the palace before the sun gilds the eastern sky. He is most kind and gentle always, and I have not cared to see his face, since for some reason it seems best to him that I should not."

" You foolish, foolish girl! " her sisters cried. " What nonsense! How do you know he is not some terrible creature, disfigured and deformed? "

"Sometime, he tells me, I may see him!" "Sometime! Sometime!" the sisters answered angrily. "See to it that the sometime is this very night. Now take our advice. We are older than you; and never in all our lives did we ever hear such nonsense. Why, the creature may be a

being wholly unworthy to look upon the daughter of a king; " and the sisters went away, scolding angrily.

Poor Psyche! never had it entered her mind before to doubt her husband's true and generous motives. He had been so kind and gentle; and sometime she was sure that she should see him face to face. It would be a good face she had been sure of that. But now O dear! what if? and she threw herself upon her couch and cried as if her heart would break.

Night came; and with it the kind husband, bringing her a most beautiful gift, as was his custom always.

But there was a shadow upon Psyche's face tonight, for her sister's words were ringing in her ears still, and doubt had entered her heart.

Hour after hour Psyche lay upon her couch, wondering, wondering, wondering; for with the sound of these words in her ear there was no sleep for her. "I must know," she said; and taking her silver candle in her hand she crept softly out from her chamber, down the long marble hall.

There upon a couch of white and silver, the Prince lay fast asleep. Psyche held her breath in wonder; for never had she seen a prince of such surpassing beauty. His yellow hair lay in beautiful ringlets about his forehead; and his skin was pink and soft and white like a baby's. But, strangest of all, folded softly upon his

back, were two white wings like those of a beautiful bird.

"It is Cupid!" said Psyche, with a start, and her heart beat fast with joy. But alas for Psyche! In her surprise she tipped her candle and a drop of the boiling oil fell upon the rosy shoulder of the god. With a cry he sprang from his couch, and seeing Psyche, said, "O Psyche, Psyche, could you not trust me? Have I not been kind and gentle with you always? But now farewell! Love cannot dwell where there is suspicion." And spreading his snow-white wings, he flew away. With him the palace, too, disappeared; and poor Psyche found herself alone upon the cold mountain top.

Morning dawned at last, and Psyche made her way down the rough mountain pass to the valley below. There was a temple there, and Psyche entered. She threw herself prostrate before the altar and begged Venus to forgive her for any wrong she had ever done, however innocently, against that goddess, and to give her some task to do, by which she might atone for her wrong-doing, and prove herself worthy of whatever peace Venus might grant to her in her future years.

Scornfully Venus looked down upon the prostrate Psyche. "Very well," she said, " here is a wagon-load of wheat and barley, millet, beans, and lentils. Separate

these grains, and let me see them at nightfall in five baskets, each kind by itself."

Psyche sat down before the grain. The tears poured down her pale cheeks, for she knew her task was hopeless, and that Venus had cruelly meant that it should be so. But just then a soft voice beside her said, " Fear not; do you not see that these ants will help you?"And sure enough, a great colony of ants had fallen upon the grain, and were separating it particle by particle.

A happy smile broke over Psyche's face, for she knew it was Cupid's voice that had spoken to her; and at nightfall she stood before Venus, her five baskets filled, each with a separate grain.

" This is no work of yours, wicked one," said Venus, and, angry, she turned away.

The next morning, however, she sent again for Psyche, and said, "Do you see yonder that flock of a thousand golden fleeced sheep? Go, then, to the field, and bring me wool from the back of each one of that great flock."

Very sorrowfully again Psyche wandered along to the water's edge; for this task was even more hopeless than that of the day before – and dangerous as well.

But from the reeds along the banks a voice again spoke to her; for again Cupid had come to her and had

secured the promise of the river-god to help her in the second hopeless task.

"O unhappy maiden," said the voice among the reeds, "do not attempt to cross this dangerous flood, nor to approach the angry rams on the opposite bank; for they burn with a cruel rage to destroy mortals with their sharp horns. Wait until the hot noontide sun has driven them to sleep beneath the shade. Then, too, the flood will be quiet, and you may cross in safety; and you will find, without trouble whole armfuls of the shining wool upon the bushes where the rams have crowded past."

And so, again, Psyche succeeded in performing the task allotted to her by the cruel Venus.

But when, at nightfall, she bore the shining wool to the goddess, she angrily said again, "You have succeeded, but not by any power of your own; that I know full well. Some one again has given you help; but I will force you yet to fail. Go, then, at once to Proserpina, who dwells in the land of shades, and give to her this box. Tell her to fill it with beautiful color that I may bathe in it before I appear before the gods and goddesses in council. Go, let there be no delay."

This was indeed a most hopeless command. The other two had been possible, almost probable, compared with this; and the poor child sat down in mute despair.

Again a voice came to her and said, "O faithless maiden, do you not know that you will be helped in this even as you have been helped before! Rise then, be brave, and go do what is bidden you. Go first to the great cave that stands, black and terrible, beneath the mountain by the riverside. Enter, and you will be led to the entrance to Hades. Then the three-headed dog, Cerberus, may growl and show its teeth; but go on, have no fear. You will reach the home of Proserpina and she will fill the box for you. Only remember this, whatever happens, do not open the box nor look within it; for that only can you be punished."

And Psyche, encouraged, arose and made her way to the great black cave. Everything was as the voice had said, and in a short time she was on her way back into the light of the upper world.

But, alas, the foolish maiden! Hardly was she safely out from the blackness, when there came to her a strange longing to know what was within the box. "It is by this," she said, "that cruel Venus preserves immortal her wonderful beauty; why should I not know her secret, too? Do I not wish, as well as she, to preserve, immortal, my beauty?"

And Psyche opened the box, forgetting what the voice had said, and looked within. But nothing did she see; for no sooner had she raised the lid than a dull

heavy sleep fell upon her; her eyes closed, and she fell like one dead, by the riverside.

"O Psyche, Psyche," cried Cupid, coming again to the rescue; almost again, by the same foolish curiosity, have you lost your chance for happiness; but rouse yourself, and speed away to Venus with the box; already she waits, impatient, for it."

And then Cupid, spreading his wings, flew upward into the presence of Jupiter, told him the whole long story, and begged him to allow forgiveness to be carried to Psyche. And more than that, he begged that she might even be brought to Olympus and be made immortal.

Jupiter looked kindly upon the fair-faced Cupid and smiled. "Carry to her this cup," he said, "and bid her drink. Then shall she be immortal, and shall come to dwell in peace forever upon Olympus, where the jealousy of no goddess in the land or sea or in the heavens shall separate her from her faithful Cupid."

Heracles

Heracles was not one of the immortal gods, like Hermes or Pan. He was the son of a Greek king, and only became immortal because of his great deeds while living upon the earth. From his babyhood Heracles was much stronger and braver than his comrades, and as he grew to be a youth he became the wonder of his father's city. He was not always thoughtful, however, in the use of his great power over others; and sometimes he used all the strength of his powerful body without thinking at all what would be the result.

As Heracles was a prince, he was taught all there was to be learned in those days. He had masters for all his studies, and even had a music-teacher who was to teach him to play upon the lyre. One day, as the teacher was giving Heracles his lesson, he was obliged to correct him for mistakes that he had made. This made Heracles very angry, and without thinking what he was doing he struck his teacher with the instrument upon which he had been playing.

His blow was so sudden and fierce that the man fell dead, and then Heracles wished that he had not grown so strong. Of course his father, the king, was very angry

at what he had done. He said, that, as Heracles could not control his temper and keep from harming other people, he had no longer any right to be a prince. So he sent him away from his palace to a lonely mountain to be a shepherd there.

Heracles did not like this tame and quiet life, where he had only the sheep for companions. After trying it for a while, he went to the oracle at Delphi to ask if there was not some other way in which he could make up for his thoughtless deed. The oracle showed him such a way; but it was so difficult that no one would even think of trying it, unless he was very strong and very brave. This was to perform twelve of the hardest tasks that could be imagined. Heracles was so sure of his strength and courage that he began them with a light heart, and thought that he would soon accomplish all that was asked of him. But he found these labors much more difficult than he had thought they would be, and it was twelve long years before the last was done.

As his first task, Heracles was asked to kill a fierce lion that lived on a lonely mountain and was a terror to all the country round about. He did this without a weapon of any kind, by hunting it to its den, and then strangling it in his arms. He took the skin from this lion, and wore it around him as a garment, and cut a great club, which he carried in his hand. So you will see

him in almost all of the pictures and statues that were made of him.

The next task of Heracles was to kill a great water-snake called the hydra. This snake had ten heads, one of which was immortal; and he found that this task was not so simple a thing as crushing the lion to death in his arms. As he cut off each head, two more immediately grew where the one had been, and he was worse off than before. But he finally discovered a way to destroy the snake by burning off the heads instead of cutting them, and at last he was ready to begin his third task.

This was not to kill a dreadful beast, but to do something much more difficult. He was to bring a wild boar alive from the place where it lived in the depths of the forest to a certain city. He succeeded in doing this as he had done the first two tasks; and he walked into the town dragging the great beast behind him, to the terror of all the people. The king was so frightened that he rushed away, and hid in an underground hut in the forest. It was only when Heracles had turned the animal loose, and it had disappeared from the city, that he came back. And then he ordered Heracles to be very careful not to bring any more proofs of his bravery into the town, but thereafter to show them outside the city walls.

His fourth task was to capture a deer belonging to Artemis, and bring it also home alive. This deer had horns of gold and hoofs of brass, and was the swiftest animal of its kind. Heracles followed it for a whole year over plain, mountain, and valley, through winter and summer. Each time he neared it, it would bound away, and he could never quite catch it. At last he wounded it with an arrow, and so caught it, and carried it on his shoulders to his city.

Heracles continued to do successfully all that was asked of him. One of his tasks was to drive away and destroy great birds which fed on human flesh, and which could shoot out their feathers like arrows at those who came near them. Another was to get a girdle which the god Ares had given to the Queen of the Amazons. Another was to cleanse in a day a filthy stable where three thousand cattle were kept; this he did by turning a river through it, and letting it wash the filth away. Another was to capture a mad bull which belonged to Poseidon. And another was to bind and bring home from a distant country a herd of fierce horses which fed on human flesh.

But the most wonderful of all his labors were the two which he performed last. These were to find and carry home the apples of the Hesperides, and to bring the three-headed dog Cerberus up from the underworld. Heracles had no idea where to find the

apples of the Hesperides, and went up and down the world asking where he should go for them. At last one of the sea-gods told him that he must look for them on some islands far to the west. So he traveled toward the setting sun until he came to where the god Atlas stood holding the blue heavens above the earth upon his shoulders. Here Heracles found that he could go no farther, so he persuaded Atlas to go get the apples for him while he held the heavens in his absence.

Atlas readily agreed, and slipped his heavy burden upon the shoulders of Heracles. Atlas obtained the apples; but he enjoyed the freedom from his burden so much, that, when he came back with them, he proposed to take the apples the remainder of the way home, and leave Heracles to do his work for him. But Heracles had no idea of allowing this. He did not wish to spend the rest of his days standing still under a great burden while Atlas roamed free and happy about the world. So he pretended that he was willing that Atlas should do as he wished, but asked, as a favor, that Atlas would hold the heavens for him a moment while he fitted a cushion to his back, so that he might support the burden more comfortably. Then, when Atlas had kindly taken the burden again, he snatched the apples and hurried away.

The last labor of Heracles was the most terrible one. He was sent to the underworld, where gloomy

Hades reigned, to get the dog Cerberus. The journey was so difficult that Hermes and Athena were obliged to go with him and guard him on the way. Hades gave him permission to take the dog if he could do it without club or weapon; and Heracles seized him in his arms, and carried him so to the upper world. This deed was so wonderful that he might never have done anything more all his life long, and still have been the greatest of all heroes. But as long as he lived he continued to wander over the earth and meet with great adventures. When he died at last, he was so beloved by the gods that he was taken to Mount Olympus and made immortal, instead of being sent to the dark underground world of the dead.

The Bee Man of Arcadia

Strange things were happening in a field of the beautiful country called Arcadia. A youth who wore a wreath of green laurel leaves on his dark hair sat on a rock and held a lyre in his hands from whose strings he drew sweet music. And as he played a wolf, who had been the terror of the shepherds for many leagues around, came out of the woods and lay down like a great dog at the feet of the youth. Next, the nearby olive trees bent their heads to listen and then moved toward him until they stood in a circle at his feet. Then the hard rock on which the musician rested covered itself with soft green verdure and bluebells and violets began to lift their heads, growing out of its age-old stones.

This was what always happened when Orpheus, the son of Apollo, played the lyre that his father had given him and had taught him to use. Nothing could withstand the charm of his music. Not only the farmers and shepherds, the nymphs and fauns of Arcadian woods and fields were softened and drawn by his tunes, but the wild beasts as well laid by their fierceness and stood, entranced, at his strains.

Orpheus touched his lyre again and played an even lovelier song. And out of the forest glided the nymph, Eurydice, taking her place near Orpheus. His music had won her devotion and Hymen, the god of marriage, had made the two very happy. Their deepest wish was that they might never be separated.

The whole of Arcadia was charmed by Orpheus' lute. No, there was just one person in that beautiful country who positively disliked music, and that was the bee-man, Aristaeus. In fact, Aristaeus could not see the value of anything beautiful, the statues and vases in the temple of Apollo, the tapestries the weavers decorated with so many soft colors, the tints of the wild flowers, or the arch of the rainbow in the sky after a shower. This bee-man could find no interest in anything except his combs of yellow honey, their number, and how many gold coins he would be paid for them. Not only did Aristaeus dislike beautiful things, but he did not want others to enjoy them. A cross old Arcadian, was he not?

He was feeling particularly disagreeable on the morning when Orpheus began playing his lute near his farm. And when Eurydice, whom Orpheus so loved, approached him to ask for a comb of his delicious honey for dinner for the two, Aristaeus entirely lost his temper. He not only refused the nymph, which no one but a very stingy person could have done, for she

smiled at him so winningly and asked for it so politely; but he chased Eurydice off his farm.

No one had treated Eurydice so rudely in all her life before. Even Pan had gathered flowers for her to twine into garlands and had refrained from teasing her as he did almost all the other nymphs. And here she was, a long distance from Orpheus and pursued by an ugly tempered country man! Eurydice ran like the wind, the bee-man coming fast behind her. She was much fleeter than he and would have reached the woods safely, but she stepped suddenly on a snake that she had not seen as it lay coiled up in the grass. The snake stung Eurydice's bare feet and she dropped down on the ground.

"It serves her right!" the bee-man said, not going to see how badly she was hurt. And with that he went back to his bees.

Aristaeus was the very first bee-man, the myths tell us. When the gods made the little creatures of the earth they made also the honey bees and taught them how to build themselves homes in hollow trees or holes in the rocks, to find the nectar in the flowers, and make from it their thick, golden honey. Aristaeus was the son of the water-nymph Cyrene, and he came to Arcadia with the remembrance of the music of the waters and the brightness of the sun in his heart, but when he discovered how to attract the bees to his farm and take

their honey away from them and sell it, he forgot everything except his business. That was when he began to dislike Orpheus and to become blind to the fair country in which he lived.

"Three hives are swarming today," the bee-man thought as he came home. "I ought to be able to get a good sum for the honey." Then, as he reached the orchard where his hives were placed on the wall, he looked about him in amazement. Hives, bees, all were gone. Not a buzz, a sting, or a single drop of honey was left!

Aristaeus looked throughout the entire countryside for his bees for days, but he could not find a single one. At last he gave up the search and did what a good many boys and girls would be apt to do in the same emergency. He went to ask the advice of his mother, the sea-nymph Cyrene.

He went to the edge of the river where he knew she lived and called her.

"O mother, the pride of my life is taken away from me. I have lost my precious bees. My care and skill have availed me nothing. Can you turn from me this blow of misfortune?"

His mother heard these complaints as she sat in her palace at the bottom of the river with her attendant nymphs around her. They were busy spinning and

weaving beautiful designs in water weeds and painting pebbles while another told stories to amuse the rest. But the sad voice of the bee-man interrupted them and one put her head above the water. Seeing Aristaeus, she returned and told his mother, who ordered that he be brought down to her.

At the command of Cyrene, the river opened itself and let him pass through, as it stood curled like a mountain on either side. The bee-man descended to the place where the fountains of the great rivers lie. He saw the enormous rock beds of the waters and was almost deafened by their roar as he saw them hurrying off in all their different directions to water the face of the earth. Then Aristaeus came to his mother's palace of shells and stone and he was taken to her apartment where he told her his troubles.

Cyrene, being a dweller of the waters which are the fountain of life, was very wise. She understood at once that her son had made a mistake in not seeing that it was possible to combine beauty and usefulness. Arcadia needed bees, but it needed Orpheus and his lute also, and the gods had punished the bee-man for his sordidness. Still, he was her son and Cyrene decided to try and help Aristaeus out of his difficulty.

"You must go to old Proteus, who is the herdsman of Neptune's sea-calves," Cyrene said. "He can tell you, my son, how to get back your bees, for he is a great

prophet. You will have to force him to help you, however. If you are able to seize him, chain him at once; he will answer your questions in order to be released. I will conduct you to the cave where he comes at noon to take his nap. Then you can easily secure him, but when he finds himself in chains he will cause you a great deal of trouble. He will make a noise like the crackling of flames so as to frighten you into loosing your hold on the chain. Or he may become a wild boar, a fierce tiger, a lion with ravenous jaws or a devouring dragon. But you have only to keep Proteus fast bound and when he finds all his arts to be of no avail he will return to his natural shape and obey your commands."

So Cyrene led Aristaeus to the cave by the sea and showed him where to hide behind a rock while she, herself, arose and took her place behind the clouds. Promptly at noon old Proteus, covered with dripping green weeds, issued from the water followed by a herd of sea calves who spread themselves out on the shore. The herdsman of the sea counted them, sat down on the floor of the cave, and then in a very short time had stretched himself out, fast asleep. Aristaeus waited until he was snoring and then he bound him with a heavy chain he had brought for the purpose.

When Proteus awoke and found himself captured, he struggled like a wild animal at bay. Next, he turned

to flame and then, in succession to many terrible beasts, but Aristaeus never once let go of the chain that secured him. At last he returned to his true form and spoke angrily to Aristaeus.

"Who are you, who boldly invades my domain and what do you want?" Proteus demanded.

"You know already," the bee-man replied, "for you have the powers of a prophet and nothing is hidden from you. I have lost my bees, and I want to have them returned to me."

At these words, the prophet fixed his eyes on Aristaeus with a piercing look.

"Your trouble is the just reward sent you by the gods because you killed Eurydice," he said. "To avenge her death, her companion nymphs sent this destruction to your bees."

"I killed Eurydice?" Aristaeus asked in amazement. "Does she no longer listen to the music of Orpheus?"

"Yes, but not in Arcadia," Proteus explained. "When she was stung by the viper, she was obliged to make her way alone to the dark realm of Pluto. Orpheus sang his grief to all who breathed the upper air, both gods and men, and then he started out to search for Eurydice. He passed through the crowd of ghosts and entered the realm beyond the dark river Styx. There, in front of the throne of Pluto, he sang of his longing that

Eurydice might be restored to him, until the cheeks of even the Fates were wet with tears.

"Pluto himself gave way to Orpheus' music and called Eurydice. She came to Orpheus, limping on her wounded foot. They roam the happy fields of the gods together now, he leading sometimes and sometimes she. And Jupiter has placed Orpheus' lyre among the stars."

As Proteus finished telling his story, the penitent Aristaeus fell on the ground at his feet.

"What can I do to appease the anger of the gods for my wickedness?" he asked.

"You may use your skill to build temples to the two in the country of Arcadia which they so loved," Proteus said. "Take your way home. Forget your own gains for a while and gather stones to fit together for the altars."

So the bee-man did this, and he discovered that he came to enjoy the work very much. He took pleasure in cutting and polishing the stones until they were as beautiful as those of any temple in Greece. As he worked in the grove that he had selected for his building he often thought that he detected the music of Orpheus' lyre as the birds sang, and the streams rippled, and the wind blew through the leaves. He found it very sweet indeed.

One day, shortly after his beautiful altars were built, Aristaeus found a wonder. It was spring, when the nearby orchards were white and sweet with blossoms, and there were all his honey bees returned, and busily starting their hives under the shadow of the temple of Eurydice.

Orpheus and Eurydice

Orpheus was the son of the god Apollo; and Apollo, proud of his beautiful son, gave him his own mellow-stringed lyre, and taught him to play so sweetly upon it, that not only men and women, but even the beasts of the field stopped to listen; and, listening, forgot their wicked, savage passions and became, one and all, gentle and loving as the lambs on the sunny hillside. Even the trees quivered and sighed, and the rocks melted before his tender strains.

When Orpheus became a man, he won with his sweet music the beautiful Eurydice for his wife; but alas, happy though they were, they were subject to an evil fate, and soon their joy was at an end. For one day, when Eurydice was wandering with her nymphs in the fields, she stepped upon a poisonous snake which turned and bit her, poisoning her so that she died from the cruel wound.

Poor Orpheus! For a time he had no heart to touch the lyre, and all the earth was sad and still. But one day he went out into the streets with it in his hand, and sang his grief out into the summer air.

Brave men wept great tears of sympathy, so tender and so touching was his music, and even the gods on Mt. Olympus looked softly down upon him.

"Go thou down into Hades," said Jupiter to Orpheus, "and thou shalt find thy wife; bring her back with thee up into the light of day."

Gladly Orpheus obeyed. Down through the great cave, across the black river, Styx, into the abode of the shades, he boldly made his way, playing sweet music as he went; and there, in the midst of the great hosts that had left the earth, he saw his own Eurydice, most beautiful of them all.

"O Pluto," he sang; "give back to me my Eurydice, stolen from me and from the upper world while youth and beauty and happiness were yet full upon her." And so tender was his voice, so soft the tones of his lyre, that the shades gathered close around him; and even Pluto's stern heart was moved to tears. Afar off, white and shining, stood Eurydice, her arms stretched out towards him, and the tears pouring down her face.

"Take her, take her," said Pluto; "but one command you must obey. As you go out from this realm of mine, playing sweet music as you go, — music that shall draw Eurydice forth, following in the wake of its melody, not once must you look back, over-eager or doubting my word with regard to her. If this command you disobey,

she is lost indeed to you until such time as you yourself shall come to dwell among us forever."

With heart bounding with joy, Orpheus, with one radiant look of joy at Eurydice, raised his lyre, and turned his steps again towards the upper world.

On, on, through the great masses of shades he hastened, making most joyous music as he passed. Out into the darkness, even down to the River Styx, he had made his way. But alas, alas, in his love for Eurydice, and in his fear lest she should not have followed, he forgot the command of Pluto and turned his eager face to look upon her.

Poor Orpheus! poor Eurydice! There stood the stern Pluto, his deep gaze full upon the twain. And when Orpheus turned, Pluto raised his sceptre; his deep voice rolled out into the darkness and Eurydice was lost again to her brave husband who had dared so much for her.

But the ferryman cared little for the grief that now fell upon the loving youth. Quickly and silently he rowed him across the Styx, and left him there upon the farther bank.

For many and many a day Orpheus sat by the riverside, his broken lyre in his hand, and often in the deep darkness of the night he would play music so sad and tender, so full of the wail of a broken heart, that

even the stars grew dim and the trees sighed in sympathy for him.

The Golden Fleece

I.

The two little children of the king of Thessaly were playing in the broad sunny fields. They were not very happy children, for their mother had been sent away into a distant land, and little care had they now that she was gone.

The poor mother, fearing that her children would fare ill indeed with no one but their cruel father to look after them, prayed to the good Minerva to save them from their sad fate.

Minerva, always glad to lend her aid and to comfort the suffering, promised that she would find the children, and rescue them if she found them illy used.

It was on the morning of the great feast day that she found them; they were out in the sunny fields at play, but hungry and neglected.

"Poor children!" said Minerva; and instantly there appeared in the field close by a young sheep, upon whose back a golden fleece shone like the sunlight. It seemed a most playful sheep, for it ran towards the children, and leaped and frolicked with them as if inviting them to play.

"Let's climb upon its back, sister Helle," said the boy Phrixos. "Perhaps the sheep will carry us across the fields."

"Dear sheep!" said Helle, patting its wooly head; and then the children climbed upon its back, Phrixos in front and Helle clinging close to him behind.

Now this was just what the sheep or Minerva, we should say, since it was she in disguise – wanted the children to do; for away in a far country there was a good king to whom Minerva meant to take the children.

"On, on the sheep sped. It was great fun, the children thought; but by and by they reached a great body of water. It was like an ocean, so the children thought, and poor little Helle began to tremble with fear.

" Hold tight!" cried Phrixos; but Helle was so little and was so frightened she could not hold; and before the sheep had reached the opposite shore the child lay in the bottom of the sea, and many a sea nymph was bending over her in pity that so beautiful a child should have come to so sad an end.

Poor Phrixos, clinging with all his might to the shining wool, called upon the gods to save him from Helle's fate; and long before the sun had risen in the

far-off east again, the sheep had borne the lad safely even into the very palace of the good king.

"What have we here?" cried the king, amazed at the sudden appearance of his strange guests.

Poor little Phrixos, trembling with fright, burst into tears. "Don't cry, little boy," said the king kindly. "Come to me and tell me whence you came, poor child."

Then Phrixos told his wonderful story, and the kind king, moved to tears of pity, gathered the little fellow up in his arms and bade him think no more about the past, but to take up his home in the new kingdom into which he had been borne. "I have no son of my own, Phrixos," said the king, "and you shall dwell with me here in our golden palace; you shall be as my own son, and the people shall call you Prince. By and by you will be a great man king, perhaps, and shall be famed throughout the land."

Little Phrixos was comforted by the good king's kind words, and could he but have had his little sister with him again, would have been very happy.

The golden fleece, the king ordered to be cut from the sheep and to be hung in a grand hall in the palace, where every one, in all the years to come, might see it and be reminded of the wonderful manner in which

the little prince had been brought into the palace of the king.

II.

The golden fleece, so precious did it seem in the sight of the king, was guarded by a huge dragon that slept neither day nor night, so eager was it lest an opportunity for devouring a hero should be lost to it.

Now, there were kings in the country who envied the possessor of this golden fleece his good fortune, and every year some daring youth, desirous of fame, would attempt to overcome this dragon and carry away the golden fleece. But alas for the youths! A hundred had already found themselves helpless before the terrible creature, and never one of them had ever returned to tell even the story of his adventure.

But the Fates had decreed that the fleece should be carried away, nevertheless; and at last a youth grew up, whose mission it was to overcome the dragon.

The youth's name was Jason; and when he came for the first time into the presence of King Pelias, the king turned pale and nearly fainted with terror.

" What is it? " asked Jason, innocently.

"One sandal! one sandal!" groaned the courtiers, looking down at his feet.

"Yes; I lost the other in crossing the river," said Jason.

"But there is a prophecy," said the people, "that our king shall be dethroned by a one-sandalled man."

" Never mind," said Jason, laughing; "I have no wish to dethrone your king, and have not come for any such purpose. I am only a youth just from school, where I have been taught for years by the good Centaur Chiron. He has taught me to be brave, but he has not taught me to take from kings their kingdoms."

These were fair words, and the people easily accepted them. The king, however, was doubtful. "I will rid myself of this youth," he said to himself; "I shall be far safer."

So one day he called Jason into his presence and said to him, " You are a brave youth. No youth so brave has ever come into our country. Surely so brave a youth as you must long for adventure."

"I do," answered Jason.

"Have you heard of the golden fleece?" asked the king.

"I have," answered Jason. "Do you will that I go to seek it?"

"I do will so," was the king's brief reply. Jason caught the wicked gleam in the king's eye, but made no reply, only bowed low before the throne. For this was the

manner, in those days, with which to receive and accept a royal command.

"You shall have my throne and my sceptre;" said the king most foolishly, hardly knowing what he said, in his wild delight that he was to be free from the dangerous youth; for he knew — or thought he knew — that no youth, however brave, could overcome this dreadful dragon, whose fiery breath, even when afar off, was like a scorching blast.

So Jason went out from the king; and – calling many brave youths to join him, they built a wonderful vessel and named it the Argo.

Upon its prow was fastened a beautiful figure, carved from the branches of the Talking Oak, a magic tree whose prophecies were never known to fail. The figure still held in its carved beauty the power to speak, and many a goodly warning did it grant the brave youth, Jason.

At last the ship was finished; the carved image was in place, and at the oars and upon the decks sat the bravest company of youths that Greece could gather. Proud indeed was Jason of his company, and sure in his heart was he of success and glory.

It was a long voyage; but the time passed most happily, and in due time the vessel grated upon the shores of the kingdom the youths were seeking.

Fancy the surprise of the possessor of the golden fleece when, an hour later, there came into his presence a handsome, daring youth who said, "I have come, good king, for the golden fleece."

Records do not tell us what the king said. Perhaps he was so amazed he could say nothing; but we know that Jason succeeded in his undertaking, and in due time sped back to his ship, sprang on board, and, seizing an oar, whispered, "Hurry, hurry, good youths, hurry!"

It had been a terrible task and none but the bravest of youths would have had the courage to try. For first there had been the brazen bulls, which he must tame and make to draw the plow — terrible creatures were they with their breath of belching fire. Then must he plant the plowed furrows with the teeth of the dragon, even as Cadmus had done so long ago. From these teeth armed soldiers had sprung up, whole armies of them, every one of which must be slain before the sun went down.

But in both tasks Jason had succeeded; and then, because she admired the valor of the youth, the daughter of the king had pitied the sad fate that must befall him should he approach the dragon-guarded fleece, and had come to his aid.

"Here," said she, "is a vial of magic liquid. Go bravely into the presence of the dragon; and when he

opens his great jaws to devour you, throw this into his cavernous mouth. Even he cannot withstand its magic. He will at once roll over, lash his great tail, and fill the air for miles around with his terrible roar."

Thus, then, did the youth succeed in his daring venture, and bear away the golden fleece.

"You promised me your kingdom," said Jason to old King Pelias, when he had appeared with the shining mass of wool. The old king scowled and clenched his sceptre in his hands. Never had he dreamed the youth would succeed; but here he stood, before the throne, claiming his reward.

"Yes, yes, you promised!" shouted the courtiers, who were proud of the brave youth and not overfond of the old king.

Then the king came down from his throne and placed his sceptre in the hands of Jason. "Useless, useless is it," said he, "to contend against the will of the Fates. What they decree, that thing shall be in spite of kings or people."

Baucis and Philemon

On a beautiful hillside in Greece, and looking down upon a valley where the sunset loves to linger, and where the waters of the river wind like a band of silver among the tall grass, there stands a strong, far-spreading oak; and close by its side, even within the shadow of its great leaves and beneath the protection of its strong arms, stands a graceful linden, — both tall and beautiful, the pride of the peaceful valley and the glory of the sunny hillside.

But there was a time when these two trees were not upon the hillside, nor were the river and the lakes to be seen in the valley below. Upon the hillside was one small hut, in which dwelt good old Baucis and Philemon; and in the valley below was a city where many people dwelt, people of great wealth, but none of them with hearts as kind and good as those of Baucis and Philemon.

And it came about that one day Jupiter and Mercury came into the valley at nightfall, weary with their long journey, their clothes dusty, their sandals travel-worn and ragged.

In the city they halted at many a door, begging for food and shelter, but were driven away from each, often with words rude and cruel.

" Who dwells in the old hut on the hillside?" asked Jupiter of a youth in the city gateway.

"Old Baucis and Philemon," answered the youth "miserable beggars like yourself." And the youth laughed uproariously, thinking he had made an answer both witty and wise.

"Let us climb the hill," said Jupiter to Mercury; and turning, the two gods left the city.

It was nearly nightfall when the two reached the little hut; but already Baucis had come out to meet them, and good Philemon stood in the doorway ready to bid the strangers welcome.

"Enter, travelers," said Baucis; "our home is simple, but we will gladly share with thee all that we have."

"And we will spread the table and pour sweet milk for thee; for surely thou must be hungry."

Gladly the travelers entered the little door and seated themselves before the fire, while Baucis and Philemon bustled about, preparing the simple supper.

"I am afraid the milk will seem to you little," said Baucis, pouring it into the great earthern bowls.

"Had we known you were coming we would gladly have saved more from our own suppers," added Philemon.

"I am sure there is enough and to spare," said Jupiter, emptying his bowl almost at one swallow; for he was very hungry and thirsty.

"It is the very best milk I ever drank," said Mercury; and he, too, emptied his bowl at a swallow.

Philemon and Baucis looked at one another. There was only a tiny cup of milk left in the pitcher, they were sure.

"Once more fill our bowls, good people," said Jupiter.

Baucis lifted the pitcher. "I am afraid " he began; but behold, the pitcher was full to the brim! With trembling hand he poured it into the bowls, while Philemon looked on amazed.

Again the travelers drained their cups; and again they asked for more. Trembling, Philemon this time lifted the pitcher. "If we had known" she began; but again the pitcher was full and foaming to the brim.

Hardly could Philemon fill the bowls, so overcome was she by the miracle before her eyes.

"O travelers," the good old Baucis said, "whoever thou art, forgive us that we should have dared offer our humble hospitality to such as we now see thee to be.

Surely thou shouldst have been received in the grand houses in the city below."

"Speak not to me of that inhospitable city," answered Jupiter, his brow growing black at the thought. "But come, let us go out upon the hillside, and there look down upon the valley."

Together the little company went forth. The sun's last rays lay upon the great hills beyond; and in the valley below — what a change had taken place! — not a house was there to be seen. No cattle were grazing in the fields and meadows; no children were at play along the riverside. There was not a sign of life as far as the eye could reach; and where the village had so recently raised its marble columns, lay a broad lake, peaceful and still, and shining like polished gold in the rich sunset light.

And the little hut of Baucis and Philemon — that, too, had disappeared; and in its place stood a temple of pure white stone, whose dome rose high above the clouds.

"And now, good Baucis and Philemon," said Jupiter, "tell me what of all things in the earth you would that I should give to thee; for kindly have we been received into thy house, and whatever thou askest, that shall be given thee."

Philemon and Baucis looked at the white temple, whose dome blazed like gold in the sunset light. "Surely," said they, "thou canst be no other than Jupiter himself; let us, then, dedicate this temple to thee, and let us henceforth serve thee here as thy priests and as guardians of thy temple. And when we die, O Jupiter, let us die together. That is all we ask; for with these gifts we shall be content forever."

Jupiter, well pleased, blessed the two old people, and promised them their gifts; adding to them, however, perfect health and strength and immortal life.

For a long, long time Baucis and Philemon dwelt within the temple, and never were the sacred rites forgotten, nor were the rarest offerings spared from the altar.

And one evening, when they had grown very, very old, they stood before the great doorway of the temple, looking down upon the lake whose waters never failed.

Suddenly a change fell upon them. Above the heads of each great branches spread, and the leaves rustled against each other. In an instant strong roots struck down into the ground, and the bodies of the two good people were like the form of the trunks of trees. And to this day they stand upon the hillside, a stout oak and a tall, graceful linden; for in this beautiful way did Jupiter bestow upon the kind Baucis and Philemon the gift of immortality.

Old Greek Folk Stories Told Anew

Josephine Peabody

Once upon a time, men made friends with the Earth. They listened to all that woods and waters might say; their eyes were keen to see wonders in silent country places and in the living creatures that had not learned to be afraid. To this wise world outside the people took their joy and sorrow; and because they loved the Earth, she answered them.

It was not strange that Pan himself sometimes brought home a shepherd's stray lamb. It was not strange, if one broke the branches of a tree, that some fair life within wept at the hurt. Even now, the Earth is glad with us in springtime, and we grieve for her when the leaves go. But in the old days there was a closer union, clearer speech between men and all other creatures. Earth and the stars about her.

Out of the life that they lived together, there have come down to us these wonderful tales; and, whether they be told well or ill, they are too good to be forgotten.

The Wood-Folk

Pan led a merrier life than all the other gods together. He was beloved alike by shepherds and countrymen, and by the fauns and satyrs, birds and beasts, of his own kingdom. The care of flocks and herds was his, and for home he had all the world of woods and waters; he was lord of everything out-of-doors! Yet he felt the burden of it no more than he felt the shadow of a leaf when he danced, but spent the days in laughter and music among his fellows. Like him, the fauns and satyrs had furry, pointed ears, and little horns that sprouted above their brows; in fact, they were all enough like wild creatures to seem no strangers to anything untamed. They slept in the sun, piped in the shade, and lived on wild grapes and the nuts that every squirrel was ready to share with them.

The woods were never lonely. A man might wander away into those solitudes and think himself friendless; but here and there a river knew, and a tree could tell, a story of its own. Beautiful creatures they were, that for one reason or another had left off human shape. Some had been transformed against their will, that they might do no more harm to their fellow-men. Some were changed through the pity of the gods, that they

might share the simple life of Pan, mindless of mortal cares, glad in rain and sunshine, and always close to the heart of the Earth.

There was Dryope, for instance, the lotus-tree.

Once a careless, happy woman, walking among the trees with her sister Iole and her own baby, she had broken a lotus that held a live nymph hidden, and blood dripped from the wounded plant. Too late, Dryope saw her heedlessness; and there her steps had taken root, and there she had said good-by to her child, and prayed Iole to bring him sometimes to play beneath her shadow. Poor mother-tree! Perhaps she took comfort with the birds and gave a kindly shelter to some nest.

There, too, was Echo, once a wood-nymph who angered the goddess Juno with her waste of words, and was compelled now to wait till others spoke, and then to say nothing but their last word, like any mocking-bird. One day she saw and loved the youth Narcissus, who was searching the woods for his hunting companions. "Come hither!" he called, and Echo cried "Hither!" eager to speak at last. "Here am I, — come!" he repeated, looking about for the voice. "I come," said Echo, and she stood before him. But the youth, angry at such mimicry, only stared at her and hastened away. From that time she faded to a voice, and to this day she lurks hidden and silent till you call.

But Narcissus himself was destined to fall in love with a shadow. For, leaning over the edge of a brook one day, he saw his own beautiful face looking up at him like a water-nymph. He leaned nearer, and the face rose towards him, but when he touched the surface it was gone in a hundred ripples. Day after day he besought the lovely creature to have pity and to speak; but it mocked him with his own tears and smiles, and he forgot all else, until he changed into a flower that leans over to see its image in the pool.

There, too, was the sunflower Clytie, once a maiden who thought nothing so beautiful as the sun-god Phoebus Apollo. All the day long she used to look after him as he journeyed across the heavens in his golden chariot, until she came to be a fair rooted plant that ever turns its head to watch the sun.

Many like were there. Daphne the laurel, Hyacinthus (once a beautiful youth, slain by mischance), who lives and renews his bloom as a flower, — these and a hundred others. The very weeds were friendly. ...

But there were wise, immortal voices in certain caves and trees. Men called them Oracles; for here the gods spoke in answer to the prayers of folk in sorrow or bewilderment. Sometimes they built a temple around such a befriending voice, and kings would journey far to hear it speak.

As for Pan, only one grief had he, and in the end a glad thing came of it.

One day, when he was loitering in Arcadia, he saw the beautiful wood-nymph Syrinx. She was hastening to join Diana at the chase, and she herself was as swift and lovely as any bright bird that one longs to capture. So Pan thought, and he hurried after to tell her. But Syrinx turned, caught one glimpse of the god's shaggy locks and bright eyes, and the two little horns on his head (he was much like a wild thing, at a look), and she sprang away down the path in terror.

Begging her to listen, Pan followed; and Syrinx, more and more frightened by the patter of his hoofs, never heeded him, but went as fast as light till she came to the brink of the river. Only then she paused, praying her friends, the water-nymphs, for some way of escape. The gentle, bewildered creatures, looking up through the water, could think of but one device.

Just as the god overtook Syrinx and stretched out his arms to her, she vanished like a mist, and he found himself grasping a cluster of tall reeds. Poor Pan!

The breeze that sighed whenever he did – and oftener–shook the reeds and made a sweet little sound, — a sudden music. Pan heard it, half consoled.

"Is it your voice Syrinx?" he said. "Shall we sing together?"

He bound a number of the reeds side by side; to this day, shepherds know how. He blew across the hollow pipes and they made music!

The Judgment of Midas

Pan came at length to be such a wonderful piper with his syrinx (for so he named his flute) that he challenged Apollo to make better music if he could. Now the sun-god was also the greatest of divine musicians, and he resolved to punish the vanity of the country-god, and so consented to the test. For judge they chose the mountain Tmolus, since no one is so old and wise as the hills. And, since Tmolus could not leave his home, to him went Pan and Apollo, each with his followers, oreads and dryads, fauns, satyrs, and centaurs.

Among the worshippers of Pan was a certain Midas, who had a strange story. Once a king of great wealth, he had chanced to befriend Dionysus, god of the vine; and when he was asked to choose some good gift in return, he prayed that everything he touched might be turned into gold. Dionysus smiled a little when he heard this foolish prayer, but he granted it. Within two days. King Midas learned the secret of that smile, and begged the god to take away the gift that was a curse. He had touched everything that belonged to him, and little joy did he have of his possessions! His palace was as yellow a home as a dandelion to a bee, but not half

so sweet. Row upon row of stiff golden trees stood in his garden; they no longer knew a breeze when they heard it. When he sat down to eat, his feast turned to treasure uneatable. He learned that a king may starve, and he came to see that gold cannot replace the live, warm gifts of the Earth.

Kindly Dionysus took back the charm, but from that day King Midas so hated gold that he chose to live far from luxury, among the woods and fields. Even here he was not to go free from misadventure.

Tmolus gave the word, and Pan uprose with his syrinx, and blew upon the reeds a melody so wild and yet so coaxing that the squirrels came, as if at a call, and the birds hopped down in rows. The trees swayed with a longing to dance, and the fauns looked at one another and laughed for joy. To their furry little ears, it was the sweetest music that could be.

But Tmolus bowed before Apollo, and the sun-god rose with his golden lyre in his hands. As he moved, light shook out of his radiant hair as raindrops were showered from the leaves. His trailing robes were purple, like the clouds that temper the glory of a sunset, so that one may look upon it. He touched the strings of his lyre, and all things were silent with joy. He made music, and the woods dreamed. The fauns and satyrs were quite still; and the wild creatures crouched, blinking, under a charm of light that they

could not understand. To hear such a music cease was like bidding farewell to father and mother.

With one accord they fell at the feet of Apollo, and Tmolus proclaimed the victory his. Only one voice disputed that award.

Midas refused to acknowledge Apollo lord of music, — perhaps because the looks of the god dazzled his eyes unpleasantly, and put him in mind of his foolish wish years before. For him there was no music in a golden lyre!

But Apollo would not leave such dull ears unpunished. At a word from him they grew long, pointed, furry, and able to turn this way and that (like a poplar leaf), — a plain warning to musicians. Midas had the ears of an donkey, for every one to see!

For a long time the poor man hid this oddity with such skill that we might never have heard of it. But one of his servants learned the secret, and suffered so much from keeping it to himself that he had to unburden his mind at last. Out into the meadows he went, hollowed a little place in the turf, whispered the strange news into it quite softly, and heaped the earth over again. Alas! a bed of reeds sprang up there before long, and whispered in turn to the grass-blades. Year after year they grew again, ever gossipping among themselves; and to this day, with every wind that sets them nodding

together, they murmur, laughing, "Midas has the ears of an donkey: Oh, hush, hush!"

Prometheus

In the early days of the universe, there was a great struggle for empire between Zeus and the Titans. The Titans, giant powers of heaven and earth, were for seizing whatever they wanted, with no more ado than a whirlwind. Prometheus, the wisest of all their race, long tried to persuade them that good counsel would avail more than violence; but they refused to listen. Then, seeing that such rulers would soon turn heaven and earth into chaos again, Prometheus left them to their own devices, and went over to Zeus, whom he aided so well that the Titans were utterly overthrown. Down into Tartarus they went, to live among the hidden fires of the earth; and there they spent a long term of bondage, muttering like storm, and shaking the roots of mountains. One of them was Enceladus, who lay bound under Ætna; and one, Atlas, was made to stand and bear up the weight of the sky on his giant shoulders.

Zeus was left King of gods and men. Like any young ruler, he was eager to work great changes with his new power. Among other plans, he proposed to destroy the race of men then living, and to replace it with some new order of creatures. Prometheus alone heard this

scheme with indignation. Not only did he plead for the life of man and save it, but ever after he spent his giant efforts to civilize the race, and to endow it with a wit near to that of gods.

In the Golden Age, men had lived free of care. They took no heed of daily wants, since Zeus gave them all things needful, and the earth brought forth fruitage and harvest without asking the toil of husbandmen. If mortals were light of heart, however, their minds were empty of great enterprise. They did not know how to build or plant or weave; their thoughts never flew far, and they had no wish to cross the sea.

But Prometheus loved earthly folk, and thought that they had been children long enough. He was a mighty workman, with the whole world for a workshop; and little by little he taught men knowledge that is wonderful to know, so that they grew out of their childhood, and began to take thought for themselves. Some people even say that he knew how to make men, — as we make shapes out of clay — and set their five wits going. However that may be, he was certainly a cunning workman. He taught men first to build huts out of clay, and to thatch roofs with straw. He showed them how to make bricks and hew marble. He taught them numbers and letters, the signs of the seasons, and the coming and going of the stars. He showed them how to use for their healing the simple

herbs that once had no care save to grow and be fragrant. He taught them how to till the fields; how to tame the beasts, and set them also to work; how to build ships that ride the water, and to put wings upon them that they may go faster, like birds.

With every new gift, men desired more and more. They set out to see unknown lands, and their ambitions grew with their knowledge. They were like a race of poor gods gifted with dreams of great glory and the power to fashion marvellous things; and, though they had no endless youth to spend, the gods were troubled.

Last of all, Prometheus went up secretly to heaven after the treasure of the immortals. He lighted a reed at the flame of the sun, and brought down the holy fire which is dearest to the gods. For with the aid of fire all things are possible, all arts are perfected.

This was his greatest gift to man, but it was a theft from the immortal gods, and Zeus would endure no more. He could not take back the secret of fire; but he had Prometheus chained to a lofty crag in the Caucasus, where every day a vulture came to prey upon his body, and at night the wound would heal, so that it was ever to suffer again. It was a bitter penalty for so noble-hearted a rebel, and as time went by, and Zeus remembered his bygone services, he would have made peace once more. He only waited till Prometheus

should bow his stubborn spirit, but this the son of Titans would not do. Haughty as rock beneath his daily torment, believing that he suffered for the good of mankind, he endured for years.

One secret hardened his spirit. He was sure that the empire of Zeus must fall some day, since he knew of a danger that threatened it. For there was a certain beautiful sea-nymph, Thetis, whom Zeus desired for his wife. (This was before his marriage to Queen Juno.) Prometheus alone knew that Thetis was destined to have a son who should be far greater than his father. If she married some mortal, then, the prophecy was not so wonderful; but if she were to marry the King of gods and men, and her son should be greater than he, there could be no safety for the kingdom. This knowledge Prometheus kept securely hidden; but he ever defied Zeus, and vexed him with dark sayings about a danger that threatened his sovereignty. No torment could wring the secret from him. Year after year, lashed by the storms and scorched by the heat of the sun, he hung in chains and the vulture tore his vitals, while the young Oceanides wept at his feet, and men sorrowed over the doom of their protector.

At last that earlier enmity between the gods and the Titans came to an end. The banished rebels were set free from Tartarus, and they themselves came and

besought their brother, Prometheus, to hear the terms of Zeus. For the King of gods and men had promised to pardon his enemy, if he would only reveal this one troublous secret.

In all heaven and earth there was but one thing that marred the new harmony, — this long struggle between Zeus and Prometheus; and the Titan relented. He spoke the prophecy, warned Zeus not to marry Thetis, and the two were reconciled. The hero Heracles (himself an earthly son of Zeus) slew the vulture and set Prometheus free.

But it was still needful that a life should be given to expiate that ancient sin, — the theft of fire. It happened that Chiron, noblest of all the Centaurs (who are half horses and half men), was wandering the world in agony from a wound that he had received by strange mischance. For, at a certain wedding-feast among the Lapitha of Thessaly, one of the turbulent Centaurs had attempted to steal away the bride. A fierce struggle followed, and in the general confusion, Chiron, blameless as he was, had been wounded by a poisoned arrow. Ever tormented with the hurt and never to be healed, the immortal Centaur longed for death, and begged that he might be accepted as an atonement for Prometheus. The gods heard his prayer and took away his pain and his immortality. He died

like any wearied man, and Zeus set him as a shining archer among the stars.

So ended a long feud. From the day of Prometheus, men spent their lives in ceaseless enterprise, forced to take heed for food and raiment, since they knew how, and to ply their tasks of art and handicraft. They had taken unresting toil upon them, but they had a wondrous servant at their beck and call, — the bright-eyed fire that is the treasure of the gods.

The Deluge

Even with the gifts of Prometheus, men could not rest content. As years went by, they lost all the innocence of the early world; they grew more and more covetous and evil-hearted. Not satisfied with the fruits of the Earth, or with the fair work of their own hands, they delved in the ground after gold and jewels; and for the sake of treasure nations made war upon each other and hate sprang up in households. Murder and theft broke loose and left nothing sacred.

At last Zeus spoke. Calling the gods together, he said: "Ye see what the Earth has become through the baseness of men. Once they were deserving of our protection; now they even neglect to ask it. I will destroy them with my thunderbolts and make a new race."

But the gods withheld him from this impulse. "For," they said, "let not the Earth, the mother of all, take fire and perish. But seek out some means to destroy mankind and leave her unhurt."

So Zeus unloosed the waters of the world and there was a great flood.

The streams that had been pent in narrow channels, like wild steeds bound to the ploughshare, broke away with exultation; the springs poured down from the mountains, and the air was blind with rain. Valleys and uplands were covered; strange countries were joined in one great sea; and where the highest trees had towered, only a little greenery pricked through the water, as weeds show in a brook.

Men and women perished with the flocks and herds. Wild beasts from the forest floated away on the current with the poor sheep. Birds, left homeless, circled and flew far and near seeking some place of rest, and, finding none, they fell from weariness and died with human folk, that had no wings.

Then for the first time the sea-creatures — nymphs and dolphins — ventured far from their homes, up, up through the swollen waters, among places that they had never seen before, — forests whose like they had not dreamed, towns and deluged farmsteads. They went in and out of drowned palaces, and wondered at the strange ways of men. And in and out the bright fish darted, too, without a fear. Wonderful man was no more. His hearth was empty; and fire, his servant, was dead on earth.

One mountain alone stood high above this ruin. It was Parnassus, sacred to the gods; and here one man and woman had found refuge. Strangely enough, this

husband and wife were of the race of the Titans, — Deucalion, a son of Prometheus, and Pyrrha, a child of Epimetheus, his brother; and these alone had lived pure and true of heart.

Warned by Prometheus of the fate in store for the Earth, they had put off from their home in a little boat, and had made the crest of Parnassus their safe harbor.

The gods looked down on these two lonely creatures, and, beholding all their past lives clear and just, suffered them to live on. Zeus bade the rain cease and the floods withdraw.

Once more the rivers sought their wonted channels, and the sea-gods and the nymphs wandered home reluctantly with the sinking seas. The sun came out; and they hastened more eagerly to find cool depths.

Little by little the forest trees rose from the shallows as if they were growing anew. At last the surface of the world lay clear to see, but sodden and deserted, the fair fields covered with ooze, the houses rank with moss, the temples cold and lightless.

Deucalion and Pyrrha saw the bright waste of water sink and grow dim and the hills emerge, and the earth show green once more. But even their thankfulness of heart could not make them merry.

"Are we to live on this great earth all alone?" they said. "Ah! if we had but the wisdom and cunning of our

fathers, we might make a new race of men to bear us company. But now what remains to us? We have only each other for all our kindred."

"Take heart, dear wife," said Deucalion at length, "and let us pray to the gods in yonder temple."

They went thither hand in hand. It touched their hearts to see the sacred steps soiled with the water-weeds, — the altar without fire; but they entered reverently, and besought the Oracle to help them.

"Go forth," answered the spirit of the place, "with your faces veiled and your robes ungirt; and cast behind you, as ye go, the bones of your mother."

Deucalion and Pyrrha heard with amazement. The strange word was terrible to them.

"We may never dare do this," whispered Pyrrha. "It would be impious to strew our mother's bones along the way."

In sadness and wonder they went out together and took thought, a little comforted by the firmness of the dry earth beneath their feet. Suddenly Deucalion pointed to the ground.

"Behold the Earth, our mother!" said he. "Surely it was this that the Oracle meant. And what should her bones be but the rocks that are a foundation for the clay, and the pebbles that strew the path?"

Uncertain, but with lighter hearts, they veiled their faces, ungirt their garments, and, gathering each an armful of the stones, flung them behind, as the Oracle had bidden.

And, as they walked, every stone that Deucalion flung became a man; and every one that Pyrrha threw sprang up a woman. And the hearts of these two were filled with joy and welcome.

Down from the holy mountain they went, all those new creatures, ready to make them homes and to go about human work. For they were strong to endure, fresh and hardy of spirit, as men and women should be who are true children of our Mother Earth.

Orpheus and Eurydice

When gods and shepherds piped and the stars sang, that was the day of musicians! But the triumph of Phoebus Apollo himself was not so wonderful as the triumph of a mortal man who lived on earth, though some say that he came of divine lineage. This was Orpheus, that best of harpers, who went with the Grecian heroes of the great ship Argo in search of the Golden Fleece.

After his return from the quest, he won Eurydice for his wife, and they were as happy as people can be who love each other and every one else. The very wild beasts loved them, and the trees clustered about their home as if they were watered with music. But even the gods themselves were not always free from sorrow, and one day misfortune came upon that harper Orpheus whom all men loved to honor.

Eurydice, his lovely wife, as she was wandering with the nymphs, unwittingly trod upon a serpent in the grass. Surely, if Orpheus had been with her, playing upon his lyre, no creature could have harmed her. But Orpheus came too late. She died of the sting, and was lost to him in the Underworld.

For days he wandered from his home, singing the story of his loss and his despair to the helpless passers-by. His grief moved the very stones in the wilderness, and roused a dumb distress in the hearts of savage beasts. Even the gods on Mount Olympus gave ear, but they held no power over the darkness of Hades.

Wherever Orpheus wandered with his lyre, no one had the will to forbid him entrance; and at length he found unguarded that very cave that leads to the Underworld where Pluto rules the spirits of the dead. He went down without fear. The fire in his living heart found him a way through the gloom of that place. He crossed the Styx, the black river that the gods name as their most sacred oath. Charon, the harsh old ferryman who takes the Shades across, forgot to ask of him the coin that every soul must pay. For Orpheus sang. There in the Underworld the song of Apollo would not have moved the poor ghosts so much. It would have amazed them, like a star far off that no one understands. But here was a human singer, and he sang of things that grow in every human heart, youth and love and death, the sweetness of the Earth, and the bitterness of losing aught that is dear to us.

Now the dead, when they go to the Underworld, drink of the pool of Lethe; and forgetfulness of all that has passed comes upon them like a sleep, and they lose their longing for the world, they lose their memory of

pain, and live content with that cool twilight. But not the pool of Lethe itself could withstand the song of Orpheus; and in the hearts of the Shades all the old dreams awoke wondering. They remembered once more the life of men on Earth, the glory of the sun and moon, the sweetness of new grass, the warmth of their homes, all the old joy and grief that they had known. And they wept.

Even the Furies were moved to pity. Those, too, who were suffering punishment for evil deeds ceased to be tormented for themselves, and grieved only for the innocent Orpheus who had lost Eurydice. Sisyphus, that fraudulent king (who is doomed to roll a monstrous boulder uphill forever), stopped to listen. The daughters of Danaus left off their task of drawing water in a sieve. Tantalus forgot hunger and thirst, though before his eyes hung magical fruits that were wont to vanish out of his grasp, and just beyond reach bubbled the water that was a torment to his ears; he did not hear it while Orpheus sang.

So, among a crowd of eager ghosts, Orpheus came, singing with all his heart, before the king and queen of Hades. And the queen Proserpina wept as she listened and grew homesick, remembering the fields of Enna and the growing of the wheat, and her own beautiful mother, Demeter. Then Pluto gave way.

They called Eurydice and she came, like a young guest unused to the darkness of the Underworld. She was to return with Orpheus, but on one condition. If he turned to look at her once before they reached the upper air, he must lose her again and go back to the world alone.

Rapt with joy, the happy Orpheus hastened on the way, thinking only of Eurydice, who was following him. Past Lethe, across the Styx they went, he and his lovely wife, still silent as a Shade. But the place was full of gloom, the silence weighed upon him, he had not seen her for so long; her footsteps made no sound; and he could hardly believe the miracle, for Pluto seldom relents. When the first gleam of upper daylight broke through the cleft to the dismal world, he forgot all, save that he must know if she still followed. He turned to see her face, and the promise was broken!

She smiled at him forgivingly, but it was too late. He stretched out his arms to take her, but she faded from them, as the bright snow, that none may keep, melts in our very hands. A murmur of farewell came to his ears, — no more. She was gone.

He would have followed, but Charon, now on guard, drove him back. Seven days he lingered there between the worlds of life and death, but after the broken promise, Hades would not listen to his song. Back to the Earth he wandered, though it was sweet to

him no longer. He died young, singing to the last, and round about the place where his body rested, nightingales nested in the trees. His lyre was set among the stars; and he himself went down to join Eurydice, unforbidden.

Those two had no need of Lethe, for their life on earth had been wholly fair, and now that they are together they no longer own a sorrow.

Icarus and Dædulus

Among all those mortals who grew so wise that they learned the secrets of the gods, none was more cunning than Dædalus.

He once built, for King Minos of Crete, a wonderful Labyrinth of winding ways so cunningly tangled up and twisted around that, once inside, you could never find your way out again without a magic clue. But the king's favor veered with the wind, and one day he had his master architect imprisoned in a tower. Dædalus managed to escape from his cell; but it seemed impossible to leave the island, since every ship that came or went was well guarded by order of the king.

At length, watching the sea-gulls in the air, — the only creatures that were sure of liberty, — he thought of a plan for himself and his young son Icarus, who was captive with him.

Little by little, he gathered a store of feathers great and small. He fastened these together with thread, moulded them in with wax, and so fashioned two great wings like those of a bird. When they were done, Dædalus fitted them to his own shoulders, and after one or two efforts, he found that by waving his arms he

could winnow the air and cleave it, as a swimmer does the sea. He held himself aloft, wavered this way and that with the wind, and at last, like a great fledgling, he learned to fly.

Without delay, he fell to work on a pair of wings for the boy Icarus, and taught him carefully how to use them, bidding him beware of rash adventures among the stars. "Remember," said the father, "never to fly very low, or very high, for the fogs about the earth would weigh you down, but the blaze of the sun will surely melt your feathers apart if you go too near."

For Icarus, these cautions went in at one ear and out by the other. Who could remember to be careful when he was to fly for the first time? Are birds careful? Not they! And not an idea remained in the boy's head but the one joy of escape.

The day came, and the fair wind that was to set them free. The father bird put on his wings, and, while the light urged them to be gone, he waited to see that all was well with Icarus, for the two could not fly hand in hand. Up they rose, the boy after his father. The hateful ground of Crete sank beneath them; and the country folk, who caught a glimpse of them when they were high above the tree-tops, took it for a vision of the gods, — Apollo, perhaps, with Cupid after him.

At first there was a terror in the joy. The wide vacancy of the air dazed them, — a glance downward

made their brains reel. But when a great wind filled their wings, and Icarus felt himself sustained, like a halcyon-bird in the hollow of a wave, like a child uplifted by his mother, he forgot everything in the world but joy. He forgot Crete and the other islands that he had passed over; he saw but vaguely that winged thing in the distance before him that was his father Dædalus. He longed for one draught of flight to quench the thirst of his captivity: he stretched out his arms to the sky and made towards the highest heavens.

Alas for him! Warmer and warmer grew the air. Those arms, that had seemed to uphold him, relaxed. His wings wavered, drooped. He fluttered his young hands vainly, — he was falling, — and in that terror he remembered. The heat of the sun had melted the wax from his wings; the feathers were falling, one by one, like snowflakes; and there was none to help.

He fell like a leaf tossed down the wind, down, down, with one cry that overtook Dædalus far away. When he returned, and sought high and low for the poor boy, he saw nothing but the bird-like feathers afloat on the water, and he knew that Icarus was drowned.

The nearest island he named Icaria, in memory of the child; but he, in heavy grief, went to the temple of Apollo in Sicily, and there hung up his wings as an offering. Never again did he attempt to fly.

Phaethon

Once upon a time, the reckless whim of a lad came near to destroying the Earth and robbing the spheres of their wits.

There were two playmates, said to be of heavenly parentage. One was Epaphus, who claimed Zeus as a father; and one was Phaethon, the earthly child of Phoebus Apollo (or Helios, as some name the sun-god). One day they were boasting together, each of his own father, and Epaphus, angry at the other's fine story, dared him to go prove his kinship with the Sun.

Full of rage and humiliation, Phaethon went to his mother, Clymene, where she sat with his young sisters, the Heliades.

"It is true, my child," she said, "I swear it in the light of yonder Sun. If you have any doubt, go to the land whence he rises at morning and ask of him any gift you will; he is your father, and he cannot refuse you."

As soon as might be, Phaethon set out for the country of sunrise. He journeyed by day and by night far into the east, till he came to the palace of the Sun. It towered high as the clouds, glorious with gold and all manner of gems that looked like frozen fire, if that

might be. The mighty walls were wrought with images of earth and sea and sky. Vulcan, the smith of the gods, had made them in his workshop (for Mount Ætna is one of his forges, and he has the central fires of the earth to help him fashion gold and iron, as men do glass). On the doors blazed the twelve signs of the Zodiac, in silver that shone like snow in the sunlight. Phaethon was dazzled with the sight, but when he entered the palace hall he could hardly bear the radiance.

In one glimpse through his half-shut eyes, he beheld a glorious being, none other than Phoebus himself, seated upon a throne. He was clothed in purple raiment, and round his head there shone a blinding light, that enveloped even his courtiers upon the right and upon the left, — the Seasons with their emblems. Day, Month, Year, and the beautiful young Hours in a row. In one glance of those all-seeing eyes, the sun-god knew his child; but in order to try him he asked the boy his errand.

"O my father," stammered Phaethon, "if you are my father indeed," and then he took courage; for the god came down from his throne, put off the glorious halo that hurt mortal eyes, and embraced him tenderly.

"Indeed, thou art my son," said he. "Ask any gift of me and it shall be thine; I call the Styx to witness."

"Ah!" cried Phaethon rapturously. "Let me drive thy chariot for one day!"

For an instant the Sun's looks clouded. "Choose again, my child," said he. "Thou art only a mortal, and this task is mine alone of all the gods. Not Zeus himself dare drive the chariot of the Sun. The way is full of terrors, both for the horses and for all the stars along the roadside, and for the Earth, who has all blessings from me. Listen, and choose again." And therewith he warned Phaethon of all the dangers that beset the way, — the great steep that the steeds must climb, the numbing dizziness of the height, the fierce constellations that breathe out fire, and that descent in the west where the Sun seems to go headlong.

But these counsels only made the reckless boy more eager to win honor of such a high enterprise.

"I will take care; only let me go," he begged.

Now Phoebus had sworn by the black river Styx, an oath that none of the gods dare break, and he was forced to keep his promise.

Already Aurora, goddess of dawn, had thrown open the gates of the east and the stars were beginning to wane. The Hours came forth to harness the four horses, and Phaethon looked with exultation at the splendid creatures, whose lord he was for a day. Wild, immortal steeds they were, fed with ambrosia,

untamed as the winds; their very pet names signified flame, and all that flame can do, — Pyrois, Eous, Æthon, Phlegon.

As the lad stood by, watching, Phoebus anointed his face with a philter that should make him strong to endure the terrible heat and light, then set the halo upon his head, with a last word of counsel.

"Follow the road," said he, "and never turn aside. Go not too high or too low, for the sake of heavens and earth; else men and gods will suffer. The Fates alone know whether evil is to come of this. Yet if your heart fails you, as I hope, abide here and I will make the journey, as I am wont to do."

But Phaethon held to his choice and bade his father farewell. He took his place in the chariot, gathered up the reins, and the horses sprang away, eager for the road.

As they went, they bent their splendid necks to see the meaning of the strange hand upon the reins. — the slender weight in the chariot. They turned their wild eyes upon Phaethon, to his secret foreboding, and neighed one to another. This was no master-charioteer, but a mere lad, a feather riding the wind. It was holiday for the horses of the Sun, and away they went.

Grasping the reins that dragged him after, like an enemy Phaethon looked down from the fearful ascent and saw the Earth far beneath him, dim and fair. He was blind with dizziness and bewilderment. His hold slackened and the horses redoubled their speed, wild with new liberty. They left the old tracks. Before he knew where he was, they had startled the constellations and well-nigh grazed the Serpent, so that it woke from its torpor and hissed.

The steeds took fright. This way and that they went, terrified by the monsters they had never encountered before, shaking out of their silver quiet the cool stars towards the north, then fleeing as far to the south among new wonders. The heavens were full of terror.

Up, far above the clouds, they went, and down again, towards the defenceless Earth, that could not flee from the chariot of the Sun. Great rivers hid themselves in the ground, and mountains were consumed. Harvests perished like a moth that is singed in a candle-flame.

In vain did Phaethon call to the horses and pull upon the reins. As in a hideous dream, he saw his own Earth, his beautiful home and the home of all men, his kindred, parched by the fires of this mad chariot, and blackening beneath him. The ground cracked open and the sea shrank. Heedless water-nymphs, who had lingered in the shallows, were left gasping like bright

fishes. The dryads shrank, and tried to cover themselves from the scorching heat. The poor Earth lifted her withered face in a last prayer to Zeus to save them if he might.

Then Zeus, calling all the gods to witness that there was no other means of safety, hurled his thunderbolt; and Phaethon knew no more.

His body fell through the heavens, aflame like a shooting-star; and the horses of the Sun dashed homeward with the empty chariot.

Poor Clymene grieved sore over the boy's death; but the young Heliades, daughters of the Sun, refused all comfort. Day and night they wept together about their brother's grave by the river, until the gods took pity and changed them all into poplar trees. And ever after that they wept sweet tears of amber, clear as sunlight.

Niobe

There are so many tales of the vanity of kings and queens that the half of them cannot be told.

There was Cassiopæia, queen of Ethiopia, who boasted that her beauty outshone the beauty of all the sea-nymphs, so that in anger they sent a horrible sea-serpent to ravage the coast. The king prayed of an Oracle to know how the monster might be appeased, and learned that he must offer up his own daughter, Andromeda. The maiden was therefore chained to a rock by the sea-side, and left to her fate. But who should come to rescue her but a certain young hero, Perseus, who was hastening homeward after a perilous adventure with the snaky-haired Gorgons. Filled with pity at the story of Andromeda, he waited for the dragon, met and slew him, and set the maiden free. As for the boastful queen, the gods forgave her, and at her death she was set among the stars. That story ended well.

But there was once a queen of Thebes, Niobe, fortunate above all women, and yet arrogant in the face of the gods. Very beautiful she was, and nobly born,

but above all things she boasted of her children, for she had seven sons and seven daughters.

Now there came the day when the people were wont to celebrate the feast of Latona, mother of Apollo and Diana; and Niobe, as she stood looking upon the worshippers on their way to the temple, was filled with overweening pride.

"Why do you worship Latona before me?" she cried out. "What does she possess that I have not in greater abundance? She has but two children, while I have seven sons and as many daughters. Nay, if she robbed me out of envy, I should still be rich. Go back to your houses; you have not eyes to know the rightful goddess."

Such impiety was enough to frighten any one, and her subjects returned to their daily work, awestruck and silent.

But Apollo and Diana were filled with wrath at this insult to their divine mother. Not only was she a great goddess and a power in the heavens, but during her life on earth she had suffered many hardships for their sake. The serpent Python had been sent to torment her; and, driven from land to land, under an evil spell, beset with dangers, she had found no resting-place but the island of Delos, held sacred ever after to her and her children. Once she had even been refused water by some churlish peasants, who could not believe in a

goddess if she appeared in humble guise and travel -worn. But these men were all changed into frogs.

It needed no word from Latona herself to rouse her children to vengeance. Swift as a thought, the two immortal archers, brother and sister, stood in Thebes, upon the towers of the citadel. Near by, the youth were pursuing their sports, while the feast of Latona went neglected. The sons of Queen Niobe were there, and against them Apollo bent his golden bow. An arrow crossed the air like a sunbeam, and without a word the eldest prince fell from his horse. One by one his brothers died by the same hand, so swiftly that they knew not what had befallen them, till all the sons of the royal house lay slain. Only the people of Thebes, stricken with terror, bore the news to Queen Niobe, where she sat with her seven daughters. She would not believe in such a sorrow.

"Savage Latona," she cried, lifting her arms against the heavens, "never think that you have conquered. I am still the greater."

At that moment one of her daughters sank beside her. Diana had sped an arrow from her bow that is like the crescent moon. Without a cry, nay, even as they murmured words of comfort, the sisters died, one by's one. It was all as swift and soundless as snowfall.

Only the guilty mother was left, transfixed with grief. Tears flowed from her eyes, but she spoke not a word, her heart never softened; and at last she turned to stone, and the tears flowed down her cold face forever.

Admetus and the Shepherd

Apollo did not live always free of care, though he was the most glorious of the gods. One day, in anger with the Cyclopes who work at the forges of Vulcan, he sent his arrows after them, to the wrath of all the gods, but especially of Zeus. (For the Cyclopes always make his thunderbolts, and make them well.) Even the divine archer could not go unpunished, and as a penalty he was sent to serve some mortal for a year. Some say one year and some say nine, but in those days time passed quickly; and as for the gods, they took no heed of it.

Now there was a certain king in Thessaly, Admetus by name, and there came to him one day a stranger, who asked leave to serve about the palace. None knew his name, but he was very comely, and moreover, when they questioned him he said that he had come from a position of high trust. So without further delay they made him chief shepherd of the royal flocks.

Every day thereafter, he drove his sheep to the banks of the river Amphrysus, and there he sat to watch them browse. The country-folk that passed drew near to wonder at him, without daring to ask questions. He seemed to have a knowledge of leech-craft, and knew

how to cure the ills of any wayfarer with any weed that grew near by; and he would pipe for hours in the sun. A simple-spoken man he was, yet he seemed to know much more than he would say, and he smiled with a kindly mirth when the people wished him sunny weather.

Indeed, as days went by, it seemed as if summer had come to stay, and, like the shepherd, found the place friendly. Nowhere else were the flocks so white and fair to see, like clouds loitering along a bright sky; and sometimes, when he chose, their keeper sang to them. Then the grasshoppers drew near and the swans sailed close to the river banks, and the country-men gathered about to hear wonderful tales of the slaying of the monster Python, and of a king with donkey's ears, and of a lovely maiden, Daphne, who grew into a laurel-tree. In time the rumor of these things drew the king himself to listen; and Admetus, who had been to see the world in the ship Argo, knew at once that this was no earthly shepherd, but a god. From that day, like a true king, he treated his guest with reverence and friendliness, asking no questions; and the god was well pleased.

Now it came to pass that Admetus fell in love with a beautiful maiden, Alcestis, and, because of the strange condition that her father Pelias had laid upon all suitors, he was heavy-hearted. Only that man who

should come to woo her in a chariot drawn by a wild boar and a lion might ever marry Alcestis; and this task was enough to puzzle even a king.

As for the shepherd, when he heard of it he rose, one fine morning, and left the sheep and went his way, — no one knew whither. If the sun had gone out, the people could not have been more dismayed. The king himself went, late in the day, to walk by the river Amphrysus, and wonder if his gracious keeper of the flocks had deserted him in a time of need. But at that very moment, whom should he see returning from the woods but the shepherd, glorious as sunset, and leading side by side a lion and a boar, as gentle as two sheep! The very next morning, with joy and gratitude, Admetus set out in his chariot for the kingdom of Pelias, and there he wooed and won Alcestis, the most loving wife that was ever heard of.

It was well for Admetus that he came home with such a comrade, for the year was at an end, and he was to lose his shepherd. The strange man came to take leave of the king and queen whom he had befriended.

"Blessed be your flocks, Admetus," he said, smiling. "They shall prosper even though I leave them. And, because you can discern the gods that come to you in the guise of wayfarers, happiness shall never go far from your home, but ever return to be your guest. No man may live on earth forever, but this one gift have I

obtained for you. When your last hour draws near, if any one shall be willing to meet it in your stead, he shall die, and you shall live on, more than the mortal length of days. Such kings deserve long life."

So ended the happy year when Apollo tended sheep.

Alcestis

For many years the remembrance of Apollo's service kept Thessaly full of sunlight. Where a god could work, the people took heart to work also. Flocks and herds throve, travellers were befriended, and men were happy under the rule of a happy king and queen.

But one day Admetus fell ill, and he grew weaker and weaker until he lay at death's door. Then, when no remedy was found to help him and the hope of the people was failing, they remembered the promise of the Fates to spare the king if some one else would die in his stead. This seemed a simple matter for one whose wishes are law, and whose life is needed by all his fellow-men. But, strange to say, the substitute did not come forward at once.

Among the king's most faithful friends, many were afraid to die. Men said that they would gladly give their lives in battle, but that they could not die in bed at home like helpless old women. The wealthy had too much to live for; and the poor, who possessed nothing but life, could not bear to give up that. Even the aged parents of Admetus shrunk from the thought of losing

the few years that remained to them, and thought it impious that any one should name such a sacrifice.

All this time, the three Fates were waiting to cut the thread of life, and they could not wait longer.

Then, seeing that even the old and wretched clung to their gift of life, who should offer herself but the young and lovely queen, Alcestis? Sorrowful but resolute, she determined to be the victim, and made ready to die for the sake of her husband.

She took leave of her children and commended them to the care of Admetus. All his pleading could not change the decree of the Fates. Alcestis prepared for death as for some consecration. She bathed and anointed her body, and, as a mortal illness seized her, she lay down to die, robed in fair raiment, and bade her kindred farewell. The household was filled with mourning, but it was too late. She waned before the eyes of the king, like daylight that must be gone.

At this grievous moment Heracles, mightiest of all men, who was journeying on his way to new adventures, begged admittance to the palace, and inquired the cause of such grief in that hospitable place. He was told of the misfortune that had befallen Admetus, and, struck with pity, he resolved to try what his strength might do for this man who had been a friend of gods.

Already Death had come out of Hades for Alcestis, and as Heracles stood at the door of her chamber he saw that awful form leading away the lovely spirit of the queen, for the breath had just departed from her body. Then the might that he had from his divine father Zeus stood by the hero. He seized Death in his giant arms and wrestled for victory.

Now Death is a visitor that comes and goes. He may not tarry in the upper world; its air is not for him; and at length, feeling his power give way, he loosed his grasp of the queen, and, weak with the struggle, made escape to his native darkness of Hades.

In the chamber where the royal kindred were weeping, the body of Alcestis lay, fair to see, and once more the breath stirred in her heart, like a waking bird. Back to its home came her lovely spirit, and for long years after she lived happily with her husband, King Admetus.

Apollo's Sister

Diana and Actæon

Like the Sun-god, whom men dreaded as the divine archer and loved as the divine singer, Diana, his sister, had two natures, as different as day from night.

On earth she delighted in the wild life of the chase, keeping holiday among the dryads, and hunting with all those nymphs that loved the boyish pastime. She and her maidens shunned the fellowship of men and would not hear of marriage, for they disdained all household arts; and there are countless tales of their cruelty to suitors.

Syrinx and Atalanta were of their company, and Arethusa, who was changed into a fountain and ever pursued by Alpheus the river-god, till at last the two were united. There was Daphne, too, who disdained the love of Apollo himself, and would never listen to a word of his suit, but fled like Syrinx, and prayed like Syrinx for escape; but Daphne was changed into a fair laurel-tree, held sacred by Apollo forever after.

All these maidens were as untamed and free of heart as the wild creatures they loved to hunt, and whoever molested them did so at his peril. None dared trespass in the home of Diana and her nymphs, not even the

riotous fauns and satyrs who were heedless enough to go swimming in the river Styx, if they had cared to venture near such a dismal place. But the maiden goddess laid a spell upon their unruly wits, even as the moon controls the tides of the sea. Her precincts were holy. There was one man, however, whose ill-timed curiosity brought heavy punishment upon him. This was Actæon, a grandson of the great king Cadmus.

Wearied with hunting, one noon, he left his comrades and idled through the forest, perhaps to spy upon those woodland deities of whom he had heard. Chance brought him to the very grove where Diana and her nymphs were wont to bathe. He followed the bright thread of the brook, never turning aside, though mortal reverence should have warned him that the place was for gods. The air was wondrous clear and sweet; a throng of fair trees drooped their branches in the way, and from a sheltered grotto beyond fell a mingled sound of laughter and running waters. But Actæon would not turn back. Roughly pushing aside the laurel branches that hid the entrance of the cave, he looked in, startling Diana and her maidens. In an instant a splash of water shut his eyes, and the goddess, reading his churlish thought, said: "Go now, if thou wilt, and boast of this intrusion."

He turned to go, but a stupid bewilderment had fallen upon him. He looked back to speak, and could

not. He put his hand to his head, and felt antlers branching above his forehead. Down he fell on hands and feet; these likewise changed. The poor offender! Crouching by the brook that he had followed, he looked in, and saw nothing but the image of a stag, bending to drink, as only that morning he had seen the creature they had come out to kill. With an impulse of terror he fled away, faster than he had ever run before, crashing through bush and bracken, the noise of his own flight ever after him like an enemy.

Suddenly he heard the blast of a horn close by, then the baying of hounds. His comrades, who had rested and were ready for the chase, made after him. This time he was their prey. He tried to call and could not. His antlers caught in the branches, his breath came with pain, and the dogs were upon him, — his own dogs!

With all the eagerness that he had often praised in them, they fell upon him, knowing not their own master. And so he perished, hunter and hunted.

Only the goddess of the chase could have devised so terrible a revenge.

Diana and Endymion

But with the daylight, all of Diana's joy in the wild life of the woods seemed to fade. By night, as goddess

of the moon, she watched over the sleep of the earth, — measured the tides of the ocean, and went across the wide path of heaven, slow and fair to see. And although she bore her emblem of the bow, like a silver crescent, she was never terrible, but beneficent and lovely.

Indeed, there was once a young shepherd, Endymion, who used to lead his flocks high up the slopes of Mount Latmos to the purer air; and there, while the sheep browsed, he spent his days and nights dreaming on the solitary uplands. He was a beautiful youth and very lonely. Looking down one night from the heavens near by and as lonely as he, Diana saw him, and her heart was moved to tenderness for his weariness and solitude. She cast a spell of sleep upon him, with eternal youth, white and untroubled as moonlight. And there, night after night, she watched his sheep for him, like any peasant maid who wanders slowly through the pastures after the flocks, spinning white flax from her distaff as she goes, alone and quite content.

Endymion dreamed such beautiful dreams as come only to happy poets. Even when he woke, life held no care for him, but he seemed to walk in a light that was for him alone. And all this time, just as the Sun-god watched over the sheep of King Admetus, Diana kept the flocks of Endymion, but it was for love's sake.

The Calydonian Hunt

In that day of the chase, there was one enterprise renowned above all others, — the great hunt of Calydon. Thither, in search of high adventure, went all the heroes of Greece, just as they joined the quest of the Golden Fleece, and, in a later day, went to the rescue of Fair Helen in the Trojan War.

For Œneus, king of Calydon, had neglected the temples of Diana, and she had sent a monstrous boar to lay waste all the fields and farms in the country. The people had never seen so terrible a beast, and they soon wished that they had never offended the goddess who keeps the woods clear of such monsters. No mortal device availed against it, and, after a hundred disasters. Prince Meleager, the son of Œneus, summoned the heroes to join him in this perilous hunt.

The prince had a strange story. Soon after his birth, Althea, the queen, had seen in a vision the three Fates spinning the thread of life and crooning over their work. For Clotho spins the thread, Lachesis draws it out, and Atropos waits to cut it off with her glittering shears. So the queen beheld them, and heard them foretell that her baby should live no longer than a brand that was then burning on the hearth. Horror inspired the mother. Quick as a thought she seized the

brand, put out the flame, and laid it by in some safe and secret place where no harm could touch it. So the child gathered strength and grew up to manhood.

He was a mighty hunter, and the other heroes came gladly to bear him company. Many of the Argonauts were there, — Jason, Theseus, Nestor, even Atalanta, that valorous maiden who had joined the rowers of the Argo, a beloved charge of Diana. Boyish in her boldness for wild sports, she was fleet of foot and very lovely to behold, altogether a bride for a princely hunter. So Meleager thought, the moment that he saw her face.

Together they all set out for the lair of the boar, the heroes and the men of Calydon, — Meleager and his two uncles, Phlexippus and Toxeus, brothers of Queen Althea.

All was ready. Nets were stretched from tree to tree, and the dogs were let loose. The heroes lay in wait. Suddenly the monster, startled by the shouts of the company, rose hideous and unwieldy from his hiding-place and rushed upon them. What were hounds to such as he, or nets spread for a snare? Jason's spear missed and fell. Nestor only saved his life by climbing the nearest tree. Several of the heroes were gored by the tusks of the boar before they could make their escape. In the midst of this horrible tumult, Atalanta sped an arrow at the creature and wounded

him. Meleager saw it with joy, and called upon the others to follow. One by one they tried without success, but he, after one false thrust, drove his spear into the side of the monster and laid him dead.

The heroes crowded to do him honor, but he turned to Atalanta, who had first wounded the boar, and awarded her the shaggy hide that was her fair-won trophy. This was too much for the warriors, who had been outdone by a girl. Phlexippus and Toxeus were so enraged that they snatched the prize from the maiden, churlishly, and denied her victory. Maddened at this, Meleager forgot everything but the insult offered to Atalanta, and he fell upon the two men and stabbed them. Only when they lay dead before him did he remember that they were his own kinsmen.

In the mean time news had flown to the city that the pest was slain, and Queen Althea was on her way to the temple to give thanks for their deliverance. At the very gates she came upon a multitude of men surrounding a litter, and drawing near she saw the bodies of her two brothers. Swift upon this horror came a greater shock, — the name of the murderer, her own son Meleager. All pity left the mother's heart when she heard it; she thought only of revenge. In a lightning-flash she remembered that brand which she had plucked from the fire when her son was but a

new-born babe, — the brand that was to last with his life.

She ordered a pyre to be built and lighted, and straightway she went to that hiding-place where she had kept the precious thing all these years, and brought it back and stood before the flames. At the last moment her soul was torn between love for her son and grief for her murdered brothers. She stretched forth the brand, and plucked it again from the tongues of fire. She cried out in despair that the honor of her house should require such an expiation. But, covering her eyes, she flung the brand into the flames.

At the same time, far away with his companions, and unwitting of these things, Meleager was struck through with a sudden pang. Wondering and helpless, the heroes gathered about, to behold him dying of some unknown agony, while he strove to conquer his pain. Even as the brand burned in the fire before the wretched queen, Meleager was consumed by a mysterious death, blessing with his last breath friends and kindred, his dear Atalanta, and the mother who had brought him to this doom, though he knew it not. At last the brand fell into ashes, and in the forest the hero lay dead.

The king and queen fell into such grief when all was known, that Diana took pity upon them and changed them into birds.

Atalanta's Race

Even if Prince Meleager had lived, it is doubtful if he could ever have won Atalanta to be his wife. The maiden was resolved to live unwed, and at last she devised a plan to be rid of all her suitors. She was known far and wide as the swiftest runner of her time; and so she said that she would only marry that man who could outstrip her in the race, but that all who dared to try and failed must be put to death.

This threat did not dishearten all of the suitors, however, and to her grief, for she was not cruel, they held her to her promise. On a certain day the few bold men who were to try their fortune made ready, and chose young Hippomenes as judge. He sat watching them before the word was given, and sadly wondered that any brave man should risk his life merely to win a bride. But when Atalanta stood ready for the contest, he was amazed by her beauty. She looked like Hebe, goddess of young health, who is a glad serving-maiden to the gods when they sit at feast.

The signal was given, and, as she and the suitors darted away, flight made her more enchanting than ever. Just as a wind brings sparkles to the water and

laughter to the trees, haste fanned her loveliness to a glow.

Alas for the suitors! She ran as if Hermes had lent her his winged sandals. The young men, skilled as they were, grew heavy with weariness and despair. For all their efforts, they seemed to lag like ships in a calm, while Atalanca flew before them in some favoring breeze — and reached the goal!

To the sorrow of all on-lookers, the suitors were led away; but the judge himself, Hippomenes, rose and begged leave to try his fortune. As Atalanta listened, and looked at him, her heart was filled with pity, and she would willingly have let him win the race to save him from defeat and death; for he was comely and younger than the others. But her friends urged her to rest and make ready, and she consented, with an unwilling heart.

Meanwhile Hippomenes prayed within himself to Venus: "Goddess of Love, give ear, and send me good speed. Let me be swift to win as I have been swift to love her."

Now Venus, who was not far off, — for she had already moved the heart of Hippomenes to love, — came to his side invisibly, slipped into his hand three wondrous golden apples, and whispered a word of counsel in his ear.

The signal was given; youth and maiden started over the course. They went so like the wind that they left not a footprint. The people cheered on Hippomenes, eager that such valor should win. But the course was long, and soon fatigue seemed to clutch at his throat, the light shook before his eyes, and, even as he pressed on, the maiden passed him by.

At that instant Hippomenes tossed ahead one of the golden apples. The rolling bright thing caught Atalanta's eye, and full of wonder she stooped to pick it up. Hippomenes ran on. As he heard the flutter of her tunic close behind him, he flung aside another golden apple, and another moment was lost to the girl. Who could pass by such a marvel? The goal was near and Hippomenes was ahead, but once again Atalanta caught up with him, and they sped side by side like two dragon-flies. For an instant his heart failed him; then, with a last prayer to Venus, he flung down the last apple. The maiden glanced at it, wavered, and would have left it where it had fallen, had not Venus turned her head for a second and given her a sudden wish to possess it. Against her will she turned to pick up the golden apple, and Hippomenes touched the goal.

So he won that perilous maiden; and as for Atalanta, she was glad to marry such a valorous man. By this time she understood so well what it was like to

be pursued, that she had lost a little of her pleasure in hunting.

Arachne

Not among mortals alone were there contests of skill, nor yet among the gods, like Pan and Apollo. Many sorrows befell men because they grew arrogant in their own devices and coveted divine honors. There was once a great hunter, Orion, who outvied the gods themselves, till they took him away from his hunting-grounds and set him in the heavens, with his sword and belt, and his hound at his heels. But at length jealousy invaded even the peaceful arts, and disaster came of spinning!

There was a certain maiden of Lydia, Arachne by name, renowned throughout the country for her skill as a weaver. She was as nimble with her fingers as Calypso, that nymph who kept Odysseus for seven years in her enchanted island. She was as untiring as Penelope, the hero's wife, who wove day after day while she watched for his return. Day in and day out, Arachne wove too. The very nymphs would gather about her loom, naiads from the water and dryads from the trees.

"Maiden," they would say, shaking the leaves or the foam from their hair, in wonder, "Pallas Athena must have taught you!"

But this did not please Arachne. She would not acknowledge herself a debtor, even to that goddess who protected all household arts, and by whose grace alone one had any skill in them.

"I learned not of Athena," said she. "If she can weave better, let her come and try."

The nymphs shivered at this, and an aged woman, who was looking on, turned to Arachne.

"Be more heedful of your words, my daughter," said she. "The goddess may pardon you if you ask forgiveness, but do not strive for honors with the immortals."

Arachne broke her thread, and the shuttle stopped humming.

"Keep your counsel," she said. "I fear not Athena; no, nor any one else."

As she frowned at the old woman, she was amazed to see her change suddenly into one tall, majestic, beautiful, — a maiden of gray eyes and golden hair, crowned with a golden helmet. It was Athena herself.

The bystanders shrank in fear and reverence; only Arachne was unawed and held to her foolish boast.

In silence the two began to weave, and the nymphs stole nearer, coaxed by the sound of the shuttles, that seemed to be humming with delight over the two webs, — back and forth like bees.

They gazed upon the loom where the goddess stood plying her task, and they saw shapes and images come to bloom out of the wondrous colors, as sunset clouds grow to be living creatures when we watch them. And they saw that the goddess, still merciful, was spinning, as a warning for Arachne, the pictures of her own triumph over reckless gods and mortals.

In one corner of the web she made a story of her conquest over the sea-god Poseidon. For the first king of Athens had promised to dedicate the city to that god who should bestow upon it the most useful gift. Poseidon gave the horse. But Athena gave the olive, — means of livelihood, — symbol of peace and prosperity, and the city was called after her name. Again she pictured a vain woman of Troy, who had been turned into a crane for disputing the palm of beauty with a goddess. Other corners of the web held similar images, and the whole shone like a rainbow.

Meanwhile Arachne, whose head was quite turned with vanity, embroidered her web with stories against the gods, making light of Zeus himself and of Apollo, and portraying them as birds and beasts. But she wove with marvellous skill; the creatures seemed to breathe

and speak, yet it was all as fine as the gossamer that you find on the grass before rain.

Athena herself was amazed. Not even her wrath at the girl's insolence could wholly overcome her wonder. For an instant she stood entranced; then she tore the web across, and three times she touched Arachne's forehead with her spindle.

"Live on, Arachne," she said. "And since it is your glory to weave, you and yours must weave forever." So saying, she sprinkled upon the maiden a certain magical potion.

Away went Arachne's beauty; then her very human form shrank to that of a spider, and so remained. As a spider she spent all her days weaving and weaving; and you may see something like her handiwork any day among the rafters.

Pyramus and Thisbe

Venus did not always befriend true lovers, as she had befriended Hippomenes, with her three golden apples. Sometimes, in the enchanted island of Cyprus, she forgot her worshippers far away, and they called on her in vain.

So it was in the sad story of Hero and Leander, who lived on opposite borders of the Hellespont. Hero dwelt at Sestos, where she served as a priestess, in the very temple of Venus; and Leander's home was in Abydos, a town on the opposite shore. But every night this lover would swim across the water to see Hero, guided by the light which she was wont to set in her tower. Even such loyalty could not conquer fate. There came a great storm, one night, that put out the beacon, and washed Leander's body up with the waves to Hero, and she sprang into the water to rejoin him, and so perished.

Not wholly unlike this was the fate of Halcyone, a queen of Thessaly, who dreamed that her husband Ceyx had been drowned, and on waking hastened to the shore to look for him. There she saw her dream come true, — his lifeless body floating towards her on

the tide; and as she flung herself after him, mad with grief, the air upheld her and she seemed to fly. Husband and wife were changed into birds; and there on the very water, at certain seasons, they build a nest that floats unhurt, — a portent of calm for many days and safe voyage for the ships. So it is that seamen love these birds and look for halcyon weather.

But there once lived in Babylonia two lovers named Pyramus and Thisbe, who were parted by a strange mischance. For they lived in adjoining houses; and although their parents had forbidden them to marry, these two had found a means of talking together through a crevice in the wall.

Here, again and again, Pyramus on his side of the wall and Thisbe on hers, they would meet to tell each other all that had happened during the day, and to complain of their cruel parents. At length they decided that they would endure it no longer, but that they would leave their homes and be married, come what might. They planned to meet, on a certain evening, by a mulberry-tree near the tomb of King Ninus, outside the city gates. Once safely met, they were resolved to brave fortune together.

So far all went well. At the appointed time, Thisbe, heavily veiled, managed to escape from home unnoticed, and after a stealthy journey through the streets of Babylon, she came to the grove of mulberries

near the tomb of Ninus. The place was deserted, and once there she put off the veil from her face to see if Pyramus waited anywhere among the shadows. She heard the sound of a footfall and turned to behold — not Pyramus, but a creature unwelcome to any tryst — none other than a lioness crouching to drink from the pool hard by.

Without a cry, Thisbe fled, dropping her veil as she ran. She found a hiding-place among the rocks at some distance, and there she waited, not knowing what else to do.

The lioness, having quenched her thirst (after some ferocious meal), turned from the spring and, coming upon the veil, sniffed at it curiously, tore and tossed it with her reddened jaws, — as she would have done with Thisbe herself, — then dropped the plaything and crept away to the forest once more.

It was but a little after this that Pyramus came hurrying to the meeting-place, breathless with eagerness to find Thisbe and tell her what had delayed him. He found no Thisbe there. For a moment he was confounded. Then he looked about for some sign of her, some footprint by the pool. There was the trail of a wild beast in the grass, and near by a woman's veil, torn and stained with blood; he caught it up and knew it for Thisbe's.

So she had come at the appointed hour, true to her word; she had waited there for him alone and defenceless, and she had fallen a prey to some beast from the jungle! As these thoughts rushed upon the young man's mind, he could endure no more.

"Was it to meet me, Thisbe, that you came to such a death!" cried he. "And I followed all too late. But I will atone. Even now I come lagging, but by no will of mine!"

So saying, the poor youth drew his sword and fell upon it, there at the foot of that mulberry-tree which he had named as the trysting-place, and his life-blood ran about the roots.

During these very moments, Thisbe, hearing no sound and a little reassured, had stolen from her hiding-place and was come to the edge of the grove. She saw that the lioness had left the spring, and, eager to show her lover that she had dared all things to keep faith, she came slowly, little by little, back to the mulberry-tree.

She found Pyramus there, according to his promise. His own sword was in his heart, the empty scabbard by his side, and in his hand he held her veil still clasped. Thisbe saw these things as in a dream, and suddenly the truth awoke her. She saw the piteous mischance of all; and when the dying Pyramus opened his eyes and

fixed them upon her, her heart broke. With the same sword she stabbed herself, and the lovers died together.

There the parents found them, after a weary search, and they were buried together in the same tomb. But the berries of the mulberry-tree turned red that day, and red they have remained ever since.

Pygmalion and Galatea

The island of Cyprus was dear to the heart of Venus. There her temples were kept with honor, and there, some say, she watched with the Loves and Graces over the long enchanted sleep of Adonis. This youth, a hunter whom she had dearly loved, had died of a wound from the tusk of a wild boar; but the bitter grief of Venus had won over even the powers of Hades. For six months of every year, Adonis had to live as a Shade in the world of the dead, but for the rest of the time he was free to breathe the upper air. Here in Cyprus the people came to worship him as a god, for the sake of Venus who loved him; and here, if any called upon her, she was like to listen.

Now there once lived in Cyprus a young sculptor, Pygmalion by name, who thought nothing on earth so beautiful as the white marble folk that live without faults and never grow old. Indeed, he said that he would never marry a mortal woman, and people began to think that his daily life among marble creatures was hardening his heart altogether.

But it chanced that Pygmalion fell to work upon an ivory statue of a maiden, so lovely that it must have

moved to envy every breathing creature that came to look upon it. With a happy heart the sculptor wrought day by day, giving it all the beauty of his dreams, until, when the work was completed, he felt powerless to leave it. He was bound to it by the tie of his highest aspiration, his most perfect ideal, his most patient work.

Day after day the ivory maiden looked down at him silently, and he looked back at her until he felt that he loved her more than anything else in the world. He thought of her no longer as a statue, but as the dear companion of his life; and the whim grew upon him like an enchantment. He named her Galatea, and arrayed her like a princess; he hung jewels about her neck, and made all his home beautiful and fit for such a presence.

Now the festival of Venus was at hand, and Pygmalion, like all who loved Beauty, joined the worshippers. In the temple victims were offered, solemn rites were held, and votaries from many lands came to pray the favor of the goddess. At length Pygmalion himself approached the altar and made his prayer.

"Goddess," he said, "who hast vouchsafed to me this gift of beauty, give me a perfect love, likewise, and let me have for bride, one like my ivory maiden." And Venus heard.

Home to his house of dreams went the sculptor, loath to be parted for a day from his statue, Galatea. There she stood, looking down upon him silently, and he looked back at her. Surely the sunset had shed a flush of life upon her whiteness.

He drew near in wonder and delight, and felt, instead of the chill air that was wont to wake him out of his spell, a gentle warmth around her, like the breath of a plant. He touched her hand, and it yielded like the hand of one living! Doubting his senses, yet fearing to reassure himself, Pygmalion kissed the statue.

In an instant the maiden's face bloomed like a waking rose, her hair shone golden as returning sunlight; she lifted her ivory eyelids and smiled at him. The statue herself had awakened, and she stepped down from the pedestal, into the arms of her creator, alive! There was a dream that came true.

Œdipus

Behind the power of the gods and beyond all the efforts of men, the three Fates sat at their spinning.

No one could tell whence these sisters were, but by some strange necessity they spun the web of human life and made destinies without knowing why. It was not for Clotho to decree whether the thread of a life should be stout or fragile, nor for Lachesis to choose the fashion of the web; and Atropos herself must sometimes have wept to cut a life short with her shears, and let it fall unfinished. But they were like spinners for some Power that said of life, as of a garment, Thus it must be. That Power neither gods nor men could withstand.

There was once a king named Laius (a grandson of Cadmus himself), who ruled over Thebes, with Jocasta his wife. To them an Oracle had foretold that if a son of theirs lived to grow up, he would one day kill his father and marry his own mother. The king and queen resolved to escape such a doom, even at terrible cost. Accordingly Laius gave his son, who was only a baby, to a certain herdsman, with instructions to put him to death.

This was not to be. The herdsman carried the child to a lonely mountain-side, but once there, his heart failed him. Hardly daring to disobey the king's command, yet shrinking from murder, he hung the little creature by his feet to the branches of a tree, and left him there to die.

But there chanced to come that way with his flocks, a man who served King Polybus of Corinth. He found the baby perishing in the tree, and, touched with pity, took him home to his master. The king and queen of Corinth were childless, and some power moved them to take this mysterious child as a gift. They called him Œdipus (Swollen-Foot) because of the wounds they had found upon him, and, knowing naught of his parentage, they reared him as their own son. So the years went by.

Now, when Œdipus had come to manhood, he went to consult the Oracle at Delphi, as all great people were wont, to learn what fortune had in store for him. But for him the Oracle had only a sentence of doom. According to the Fates, he would live to kill his own father and wed his mother.

Filled with dismay, and resolved in his turn to conquer fate, Œdipus fled from Corinth; for he had never dreamed that his parents were other than Polybus and Merope the queen. Thinking to escape

crime, he took the road towards Thebes, so hastening into the very arms of his evil destiny.

It happened that King Laius, with one attendant, was on his way to Delphi from the city Thebes. In a narrow road he met this strange young man, also driving in a chariot, and ordered him to quit the way. Œdipus, who had been reared to princely honors, refused to obey; and the king's charioteer, in great anger, killed one of the young man's horses. At this insult Œdipus fell upon master and servant; mad with rage, he slew them both, and went on his way, not knowing the half of what he had done. The first saying of the Oracle was fulfilled.

But the prince was to have his day of triumph before the doom. There was a certain wonderful creature called the Sphinx, which had been a terror to Thebes for many days. In form half woman and half lion, she crouched always by a precipice near the highway, and put the same mysterious question to every passer-by. None had ever been able to answer, and none had ever lived to warn men of the riddle; for the Sphinx fell upon every one as he failed, and hurled him down the abyss, to be dashed in pieces.

This way came Œdipus towards the city Thebes, and the Sphinx crouched, face to face with him, and spoke the riddle that none had been able to guess.

What animal is that which in the morning goes on four feet, at noon on two, and in the evening upon three?"

Œdipus, hiding his dread of the terrible creature, took thought, and answered "Man. In childhood he creeps on hands and knees, in manhood he walks erect, but in old age he has need of a staff."

At this reply the Sphinx uttered a cry, sprang headlong from the rock into the valley below, and perished. Œdipus had guessed the answer. When he came to the city and told the Thebans that their torment was gone, they hailed him as a deliverer. Not long after, they married him with great honor to their widowed queen, Jocasta, his own mother. The destiny was fulfilled.

For years Œdipus lived in peace, unwitting; but at length upon that unhappy city there fell a great pestilence and famine. In his distress the king sent to the Oracle at Delphi, to know what he or the Thebans had done, that they should be so sorely punished. Then for the third time the Oracle spoke his own fateful sentence; and he learned all.

Jocasta died, and Œdipus took the doom upon himself, and left Thebes. Blinded by his own hand, he wandered away into the wilderness. Never again did he rule over men; and he had one only comrade, his faithful daughter Antigone. She was the truest

happiness in his life of sorrow, and she never left him till he died.

Cupid and Psyche

Once upon a time, through that Destiny that overrules the gods, Love himself gave up his immortal heart to a mortal maiden. And thus it came to pass.

There was a certain king who had three beautiful daughters. The two elder married princes of great renown; but Psyche, the youngest, was so radiantly fair that no suitor seemed worthy of her. People thronged to see her pass through the city, and sang hymns in her praise, while strangers took her for the very goddess of beauty herself.

This angered Venus, and she resolved to cast down her earthly rival. One day, therefore, she called hither her son Love (Cupid, some name him), and bade him sharpen his weapons. He is an archer more to be dreaded than Apollo, for Apollo's arrows take life, but Love's bring joy or sorrow for a whole life long.

"Come, Love," said Venus. "There is a mortal maid who robs me of my honors in yonder city. Avenge your mother. Wound this precious Psyche, and let her fall in love with some churlish creature mean in the eyes of all men."

Cupid made ready his weapons, and flew down to earth invisibly. At that moment Psyche was asleep in her chamber; but he touched her heart with his golden arrow of love, and she opened her eyes so suddenly that he started (forgetting that he was invisible), and wounded himself with his own shaft. Heedless of the hurt, moved only by the loveliness of the maiden, he hastened to pour over her locks the healing joy that he ever kept by him, undoing all his work. Back to her dream the princess went, unshadowed by any thought of love. But Cupid, not so light of heart, returned to the heavens, saying not a word of what had passed.

Venus waited long; then, seeing that Psyche's heart had somehow escaped love, she sent a spell upon the maiden. From that time, lovely as she was, not a suitor came to woo; and her parents, who desired to see her a queen at least, made a journey to the Oracle, and asked counsel.

Said the voice: "The princess Psyche shall never wed a mortal. She shall be given to one who waits for her on yonder mountain; he overcomes gods and men."

At this terrible sentence the poor parents were half distraught, and the people gave themselves up to grief at the fate in store for their beloved princess. Psyche alone bowed to her destiny. "We have angered Venus unwittingly," she said, "and all for sake of me, heedless

maiden that I am! Give me up, therefore, dear father and mother. If I atone, it may be that the city will prosper once more."

So she besought them, until, after many unavailing denials, the parents consented; and with a great company of people they led Psyche up the mountain, — as an offering to the monster of whom the Oracle had spoken, — and left her there alone.

Full of courage, yet in a secret agony of grief, she watched her kindred and her people wind down the mountain-path, too sad to look back, until they were lost to sight. Then, indeed, she wept, but a sudden breeze drew near, dried her tears, and caressed her hair, seeming to murmur comfort. In truth, it was Zephyr, the kindly West Wind, come to befriend her; and as she took heart, feeling some benignant presence, he lifted her in his arms, and carried her on wings as even as a sea-gull's, over the crest of the fateful mountain and into a valley below. There he left her, resting on a bank of hospitable grass, and there the princess fell asleep.

When she awoke, it was near sunset. She looked about her for some sign of the monster's approach; she wondered, then, if her grievous trial had been but a dream. Near by she saw a sheltering forest, whose young trees seemed to beckon as one maid beckons to another; and eager for the protection of the dryads, she went thither.

The call of running waters drew her farther and farther, till she came out upon an open place, where there was a wide pool. A fountain fluttered gladly in the midst of it, and beyond there stretched a white palace wonderful to see. Coaxed by the bright promise of the place, she drew near, and, seeing no one, entered softly. It was all kinglier than her father's home, and as she stood in wonder and awe, soft airs stirred about her. Little by little the silence grew murmurous like the woods, and one voice, sweeter than the rest, took words. "All that you see is yours, gentle high princess," it said. "Fear nothing; only command us, for we are here to serve you."

Full of amazement and delight. Psyche followed the voice from hall to hall, and through the lordly rooms, beautiful with everything that could delight a young princess. No pleasant thing was lacking. There was even a pool, brightly tiled and fed with running waters, where she bathed her weary limbs; and after she had put on the new and beautiful raiment that lay ready for her, she sat down to break her fast, waited upon and sung to by the unseen spirits.

Surely he whom the Oracle had called her husband was no monster, but some beneficent power, invisible like all the rest. When daylight waned he came, and his voice, the beautiful voice of a god, inspired her to trust her strange destiny and to look and long for his return.

Often she begged him to stay with her through the day, that she might see his face; but this he would not grant.

"Never doubt me, dearest Psyche," said he. "Perhaps you would fear if you saw me, and love is all I ask. There is a necessity that keeps me hidden now. Only believe."

So for many days Psyche was content; but when she grew used to happiness, she thought once more of her parents mourning her as lost, and of her sisters who shared the lot of mortals while she lived as a goddess. One night she told her husband of these regrets, and begged that her sisters at least might come to see her. He sighed, but did not refuse.

"Zephyr shall bring them hither," said he. And on the following morning, swift as a bird, the West Wind came over the crest of the high mountain and down into the enchanted valley, bearing her two sisters.

They greeted Psyche with joy and amazement hardly knowing how they had come hither. But when this fairest of the sisters led them through her palace and showed them all the treasures that were hers, envy grew in their hearts and choked their old love. Even while they sat at feast with her, they grew more and more bitter; and hoping to find some little flaw in her good fortune, they asked a thousand questions.

"Where is your husband?" said they. "And why is he not here with you?"

"Ah," stammered Psyche. "All the day long — he is gone, hunting upon the mountains."

"But what does he look like?" they asked; and Psyche could find no answer.

When they learned that she had never seen him, they laughed her faith to scorn.

"Poor Psyche," they said. "You are walking in a dream. Wake, before it is too late. Have you forgotten what the Oracle decreed, — that you were destined for a dreadful creature, the fear of gods and men? And are you deceived by this show of kindliness? We have come to warn you. The people told us, as we came over the mountain, that your husband is a dragon, who feeds you well for the present, that he may feast the better, some day soon. What is it that you trust? Good words! But only take a dagger some night, and when the monster is asleep go, light a lamp, and look at him. You can put him to death easily, and all his riches will be yours — and ours."

Psyche heard this wicked plan with horror. Nevertheless, after her sisters were gone, she brooded over what they had said, not seeing their evil intent; and she came to find some wisdom in their words. Little by little, suspicion ate, like a moth, into her lovely

mind; and at nightfall, in shame and fear, she hid a lamp and a dagger in her chamber. Towards midnight, when her husband was fast asleep, up she rose, hardly daring to breathe; and coming softly to his side, she uncovered the lamp to see some horror.

But there the youngest of the gods lay sleeping, — most beautiful, most irresistible of all immortals. His hair shone golden as the sun, his face was radiant as dear Springtime, and from his shoulders sprang two rainbow wings.

Poor Psyche was overcome with self-reproach. As she leaned towards him, filled with worship, her trembling hands held the lamp ill, and some burning oil fell upon Love's shoulder and awakened him.

He opened his eyes, to see at once his bride and the dark suspicion in her heart.

"O doubting Psyche!" he exclaimed with sudden grief, — and then he flew away, out of the window.

Wild with sorrow. Psyche tried to follow, but she fell to the ground instead. When she recovered her senses, she stared about her. She was alone, and the place was beautiful no longer. Garden and palace had vanished with Love.

The Trial of Psyche

Over mountains and valleys Psyche journeyed alone until she came to the city where her two envious sisters lived with the princes whom they had married. She stayed with them only long enough to tell the story of her unbelief and its penalty. Then she set out again to search for Love.

As she wandered one day, travel-worn but not hopeless, she saw a lofty palace on a hill near by, and she turned her steps thither. The place seemed deserted. Within the hall she saw no human being, — only heaps of grain, loose ears of corn half torn from the husk, wheat and barley, alike scattered in confusion on the floor. Without delay, she set to work binding the sheaves together and gathering the scattered ears of corn in seemly wise, as a princess would wish to see them. While she was in the midst of her task, a voice startled her, and she looked up to behold Demeter herself, the goddess of the harvest, smiling upon her with good will.

"Dear Psyche," said Demeter, "you are worthy of happiness, and you may find it yet. But since you have

displeased Venus, go to her and ask her favor. Perhaps your patience will win her pardon."

These motherly words gave Psyche heart, and she reverently took leave of the goddess and set out for the temple of Venus. Most humbly she offered up her prayer, but Venus could not look at her earthly beauty without anger.

"Vain girl," said she, "perhaps you have come to make amends for the wound you dealt your husband; you shall do so. Such clever people can always find work!"

Then she led Psyche into a great chamber heaped high with mingled grain, beans, and lintels (the food of her doves), and bade her separate them all and have them ready in seemly fashion by night. Heracles would have been helpless before such a vexatious task; and poor Psyche, left alone in this desert of grain, had not courage to begin. But even as she sat there, a moving thread of black crawled across the floor from a crevice in the wall; and bending nearer, she saw that a great army of ants in columns had come to her aid. The zealous little creatures worked in swarms, with such industry over the work they like best, that, when Venus came at night, she found the task completed.

"Deceitful girl," she cried, shaking the roses out of her hair with impatience, "this is my son's work, not yours. But he will soon forget you. Eat this black bread

if you are hungry, and refresh your dull mind with sleep. Tomorrow you will need more wit."

Psyche wondered what new misfortune could be in store for her. But when morning came, Venus led her to the brink of a river, and, pointing to the wood across the water, said, "Go now to yonder grove where the sheep with the golden fleece are wont to browse. Bring me a golden lock from every one of them, or you must go your ways and never come back again."

This seemed not difficult, and Psyche obediently bade the goddess farewell, and stepped into the water, ready to wade across. But as Venus disappeared, the reeds sang louder and the nymphs of the river, looking up sweetly, blew bubbles to the surface and murmured: "Nay, nay, have a care, Psyche. This flock has not the gentle ways of sheep. While the sun burns aloft, they are themselves as fierce as flame; but when the shadows are long, they go to rest and sleep, under the trees; and you may cross the river without fear and pick the golden fleece off the briers in the pasture."

Thanking the water-creatures. Psyche sat down to rest near them, and when the time came, she crossed in safety and followed their counsel. By twilight she returned to Venus with her arms full of shining fleece.

"No mortal wit did this," said Venus angrily. "But if you care to prove your readiness, go now, with this little box, down to Proserpina and ask her to enclose in

it some of her beauty, for I have grown pale in caring for my wounded son."

It needed not the last taunt to sadden Psyche. She knew that it was not for mortals to go into Hades and return alive; and feeling that Love had forsaken her, she was minded to accept her doom as soon as might be.

But even as she hastened towards the descent, another friendly voice detained her. "Stay, Psyche, I know your grief. Only give ear and you shall learn a safe way through all these trials." And the voice went on to tell her how one might avoid all the dangers of Hades and come out unscathed. (But such a secret could not pass from mouth to mouth, with the rest of the story.)

"And be sure," added the voice, "when Proserpina has returned the box, not to open it, however much you may long to do so."

Psyche gave heed, and by this device, whatever it was, she found her way into Hades safely, and made her errand known to Proserpina, and was soon in the upper world again, wearied but hopeful.

"Surely Love has not forgotten me," she said. "But humbled as I am and worn with toil, how shall I ever please him? Venus can never need all the beauty in this casket; and since I use it for Love's sake, it must be

right to take some." So saying, she opened the box, heedless as Pandora! The spells and potions of Hades are not for mortal maids, and no sooner had she inhaled the strange aroma than she fell down like one dead, quite overcome.

But it happened that Love himself was recovered from his wound, and he had secretly fled from his chamber to seek out and rescue Psyche. He found her lying by the wayside; he gathered into the casket what remained of the philter, and awoke his beloved.

"Take comfort," he said, smiling. "Return to our mother and do her bidding till I come again."

Away he flew; and while Psyche went cheerily homeward, he hastened up to Olympus, where all the gods sat feasting, and begged them to intercede for him with his angry mother.

They heard his story and their hearts were touched. Zeus himself coaxed Venus with kind words till at last she relented, and remembered that anger hurt her beauty, and smiled once more. All the younger gods were for welcoming Psyche at once, and Hermes was sent to bring her hither. The maiden came, a shy newcomer among those bright creatures. She took the cup that Hebe held out to her, drank the divine ambrosia, and became immortal.

Light came to her face like moonrise, two radiant wings sprang from her shoulders; and even as a butterfly bursts from its dull cocoon, so the human Psyche blossomed into immortality.

Love took her by the hand, and they were never parted any more.