

Tales from Ancient Greece/Rome & Italy

IMAGINATIVE SERIES

SELECTED AUTHORS

Tales from Ancient Greece/Rome & Italy

Selected Authors

Libraries of Hope

Tales from Ancient Greece/Rome & Italy

Imaginative Series

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Contents

Stories of Old Greece 3
- Introduction 4
- Greece and the Greeks 6
- Helios and Clytie 8
- Phaethon 11
- Apollo, the Beautiful 15
- Hyacinthus 18
- Apollo and the Python 20
- Daphne, the Dawn-Maiden 23
- Hermes and Apollo 26
- Baucis and Philemon 30
- Rhoecus 34
- Arachne, the Little Spinner 37
- Psyche 40
- Orpheus, the Sweet Singer 45
- The Story of the Halcyon Birds 49
- Prometheus 53
- Epimetheus and Pandora 56
- Perseus, "The Son of the Bright Morning" 59

Tanglewood Tales Told to the Children 67
- About this Book 68
- Pandora 69
- Baucis 76
- Cadmus 85
- Proserpina 94

Midas 116
Myths of Old Greece 125
The Creation 126
Pandora 128
The Great Flood 130
The Story of Iris 132
Hera (Juno) and Iris 134
The New Creation 136
Apollo and Daphne 138
Io 140
Callisto 143
Actæon 146
King Midas 149
Glaucus and Scylla 153
Pygmalion and Galatea 157
Dryope 160
The Halcyon Birds 162
The Story of Pomona 166
The Dragon's Teeth 169
Clytie 172
Arachne 174
Perseus and Medusa 177
Pegasus and Bellerophon 181
Hercules 185
Theseus 192
Dædalus 197

The Race of Atalanta....199
Castor and Pollux....202
Arion, the Prize-Winner....204
Arion's Return....207
Alpheus and Arethusa....211
The Golden Apple....213
Ulysses' Return to Greece....222
Polyphemus....225
Æolus, the Wind-Keeper....228
Circe's Palace....231
The Sirens....234
Scylla And Charybdis....236
Wonder Stories....239
How the Myths Began....240
What Prometheus Did with a Bit of Clay....243
The Paradise of Children....248
What Became of the Giants....255
Where the Labyrinth Led....259
How Perseus Conquered the Sea....264
How Mars Lost a Battle....270
Cadmus, the Alphabet King....276
The Picture Minerva Wove....280
The Horn of Plenty....284
The Wonder the Frogs Missed....287
When Phaeton's Chariot Ran Away....293
When Apollo was Herdsman....299

How Jupiter Granted a Wish 303
How Hyacinthus Became a Flower..... 308
A Little Errand Girl's New Dress..... 312
When Pomona Shared Her Apples 317
How Psyche Reached Mount Olympus..... 322
The Fables of Æsop 329
Legends and Stories of Italy for Children..... 371
The Legend of the Christmas Rose 372
The Merciful Knight..... 377
The Saint-Maid of Lucca 382
S. Mark and the Fisherman..... 389
Domenica 395
The Legend of the Castellano..... 401
Stella Marts 406
The Angel and the Diavolo 410
Little Legends of the Madonna..... 415
The Little Countess 419
References 423

Tales from Ancient Greece/Rome and Italy

Month 4

Stories of Old Greece

By Emma M. Firth

Introduction

"THERE is an instinct in the human heart
Which makes all fables it has coined—
To justify the reign of its belief,
And strengthen it by beauty's right divine—
Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,
Which, like the hazel twig in faithful hands,
Points surely to the hidden springs of truth."

ASIDE from their use as a means of strengthening the imagination, the myths embody ethical truths, which are helpful just in proportion to the intellectual activity which the stories arouse. The child lover will seek for the best means in accomplishing her end—the harmonious culture of the child. In all that she does, she will be governed by the purest motives.

The telling of a story has a broader meaning than "that of entertainment. Its real motive is the making of what the child loves a means by which he may be led to a clearer understanding of his own powers and possibilities, and of his relations to others.

The child lives wholly in the present. He is semi-barbaric in his tendencies toward self-interest. He needs to be lifted from an indefinite present of childish pleasure to a definite understanding of his own powers, and a better exercise of his will. If by means of a story, well told, he can grasp the simple truth contained in it, he is making progress in the right direction. He is getting a foundation for the future study of literature, and gaming an appreciation for the beautiful in art.

All modern tendencies are to make children too realistic, and to stifle, rather than to cultivate, the fine imagination necessary to the creation or enjoyment of art and literature. By presenting these myths, the product of a primitive people, and therefore adapted to the child, because of their beauty and simplicity, we are giving him good material for the growth of a healthful imagination.

While the general motive for telling stories is this, there are special motives in each story, which, if thoroughly appreciated, may enhance the value of the story. The first myth, a flower and sun myth, is designed to inspire in the child a feeling for the beauty and dignity of friendship. The story of Phaethon emphasizes the folly of unreasonable requests. Baucis and Philemon teach respect for the aged, and hospitality. The Rhoecus urges the doing of the "duty which lies nearest." In nearly all the myths courage and self-forgetfulness are shown; and by arousing admiration for these qualities we may inspire in the child a desire to possess them.

These myths are meant to do for the little beginner what the study of literature does for the "children of a larger growth." They are but beginnings for beginners; but with the sincere hope that they may accomplish the desired results, the writer submits them to her fellow-teachers and to the dear children of America.

Greece and the Greeks

Long ago, when the earth was new and people had not lived long enough upon it to find out how little they really knew about it, there lived in a far-away country a simple and childlike people. The country was a small one, but it was very beautiful, and the people who lived in it loved it dearly. They loved its rugged mountains, green valleys, and swift-flowing streams. It is the little country which we call Greece; but then it was called Hellas.

The wide blue sea is on the east, and south, and west of Greece, but on the north there is a great wall of mountains, which separates it from the rest of Europe.

The Greeks have told many strange and beautiful stories about their country and its people. They were a strong and active people, and were fond of being out of doors and of all out-of-door amusements. Thus they became famous athletes. They could run swiftly, and could jump, wrestle, and use the bow and arrow with great accuracy and skill. They rode well on horse-back, and were very proud of their queer, clumsy chariots, and of their ability to curb their fiery steeds.

Their chariots were clumsy because they were very heavy; but the finer ones were as beautiful as the Greeks could make them with carvings, gold, and jewels.

They used their chariots in war, and in their chariot races. In war the Greeks were brave, and their heroes were the men who were the best warriors. They loved beautiful colors, fine pictures and statues; and their houses and temples were grander than any we have today. They were more skilful than we are in the art of carving statues from ivory and marble.

They made statues of their heroes and their gods.

It is strange that people who were so wise in many things knew nothing of the great God who made the earth. They thought that there were many gods, and that these gods lived in a beautiful place on the top of Mount Olympus. They thought that their gods were very much like themselves, but were wiser, and far more beautiful. Zeus was the greatest of the gods, and the Greeks believed that they heard his voice in the thunder. His wife, Hera, was pleasant to look upon, yet she had very unpleasant manners, and an unfortunate habit of turning into an animal any one who displeased her.

Poseidon lived in a beautiful palace at the bottom of the sea. With his trident he caused mighty tempests, or stilled the angry waves. He was carried from place to place in a shell chariot drawn by fish-horses, which bounded so swiftly over the water that the chariot scarcely touched its waves. Demeter looked after the fields, and brought good harvests to the people. Athena taught them to be wise in many ways. She taught them to do all kinds of hard work; and Helios, the sun-god, drove his golden chariot across the sky every morning. There were many other gods of whom the Greeks asked help, and of whom they told the stories which we shall read.

Helios and Clytie

HELIOS, the beautiful, was the sun-god, whom the Greeks loved and honored. He was tall, and as straight as an arrow. He had blue eyes, and hair which fell in golden curls over his shoulders. His limbs were strong, and the muscles of his arms stood out in rounded curves like the arms of an athlete. The sun-god was indeed a famous horseman. Every morning he drove his golden chariot across the sky. This was not an easy thing to do, for the horses were as wild as the Arabian horses of Ilderim. Ah, but they were beautiful, with their flowing manes and tails, their flashing eyes, graceful limbs, and silky coats! Fire flashed from their nostrils as they ran, and no horses have ever been swifter than those which drew the golden chariot.

Helios was proud of them, and indeed, he should have been very happy. But sometimes he grew quite tired of his pleasant task. The Hours, Minutes, and Seconds who went with him were often very tiresome, because they always said the same things. To be sure, Helios never grew tired of his beautiful sister, Eos, who drew aside the crimson curtains of the dawn. When he was ready to start, Eos bade him good-by with a pleasant smile.

At the end of the day's journey, Helios was received by the sea-nymphs, who took care of the horses, and prepared a soft conch on which he rested until the next day.

The beginning of the journey was very pleasant to Helios. The birds sang a greeting, the brooks and rivers made music for him, and the people down upon the green earth sang songs in his praise. Everybody and everything loved him. Even the

little ants, toiling away at their tiny sand mountains, watched for his coming. Helios should have been happy and contented at all times; but he was not. Sometimes his discontent darkened his bright face, so that people on the earth were frightened. In vain they sang their songs of praise and inquired, "Where is Helios?" No one could tell.

"Far down the gentle stream of Ocean" lived the stern old god Oceanus and his daughter Clytie. She was one of the sea-nymphs who danced and sang at evening when Helios returned. She was a bright and playful little nymph. All day long she ran laughing and dancing through her father's coral halls, and made his heart soften, even in his darkest moods; for Oceanus was very stern and unkind at times.

Helios was never too tired to talk to Clytie. They were the best of friends, and had many pleasant times together. Helios told her what had happened during the day, in the sky, or clown upon the earth. Sometimes his stories were bright, happy ones, but often Helios told of terrible wars and brave warriors killed by cruel lances; and then Clytie would put her hands over her ears and beg Helios to tell of other things more pleasant.

One day Helios promised to take Clytie with him in the chariot. "If you are not afraid, you shall go every day," he said. Clytie said that she would not be afraid with such a brave driver.

But Oceanus could not spare Clytie, and would not give his consent. "Ah, well, Leucothea will go, even though her father consent not," said Helios.

Helios had told Clytie about the little princess Leucothea, whose father was king of an eastern country. Why should Clytie stay at home and miss the pleasure which Leucothea would enjoy? Clytie made up her mind to go without asking her father. So she called her dolphins, and bade them bring her pink-lined chariot; and away they dashed through the waves and surf. They stopped at a little rock island where the

sea-nymphs played their happy games. By and by the golden chariot of Helios appeared far away in the east. Clytie's heart beat fast. She watched the sun-god as he drew nearer and nearer. She was sure that he would take her as he had promised. But Helios did not stop. Perhaps he had forgotten Clytie, or it may be that he dared not offend Oceanus. Helios drove right along, not deigning even so much as a glance toward the little rock island. Perhaps he did not know that a sad and disappointed little maiden was watching so patiently.

Day after day Clytie waited in vain for the fickle sun-god. "He has forgotten me—he will not keep his promise," she sobbed; and she threw herself upon the rocks, and refused the comfort offered by her gentle sister nymphs.

Clytie stayed so long on the rocks that her feet became rooted in the sand, and her golden hair was changed into the yellow rays of the sunflower, which still turns toward the bright chariot of Helios.

Phaethon

PHAETHON was a tall, handsome youth, with flashing eyes and a dauntless spirit. He was known as the most daring among his companions, for no deed, however reckless it might be, was too dangerous for Phaethon to undertake. And yet, with all his bravery he was a great boaster, often bringing ridicule upon himself because of his vanity.

One day he was boasting about his father, Helios. Now, as every one knows, a great and wise father may not always have a son as wise and great as himself, and Phaethon's friends taunted him with this; and even declared that his father was not a god at all.

This was too much for Phaethon's pride. and rushing to his mother, Clymene, he earnestly besought her to tell him the truth, and assure him of his noble birth.

"My son," said Clymene, "thou art too apt to boast, and wilt surely come to grief in consequence; but of a truth, thou art the son of thy father, Helios, and to convince thyself, go and ask him."

Now Phaethon had never seen his father. In order that he might be self-dependent he had been brought up far away from the palace to which his mother intended to take him when he had proven himself worthy. Clymene told him how difficult he would find the journey; but Phaethon was willing to overcome all difficulties, and he started at once. On the way he had many adventures, but at last found himself in a far Eastern country, which has for its boundary a wall of high mountains.

On the top of the highest mountain was the palace of the sun-god, a palace of far greater beauty than any which Phaethon had ever seen, and its brightness dazzled him. It had golden columns, great silver doors, and its ceilings were of ivory. On the walls were vast pictures of the sky, the rivers, oceans, and lands of the earth; and most wonderful of all were the pictures of all the people of the earth in their cities and villages.

But Phaethon did not stop to look at these beautiful things, or to listen to the sweet music of many fountains. He entered the hall in which Helios was preparing to take his daily journey; and walking straight up to the sun-god exclaimed, "O light of the boundless world, my father, claim me, I pray thee, as thy son, for such I surely am."

Helios bade him approach, and kissing him, exclaimed, "Thou art most welcome, my son. I have looked long for thy coming, and to prove my love for thee, thou shalt ask what thou wilt, and it shall be granted thee."

At this moment the goddess of the morning, Eos, drew aside a beautiful crimson veil, and the chariot and horses were brought in. It was a glorious moment. The attendants burst into a chorus of glad music; the air became sweet with perfume, as from many flowers, and the spirited horses stamped impatiently at the delay.

Phaethon looked at the horses, and then at the dazzling chariot. Hephaestus had given it to Helios. With its wheels of gold and spokes of silver, which sparkled and flashed with many-colored jewels, it was charming. Phaethon became possessed of a great desire to drive the fire-flashing horses. "Let me but drive them for a day," he asked; "then shall I prove to thee how worthy a son am I for so great a father." Then, bending low, he exclaimed, "Grant this one wish, I pray thee."

"I cannot grant thee that wish, my son. The horses can be safely driven only by Helios himself. Ask anything else."

But Phaethon, foolish lad, insisted, and as Helios had promised, he at length yielded, after trying in vain to turn Phaethon from his intention.

Phaethon was very stubborn. He longed for the glory of having driven the sun-chariot for a day, and with this desire strong in his heart, he forgot to respect the wishes of an older and wiser person.

When he started upon his journey the chorus ceased; the Hours, Minutes, and Seconds looked sad; Spring dropped her flowers; Summer threw down her garlands of roses, and Autumn's rosy face turned pale, while old Winter's icicles began to melt.

At first it was fine sport holding the reins over the fire-breathing horses. Helios had wisely allowed them their own pace, which was far from slow; but Phaethon urged them on until they were rushing at a terrific speed quite out of their regular course. At length they came so near to the poisonous Scorpio, that Phaethon was in danger of being grasped by the great claws, and dropping the reins in his fright, he clung desperately to the chariot.

The horses plunged wildly on. They came so near to the earth that the oceans and rivers dried up, the mountains began to smoke, and the people cried to Zeus for help.

When Zeus saw what had been so foolishly done, he became very angry, and sent a bolt which hurled Phaethon from the chariot, down, down—his hair and clothes on fire—into a river which hid him in its cool waters.

A sad ending was this to Phaethon's great day. But, sadder still, two maidens who were standing on the bank of the river, saw in the boy-comet their brother Phaethon. They could not help him; they could only stand and weep, and they wept so long that their feet became rooted to the ground, and they turned into poplar-trees. If you will listen near one of these trees you may still hear the gentle sighing of the poplar-sisters for their brother.

Phaethon's friend Cygnos saw the fall, and was deeply grieved. Day after day he mourned, and each day his neck grew longer as he lingered near the water and looked into its waves. He became a swan and spent his time floating on the river, always looking for, but never finding Phaethon. Only once did he call Phaethon, and that was when he was dying.

Apollo, the Beautiful

LONG ago, on the rocky island of Delos, a little baby opened his blue eyes to the light of day.

It was so joyful an event that the birds sang, flowers sprang from the ground in full bloom, and the little wood-nymphs danced merrily. A great joy came into the hearts of men, and the earth was full of gladness.

Apollo, the beautiful, was born. He it was who brought health and prosperity to men, and who caused the flowers to bloom and the grains to ripen, until the fields lay smiling in warmth and gladness, and the shepherds upon the hillsides broke forth into songs of joy.

A beautiful goddess, Themis, gave Apollo a bow, and a quiver full of shining arrows, and better than these, a lyre. Then she gave the little Apollo some of the nectar and ambrosia which is the food of the gods.

No sooner had he eaten it than he began to grow taller and taller, until he had become a handsome youth. How strong, and noble, and brave he was!

Taking his bow and his lyre, he said, "These shall be my friends. I will teach the will of my father Zeus to men. I will teach them the songs of nature, and they shall sing more sweetly than the birds. I will teach them to see new beauty in the hills and fields. I will foretell to them the future, and they shall become wise like the gods."

So Apollo started forth to do this noble work for men. They began to grow wiser and better. The people honored him by making beautiful temples, and by growing skilful in the arts of poetry and music.

Apollo was well loved by the gods; but he once offended Zeus, and the anger of the greatest of the gods was intense. Apollo's dear friend, Aesculapius, the god of medicine, had been killed by the thunderbolts of the giant Cyclops. Apollo killed the giant, and Zeus had no one to forge his thunderbolts.

For this offence, Zeus sent Apollo to Thessaly, and, taking away his power, made him a servant to Admetus, the king of that country.

So Apollo became a simple shepherd. But even on the hills, dressed in rough skins, the god lost none of his beauty. He played on his lyre so skilfully that the king called him to his palace, to play for his beautiful wife, Alcestis.

Apollo and Admetus became firm friends. Apollo loved the king so dearly that he could not bear to think of the time when Admetus should grow old and die.

He begged the Fates to make him immortal, so that he would never die. "He shall be like thee, immortal Apollo, but some one must die in his stead," they said.

One day Admetus grew ill; and Alcestis, bending over him, said, "Thou shalt not die, Admetus, I will die for thee. 'Life is sweet,' and thou shalt live to enjoy its sweetness."

So the noble Alcestis died, and the home of Admetus was full of mourning.

When Heracles, the strong, came to visit Admetus, he found a sad state of affairs. In spite of his grief, Admetus tried to make his guest feel welcome. After hearing the sad story, Heracles went away.

He soon returned, bringing a lady whose face Admetus could not see.

"Wilt thou care for this noble lady, Admetus?" said Heracles.

At first Admetus thought that it was a stranger; but when he found that it was his own dear wife, his joy was as great as his grief had been. Heracles had brought Alcestis back after

he had fought with and conquered the messenger of Aides.

While Apollo was caring for the flocks of Admetus, his lyre was seldom silent; and so well did he play that the tall reeds and grasses trembled with pleasure, and softly echoed the sweet strains.

Hyacinthus

ONE day, upon a green hillside. Apollo saw another shepherd lad, who was playing upon a pipe, and making music which sounded like the sighing of the pine-trees. Apollo drew near and stood before the shepherd. "What is thy name, noble youth?" he asked.

The shepherd was dazzled by the brightness of the god, but answered simply, "Hyacinthus."

"Thy name is well suited to thee. Let me play upon thy pipe," said Apollo.

Hyacinthus, although astonished at the great beauty of Apollo, was even more amazed at the sweetness of his music, for no mortal had ever heard such music before.

The shepherd lad was charmed into silence, as were also the birds and bees, while even the little brook, which had been rippling down hill, paused in a quiet pool to listen.

Apollo finally returned the pipe, saying frankly, "I like you, Hyacinthus. We will be friends, and you shall go with me to the palace of King Admetus."

Hyacinthus' eyes sparkled; he longed to go, but when he thought of his sheep, he said, "But what would become of my sheep? I must not leave them. No, no, Apollo; I cannot go with you!"

"Noble youth, I love you the better because you prefer duty to pleasure; and since you cannot come with me, I will come to you. Tomorrow I will come again."

Apollo came again; and for many happy days they played and talked, and learned to love each other, as only the best of friends can do.

One day they were playing a game of quoits. They were both very eager and earnest, Hyacinthus wishing that Apollo might win, Apollo wishing for the success of Hyacinthus. Apollo picked up the discus, and made a splendid throw. He would have won, but a sad thing happened. The West Wind, who, as you know, is a wild and gloomy fellow, had grown jealous of the friendship. No doubt he thought that he could make them quarrel. He blew the discus so that it bounded back and hit Hyacinthus on the forehead. Apollo rushed forward and tenderly lifted the wounded head from the ground, but it drooped like a broken flower.

Apollo wept and moaned, for poor Hyacinthus was dead. He could play no more with his beloved friend.

"Ah, Hyacinthus, would that I could have died for thee! My lyre shall tell of thy sad fate, and I will cause thee to be remembered, for thou wert indeed a noble friend."

So where the bright blood of Hyacinthus had fallen, Apollo caused to spring up the beautiful flower which bears his name—the hyacinth.

Apollo and the Python

APOLLO carried a silver bow and a quiver full of golden arrows, which were not only very beautiful, but also very dangerous. They had been known to slay whole armies, and even to dry up the rivers and lakes into which they had fallen. But you must not suppose that he was an angry and an unjust god; he was as brave as he was beautiful, and as kind as he was brave.

One day he saw that the people down upon the green earth were very unhappy about something. This made him sad, for he wished always to see them happy and cheerful; so he came down to see what troubled them. He walked through a green valley, where a river ran laughing toward the sea, and stopped near a house in the doorway of which sat a little boy sobbing bitterly.

When Apollo asked him the cause of his grief, he pointed to a far-away blue mountain, and said, between his sobs, that a great dragon lived in the mountain caves. At night, when the people slept, this dragon came silently down, breathed upon them his poisoned breath, and in the morning they did not awaken. He told Apollo that his dear mamma was yet asleep; that he had been calling to her, but she did not answer.

Apollo shot a golden arrow into the room, then, patting the boy's shining curls, he said, "Laugh and be happy, little one; the dragon shall never come again."

Then the little boy heard his mother's voice calling to him very softly; and clapping his hands with delight, he ran into the house.

Apollo knew that his old enemy, the python, was doing all the mischief, and he determined to kill the monster. This was not an easy task, even for Apollo; for the serpent hid himself in the deep recesses of the mountain caves during the daytime; and he had a sly habit of making himself invisible. Apollo grasped his bow firmly, and chose three of his straightest arrows.

He climbed the steep, craggy side of the mountain, and looked carefully into its many caves. At last he found one which was larger than the others. He shot a swift and silent arrow back into the darkness, and not without result; for there with a sparkling roof of precious stones above him, lay the python, coiled in an ugly heap. He was just ready to spring at the intruder, but Apollo's arrow pinned the flat head to the earth.

The python lashed about in its fury, and filled the cave with its fiery and poisonous breath; but Apollo could not be harmed by it. Again and again his careful aim took effect, and at last the ugly, quivering mass became silent. The python was dead, and Apollo went on his journey again.

How happy the people were! They sang songs in praise of Apollo; and over the cave where he had killed the python, they built a beautiful temple. They played many games in his honor, and these were called the Pythian games. There were chariot and foot races, quoit-throwing, wrestling, and the performing of many feats of strength by the young men. The winner of the games was called a victor, and was crowned with a wreath of laurel leaves, of which he was perhaps more proud than a king is of his golden crown.

Long ago, a great sculptor made a statue to be put in one of Apollo's temples. It proved to be a remarkable work of art, for no one had ever made so beautiful a statue before, and its excellence has never since been equalled. It was found many years after it had been made, not far from the great city of Rome, and was taken to the belvedere of the Vatican in that

city. This fine statue is called the Apollo Belvedere and represents the sun-god after he had shot the golden arrow into the python's cave. He seems proud and happy at the thought of having done a great deed for the people of the earth.

Daphne, the Dawn-Maiden

In a beautiful palace, far up on Mount Olympus, lived Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty, and her pretty little boy, Eros.

Eros was a bright and winning little fellow: but since the truth must be told, he was mischievous and often did harm by his thoughtless ways. His mother had given him a bow and arrows, and Eros had become quite a skilful archer. Sometimes, however, he sent his arrows so carelessly that he wounded people without meaning to do so. The arrows were tiny, but the wounds which they made were difficult to heal.

One day Eros sat on the rim of a fountain, shooting at the pond-lilies, which seemed to be glancing up at him and filling the air with dainty perfume.

All at once, the water of the fountain shone like molten gold. Apollo, the god of light, stood beside it. When he saw what Eros was doing, he picked up the bundle of arrows, laughed, and carelessly threw them down, breaking several.

"Why, Eros," said Apollo, "are you playing with such war-like weapons? It is not strange that the butterflies and water-spiders have left the fountain to-day; they have saved their lives by so doing. How many pond-lilies have you killed, my son?

"Put these toys away! By and by you shall have a real bow and arrows, like mine, which have just killed the python."

Not only had Apollo broken Eros' arrows, but he had wounded his pride, which was far worse for Eros to endure, and he was very angry. Picking up one of the broken arrows, he said—

"Well, Apollo, your arrows may strike everything, but you shall some day be wounded by mine."

Apollo laughed, and said that he was not afraid of such tiny weapons.

The fountain, on the rim of which Eros sat, was a very wonderful fountain. Its water dimpled and sparkled in the sunlight, looking so delicious and cool that all who saw it desired to partake of it. And for those who drank this water, a charm was wrought; for it made everybody happy and contented. Enemies became friends, and all cares were forgotten, for it was the fountain of Content.

There was another fountain, too, in Aphrodite's garden, which was filled with bitter water; and very unfortunate indeed was the one who drank of this water, for he became filled with unfriendly feelings toward everybody and everything. He began to dislike his best friends, and sought to do them injury. And this was the fountain of Discontent.

The angry Eros, bent upon punishing Apollo, dipped one arrow into the sweet water, and another into the bitter. Then he followed Apollo down into the beautiful Vale of Tempe, the home of the river-god, Peneus, and his little daughter, Daphne.

Daphne was exceedingly pretty, with eyes that shone like stars, dimpled and rosy cheeks, and a face always full of sunshine. Perhaps that was because she and the sun-god were such good friends, for they talked together, and sang together, while they sat by the river-side. Apollo told his little friend about the terrible monsters which were sometimes seen from his golden chariot; about the Scorpio with its poisonous claws, and the Bull with its angry horns. When the eyes of the little girl grew round with fright, Apollo told her about the earth and of his own palace, with its gorgeous attendants. Daphne and Apollo had only the kindest of words for each other.

But Eros did a dreadful thing! He shot the bitter arrow at Daphne. It did not hurt badly, but it had the power of

changing the feelings of friendship to those of dislike and distrust.

He shot the sweetened arrow at Apollo, so that he longed to have Daphne with him always, and even desired to take her away from her home in the Vale of Tempe. So he asked her to leave Peneus and go with him in the chariot.

Daphne was very angry that Apollo should ask her to leave the beautiful things which she loved—her home, the birds, and her kind old father; and when the thought could no longer be endured, she turned and ran away.

Apollo followed, for he did not see that Daphne had changed so quickly. They both ran swiftly; but Apollo was the swifter runner of the two, and would surely have overtaken Daphne, but she ran to the river-bank, and throwing up her arms, cried, "Oh, help me, Peneus, my father! I do not wish to leave you. Take me, and send Apollo away."

Peneus heard her, and caused the ground to open. Daphne's feet began to sink into the soft earth. Her outstretched arms became stiff and strong, and her tender flesh and white garments were changed into the trunk and bark of a tree. Instead of her golden hair and pink cheeks, Apollo saw only the green leaves and pink flowers of the laurel. He was deeply grieved. He had not time to ask Daphne the cause of her strange actions before she was lost to sight.

Apollo plucked some of the leaves and twined them about his harp, saying sadly, "Ah, Daphne, if you will not be my friend, you shall be my tree. Boreas shall never change the color of your leaves: they shall always be green; and when great deeds are done, none are more fit than these to crown the victor."

And ever since then the laurel has been sacred to Apollo; and heroes and great poets are crowned with wreaths of laurel even to this day.

Hermes and Apollo

Long ago, in a cave of the beautiful blue hills of the Lotus land, a little bright-eyed baby lay fast asleep. He slept as softly and as sweetly in his rock cradle as the little now-a-day babies do upon their downy pillows; for the bees hummed his lullaby, and the birds and mountain brooks sang his cradle songs. The cave was filled with sweet scents from flowery fields, and no passer-by disturbed the little sleeper, Hermes.

Hermes was the son of Zeus; and being the child of so great a father, was of course quite different from other children. Indeed, he was a very wonderful baby; for when he was but four days old, he crept out of the cave, then stood up, and after a few trials began walking along the soft sand, and by and by he began to talk. He talked to the birds, insects, and flowers, and they talked to him, although in a different language. Everything was new and beautiful, and Hermes was very happy. He clapped his dimpled hands when he saw a tortoise creeping slowly toward the water.

"Stop," said he. "Where are you going, little tortoise? I will go too."

But the tortoise did not wish to talk, nor did he care for company; but he stopped and blinked his small bright eyes at the blue-eyed little boy.

"Ah, you are silent now," cried Hermes; "but by and by you shall sing more sweetly than the birds."

But the tortoise had no time to think about the matter, for Hermes killed it, and taking its shell, stretched skin across it, then stretched strings across the skin. So the poor, silent little tortoise lost its life that its shell might be used in making

a musical instrument.

Hermes made each string give a different tone; and much pleased with his work, he began to sing and to play. Everything else was silent as the sound of the lyre trembled in the air; and as the soft, sweet music attracted their attention, the birds hopped about Hermes, and the animals drew near to listen. He sang of the ocean, with its white crested waves; of the sandy beach and pink-lined shells. But he sang best of all about his great father, Zeus, and of his beautiful mother, Maia.

By and by he grew tired of this pleasant occupation, and, looking about him, saw on the far-away hills the white oxen of Apollo, quietly grazing. He thought that it would be great sport to drive them from hill to hill. He knew he could show them where the greenest grasses grew. Apollo had so many oxen, surely he would not miss a few. Thus did Hermes try to ease his mind, for although no one had told him that it would not be right to drive the oxen away, he really felt that it would not be treating Apollo fairly.

After looking at the oxen for some time, he decided to help himself. Sly little Hermes! In order that Apollo should not find which way they had gone, he tied twigs to his own soft feet and to those of the oxen, then drove them by a crooked path to a far-away cave. He did not feel quite comfortable about it when he came to his cave and went back into his cradle—for he was still the baby Hermes, although so sly and cunning. He did not feel quite right about the oxen. His conscience troubled him. He could not sleep. He began to wish he had not taken them.

Apollo was very angry when he found his oxen missing. His usually good temper was dreadfully ruffled, and he went about in a great hurry, asking everybody about the lost animals; but no one had seen them.

At length he came to an old man who had watched Hermes as he drove the cattle away. At first the old man

refused to tell anything; but when Apollo promised him fruitful vines and good harvests, the old man was so pleased that he told Apollo what he had seen—how a little boy with a staff in his hands had driven them away over the hills.

Now, Apollo knew who the little boy was, and went at once to the cave where lay Hermes, pretending to be asleep. When Apollo asked for his oxen, Hermes covered his eyes and ears, and refused to talk; but Apollo coaxed and threatened, and at last said some cross things. He went to Zeus, who bade Hermes to come with Apollo and settle the dispute. So the angry sun-god and the naughty Hermes went together to the great hall where all the gods and goddesses were waiting. drinking nectar and eating ambrosia, while the pretty Hebe served them politely.

How the gods and goddesses laughed when Apollo said that the little baby-boy, Hermes, had stolen his cattle! But when Zeus said, "Hermes, you must give back the oxen, and put them upon the hillside pasture again," there was no other way to do; so the cattle were brought back, and when Apollo again visited the cave of Hermes, there was peace and friendship between them.

Hermes showed Apollo his lyre, and when Apollo swept his hand across the strings, even the little waves on the blue sea stopped chasing one another to listen; then they too sang the same song, and they sing it to this day. Hermes opened his eyes in wonder, then exclaimed, "Apollo, you are truly the god of light and music. You may keep the lyre. It speaks only to those who know its tones; to all others it is but noise."

Apollo did not wish to take the lyre without giving something in return, so he gave to Hermes a wand which had the power of making friends of those who had been enemies, and of settling disputes. It is called the Caduceus. Apollo also gave to Hermes the care of his flocks; and if you will look for them, you can see the white oxen of Apollo in his sunny pastures, for Hermes is the wind, and the oxen are the clouds.

When Apollo had gone with his lyre, Hermes went out to try the wand. Finding two serpents fighting and lashing the ground with their slender tails, he touched them with the wand, and they twined themselves lovingly about it. Thus, even now, does Hermes heal all difficulties.

Zeus was greatly pleased with the peaceful ending of the quarrel. He made Hermes the trusted messenger of the gods, and gave him a winged cap and sandals.

Baucis and Philemon

How the Lindens and the Oaks Grew

ALTHOUGH the home of Zeus was up above the cloud-capped mountains, in a beautiful country where there was perpetual sunshine; where fell neither drenching rains nor heavy snows, the great god often came down to the earth. Disguised as a mortal, he wandered to and fro, mingling with the people and feeling glad and sorry with them.

The people of Greece had very strange ideas about the earth in those far-away childish clays. They knew all about their own fair country, for they had climbed its mountains and traversed its valleys; but beyond these were strange regions, about which they thought a great deal, although they knew but little.

They thought that the earth was flat, like a great shield; that their own country was in the centre; and that the home of the gods was Mount Olympus, which rose above them, like the central point on the great brass shields which you have seen.

They thought that the great River-Ocean flowed around the earth, and poured its waters into the Aegean Sea and the seas about which they knew. North of them was the beautiful land of the Hyperboreans, in which country were the happiest of people, who spent their time in singing and dancing, laughing and dreaming—a careless, idle people, doing no work, never growing old, and always free from sickness or war. A poet has written one of the songs of these joyous Hyperboreans.

South of Greece was a country quite as beautiful, and a

people quite as happy—the god-favored Ethiopians. On the west were the Isles of the Blessed, where good people were taken by the gods, and where they lived forever in happiness. So you see the Greeks knew very little about the countries around them; for we have learned that these are very strange and useless beliefs about the earth.

When we think that other places are so much better than our own, and that happiness can be found everywhere else than in our own little corner of the world, we, like the Greeks, are believers in a land of the Hyperboreans, into which we cannot expect to enter.

Zeus often visited these strange and blissful regions; and he chose Hermes for a companion, because he had the winged cap and sandals, and could travel rapidly. Then, too, Hermes was a famous storyteller; and who does not love to listen to a good story? Hermes' stories were his own. They were not always true; but they pleased the dignified and stately Zeus, nevertheless.

One day Hermes and Zeus had walked for a long distance in search of the Elysian Plains. They were weary and footsore, and they had travelled over steep mountains and through sunny valleys without having found a path. They had made frequent inquiries, but each person whom they asked had told them to go in a different direction. So they decided to give up the search until the next day; and just as Helios was driving far down in the west, they came to a village, nestled close beneath a high mountain.

Hermes and Zeus were dressed like mortals; their clothes were dusty and torn, and they looked like very ordinary travellers. At the outskirts of the village, they came to a fine large house with marble pillars, around which were great shady trees inviting rest. Hermes said, "Let us go in here. This will be a nice place to rest." So they walked up to the arched portico, and would have entered, but a richly dressed man came out and bade them begone.

Again and again they sought rest at different houses, but with no better success. In this manner they passed through the village. At length they came to a little tumble-down house with which the West Wind had played many a rough game. Two old people were sitting on a rude bench by the door; and at sight of the travellers, they both arose and welcomed them gladly. They gave up their bench; the housewife brought water in a wooden bowl; while the man unfastened their sandals, and helped them to bathe their faces, hands, and feet. Inside the house the good lady spread a coarse cloth upon the table, and began to get supper. To the wearied and hungry travellers, all this was very pleasant indeed. To be treated as if they were long-expected guests was as delightful to Hermes and Zeus then as it is to mortals now.

They began to talk to the old man, who seemed cheerful and happy in spite of his poverty.

"To whom do we owe this pleasure?" asked Zeus.

"This is Baucis, my wife," and "That is Philemon, my husband," they both answered, almost in the same breath.

They were too polite to ask who the strangers were or where they were going. They talked of the harvests and about the games in which some of the young men of the village had taken part, and had been victorious. Then they went into the house, with its one room, its rickety old table, and shaky chairs. Baucis began to say how sorry she was that she had nothing better to offer. She had only cakes, grapes, and milk; and these did not seem very much for two hungry people. Baucis and Philemon said that they were not at all hungry, and urged their guests to eat all that, there was in the dishes. And how they did eat! The dishes were nearly empty; one cake and the last bunch of grapes remained, and there was no more milk in the pitcher, when Hermes politely asked for more. Baucis tipped the pitcher to pour out the last drop, when, lo! it was full to the brim of rich and sparkling nectar, while each humble dish was turned into a glittering vessel of

gold, filled with rare dainties, such as Baucis and Philemon had never dreamed of. They were now invited to the feast, and they fell upon their knees, for they discovered that their visitors were the gods themselves.

"Good Baucis and Philemon," said Zeus, "ye have shown us the true beauty of hospitality, and ye are deserving of gifts worthy of those whom ye have served. Rise and follow us."

The gods led the way to the top of a hill, and there, pausing, bade Baucis and Philemon look back.

The whole scene had changed. They saw no longer the village with its white houses among the trees, but, instead, a blue and sparkling lake. In the midst of this lake, on an island, stood their old home; and as they looked, it began to change. Slowly its crumbling walls rose into tall and stately columns, and the old roof became the pediment of a beautiful temple. On the pediment were statues of Zeus and the gods.

"This shall be your home," said Zeus. "It is a temple sacred to Zeus, and it shall be taken care of by those who know well how to care for the needs of others. Is there a wish you would have granted?"

"Great father Zeus," said Baucis, "we pray that we may never part, but that we may go together to the land of the afternoon."

One day Baucis and Philemon were standing before the temple; and as they looked lovingly into each other's eyes, Baucis said, "Ah Philemon, would that we could remain here always!"

She had scarcely spoken these words, when Philemon was changed into a beautiful tree; and looking down at her feet, she saw that she herself was changing. So Baucis became a beautiful linden, and Philemon a strong and sturdy oak. For years they stood before the temple, and with each passing breeze, they whispered loving words to each other.

Rhoecus

AT the foot of the cloud-capped mountains in Greece was a forest, in which grew laurel, the linden, the oak, and many other kinds of trees, as dear to the Greeks as they are to us.

The Greeks loved to wander along the paths of the green forests beneath the spreading branches of its great trees; and they enjoyed this all the more, because they believed that each tree was the home of a Dryad, and that in each brook and river lived the water-nymphs.

Nymphs and Dryads were seldom seen by mortal eyes; but did not these simple people know that they were there? They could hear their voices in the rustling of the leaves, in the rippling of the brooks, and in the rush of water in the rivers.

The nymphs of the rivers and streams were the Naiads; those of the ocean the Nereids; and those of the wood the Dryads and Hamadryads. They must have had happy times in their forest homes, with the birds and bees for messengers. The Naiads and Nereids lived always; but, sad to say, the life of the poor little Dryads ended when the tree died.

One day a young Grecian lad named Rhoecus was walking through the forest on his way to join the sports in which his friends were engaged. His merry face and bright eyes had caught the sunshine which flickered through the leaves. He was singing gayly, stopping now and then to pick a flower, or watch a sly little spider spinning her silken trap.

At length he came to a very old oak-tree, the mossy trunk of which was falling apart, so that a strong wind would have blown it down. Rhoecus thought of the many summers it had seen; and peering into the great hollow trunk, he wondered

whether the Dryad were at home. He felt sorry for the old tree, and propped it up, saying as he did so, "There, old tree, the West Wind shall not yet have a chance to laugh at your downfall."

As Rhoecus turned to go, he thought that he heard some one calling to him very softly. He listened. Yes; some one was surely calling to him. "Rhoecus, Rhoecus!" The voice was very sweet; and Rhoecus, searching for its owner, saw up among the green branches a little maiden. "Are you calling me?" he asked very gently.

"Yes, Rhoecus, you have been very kind and have saved my life; for do you not see these green branches growing out of the old trunk of my tree? Ask what you wish. It is in my power to help you."

Rhoecus thought of many things which he would like to possess, or to be. He had seen the warriors with their horses and chariots; their gleaming shields and flashing swords.

"I should like to be a great warrior, little Dryad," said he.

"Ah, Rhoecus, to fight bravely is a great thing; but after you are dead, men will simply say of you, 'He fought well.' Think again. Is that the best wish? Would you not rather live nobly for others than die nobly for fame?"

"That is a better wish," said Rhoecus. "Make me good and true, like yourself. Come with me and be my friend and helper always. Then can I be true and good."

"I cannot make you good; only Rhoecus can do that. But if you will come here an hour before sunset. I will tell you about the Nymphs and Dryads; and although I cannot make you good. I will make you wise. To be good and wise is to be like a god," said the Dryad.

Rhoecus, after promising to return, went on his way in a very happy mood. At the gate of the city he found his friends, who were playing just outside the city wall; and as he was a very good player, they welcomed him gladly. He was a strong, swift runner, and could throw the discus with greater skill

than any of his companions. He became so eager in trying to win that he forgot his promise to the Dryad. The hours flew faster than the swallows.

All at once a bee began to buzz about Rhoecus' head. It flew around and around, until he became quite angry, saying, as he brushed at it roughly, "Does it take me for a rose?" He hurt the little bee, and it flew slowly away; and as Rhoecus glanced after it, he noticed that Helios had reached the highest mountain peaks in Thessaly. Then came the thought of his promise. What if he were too late? He dropped the discus and ran, until, all out of breath, he reached the old oak-tree.

He looked up among the twisted branches. No gentle glance from the little Dryad met his own; but as he peered into the shadows, he heard the low voice again.

"Oh, Rhoecus! You did not keep your promise; and you hurt my little messenger, the bee. I cannot come to you now, for only gentle eyes may look upon us. I would be a friend to Rhoecus kind and thoughtful; but to the careless, thoughtless Rhoecus, I cannot come."

"Come back, little Dryad! I will be kind next time. I will remember next time," cried Rhoecus.

"No, Rhoecus. You must learn to be true to yourself and to your promises. He who does a little wrong thoughtlessly will do a greater. Good-bye."

Sadly and thoughtfully Rhoecus wandered homeward, and as he passed beneath them, the trees seemed to whisper, "Oh, Rhoecus, thoughtless Rhoecus!" and the little stars and the great, kind moon seemed to say, "You must learn to think for others, Rhoecus; then you will be good and happy too."

Arachne, the Little Spinner

ATHENE, the goddess of wisdom, taught the Grecian people the useful arts, and they honored her by giving to her the care of one of their fairest cities, Athens. In this beautiful city they built the Parthenon and dedicated it to Athene. In the temple they placed a statue of the goddess. It was made of ivory and gold, and its robes were spun, woven, and embroidered by the fairest maidens in Greece.

The Greek maidens all knew how to spin and embroider. They said that Athene taught them. It would have been wrong to think otherwise.

One day a Grecian maiden sat spinning beneath an olive-tree on the shore of the blue Aegean Sea. She was a pretty picture. Her hair was like spun gold, and her face was very fair to look upon. She held her head high, and turned it somewhat haughtily when a sly little nymph, who had been watching, asked her about her work.

The little maid was Arachne, the most skilful spinner in Greece. None could equal her in the weaving of beautiful webs; and her fame had gone abroad, for the webs which Arachne wove and embroidered with her nimble fingers were sent far away, to be worn by the great people of other lands.

Everybody praised the little maid so lavishly that they quite turned her head. It was unfortunate indeed that a maiden so charming in most respects should not be agreeable in all; but the foolish little Arachne was so much given to boasting of herself and of her skill that she was at times far from agreeable. At such times the little nymphs, who stole softly near to watch her as her slender fingers flew deftly to and fro,

ran back to their vines and streams, while her friends grew weary and left her alone.

One day Arachne made a foolish boast. She declared that she excelled even Athene herself.

"O Arachne. Arachne, how wicked! Why, Athene taught you all you know," cried her friends.

But the vain little maiden shook her pretty head, saying, "Athene taught me not. I taught myself."

Arachne's friends were shocked. They went home at once, while the naughty Arachne, with a toss of her proud little head, went on spinning and spinning.

By and by a shadow fell across the snowy wool, and looking up, Arachne saw an old woman leaning on her staff.

"My daughter, I heard that remark. It was foolish; but you are young, and perchance were jesting. You do not mean to compare yourself with Athene?"

"Yes, I do," said Arachne, still spinning.

"Then you have greatly offended the goddess, and should beg her pardon."

"I do not care. Do you suppose that Athene could weave a mantle finer than this?" And Arachne held up a soft scarf, rich with Tyrian purple and gold. "Let Athene come and try, if she thinks she can do better. I will match my skill with hers."

As Arachne said this, the cloak fell from the old woman's shoulders, and the stately goddess Athene stood before her. But Arachne was not abashed. She refused to ask pardon, and insisted upon a trial of skill.

They met on the shores of the sea, while the sea-nymphs, the tritons, and Arachne's friends watched anxiously. Never before had a mortal dared to vie with a goddess; and every one knew that, should Arachne fail, her punishment would be severe. So they watched, almost breathlessly, as the hands of the spinners deftly carded the soft, fine wool, then twisted it into threads. Then these threads were stretched on frames, and soon the shuttles flew back and forth as if by magic.

Athene wove into her web the colors of the rainbow, and more beautiful pictures than mortal eyes had ever beheld. She made pictures of the gods—Zeus seated on his throne, with the stately Hera, and all the gods and goddesses in attendance; Helios in his chariot; Proserpine with her garlands of flowers; and the sea-god Poseidon, with his trident. There was truth and beauty in every line of Athene's web. Arachne's web was also beautiful, but it was not entirely truthful, for her pictures were those which showed the errors and failings of others.

When Athene's web was finished, Zephyrus bore it aloft, and stretched it across the sky in a beautiful arch. But Arachne's web grew darker and darker. She knew that she was beaten, but would not ask forgiveness of the now angry Athene, who struck the web and rent it. Arachne snatched the fragments, and would have strangled herself; but Athene said, "Ah, Arachne, there is no pleasure in working for others unless truth and beauty enter into all which we do. That which is done for self-praise is wrong. Yon shall live to warn people who boast of their skill rather than make it a means of doing good." Then she touched Arachne; and, sad to tell, her beautiful hair fell off, her body shrivelled, and she turned into a spider. But she still shows us how wonderful a web she wove in those days of long ago.

Psyche

PSYCHE was the most beautiful maiden in Greece. So rare and wonderful was her beauty, and so sweet her temper, that everybody loved and praised her; and although there were many people who were unwise enough to express their opinions, even to the fair Psyche herself, she was not spoiled. She remained gentle and helpful, spinning and working in her father's palace.

Her fame went abroad, until at last the goddess Aphrodite heard of the Grecian maiden, whose beauty was said to excel even her own. She determined to punish Psyche for daring to be so beautiful, for Aphrodite was very jealous. Even since Paris had given her the golden apple, which bore the inscription, "For The Fairest"—and which Eris had thrown into the midst of a feast among the gods and goddesses—Aphrodite had had no rival in beauty; and it angered her greatly that a mortal should dare comparison with her. So she called Eris, and bade him punish Psyche.

Eris took two vases, and filled one with sweet, and the other with bitter water from the two fountains in Aphrodite's garden; and finding Psyche fast asleep, he poured some of the bitter water on her lips, which were as pretty and as pink as an opening rosebud. In doing so, he touched Psyche with one of his arrows, and she awoke. He could not bear to harm the little maiden, so he poured all of the sweet water over her golden curls, so that Aphrodite's charm could do her no harm. Then he ran away.

But Aphrodite was cruel. She sent troubles into Psyche's home, and by and by Psyche found out that she was the cause;

and this so grieved her that she could not stay any longer where her presence brought harm to those she loved.

One night she stole softly away, and wandered off by herself upon a lonely mountain. She climbed its rugged sides until she was too weary to go farther, and sitting clown to rest, fell asleep.

When Psyche awoke, she found herself in a beautiful garden. There were shady paths, sparkling fountains, and joyous songs from many birds. She wandered along one of the paths until she came to a beautiful palace. The steps were of pink and blue and white onyx. There were columns of onyx, with golden capitals and bases richly inlaid with gold. Before the door were hung rich draperies, which waved gently to and fro.

Psyche was charmed. While she was wondering who lived in the palace, a voice from an invisible some one said, "Fair lady, all that you see is yours. Enter, and be content."

Psyche went into the palace, and wandered, delighted, through all of its rooms. She stopped in the banqueting hall, where a feast was spread, which was served by unseen hands.

That evening as she sat alone, a pleasant voice again addressed her, "Fair Psyche, this is your home, and I am your friend. I will come often to talk with you, so that you shall never be lonely. But you must promise neither to try to see my face, nor to find out my name."

This was a strange request, but Psyche willingly promised. Many happy hours they spent in the gardens and in the halls of the palace. When Psyche heard the voice, always in the dusk of the evening, she sought not to find out whence it came.

But, at her birth, Psyche had received another gift than that of beauty. This was not a desirable one, and had been given by an envious woman. It was the dangerous gift of curiosity. For a long time she satisfied this in finding out many new and wonderful things about the palace. But at length she began to wonder about her friend, and one evening she hid a

little lamp in one of the vases in the court. After talking with her invisible friend for some time, she stole softly forward and took the lamp from the vase. And whom do you think she saw? The rosy, blue-eyed little boy, Eros, who had taken this mode of getting Psyche out of the way of Aphrodite's anger.

But when he saw the light, he knew that Psyche trusted him no longer; and without a word, he turned and flew away from the palace.

Psyche ran swiftly after him, calling to him to come back: "Come hack, Eros! I will trust you. I will be kind to you, and we shall still be friends!"

But Eros would not return. Psyche ran far down the mountain side; but though she wandered about for a long time, she searched in vain, for she could find no trace of her little friend. At length she came to the temple of Aphrodite; and hoping to gain the favor of the goddess by offering her service, she entered.

Aphrodite said that she would forgive Psyche, but that she must first prove herself worthy by doing some difficult tasks. She took Psyche into her store-room, where there were many large jars of mixed grains.

"You must separate the grains and put them into these smaller vases," said Aphrodite.

Psyche could never ban done so great a task had it not been for the kindness of the tiny black ants, which left their sand cities and came to help her. So that at night, when Aphrodite came back, the task was done.

Yet another task Psyche performed by the help of the river-god—that of gathering the golden fleece from a flock of wild sheep.

A third and more difficult task remained. Psyche's courage almost failed when Aphrodite bade her go to the regions of Aides in the Under-world, and ask Proserpine for a box of precious ointment. Proserpine, you know, was the princess who ruled for six months down in Aides' kingdom, because

she ate the six pomegranate seeds, poor child! and during the other six months, she gladdened the earth and her mother, Demeter, with her smiles.

The way to Aides' kingdom was difficult indeed. It was guarded by Cerberus, a three-headed monster; and there was a dark river, the Styx, across which Psyche was sure she could not pass. But when she arrived at the cave where the dog Cerberus lived, she found the three heads asleep, and gliding swiftly by, soon stood on the river's brink.

"Who are you?" asked the dark ferryman, Charon. "I am Psyche, and am sent with a message to Proserpine. I beg you, good Charon, do not delay, but ferry me across."

So Charon ferried Psyche across the Styx, and she soon found herself in Proserpine's glittering palace. They made her welcome, and bade her partake of the feast which was spread beneath the dark arches of a splendid hall. Psyche did not tarry. She begged the ointment for the lady, Aphrodite, which Proserpine gave gladly, only saying, "Do not open the box, Psyche. Be sure that it be kept carefully closed."

Psyche promised, and hastened to return. Again she passed the dark river and the sleeping Cerberus in safety, and would have returned to Aphrodite with the ointment, if curiosity, her most fatal gift, had not again conquered. She longed to see what the precious ointment was like, and lifting the lid, peeped in.

At once a drowsiness took possession of her. She fell into a deep sleep from which she did not awaken until Eros found her. Shaking some drops of sweet water over her face, he said, "Foolish Psyche! You have again been punished; but I will stay with you now. We will carry this to Aphrodite, and I am sure she will forgive you."

So Eros and Psyche went together to Aphrodite, who had begun to feel quite ashamed for her selfishness, for she saw that Psyche really desired to be useful as well as beautiful. She gave Psyche some of the nectar, which made her immortal;

and they were all very happy after that in their palace on Mount Olympus.

Orpheus, the Sweet Singer

In the sunny vales of Thessaly lived many happy youths who wandered over the hills and cared for their father's flocks. They were gentle and kind to their friends, but strong and brave when called upon to do battle for their rights.

In this pleasant valley, where the blasts of winter never blew fiercely, where the summer winds were balmy, and where the flowers bloomed always, lived Orpheus, the sweet singer. Apollo, his father, had given him a lyre; and ever since his baby hands could hold it, he had played and sung, making music so sweet that even the rocks were softened, the trees bent their branches to listen, while animals, birds, and even serpents drew near, charmed by the soft music of Orpheus' golden lyre.

One day while Orpheus was sitting beside a stream, which ceased to ripple, in its ecstasy, a pretty maiden, her great blue eyes wide open in astonishment, approached, and seating herself, listened. She was the dawn maiden, Eurydice, than whom a maiden more fair and sweet could not be found in all Thessaly.

Day after day, Eurydice came and listened while Orpheus played, until at last he said—

"Oh, sweet Eurydice, be my friend and companion always. Come with me wherever I go. Leave me not; for when thou art not near, I am like the lyre with no one to bring forth its music."

So Eurydice became Orpheus' companion, and they wandered through the vales and over the hills, and together they

watched the flocks. But one day, Apollo sent Orpheus on a journey to a far country to which he could not take Eurydice.

How lonely it seemed to the poor little dawn-maiden! She could not play with the star-children and be happy as before, so she wandered off by herself.

One day, while she was walking through a field and filling her arms with morning-glories, she chanced to step upon a serpent which was coiled up in the grass. It bit the tender little foot, and presently Eurydice began to feel sick. The bite of the serpent was poisonous, and dropping down by the bank of the stream where she had first seen Orpheus, she died. Here the star-children found her, and they hastened to meet Orpheus on his return, and told him the sad story.

Orpheus was speechless with grief. He hung his lyre on a branch and refused to be happy, but wept and moaned for Eurydice. In tones of sorrow, the birds and squirrels told their sympathy; and the nightingale, his clearest friend among birds, perched upon his shoulder, trilling a sweet little song of regret and sadness. At last Orpheus thought he would try to find Eurydice.

Orpheus wandered far away from Thessaly, into the Region of the Blessed, for it was here that he thought Eurydice must have gone. He had first to pass through Aides' regions; and you know this was a difficult thing to do. Upon his arrival at the rock-hewn gates, before which Cerberus kept guard, the three-headed dog rushed forward, growling angrily. Orpheus sat down upon a rock, and played upon his lyre. There came a change in the ugly monster. One of the heads ceased to look angrily; then the other head ceased to show its teeth; and at length the dog came forward to lick the hands of the sweet player, and Orpheus passed in safety. When he came to the river Styx, Charon glared coldly at him, demanding how a mortal dared enter the realms of Aides.

"O sad-eyed Charon, you have taken Eurydice across the river Styx; take me too. I pray you, for I cannot live without

her." So sang Orpheus, while he played such sad, touching strains that Charon begged him to cease. Tears were falling from the eyes of the dark boatman, as he hastily guided his boat across the river.

Orpheus went on and on through the dark, glittering caverns, heeding not the wealth which was stored in Aides' vast treasure-houses.

Aides and Proserpine were seated upon an ebony throne, while their silent attendants hovered around. Orpheus approached, paying no attention to the dark frown of Aides, and began to sing—

"O King of the Under-world, I am not come to find out the secrets of thy realm or the greatness of thy wealth. Thou hast taken Eurydice, who to me was more than these glittering baubles. Send her back to the light of day. Grant that she come again to the home of Orpheus. Thon hast thy Proserpine. Give me, I pray thee, Eurydice."

So Orpheus sang and played, until Proserpine's tears were falling fast, and Aides' stern face softened into pity.

"Return to thy home, Orpheus, and take Eurydice; but look not back until you reach again the abodes of men.

Orpheus passed on in silence, not daring to look back. He passed the river, and the dog Cerberus, and came to the rocky cave in the mountain's side, through which gleamed a streak of light from the upper world.

Soon they would have been back to their home, with their friends and their flocks; but, sad to tell, Orpheus, in a moment of forgetfulness, looked back to see that Eurydice was really returning with him. He saw her gentle face and outstretched arms; but as he looked, she was borne back to Aides' kingdom, and Orpheus beheld her no more, although he tried in vain to follow, and waited for many days, singing songs of grief which melted the rocks to tears, while the wild beasts came and mourned with him. He refused to be comforted. The woods and hills no longer re-echoed his glad strains; but sad,

wild notes were heard by the little wood-nymphs, who tried to make him forget. "See," they said, "how the lonely Orpheus mourns for sweet Eurydice. Can we not make him happy once more?'" But they tried in vain.

The Story of the Halcyon Birds

The kingdom of Thessaly was far-famed for its peace and prosperity during the reign of Ceyx and his beautiful queen, Alcyone. People across the sea spoke of mountain-walled Thessaly as the country which all of the gods loved; and they praised King Ceyx for his wisdom and justice.

But it was not always summer in Thessaly. King Ceyx heard of the death of a well-beloved brother; and after this sad news came famine and dire diseases among his people. Ceyx believed that he had offended the gods; and to appease them, he planned a journey to distant Ionia. Thither he would go and offer sacrifice to the gods, and so win back their favor. He told his plans to Alcyone, but she begged him to sacrifice in his own country.

"Brave not the dangers of the deep, my husband. Surely the gods are grateful for honors wherever paid. Stay, then, at home, and look after the wants of they unhappy people."

"Ah, Alcyone, thou art a woman, and dost not know that the gods are best pleased by courage and daring. I will go, and thou shalt stay and rule in my stead. Thou wilt be brave, Alcyone, and prove thyself worthy thy great father, Aeolus?"

So Ceyx determined to go, and calling together his most valiant soldiers and his most trusted sailors, they made ready to depart.

Alcyone had great cause for anxiety, for being the daughter of the wind-god, Aeolus, she knew at what season the winds were treacherous, and when they were apt to rush together and lash the fair blue sea into fury.

Sadly she stood on the shore and watched the boat until

it became a white speck upon the horizon. Then it vanished altogether, and Alcyone returned to her lonely palace.

For a while, Ceyx and his brave followers sailed peacefully on. The sailors rowed and sang, keeping time with the pulsing of the waves and the flapping of the sails. They reached the Ionian land in safety; and Ceyx did sacrifice in the temple of the Pythian Apollo, and learned that he was yet favored, although the oracle gave him a strange message which he scarcely understood.

Half of the homeward journey had been made. The wind began to change suddenly, and the waves ran higher and higher, crowned with crests of foam. The ship tossed about uneasily; and the sailors lashed their oars, and furled the sails. The sky grew angry. Wilder and wilder screamed the wind, until with an angry blast it shattered the mast of the trembling boat.

Higher and more angry grew the waves. They lifted the boat upon their huge shoulders, tossing it into dark hollows with a force and suddenness that was appalling. The sailors thought of their dear ones at home; while the sweet face of Alcyone, tearful and sad, came like a vision to Ceyx, as he sat silent and fearful in one end of the boat, where he had lashed himself to a spar. The storm Furies were sporting with the little vessel, and, weary at last of so small a plaything, they crushed it, and ran on and on, to vent their wrath against the rock-bound coast.

Day after clay the fond Alcyone went down to the sea-shore, straining her eyes for a glimpse of the returning sail. Each day she offered prayers, and ceased not to beg for the safe return of her husband. At last Hera took pity upon her, and told her the truth in a vision. Hera sent Iris, her swift messenger, to the far Cimmerian country, where lived Somnus, the god of sleep.

Iris started on her long journey. after clothing herself in her rainbow-colored dress, which was so beautiful that it left

a path of brilliant colors in the sky after she had passed. She travelled swiftly, and before Helios had started upon his daily journey, she arrived at the palace of Somnus.

The palace was large and silent, for no song of bird or bee, or sound of human voice, was ever heard there. Between the ebony columns lurked the darkest shadows; for no light, save the light of the moon, ever entered. Before the door grew poppies, pink, and white, and red, exhaling a sleep-giving perfume. Whole fields of them stretched away for miles and miles; while on the silvery, placid surface of a lake from which flowed the river Lethe, grew dark purple lilies which caused a strange and wonderful sleep to steal over the senses of all who breathed their perfume.

Iris touched the great door of the palace, and it opened silently, as if by unseen hands. She glided through a shadowy court, where fountains played, and where the branches of tall palm-trees waved gently in the soft night air.

In the great hall, Somnus lay sleeping upon an ebony couch. All around him were strange and beautiful dream forms, some of them as delicate as the gossamer wings of the dragon-fly. There were the tiny baby dreams, which bring a smile to the rosebud lips of the sleeping infant; and there were the strong, terrible dreams which make the bravest of men tremble.

Many beautiful dreams hovered about Iris when she entered. She waved them aside, however, and walking to the couch of Somnus, touched him softly with a flower which Hera had given her. Somnus raised his drooping eyelids, and after hearing Hera's command, sent a vision to Alcyone, in which she saw the tossing waves, the raging storm, and the peril of Ceyx, whom she knew that she would not greet again.

Sadly Alcyone bade her maidens prepare the funeral rites. She went to the seashore, to the spot where she had bidden him farewell. "I shall see him no more," she cried, weeping bitterly. She gazed across the water; and far out, the dimpling,

happy waves were bearing a gleaming object toward the shore. It came nearer and nearer, until Alcyone saw that it was the form of Ceyx, which the waves were bringing to her feet. She raised her arms and sprang toward it, no longer the beautiful Alcyone, but a graceful bird, uttering strange cries. She sought to lift him on her wings. Then two birds arose from the water, and flew away together.

So Alcyone and Ceyx were united at last, and ever since then the halcyon birds have warned sailors of the coming storm. In the placid days of winter they brood on their floating nests, and skim the surface of the waves. Then the sailors say, "The halcyon days are here. Let us he glad. There is nothing to fear."

Prometheus

From the top of Mount Olympus, stretching far across the broad plains of the sky, lay the Milky Way, along which were scattered the fine palaces of the gods.

In one of these grand palaces lived two giants, Prometheus and Epimetheus. They were brothers, and were much beloved because of their goodness and wisdom. Prometheus was, perhaps, the wiser of the two. His visions and speech were those of a prophet, and he saw far into the future. He even knew of events which were to take place on Mount Olympus, and could foretell the deeds of Zeus himself.

One day he looked down upon the earth. and saw that men were neither as wise nor as happy as they might be; and he determined to help them by doing a daring deed. This was neither more nor less than the stealing of the fire which the gods held sacred. Prometheus saw how, in many ways, it would help and benefit mankind, and without hesitation, he took it to the earth, and gave it to the savage men who were living in cheerless caves, and were cold and hungry, unloving and unloved.

After they had received the gift of fire, these savage men began to grow wiser, and to build better houses, eat better food, and dress in better clothing.

Soon Zeus saw that a great change had taken place in the lives of the people of the earth; but instead of being glad, he was very angry, for he thought that Prometheus desired to take his place as ruler over the gods. He was angry, too, because Prometheus had stolen the sacred fire. So he planned a

terrible punishment for the kind-hearted giant, who had never dreamed of doing an injury to Zeus.

Two heartless giants, Force and Strength, were called, together with the mighty blacksmith. Hephestus, before the throne of Zeus; and the three were commanded to chain Prometheus to the rocks which overlooked the angry sea-waves. Not content with thus making a captive of the good giant, Zeus sent a vulture to torment him with its beak and talons.

It was hard to suffer thus for doing what he had thought was right and good. Force and Strength riveted the chains upon Prometheus' arms and ankles; as if they enjoyed the work: but Hephestus had a kind heart, after all, for he said, "I dread to bind a kindred god to this wild cliff, but I must steel my soul and dare. Zeus' high commands require a prompt obedience."

They left Prometheus alone, with only the sky and sea for company; but the sky was pitiless, and the waves sighed and moaned, as also did Prometheus, but not because of the pain he was forced to withstand from the cruel bands and savage vultures. His greatest pain was the thought of the ingratitude of Zeus; for once, when the angry Titans had planned to drive him from his throne, Prometheus had, by his counsel, changed their designs.

While Prometheus lay chained to the rocks, a group of water-nymphs came up out of the ocean, and sang to him songs of comfort and sympathy. "Why art thou here, great Prometheus?" they sang. "Tell us, for what offence does Zeus inflict this punishment?"

Then Prometheus told them how he had stolen the fire from heaven, and had given it to men; how he had put Hope into their hearts, and had given them memory; how he had taught them to watch the stars, the changing seasons, and the varying winds; how to yoke the ox, and train the steed to whirl the rapid car. "I taught them to build the tall bark, and

to guide its course while lightly bounding over the waves; how to search deep into the earth for her treasures; how to chase each pale disease and soften pain; and, in a word. Prometheus taught each useful art to men, yet have I not the art which shall free me from these chains."

The nymphs again and again came to bring solace to the unhappy Prometheus; and you will be glad to know that he was freed at last, after much suffering; for thus do freedom and right always triumph.

Epimetheus and Pandora

PROMETHEUS had a brother named Epimetheus, who was also very wise, and, like Prometheus, he was called the "common blessing of mankind."

Epimetheus did not arouse the anger of Zeus, as his brother had done. Indeed, instead of binding him to a rock, Zeus sent a valuable present to Epimetheus' palace. And what do you suppose it was? A dear little maiden, Pandora, who was to live in the palace as a friend and helpmeet for Epimetheus.

Pandora came in the swan chariot of the lady Aphrodite, and stood in the doorway to greet Epimetheus upon his return from the fields. It was a happy surprise to him, for he had grown very lonely in his grand and gloomy palace, which needed the sunshine of little Pandora's presence.

Epimetheus was very rich, but very generous; and he could but grow more gentle and kind to the little Pandora, who reminded him constantly of the needs of others.

But we must not forget the strange gift which the gods had sent with Pandora. This was a strong box, which Pandora desired at once to open. But when Epimetheus attempted to do so, he found this inscription upon the lid:

"OPEN NOT THE BOX UNTIL THE GODS
SHALL SO DECREE."

So Epimetheus carried the box into the palace, and told Pandora that she could see it whenever she liked to do so, but begged her never to try to open it. Pandora promised. She often found pleasure in sitting upon the box, tracing with her

slender fingers the delicate scrolls and queer designs. The beauty of the box was a constant temptation to her. She often dreamed about the contents, and longed to take just a peep. But the kind face and warning voice of Epimetheus always prevented, for somehow he always appeared just at the dangerous moment.

One day Epimetheus went to the fields early in the morning to stay until the shades of evening had fallen. Pandora tried to forget the box, but it seemed to call to her. That very morning she had found a curiously shaped key, and she was tempted to try it in the lock. She would not open the box; she would only see whether the key really did belong to it. Her hands trembled, and her breath came quickly; she thought she heard a footstep. No; it was only the water splashing in the fountain. With a little click, the key slid into the lock. It was a perfect fit. Pandora's left hand rested under the edge of the lid. She raised it gently, and peeped in. Oh-o-o-o! Whiz! Whir-r-r-r! The room was filled with tiny, fluttering creatures, so tiny and so lovely that they might have been winged blossoms. They fluttered about the room, while Pandora looked aghast, then floated out between the great pillars, and away across the fields.

Pandora had shut the lid down quickly after a very short space, and she hoped that they had not all escaped. She leaned her pretty head against the box and sobbed bitterly, listening between sobs for the foot-steps of Epimetheus. How she dreaded his return! It seemed as if a whole year passed while she waited. It was so silent in the great room.

All at once a tiny voice which seemed to come from the box cried, "Pandora! Pandora! open the box, and let us out."

Pandora raised the lid again, and seated upon the edge of the box were two little beings, who said, "Foolish little Pandora! You have not prized the blessings which the gods sent you, else you would have guarded them more carefully. They have flown away, but we will stay with you. We are Love

and Hope. We will help you to undo the mischief; but it will take much patient effort, little Pandora, to bring back the blessings to mankind."

Just at that moment Epimetheus returned; and as he saw at a glance what had happened, his face grew sad, and he said, "Pandora, we have offended the gods by holding their command so lightly. We must now strive to regain the blessings, for if they come not to us, they will never be a gift to mortals."

So Pandora became very patient and earnest in all that she did. One by one the blessings came back for short periods, then for longer ones, until Pandora had grown to be a beautiful old woman, when all of the blessings were hers once more; and they did not remain in the box, but hovered around her wherever she went, bringing happiness to all who knew her.

Perseus, "The Son of the Bright Morning"

In the sunny vale of Argos, King Acrisius ruled over a brave and warlike people. But he ruled not with justice and kindness; and he was therefore far from happy, in spite of his fertile fields, rich vineyards, and numerous flocks and herds.

After many a bitter quarrel with his brother Proetus, he had given up to him the poorer half of the kingdom, and had kept the best for himself. He had been very cruel to his beautiful daughter, Danaë, who, with her little baby Perseus, had been shut up in a room with brass walls; and all because of a solemn prophecy.

One day a white-haired old man came to Acrisius and told him that he would lose his life at the hands of Perseus. This made the king feel very bitter toward Danaë and the innocent little child, his grandson.

Danaë's son was called the Child of the Bright Morning. He was so fair and bright, though a tiny baby, that the people declared that he was a child of gods. His sunny smile and winning ways brought no smiles of joy to the face of stern Acrisius, who planned in his heart to send Danaë and her child away where he should never see them again.

He dare not kill them, for he feared the terrible Erinnyes, who, with scorpions and vipers, scourged those who had offended the gods.

So Acrisius placed Danaë and her child in a large chest, and set it afloat on the restless waves of the sea. Poor Danaë was as helpless as the child asleep on her bosom. She watched the shore until it became a dark line against the horizon, and then, through her tears, she saw only the blue sea and the

bluer sky. She closed her eyes, and Morpheus sent her the sweet forgetfulness of sleep.

All night, under a starlit sky, the chest floated gently. The waves rocked it to and fro. It was the pleasant halcyon days, and the winds were still; for in that peaceful season no storms ruffle the bosom of the deep.

In the morning the chest grated against the shores of the island of Seriphos. Danaë awoke with a heart full of fear. She knew not whether kindness or cruelty awaited them beyond the rugged rocks.

It happened that a brave fisherman, Dictys, had come down to the seashore to cast his net. When he saw the strange boat and its helpless occupants, he hastened to help them out, and to assure Danaë that he meant to be kind.

"Fear not, lady," he said; "naught shall harm thee on this peaceful island. But what fate drove thee to the bosom of the deep in this frail boat? Did some one send thee thus at the mercy of the waters? He is worthy the darkest shades of Tartarus who thus cruelly treats a noble lady. For I perceive that thou art noble, perchance the daughter of a king."

"I am Danaë, the daughter of King Acrisius, who has thus unjustly sent us from his lands. Good sir, I pray thee let me come into thy house. I will serve thee with diligence, for never yet has Danaë eaten the bread of idleness."

"We are old, and apt service will be sweet to old age; but as a daughter, and not as a servant, shall ye come," said good Dictys.

So Danae went to the home of Dictys; and full gladly she took up the spinning and weaving which the wife of the good fisherman had put aside because of her failing sight. And the little Perseus brought sunshine and gladness to all.

Dictys was the brother of Polydectes, the king of the island. When the king saw the fair Danaë, he desired her to come and live in the palace as his wife. But Danaë did not love the king, and she knew full well that Perseus would be

safer in the humble home of Dictys, so she refused to become the wife of Polydectes. This made him angry, and he began to dislike them both; but they were not harmed by his hatred until Perseus had grown to be a strong and handsome youth.

When he had grown up, Perseus won in all of the games, and far exceeded the young men of the island in the doing of brave deeds.

In those days of the long, long ago, dear children, the bravest youths of Hellas were sent into far countries to prove their courage and endurance.

There were strange and terrible monsters to kill, and there were rich and precious gifts of the gods, which were won only by the bravest. So the young men all desired most to be strong and daring. It was cowardly not to be able to win in feats of strength.

One of the great deeds which all of the young men longed to do was the killing of the Gorgon, Medusa.

She lived far away from the peaceful island; but she was the dread of all sailors and fishermen; for oftentimes they were driven by adverse winds into her icy regions, and were frozen into stone by the gaze of her cruel eyes.

Polydectes planned a way to get rid of Perseus. He taunted him with cowardice, in spite of the daring deeds which he had done, until Perseus declared that he would prove himself worthy by killing the Gorgon. Polydectes was glad, for he was sure that Perseus would never get back.

One night Perseus dreamed a strange dream. He saw a tall and stately lady with a shining face, and a helmet upon her head. In her hands she held a glittering aegis, or shield.

"Perseus," she said, "you desire to do a more daring deed than any Hellen has yet attempted. Is your heart brave enough, and your courage great enough, that you dare to face a creature like this?" As she spoke, Athene held up the shield, on which was a face so terrible that Perseus turned pale. The locks of hair were writhing serpents, and out of the eyes glared

such a look of hatred and misery that Perseus could scarcely believe that this was a picture of the once beautiful mortal, Medusa, who, because she had dared to compare her beauty and wisdom with that of Athene, had been doomed by the angry goddess to live in a far-away country with two dreadful Gorgons for companions. "Will you dare to meet Medusa, Perseus?" asked Athene.

"Try me, noble lady. I would rather die in a heroic act than remain like a horse bound by a halter."

Then Athene gave him her shield, saying, "You must not look at the Medusa when you find her, else you will be turned to stone. But this is the aegis of an immortal, and you can look into it without harm. Hold it thus, and yon can see the reflection of all that is below.

"In the land of the Graeae you will find out where the Gorgons live. Fear not these aged sisters, but be wise and watchful. They only can tell thee. They have but one eye, and their voices are hollow, and their forms unlovely; but be not alarmed by aught which they may say."

"I will be brave," said Perseus. "But, I pray thee, noble lady, how am I to cross the seas without a ship? I cannot build one, for Polydectes would not give me the smallest tree upon his hillsides. Nor will this beautiful aegis be of use, unless there be somewhere a sword which shall match it in excellence."

"Thou art far-sighted, as well as brave, Perseus, and dost deserve the best gifts of the gods."

Then Perseus saw standing beside Athene a young man of noble countenance. In one hand he held a pair of winged sandals, and in the other, a shining sword.

"Behold what Hermes has brought. These sandals will take you wherever you wish to go, and this sword can pierce even the metal scales of Medusa. Fear not, but depart." When Perseus awoke, he found that the dream was not all a dream, for there were the sandals, harpe, and aegis.

Perseus lost no time in putting the precious sandals upon his feet; and taking the harpe, he started at once. He felt a strange lightness of body. He started to run, but found that he could float as easily as a bird. Faster and faster he sped over land and sea, until the sunny hills of Hellas were far behind, and the dull, dark mountains of the north country rose before him.

At the foot of one of these mountains he found an ice-bound cave. Within he heard the only sounds which broke the silence—the weird songs of the Gray Sisters. There they sat rocking to and fro, and crooning a sad, sad song, while they passed the eye from one to the other.

At first Perseus felt sad; but when he heard their words of hatred towards the race of men, he snatched the eye, and bade them tell him where the Gorgon lived. They were eager enough to get back their eye, so they told Perseus that the nymphs of the garden of Hesperides, in the far-away land of Atlas, would tell him what he wished to know. Perseus started at once for the land of Atlas, the Cyclops. It was guarded by a mighty mountain which rose far above the clouds. On the top was the unhappy giant whom Zeus had placed there to hold up the pillars of Heaven. This was so great a task that Atlas had long since grown weary of it.

When he found that Perseus was in quest of the Medusa, he begged him to return with it, that he might gaze into its eyes, and be turned into stone. Perseus promised to do what Atlas desired. He went down the mountain and into the beautiful dreamy garden of the Hesperides. Here he found a wonderful tree upon which hung golden apples. Beneath its richly laden boughs were three of the fairest maidens Perseus had ever seen. Abashed at their beauty, but charmed by their sweet songs, Perseus drew near. Then he saw something which filled him with horror; for, twined round and round the nymphs, and caressing them with its shining folds, was a mighty serpent. Its scales glistened in the sunlight with

beautiful colors. Each scale had a pearly lustre, and the serpent's eyes sparkled like diamonds. Honey was dripping into its mouth from a dish held by one of the nymphs.

When the maidens saw Perseus, they put the serpent to sleep by a magical spell, and came forth to meet him: "Who are you, and for what have you dared to come into the garden of the Hesperides? Are you Heracles, in quest of the golden apples?"

"I come not for your apples of gold, fair maidens. I am searching for the Medusa. Tell me, I pray you, when I can find her?"

The nymphs sought to keep Perseus in the garden. "Stay with us," they cried. "Here winter never comes, and the power of Medusa is only a dream that has been half forgotten."

When they found that Perseus would not give up his great purpose, they wept and pleaded again in vain.

They led him to a high cliff, and pointed to the northward; and they gave him a cap which had the power of making its wearer invisible. Perseus bade them farewell, and sped on his journey to the heart of the far country where Medusa dwelt.

As he neared the dreary shores, he put on his invisible cap, and rising high in the air, he held the shield so that he could look into it. Far away he saw the terrible creature tossing, restless, to and fro. Beside her, locked in deep slumber, were the two sister Gorgons. Perseus could not but feel sorry for the unhappy Medusa; but he wisely thought that so terrible an existence should end.

He drew near, and struck boldly with the harpe which Hermes had given him. Looking into his shield, he saw that the serpents had ceased to writhe, and he knew that Medusa was dead. He threw a goat-skin over its head, put it into a bag, and flew toward Seriphos. Onward he rushed faster than ever. Stopping at the mountain of Atlas, he held up the Medusa, and Atlas gazed, and became a mighty mountain of

stone.

Seriphos was still far away; and on and on sped Perseus over land and sea, past cloud-capped mountains and over the dreary desert wastes of Libya.

One day looking down on a dark cliff, he saw a white image. "Perchance 'tis a god whom the barbarians worship! I will go and see," he thought.

Perseus found that it was not a god, but a beautiful maiden, whose fair hair streamed in the breeze. She stood upon a rock just above the waves. Her face was full of agony, and her white arms, lifted above her head, were chained to the rock.

Perseus was filled with pity and indignation. He flashed down beside her; and when she saw the noble youth, she begged him to loose her bonds.

"Fear not, noble maiden, Perseus will gladly help to free you from these chains which some monster has forced upon tender wrists. But who are you, and why are you here?"

"I am Andromeda," she replied. "Unhappy that I am! My mother, Cassiopeia, boasted of my beauty, and to punish her, Thetis sent dreadful floods, which laid waste our fields. I am chained thus to appease the sea-gods, and they will send a sea-monster to devour me. Look! even now it comes!" Perseus looked from the fair face of Andromeda to the restless water. Her fear was not in vain; for there, coming rapidly towards them, was a great sea-serpent, from whose wide jaws the water rushed in long lines of foam.

Andromeda closed her eyes. When she opened them again, she saw only a long reef over which the waves were dashing angrily.

Then Perseus cut the chains which bound Andromeda, and led her back to her parents, who were filled with joy, and readily consented when Perseus asked that he might take Andromeda back with him to his own country.

It was a glad home-coming to Perseus and to Danaë and the good fisherman. Polydectes had treated Danaë unkindly

during Perseus' absence. He had made her work like a servant in the palace, hoping thus to make her humble.

Perseus rushed to the palace where Polydectcs had bidden guests to a great feast. Standing in the doorway, he heard Polydectes tell with many a jeer how Perseus had gone forth years ago to slay the Gorgon, and had never returned. "Ha! wretched king, thou art mistaken! Wouldst thou, then, see the Gorgon? Behold! here it is!"

Polydectes threw himself upon his knees, and besought Perseus to spare him; but even while he was speaking, his body became rigid and cold.

So Polydectes and his guests became a ring of stones which are pointed out to this day on one of the far-away islands of Greece.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's

Tanglewood Tales
Told to the Children

by C. E. Smith

About this Book

In this little book you will find some old Greek Tales to which people of all ages have loved to listen, since they were first told many hundreds of years ago.

These tales were told for children by a famous man called Hawthorne, who lived in America: but he meant them for older children than you are. So I have gone over them, and have changed all the big words which you would not understand, and I have made some of the sentences easier: and now I hope you will be able to enjoy every word in the book.

But I have not changed anything else; in every other way these Greek Tales remain just as Hawthorne wrote them, and I hope they will give you as much pleasure as they have given to the bigger children for whom they were written.

C. E. SMITH.

Pandora

Long, long ago, when this old world was still very young, there lived a child named Epimetheus. He had neither father nor mother, and to keep him company, a little girl, who was fatherless and motherless like himself, was sent from a far country to live with him and be his playfellow. This child's name was Pandora.

The first thing that Pandora saw, when she came to the cottage where Epimetheus lived, was a great wooden box. 'What have you got in that box, Epimetheus?' she asked.

'That is a secret,' answered Epimetheus, 'and you must not ask any questions about it: the box was left here for safety, and I do not know what is in it.'

'But who gave it you?' asked Pandora. 'and where did it come from?'

'That is a secret too,' answered Epimetheus.

'How tiresome!' exclaimed Pandora, pouting her lip. 'I wish the great ugly box were out of the way': and she looked very cross.

'Come along, and let us play games,' said Epimetheus; 'do not let us think any more about it'; and they ran out to play with the other children, and for a while Pandora forgot all about the box.

But when she came back to the cottage, there it was in front of her and, instead of paying no heed to it, she began to say to herself, 'Whatever can be inside it? I wish I just knew who brought it! Dear Epimetheus, do tell me; I know I cannot be happy till you tell me all about it.'

Then Epimetheus grew a little angry. 'How can I tell you,

Pandora?' he said, 'I do not know any more than you do.'

'Well, you could open it,' said Pandora 'and we could see for ourselves!'

But Epimetheus looked so shocked at the very idea of opening a box that had been given to him in trust, that Pandora saw she had better not suggest such a thing again.

'At least you can tell me how it came here,' she said.

'It was left at the door,' answered Epimetheus, 'just before you came, by a queer person dressed in a very strange cloak: he had a cap that seemed to be partly made of feathers. It looked exactly as if he had wings.'

'What kind of a staff had he?' asked Pandora.

'Oh, the most curious staff you ever saw,' cried Epimetheus: 'it seemed like two serpents twisted round a stick.'

'I know him,' said Pandora thoughtfully. 'It was Mercury, and he brought me here as well as the box. I am sure he meant the box for me, and perhaps there are pretty clothes in it for us to wear, and toys for us both to play with.'

'It may be so,' answered Epimetheus, turning away; 'but until Mercury comes back and tells us that we may open it, neither of us has any right to lift the lid': and he went out of the cottage.

'What a stupid boy he is!' muttered Pandora: 'I do wish he had a little more spirit." Then she stood gazing at the box. She had called it ugly a hundred times, but it was really a very handsome box, and would have been an ornament in any room.

It was made of beautiful dark wood, so dark and so highly polished that Pandora could see her face in it. The edges and the corners were wonderfully carved. On these were faces of lovely women, and of the prettiest children, who seemed to be playing among the leaves and flowers. But the most beautiful face of all was one which had a wreath of flowers about its brow. All around it was the dark, smooth-polished

wood with this strange face looking out from it, and some days Pandora thought it was laughing at her, while at other times it had a very grave look which made her rather afraid.

The box was not fastened with a lock and key like most boxes, but with a strange knot of gold cord. There never was a knot so queerly tied: it seemed to have no end and no beginning, but was twisted so cunningly, with so many ins and outs, that not even the cleverest fingers could undo it.

Pandora began to examine the knot just to see how it was made. 'I really believe,' she said to herself, 'that I begin to see how it is done; I am sure I could tie it up again after undoing it. There could be no harm in that: I need not open the box even if I undo the knot.' And the longer she looked at it, the more she wanted just to try.

So she took the gold cord in her fingers and examined it very closely. Then she raised her head, and happening to glance at the flower-wreathed face, she thought it was grinning at her. I wonder whether it is smiling because I am doing wrong, thought Pandora. I have a good mind to leave the box alone and run away.

But just at that moment, as if by accident, she gave the knot a little shake, and the gold cord untwisted itself as if by magic, and there was the box without any fastening.

'This is the strangest thing I have ever known,' said Pandora, rather frightened. 'What will Epimetheus say? How can I possibly tie it up again.'

She tried once or twice, but the knot would not come right: it had untied itself so suddenly she could not remember in the least how the cord had been twisted together. So there was nothing to be done but to let the box remain unfastened until Epimetheus should come home.

'But,' thought Pandora, 'when he finds the knot untied he will know that I have done it: how shall I ever make him believe that I have not looked into the box?' And then the naughty thought came into her head that, as Epimetheus

would believe that she had looked into the box, she might just as well have a little peep.

She looked at the face with the wreath, and it seemed to smile at her invitingly, as much as to say, 'Do not be afraid; what harm can there possibly be in raising the lid for a moment?' And then she thought she heard voices inside, tiny voices that whispered, 'Let us out, dear Pandora, do let us out: we want very much to play with you if you will only let us out.'

'What can it be?' said Pandora. 'Is there something alive in the box? Yes, I must just see; only one little peep and the lid will be shut down as safely as ever. There cannot really be any harm in just one little peep.'

All this time Epimetheus had been playing with the other children in the fields, but he did not feel happy. This was the first time he had played without Pandora, and he was so cross and discontented that the other children could not think what was the matter with him. You see, up to this time everybody in the world had always been happy: no one had ever been ill, or naughty, or miserable: the world was new and beautiful, and the people who lived in it did not know what trouble meant. So Epimetheus could not understand what was the matter with himself, and he stopped trying to play games and went back to Pandora.

On the way home he gathered a bunch of lovely roses, and lilies, and orange-blossoms, and with these he made a wreath to give Pandora, who was very fond of flowers. He noticed there was a great black cloud in the sky, which was creeping nearer and nearer to the sun, and just as Epimetheus reached the cottage door the cloud went right over the sun and made everything look dark and sad.

Epimetheus went in quietly, for he wanted to surprise Pandora with the wreath of flowers. And what do you think he saw? The naughty little girl had put her hand on the lid of the box and was just going to open it. Epimetheus saw this quite well, and if he had cried out at once it would have given

Pandora such a fright she would have let go the lid. But Epimetheus was very naughty too. Although he had said very little about the box, he was just as curious as Pandora was to see what was inside: if they really found anything pretty or valuable in it, he meant to take half of it for himself; so that he was just as naughty, and nearly as much to blame as his companion.

When Pandora raised the lid, the cottage had grown very dark, for the black cloud now covered the sun entirely and a heavy peal of thunder was heard. But Pandora was too busy and excited to notice this: she lifted the lid right up, and at once a swarm of creatures with wings flew out of the box, and a minute after she heard Epimetheus crying loudly, 'Oh, I am stung, I am stung! You naughty Pandora, why did you open this wicked box?'

Pandora let the lid fall with a crash and started up to find out what had happened to her playmate. The thunder-cloud had made the room so dark that she could scarcely see, but she heard a loud buzz-buzzing, as if a great many huge flies had flown in, and soon she saw a crowd of ugly little shapes darting about, with wings like bats and with terribly long stings in their tails. It was one of these that had stung Epimetheus, and it was not long before Pandora herself began to scream with pain and fear. An ugly little monster had settled on her forehead, and would have stung her badly had not Epimetheus run forward and brushed it away.

Now I must tell you that these ugly creatures with stings, which had escaped from the box, were the whole family of earthly troubles. There were evil tempers, and a great many kinds of cares: and there were more than a hundred and fifty sorrows, and there were diseases in many painful shapes. In fact all the sorrows and worries that hurt people in the world to-day had been shut up in the magic-box, and given to Epimetheus and Pandora to keep safely, in order that the happy children in the world might never be troubled by them.

If only these two had obeyed Mercury and had left the box alone as he told them, all would have gone well.

But you see what mischief they had done. The winged troubles flew out at the window and went all over the world: and they made people so unhappy that no one smiled for a great many days. It was very strange, too, that from this day flowers began to fade, and after a short time they died, whereas in the old times, before Pandora opened the box, they had been always fresh and beautiful.

Meanwhile Pandora and Epimetheus remained in the cottage: they were very miserable and in great pain, which made them both exceedingly cross. Epimetheus sat down sullenly in a corner with his back to Pandora, while Pandora flung herself on the floor and cried bitterly, resting her head on the lid of the fatal box.

Suddenly, she heard a gentle tap-tap inside. 'What can that be?' said Pandora, raising her head; and again came the tap, tap. It sounded like the knuckles of a tiny hand knocking lightly on the inside of the box.

'Who are you?' asked Pandora.

A sweet little voice came from inside 'Only lift the lid and you will see.'

But Pandora was afraid to lift the lid again. She looked across to Epimetheus, but he was so cross that he took no notice. Pandora sobbed, 'No, no, I am afraid; there are SO many troubles with stings flying about that we do not want any more.'

'Ah, but I am not one of these,' the sweet voice said: 'they are no relations of mine. Come, come, dear Pandora, I am sure you will let me out.'

The voice sounded so kind and cheery that it made Pandora feel better even to listen to it. Epimetheus too had heard the voice. He stopped crying. Then he came forward, and said, 'Let me help you, Pandora, as the lid is very heavy.'

So this time both the children opened the box, and out

flew a bright, smiling little fairy, who brought light and sunshine with her. She flew to Epimetheus and with her finger touched his brow where the trouble had stung him, and immediately the pain was gone.

Then she kissed Pandora, and her hurt was better at once.

'Pray who are you, kind fairy?' Pandora asked.

'I am called Hope,' answered the sunshiny figure. 'I was shut up in the box so that I might be ready to comfort people when the family of troubles got loose in the world.'

'What lovely wings you have! They are just like a rainbow. And will you stay with us,' asked Epimetheus, 'for ever and ever?'

'Yes,' said Hope, 'I shall stay with you as long as you live. Sometimes you will not be able to see me, and you may think I am dead, but you will find that I come back again and again when you have given up expecting me, and you must always trust my promise that I will never really leave you.'

'Yes, we do trust you,' cried both children. And all the rest of their lives when the troubles came back and buzzed about their heads and left bitter stings of pain, Pandora and Epimetheus would remember whose fault it was that the troubles had ever come into the world at all, and they would then wait patiently till the fairy with the rainbow wings came back to heal and comfort them.

Baucis

One evening, in times long ago, old Philemon and his wife Baucis sat at their cottage door watching the sunset. They had eaten their supper and were enjoying a quiet talk about their garden, and their cow, and the fruit trees on which the pears and apples were beginning to ripen. But their talk was very much disturbed by rude shouts and laughter from the village children, and by the fierce barking of dogs.

'I fear, wife,' said Philemon, 'that some poor traveller is asking for a bed in the village, and that these rough people have set the dogs on him.'

'Well, I never,' answered old Baucis. 'I do wish the neighbours would be kinder to poor wanderers: I feel that some terrible punishment will happen to this village if the people are so wicked as to make fun of those who are tired and hungry. As for you and me, so long as we have a crust of bread, let us always be willing to give half of it to any poor homeless stranger that may come along.'

'Indeed, that we will,' said Philemon.

These old folks, you must know, were very poor, and had to work hard for a living. They seldom had anything to eat except bread and milk, and vegetables, with sometimes a little honey from their beehives, or a few ripe pears and apples from their little garden. But they were two of the kindest old people in the world, and would have gone without their dinner any day, rather than refuse a slice of bread or a cupful of milk to the weary traveller who might stop at the door.

Their cottage stood on a little bill a short way from the village, which lay in a valley: such a pretty valley, shaped like

a cup, with plenty of green fields and gardens, and fruit trees; it was a pleasure just to look at it. But the people who lived in this lovely place were selfish and hard-hearted: they had no pity for the poor, and were unkind to those who had no home, and they only laughed when Philemon said it was right to be gentle to people who were sad and friendless,

These wicked villagers taught their children to be as bad as themselves: they used to clap their hands and make fun of poor travellers who were tramping wearily from one village to another, and they even taught the dogs to snarl and bark at strangers if their clothes were shabby. So the village was known far and near as a bad place, where neither help nor pity was to be found.

What made it worse, too, was that when rich people came in their carriages, or riding on fine horses, with servants to attend to them, the village people would take off their hats and be very polite and attentive: and if the children were rude they got their ears boxed: as to the dogs—if a single dog dared to growl at a rich man he was beaten and then tied up without any supper.

So now you can understand why old Philemon spoke sadly when he heard the shouts of the children, and the barking of the dogs, at the far end of the village street.

He and Baucis sat shaking their heads while the noise came nearer and nearer, until they saw two travellers coming along the road on foot. A crowd of rude children were following them, shouting and throwing stones, and several dogs were snarling at the travellers' heels.

They were both very plainly dressed, and looked as if they might not have enough money to pay for a night's lodging.

'Come, wife,' said Philemon, 'let us go and meet these poor people and offer them shelter.'

'You go,' said Baucis, 'while I make ready some supper,' and she hastened indoors.

Philemon went down the road, and holding out his hand

to the two men, he said, 'Welcome, strangers, welcome.'

'Thank you,' answered the younger of the two travellers. 'Yours I sa kind welcome, very different from the one we got in the village: pray why do you live in such a bad place?'

'I think,' answered Philemon, 'that Providence put me here just to make up as best I can for other people's unkindness.'

The traveller laughed heartily, and Philemon was glad to see him in such good spirits. He took a good look at him and his companion. The younger man was very thin, and was dressed in an odd kind of way. Though it was a summer evening, he wore a cloak which was wrapped tightly about him; and he had a cap on his head, the brim of which stuck out over both ears. There was something queer too about his shoes, but as it was getting dark, Philemon could not see exactly what they were like.

One thing struck Philemon very much: the traveller was so wonderfully light and active that it seemed as if his feet were only kept close to the ground with difficulty. He had a staff in his hand which was the oddest-looking staff Philemon had seen. It was made of wood and had a little pair of wings near the top. Two snakes cut into the wood were twisted round the staff, and these were so well carved that Philemon almost thought he could see them wriggling.

The older man was very tall, and walked calmly along, taking no notice either of naughty children or yelping dogs.

When they reached the cottage gate, Philemon said, 'We are very poor folk, but you are welcome to whatever we have in the cupboard. My wife Baucis has gone to see what you can have for supper.'

They sat down on the bench, and the younger stranger let his staff fall as he threw himself down on the grass: and then a strange thing happened. The staff seemed to get up from the ground of its own accord, and it opened a little pair of wings and half-hopped, half-flew and leaned itself against the wall

of the cottage.

Philemon was so amazed that he feared he had been dreaming, but before he could ask any questions, the elder stranger said: 'Was there not a lake long ago covering the spot where the village now stands?'

'Never in my day,' said old Philemon, 'nor in my father's nor my grandfather's: there were always fields and meadows just as there are now, and I suppose there always will be.'

'That I am not so sure of,' replied the stranger. 'Since the people in that village have forgotten how to be loving and gentle, it were maybe better that the lake should be rippling over the cottages again,' and he looked very sad and stern.

He was a very important-looking man, Philemon felt, even though his clothes were old and shabby: maybe he was some great learned stranger who did not care at all for money or clothes, and was wandering about the world seeking wisdom and knowledge. Philemon was quite sure he was not a common person. But he talked so kindly to Philemon, and the younger traveller made such funny remarks, that they were all constantly laughing.

'Pray, my young friend, what is your name?' Philemon asked.

'Well,' answered the younger man, 'I am called Mercury, because I am so quick.'

'What a strange name!' said Philemon; 'and your friend, what is he called?'

'You must ask the thunder to tell you that,' said Mercury, 'no other voice is loud enough.'

Philemon was a little confused at this answer, but the stranger looked so kind and friendly that he began to tell them about his good old wife, and what fine butter and cheese she made: and how happy they were in their little garden: and how they loved each other very dearly and hoped they might live together till they died. And the stern stranger listened with a sweet smile on his face.

Baucis had now got supper ready: not very much of a supper, she told them. There was only half a brown loaf and a bit of cheese, a pitcher with some milk, a little honey, and a bunch of purple grapes. But she said, 'Had we only known you were coming, my goodman and I would have gone without anything in order to give you a better supper.'

'Do not trouble,' said the elder stranger kindly. 'A hearty welcome is better than the finest of food, and we are so hungry that what you have to offer us seems a feast.' Then they all went into the cottage.

And now I must tell you something that will make your eyes open. You remember that Mercury's staff was leaning against the cottage wall? Well, when its owner went in at the door, what should this wonderful staff do but spread its little wings and go hop-hop, flutter-flutter up the steps: then it went tap-tap across the kitchen floor and did not stop till it stood close behind Mercury's chair. No one noticed this, as Baucis and her husband were too busy attending to their guests.

Baucis filled up two bowls of milk from the pitcher, while her husband cut the loaf and the cheese. 'What delightful milk, Mother Baucis,' said Mercury: 'may I have some more? This has been such a hot day that I am very thirsty.'

'Oh dear, I am so sorry and ashamed,' answered Baucis, 'but the truth is there is hardly another drop of milk in the pitcher.'

"Let me see,' said Mercury, starting up and catching hold of the handles: 'why here is certainly more milk in the pitcher.' He poured out a bowlful for himself and another for his companion, Baucis could scarcely believe her eyes. 'I suppose I must have made a mistake,' she thought, 'at any rate the pitcher must be empty now after filling both bowls twice over.'

'Excuse me, my kind hostess,' said Mercury in a. little while, 'but your milk is so good that I should very much like another bowlful.'

Now Baucis was perfectly sure that the pitcher was empty, and in order to show Mercury that there was not another drop in it, she held it upside down over his bowl. What was her surprise when a stream of fresh milk fell bubbling into the bowl and overflowed on to the table, and the two snakes that were twisted round Mercury's staff stretched out their heads and began to lap it up.

'And now, a slice of your brown loaf, pray Mother Baucis, and a little honey,' asked Mercury.

Baucis handed the loaf, and though it had been rather a hard and dry loaf when she and her husband ate some at tea-time, it was now as soft and new as if it had just come from the oven. As to the honey, it had become the colour of new gold and had the scent of a thousand flowers, and the small grapes in the bunch had grown larger and richer, and each one seemed bursting with ripe juice.

Although Baucis was a very simple old woman, she could not help thinking that there was something rather strange going on. She sat down beside Philemon and told him in a whisper what she had seen.

'Did you ever hear anything so wonderful?' she asked.

'No, I never did,' answered Philemon, with a smile. 'I fear you have been in a dream, my dear old wife.'

He knew Baucis could not say what was untrue, but he thought that she had not noticed how much milk there had really been in the pitcher at first. So when Mercury once more asked for a little milk, Philemon rose and lifted the pitcher himself. He peeped in and saw that there was not a drop in it: then all at once a little white fountain gushed up from the bottom, and the pitcher was soon filled to the brim with delicious milk.

Philemon was so amazed that he nearly let the jug fall. 'Who are ye, wonder-working strangers?' he cried.

'Your guests, good Philemon, and your friends,' answered the elder traveller, 'and may the pitcher never be empty for

kind Baucis and yourself any more than for the hungry traveller.'

The old people did not like to ask any more questions: they gave the guests their own sleeping-room, and then they lay down on the hard floor in the kitchen. It was long before they fell asleep, not because they thought how hard their bed was, but because there was so much to whisper to each other about the wonderful strangers and what they had done.

They all rose with the sun next morning. Philemon begged the visitors to stay a little till Baucis should milk the cow and bake some bread for breakfast. But the travellers seemed to be in a hurry and wished to start at once, and they asked Baucis and Philemon to go with them a short distance to show them the way.

So they all four set out together, and Mercury was so full of fun and laughter, and made them feel so happy and bright, that they would have been glad to keep him in their cottage all day and every day long.

'Ah me,' said Philemon, 'if only our neighbours knew what a pleasure it was to be kind to strangers, they would tie up all their dogs and never allow the children to fling' another stone.'

'It is a sin and shame for them to behave so,' said Baucis, 'and I mean to go this very day and tell some of them how wicked they are.'

'I fear,' said Mercury, smiling, 'that you will not find any of them at home.'

The old people looked at the elder traveller and his face had grown very grave and stern. 'When men do not feel towards the poorest stranger as if he were a brother,' he said, in a deep, grave voice, 'they are not worthy to remain on the earth, which was made just to be the home for the whole family of the human race of men and women and children.'

'And, by the bye,' said Mercury, with a look of fun and mischief in his eyes, 'where is this village you talk about? I do

not see anything of it.'

Philemon and his wife turned towards the valley, where at sunset only the day before they had seen the trees and gardens, and the houses, and the streets with the children playing in them. But there was no longer any sign of the village. There was not even a valley. Instead, they saw a broad lake which filled all the great basin from brim to brim, and whose waters glistened and sparkled in the morning sun.

The village that had been there only yesterday was now gone.

'Alas! what has become of our poor neighbours,' cried the kind-hearted old people.

'They are not men and women any longer,' answered the elder traveller, in a deep voice like distant thunder. 'There was no beauty and no use in lives such as theirs, for they had no love for one another, and no pity in their hearts for those who were poor and weary. Therefore the lake that was here in the old, old days has flowed over them, and they will be men and women no more.'

'Yes,' said Mercury, with his mischievous smile, 'these foolish people have all been changed into fishes, because they had cold blood which never warmed their hearts, just as the fishes have.'

'As for you, good Philemon, and you, kind Baucis,' said the elder traveller, 'you, indeed, gave a hearty welcome to the homeless strangers. You have done well, my dear old friends, and whatever wish you have most at heart will be granted.'

Philemon and Baucis looked at one another, and then I do not know which spoke, but it seemed as if the voice came from them both. 'Let us live together while we live, and let us die together, at the same time, for we have always loved one another?'

'Be it so,' said the elder stranger, and he held out his hands as if to bless them. The old couple bent their heads and fell on their knees to thank him, and when they lifted their eyes

again neither Mercury nor his companion was to be seen.

So Philemon and Baucis returned to the cottage, and to every traveller who passed that way they offered a drink of milk from the wonderful pitcher: and if the guest was a kind, gentle soul, he found the milk the sweetest and most refreshing he had ever tasted. But if a cross, bad-tempered fellow took even a sip, he found the pitcher full of sour milk, which made him twist his face with dislike and disappointment.

Baucis and Philemon lived a great, great many years and grew very old. And one summer morning when their friends came to share their breakfast, neither Baucis nor Philemon was to be found!

The guests looked everywhere, and all in vain. Then suddenly one of them noticed two beautiful, big trees in the garden, just in front of the door. One was an oak tree and the other a linden tree, and their branches were twisted together so that they seemed to be embracing.

No one had ever seen these trees before, and while they were all wondering how such fine trees could possibly have grown up in a single night, there came a gentle wind which set the branches moving, and then a mysterious voice was heard coming from the oak tree. 'I am old Philemon,' it said: and again another voice whispered, 'And I am Baucis.'

And the people knew that the good old couple would live for a hundred years or more in the heart of these lovely trees. And oh, what a pleasant shade they flung around! Some kind soul built a seat under the branches, and whenever a traveller sat down to rest he heard a pleasant whisper of the leaves over his head, and he wondered why the sound should seem to say, 'Welcome, dear traveller, welcome.'

Cadmus

Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, the three sons of King Agenor, were playing near the seashore in their father's kingdom of Phœnicia, and their little sister Europa was beside them.

They had wandered to some distance from the King's palace and were now in a green field, on one side of which lay the sea, sparkling brightly in the sunshine, and with little waves breaking on the shore.

The three boys were very happy gathering flowers and making wreaths for their sister Europa. The little girl was almost hidden under the flowers and leaves, and her rosy face peeped merrily out among them. She was really the prettiest flower of them all.

While they were busy and happy, a beautiful butterfly came flying past, and the three boys, crying out that it was a flower with wings, set off to try to catch it.

Europa did not run after them. She was a little tired with playing all day long, so she sat still on the green grass and very soon she closed her eyes.

For a time she listened to the sea, which sounded, she thought, just like a voice saying, 'Hush, hush,' and telling her to go to sleep. But if she slept at all it was only for a minute. Then she heard something tramping on the grass and, when she looked up, there was a snow-white bull quite close to her!

Where could he have come from? Europa was very frightened, and she started up from among the tulips and lilies and cried out, 'Cadmus, brother Cadmus, where are you? Come and drive this bull away.' But her brother was too far off to

hear her, and Europa was so frightened that her voice did not sound very loud; so there she stood with her blue eyes big with fear, and her pretty red mouth wide open, and her face as pale as the lilies that were lying on her golden hair.

As the bull did not touch her she began to peep at him, and she saw that he was a very beautiful animal; she even fancied he looked quite a kind bull. He had soft, tender, brown eyes, and horns as smooth and white as ivory: and when he breathed you could feel the scent of rosebuds and clover blossoms in the air.

The bull ran little races round Europa and allowed her to stroke his forehead with her small hands, and to hang wreaths of flowers on his horns. He was just like a pet lamb, and very soon Europa quite forgot how big and strong he really was and how frightened she had been. She pulled some grass and he ate it out of her hand and seemed quite pleased to be friends. He ran up and down the field as lightly as a bird hopping in a tree; his hoofs scarcely seemed to touch the grass, and once when he galloped a good long way Europa was afraid she would not see him again, and she called out, 'Come back, you dear bull, I have got you a pink clover-blossom.' Then he came running and bowed his head before Europa as if he knew she was a King's daughter, and knelt down at her feet, inviting her to get on his back and have a ride.

At first Europa was afraid: then she thought there could surely be no danger in having just one ride on the back of such a gentle animal, and the more she thought about it, the more she wanted to go.

What a surprise it would be to Cadmus, and Phœnix, and Cilix if they met her riding across the green field, and what fun it would be if they could all four ride round and round the field on the back of this beautiful white bull that was so tame and kind!

'I think I will do it,' she said, and she looked round the field. Cadmus and his brothers were still chasing the butterfly

away at the far end. 'If I got on the bull's back I should soon be beside them,' she thought. So she moved nearer, and the gentle white creature looked so pleased, and so kind, she could not resist any longer, and with a light bound she sprang up on his back: and there she sat holding an ivory horn in each hand to keep her steady.

'Go very gently, good bull,' she said, and the animal gave a little leap in the air and came down as lightly as a feather. Then he began a race to that part of the field where the brothers were, and where they had just caught the splendid butterfly, Europa shouted with delight, and how surprised the brothers were to see their sister mounted on the back of a white bull!

They stood with their mouths wide open, not sure whether to be frightened or not. But the bull played round them as gently as a kitten, and Europa looked down all rosy and laughing, and they were quite envious. Then when he turned to take another gallop round the field, Europa waved her hand and called out 'Good-bye,' as if she was off for a journey, and Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix shouted 'Good-bye' all in one breath. They all thought it such good fun.

And then, what do you think happened? The white bull set off as quickly as before, and ran straight down to the sea-shore. He scampered across the sand, then he took a big leap and plunged right in among the waves. The white spray rose in a shower all over him and Europa, and the poor child screamed with fright. The brothers ran as fast as they could to the edge of the water, but it was too late.

The white bull swam very fast and was soon far away in the wide blue sea, with only his snowy head and tail showing above the water. Poor Europa was holding on with one hand to the ivory horn and stretching the other back towards her dear brothers.

And there stood Cadmus and Phœnix and Cilix looking after her and crying bitterly, until they could no longer see the

white head among the waves that sparkled in the sunshine.

Nothing more could be seen of the white bull, and nothing more of their beautiful sister.

This was a sad tale for the three boys to carry back to their parents. King Agenor loved his little girl Europa more than his kingdom or anything else in the world: and when Cadmus came home crying and told how a white bull had carried off his sister, the King was very angry and full of grief.

'You shall never see my face again,' he cried, 'unless you bring back my little Europa. Begone, and enter my presence no more till you come leading her by the hand,' and his eyes flashed fire and he looked so terribly angry that the poor boys did not even wait for supper, but stole out of the palace, wondering where they should go first.

While they were standing at the gate, the Queen came hurrying after them. 'Dear children,' she said, 'I will come with you.'

'Oh no, mother,' the boys answered, 'it is a dark night, and there is no knowing what troubles we may meet with: the blame is ours, and we had better go alone.'

'Alas!' said the poor Queen, weeping, 'Europa is lost, and if I should lose my three sons as well, what would become of me? I must go with my children.'

The boys tried to persuade her to stay at home, but the Queen cried so bitterly that they had to let her go with them.

Just as they were about to start, their playfellow Theseus came running to join them. He loved Europa very much, and longed to search for her too. So the five set off together: the Queen, and Cadmus, and Phœnix, and Cilix, and Theseus, and the last they heard was King Agenor's angry voice saying, 'Remember this, never may you come up these steps again, till you bring back my little daughter.'

The Queen and her young companions travelled many a weary mile: the days grew to months, and the months became years, and still they found no trace of the lost Princess. Their

clothes were worn and shabby, and the peasant people looked curiously at them when they asked, 'Have you seen a snow-white bull with a little Princess on its back, riding as swiftly as the wind?'

And the farmers would answer, 'We have many bulls in our fields, but none that would allow a little Princess to ride on its back: we have never seen such a sight.'

At last Phœnix grew weary of the search. 'I do not believe Europa will ever be found, and I shall stay here,' he said one day when they came to a pleasant spot. So the others helped him to build a small hut to live in, then they said good-bye and went on without him.

Then Cilix grew tired too. 'It is so many years now since Europa was carried away that she would not know me if I found her.

'I shall wait here,' he said. So Cadmus and Theseus built a hut for him too, and then said good-bye.

After many long months Theseus broke his ankle, and he too had to be left behind, and once more the Queen and Cadmus wandered on to continue the search.

The poor Queen was worn and sad, and she leaned very heavily on her son's arm. 'Cadmus,' she said one day, 'I must stay and rest.'

'Why, yes, mother, of course you shall, a long, long rest you must have, and I will sit beside you and watch.'

But the Queen knew she could go no further. 'Cadmus,' she said, 'you must leave me here, and go to the wise woman at Delphi and ask her what you must do next. Promise me you will go!'

And Cadmus promised. The tired Queen lay down to rest, and in the morning Cadmus found that she was dead, and he must journey on alone.

He wandered for many days till he came in sight of a high mountain which the people told him was called Parnassus, and on the steep side of this mountain was the famous city of

Delphi for which he was looking. The wise woman lived far up the mountain-side, in a hut like those he had helped his brothers to build by the roadside.

When he pushed aside the branches he found himself in a low cave, with a hole in the wall through which a strong wind was blowing. He bent down and put his mouth to the hole and said, 'O sacred goddess, tell me where I must look now for my dear sister Europa, who was carried off so long ago by a bull?'

At first there was no answer. Then a voice said softly, three times, 'Seek her no more, seek her no more, seek her no more.'

'What shall I do, then?' said Cadmus. And the answer came, in a hoarse voice, 'Follow the cow, follow the cow, follow the cow.'

'But what cow,' cried Cadmus, 'and where shall I follow?'

And once more the voice came, 'Where the stray cow lies down, there is your home'; and then there was silence.

'Have I been dreaming?' Cadmus thought, 'or did I really hear a voice?' and he went away thinking he was very little wiser for having done as the Queen had told him.

I do not know how far he had gone when just before him he saw a brindled cow. She was lying down by the wayside, and as Cadmus came along she got up and began to move slowly along the path, stopping now and then to crop a mouthful of grass.

Cadmus wondered if this could be the cow he was to follow, and he thought he would look at her more closely, so he walked a little faster; but so did the cow. 'Stop, cow,' he cried, 'hey, brindle, stop,' and he began to run: and much to his surprise so did the cow, and though he ran as hard as possible, he could not overtake her.

So he gave it up. 'I do believe this may be the cow I was told about,' he thought. 'Any way, I may as well follow her and surely she will lie down somewhere.'

On and on they went. Cadmus thought the cow would never stop, and other people who had heard the strange story began to follow too, and they were all very tired and very far away from home when at last the cow lay down. His companions were delighted and began to cut down wood to make a fire, and some ran to a stream to get water. Cadmus lay down to rest close beside the cow. He was wishing that his mother and brothers and Theseus had been with him now, when suddenly he was startled by cries and shouts and screams.

He ran towards the stream, and there he saw the head of a big serpent or dragon, with fiery eyes and with wide open jaws which showed rows and rows of horrible sharp teeth. Before Cadmus could reach it, the monster had killed all his poor companions and was busy devouring them. The stream was an enchanted one, and the dragon had been told to guard it so that no mortal might ever touch the water, and the people round about knew this, so that for a hundred years none of them had ever come near the spot.

The dragon had been asleep and was very hungry, and when he saw Cadmus he opened his huge jaws again, ready to devour him too. But Cadmus was very angry at the death of all his companions, and drawing his sword he rushed at the monster. With one big bound he leaped right into the dragon's mouth, so far down that the two rows of terrible teeth could not close on him or do him any harm. The dragon lashed with his tail furiously, but Cadmus stabbed him again and again, and in a short time the great monster lay dead.

'What shall I do now?' he said aloud. All his companions were dead, and he was alone once more. 'Cadmus,' said a voice, 'pluck out the dragon's teeth and plant them in the earth.'

Cadmus looked round and there was nobody to be seen. But he set to work and cut out the huge teeth with his sword, and then he made little holes in the ground and planted the

teeth. In a few minutes the earth was covered with rows of armed men, fierce-looking soldiers with swords and helmets who stood looking at Cadmus in silence.

'Throw a stone among these men,' came the voice again, and Cadmus obeyed. At once all the men began to fight, and they cut and stabbed each other so furiously that in a short time only five remained alive out of all the hundreds that had stood before him. 'Cadmus,' said the voice once more, 'tell these men to stop fighting and help you to build a palace.' And as soon as Cadmus spoke, the five big men sheathed their swords, and they began to carry stones, and to carve these for Cadmus, as if they had never thought of such a thing as fighting each other!

They built a house for each of themselves, and there was a beautiful palace for Cadmus made of marble, and of fine kinds of red and green stone, and there was a high tower with a flag floating from a tall gold flag-post.

When everything was ready, Cadmus went to take possession of his new house, and, as he entered the great hall, he saw a lady coming slowly towards him. She was very lovely and she wore a royal robe which shone like sunbeams, with a crown of stars on her golden hair, and round her neck was a string of the fairest pearls.

Cadmus was full of delight. Could this be his long lost sister Europa coming to make him happy after all these weary years of searching and wandering?

How much he had to tell her about Phœnix, and Cilix, and dear Theseus and of the poor Queen's lonely grave in the wilderness! But as he went forward to meet the beautiful lady he saw she was a stranger. He was thinking what he should say to her, when once again he heard the unknown voice speak.

'No, Cadmus,' it said, 'this is not your dear sister whom you have sought so faithfully all over the wide world. This is Harmonia, a daughter of the sky, who is given to you instead

of sister and brother, and friend and mother. She is your Queen, and will make happy the home which you have won by so much suffering.'

So King Cadmus lived in the palace with his beautiful Queen, and before many years passed there were rosy little children playing in the great hall, and on the marble steps of the palace, and running joyfully to meet King Cadmus as he came home from looking after his soldiers and his workmen.

And the five old soldiers that sprang from the dragon's teeth grew very fond of these little children, and they were never tired of showing them how to play with wooden swords and to blow on a penny trumpet, and beat a drum and march like soldiers to battle.

Proserpina

Mother Ceres was very fond of her little daughter Proserpina. She did not often let her go alone into the fields for fear she should be lost. But just at the time when my story begins she was very busy. She had to look after the wheat and the corn, and the apples and the pears, all over the world, and as the weather had been bad day after day she was afraid none of them would be ripe when harvest-time came.

So this morning Mother Ceres put on her turban made of scarlet poppies and got into her car. This car was drawn by a pair of winged dragons which went very fast, and Mother Ceres was just ready to start, when Proserpina said, 'Dear mother, I shall be very lonely while you are away, may I run down to the sands, and ask some of the sea-children to come out of the water to play with me?'

'Yes, child, you may,' answered Mother Ceres, 'but you must take care not to stray away from them, and you are not to play in the fields by yourself with no one to take care of you.'

Proserpina promised to remember what her mother said, and by the time the dragons with their big wings had whirled the car out of sight she was already on the shore, calling to the sea-children to come to play with her.

They knew Proserpina's voice and came at once: pretty children with wavy sea-green hair and shining faces, and they sat down on the wet sand where the waves could still break over them, and began to make a necklace for Proserpina of beautiful shells brought from their home at the bottom of the sea.

Proserpina was so delighted when they hung the necklace round her neck that she wanted to give them something in return. "Will you come with me into the fields,' she asked, 'and I will gather flowers and make you each a wreath?'

'Oh no, dear Proserpina,' said the sea-children, 'we may not go with you on the dry land. We must keep close beside the sea and let the waves wash over us every minute or two. If it were not for the salt water we should soon look like bunches of dried seaweed instead of sea-children.'

'That is a great pity,' said Proserpina, 'but if you wait for me here, I will run to the fields and be back again with my apron full of flowers before the waves have broken over you ten times. I long to make you some wreaths as beautiful as this necklace with all its coloured shells.'

'We will wait, then,' said the sea-children: 'we will lie under the water and pop up our heads every few minutes to see if you are coming.'

Proserpina ran quickly to a field where only the day before she had seen a great many flowers; but the first she came to seemed rather faded, and forgetting what Mother Ceres had told her, she strayed a little farther into the fields. Never before had she found such beautiful flowers! Large sweet-scented violets, purple and white: deep pink roses: hyacinths with the biggest of blue bells: as well as many others she did not know. They seemed to grow up under her feet, and soon her apron was so full that the flowers were falling out of the corners.

Proserpina was just going to turn back to the sands to make the wreaths for the sea-children, when she cried out with delight. Before her was a bush covered with the most wonderful flowers in the world. 'What beauties!' said Proserpina, and then she thought, 'How strange! I looked at that spot only a moment ago; why did I not see the flowers?'

They were such lovely ones too. More than a hundred different kinds grew on the one bush: the brightest, gayest

flowers Proserpina had ever seen. But there was a shiny look about them and about the leaves which she did not quite like. Somehow it made her wonder if this was a poison plant, and to tell the truth she was half inclined to turn round and run away.

'How silly I am!' she thought, taking courage: 'it is really the most beautiful bush I ever saw: I will pull it up by the roots and carry it home to plant in mother's garden.'

Holding her apron full of flowers with one hand, Proserpina seized the large shrub with the other and pulled and pulled.

What deep roots that bush had! She pulled again with all her might, and the earth round the roots began to stir and crack: so she gave another big pull, and then she let go. She thought there was a rumbling noise right below her feet, and she wondered if the roots went down to some dragon's cave. Then she tried once again, and up came the bush so quickly that Proserpina nearly fell backwards. There she stood, holding the stem in her hand and looking at the big hole which its roots had left in the earth.

To her surprise this hole began to grow wider and wider, and deeper and deeper, and a rumbling noise came out of it. Louder and louder it grew, nearer and nearer it came, just like the tramp of horses' feet and the rattling of wheels.

Proserpina was too frightened now to run away, and soon she saw a wonderful thing. Four black horses, with smoke coming out of their nostrils and with long black tails and flowing black manes, came tearing their way out of the earth, and a splendid golden chariot was rattling at their heels.

The horses leaped out of the hole, chariot and all, and came close to the spot where Proserpina stood.

Then she saw there was a man in the chariot. He was very richly dressed, with a crown on his head all made of diamonds which sparkled like fire. He was a very handsome man, but looked rather cross and discontented, and he kept rubbing his

eyes and covering them with his hand, as if he did not care much for the bright sunshine.

As soon as he saw Proserpina, the man waved to her to come a little nearer. 'Do not be afraid,' he said. 'Come! would you not like to ride a little way with me in my beautiful chariot?'

But Proserpina was very frightened, and no wonder. The stranger did not look a very kind or pleasant man. His voice was so gruff and deep, and sounded just like the rumbling Proserpina had heard underneath the earth.

She at once began to cry out, 'Mother, mother! O Mother Ceres, come quickly and save me!'

But her voice was very shaky and too faint for Mother Ceres to hear, for by this time she was many thousands of miles away making the corn grow in another country.

No sooner did Proserpina begin to cry out than the strange man leaped to the ground: he caught her in his arms and sprang into the chariot: then he shook the reins and shouted to the four black horses to set off. They began to gallop so fast that it was just like flying, and in less than a minute Proserpina had lost sight of the sunny fields where she and her mother had always lived.

She screamed and screamed and all the beautiful flowers fell out of her apron to the ground.

But Mother Ceres was too far away to know what was happening to her little daughter.

"Why are you so frightened, my little girl?' said the strange man, and he tried to soften his rough voice. 'I promise not to do you any harm. I see you have been gathering flowers? Wait till we come to my palace and I will give you a garden full of prettier flowers than these, all made of diamonds and pearls and rubies. Can you guess who I am? They call me Pluto, and I am the King of the mines where all the diamonds and rubies and all the gold and silver are found: they all belong to me. Do you see this lovely crown on my head? I will let you have

it to play with. Oh, I think we are going to be very good friends when we get out of this trouble-some sunshine.'

'Let me go home,' sobbed Proserpina, 'let me go home.'

'My home is better than your mother's,' said King Pluto. 'It is a palace made of gold, with crystal windows and with diamond lamps instead of sunshine; and there is a splendid throne; if you like you may sit on it and be my little Queen, and I will sit on the footstool.'

'I do not care for golden palaces and thrones,' sobbed Proserpina: 'O mother, mother! Take me back to my mother.'

But King Pluto only shouted to his horses to go faster.

'You are very foolish, Proserpina,' he said, rather crossly. 'I am doing all I can to make you happy, and I want very much to have a merry little girl to run upstairs and downstairs in my palace and make it brighter with her laughter. This is all I ask you to do for King Pluto.'

'Never,' answered Proserpina, looking very miserable. 'I shall never laugh again, till you take me back to my mother's cottage.'

And the horses galloped on, and the wind whistled past the chariot, and Proserpina cried and cried till her poor little voice was almost cried away, and nothing was left but a whisper.

The road now began to get very dull and gloomy. On each side were black rocks and very thick trees and bushes that looked as if they never got any sunshine. It got darker and darker, as if night was coming, and still the black horses rushed on leaving the sunny home of Mother Ceres far behind.

But the darker it grew, the happier King Pluto seemed to be. Proserpina began to peep at him: she thought he might not be such a wicked man after all.

'Is it much further,' she asked, 'and will you carry me back when I have seen your palace?'

'We will talk of that by and by,' answered Pluto. 'Do you

see these big gates? When we pass these we are at home: and look! there is my faithful dog at the door! Cerberus, Cerberus, come here, good dog.'

Pluto pulled the horses' reins, and the chariot stopped between two big tall pillars. The dog got up and stood on his hind legs, so that he could put his paws on the chariot wheel. What a strange dog he was! A big, rough, ugly-looking monster, with three heads, each fiercer than the other.

King Pluto patted his heads and the dog wagged his tail with delight. Proserpina was much afraid when she saw that his tail was a live dragon, with fiery eyes and big poisonous teeth.

'Will the dog bite me?' she asked, creeping closer to King Pluto. 'How very ugly he is.'

'Oh, never fear,' Pluto answered: 'he never bites people unless they try to come in here when I do not want them. Down, Cerberus. Now, Proserpina, we will drive on.'

The black horses started again and King Pluto seemed very happy to find himself once more at home.

All along the road Proserpina could see diamonds, and rubies and precious stones sparkling, and there were bits of real gold among the rocks. It was a very rich place.

Not far from the gateway they came to an iron bridge. Pluto stopped the chariot and told Proserpina to look at the river which ran underneath. It was very black and muddy, and flowed slowly, very slowly, as if it had quite forgotten which way it wanted to go, and was in no hurry to flow anywhere.

'This is the river Lethe,' said King Pluto; 'do you not think it a very pleasant stream?'

'I think it is very dismal,' said Proserpina.

'Well, I like it, answered Pluto, who got rather cross when any one did not agree with him. 'It is a strange kind of river. If you drink only a little sip of the water, you will at once forget all your care and sorrow. When we reach the palace, you shall have some in a golden cup, and then you will not cry any more

for your mother, and will be perfectly happy with me.'

'Oh no, oh no!' said Proserpina, sobbing again. 'O mother, mother, I will never forget you; I do not want to be happy by forgetting all about you.'

'We shall see,' said King Pluto; 'you do not know what good times we will have in my palace. Here we are, just at the gate. Look at the big pillars; they are all made of solid gold.'

He got out of the chariot and carried Proserpina in his arms up a long stair into the great hall of the palace. It was beautifully lit by hundreds of diamonds and rubies which shone like lamps. It was very rich and splendid to look at, but it was cold and lonely and Pluto must have longed for some one to keep him company: perhaps that was why he had stolen Proserpina from her sunny home.

King Pluto sent for his servants and told them to get ready a grand supper with all kinds of dainty food and sweet things such as children like. 'And be sure not to forget a golden cup filled with the water of Lethe,' he said to the servant.

'I will not eat anything,' said Proserpina, 'nor drink a single drop, even if you keep me for ever in your palace.'

'I should be sorry for that,' replied King Pluto. He really wished to be kind if he had only known how. 'Wait till you see the nice things my cook will make for you, and then you will be hungry.'

Now King Pluto had a secret reason why he wanted Proserpina to eat some food. You must understand that when people are carried off to the land of magic, if once they taste any food they can never go back to their friends.

If King Pluto had offered Proserpina some bread and milk she would very likely have taken it as soon as she was hungry, but all the cook's fine pastries and sweets were things she had never seen at home, and, instead of making her hungry, she was afraid to touch them.

But now my story must leave King Pluto's palace, and we must see what Mother Ceres has been about.

You remember she had gone off in her chariot with the winged dragons to the other side of the world to see how the corn and fruit were growing. And while she was busy in a field she thought she heard Proserpina's voice calling her. She was quite sure her little daughter could not possibly be anywhere near, but the idea troubled her: and presently she left the fields before her work was half done and, ordering her dragons with the chariot, she drove off.

In less than an hour Mother Ceres got down at the door of her cottage. It was empty! At first she thought 'Oh, Proserpina will still be playing on the shore with the sea-children.' So she went to find her.

'Where is Proserpina, you naughty sea-children?' she asked: 'tell me, have you taken her to your home under the sea?'

'Oh no, Mother Ceres,' they said, 'she left us early in the day to gather flowers for a wreath, and we have seen nothing of her since.'

Ceres hurried off to ask all the neighbours. A poor fisherman had seen her little footprints in the sand as he went home with his basket of fish.

A man in the fields had noticed her gathering flowers.

Several persons had heard the rattling of chariot wheels or the rumbling of distant thunder: and one old woman had heard a scream, but supposed it was only in merriment, and had not even looked up.

None of the neighbours knew where Proserpina was, and Mother Ceres decided she must seek her daughter further from home.

By this time it was night, so she lit a torch and set off, telling the neighbours she would never come back till Proserpina was found. In her hurry she quite forgot her chariot with the dragons: may be she thought she could search better on foot.

So she started on her sad journey, holding her torch in

front of her, and looking carefully along every road and round every corner.

She had not gone very far before she found one of the wonderful flowers which Proserpina had pulled from the poison bush.

'Ha!' said Mother Ceres, examining it carefully, 'there is mischief in this flower: it did not grow in the earth by any help of mine; it is the work of magic, and perhaps it has poisoned my poor child.' And she hid it in her bosom.

All night long Ceres sought for her daughter. She knocked at the doors of farm-houses where the people were all asleep, and they came to see who was there, rubbing their eyes and yawning. They were very sorry for the poor mother when they heard her tale—but they knew nothing about Proserpina.

At every palace door, too, she knocked, so loudly that the servants ran quickly, expecting to find a great Queen, and when they saw only a sad lonely woman with a burning torch in her hand, and a wreath of withered poppies on her head, they were angry and drove her rudely away.

But nobody had seen Proserpina, and Mother Ceres wandered about till the night was passed, without sitting down to rest, and without taking any food. She did not even remember to put out her torch, and it looked very pale and small in the bright morning sunshine.

It must have been a magic torch, for it burned dimly all day, and then when night came it shone with a beautiful red light, and neither the wind nor the rain put it out through ail these weary days while Ceres sought for Proserpina.

It was not only men and women that Mother Ceres questioned about her daughter. In the woods and by the streams she met other creatures whose way of talking she could understand, and who knew many things that we have never learned.

Sometimes she tapped with her finger against an oak tree,

and at once its rough bark would open and a beautiful maiden would appear: she was the spirit of the oak, living inside it, and as happy as could be when its green leaves danced in the breeze.

Then another time Ceres would find a spring bubbling out of a little hole in the earth, and she would play with her fingers in the water. Immediately up though the sandy bed a nymph with dripping hair would rise and float half out of the water, looking at Mother Ceres, and swaying up and down with the water bubbles.

But when the mother asked whether her poor lost child had stopped to drink of the fountain, the nymph with weeping eyes would answer 'No,' in a murmuring voice which was just like the sound of a running stream.

Often, too, she met fauns. These were little people with brown faces who looked as if they had played a great deal in the sun. They had hairy ears and little horns on their brows, and their legs were like goats' legs on which they danced merrily about the woods and fields. They were very kind creatures, and were very sorry for Mother Ceres when they heard that her daughter was lost.

And once she met a rude band of satyrs who had faces like monkeys and who had horses' tails behind: they were dancing and shouting in a rough, noisy manner, and they only laughed when Ceres told them how unhappy she was.

One day while she was crossing a lonely sheep-field she saw the god Pan: he was sitting at the foot of a tall rock, making music on a shepherd's flute. He too, had horns on his brow, and hairy ears, and goat's feet. He knew Mother Ceres and answered her questions kindly, and he gave her some milk and honey to drink out of a wooden bowl. But he knew nothing of Proserpina.

And so Mother Ceres went wandering about for nine long days and nights. Now and then she found a withered flower, and these she picked up and put in her bosom, because she

fancied they might have fallen from her daughter's hand. All day she went on through the hot sunshine, and at night the flame of her torch would gleam on the pathway, and she would continue her weary search without ever sitting down to rest.

On the tenth day she came to the mouth of a cave. It was dark inside, but a torch was burning dimly and lit up half of the gloomy place. Ceres peeped in and held up her own torch before her, and then she saw what looked like a woman, sitting on a heap of withered leaves, which the wind had blown into the cave. She was a very strange-looking woman: her head was shaped like a dog's, and round it she had a wreath of snakes.

As soon as she saw her, Mother Ceres knew that this was a queer kind of person who was always grumbling and unhappy. Her name was Hecate, and she would never Say a word to other people unless they were unhappy too. 'I am sad enough,' thought poor Ceres, 'to talk with Hecate': so she stepped into the cave and sat down on the withered leaves beside the dog-headed woman.

'O Hecate,' she said, 'if ever you lose a daughter you will know what sorrow is. Tell me, for pity's sake, have you seen my poor child Proserpina pass by the mouth of your cave?'

'No, Mother Ceres,' answered Hecate. 'I have seen nothing of your daughter. But my ears, you know, are made so that all cries of distress or fright all over the world are heard by them. And nine days ago, as I sat in my cave, I heard the voice of a young girl sobbing as if in great distress: as well as I could judge, some dragon was carrying her away.'

'You kill me by saying so,' cried Mother Ceres, almost ready to faint: 'where was the sound, and which way did it seem to go?'

'It passed along very quickly,' said Hecate, 'and there was a rumbling of wheels to the eastward: I cannot tell you any more. I advise you just to come and live here with me, and we

will be the two most unhappy women in all the world.'

'Not yet, dark Hecate,' replied Ceres. 'Will you first come with your torch and help me to seek for my child. When there is no more hope of finding her, then I will come back with you to your dark cave. But till I know that Proserpina is dead, I will not allow myself time to sorrow.'

Hecate did not much like the idea of going abroad into the sunshine, but at last she agreed to go, and they set out together, each carrying a torch, although it was broad daylight and the sun was shining. Any people they met ran away without waiting to be spoken to, as soon as they caught sight of Hecate's wreath of snakes.

As the sad pair wandered on, a thought struck Ceres. 'There is one person,' she exclaimed, 'who must have seen my child and can tell me what has become of her. Why did I not think of him sooner? It is Phœbus.'

'What!' said Hecate, 'the youth that always sits in the sunshine! Oh! pray do not think of going near him: he is a gay young fellow that will only smile in your face. And, besides, there is such a glare of sunshine about him that he will quite blind my poor eyes, which are weak with so much weeping.'

'You have promised to be my companion,' answered Ceres. 'Come, let us make haste, or the sunshine will be gone and Phœbus along with it.'

So they set off in search of Phœbus, both sighing a great deal, and after a long journey they came to the sunniest spot in the whole world. There they saw a young man with curly golden hair which seemed to be made of sunbeams.

His clothes were like light summer clouds, and the smile on his face was so bright that Hecate held her hands before her eyes and muttered that she wished he would wear a veil! Phœbus had a lyre in his hands and was playing very sweet music, at the same time singing a merry song.

As Ceres and her dismal companion came near, Phœbus smiled on them so cheerfully that Hecate's wreath of snakes

gave a spiteful hiss and Hecate wished she was back in her dark cave.

But Ceres was too unhappy to know whether Phœbus smiled or looked angry.

'Phœbus,' she said, 'I am in great trouble and have come to you for help. Can you tell me what has become of my little daughter Proserpina?'

'Proserpina, Proserpina did you call her?' answered Phœbus, trying to remember. He had so many pleasant ideas in his head that he sometimes forgot what had happened no longer ago than yesterday.

'Ah yes! I remember now—a very lovely little girl. I am happy to tell you that I did see Proserpina not many days ago. You may be quite easy about her. She is safe and in good hands.'

'Oh, where is my dear child?' cried Ceres, clasping her hands and flinging herself at his feet.

'Why,' replied Phœbus, 'as the little girl was gathering flowers she was snatched up by King Pluto and carried off to his kingdom. I have never been there myself, but I am told the royal palace is splendidly built. Proserpina will have gold and silver and diamonds to play with, and I am sure even although there is no sunshine, she will have a very happy life.'

'Hush! do not say such a thing,' said Ceres. 'What has she got to love? What are all these splendours if she has no one to care for? I must have her back: good Phœbus, will you come with me to demand my daughter from this wicked Pluto?'

'Pray excuse me,' answered Phœbus, with a bow. 'I certainly wish you success, and I am sorry I am too busy to go with you. Besides, King Pluto does not care much for me. To tell you the truth, his dog with the three heads would never let me pass the gateway. I always carry a handful of sunbeams with me, and those, you know, are not allowed within King Pluto's kingdom.'

So the poor mother said good-bye and hastened away

along with Hecate.

Ceres had now found out what had become of her daughter, but she was not any happier than before. Indeed, her trouble seemed worse than ever. So long as Proserpina was aboveground there was some hope of getting her home again. But now that the poor child was shut up behind King Pluto's iron gates, with the three-headed Cerberus on guard beside them, there seemed no hope of her escape.

The dismal Hecate, who always looked on the darkest side of things, told Ceres she had better come back with her to the cave and spend the rest of her life in being miserable. But Ceres answered that Hecate could go back if she wished, but that for her part she would wander about all the world looking for the entrance to King Pluto's kingdom. So Hecate hurried off alone to her beloved cave, frightening a great many little children with her dog's face as she went.

Poor Mother Ceres! It is sad to think of her all alone, holding up her never-dying torch and wandering up and down the wide, wide world. So much did she suffer that in a very short time she began to look quite old. She wandered about with her hair hanging down her back, and she looked so wild that people took her for some poor mad woman, and never thought that this was Mother Ceres who took care of every seed which was sown in the ground and of all the fruit and flowers.

Now she gave herself no trouble about seedtime or harvest: there was nothing in which she seemed to feel any interest, except the children she saw at play or gathering flowers by the wayside. Then, indeed, she would stand and look at them with tears in her eyes.

And the children seemed to understand her sorrow and would gather in a little group about her knees and look up lovingly into her face, and Ceres, after giving them a kiss all round, would lead them home and advise their mothers never to let them stray out of sight. 'For if they do,' said she, 'it may

happen to you as it has happened to me: the iron-hearted King Pluto may take a liking to your darlings and carry them away in his golden chariot.'

At last, in her despair, Ceres made up her mind that not a stalk of grain, nor a blade of grass, not a potato, nor a turnip, nor any vegetable that is good for man or beast, should be allowed to grow till her daughter was sent back. She was so unhappy that she even forbade the flowers to bloom.

Now you can see what a terrible misfortune had fallen on the earth. The farmer ploughed the ground and planted his seed, as usual, and there lay the black earth without a single green blade to be seen. The fields looked as brown in the sunny months of spring as ever they did in winter. The rich man's garden and the flower-plot in front of the labourer's cottage were both empty; even the children's gardens showed nothing but withered stalks. It was very sad to see the poor starving sheep and cattle that followed behind Ceres, bleating and lowing as if they knew that she could help them.

All the people begged her at least to let the grass grow, but Mother Ceres was too miserable to care for any one's trouble. 'Never,' she said. 'If the earth is ever to be green again, it must grow along the path by which my daughter comes back to me.'

At last, as there seemed to be no other way out of it, Mercury, the favourite messenger of the gods, was sent to King Pluto in the hope that he would set everything right again by giving up Proserpina,

Mercury went as quickly as he could to the great iron gates, and with the help of the wings on his shoes, he took a flying leap right over Cerberus with his three heads, and very soon he stood at the door of King Pluto's palace.

The servants all knew him, as he had often been there in his short cloak, and cap, and shoes with the wings, and with his curious staff which had two snakes twisted round it.

He asked to see the King immediately, and Pluto, who

had heard his voice from the top of the stairs, called out to him to come up at once, for he was always glad to listen to Mercury's cheery talk.

And while they are laughing together we must find out what Proserpina had been doing since we last heard about her.

You will remember that Proserpina had said she would not taste food so long as she was kept a prisoner in King Pluto's palace.

It was now six months since she had been carried off from her home, and not a mouthful had she eaten, not even when the cook had made all kinds of sweet things and had ordered all the dainties which children usually like best.

Proserpina was naturally a bright, merry little girl, and all this time she was not so unhappy as you may have thought.

In the big palace were a thousand rooms, and each was full of wonderful and beautiful things. It is true there was never any sunshine in these rooms, and Proserpina used to fancy that the shadowy light which came from the jewelled lamps was alive: it seemed to float before her as she walked between the golden pillars, and to close softly behind her in the echo of her footsteps.

And Proserpina knew that all the glitter of these precious stones was not worth a single sunbeam, nor could the rubies and emeralds which she played with ever be as dear to her as the daisies and buttercups she had gathered among the soft green grass.

King Pluto felt how much happier his palace was since Proserpina came, and so did all his servants. They loved to hear her childish voice laughing as she ran from room to room, and they felt less old and tired when they saw again how glad little children can be.

'My own little Proserpina,' King Pluto used to say, 'I wish you would like me a little better. Although I look rather a sad man, I am really fond of children, and if you would stay here

with me always, it would make me happier than having hundreds of palaces like this.'

'Ah,' said Proserpina, 'you should have tried to make me like you first before carrying me off, and now the best thing you can do is to let me go again: then I might remember you sometimes and think that you were as kind as you knew how to be. Perhaps I might come back to pay you a visit one day.'

'No, no,' answered Pluto, with his gloomy smile, 'I will not trust you for that. You are too fond of living in the sunshine and gathering flowers. What an idle, childish thing to do! Do you not think that these diamonds which I have had dug out of the mine for you are far prettier than violets?'

'No, oh no! not half so pretty,' said Proserpina, snatching them from Pluto's hand, and flinging them to the other end of the room. 'O my sweet purple violets, shall I ever see you again?' and she began to cry bitterly.

But like most children, she soon stopped crying, and in a short time she was running up and down the rooms as merrily as when she had played on the sands with the sea-children. And King Pluto, sad and lonely, watched her and wished that he too was a child, and when Proserpina turned and saw the great King standing alone in his splendid hall, so grand and so lonely, with no one to love him, she felt sorry for him. She ran back and for the first time in all those six months she put her small hand in his. 'I love you a little,' she whispered, looking up into his face.

'Do you really, dear child?' cried Pluto, bending down his dark face to kiss her. But Proserpina was a little afraid, he was so dark and severe-looking, and she shrank back.

'Well,' said Pluto, 'it is just what I deserve after keeping you a prisoner all these months, and starving you besides. Are you not dreadfully hungry, is there nothing I can get you to eat?'

In asking this Pluto was very cunning, as you will remember that if Proserpina once tasted any food in his kingdom,

she would never again be able to go home.

'No, indeed,' said Proserpina. 'Your poor fat little cook is always making me all kinds of good things which I do not want. The one thing I should like to eat would be a slice of bread baked by my own mother, and a pear out of her garden.'

When Pluto heard this he began to see that he had made a mistake in his way of trying to tempt Proserpina to eat. He wondered why he had never thought of this before, and he at once sent a servant with a large basket to get some of the finest and juiciest pears in the whole world.

But this was just at the time when, as we know, Mother Ceres in her despair had forbidden any flowers or fruit to grow on the earth, and the only thing King Pluto's servant could find, after seeking all over the world was a single dried-up pomegranate, so dried up as to be hardly worth eating. Still, since there was no better to be had, he brought it back to the palace, put it on a magnificent gold plate, and carried it to Proserpina.

Now it just happened that as the servant was bringing the pomegranate in at the back door of the palace, Mercury had gone up the front steps with his message to King Pluto about Proserpina.

As soon as Proserpina saw the pomegranate on the golden plate, she told the servant to take it away again. 'I shall not touch it, I can assure you,' she said. 'If I were ever so hungry, I should not think of eating such a dried-up miserable pomegranate as that.'

'It is the only one in the world,' said the servant, and he set down the plate and went away.

When he had gone, Proserpina could not help coming close to the table and looking at the dried-up pomegranate with eagerness. To tell the truth, when she saw something that really suited her taste, she felt all her six months' hunger come back at once.

To be sure it was a very poor-looking pomegranate, with

no more juice in it than in an oyster-shell. But there was no choice of such things in King Pluto's palace, and this was the first fresh fruit Proserpina had ever seen there, and the last she was ever likely to see: and unless she ate it up at once, it would only get drier and drier and be quite unfit to eat.

'At least I may smell it, she thought, so she took up the pomegranate and held it to her nose, and somehow, being quite near to her mouth, the fruit found its way into that little red cave.

Before Proserpina knew what she was about, her teeth had actually bitten it of their own accord.

Just as this fatal deed was done, the door of the hall opened and King Pluto came in, followed Ly Mercury, who had been begging him to let his little prisoner go.

At the first noise of their coming, Proserpina took the pomegranate from her mouth, Mercury, who saw things very quickly, noticed that Proserpina looked a little uncomfortable, and when he saw the gold plate empty, he was sure she had been eating something.

As for King Pluto, he never guessed the secret.

'My dear little Proserpina,' said the King, sitting down and drawing her gently between his knees, 'here is Mercury, who tells me that a great many sad things have happened to innocent people because I have kept you a prisoner down here. And to confess the truth I have been thinking myself that I really had no right to take you away from your mother. It was very stupid of me, but I thought this palace was so dull, and that I should be much happier if I just had a merry little girl to play in it, and I hoped you would take my crown for a toy and let me be your playmate. It was very foolish of me, I know.'

'No, it was not foolish,' said Proserpina, 'you have been very kind to me, and I have often been quite happy here with you.'

'Thank you, dear,' said King Pluto, 'but I cannot help

seeing that you think my palace a dark prison and me the hard-hearted jailer, and I should, indeed, be hard-hearted if I were to keep you longer than six months. So I give you your liberty: go back, dear, with Mercury, to your mother.'

Now, although you might not think so, Proserpina found it impossible to say goodbye to King Pluto without being sorry, and she felt she ought to tell him about tasting the pomegranate. She even cried a little when she thought how lonely and dull the great palace with its jewelled lamps would be after she had left.

She would like to have thanked him many times, but Mercury hurried her away. 'Come along quickly,' he said, 'as King Pluto may change his mind, and take care above all things that you say nothing about the pomegranate which the servant brought you on the gold plate.'

In a short time they had passed the great gateway with the golden pillars, leaving Cerberus barking and growling with all his three heads at once, and beating his dragon tail on the ground. Along the dark, rocky road they went very quickly, and soon they reached the upper world again.

You can guess how excited and happy Proserpina was to see the bright sunshine. She noticed how green the grass grew on the path behind and on each side of her. Wherever she set her foot at once there rose a flower: violets and roses bloomed along the wayside: the grass and the corn began to grow with ten times their usual quickness to make up for the dreary months when Mother Ceres had forbidden them to appear aboveground.

The hungry cattle began to eat, and went on eating all day after their long fast. And, I can assure you, it was a busy time with all the farmers when they found that summer was coming with a rush.

As to the birds, they hopped about from tree to tree among the fresh, sweet blossoms, and sang for joy that the dreary days were over and the world was green and young

again.

Mother Ceres had gone back to her empty cottage, and was sitting very sadly on the doorstep with her burning torch in her hand. She had been looking wearily at the flame for some moments, when all at once it flickered and went out.

"What does this mean?' she thought. 'It was a magic torch, and should have gone on burning till Proserpina was found.'

She looked up, and was surprised to see the bare brown fields suddenly turning green, just as you sometimes see them turn golden when the sun comes from behind a dark cloud.

'Does the Earth dare to disobey me?' exclaimed Mother Ceres angrily. 'Did I not forbid it to be green until my child should be sent back to me?'

"Then open your arms, mother dear,' cried a well-known voice, 'and take me back again.' And Proserpina came running along the pathway and flung herself on her mother's bosom.

It would be impossible to tell how happy they were; so happy that they cried a little: for people cry when they are very glad as well as when they are unhappy.

After a little while Mother Ceres looked anxiously at Proserpina. 'My child,' she said, 'did you taste any food while you were in King Pluto's palace?'

'Dearest mother,' answered Proserpina, 'I will tell you the whole truth. Until this morning not a morsel of food had passed my lips. But a servant brought me a pomegranate on a golden plate, a very dry pomegranate, with no juice inside, nothing but seeds and skin: and I was so hungry, and had not tasted any food for such a long time, that I took just one bite. The moment I tasted it King Pluto and Mercury came into the room. I had not swallowed a morsel, but O mother! I hope it was no harm. Six pomegranate seeds remained in my mouth and I swallowed them.'

'O miserable me!' said Mother Ceres. 'For each of these

six pomegranate seeds you must spend a month every year in King Pluto's palace. You are only half restored to me: you will be six months with me and then six months with the King of Darkness!

'Do not be so vexed, mother dear,' said Proserpina. 'It was very unkind of King Pluto to carry me off, but then, as he says, it was such a dismal life for him to lead in that great palace all alone: and he says he has been much happier since he had me to run about the big rooms and to play beside him. If only he will let me spend six months every year with you, I think I can bear to spend the other six months beside him. After all, he was as kind as he knew how to be, but I am very glad he cannot keep me the whole year round.'

Midas

Once upon a time there lived a very rich King whose name was Midas, and he had a little daughter whom he loved very dearly. This King was fonder of gold than of anything else in the whole world: or if he did love anything better, it was the one little daughter who played so merrily beside her father's footstool.

But the more Midas loved his daughter, the more he wished to be rich for her sake. He thought, foolish man, that the best thing he could do for his child was to leave her the biggest pile of yellow glittering gold that had ever been heaped together since the world began. So he gave all his thoughts and all his time to this purpose.

When he worked in his garden, he used to wish that the roses had leaves made of gold: and once when his little daughter brought him a handful of yellow buttercups, he exclaimed, 'Now if these had only been real gold they would have been worth gathering.' He very soon forgot how beautiful the flowers, and the grass, and the trees were, and at the time my story begins Midas could scarcely bear to see or to touch anything that was not made of gold.

Every day he used to spend a great many hours in a dark, ugly room underground: it was here that he kept all his money, and whenever Midas wanted to be very happy he would lock himself into this miserable room and would spend hours and hours pouring the glittering coins out of his money-bags. Or he would count again and again the bars of gold which were kept in a big oak chest with a great iron lock in the lid, and sometimes he would carry a boxful of gold dust

from the dark corner where it lay, and would look at the shining heap by the light that came from a tiny window.

To his greedy eyes there never seemed to be half enough; he was quite discontented. 'What a happy man I should be,' he said one day, 'if only the whole world could be made of gold, and if it all belonged to me!'

Just then a shadow fell across the golden pile, and when Midas looked up he saw a young man with a cheery rosy face standing in the thin strip of sunshine that came through the little window. Midas was certain that he had carefully locked the door before he opened his money-bags, so he knew that no one, unless he were more than a mortal, could get in beside him. The stranger seemed so friendly and pleasant that Midas was not in the least afraid.

'You are a rich man, friend Midas,' the visitor said; 'I doubt if any other room in the whole world has as much gold in it as this.'

'May be,' said Midas in a discontented voice, 'but I wish it were much more: and think how many years it has taken me to gather it all! If only I could live for a thousand years, then I might be really rich.

'Then you are not satisfied?' asked the stranger. Midas shook his head.

'What would satisfy you?' the stranger said.

Midas looked at his visitor for a minute, and then said, 'I am tired of getting money with so much trouble. I should like everything I touch to be changed into gold.'

The stranger smiled, and his smile seemed to fill the room like a flood of sunshine. 'Are you quite sure, Midas, that you would never be sorry if your wish were granted?' he asked.

'Quite sure,' said Midas: 'I ask nothing more to make me perfectly happy.'

'Be it as you wish, then,' said the stranger: 'from to-morrow at sunrise you will have your desire—everything you touch will be changed into gold.'

The figure of the stranger then grew brighter and brighter, so that Midas had to close his eyes, and when he opened them again he saw only a yellow sunbeam in the room, and all around him glittered the precious gold which he had spent his life in gathering.

How Midas longed for the next day to come! He scarcely slept that night, and as soon as it was light he laid his hand on the chair beside his bed: then he nearly cried when he saw that nothing happened: the chair remained just as it was. 'Could the stranger have made a mistake,' he wondered, 'or had it been a dream?'

He lay still getting angrier and angrier each minute until at last the sun rose, and the first rays shone through his window and brightened the room. It seemed to Midas that the bright yellow sunbeam was reflected very curiously from the covering of his bed, and he sat up and looked more closely.

What was his delight when he saw that the bedcover on which his hands rested had become a woven cloth of the purest and brightest gold! He started up and caught hold of the bed-post: instantly it became a golden pillar. He pulled aside the window-curtain and the tassel grew heavy in his hand: it was a mass of gold! He took up a book from the table, and at his first touch it became a bundle of thin golden leaves, in which no reading could be seen.

Midas was delighted with his good fortune: he took his spectacles from his pocket and put them on, so that he might see more distinctly what he was about. But to his surprise he could not possibly see through them: the clear glasses had turned into gold, and, of course, though they were worth a great deal of money, they were of no more use as spectacles.

Midas thought this was rather troublesome, but he soon forgot all about it. He went downstairs, and how he laughed with pleasure when he noticed that the railing became a bar of shining gold as he rested his hand on it: even the rusty iron

latch of the garden door turned yellow as soon as his fingers pressed it.

How lovely the garden was! In the old days Midas had been very fond of flowers, and had spent a great deal of money in getting rare trees and flowers with which to make his garden beautiful.

Red roses in full bloom scented the air: purple and white violets nestled under the rose-bushes, and birds were singing happily in the cherry-trees, which were covered with snow-white blossoms. But since Midas had become so fond of gold he had lost all pleasure in his garden: this morning he did not even see how beautiful it was.

He was thinking of nothing but the wonderful gift the stranger had brought him, and he was sure he could make the garden of far more value than it had ever been. So he went from bush to bush and touched the flowers. And the beautiful pink and red colour faded from the roses: the violets became stiff, and then glittered among bunches of hard yellow leaves: and showers of snow-white blossoms no longer fell from the cherry-trees; the tiny petals were all changed into flakes of solid gold, which glittered so brightly in the sunbeams that Midas could not bear to look at them.

But he was quite satisfied with his morning's work, and went back to the palace for breakfast feeling very happy.

Just then he heard his little daughter crying bitterly, and she came running into the room sobbing as if her heart would break. 'How now, little lady,' he said, 'pray what is the matter with you this morning?'

'Oh dear, oh dear, such a dreadful thing has happened!' answered the child. 'I went to the garden to gather you some roses, and they are all spoiled: they have grown quite ugly, and stiff, and yellow, and they have no scent: what can be the matter?' and she cried bitterly.

Midas was ashamed to confess that he was to blame, so he said nothing, and they sat down at the table. The King was

very hungry, and he poured out a cup of coffee and helped himself to some fish: but the instant his lips touched the coffee it became the colour of gold, and the next moment it hardened into a solid lump. 'Oh dear me!' exclaimed the King, rather surprised.

'What is the matter, father?' asked his little daughter.

'Nothing, child, nothing,' he answered; 'eat your bread and milk before it gets cold.'

Then he looked at the nice little fish on his plate, and he gently touched its tail with his finger. To his horror it was at once changed into gold. He took one of the delicious hot cakes, and he had scarcely broken it when the white flour changed into yellow crumbs which shone like grains of hard sea-sand.

'I do not see how I am going to get any breakfast,' he said to himself: and he looked with envy at his little daughter, who had dried her tears and was eating her bread and milk hungrily. 'I wonder if it will be the same at dinner,' he thought, 'and if so, how am I going to live if all my food is to be turned into gold?'

Midas began to get very anxious and to think about many things that he had never thought of before. Here was the very richest breakfast that could be set before a King, and yet there was nothing that he could eat! The poorest workman sitting down to a crust of bread and a cup of water was better off than King Midas, whose dainty food was worth its weight in gold.

He began to doubt whether, after all, riches were the only good thing in the world, and he was so hungry that he gave a groan.

His little daughter noticed that her father ate nothing, and at first she sat still looking at him and trying to find out what was the matter. Then she got down from her chair, and running to her father, she threw her arms lovingly round his knees.

Midas bent down and kissed her: he felt that his little

daughter's love was a thousand times more precious than all the gold he had gained since the stranger came to visit him. 'My precious, precious little girl!' he said, but there was no answer.

Alas! what had he done? The moment that his lips had touched his child's forehead, a change took place. Her sweet, rosy face, so full of love and happiness, hardened and became a glittering yellow colour: her beautiful brown curls hung like wires of gold from the small head: and her soft, tender little figure grew stiff in his arms.

Midas had often said to people that his little daughter was worth her weight in gold, and it had become really true: now when it was too late, he felt how much more precious was the warm tender heart that loved him than all the gold that could be piled up between the earth and sky.

He began to wring his hands and to wish that he was the poorest man in the wide world, if the loss of all his money might bring back the rosy colour to his dear child's face.

While he was in despair he suddenly saw a stranger standing near the door, the same visitor he had seen yesterday for the first time in his treasure-room, and who had granted his wish.

'Well, friend Midas,' he said, 'pray how are you enjoying your new power?'

Midas shook his head. 'I am very miserable,' he said.

'Very miserable, are you?' exclaimed the stranger. 'And how does that happen: have I not faithfully kept my promise; have you not everything that your heart desired?'

'Gold is not everything,' answered Midas, 'and I have lost all that my heart really cared for.'

'Ah!' said the stranger, 'I see you have made some discoveries since yesterday. Tell me truly, which of these things do you really think is most worth—a cup of clear cold water and a crust of bread, or the power of turning everything you touch into gold; your own little daughter, alive and loving, or that

solid statue of a child which would be valued at thousands of pounds?'

'O my child, my child!' sobbed Midas, wringing his hands. 'I would not have given one of her curls for the power of changing all the world into gold, and I would give all I possess for a cup of cold water and a crust of bread.'

'You are wiser than you were, King Midas,' said the stranger. 'Tell me, do you really wish to get rid of your fatal gift?'

'Yes,' said Midas, 'it is hateful to me.'

'Go, then,' said the stranger, 'and plunge into the river that flows at the bottom of the garden: take also a pitcher of the same water, and sprinkle it over anything that you wish to change back again from gold to its former substance.'

King Midas bowed low, and when he lifted his head the stranger was nowhere to be seen.

You will easily believe that King Midas lost no time in getting a big pitcher, then he ran towards the river. On reaching the water he jumped in without even waiting to take off his shoes. 'How delightful!' he said, as he came out with his hair all dripping: 'this is really a most refreshing bath, and surely it must have washed away the magic gift.

Then he dipped the pitcher into the water, and how glad he was to see that it became just a common earthen pitcher and not a golden one as it had been five minutes before! He was conscious, also, of a change in himself: a cold, heavy weight seemed to have gone, and he felt light, and happy, and human once more. Maybe his heart had been changing into gold too, though he could not see it, and now it had softened again and become gentle and kind.

Midas hurried back to the palace with the pitcher of water, and the first thing he did was to sprinkle it by handfuls all over the golden figure of his little daughter. You would have laughed to see how the rosy colour came back to her cheeks, and how she began to sneeze and choke, and how surprised she was to find herself dripping wet and her father

still throwing water over her.

You see she did not know that she had been a little golden statue, for she could not remember anything from the moment when she ran to kiss her father.

King Midas then led his daughter into the garden, where he sprinkled all the rest of the water over the rose-bushes, and the grass, and the trees: and in a minute they were blooming as freshly as ever, and the air was laden with the scent of the flowers.

There were two things left, which, as long as he lived, used to remind King Midas of the stranger's fatal gift. One was that the sands at the bottom of the river always sparkled like grains of gold: and the other, that his little daughters curls were no longer brown. They had a golden tinge which had not been there before that miserable day when he had received the fatal gift, and when his kiss had changed them into gold.

Myths of Old Greece

by Mara L. Pratt

The Creation

There was a time, so the Greek people in their beautiful legendary lore tell us, when the earth, and the sea, and the sky, all one chaotic mass, struggled together, and clashed the one against the other; so that there was neither solid earth, nor clear water, nor was the air transparent.

But the air, in time, rose lightly above the chaotic mass; the earth sank heavily below, and the seething waters, now quiet and firm and still, buoyed up the earth.

Then arose the hills and mountains, by which the valleys were made in which the lakes lay and the rivers flowed. The trees and ferns grew by the still water's edge, and the stars shone through the clear cold air.

To the gods Prometheus and Epimetheus was given the task of filling the waters with fish, the forests with animals, and the plains with a creature who should be above all these, and which should be called man.

To all of these, the brothers gave some gift; to one strength, to another speed, to another sagacity; to one fins, to another claws; to another wings, and to another shelly covering, all of which gifts were to help these birds and fish and animals to provide for their own wants, and to protect themselves from their foes.

But, alas, when man came there was no gift for him; all had been given to the birds and fishes and animals. There he stood, with neither wings or fins; and with neither speed nor sagacity above many an animal of the forest.

"What shall be done for him?" asked Prometheus. "He is less provided for and less protected than any bird or fish or

animal; he has neither fins nor wings, fur nor feathers; neither great strength nor speed. Greatly do I fear he will be a prey to the larger animals that now are browsing on the plains."

For a long time Prometheus and Epimetheus pondered and were sad at heart; for they loved the earth and its creations, and had sought to give each his share of gifts.

At last, Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, spoke and said; "To bring down fire from the heavens, and to teach man its use and power, would be to endow him with that which may overcome even the elements themselves."

"Though it destroy me, I will bring it to these helpless people," Prometheus said; and away he sped upon his errand.

From the chariot of the sun he lighted his torch, and slowly and carefully descended with it to the earth; and together the brothers taught the people its uses and its power.

With it, the wild beasts were kept at bay; with it irons for weapons were made; food was cooked; and their rude huts were made warm and comfortable when the biting cold descended upon the plains.

Pandora

But man was a desolate creature living on the earth alone, and with no other occupation than fighting each other and subduing the wild beasts that roamed up and down the earth.

And the gods looked down from Mt. Olympus upon him and pitied him that he had, after all, so little to make him really happy and to lift his thoughts Heavenward.

"He has no love in his heart," said one god, sadly.

"He does not know the meaning of gentleness," said another.

"He knows no heroism except that of brute strength against a foe," said another.

"He thinks only of self," said another.

"There is," said Zeus, "but one way to lift his thoughts towards Olympus; but one way to arouse in his heart love and tenderness and true heroism; and that is to give him something to love, something to protect. Even the brutes of the forest have their young, and so are happier than man."

Then spoke the wise and loving Athene, "Let us send down to earth a woman who shall be to man a goddess, and who shall refine his nature and make to grow in his sleeping heart those qualities that shall make him god-like and brave and true."

To this great Zeus bowed assent; and happy in the task before them, the gods set themselves to work, and every god and goddess vied each with the other to make some glorious gift to her.

One gave her a tender loving heart that could do no cruelty even to a worm of the earth; another gave her a beautiful

form and a face from which the light of Apollo always shone; one gave her a love of music and beauty; another a love of home and of little children; and when, at last, the beautiful Pandora was brought before Zeus, his stern face grew tender; and, rising from his golden throne, he placed his hand upon her shining head, and there was added unto her beauty and gentleness a reverence henceforth for all that was pure and high and god-like in the earth or in Olympus.

Then Iris spread her beautiful arch across the sky; and hand in hand the messenger of Hera and the loving-hearted Pandora passed out from Olympus, down the shining bridge of color, to the abode of man.

And when Pandora stood before Prometheus and the people he had made, there fell a hush upon man's war-like spirit; and sprang up in his heart the tenderness and love and protection of the weak that made man forever more a being above the brute, and tending always towards the god-like.

But it was the will of Zeus that sorrow should come into man's world; and so it was Pandora who, as time went on, lifted the lid from the chest in which lay her parting gifts of the gods – joy, happiness, health, success, comfort, prosperity – and alas, they all escaped – all except hope. That, Pandora saved; and so it is that while all other blessings come and go, leaving the heart of man sometimes sad and heavy, hope never fails, but abides eternal, upholding, and encouraging to new endeavor, even the most heavily laden life.

The Great Flood

But there came a time, as the years rolled on and the centuries stretched themselves in the past, when the people grew so selfish and cruel, and avaricious towards each other, and so unmindful of the gods who worked with them and watched over them from Mt. Olympus, that Zeus, grieved that they should forget the innocent and happy Age that had once made earth so beautiful and their own lives so joyous, called the gods together in his great cloud palace.

"O gods and goddesses," said Zeus, when at his command all had hastened up the nebulous shining path of heaven which the earth people called the Milky Way; "O gods and goddesses, who so long have loved these people, have dwelt among them and have labored with them in all the time since first the earth was made, behold now the grievous state into which they have fallen. There is no love among them; they seek only to slay one another; greed and selfishness have destroyed their happiness and have shut them out from great Olympus."

"Let them be destroyed by fire," said Hephaestus, whose great forges groaned and bellowed in the mountains, and sent their lurid flames high up in the heavens.

"Let them be destroyed by water," said Neptune who dwelt in the depths of the dark green ocean.

And while they counselled thus together, Astraea, the goddess of justice, who even when Zeus called, had lingered among the earth people, still hoping they might turn to her and hear her plea, came slowly up the arch of heaven and laid her scales, with which so long she had weighed the claims of

right and wrong, down at the feet of Zeus.

"Let the waters," said she, "rather than fire, destroy the wrong that has turned the peaceful earth to one of war and sorrow; for then shall the earth itself be unharmed; the grass shall spring forth again; the trees shall send forth their leaves, and the flowers, nourished by the floods, shall brighten the hills and plains again."

So Zeus called to the South Wind to bring its rains, and the sweet West Wind, and the fierce North Wind he chained into dungeons deep, that they might scatter not the heavy-laden clouds South Wind should bring.

Then Neptune lashed the seas in fury, and the waves rose mountains high; the rivers loosed their floods; the snows in the mountains melted, and the whole earth was covered with water.

Among the tree-tops the fishes swam; and there was no living thing upon the face of the earth – so the South Wind and Neptune believed.

But it was not the will of Zeus that there should be complete destruction of life upon the earth; and he sent Hermes to find the bravest, truest man and the bravest, truest woman, into whose ears he should whisper words of warning, and should lead them in safety to the top of Mt. Parnassus, far beyond the reach of wind and wave.

And there, safe in the shelter of a mighty cave, the Sun-god found them, when, after many days the water had subsided and the clouds had rolled away.

Joyously Deucalion and Pyrra greeted the coming of the Sun's rays; and with hearts filled with hope, they raised their hands towards the rainbow arch, when it shone out in the eastern sky, a token to them that the wrath of Zeus had passed away, and that Hera had sent to them her own loving Iris with messages of hope and courage.

The Story of Iris

Never before had Deucalion and Pyrra seen this wonderful arch in the eastern sky, with its rich colors of red and purple and orange; but they knew it must bring a messenger of good to them, so beautiful was it, and so softly did it reflect its beauty in the waters below.

Then again Hermes came to them and whispered the story of Iris into their willing ears and into their ready hearts; for it is only into such hearts that the gods can speak; and it is only such ears that can hear the music and the messages the gods bear always to the earth-people.

Of all the gods and goddesses, not even excepting Apollo, the glorious Sun-god, none were as beautiful as Iris whose delicate rainbow Colors Deucalion and Pyrra saw now in the radiant sky, and reflected in the sparkling raindrops that glittered upon every leaf and upon every blade of grass.

And so loved by all was this beautiful Iris, that Hera had chosen her for her own loving companion, who should bear from her to the suffering earth-children messages of helpfulness and gentle words of cheer.

And Iris, in whose heart \vas never a thought unloving towards either gods or the earth-people who needed her warnings in times of danger, and her loving messages in times of trouble, sped always upon her errands with fleet and willing feet; and the people, when they came to know her, and saw her wonderful colors in the sparkling waters, and sometimes dancing upon the walls of their simple homes, would smile and say, "Iris is near! Iris is near!"

And this evening when the fierce floods had disappeared,

and only the soft rains had been falling through the day, and Demeter and Persephone were happy in the strength and fresh courage the floods should bring to the fruits and flowers, behold, there appeared in the east, this arch of red and green and purple, with rare tints of yellow and pink and blue. Never in all the earth, even at sunset time, had such beauty of color been seen in the eastern sky.

And in the lakes and rivers, even in each tiny raindrop was the beauty reflected, till all the earth seemed filled with the rich glow of the beautiful arch.

Then Hermes came and whispered to Pyrra and Deucalion, "This is a rainbow bridge from Olympus to the sea. Most gracious Hera makes this gift to Iris, and down its beautiful arch none but Iris shall be allowed to pass; for it is Hera's own gift, her token to all earth-people of her love for the beautiful messenger queen, the gentle, loving Iris."

And from that time when the rainbow appeared in the sky, the people would look up in wonder at its wondrous beauty and would say, "See, Iris approacheth. She hath wrapped herself in a cloud of purple and red; she hath stepped into her chariot and she guideth it down her rainbow bridge."

The beautiful Iris came to love to wander up and down the valleys of earth, and to look into the clear waters of the rivers and the lakes; for in them she could see often the colors of her own beautiful bridge.

She would sprinkle the waterdrops in her hair; she would string them like pearls, and wear them around her neck and around her shining white arms.

It was joy to her to shake them out from the clouds, and see them chasing each other down through the air, every one of them reflecting the same rich colors of red and orange and purple.

And it is said that one day she found by the water's edge a beautiful flower, as blue as the heavens above; and that she kissed the flower, saying, "O flower, thy blue is like the blue

of the sky and of my own rainbow bridge of mist!"

And as she stooped to kiss the flower, some of the raindrops in her hair fell upon it; and there they remain, even to this day, reflecting the same beauty and glory that is seen in the wonderful rainbow bridge.

The New Creation

When at last the waters of the sea were quiet, the rivers were flowing peacefully along between their sunny banks, and the soft clouds were smiling down at their own reflections in the blue lakes, Deucalion and Pyrra came down from Mt. Parnassus and walked along the fresh green valleys.

The brooks laughed in glee, and ran and bubbled to see them once again; the flowers looked up and laughed and nodded at them; and the great trees spread out their branches to protect them from the too fierce heat of the sun.

"The earth is beautiful," said Pyrra.

"Very beautiful," answered Deucalion; "but I am wondering why we two were spared to dwell here in all this beauty."

"Let us go to a temple of Zeus, and ask the gods to tell us what we ought to do," said Pyrra.

For two whole days and two whole nights they wandered on, seeking a temple of Zeus. Many ruins they passed; but at the end of the second day they came to a great white marble temple whose altar and whose shrine had not been washed away even by the great flood of waters.

Here they knelt and prayed to the gods; and at night, when they had fallen asleep, an answer came to them. Perhaps it was Iris that brought it; perhaps it was Hermes; but the words they heard were, "Go up the mountain-side; and as you go, roll back, down into the valley, every rock and stone that lies in your pathway. Rest in the mountain a night; then, when the early Dawn begins to paint the eastern sky with rosy tints, go down again into the valley, and there will you find your work awaiting you."

This seemed a very strange message; but the good Deucalion and Pyrra hesitated not to obey the commands of the gods.

All day long they toiled up the mountain side, rolling down the stones even as they had been bid.

At night they rested; and in the morning, eager, they hastened to the valley below.

What a wonder met their gaze! for there in the valley, at the foot of the mountain, stood men and women and little children – hundreds of them; for behold, the rocks and stones Deucalion and Pyrra had rolled down the mountain side had changed to people; and there they stood, awaiting the coming of Deucalion and Pyrra who were to teach them and guide them until they should themselves become wise.

"These people," said Pyrra, the mother heart within her speaking, "shall be our care."

"Yes," answered the true-hearted Deucalion; and \ve will teach them to be noble men and women. They shall be kind, one to the other, and the strong shall learn that it is heroic to protect the weak."

Then Deucalion taught the men to plant and gather the harvests; he taught them to fell the trees, and to make houses for their shelter; he taught them to hunt and fish, and then to cook their game. And Pyrra taught the women to care for their homes, to spin and weave; and to teach the children to grow up noble men and women.

Very happy were these people; for they strove in everything to be like Deucalion and Pyrra, good and kind and helpful, each to every other; and there was joy in Olympus; for the gods looked down and smiled upon the valley, and each vied with the other to protect these innocent people and keep their hearts from evil.

Apollo and Daphne

One morning, as the Sun-god wandered in the valleys of Parnassus, he saw at play upon the hillside a beautiful maiden, with sunny blue eyes, and the most beautiful golden hair Apollo had ever seen.

"O, beautiful' Daphne!" Apollo cried; "come wander in the sunny valley. All day long will we hunt the deer, and you, too, shall learn to loose my golden . bow."

But Daphne feared the arrows from that golden bow; and the radiant face of Apollo, too, she feared.

She sprang from the sunny rock upon which she sat at play; and with a speed that only the deer might claim, she disappeared above the mountain ridge.

In quick haste Apollo pursued the flying maiden. "Daphne, Daphne," cried Apollo, "do not run away from me. I am Apollo, and I seek not to do thee harm."

On, on Daphne fled across the wide valley that stretches at the foot of Mt. Parnassus; on, on Apollo followed till the morning was well nigh spent. And now, close upon the banks of a mighty forest, Daphne sank exhausted. "Daphne, Daphne," cried Apollo; for his noble heart was grieved; "faint not, for Apollo will bring thee fresh water from the mountain stream." And with greater speed he flew to the poor maiden's protection. "Save me, save me!" cried "Daphne, springing again to her feet. And Zeus heard her prayer; for hardly had she raised her arms toward heaven, when there came a swift change upon her. Her trailing robe grew firm, even like the trunk and roots of a tree. Her white arms changed to branches, and over her was thrown a protecting bark, even

like that of a laurel tree.

"O Daphne, Daphne!" sobbed Apollo. "Foolish youth that I am to have pursued thee thus. And thou wert so beautiful! Now have I lost thee forever; nor wilt thy beauty grace the hillsides ever again in the rosy morning of the day."

"But thou shalt be honored, O Daphne, eyen by the bravest in the land; for from thy branches will I gather a laurel wreath; and in all the ages to come shall the wreath of laurel be placed upon the victor's brow, in honor not only of his brave deed, but of thy lost beauty, O Daphne."

Io

In the sunny valley dwelt Io, the sweet daughter of the river-god; and very happy and free was the fair maiden's life, till one day there fell upon her the jealous wrath of one who changed her into the form of a cow, and left her to wander up and down the pasture lands, with no friend to help, and with no way to tell her sad and curious story.

Moreover, there was set to watch her the giant Argus, whose hundred eyes were never closed, and who could see in all directions and at untold distances.

Never for one second did his eyes wander away from the enchanted maiden, whom it was his charge to watch. For though he slept often, never were all the hundred eyes closed at once; and whenever the sad maiden, turned towards him she saw those cruel eyes glaring at her. They winked and blinked, but never closed; and the poor child wandered hopelessly up and down the fields and hillsides, wishing she could join the herds that she was like, and that she could forget she had ever been a happy maiden, the pride and joy -of the river-god, her father.

And all this time the river-god, angry that his child had been stolen from him, was storming up and down the country. The waters of the rivers hissed, and foamed, and roared, and like an angry sea threw their spray upon its banks, and over into the fields on either side.

"It is strange," the earth-people would say, "that there should be freshets at this season of the year."

And the sisters of lo searched up and down the country for the lost child, stopping at every hut to ask if its people had

seen a maiden as beautiful as a flower and as radiant as a water drop, with long hair in which the sunlight dwelt, and with a laugh that was like the bubbling of a happy rivulet.

But no one had seen a maiden half so fair; and the sisters would lie down on the hillside and sob themselves to sleep at night.

Sometimes Io would come and stand beside them and look down at them with her great, brown, sorrowful eyes.

But the sisters never knew; and when, because her heart was full to breaking, she would try to cry out to them, it was only the deep sound that the cows make that they heard. "What soft brown eyes the cow has," the sisters said one day; "and how she cries. There is something she wants."

"Poor cow," said the oldest sister, placing her soft hand on Io's neck, "tell us what it is you want."

But Io could only look at them with her great, brown, pleading eyes; and by and by the sisters went back to the river-god to tell him they could find no trace of Io in all the land.

All day long Io browsed in the green fields beside the river bank; and one evening, as the river-god sat grieving still for his daughter, it came into Io's heart to try to give some sign to him. So she came and rested her head upon his shoulder; and then when he had spoken kindly to her, she raised one forefoot and slowly traced in the white sand her own name—IO.

"O my child, my child!" cried the river-god. "My Io, my Io! Who hath done this cruel thing? Who hath changed my beautiful daughter to a beast like this?" And he threw his arms about the soft white neck of the cow and prayed to Zeus to break the spell that had fallen upon his daughter.

"Hermes," said Zeus, "go thou down into the earth, and close with thy wonderful music the hundred eyes of the ever watchful giant Argus, who watcheth over the white cow that feedeth in the river pastures."

And Hermes, glad of such sport as this would be, sped

downward just at eventide, when Argus, wearied, had already stretched himself upon the hillside, and had closed fifty of his eyes for sleep.

And Hermes took his place close beside the giant and played to him the softest strains that ever came from harp or lyre.

For a whole hour Hermes played, and already the sun had sunk behind the hills.

"It is most beautiful music," said the giant; but only sixty of the eyes were closed.

Another hour passed. Hermes played and sang soft and low; but only seventy of the eyes were closed.

Another hour passed. The darkness had fallen. All was still. Hermes crooned soft strains that were like the murmur in the pines; but only eighty of the eyes were closed.

Another hour passed. The cool breezes swept softly across the face of Argus; the music of Hermes rose and fell in slow, sweet rhythm; but only ninety of the eyes were closed.

Then Hermes loosened the strings of his lyre, and the music grew deeper and deeper. The sweet voice of Hermes fell lower and lower; the breezes felt the hush; midnight settled its dark wings on all the land – and one hundred of the eyes were closed.

Then Hermes smote the giant lying there upon the hills, and fled with his hundred eyes to Mt. Olympus.

Zeus now had power to set poor Io free; and the hundred eyes were placed in the feathers of Hera's pet bird, the peacock; and there they are to be seen, even to this day, shining in the sunlight, as the vain bird struts to and fro.

Callisto

You have seen the Great Bear and the Little Bear Constellations in the sky, of course.

Well, it is a sad story – that of the beautiful maiden Callisto. For it was because of the jealousy of Juno that her sad fate fell upon her.

Callisto was beautiful, as Io was beautiful. And she was a free, happy maiden, content to wander up and down the hill-sides and watch the flocks in the valleys. Her eyes were as blue as the deep blue sky, and her laughter bubbled like the waters in the sunlit brooks.

It was sad that the wrath of Juno should descend upon so fair a maid as this; but alas, Juno was not always kind; and one evening when Callisto lay sleeping on the hill-side, Juno, wrapping herself in a shining cloud, came and stood upon the hill-top.

"Awake!" she said, looking down upon the sleeping maiden.

With a cry of fear, Callisto sprang to her feet; for the voice had sounded hard and cruel, and she knew an enemy must be near.

"Come to the hill-top," said Juno, turning her dark face upon the maiden. Callisto trembled. There was something terrible in the dark face; and the great eyes seemed to burn into her very heart.

"Spare me! spare me!" sobbed Callisto, falling upon her knees and stretching her soft white arms towards the cruel Juno.

But Juno had no pity. "You shall be punished," she

answered, "for your great beauty. See! Already those white hands that gleam so in the moonlight are changing into claws! And your arms, the great black hairs are covering them! And your rosy lips and teeth of pearl, look at them now!"

Poor Callisto! One glance at her own arms and hands, and with a shriek – no, not a shriek, but a horrible growl that frightened even herself! – she fell to the ground.

For a long time she lay there; for Juno had thrown a deep sleep upon the maiden; and, wrapping the cloud again around herself, had floated back to her golden palace on Mt. Olympus.

It was black night when Callisto awoke. The stars were shining overhead, and in the distance she could hear the growling of the bears and the howling of the wolves.

She tried to cry out, but again from her own throat came the horrible growl.

A little bird in the branches overhead gave a frightened little twitter and flew to another tree. Callisto arose on her four feet and made her way down into the valley towards her own home.

Morning came and the people in the little huts were awake. "A bear! a bear!" cried her own father as she approached, "Get me my arrows! quick, quick!" and away ran her own little brother to bring the old hunter's bow and arrows.

But Callisto had not the bear mind though she had the bear body. She knew her father's voice, and understood his words; and before the arrows were brought she was safe within the forest.

For long, long months poor Callisto wandered up and down the land. She could not approach her old home again, for the children were terrified at sight of her, and she knew full well the skill of her hunter father.

In the forests she herself lived in terror. The howls of the wolves made her heart leap; and at sight of a bear she

trembled from head to foot.

When the bears, in their own bear language, spoke to her, she would turn and flee; and no cave was there so dark that its darkness and dampness was not to her a shelter, and more grateful than the sunlight on the hill-side.

But one morning, when the air was cool and clear, and the soft breezes were laden with the sweet odors of fern and pine, poor Callisto crept out to the edge of the forest. There, just across the rippling brooklet, stood a beautiful, fair-haired youth. He was playing in the water, and amusing himself, throwing the water drops high in the air.

"O my brother, my brother!" cried poor Callisto, forgetting everything in the joy of seeing the beautiful child again. And with a bound, her jaws stretched, and her eyes shining, she sprang towards him.

But the child had heard the growl – there were no words in it to his ear and saw the hungry-jawed creature burst out from the thicket. Like lightning he turned upon the bear, and raised his spear. Straight at her breast he aimed. The spear flashed in the sunlight there was a roll of thunder in the sky – it turned its course, and buried itself in the soft earth; for Jupiter had seen the danger to the beautiful Callisto, and so smote the spear to the ground.

In a second, both Callisto and the little hunter were lifted high in the air. On, on they sped, up, up, above the earth, above the clouds, even into the realm where the stars shine the whole night long.

And there, close by the great Pole Star, Jupiter placed them both, among the brightest lights of the heavens, safe from all danger, and forever beyond the reach of Juno's wrath and jealously.

Actæon

"Come, good youths," called Actæon the swift hunter; "the morning is fresh and fair. Let us away to the hunt. Surely, on such a morning as this the deer will come forth to drink from the clear waters of the brook and river. Away, then, let us away."

Gladly the youths obeyed the call of their noble leader; and, gathering their bows and arrows, away they sped up the hillside and across the plain.

On, on through the forests Actæon led the way; for the air was clear and cool, the youths were strong, and their hearts were filled with joy.

But alas for the joyous Actæon! Bursting through the forest, he came, upon the beautiful Diana, the goddess of the chase, who, with her maidens, was bathing in the clear, sparkling waters of the fountain, that poured its silver waters forth from the great, dark rock that over-shadowed the pool.

"O beautiful Diana!" cried Actæon, coming towards the fountain; but it was not the wish of the goddess that Actæon should approach, and so learn the secret of her home, and where lay concealed her moonlight glory through the long days and nights, when she chose to hide herself from the sight of man.

Darting one flash of angry light upon him, she raised her white arm as if to smite him to the ground. "Go," she said;" Go and tell, if thou canst, that thou hast found the cave wherein Diana dwells, and the fountain whereat she bathes."

Actæon bowed his head, grieved that he should have aroused the anger of the goddess, for whom he had great love

and admiration; but as he bowed, he beheld the reflection of himself in the waters at his feet. A terrible reflection! Already great horns, like those of a stag, branched far above his head. And as he gazed, his ears grew large and long; his face changed, and course brown hairs covered him from head to foot.

With a groan, he turned and fled into the forest. What should he do? How should he make known to his comrades the sad fate that had befallen him?

But already the clicking of his hoofs had caught the quick ear of his hunting dogs. With a yelp, the great dog, Melampus started, raised his ears, and sniffed. Then with a howl and a bound he sprang forward Pamphagus, Dorceus, Lelaps, Theron, Nape and Tigris in close pursuit.

Actæon heard them coming. Would his own dogs devour him? Would they not know? How should he prove to them that he was still their master?

But nearer and nearer they came. Their eyes were shining. Already he could see their red tongues hanging from their frothing mouths.

With a spring Actæon bounded through the forest. If he could only reach his comrades! Some way, he was sure he could make them know.

But now the shout of the huntsman was added to the yelping and barking of the dogs.

"On, on Melampus!" they shouted. "On Pamphagus! On Tigris!"

And the dogs, excited by the shouts and frequent cries, sped faster and faster. Over hills, through valleys, on – on across the fields they flew – Actæon and the dogs – and breathless, in close pursuit, his comrades followed.

And now the dogs were upon him. One seized a leg, another an ear, another sprang upon his back. Worn out with the long chase and stinging from his wounds, the unfortunate youth fell to the ground, and already the film of death had

gathered over the beautiful brown eyes when his companions knelt beside him.

"Bravo, bravo, Melampus," said one.

"Pamphagus, the fleet-footed," said another.

"If only Actæon could have seen you, good Tigris," said another.

But Actæon knew now nothing of the swiftness of the dogs he had loved and had trained so carefully; for already his heart had ceased beating, and cruel Diana's revenge was finished.

Actæon was dead; and the secret cave and sparkling fountain were never discovered to the earth-people who dwelt, and who still dwell in Diana's moonlit valleys.

King Midas

"An old man cometh begging at our gates," said the servants of great King Midas.

"Bring him into my presence," was the king's answer; "and, if I find him worthy, he shall have food and drink; if an impostor, he shall be punished."

And so Silenus, the old tutor of the jovial Bacchus, was brought into the presence of the king.

Now, for days, up and down the country, messengers from Bacchus had been scurrying hither and thither in search of the old tutor who had wandered away and perhaps had lost his path in the deep forests.

But here the old man was at last, safe and sound, and begging at the gates of King Midas.

And so, when King Midas restored the old man, as he did, to the grateful Bacchus, there was a great feast given in honor of the king; and, after days and nights of games and revellings, Bacchus, as a parting gift, promised to bestow upon Midas any gift or power that he should name.

Now Midas was not the wisest king that ever lived, nor was he far-seeing. So he answered, as foolishly as greedily, "Give me gold, O Bacchus! Let everything, even though a clod of earth, turn into gold at my touch. Gold, gold, gold! Yes, give me gold!"

"The miserly fool," thought Bacchus; "but he shall have his wish. Indeed there could be no greater punishment for his stupid greed."

So Bacchus laid his hands upon the king's foolish head and bade him receive his gift.

King Midas could scarcely contain himself for joy. "Let me return to my palace at once," said he, "that I may test my power."

"As you please," said Bacchus, a twinkle in his merry eye. And away the king hurried through the forest, not waiting even to mount his good horse, so eager was he to be away.

On the way a snake crossed his path; and seizing a stone to throw at it, behold, the stone was changed into a shining mass of gold.

Midas shouted aloud for joy, all by himself in the forest. He put the stone in his pocket, forgetting the snake, and greedily began gathering branches from the trees, simply to further prove his power. Yes, yes, it was true, the golden touch was his; for every twig and leaf changed to a rich yellow in his hand.

Reaching his palace, he ordered that a grand feast be prepared at once, and that all the people for miles about should be bidden to attend. Such a surprise as should be theirs! How envious the guests would be! And how, henceforth, they would reverence his wonderful power! The king could scarcely contain himself until the people had gathered, so many plans had he for displaying his wonderful gift before them.

But alas for King Midas's feast! Alas for his glorification before the people! The bread that he took into his hand changed at once into tasteless gold; his meat dropped from his lips heavy and hard and yellow. Furious, he seized a glass of wine; but the liquid poured down his throat a stream of molten gold. The poor king groaned aloud; the guests, sorrowful and amazed, withdrew from the dining hall, and Midas was left alone in his golden misery.

At daybreak he set forth with the greatest possible speed to the valley where Bacchus dwelt. He passed through the selfsame forests, and saw scattered here and there the golden leaves he had so greedily plucked from the bushes a few hours

before. But they had no charm for him now; he only groaned at sight of them and hurried on.

"O Bacchus, Bacchus!" he cried, throwing himself upon the ground before the god, "take back this direful gift; give me again my poverty and my peace."

And the merry Bacchus, seeing that the king was indeed cured of his greed, took back the gift, and bade the king rise and be free again.

"Go, now," said Bacchus, "to the River Pactolus. Bathe there until not a grain of golden dust is upon you. Return then, and dwell with us in the forests and the valleys. Here we are free from strife and envy and greed; for all day we wander up and down the valleys, free and happy; even as the birds and the beasts, the trees and the flowers are free and happy."

For a long time King Midas dwelt with Bacchus, and worshipped Pan, the god of the field and forest; and until this day all might have been well with him had not a contest arisen between Pan and Apollo as to whose music was the sweetest.

"The mountain-god shall decide the matter for us," said Bacchus.

Then Pan played upon his pipes music so sweet that the very birds of the forests hushed their songs to listen.

"Music most sweet," said the mountain-god.

"There can be no music sweeter," said Midas.

But when the Sun-god tuned his lyre, behold, the trees themselves turned to listen; nor was there a flutter among the leaves until the music had died away, and the red sunset was pouring its red light down upon hill and vale.

"The music of Pan is best," said Midas, obstinately, although he knew he spoke not the truth.

"Stupid creature!" flashed the Sun-god. "Such ears and such stupid obstinacy belong only to an ass. Henceforth your ears shall be like those of the beast you so resemble."

And before Midas could even cry for mercy, behold, his ears stood up even above the top of his stupid head, long and

pointed, and covered with rough, bristling hairs.

Mortified indeed was King Midas that so grievous a disgrace had fallen upon him; and for whole days he hid himself in the caves of the forest. But again merry Bacchus rescued him. Upon the top of his head the merry god bound down the ears, and over them arranged a wreath of leaves and berries. Not a hair of the wretched ears was to be seen; and again Midas joined the games, and lived the happy life of the followers and worshippers of Pan.

Every day a new wreath was made for him and arranged upon his head; and only the youth that made the wreath knew the secret.

"Tell thou the secret to any man or god," said Bacchus, "and dire punishment shall befall thee." For long months the youth kept close the knowledge that he had; but it troubled him sorely by day, and it kept him awake by night. And when at last he could bear it no longer, he went down by the river, dug a hole, whispered the secret into it, covered it over, and ran away.

But strange to say, from this very hole there sprang up a growth of reeds and bulrushes; and no sooner had they reached their heads above the grass, than they began to whisper, whisper, whisper, whisper the story that had been whispered to them. And they have kept on whispering it in all the years that have followed; till now all the people in the world, far and wide, know the secret of King Midas's ears.

Glaucus and Scylla

All his life long, Glaucus had fished in the waters of the sea, and had drawn his great nets and emptied their contents upon the banks.

But one morning he drew his boat alongside an island where the cattle never had fed, nor had the foot of man often rested upon its soil.

There were strange grasses and odd plants upon this island, and it was upon a bed of these grasses that Glaucus spread his nets. There were hundreds of fish, and many kinds were there among them. One by one Glaucus gathered them up, placing them in little piles, each kind by itself.

But suddenly a wonderful change came over the fish. Perhaps it was the strange grass that had affected them! For certainly no fish the old fisherman had ever seen behaved as these fish now behaved. They winked and blinked; they wriggled their tails and flapped their fins; and, strangest of all, they hopped and rolled and tumbled, until every one of them reached the banks, and plunged again into the waters and swam away.

"What can this mean?" asked Glaucus, watching the fish disappear before his eyes "Has some god set a spell upon these creatures of the waters? Is old Neptune angry that I should take them from his seas? Or is there some magic power in these strange grasses?"

"I will know if it be the grasses;" and the old fisherman gathered a handful and began slowly and thoughtfully to taste and to swallow it.

Yes, it was the grasses; for hardly had he tasted, when

there came upon him an unaccountable longing for the waters of the sea. Fie went to the banks and drank. But that did not satisfy him; he must have more. And from that day to this such has been the effect upon all people of drinking seawater.

Again he drank; and again and again; till at last, so frantic did he become, that he could do no less than plunge into the sea itself. Down, down he sank; and far out, out to sea did he float.

Strange creatures he saw about him in the water and upon the sea bottom below.

By and by beautiful nymphs began to appear; and, at last, straight into the palace of the ocean god himself he floated.

Very graciously did old Oceanus receive the fisherman, and most gladly did Glaucus accept his welcome; for he had now no love for the land, and longed only to live forever in the cool depths of the sea.

"But you must be in form like unto those of us who dwell beneath the sea," said Oceanus.

"Gladly would I be like thee," answered Glaucus; and even while he spoke, behold, a change came over him. His hair grew green like the sea-weed and floated far out behind him; his body became covered with shining scales of green and silver; and his legs took on the shape of a long, green, fish-like tail. Glaucus was delighted with his fine color; he swam up and down before the palace, flashing his green scales in the sunlight, and watching his long green hair as it floated upon the top of the water.

And it may be that Glaucus would have gone on happy forever, had he not one day spied upon the shore a beautiful maiden, whose fair face and golden hair made him wish he were a mortal again, that he might speak with her and walk with her upon the land.

Up close to the shore Glaucus swam, and lifted his green head above the waters. "O beautiful maiden," he began – but

at sight of him the beautiful maiden ran screaming into the forests; nor did she ever come down to the waters at that place again.

Morning after morning Glaucus watched for her, till at last he saw her far down the shore, sitting upon the rocks in the sun.

Quickly Glaucus swam to her, and, lifting his head above the waters, began again; "O beautiful maiden," but again the beautiful maiden fled, screaming, to the forests.

Then Glaucus, sad at heart, swam away to the island of Circe the enchantress. "O Circe," he moaned, "give me back my mortal form, that I may again walk upon the land and try to win the love of the beautiful Scylla."

But Circe had no wish to aid poor Glaucus. Indeed, she was very angry that he should wish to leave the waters upon the shores of which she dwelt. "These people of the sea," said she to herself, "should admire me. I am no less beautiful than this golden-haired Scylla. Or if I am, then she shall be changed, not you, O Glaucus."

And the cruel Circe laughed to think how the maiden should be destroyed.

She made no answer to Glaucus, and the sad fisher-merman swam away to the palace of Oceanus. Nor did he ever know what a terrible fate befell his beautiful Scylla. He only knew that out in the waters, over against the roaring whirlpool of Charybdis, there came to dwell a terrible serpent with six most terrible heads. And a cruel serpent it was; for as the ships passed by, it would reach forth its six terrible heads, open its six terrible jaws, and swallow up the crew. Or if the crew were hidden in the lower part of the vessel – and they learned very soon to be – then it would lash the waters with its terrible tail, and try to drive the vessel into the waters of the whirlpool.

Indeed, the waters between Scylla and Charybdis came to be a place dreaded above all rocks and shoals by the brave

mariners who were forced to sail that way. Nor even when, at last Circe, wearied of her care over the terrible Scylla, changed her into a huge cliff, bidding her stand forever against the clear sky, did the sailors fear the waters less. For now there were treacherous rocks beneath the waters – the six heads of the serpent they might be, still hiding below – and great was the danger that the ships would strike upon these sharp and cruel points. While on the other side, still roared and seethed the fateful waters of Charybdis; as indeed it roars now – even to this day.

Pygmalion and Galatea

Pygmalion was a most wonderful sculptor. Never was he so happy as when with a great block of pure white marble he seated himself, chisel in hand, to carve out some beautiful creation.

His work was the admiration of all the world, and kings came to him from all the countries round about, begging him to make beautiful their palaces with his wonderful carvings. For the vines that he carved, the flowers, the leaves, were true vines and flowers and leaves in grace and beauty.

But one day he set himself to carve from the white, transparent marble the figure of a maiden, who should show forth the perfection of all the maidenly beauty that had ever been.

Day after day, week after week he worked, from early morn till late at night; and when he went out among his comrades, he walked and listened as one in a dream.

"Pygmalion sees visions," the people began to whisper among themselves.

By and by, the sculptor began to work by night as well as by day; no one could win him away; neither would he permit his closest friends to look upon his work.

"The youth is mad," they said, and began to draw away from him. Still he worked on, till by and by there came a time when no sound of hammer was heard in the sculptor's chamber, and the great door was barred against the world. Still, Pygmalion dwelt alone, and no one dreamed the secret of his heart.

But one day, when the people were celebrating with festivities the glory of the goddess Venus, Pygmalion threw

himself before the altar and cried, "O most kind Venus, give me for my wife, my beautiful marble Galatea! give me my beautiful marble Galatea!"

The people wondered. "It is the ravings of a madman," they said, and tried to lead him away from the altar. But Pygmalion knew, and Venus knew what his strange words meant, and she took pity upon the sculptor who had made a marble maiden so beautiful that he had grown to love her and to long to have her dwell with him, a real, speaking, thinking, living maiden.

When the festivities were over, and Pygmalion had laid upon the altar the richest gifts of all who had gathered there, he hurried back to his home. Would Venus grant his prayer? He hurried to the great chamber. There in the niche the statue stood, tall and beautiful as Venus herself.

Pygmalion knelt before it; then he rose and folded his arms around it; he bent his head tenderly over the marble head. "O Galatea, Galatea," he whispered; "my beautiful Galatea!"

Then Pygmalion threw himself upon the rug before the statue and lay looking up at the beautiful face.

By and by a change began to creep over the marble; a pink glow flushed the pale face and arms; the hair softened and took on a hue of golden bronze; the eyelids quivered, opened – and there looked down upon the youth eyes of most tender, loving blue.

Slowly, slowly one hand was raised – then the other one foot advanced – then the other. Pygmalion's heart beat fast. Down from the niche the marble Galatea now the beautiful, rosy, flesh and blood Galatea stepped. Pygmalion sprang to his feet. Galatea came towards him; she stretched out her arms to him; and Pygmalion, lifting his eyes towards heaven, drew her to him saying, "O goddess Venus, I thank thee that thou hast given me my Galatea."

And Galatea proved to be as good as she was beautiful. A

long, long, happy life they lived together; and it was from Pygmalion that Galatea learned to build the altar fires, to spin and weave, and to have charge over her household, as a goodly matron should; and never in all the land, even among the princesses, was a woman so beautiful, so wise, so good as the Galatea of the sculptor Pygmalion.

Dryope

The beautiful young mother, Dryope, wandered in the sunlight along the riverside, crooning now and then soft music to the tiny baby that nestled in her arms and hid its little pink face in her fair neck.

Beneath the shade of a grove of grand old oaks, Dryope sat down to rest and to watch the still waters of the river. Beside them grew a lotos plant, its branches heavy with the purple flowers.

"How beautiful!" said Dryope; and she reached forth her hand and gathered a branch whose flowers were deep and full.

But behold a terrible sight! From the stem of the broken branch blood poured forth, and a sad moaning filled the air; for this was the Nymph Lotis who, fleeing in fright, had been transformed, and, hidden thus, had dwelt near the shady grove, secure from harm.

Poor Dryope, sad indeed that she had brought sorrow again to the unhappy Lotis, rose to go away; but alas, she could not move. Already her punishment had come upon her and her feet held fast to the earth.

"Help, help, O help me!" she cried, swaying back and forth and stretching her hands towards heaven.

Hearing her cry, Dryope's sister came hurrying towards her. Already the woody bark had covered her to the waist, and Iole, clasping her arms around it, as if to warm it back to life, moaned and sobbed till the trees of the forest rocked to and fro, and the wind moaned and sobbed as if to show their sympathy with the great sorrow that had fallen upon the sisters.

"O save me! save me, Iole! save me," moaned Dryope; but already her voice sounded like the wail of the wind in the forest. Leaves rustled and waved about her head; her arms were bound, and only the sweet face shown out among the upper branches.

"Don't let my baby forget me," she moaned. "Tell him of my cruel fate; and when he is grown, let him come to me and say, 'Beneath this bark my mother dwells'; and bid him be careful what flowers he plucks, lest he should chance upon a goddess transformed, and the cruel fate of his mother should some day be his as well.

"Lift the child to me. Let me once more kiss the sweet lips then go – away."

Already the voice of Dryope grew indistinct; for the bark had crept up over the fair throat and face; the eyes had closed; and by the riverside stood a tall straight Lotus tree that had not been there before. And as the peasants passed through the grove at night they said, "Strange that we should never have noticed this tree before. Almost we could believe it to be the growth of a day."

The Halcyon Birds

In Thessaly dwelt the just and peaceful king Ceyx, the son of Heosphoros, the Morning Star, and with him in his marble palace Queen Halcyone, the daughter of Æolus the Wind-god.

But there was trouble now in the heart of Ceyx; for already his brother had passed away to the land of the shades, and dire prophecies of greater troubles still were rife in the kingdom.

"I must go," said he to Halcyone, "across the waters to consult the Oracle at the temple of Apollo."

A great fear filled the heart of Halcyone – a premonition of great sorrow to come; and, falling upon her knees, she begged King Ceyx to give up this journey across the seas – a journey long and wearisome, and sorely fraught with cruel danger. "But if it seems to you," she said, "that there is no other way to escape the ills that beset our kingdom, then take me, I pray, with you. Even the dangers of the sea will be light to bear, as compared with the long weeks of dread and uncertainty and weary waiting."

The words of Halcyone weighed heavily upon the soul of Ceyx, and fain would he have turned back; but already the boat lay waiting, the oarsmen were at their benches, with oars in hand.

With moaning and bitter tears Halcyone bade the king farewell; for well she knew some evil lay before him, and heavy was her heart and full of fear.

Upon the bank she stood, waving her hand to her husband and watching him upon the boat far, far out at sea, until

at last the purple distance hid him from her view; then, sad at heart, she turned away and entered the deserted palace.

On, on, across the waters the little vessel bounded, and for a time all was well; but when the sun went down, and darkness began to settle upon the sea, a change came upon the deep. Far away a moaning, as of the wind was heard; the waters were restless; white specks of foam tossed to and fro; the waves rose higher and higher; the east wind burst upon them; and the rain poured down in torrents.

"The sails! the sails!" the master cried; but so loudly did the wind howl and shriek among the rigging that no commands could be heard; moreover, the vessel so rocked and plunged that no man could climb the rigging, and the rain so beat upon them that not even the bravest and the hardiest of all the sailors could see to guide his steps.

The thunders roared; the lightning flashed; the boat pitched and reeled; and the great waves burst over the vessel, sweeping the crew from the deck, and bearing them far out upon the black and stormy sea.

And now the mast falls with a crash; the surge rolls over upon the wreck; the little vessel sinks beneath the waves; and the Morning Star, powerless to save, shrouds its face in the black clouds.

The king, seizing upon a broken spar, floats with it upon the water, calling upon the Morning Star and upon Æolus to save him. At last the waters overwhelm him, and with a prayer that his body may be washed ashore, that Halcyone may know his fate, he sinks beneath the black waters.

The weeks pass by; up and down the shore each day Halcyone wandered, watching until the darkness fell for the coming of her husband's ship. At night she prayed to Juno that her husband might be guided and guarded, and at last restored to her and to his kingdom. Rare incense she burned upon the altars, and daily sacrifices she offered, till Juno, saddened with these prayers for one already dead, called to

her side the faithful Iris and said, "Good messenger, go thou upon thy rainbow bridge down to the cave of Somnus, and bid him in mercy send to Halcyone a dream that shall tell her the sad fate that has already befallen her husband, Ceyx, the king of Thessaly."

Iris obeyed; and spreading the rich rainbow of many colors across the sky, she sped downward to the cave of Somnus; and that night there came to the sad Halcyone a vision that spoke to her saying, "Watch no longer with weary eye for the return of Ceyx your husband; for, look at me, recognize me, I am his shade, and I have come to tell you that weeks ago I sank beneath the waters. Watch for me no longer; but busy thyself with funeral rites for me, and bid my people build a tomb to my memory. Be brave, dear Halcyone, and thou, too, shalt come to the land of the shades when the gods so will."

Then the vision disappeared; and Halcyone, springing from her bed, cried aloud for her maids, and told them the dream that had come to her.

Then down to the water's edge she sped and stretched her arms outward toward the distant horizon. "O Father Æolus," she cried, "give me wings strong and large that I may fly out across the waters to the place where my poor husband sank beneath the angry waters. O father, father, help thy child!"

And as she prayed, behold, she was lifted from the shore; a strange power wafted her high in air; and out across the waters she floated, her long robes dipping upon the billowy waters.

Out, out she floated, the large strong wings steady, firm, unfailing. At last, upon the surface of the waters afar off, Halcyone spied lying upon the waters, a pale, white body. "It is Ceyx," she thought; and from her throat there burst a flood of soft, sad melody. On, on she sped, till she came to the spot where the body lay, so cold and still upon the wave.

It was indeed the body of the king; for the Morning Star and Æolus were guiding it towards the shores of Thessaly.

Halcyone bent tenderly over it, and again the soft, sad music filled the air. For an instant the wings closed, and the sad wife knelt upon the wave.

And Juno, looking down upon the scene, pitied Halcyone; and, descending from Olympus, stood beside them on the waters. Her hands she outstretched and placed upon the heads of each, saying, "Go, thou loving hearts; seek a home for yourselves in the cliffs of the sea, and dwell there again together, happy in all the ages to come."

And behold, there arose from the waters two large, strong birds; and together they flew across the waters, to the white cliffs far away. And there to this day they dwell in peace and happiness; and each year when they build their nest and Halcyone broods over the little ones, Æolus holds the winds in check; the Sun and the Morning Star shine brightly, and all is peace and quiet upon the sea; for these are the Halcyon Days and in them all nature rests.

The Story of Pomona

There were many, many Hamadryads – or Wood-nymphs, if you like the easier word better – who watched over the forests, the valleys, the hillsides, the rivers, the lakes, the waterfalls, the brooklets; but to Pomona's heart the orchards were the dearest.

Her sisters might wander if they willed in the wild woodlands, but Pomona loved better the abodes of man and the vines and trees that bore him fruit.

Her sisters rejoiced in the javelin and the hunt; but to Pomona the simple pruning knife was better; and, armed with it, she rejoiced to wander from vineyard to vineyard, and from orchard to orchard, pruning here and grafting there, till every vine and every tree grew strong and tall, and the branches bent beneath the heavy load of fruit.

And Pomona was beautiful to look upon; her eyes shone like stars and her cheeks were rosy, like the apples she loved so well.

Not a Faun nor Satyr in all the forest but loved the beautiful Pomona, and would have counted himself happy to have won a smile from her; but Pomona was busy and happy in her orchards, and seemed to care more for the fruit than for the Fauns.

But of them all, Vertumnus loved her most of all. Often would this youth come to her in disguise, and so gain a vision of her, and perhaps win the favor of a few words with her.

Once he came as a reaper, bringing her rich and yellow sheaves; again as a farmer, ox-goad in hand, weary from his hard day's work; again as a vine dresser, with a pruning knife

like her own.

But one day he came as an old bent woman, a cap about her head, and a staff in her trembling hand. Now Pomona was kind of heart, and she made a seat for the old woman on a soft bank, and sat beside her.

"It is strange," said the old woman, after a time, "that so beautiful a maiden as you should give so little heed to the brave youths that dwell in the land.

There is Vertumnus; surely a handsome youth is he, and he would give his life for you. Now my dear Pomona, take an old woman's advice, and do not let your heart grow hard and cold. Did you ever hear the story of Iphis and the young princess Anaxarete?"

And the old woman shook her head solemnly and blinked her eyes knowingly. "Long, long," said she, "Iphis sought to gain the love of the princess; but she was as deaf to his words as are the cliffs to the surging of the waters.

Then Iphis, weary of his sad life, threw himself into the dark waters of the rivers; and when the dead body of the youth was found, they bore him through the streets of the city where the princess dwelt.

But even now the heart of the maiden was cold and hard; and the gods said, 'So cruel a maiden as this deserves as cruel a punishment.' And, behold, as she looked down from her tower upon the unhappy Iphis, she was changed, from head to foot, to a marble statue, as cold and hard as her heart had been."

Very closely had Pomona listened to the wonderful story. Her cheeks grew red, the tears came into her beautiful eyes. The form of the old woman disappeared, and the noble Vertumnus stood before her, the handsome hero that he was.

The legend does not say what words they spoke; but when the harvest time was over, and the fruits were gathered in, there was a great marriage festival among the forest trees.

The hillsides rang with the song of Fauns and Satyrs; Pan

played upon his lyre as never he had played before; and even old Sylvanus arrayed himself in newest robes of green; and all this in honor of the goddess Pomona and the brave youth Vertumnus.

The Dragon's Teeth

The children of old King Agenor were playing by the shore of the sea, when afar off they saw a gentle white cow feeding in the field near by.

"Let's play with her," said the children; and away they ran to her. And, indeed, the cow seemed to enjoy the play quite as well as the children did; for when they made a wreath of wild flowers for her, she bent her pretty head for them to place it upon her neck, and even allowed the children to clamber over her.

By and by the little Europa climbed upon her back. Her brothers made reins of woven grasses for her and fastened them to the horns of the cow.

But no sooner were the reins in the little Europa's hands, than a change seemed to come over the spirit of the cow. She raised her head high, planted her fore feet, and, with a bound, was out across the fields and down to the water's edge.

The brothers screamed with fright, and little Europa lifted up her voice in a piteous wail; but little did the cow care for that. On, on, she plunged, even into the sea, and swam with the little girl upon her back far, far out, until the little brothers could no longer see her for the purple mists that had settled down upon the waters.

Then the oldest brother, Cadmus, made a solemn vow. "Some spell is upon my sister," said he, "and the cow is some power in disguise. Nevertheless will I go forth to find Europa; nor will I return until I bring her with me."

And Cadmus set forth; for years and years he wandered up and down the country, asking in every village, "Have you

seen a snow-white cow, bearing upon her back a little girl with golden hair and violet eyes?"

But no one had seen either the cow or the child; and sometimes the people stared at Cadmus and thought he was mad to ask such a question.

And now Cadmus had become a man. One day, as he knelt before the Oracle asking for guidance, as he had done for years, the voice said to him, "Search no longer for the child. Do you not know that, wherever she is, she is now a tall maiden, and has made for herself long since a home in some far distant land? And you yourself are a man now, strong and able to build cities or lead armies to battle. Give up, then, this search, and go out from the temple with changed plans. In the field outside you will find a young heifer. Follow it as long as it shall wander; and where at last it shall lie down to rest, there it is that the gods would have you build a city; and the city shall be great, and its name shall be called Thebes."

Cadmus went out from the temple as he had been bidden; and there in the field stood the heifer browsing, even as the Oracle had said.

"I can trust the command," Cadmus thought; and when the heifer moved along the roadside, Cadmus followed willingly; and when at last it lay down to rest, Cadmus prostrated himself beside it, kissed the ground, and offered sacrifice to Jupiter.

Near by stood a tall dense forest, and far within the forest sprang from the dark rocks a fountain of clear, sweet waters. To this fountain Cadmus made his way, for he was tired and thirsty from his long journey, and was in sore need of the fresh waters.

But hardly had he stooped to drink, when he heard above his head a crackling of boughs and the hissing of a terrible dragon. Quickly Cadmus seized a great rock, tore it out from the earth, and threw it with the force of a giant against the head of the angry creature.

Little harm did it do, however, but came rolling down into the glen like the crash of Jupiters's own thunderbolt; and the dragon only opened his great mouth the wider, showing his terrible, shining teeth.

Then Cadmus threw his javelin – an enchanted javelin it was – and even the dragon could not resist its poisonous point. In through the brazen scales it flew, and the great creature, unable to cast it out, writhed and hissed and curled, then fell dead, down from the great cliff, at Cadmus's feet.

"Plant the teeth of the dragon," said a voice close at Cadmus's ear; "plant the dragon's teeth."

It was a strange command, yet Cadmus obeyed; but scarcely had he covered them with the ground, when the clods of earth began to move. Tiny spears pushed their way up; then shining helmets showed their steel; then nodding plumes; and then the heads, the shoulders, the bodies, the legs – till there stood before the hero a full army of armed warriors.

Again Cadmus drew his sword. Was here another foe? But the warriors took no heed of him; but fell rather to fighting each other. One after another was slain, until at last just five were left; and these, coming towards Cadmus, laid down their spears before him, saying, "We have come to help you build your city."

And grand help these five warriors proved to be; for in a few years a beautiful city had been built, over which Cadmus reigned as king for many a happy year.

Clytie

Poor foolish Clytie! She did not cry for the moon, to be sure; but every morning when she came forth from the waters and rested upon the river bank, her face turned eagerly towards the great red sun, rising far away in the east.

To her there was nothing in the heavens, nor in the earth, so beautiful. She gave no ear to the bird, nor to the rippling of the waters; she had no eye for the color in the grass or flowers; nor to her were the sunset clouds beautiful, except that through them the bright sun, as he bade farewell to the earth, sank to his rest behind the hills.

Nor did she turn her face towards Olympus where dwelt the gods and the goddesses; and sadder than all this, she forgot her own sisters, the water nymphs, and wandered lonely up and down the river banks, her eyes following always the sun in its course across the skies.

At last the gods and goddesses, it is feared, grew jealous, resenting such neglect from one from whom respect and reverence were due; and it is said they convened together and punished the poor foolish Clytie for her neglect.

For there came a morning when the sun shone out and no Clytie turned her eyes towards the east to greet his coming. At least, there was no water nymph by the river side, as for so many mornings there had been, waiting, eager and earnest, for the first ray of yellow light.

But where this sweet water nymph had been wont to stand with face upturned, there stood a tall, rich golden flower, its face turned towards the east. And strange to say, as the sun rose and crossed the sky, the flower turned upon its

stalk and followed; so that when sunset came, the flower's face was lifted towards the west, and on its golden petals the last rays lingered, filling the valley with a golden glory. "It shall be called the sun flower," said the people; "and it shall be guarded well; for it may be that in its root and stalk the soul of Clytie dwells."

Arachne

Minerva, or Athenæ, which ever name you like best, was the goddess of wisdom. Indeed, it is said she sprang forth, armed with shield and helmet, straight from the mighty brain of Jupiter himself, which, if true, is reason enough for her great wisdom.

Minerva presided over all useful and also all ornamental arts of both men and women – spinning, weaving, agriculture, navigation; – all these she understood and could direct.

Moreover, she was always present upon the battle field; not with the savage love for bloodshed that Mars gloried in and never failed to bring about, but with firm wisdom, justice, and ready always to take the part of the weak and ill-used.

The beautiful city of Athens was her chosen seat, a prize awarded her by Jupiter in a contest with old Neptune.

It was like this: Neptune and Athenæ both loved the beautiful plain, and both besought Jupiter to grant them the honor of its possession.

"What can I do? "asked Jupiter; "you have asked for it, both together; and both in my sight are equally deserving."

"Let us contend for it," said Minerva.

And so it was arranged, that, when next the Sun rose in the east, Minerva and Neptune should come before the council on Mt. Olympus, bringing with them gifts for the people who would dwell in the beautiful city. And to that one who brought the gift most useful, most helpful, should be given charge over the city.

The Sun arose; and the council gathered. Minerva and

Neptune stood before the mighty judge.

"I bring the horse," said Neptune, "as my gift; with it man can plow, travel, and can carry war against his enemy."

"And I," said Athenæ, "bring this little olive, from which a tree shall spring to furnish food and oil and shelter to the people."

Unlike gifts, were they not? For a long time the council sat in judgment; and at last, as you must already have suspected, the prize was awarded to Athenæ, and the city thus became her own.

Most wisely did she rule the city; for never in all the history of the world has there been one so famous for beauty, for prowess, for art; and for great men and women.

But in this city there dwelt a proud and haughty maiden, whose name was Arachne. She was a most wonderful spinner of wool and weaver of tapestry. Indeed her tapestries were so life like, the trees and fruit so natural, that often the birds would come and try to alight upon the branches and peck at the fruit. And once, when she had woven a mountain and a rivulet, so true was it, that the nymphs came and knelt by the water to drink.

"You must have been a pupil of Minerva," said the people; "no other could have taught you to do such perfect weaving."

Now, one would have supposed this would have made the little maiden's heart beat fast with pride. But no, she would own no teacher. She wished, rather, that people should believe she taught herself unaided.

"Let the goddess herself come and contend with me," said the foolish girl. "I will soon show you all whether or not her work even can equal mine."

"She comes," said an angry voice near by; and there stood Minerva herself, a black frown upon her beautiful face.

"Foolish girl!" said she; "do you not know that the gods brook no insult? Sit down at your loom, and we will indeed show the people to whom the honor is due."

Arachne shook with fear. She took her shuttle in her hand and began to weave; Minerva, too, seated herself at a loom near by.

The looms hummed and buzzed; the shuttles flew; and slowly the tapestries grew before the eyes of the people, who stood in terror for Arachne's fate.

Arachne wove pictures of the gods in all the defeats that had ever come to them, and in all the wrongs they had ever done.

Minerva wove pictures of the gods in their greatest victories, of Neptune ruling over the sea, and among the figures the august Jove himself sat proudly.

"Shame upon you, Arachne," said the people, "to so insult the goddess. Shame! Shame upon you!" And then Minerva, touching the forehead of the saucy girl with her shuttle, so filled her heart with shame that she went away and hanged herself by the long threads of Tyrian colored wool with which she had been weaving.

But when Minerva saw the foolish Arachne hanging from the tree, she said, "Nay, nay, foolish girl, you shall not escape to the land of shades like this. Awake, and live; and forever more shall you and all your kin hang by your own threads, even as you are hanging now."

Then straightway the form of Arachne began to change. Her arms and legs began to shorten, her head grew small, and in this form, as spiders, behold the descendants of Arachne have gone on spinning the threads with which they hang, from that time on till now, even as Minerva bade them do.

Perseus and Medusa

There were the Gracæ, white haired from their birth; and there were the Gorgons, hissing terrible creatures dwelling in the waters near the shore, cruel and treacherous always.

And some say the Gracæ were the billows that roll and toss away out in the sea; and that the Gorgons are the white-crested waves that break upon the shore; but whatever they were, there is a story about them that once heard will never be forgotten.

There was in the court of the king of Argos, a youth most brave, and strong, and daring. But of this youth, the king had great fear. "He shall die," said the king; and straightway he began to devise ways of putting him to death.

He dared not slay him outright, for Perseus had hosts of friends at court who might avenge his death. So he called the lad to him one day and said, "Away towards the far west, upon the shores of the sea, dwell the Gorgons. The head of one of them – Medusa – I must have."

"I will go," answered Perseus; for he knew full well what the cruel king desired.

"But wait," said the king. It is an adventure full of danger, and great must be the care you use; for the terrible curse of this Medusa is, that any mortal that looks upon her is turned at once to stone."

"It will not be an easy thing to find a foe one must not look upon," said Perseus bitterly; and he went out from the palace sad indeed at heart.

"Of course there is but one end death," said he, as he buckled on his sandals.

"Keep up your courage, lad," said a voice close by. "Here, put on my sandals. They will make you fleet-footed and invisible as well. And here is a shield, polished like glass.

"Take this now, and fly out across the waters till you come to the Gracæ. Follow their guide, and you will come into the land of the Gorgons.

"You will hear their hissing and seething long before you can see them. Then is the time to use your mirror-like shield. Turn your back upon them, and fly backwards, holding your shield high until you see their reflection in it. Still watching them through the mirror, you must strike at them, get the head of Medusa, put it into this bag which I shall give you, and fly home again to punish the cruel king who has put this task upon you."

And away Perseus flew, encouraged by these words of helpfulness. On, on, for a whole day and a whole night, he flew, till he came at last into the home of the Gracæ. Then on, on, another day till he came into the land of the Gorgons.

As the good messenger, Mercury, had said, he heard the seething and hissing when yet afar off. It was like a roar, and then like the splash of waters; but Perseus was not afraid. Turning, he raised his shield; and in less time than it takes to tell you of it, he had swooped down upon Medusa with his magic power, had secured his prize, and was winging his way towards the far east, where twice the Sun rose to greet him before his journey was done.

Once, midway across the sea, he stopped to rescue the beautiful maiden Andromeda, who, for some cruel reason, was chained to a great rock, at the base of which, far down beneath the dark waters, sea serpents and ravenous dragons dwelt, who one day might rise and devour their prey.

Again he came into the land of Atlas, the huge giant who bears upon his shoulders this great, round earth of ours.

"Begone, rash youth," thundered Atlas; "approach not the garden of the golden apples, on penalty of your life."

"Look at me," called Perseus from afar; for he dared not come too near the gruff old fellow. "Look at me! Dare you contend with me? Lad though I am, I have a magic power."

"Away with you!" roared the giant again, turning in rage towards him. But as he turned, Perseus raised the Medusa head before him; and in one second the giant became a great mountain of rock, upon whose shoulders the earth sits all the more firmly because he never changes. Then seizing the very largest and handsomest of the golden apples, away the youth sped again toward the cruel king.

Together with his great court of advisors, all as wicked as he was himself, Perseus found the king in royal state.

"I have brought the Medusa head," said Perseus, presenting himself before the king.

"Fool!" shouted the king angrily; "how dare you speak false to me!"

"I do not speak false," answered Perseus; "I have it here in this leathern bag."

"Show it to me, then," sneered the king, "we are all here to see it."

"Here! here!" shouted the advisors.

"But you know the fate of all who look upon this face," said Perseus.

"Coward!" yelled the king, beside himself with rage. "Do you think to cheat us in this manner – with this foolish excuse? Show your prize, I say; or you shall die upon the spot!" And the angry king drew his spear, ready to hurl it upon the defenceless lad.

"I will do as you say," answered Perseus; "but I warn you once again – and he waited, one hand already in this leathern bag.

"Show! show!" yelled the advisors; and Perseus, closing his own eyes, drew forth the snaky head of the terrible Medusa.

One second, and there was the hush of death throughout

the palace hall; and when Perseus looked, behold every man stood transfixed in marble, even as Perseus had warned them would be there fate.

"And now, faithful lad," whispered Mercury, "this kingdom is yours; and over all the people you shall reign long and happily. Hail! then, all hail King Perseus the Brave!"

Pegasus and Bellerophon

Bellerophon, the princely son of Glaucus, lived in the court of the king of Argos. Beautiful, and brave, and strong was he, and renowned in all the country for his daring deeds.

But the king, urged on by wicked advisors, sent Bellerophon far away into the country of a distant king, and with him sent messages to the king, asking that he should slay the youth lest he return to work harm to the kingdom of Argos.

When Bellerophon reached the kingdom of King Iobates, so beautiful and princely was he, the king welcomed him gladly to his court, and for nine days feted and feasted him, pouring upon him every honor.

At the end of the ninth day he called Bellerophon to him and said, "Now, my brave prince, deliver to me the message which you bring from your king."

"I cannot tell you what it is," answered Bellerophon, "but I will bring to you the sealed tablets upon which it is written, and which I have faithfully borne from my king to you."

King Iobates read the message. He turned pale and shook with fear. For the message bade him, as we know, slay this youth whom he had now for nine days feted, and feasted, and honored.

For three days and three nights the king pondered upon the sad task laid upon him.

Now, great trouble had come to the people in a distant part of the realm. A terrible creature, half serpent and half lion, had taken up its abode in the forests, and each morning it rushed out upon the people, breathing forth a flame from

its terrible mouth that set on fire the grasses and the trees.

All in vain had brave men sought to capture the creature; but each and every one of them had been devoured or scorched to death before the burning flame.

"Bellerophon," said the king, "dare you go against this dread creature and try to save my people?" For if Bellerophon could be led to do this, his own destruction was sure, so the king thought.

"I will go," said Bellerophon, his brave heart touched by the story of the sufferings of the people.

But first Bellerophon asked the aid of Minerva, who, appearing to him in a dream, told him he must first secure the winged horse Pegasus, else all attempts, however brave, would be futile.

Now Pegasus was a winged horse, whom no one had ever yet been able to secure. 'Often was he seen frolicking in the fields, or drinking from the fountain that gushed from the high cliffs outside the city. But Minerva had given Bellerophon a magic bridle, and, full of hope, the youth went forth.

All day long he lay upon the hillsides, waiting and watching. Often, up among the clouds, he caught sight of the white wings of the horse, but never once, all day long, did Pegasus come down to earth.

The night passed. More than once Bellerophon heard the whirring of the wings above his head, but could only see the shadow in the darkness.

At sunrise Bellerophon went down to the fountain and concealed himself in the heavy overhanging branches of a great tree. Bridle in hand, he waited, for sooner or later Pegasus was sure to come.

By and by the whirring of the wings was heard; then the clattering of the silver hoofs; and there, at the fountain, stood the snow-white steed, frisking and prancing, as if too full of life to stop even to drink. Patiently Bellerophon waited.

Noiselessly he crept along the bough, and waited until Pegasus should stretch his long neck down to the water.

Then, with a quick spring, he bounded upon the back of the horse and grasped him by his beautiful, flowing mane. With a cry of terror almost human, the strange creature bounded out into the fields, carrying Bellerophon upon his back. Over and over he rolled, while Bellerophon tried to place the magic bridle. Up, up, among the clouds he flew, rolling and plunging in his attempt to throw off his unwelcome rider. But even Pegasus could not withstand the will of the gods; and all in good time he fell beneath the power of the magic bridle and the dauntless daring of the youth.

And most wonderful it was, the obedience and love that seemed to fall upon him with the bridle; for from that moment Bellerophon had but to speak and Pegasus would heed the words most meekly.

By and by, a great black cloud overspread the sky, and darkness fell upon the hills. The people hurried into their houses, shrieking in terror; for well they knew that the great dragon had come forth. "Now is my time," said Bellerophon, watching the great dragon writhing and twisting in the sky above.

"Now, good Pegasus, up! up!" he whispered, "and let us do our best to stay this foe of the people."

Pegasus reared his beautiful head and spread his wings. Up, straight towards the dread creature the good horse sped.

It was a terrible battle that followed. The dragon hissed and roared. It belched forth flames of fire and wound its terrible length about the struggling youth, who threw his spears and swung his sharp-edged sword. All day long they fought; but with the going down of the sun the dragon failed in strength; only black smoke poured forth from his horrid jaws; and with one last, mighty roar, he fell crashing into the forest whence he had come out to lay waste the fields and to cruelly slay the people.

"And so the dragon was overcome, the people were rescued, and Bellerophon returned to the court of Iobates. And there in love and honor he dwelt for many a year among the grateful people for whom he had done so brave service.

Hercules

When Hercules, a mere babe, lay in his cradle by the sounding sea, there came up out of the deep waters two terrible serpents. They were cruel, venomous serpents, with the strength of an Atlas, and with the poison of death in their fangs.

Swiftly and noiselessly they glided towards the cradle where the child slept. Up the sides of the cradle, over the top they writhed; when lo! the child raised himself from his pillow, stretched out his baby arms and strangled the great slimy creatures!

"Was there ever such a wonderful child?" said the people. "Surely he is born to do great things."

And indeed, as the years went on; he proved himself worthy of this prophecy of his babyhood; for he came to be one of the greatest of all the Greek heroes, the bravest, the truest, the noblest. Little children in all the ages after were taught to admire this grand hero, and to try to be like him in heart and mind and courage.

Now it happened that as he grew up, he was made subject to the control of a wicked, jealous cousin, who spared no pains to make the brave youth's life unhappy.

More than that — he sought to slay him; and it was with this hope that he sent him to do the twelve hard tasks which made him famous — though that was far from the cousin's intention — and which came to be known as:

The Twelve Labors of Hercules

The first task was to go forth into the great valley of Nemea, and slay the terrible Nemean lion.

For a long time this creature had infested the valley, and each morning had devoured the children of the people.

"Bring me the skin of the lion," had been the cruel cousin's command; and bravely, though sad at heart, the hero had set forth.

It was a fierce hard fight; clubs and arrows had no effect upon the thick, hard hide of the lion; and in vain would Hercules have contended had he not thrown down his weapons, and, marching straight up to the roaring foe, seized him by the jaws and strangled him.

"I will carry to my cousin," said Hercules, "not only the hide, but the whole animal." And so, throwing the lion across his shoulder, Hercules carried him home in victory.

From the hide the brave hero made a mantle for himself, and from that time on wore it always as a token of his own first great victory.

Angry at his success, the cousin sent Hercules out at once upon a second labor.

In the swamps of Argos, there dwelt in the slimy waters a horrible, nine-headed creature, called by the people the Hydra.

Of these nine heads, one was immortal; and, moreover, until that was struck off, two would grow in the place of each one that fell beneath the club.

"Very well;' said Hercules, "if that is the effect of the club upon you, I will try another means; "and so, holding the terrible Hydra with all his force, he burned off the eight heads; and seizing the immortal one, he thrust it under a great mountain, where, able neither to die nor to get free, it writhes and roars even to this day.

Again Hercules was sent forth — this time to the labor of cleaning the floors of the filthy Augean stables, where hundreds of cattle had been stalled for thirty years.

"And this," said the cousin, "is to be done in a day."

Hercules went to the stables and looked. Fifty men could

not have performed the task in a year! But with Hercules there was no such word as fail. He stood in the great doorway and looked out across the fields. There lay the waters of the beautiful sparkling River Peneus.

"Turn the waters of the river through the stable," whispered some good voice; and Hercules went to work. In a few hours a great ditch was dug, and through it, straight into the stable, rushed the rapid current of the river. How it rushed, and roared, and foamed, covering the stable floor! And then, pouring forth itself and all the filth, it seethed out into the great meadows beyond.

Next was given Hercules a task of a different nature; one requiring not strength but tact.

In a far off land dwelt the Amazons, a race of war-like women, who had great cities, were very powerful in combat, and who allowed no stranger within their gates. Now, the Queen of the Amazons owned a wonderful, magic girdle; that Hercules was sent to seize and bear away.

No one knows how it was accomplished; but Hercules was admitted to the city of the Queen, and even to her royal palace. For many days he remained a guest in the city, feted and banqueted by his royal hostess. He even won from her the promise that when he went away he should wear the magic girdle for his own. But just here the fates interfered; the Queen became suspicious of her guest, and fell upon him with her army of trained warriors. It was a terrible battle; but Hercules won the girdle, and away he flew across the plains and over mountains to his home, where he delivered the girdle to his cruel cousin.

But no sooner had he reached home with the prize, than away he was hurried again — this time to slay the oxen of a terrible, three-headed monster who dwelt far away to the west, and who guarded the oxen by another two-headed monster as terrible as himself. On his way, when almost there, Hercules came upon a great mountain of rock which impeded

his progress. He had neither time nor inclination to scale it, nor even to go around it. What more likely, then, than that he should grasp it in his mighty hands, tear it asunder, and pass through!

This he certainly did; and there to this day the two great rocks stand — the Pillars of Hercules — guarding the entrance right and left, and forming the Straits of Gibraltar.

But of them all, the most wonderful was our hero's success in reaching the garden of the Hesperides and securing the golden apples of Juno.

Now, many brave youths had gone in search of these golden apples, but the tree was guarded by a dragon so fierce that no one had ever dared go near it.

"I will find this tree," said Hercules, the young giant, "and I will kill this dragon and bring back the apples."

"Many brave youths have said that," thought the people; "but the dragon is very terrible to look upon."

"I'm not afraid," laughed Hercules. And, throwing his cloak of lion skin over his shoulders he started forth with his great club upon his journey.

Up and down mountains Hercules traveled, over hills and plains, across great rivers, until at last he reached the land beyond the setting sun.

"Where is the tree that bears the golden apples?" cried Hercules, seeing afar off a great giant.

"Come across the sea and I will tell you," shouted the giant.

"I am coming," shouted Hercules; and with, two or three great strides, Hercules had crossed the water.

"What is this great round ball you carry upon your back?" asked Hercules as he came near.

"This great round ball is the earth," answered the giant.

"Then you must be the giant Atlas," cried Hercules.

"That is my name," said the giant.

"I have heard of you," answered Hercules, "and I am glad

to see you. There are wonderful stories told of you in my country; and I have often wished I might chance to find you in my journeys to distant countries."

"Who are you, pray?" asked Atlas, shifting the earth over upon his other shoulder that he might see his bold guest more plainly.

"I? I am Hercules," shouted our hero.

"Hercules! Hercules! Are you the Hercules that was a giant in strength even when a baby?" cried Atlas. "Are you the Hercules that has performed the great Labors? "Indeed, young man, your fame has reached me even in this far-off land. But, brave as you have been, you will never find the golden apples."

"Why?" asked Hercules. "Because," answered Atlas, "no one can enter that garden but me. But if you will take this great ball upon your shoulders, I will go and get the apples for you. I shall be very glad of a little rest and change."

So Hercules took the earth upon his shoulders, and away Atlas ran towards the far off garden. How heavy the earth grew! "I can never hold it! O dear!" And the earth rolled back and forth from one shoulder to the other.

"O dear! O dear," cried the people on the earth. "How the earth rocks and rolls! There must be a terrible earthquake!"

Soon Atlas returned, bearing in his hand three golden apples. "Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed. "How do you like to carry the earth?"

"O hurry," groaned Hercules, "my back will break!"

"O no," laughed Atlas, "I am not coming back. Ha! ha! good-bye!" and away he ran up the hillside.

"Come back!" shouted Hercules. "At least you might help me to put my lion skin across my shoulder for the earth to rest upon."

"O yes, I will do that," shouted Atlas, coming towards Hercules.

Now Atlas was not very bright. Such very heavy people usually are stupid; and as he came near, laughing all the while at his own escape, Hercules, quick as a flash of lightning, rolled the earth over on to the shoulders of Atlas, seized the golden apples, and flew away.

"Such dreadful earthquakes as there have been," said the people to Hercules when he had reached his home again. Whole cities have been laid flat. But Hercules held up the golden apples and the people, forgot all about their troubles, so glad were they to see the apples.

"How did you get them?" the people asked. Hercules did not answer, and the people never knew.

Then there was the famous encounter with Antæus, the son of Mother Earth, and whose strength could not be overcome so long as he stood upon the ground.

Many and many a brave youth had fought with him; but never had Antæus been even harmed.

Now Hercules would have been quite willing to have escaped from this giant; but Antæus saw him passing through his territory and shouted to him to come and contend for his life, as, indeed, it was his custom to shout to every unfortunate that chanced to come within hearing of his mighty voice.

There was no escape; and Hercules would not play the coward by taking to flight.

Accordingly the two faced each other. Over and over they rolled; sometimes one, sometimes the other, seemed victorious; but at last the bright mind of the hero perceived that every time Antæus was thrown to the ground, he arose with strength redoubled. "We will see," said Hercules; and, rushing upon the giant, he seized him by the waist and lifted him high in the air.

How the old giant kicked and howled! But Hercules only held him all the more tightly, and very soon the thunderous tones grew weaker and weaker; the kicking ceased; and the

great Antæus gave himself up, a defeated, humbled creature; and never again did he seize upon mortals who passed through that part of the country, challenging them to a battle in which there was for them no hope of victory.

So passed the life of the Greek's favorite hero; and when at length the time came for him to die, Jupiter, descending from Olympus with his golden chariot of winged horses, wrapped him in a shining cloud, and bore him to the home of the gods.

There he was met by the beautiful cupbearer, Hebe, who gave him to drink of the immortal wine; and he became henceforth one of the gods, and dwelt forever among them upon the Olympic Mount.

Theseus

There was in Greece another brave hero whose fame was as widely spread as that of Hercules himself.

This hero's name was Theseus, and he was a son of one oi the kings of Minerva's proud city — Athens.

Theseus was brought up in a simple village far away from Athens; but when he became a youth he was sent to his father at Athens, bearing with him a rare old signet ring, a sword, and a pair of ancient sandals, by which he might prove himself to the king to be the Theseus he claimed to be.

Wry gladly the king received his son; for he was tall, and straight, and brave, and handsome, and any king might well be proud of such a son.

Nine days of feasting were at once appointed, and all the people in the city were invited to the royal palace to welcome the new prince.

Already, on his journey, Theseus had met with wonderful adventures, and the countries through which he had passed were still ringing with praises of the brave lad who carried the sword and wore the strange old sandals.

Theseus, like the true hero he was, did not tell of these adventures, hoping thereby to win honor from his kingly father and from the people.

"I must do brave deeds in the city of Athens and for the people of Athens," said he, "if I would win their favor."

But the stories of his brave deeds reached the city, and proud indeed were the king and the people that the prince had proven to be so grand a hero.

"I come," said a courier from the far east, "to tell you of a

brave youth, who, passing through my country, slew the terrible Periphetes, who, for all time, has held in fear the travelers that pass our way; for always did he bear an iron club with which he smote even the bravest who dared resist him."

"And I," said another from another country, "come to tell the glad news. The cruel Procrustes, the king, is slain; he whose pleasure it has been to seize upon travelers and bind them to his terrible iron frame, and with taunts and jeers bid the unfortunate ones to sleep. But alas! little sleep was there for such as fell into his cruel power; for first must they be fitted to the frame, being stretched with cruel chains if perchance they proved too short, or have their limbs struck off with the sword if they proved too long. Alas, what terrors have our people borne, and with what joy do we feast now that Procrustes is slain by the club of the brave young stranger."

But when the nine days of feasting were over, there fell upon the palace and the city a deep gloom. For whole hours the old king would sit looking out across the waters, and then deep groans would fill the air.

"What is the meaning of this sorrow?" asked Theseus.

But no one in the city would tell him. "It is nothing that you can help," they would say, shaking their heads most sadly.

"What right," said Theseus to the old king, "have these people to keep a secret from me, their prince? I demand to know what this sorrow is that lies so heavily upon the hearts of you all."

"Alas, brave Prince," said the king, "it is, as they have said, a hopeless sorrow; nor is there any use to fight against the Fates that will these things.

"Each year is our city forced by cruel King Minos to send him seven of our bravest youths and seven of our most beautiful maidens."

"But why?" cried Theseus, impatient.

"These youths and maidens," the sad old king went on, "are devoured one by one by the terrible Minotaur, who will

eat only human flesh and will drink only human blood."

"This year, then," said Theseus, "there need be chosen only six brave youths, for I myself will go."

In vain did the old king plead with Theseus to stay. "I have no other son," he wept, "on whom to lean in these my declining years." But neither the tears of his father nor the prayers of the people could change his purpose. "Think you," the Prince said, "that I would allow my helpless countrymen to suffer in my stead? Think you I would rest here in the luxury of my father's palace while some brave son of the people gave his life for the country that I love?"

And so a great vessel was made ready, black sails were raised, and with sad hearts the people bade farewell to the youths and maidens who, they knew full well, would never return again to the city of Athens.

It was a long, sad voyage; and when the island of King Minos was reached, there stood the king ready to receive them, and ready, too, was the tower in which they were to be imprisoned till such time as the dainty Minotaur should demand his victims.

"I am Theseus, the son of the king of Athens," said our hero; "and I have brought with me the thirteen other youths and maidens as, I am told, is the custom of the city over which my father reigns."

"Theseus?" cried the king; "the Theseus that slew Periphetes and the terrible Procrustes as well?"

"I am that Theseus," was our hero's reply.

"Come with me to my palace," said the king; "for I would indeed talk with so great a hero as I know you to be."

And so, while the thirteen youths and maidens were hurried away to the tower, Theseus was taken to the royal palace.

There for long hours the king and the prince talked together. They talked of Athens, of the Minotaur, of Periphetes, of Procrustes, and of all the heroes that had ever been.

"Cruel, cruel fate!" groaned the king, "that so brave a

youth as this should die."

"Can you not save him?" beeeed Ariadne, the beautiful daughter of King Minos.

But the old king shook his head. "No, no," he said; "he has come and he must die."

But Ariadne's little head and heart were very busy. She waited until deep slumber had fallen upon the household, and then crept out to the tower where Theseus was imprisoned.

"Brave Prince," she whispered; and Theseus heard.

"Come down the staircase. Rouse all your comrades and bid them wait till you return. I have unbarred the door."

Quickly Theseus obeyed the commands of Ariadne, and hurried out into the blackness.

"Come quick," she said, "to the labyrinth where the Minotaur lies sleeping.

It is a strange place, with winding ways; and without help no youth could find his way back into the world again. But here is a golden thread. Tie it to your waist. Go into the labyrinth, slay the Minotaur with this magic sword, then pull hard the golden thread, and by it I will draw you safely out."

Gladly did Theseus follow the beautiful Ariadne's directions, and into the labyrinth he plunged.

It was, indeed, as she had said, winding and blind to follow. Nearer and nearer he crept to the great open space where the horrible Minotaur lay sleeping. Louder and louder grew the great beast's snores as he approached; but with the golden thread, Theseus felt sure of success and a safe return to the upper world again.

It was a quick, terrible battle that followed; but with a last thrust of the magic sword, the Minotaur, with one great roar, fell dead.

"That roar might have awakened the world," said Theseus to himself; and, pulling the thread, he was drawn along the paths back again to the entrance where the brave princess waited to guide him farther.

"Hurry! hurry!" she said. "Get the youths and maidens! Rush to the ship; for I fear already the servants of the palace are awake!"

And away Theseus flew. Not a second too quick were they; for hardly had Theseus pushed the keel out into the deep waters than there came rushing down from the palace the old king himself. For he had heard the dying roar of the Minotaur and had feared some harm had come to him.

But he reached the shore too late; already the oarsmen were fast at work, and Theseus, with Ariadne close beside him, stood hard at the helm.

Away, away they flew; and when the sun arose above the waters, nowhere in all the world did it find so happy a band of youths and maidens, as those that danced and sang beneath the black sails of this little vessel out upon the sparkling waters.

Dædalus

The man who had made the labyrinth was ingenious in many another direction, as old King Minos learned to his sorrow.

Now, at the time Daedalus made the labyrinth with its marvellously tortuous paths, he and the king had been great friends; but the friendship of kings then, as later, is always an uncertain blessing; and so it came about that, in course of time, Daedalus found himself a prisoner in the tower, and another favorite established in his place.

The ingenuity of Daedalus came to his rescue, however, and soon he had invented an escape from the tower.

"Let him wander up and clown the island if he prefers," sneered King Minos; "but let it be understood by the people that, whoever shall shelter him or his son, Icarus, or give them food, loses his life.

"Moreover, set guards along the shore to intercept him if he attempts to swim away, or to build a boat, or in any way to escape from the kingdom."

"We will see," thought Daedalus. "I shall find a way." And before long he did find a way. One day a flock of birds flew across the skies. Daedalus watched them with longing eves. "If only I could fly," he sighed. And then, "Why not?" was his next thought.

At once the prisoner set to work. "I can make wings," said he; and indeed, after long, long weeks of work, he did produce from the feathers of the birds of the island some wings.

These he fastened to himself and his little son, and away they flew over the heads of the guards, out across the waters.

On, on, past the islands of Samos and of Delos they flew; but Icarus, joyous in the new sport, began to ascend the sky. Up, up towards the Sun he flew, till, close upon it, the heat melted the wax with which the father had fastened the feathers together.

"Help me! help me, Father Daedalus!" he cried; but there was no help for him.

Down through the air he fell— the feathers falling about him and flying in every direction — and sank in the deep blue waters of the sea.

From this time on, Daedalus became a bitter-hearted man; and when, one time, he stood with his sister's son, Perdix, upon a high tower of rock, he pushed the child off, meaning that he should be crushed upon the rocks below.

But Minerva, seeing the cruel deed, changed Perdix into a bird — a partridge — and so saved him from the cruel fate.

But Perdix never forgot his fall; and that is why the partridge never soars to great heights; but likes rather to build its nests in the low, safe coverts, where no harm can come to him.

The Race of Atalanta

Never was there a maiden so free and happy, so tall and straight and handsome. All her life had she dwelt in the forests and followed the chase, as brave and daring as any youth, and as unfailing with her arrows as Diana herself.

Many a youth loved her and longed to win her to grace his home; but the Oracle had said, "Nay, nay, Atalanta; never many; a terrible fate awaits you if you do."

And so, when the youths came to her, rather than that they should count her heartless, she would say, "There is but one condition upon which I can hear your prayer. First, you must race with me. Such is my fate. If you outrun me, then will I give up my free life and come to dwell with you. If you fail to outrun me, then you must surrender up your life; such is the decree of the gods." And many a youth, so beautiful was she, had accepted her challenge; but, alas, brave lads though they were, none had succeeded in outrunning the fleet-footed Atalanta.

But one day a youth came to her, so tall, and brave, and beautiful that her heart was touched. "It is a shame," thought she, "that such a noble life as this should be wasted."

Still what could she do. Never would it be acceptable either to gods or men that she should make an exception.

"I know the risk I take," said Hippomenes; "but I am ready."

It was with a heart as sad as her free heart could be, that Atalanta prepared for this contest.

But in Hippomenes' heart there was only hope and courage. Already he had prayed to Venus, the goddess of love, and

had offered rich sacrifices upon her alters.

"I will give you aid," the goddess had answered. "Take these three golden apples from the far-off gardens of the Hesperides; and as you run, drop them, one at a time, that Atalanta may be tempted to stop to gather them."

And so Atalanta and Hippomenes took their places before the king.

At a signal each bounded forward even like the wild forest deer.

On, on they sped, so light of foot, it was but as the sweeping by of a western wind.

The shouts of the people rent the air and cheered them on.

"Courage! Courage!" they cried.

"Haste! haste!"

"Don't lose your speed! Don't lose your speed!"

"On! on!"

"You gain! You gain! You gain on Atalanta!"

"She's won! she's won!"

"On, on, Atalanta! He gains! he gains!"

Thus did the shouts of the people mingle.

But Hippomenes' strength was failing. Now, now," said Venus, "throw the apple."

And out it rolled beneath Atalanta's flying feet. Its rich color shone in the light. It was beautiful. Who could resist so rare a prize? And Atalanta stooped to reach the apple.

"Hippomenes with one great effort leaped forward, and for one moment shot ahead. But soon again Atalanta was abreast of him.

"Again! Throw another," whispered Venus, who heard the heavy heaving of Hippomenes' breath.

"On! On!"

"Atalanta!"

"Hippomenes!"

"Atalanta!"

"Hippomenes!" shouted the crowd of people, wild with excitement.

"The third apple! Now! Quick!" whispered Venus; and out rolled the last of the three golden apples.

Again Atalanta stooped to gather the wonderful fruit. It was one second lost. On, on the racers flew; and with one last bound, one last summoning of strength, Hippomenes fell prostrate upon the goal — Atalanta one half leap behind.

How the people cheered! And the king himself, glad in his heart for the beautiful youth, arose and swung his sceptre and summoned the servants of the palace to prepare a feast in honor of the victor.

But alas for Atalanta! The Oracle will not be defied. And so it came about that, the ire of Venus being aroused because the happy youth and maiden forgot for a time their benefactor, she sent a heavy punishment upon them.

In the midst of their happiness, a terrible change began to creep over them; their beauty, their grace, failed. Their tall, handsome forms sank lower and lower to the earth; their fair skins grew tough and hairy; and alas, they stood at last before each other transformed from human beings to wretched beasts — brave, though, even now — and, as lion and lioness, they lived to drag, for many a year, the golden chariot of Cybele.

Castor and Pollux

Castor and Pollux were two twin baby boys who sprang from a great white swan's egg.

They were very beautiful, with their golden hair and their sunny blue eyes, and as they grew through youth to manhood became real heroes. Castor was famous the world over for his marvellous power of taming and training horses; and without Pollux no boxing match in all Greece was of any note.

It was wonderful how these twins loved each other. Never were they separated; never had one an interest into which the other did not enter, heart and soul.

Many were the battles in which the two brothers, mounted on their pure white horses, fought and conquered; indeed, the time came, so successful were they, that in any battle where Castor and Pollux appeared, it was the signal for the foe to retreat; for, said they, "Of no use is it to fight against the warriors of the white horse."

But at last there came a battle in which one of the youths was slain. For twelve moons the brother wandered up and down the earth, sad at heart, offering sacrifices to Jupiter, and praying ever that the great god would send him, too, to the land of shades, or restore his lost brother to him.

But Jupiter could not do that, even for these brothers whom he loved so well. But there was one thing he could do; he could make them both immortal and place them, as he had the Bears, in the sky.

Gladly the twins accepted this honor; and there to-day they are to be seen — a little above the brave Orion — shining and sparkling, as happy and contented together as ever

two loving brothers could be, either on the earth below, or on the great Mount where the gods and goddesses dwell.

Arion, the Prize-Winner

Arion was a famous musician; so famous indeed that he was sent for from all the countries round about to come and play before the kings and princes.

No festival at Corinth, where he dwelt with his good friend Periander, was complete unless Arion was there to make sweet music upon his lyre. Indeed, the gods themselves might well have envied him his skill, so delicately did he sweep the strings of the lyre, and so sweet were the sounds that were wafted out upon the air by his gentle touch. Apollo himself, and Hermes too, loved to listen; and whenever he played, the people said, "It is Orpheus come back again."

Now, there was to be a contest in Sicily among the musicians of every kingdom. Arion longed to go and try his skill; "and besides," said he, "how happy it would be to listen to the music of all these wonderful players who will gather before the king of Sicily!"

"Yes," said his good friend, King Periander; "it is as you say. Still, it is a long distance. It would take many a day to reach the island, and more than all that, think of the danger and risk of life. Our ships are frail; the storms on the sea are heavy, and never is the sailor sure how soon the waters may rise, the winds roar, and his soul be sent to the land of pale shades.

"Pray, stay here with me, and be content in my kingdom, where friends are on every side and no danger can approach." Arion sighed, "O good friend, well do I know that all you say is true; still my soul longs for the change, and for the sight of other lands and other people. I will return; but first give me

permission to leave this kingdom — though I have dwelt so long and happily here — and let me wander up and down the earth as the music-loving heart within me urges me to do."

And Periander saw that Arion must have his way; of little use would it be, and of little comfort, to hold him when he longed to be away upon his wanderings. So, one day he called the youth to him and said, "Since it must be that you will go to Sicily and join in the contest for this prize, though already you have fame in many a land, take with you this purse of gold and this robe of purple. I should be sorrowful indeed to feel that Arion journeyed through the country and across the seas without money, or that he appeared before the king of Sicily robed less richly than the youths who will contend with him for this great prize.

"Neither do I care, good friend, whether the prize is won by you or by some barbarian across the sea. To me there is no music like that of Arion, and whether a prize-winner or not, know that your welcome will be joyous when again you come to the court of Periander. Every day we shall miss our Arion; and every morning we shall look out across the seas, and listen for the sound of his sweet music, coming nearer and nearer over the waters."

"Good friend," said Arion, "I shall come back again, and gladly too; for what would be the joy, even of a great prize won, could not my friend and king rejoice with me, and could I not bring it and lay it at his feet?"

And so the youth set forth upon his journey. Gaily the waters sparkled, and danced, and laughed up at him as the little boat sped across the sea; and safely was he landed upon the shores of the kingdom of Sicily. It was a beautiful island; the air was soft and sweet, and Arion's heart was filled with gladness.

"Surely I shall play as never I have played before," he said, "for my heart is bursting with joy."

And so Arion went before the king. Already many

musicians sat about the great marble hall, and all awaited the opportunity to display their skill.

It was a wonderful gathering of beauty and talent and valor. Arion's heart beat faster and faster; hardly could he wait until his turn should come to sweep the lyre and send its melody out upon the air.

One there was whose music rose like the rush of a mighty torrent; another played like the sweet babbling brook; another like the deep swell of the mighty ocean.

"Tho' I win no prize," said Arion to himself, "it is joy enough to have heard the music of this day;" and, closing his eyes from very joy, Arion touched the chords of his lyre. Softly, sweetly, the music rose; more and more tender, more and more delicate, now near, now far, until the people whispered, "It must be Hermes himself come to join this contest;" and not a sound was heard in all the court save the soft sighing of Arion's music. On, on he played, his eyes closed, his face shining like the face of a god.

"Tis Hermes," said the king; and no doubt was there of the issue of the contest when the last strains of Arion's music died away.

And so Arion won the prize; and for twelve days and twelve nights the kingdom was joyous with banquet and feasting in honor of the hero.

Arion's Return

When Arion left the palace of the Sicilian king, there was a great gathering of the people; for the chest of gold and the silver cup — the prize Arion had won — were to be given him, and the king and his pageant were to accompany the hero to his ship.

Very grateful was Arion for the honors poured upon him; and glad was he when he thought how proud Periander would be when he saw his friend returning a victor in the contest.

It was at the close of day when the little vessel sailed away from the Sicilian shore. The waters were smooth, the sky clear, the wind gentle, and there seemed no danger either from sea or sky.

But alas, there were other dangers of which Arion did not dream; for hardly was the ship well out at sea, and Arion lay sleeping, happily dreaming of his friend and the joy there would be at his home-coming, when the sailors, greedy of the gold they knew lay in the chest beside Arion's bed, began to plan and scheme together.

"We must have that gold," said one.

"But how shall we get it?" asked another.

"We must first slay Arion," said the first.

"But Periander – what shall we say to him when he asks us where Arion is?"

"We will say he remains still in the court of the Sicilian king."

Then the seamen went to Arion's bedside, and shaking him roughly, said, "Up, Arion, up; for your hour of departure to the land of pale shade has come. The waters invite you;

even now the waves rise to meet you."

"But why?" asked Arion.

"We would have your gold," answered the sailors; and even then they had begun to break open the heavy chest.

"Take the gold; yes, the gold and the silver cup if you will," pleaded Arion; "but leave me free; spare me my life, and allow me to go to my friend, Periander."

"That is it," laughed the sailors; "it is because Periander is your friend that we dare not spare your life. Think you that we dare allow you to go to him and tell him of your lost treasure?"

"But I promise not to tell him," said Arion.

"We cannot risk our lives," laughed the sailors. "Prepare at once for the sea; let there be no delay."

Then Arion, sad at heart, knowing how useless were words or entreaties, dressed himself in his robe of purple and gold. He was indeed fair to look upon; the purple tunic fell from his shoulders as from the shoulders of a king. The jewels upon his arms sparkled in the pale moonlight.

Taking his lyre in his hand, he raised his eves towards heaven and played one last sad song. Even the sailor's hearts were touched. The waves stood still, and the fishes gathered round the vessel to catch the sounds. Arion's voice rose, soft and sad. "Ye heroes of Elysium, who have already passed the black waters, soon shall I join your band. Yet ye cannot relieve my sorrows. Alas! I leave my friend behind. O thou who didst seek thy Eurydice in this land of shade, hear me! I too must come. Ye Nereids, receive Arion who comes now to thee."

So saving, Arion sprang into the sea; the waters closed over him; the ship moved on; and the sailors sat down to divide their gold. "It is ours," they said, "nor have we any fear now of Arion."

But they did not know.

"Arion," said a voice, as the hero sank beneath the waters, "fear not. You shall not die; for I have listened to your song

and long to bring aid to you in this sad hour."

Arion looked; and there beside him, sinking, sinking slowly beneath the waters, even as he himself was sinking, swam a dolphin.

"Get upon my back, brave youth," said the dolphin "tell me where you would go, and gladly will I bear you to the home from which the cruel sailors have cut you off."

"O good friend," said Arion, leaping upon the dolphin's back, "how can I repay you?"

"Speak not of reward," answered the dolphin; "proud am I of such a burden." And away through the water he sped. All night, all day, all another night he sped; and when again the sun rose, the shores of the kingdom of Periander were reached, and Arion once more stood upon the friendly sands.

"Farewell, O kind and friendly dolphin!" he said. "Would that you could come with me to the court of the king and there receive the thanks of Periander. But it cannot be; companionship there cannot be for us, and I must say farewell. May Galatea, the queen of the deep, accord to you her favor, that you, proud of your burden, may draw her chariot over the smooth waters."

Then Arion hastened to the palace of the king. "O my friend," he cried, "I have come back to you; nor did I fail to win the prize offered by the Sicilian king."

Then Arion told his story: — he told of the days of feasting at the Sicilian court, of the plot of the wicked sailors, and of his wonderful rescue from death.

"I will be upon the shore and await the coming of the ship that bears these cruel sailors. As they land I will greet them as becomes a king, and they shall tell their story."

Soon the ship arrived.

"O sailors," asked Periander, "have you not brought Arion back to the city that awaits his coming and to the king that loves him?"

"Alas," said the sailors, "it is sad; but so happy was he in

the court of the Sicilian king, who showered upon him every honor, that he bade us tell our king that it was his wish to remain in the island of Sicily another year; nor could we persuade him to return with us."

"A fair story," said the king sternly. "Come now with me to my palace, and tell me of this wonderful island which has so captured my friend Arion."

And the sailors, unsuspecting, followed the king.

"Enter," said he as they reached the gateway. The sailors entered. At once, at a signal from the king, the sailors were seized and put in irons. Arion came and stood before them. The wicked men trembled with fear. They fell upon their knees and begged for mercy.

"Such mercy as you showed Arion, that do I show you," said the king", and the sailors were hurried away from the city, out, out across the country, into the borders of a barbaric country.

"Begone, now," said the soldiers of the king, who had driven them hither. "Begone, and let no light from Perianders kingdom shine again upon your wretched faces. Flee into the forests; and may the barbaric foe that dwells beside these forests hunt your lives, even as they hunt the wild beasts that you shall hide among."

Alpheus and Arethusa

"O Artemis! Artemis!" cried Alpheus, "O beautiful huntress-queen! but one boon do I ask of thee, or of the gods above in Mt. Olympus. Neither do I ask of thee great wealth or power or fame. Only this I ask: that I may wander, free from care, forever up and down these beautiful valleys amid the tree-clad hills, and dwell forever among the flowers and grasses that make the valley ever fresh and sweet."

"But your wife and child at home?" — said Artemis.

"They shall be cared for — that I promise," Alpheus answered; "but for me, let me wander here; there is no other life so free, so sweet."

"It shall be as you wish," said Artemis; and, raising her bow, she caused a vision to rise from out the hillside — a vision of a maiden pure and beautiful, with hair like the golden light, and a robe that shone like shimmering mist beneath the sun.

And the maiden, singing cheerily, joyous as a bird, came tripping down the valley to where the huntress stood.

"It is Arethusa," said the queen, and Alpheus turned to see. In the beautiful maiden's hands were flowers of choicest color, and on her head a chaplet of delicate leaves and buds.

As Alpheus looked upon the vision of beauty, a strange spell fell upon him; he forgot the valley and the hillsides; he forgot the huntress queen; the song of the birds grew fainter and fainter; he saw not the nodding flowers at his feet, nor yet the deep blue sky above his head. Blind was he to all the world, save only the sweet, pure vision of Arethusa that stood before him in the valley.

"O thou most beautiful Arethusa!" he cried, raising his arms towards her.

With a cry, Arethusa turned and fled. "Flee not from me, O vision fair!" he cried; but Arethusa flew like the wind down the valley.

"Hear me! hear me!" cried Alpheus, following in hot pursuit. "I will not hurt thee, nor take thy freedom from thee. Hear me, only hear me, for alas, I cannot live without thee!"

On, on the maiden flew, down the valley, across the fields, up the hillsides; and, at last, with one sad cry to the gods for help, she sprang from the rocky cliff, whose high walls cast its dark shadow across the valley, and floated down a glistening, sparkling fall of water into the valley below.

Then Alpheus wept, and threw himself upon his face in bitter, piteous grief. "O Arethusa! Arethusa!" he cried; but there came no answer save the plashing of the fountain.

Then Alpheus rose, sad at heart, and turned to go away; but lo, a change had fallen, too, upon him; for no longer was he a huntsman, forgetting home and duty, but a river — a long, winding river, with the sea before him, and doomed henceforth to wander for all time in the valley he had loved so well.

For thus had Artemis the huntress-queen answered the prayer of Alpheus.

The Golden Apple

On the top of Mt. Pelion there was a great cave — so deep that no man had ever journeyed into the darkness of the mountain to find its inner chambers, where, on great occasions, the gods held high carnival.

Beautiful indeed was this cave within. Its walls sparkled with crystals of Iris' colors, and the great hall floor shone like glass.

Together, one evening when the days were short and the Sun-god had early driven his chariot beyond the cloud-land of the west, the gods met in the wondrous cave. It was the wedding feast of King Peleus and the goddess, Thetis, who rose each morning from the sea.

Never was there a bride more beautiful. Her soft green robe was woven by the Naiads in their grottos beneath the sea. Her chaplet of pearls was a gift of Neptune, and, as she walked, the sandals upon her snowy feet shone like the sunlight on the waves.

Now Peleus had been banished from his own country, and for many a weary day had wandered, sad and lonely, up and down the valley by the sea.

One morning there came a voice to him from among the trees. It was a soft voice, and it spoke to him in kindness; "O Peleus, the gods have looked with pity upon your weary exile; and to your prayers great Jupiter has listened. He sends to you now, to bring you joy, the beautiful sea-nymph, Thetis, who rises like the gentle morning mist from out the waters. Behold, already she is beside you!"

Peleus looked; but nowhere did he see the maiden whom

Jupiter had sent to be his bride.

Then Peleus' heart grew sad again, and he bowed his head in grief.

"But I am here," said a soft voice again by his side. "It is I — Thetis — the sea nymph."

"But I see only the slow-rising mist that floats above the waters," said Peleus sadly.

"But I am in the mist," said the voice again. "Care you not for the gifts of the gods? Will you not search for me?"

"My life would I give for this sweet gift of the gods," said Peleus, fervently, "but where may I search for thee?"

"In the mist! in the mist!" whispered the trees; and Peleus hastened close to the water's brink. "Thetis, Thetis," he cried, "do not hide from me. Thetis! Thetis!"

Then the mist came closer; it rolled across the waters; it lifted itself from the fields, and stood at last a shining pillar of white light upon the hill top.

"Never, never will I permit thee to escape from me," said Peleus. Across the fields, up the hillside he hurried, calling upon the gods to give him strength and speed; and when he reached the hill top, there Thetis stood, the beautiful water maiden, in her soft robe of trailing green.

And so it came about that there was great rejoicing among the gods, and the great cave was ablaze with light; for in the banquet hall a feast was spread, and all the gods and goddesses were there to celebrate the wedding of the beautiful Thetis and the brave Peleus.

The vaulted roof of the cave was studded with precious stones; and the shining floor reflected back the thousand flaming torches that the sea-nymphs bore.

Peleus clad in shining armor, the gift of Jupiter, shone with a glory that rivalled the Iris-colored walls; and Thetis, never so beautiful, stood like a shining moonlight cloud, amid the ten thousand happy guests.

Wonderful were the gifts to Peleus. There were the

deathless horses which Neptune brought, and a handsome chariot of finely wrought gold; for such were the gifts suited to the hero who should win the heart of the lovely Thetis.

First at the banquet table sat great Jupiter, and beside him the haughty Juno and the smiling Venus. The fleet-footed Mercury was there; and Hebe who brought the golden cup; the Muses made soft music. Iris spread an arch of color above the wide-spread table; the sea-nymphs danced; and Apollo played upon his magic lyre.

Never was there feast more joyous, never wedding more auspicious. But alas! one goddess there was who stood in the darkness outside and muttered evil threats, and plotted to bring sorrow and disturbance upon the gods who had not bidden her to the feast.

It was while Apollo sang his softest music, and the company sat hushed in happy silence, that Iris, taking upon herself a form invisible, crept into the banquet hall and threw into the midst of the gods assembled a golden apple.

Large and golden was the apple, and upon it was written the words: For the Fairest.

"Whence came this?" asked Jupiter, when Mercury laid it at his feet.

"We know not," said Mercury; "it fell just now as from out the roof of the cave. Surely it is a gift for the beautiful" — but there Mercury stopped. "For the Fairest!" Surely it was not for Mercury to say which of the beautiful goddesses was most fair.

Even Jupiter looked from one to another, speaking not a word. What had at first seemed so simple became now a puzzle indeed, even to the all-wise Jupiter.

"For the Fairest!" and Jupiter looked toward Juno. "For the Fairest!" and he looked toward Venus, and Minerva. Would not some one claim it, and so relieve him of the task of choosing?

"Why delay?" spoke out Juno, her handsome face flushing angrily. "Is it so difficult to know that the apple is intended

for me, the queen?"

"Of what moment is it to be queen," cried Minerva, "if one has not with it the grace of mind and gentleness of heart that makes one queenly? The apple is intended for me; for it is I who have the true beauty that perishes never."

"Nonsense, both!" cried Venus. "With me dwells joy. In me all mankind rejoices. To be happy, that is best. That is the true beauty. The apple should be mine."

"Truly, it is an apple of discord," and Jupiter sighed.

"It is mine!" said Juno, haughtily.

"Mine!" flashed Venus.

"It is mine alone," said Minerva, with a dignity that awed the gods and goddesses to silence.

But soon the strife broke forth again. Not one, from the highest to the least among the nymphs, but arrayed herself upon the side of one or another of the beautiful goddesses who claimed the apple of discord for herself. The music of Apollo was hushed; the Muses fled in grief, and the sea-nymphs, frightened, crept back to their peaceful grottos beneath the sea; and in place of the joy that had been, now all was bitter wrangling.

Already the chariot of the Sun-god had appeared in the eastern sky, when Jupiter, rising, said: "Let now all discord cease. It is not for one of us to say which goddess is most beautiful. Let us leave the decision to some mortal who dwells upon the earth below. Even now, I see far across the sea, a youth who tends his sheep upon the hillside. He rises now from sleep, and stands beneath the grateful shade of the sacred tree. Flee, swift-footed Hermes, flee to the hillside where the youth Paris guards his flocks. Tell him of the gift for the fairest, and by his decision will we abide."

Then Mercury, obedient, led the three goddesses across the sea and up the hillside where Paris watched his flock — an innocent, happy youth, not dreaming of the greatness so soon to be his.

"Hard, indeed, is it to choose," said Paris, when the three goddesses stood before him; "but if choose I must, then would I give the apple to thee, O Venus."

"Wise youth," said Venus; and as a reward for your wisdom, you shall have that which shall make you the envied of all the world; for the most beautiful woman dwelling upon the earth shall be your wife; and with her you shall dwell, prince and princess, in a great and glorious city."

"I thank you, kind Venus," said Paris; "but I have already a wife, Eone, who is to me the most beautiful in all the earth."

Venus made no answer; for she knew full well that whatever the gods promise, that thing must happen; and the three goddesses rose high in the air and sped away towards Mt. Olympus; and Paris, although he did not know it yet, was a changed man; for all the future that was to have been was swept away, and a new future now beckoned him onward.

It happened that on the next day Priam, king of Troy, sat musing. "Once," said he to himself, "I had a little son whose beauty was like that of a god. But the Oracle prophesied that one day he would bring destruction upon this kingdom, and that, through him, this people would fall into the power of a foreign people."

"Alas, alas, my child! what cruel fate set this decree upon your luckless life; and what was there left for me to do but, for the safety of my people, to send you from the kingdom and command that you be slain! Alas, my brave son, beautiful and strong, even as a god is beautiful and strong!"

And the old king sat for hours, looking out across the city, within whose walls peace had reigned for many a year.

"But thou art not forgotten, pale shade of Trojan Prince," the old king said, rising, "and on the very morrow shall a great feast be made, and there shall be music and games — all in honor of the Trojan Prince whose life was sacrificed for the safety of his people!"

Then the king called his trusty servants to him, and bade

them go out into the fields and up the hillsides, where they would find the strongest, sleekest cattle. "From the flock," said he, "bring to me the bull fittest for sacrifice; and to-morrow shall be a festal day in honor of the Prince now gone years since to the pale land of shades."

Now, there was one amongst the oldest servants who sighed a deep sigh. To him had been entrusted the slaying of the baby prince; and well did he remember the great terror that came upon him when he threw the child into the fire and it burned not, and when he left him upon the cold hillside and he suffered not.

"It was not the will of the gods," the old servant now whispered to himself, "that the child should die; and it is a secret with them and me that even now he dwells amid his flocks upon the hillsides without the city; and a brave youth he is — my young Paris the herdsman! And well worthy is he to be the king of Troy when at last old King Priam passes from the light of day."

Now it was from the herd of Paris that the bull was chosen for the sacrifice; and so angry was Paris that his herds should be disturbed, that he declared that he himself would drive it into the city and that, moreover, he would contend for the prizes side by side with the youths of the city.

The morning dawned bright and clear; and before the sun had spanned the arch of heaven by one half its course, the games were at their height. Brave indeed were the Trojan youths, and bravest of them all was Hector, the son of old King Priam; but with the strong, young shepherd lad none could contend. Prize after prize was laid at his feet, until Hector, angry, took his place before the youth and bade him withdraw from the games.

"I will not!" thundered Paris; and had Hector been less a hero, he would have quailed before the ringing voice of the daring youth.

"Look! look!" cried Priam's queen. "Mark the two youths!

How like they are! The same fair hair; the same clear eyes! Priam, Priam, I could believe it is our son, our Prince, lost so many years ago to us!"

"O blinded king! O blinded king!" cried Cassandra, the prophetess. "See you not that this is your own son – the son whoso long ago you sent forth to die upon the woody hills of Ida? Do you not know that the gods slay not those whom they would have live, and that it is the same child that stands now before you, a victorious hero on his own first festal day?"

And so it came about that Paris was taken to the palace of the king and given a place of honor beside his father at the long table of the banquet hall. All the people rendered honor unto him, and he was henceforth known in all the kingdoms round about as Paris, the long lost son of Priam — Paris, the Prince of Troy.

For many happy months Paris dwelt in the palace of the king, rejoicing in his newfound home and friends; and almost had the cruel prophesy been forgotten, so happy were the king and queen in their two brave and handsome sons, Hector and Paris.

But, alas, the gods forget not their decrees; and one day there came to Troy a hero from the shores of Greece. Most valiant service had the Grecian Menelaus rendered Troy, and such friendship sprang up between him and Paris, that, when the Grecian returned to his home, he took the youth with him; nor was there any honor that was not showered upon him, the fair-haired Prince of Troy.

But now had come the time for the fulfilment of the prophesy. No sooner had Paris reached the kingdom of Menelaus than, forgetting honor, gratitude, all, he stole the beautiful Helen, the wife of Menelaus, and fled with her across the seas — for Helen was the most beautiful woman in all the world.

And so it came about that through Paris, Troy fell, and the Trojans of the city lost their liberty and their glory, as a people. For when Menelaus knew the misfortune that had

fallen upon him, he raised a great army and marched against the city of Troy, whither Paris had fled with Helen, the beautiful queen of the Grecians.

For long, long years the army besieged the city; thousands upon thousands of the bravest Trojans and the bravest Grecians fell in battle; still there seemed no hope of victory to either side.

With both armies the gods, too, fought — some with the Trojans, some with the Greeks, and bitter was the contest between the foes.

But at last the Greeks, resorting to strategy, built a wonderful wooden horse, so large that hundreds of Greeks could easily conceal themselves within it, and this they left before the gates of Troy, withdrawing the armies to a distant shelter, that the Trojans might believe that, despairing of success, they had set forth for their distant homes, defeated.

Great was the rejoicing of the Trojans when, looking out from the watch towers one morning, they found the plain outside the city clear, and no foe in sight as far as eye could reach. "But what is this?" they said, as they saw the great wooden horse outside their gates.

"It is an offering to the gods," said one. "Let us drag it into the city and place it where stood the Palladium, which the Greeks stole from us and so ruthlessly destroyed!"

And so it was the Trojans fell into the trap the Greeks had set for them; and when the wooden image had been placed in the great square, and night had settled upon the city, the Greeks sprang forth from their hiding place, rushed to the gates, threw them open, signalled to the army waiting outside, and before the Trojans knew the fate that had fallen upon them, the streets were filled with Greeks. With flaming torches they thronged the streets and set on fire the homes and public buildings; the temple they razed to the ground; the altars were desecrated; the city walls were thrown down, and the people driven captive from the city that had been so long

their home.

Such was the end of the Trojan power; such was the fate brought upon the people by the perfidy of Paris, the fair-haired Prince of Troy, of whom it was prophesied at birth, "This child shall prove the destruction of the Trojan empire."

Ulysses' Return to Greece

Now, among the brave Greek generals who had fought with such skill and patience, who had been among the first to urge his countrymen on to avenge the wrong to Menelaus, who never for a day wavered in his purpose to rescue the beautiful Helen and so save the reputation of his country for courage and success in war, was Ulysses, the friend of Menelaus.

Never a battle but Ulysses was in the foremost ranks and in the thickest of the fight; never a success that Ulysses was not among the bravest of the victors; and never a defeat that Ulysses was not still the ready support of the defeated, the daring, defiant, never-failing man of courage, spurring his companions on to fresh endeavor, and to fiercer battle. For such was the hero of these early times when Greece and Troy fought together.

Now this brave Ulysses had been watched over and protected during this long siege by more than one of the powerful gods that dwelt on Mt. Olympus; still, there were other gods who, hating the Greek leaders and being determined that Troy should conquer in the great warfare, fought against Ulysses and pursued him with disaster, even on his homeward voyage.

"Now that the war is finished and Troy is overthrown," said Ulysses, "my heart turns towards home. There did I leave ray faithful Penelope and my brave son, a child only, but now a tall youth, noble and brave I know, trained as he has been by so noble a mother."

Then certain ones among the gods counciled together.

"He shall endure great suffering; he shall be wrecked; enemies shall rise up on every side, and for long, long years shall he be tossed upon the wave."

"But at last, in spite of all your threats," rang out the clear voice of Minerva, "he shall reach his home, and shall find awaiting him the noble Penelope and the brave youth."

And so it was, Ulysses set forth upon the sea. The sails were set, the oarsmen were at their places, and with joyous hearts, Ulysses turned the vessels towards his home, happy and hopeful, not knowing the fate that lay before him.

But hardly had the sun journeyed once across the sky, before Neptune, the sea-god, sent upon the little ships a terrible storm.

The winds blew, the waxes rose high, and the little fleet, driven hither and thither, drifted upon the shores of the island of the Lotus eaters.

Three men Ulysses sent inland to learn what manner of people these Lotus eaters might be. Day after day passed by, but the three men never returned. At last, no longer willing to endure the waiting, Ulysses and his men made their way into the island to learn what terrible fate might have overtaken their companions.

Sadly and with hearts heavy, they made their way in from the rocky shore; but upon the sunny, flowery banks of the sparkling river there the three men lay, eating of the fruit of the lotus tree.

"O come and eat," said they; "then let us remain forever in this land of ease and plenty."

"But your homes!" said Ulysses, surprised at the change that had come to his three most valiant men.

"Do not trouble us," they answered dreamily; "we are content. Eat of the lotus fruit; then you, too, shall be content."

But Ulysses saw that a spell was upon them, and, summoning his crew, he bade them seize the three spell-bound men and drag them to their vessel. And not until they were

placed upon the benches and the oars again were within their grasp, did the spell lift itself from them, and give them power again to strive bravely in the struggle to reach their homes.

"Let us row away from this spell-bound island," cried Ulysses, "with speed. Surely greater danger is here upon us than that of war.

On, on the vessel sped. "Now we shall have fair sailing," said the crew; but old Neptune, hearing these vain words, lashed the waters round about him and roared with glee; for slowly, surely, as the night wore on, the vessel was drifting, drifting close upon the rocky shores of the island where Polyphemus tended his flocks, and watched with his one great eye for ships that came too near his shores.

Polyphemus

When the sun rose beyond the waters far away to the east, Ulysses saw before him a great black cave. Great trees stood before it, and over it clustered heavy vines.

Near by, large flocks of sheep lay sleeping on the hillsides.

"These are goodly sheep," said the crew. "Let us rest here and feast ourselves."

But as they looked, behold, the whole dark forest raised itself black against the sky; — or at least, so it seemed — and, terrified, the crew stood trembling upon the shore, daring neither to advance nor to turn and flee to the ship.

Then a great roar filled the air; the forest shook itself, and there above them, Marine down upon them with his one great horrid eye, stood the giant Polyphemus.

But he saw them not, and when he had turned away, Ulysses and his adventure-loving crew made their way to the great cave where Polyphemus dwelt, and where at night he stabled his numerous flocks.

Into the cave the men made their way, and finding food and wine, they seated themselves for a generous feast.

Suddenly darkness fell upon the cave, for at the entrance stood the giant Polyphemus, and before him into the cave came the vast flocks.

"Let us hide," said Ulysses; and glad indeed were all the crew to conceal themselves in niches in the rock.

For a long time, Polyphemus perceived not the terror-stricken men; but as the fire flashed higher, lighting up the gloomy walls of the dismal cave, the hiding places were revealed.

"You sea-robbers! You thieves! "thundered Polyphemus, "how dare you steal into my home unasked!"

"We are no sea-robbers, neither are we thieves," answered Ulysses boldly. "We are Greeks, returning from the Trojan war, and driven by the unfriendly tide upon your shores."

But little cared Polyphemus for tales of heroes or of disaster either upon land or sea; and, seizing two of the companions of Ulysses, he swallowed them, while his roar of satisfied greed echoed through the cave and shook it to its foundations.

Then the giant rolled a great stone up at the door of the cave that neither sheep nor men might escape, and stretched himself out upon the floor to sleep; nor did he wake until the sun was high in the heavens.

Then seizing two more of the unfortunate men, he swallowed them, drove forth his flocks, rolled up the great stone before the door, and went forth to tend his sheep in the pasture.

Sad at heart were Ulysses and his men as the long day wore on. At nightfall the giant returned, ate two more men, and again lay down to sleep.

But Ulysses had already planned revenge upon the cruel giant; and when again his heavy slumber shook the cave, the men crept forth from their hiding-places, thrust a sharp iron into the one eye the Cyclop had, and even while he roared with pain, hid themselves among the sheep.

Wild with anger the huge creature roared and raged, and stretched his great arms in all directions to seize upon his foe; but they were safe among the sheep; and when Polyphemus burst open the great cave door and roared out across the sea, the men, clinging to the long wool, and hidden from the touch of Polyphemus, were dragged forth by the frightened sheep as they rushed forth from the cave.

Never was there so narrow an escape from cruel death, not even in the fiercest of the Trojan battles; and, weak with

fright, daring not even yet to speak, the men staggered down to the shore, swam out to their ship, seized the oars in their trembling hands and made their way out into the sea, forgetting not to offer sacrifices and prayers of gratitude to the gods that they had been spared so terrible a death.

For days the little ship sailed bravely on; the sky was fair, the winds favorable, and old Neptune seemed to have forgotten his cruel designs upon Ulysses and his weary crew.

Æolus, the Wind-Keeper

But by and by there rose before them from out the sea, a great island of rock; and around its crest was a great wall of shining brass.

"Who dwells within these walls?" shouted Ulysses, coming nearer.

And a voice answered, "I, Æolus, the Keeper of the Winds, dwell here; and with me are my six strong sons and my six strong daughters. Bring thy vessel close upon my shores, and come and dwell with me; for welcome are all strangers in my island."

Very glad were Ulysses and his men, and straightway the vessel was driven ashore.

For four long weeks the men rested in the island, feasted by King Mollis. But at the end of the fourth week, Ulysses bade farewell to their most kind host, and again the little crew set forth upon the sea.

Many were the gifts and rare, with which King Æolus loaded the little vessel; but strangest of them all was the gift of a bag of winds. For Æolus was, as he had said, the keeper of the winds, and without his permission no wind could blow.

Knowing, then, that his guests, whom he had come to love full well, longed for clear weather and fair sailing, Æolus had fastened into a great bag, tied with strong silver cords, all but the soft west wind; and it was this bag he had given into the keeping of Ulysses, saying, "Guard well this bag; for in it have I imprisoned the adverse winds, so that only the west wind shall be abroad; for it is that wind that shall guide you gently towards your home, the sunny land of Ithaca."

Gladly did Ulysses prize this greatest of all gifts; and so true was the promise of Æolus, that, at the end of nine days only, the shores of their loved land lay full in sight.

"Now," sighed Ulysses, "our disasters are at an end. The rising of to-morrow's sun shall see our little vessel lying in the harbor from whence, so many long, long years ago, we sailed forth to carry war against the Trojans."

But alas for Ulysses' hopes! Not vet were the wishes of the god's fulfilled; not yet was the time come when the wanderer should rest within the peace and quiet of his home. And so it came about that jealousy and suspicion rose in the hearts of the companions of Ulysses.

"Who is Ulysses," they said, "that he should hold a secret in which we have no part? How are we to know what may lie concealed in the great bag with the silver string? Let us open it, since it is not his will to tell us, and learn for ourselves. Surely we have shared his perils, and whatever treasure he has concealed, that, too, we have a right to share."

And so, while Ulysses slept, the men crept towards the bag and unfastened the silver cord; when, lo! there rushed forth like hissing serpents the imprisoned winds.

They shrieked and howled among the sails; they lashed the water till it was white with foam; the great black clouds rose on every side, and there was upon the sea a storm so terrible that even the gods on Mt. Olympus trembled, and the little ships were scattered far and wide upon the stormy waters.

Days passed; the storm abated, and Ulysses and his men, now penitent and heavy-hearted, found themselves upon a strange coast, where the cliffs rose black and tall, and the waters seethed around the treacherous rocks.

"Let us rest, even upon this inhospitable shore," said the men; but scarcely were the anchors dropped and the men on shore, when there rushed upon them a great giant, who seizing two of the men, swallowed them, and roared with glee

to think how grand a feast he now should have.

But the men, seeing the dreadful fate of the two, fled from the shore and scrambled up the sides of the vessels.

After them in swift pursuit came the giants, hundreds upon hundreds of them; and tearing up great rocks and trees, they hurled them at the vessels, crushing them like shells, and scattering the crew upon the sea.

Then, wading forth into the sea they gathered up the struggling men and ate them in fierce delight. Only one vessel was saved from all the fleet; and with the few men who had escaped, Ulysses set forth again, sad at heart, upon the cruel sea.

Circe's Palace

For two days now the one lone vessel drifted; for so stricken with grief were the crew, and so sick with terror were they, that none had courage even to guide the vessel.

At last, another island rose out of the sea; and as they drew near they saw, rising beyond the trees, the friendly smoke, as from an altar or from the hearth of some home-loving people.

Drawing near, Ulysses, unable to trust his companions, disheartened as they were, himself set forth to find food for them in the unknown island.

It was a beautiful island, and game was plenty. Then when all had feasted and had refreshed themselves, a little band of men set forth to explore, leaving behind Ulysses and fully half the crew.

The farther inland they went, the more beautiful did they find the island; and at last, rising out of the dense forest, the wonderful palace of Circe appeared before them.

In the distance they heard her wonderful voice, singing softly the strange, sweet song no mortal could imitate; the song which no mortal could resist.

Forward the men pressed, each eager first to reach the palace. The great gates flew open upon their golden hinges, and the beautiful Circe came forth to welcome them.

Gracious and most kind did she appear in the eyes of her guests. One only of them all was wise and wary. He, Eurylochus, remembering the dire disasters that had already befallen his comrades in this unfortunate voyage, held back; and when the guests were led to the banquet hall, unnoticed

he hid himself among the pillars of the portico.

Then he watched his comrades, and saw them, eager, take their places at the bountifully spread table.

"Eat," said Circe; and they fell upon the food like swine, so hungry were they from long fastings.

"Drink," said Circe; and the wine poured freely.

Then over Circe's face there came an evil glitter; and raising her sceptre she said, "Now, swine that you are, go! Go, every man of you, to the sty wherein such as you should dwell. Live there in the form of those gross animals like which you are!"

The heart of Eurylochus stood still with horror; for scarcely had the words been said, when every man, grovelling on the floor of the great hall, grunted and squealed, and snouted like the very brutes into which they were transformed; and away they sped to the great sty outside to dwell among others of their kind.

Then Eurylochus, speeding on the wings of the wind, fled back to the ship, and poured into the ears of Ulysses the tale of woe.

"Our comrades must be rescued," was the answer Ulysses made; and at once he set forth to the palace.

"Whither goest thou?" said a voice close by.

"It is you, O Hermes," said Ulysses; and well do you know whither I go and why."

"But you are powerless before the power of Circe," Hermes replied.

"That may be; still would I try to rescue my companions, even at the risk of my own life."

"The ever brave Ulysses! "said Hermes; "and I will help. Take this flower; eat it; then go fearless into the presence of the cruel Circe; for the flower has magic power."

Then Ulyssses did as he was bid, and entered most bravely the golden palace.

Like his comrades before him Ulysses ate and drank as

Circe commanded him; but when, raising her glittering sceptre, she opened her lips to speak the fateful words, Ulysses raised his glittering sword, and looked defiance into the eyes of the witch goddess. Nor did any change come over him when her words were finished.

Then Circe, knowing that the man before her must be some hero, protected by the gods by a spell more potent than her own, dropped her sceptre and fell, a suppliant, at the feet of her noble guest.

Then did Ulysses demand of her the freedom of his comrades, and the safe return of every one to the vessel awaiting them outside the rocky shores.

All this Circe fulfilled, and in due time again the little ship was making its way to Ithaca, the home so far away, and towards which the crew looked with sad hearts and weary eyes.

The Sirens

Merrily over the waves the vessel glided for many a day; for Circe had promised a prosperous wind, and already hope had begun to rise in the hearts of the crew, and now and then the oars lay idle.

But one evening, when all was still, the quick ear of Ulysses caught the sound of distant music.

"Hark!" said Ulysses; and every oar was hushed. Softer, sweeter, came the music, nearer and yet nearer.

"We are nearing the flowerv meadows of the Sirens," said Ulysses.

"This is charmed music, which no man can resist, let him try as he will.

We then must shut it out from our ears; for it must not be that we shall fall entranced by the Siren music, when our journey is already so near its end."

And speaking thus, Ulysses warmed and moulded a great mass of wax, and calling each man to him, stuffed his ears, that no sound might reach him as he passed the charmed meadows.

"As for myself," said Ulysses, "I would know what the music is like. So bind me, good comrades, to the mast. Bind me strongly that there may be no chance of escape for me, though I struggle and beg you to release me as the charm enthralls me."

So Ulysses was bound, and the men, with ears sealed, took their places at the oars.

Nearer and nearer came the music. "More wisdom for thee, wise Ulysses! Come, come, O come, Ulysses!" sang the

Sirens; and Ulysses, charmed, strained and pulled at the ropes, and begged the men to loose him and to turn the vessel towards the shore.

But the men only bound him the closer, and plied the oars with greater force and speed; till at last quiet again came into the soul of Ulysses, and the oarsmen, seeing that the danger was past, unsealed their ears, and unbound their leader from the mast. So did they pass one danger without harm and without delay.

Scylla And Charybdis

But another danger lay in wait for the little crew; for it was decreed that none but Ulysses himself should ever reach again the shores of Ithaca.

Suddenly there rose a terrible sound of thunder and rumble and roar. The vessel rocked and rolled, and the foam and clouds of spray blinded the eyes of the oarsmen, so that they knew not which way to guide the ship.

The hearts of the oarsmen were cold with fear; and even Ulysses had little courage to urge the men onward into the waters that lay between Scylla and Charybdis.

But the men, desperate, plied the oars; and Ulysses, standing high upon the prow, sword in hand, watched with strained and eager eye, that he might catch the first glimpse of Scylla's terrible heads, and strike them ere she caught the shining of the blade of steel.

But Scylla pushed not forth her heads; and Ulysses, seeing the whirlpool into which the ship was drifting, cried "To the other side! To the other side! Closer to the higher rock!"

Then the vessel turned, the whirlpool was passed, and the vessel for one second lay beneath the terrible cave in which the monster Scylla dwelt.

"Now, quick, quick! Row with all your might!" Ulysses cried; but, alas, no oarsmen could row with a speed that could escape the dreadful Scylla; and before even his sword could be raised, Ulysses saw six of his comrades seized by the six terrible arms, lifted from their benches, and drawn into the black cavern above.

"On! on!" Ulysses shouted; and straining every nerve, the

oarsmen pushed the vessel through the strait, and soon heard as from afar the roar and rush of the waters, mingled with the bellowing of Charybdis and the screams of Scylla, angry both, that even one of the crew should have escaped their power.

Cold, and hungry, and weary, the crew now demanded that they be allowed to land upon the sunny island that lay now before them, and on the shores of which fat cattle grazed.

Ulysses groaned aloud; for well did he know the danger that lay in wait for them upon this sunny island.

But the men were desperate and heeded not his warning. In the night, while Ulysses slept, they left the vessel, reached the island, slew the cattle, and sat down to merry feasting.

Now these were sacred cattle, loved and tended by the goddess-shepherd, Lampetia; and when in the morning she saw the skin and bones of her slain cattle lying upon the shore, and knew they had been slain by the crew of Ulysses, she called aloud to Jupiter and said, "See, O Jupiter, what these wicked ones have done. Nor will I rest, nor shall there be fruits or grains; the sun shall not shine, and there shall be desolation in all the earth, unless thy vengeance fall full speedily upon these Greeks."

Then up rose great Jupiter, and said, "This complaint, O Lampetia, is most just, and for their impious act these Greeks shall suffer. No more shall they look upon the light of day. I will, when night hangs dark upon the sea, send down my bright, swift thunderbolts; they shall cleave their boat in twain, and the wicked ones shall sink into the depths of the sea."

And so it was that in the dense darkness suddenly a terrible storm arose; the heavens grew red, and a great bolt, straight from the blackness overhead smote the vessel, tearing it from stem to stern, and carrying away both masts and men, as straws upon the restless waves.

The groans of the drowning men filled the air; but in the blackness no help could come from one to the other; only in

the flashes of the lurid lightning could they see each other's wild faces, now and then struggling above the cold black waters.

Seizing a floating mast, Ulysses clung to it through the long black night. To this, when the morning came, he bound the broken helm, making thus for himself a raft; and on this raft, though so frail, he floated and drifted on the tide.

On, on, for nine long days and nights Ulysses floated, and terrible were the sufferings he endured from hunger, from thirst, from cold, and from the terrors of the sea.

But there came a time, even as had been decreed, when the hero landed upon a friendly isle, where food and care were given him, and after days of rest, a brave crew of Phaecian youths set out with him upon the sea, and rowed him safe to the shores of his own loved Ithaca.

A deep sleep lay upon Ulysses, and scarcely was he conscious of the voyage. Then, when the keel grated upon the shores of Ithaca, most carefully the youths lifted him, still sleeping, from out the vessel, placed him upon the soft hill slope beneath the trees, then quietly rowed away.

For a long time Ulysses slept. Then, rising, he thanked the gods that at last his trials were at an end and that once more his feet might press the soil of his native land.

"Ulysses will come," Penelope had always said, even when all had given him up as dead. "I know Ulysses will yet come."

And the boy, Telemachus, now a fine straight youth, had been taught to say, "Some day my father will come."

And now, indeed, the brave hero had come; and great was the rejoicing throughout the city. Great festivals were held in honor of him, and sacrifices were offered to the gods.

But after these were over, content and happy, Ulysses, returning to his family and his acres, spent the remaining years of his life in peace, ever grateful to the gods who, through great danger, had thus brought him safety home at last.

Wonder Stories

The Best Myths for Girls and Boys

By Carolyn Sherwin Bailey

How the Myths Began

Long ago, when our earth was more than two thousand years younger, there was a wonderful place called Mount Olympus at the top of the world that the ancients could see quite clearly with the eyes of hope and faith. It did not matter that the Greek and Roman people had never set foot on this mountain in the clouds. They knew it in story and reverenced the gods and goddesses who inhabited it.

In the days when the myths were told, Greece was a more beautiful country than any that is the result of civilization today, because the national ideal of the Greeks was beauty and they expressed it in whatever they thought, or wrote, or made with their hands. No matter how far away from home the Greeks journeyed they remembered with pride and love their blue bays and seacoast, the fertile valleys and sheep pastures of Arcadia, the sacred grove of Delphi, those great days when their athletes met for games and races at Athens, and the wide plains of Olympia covered and rich with the most perfect temples and statues that the world has ever known. When the Greeks returned the most beloved sight that met their eyes was the flag of their nation flying at Corinth, or the towers of the old citadel that Cadmus had founded at Thebes.

It was the youth time of men, and there were no geographies or histories or books of science to explain to the ancients those things about life that everyone wants to know sooner or later. There was this same longing for truth among the Roman people as well as among the Greeks. The Romans, also, loved their country, and built temples as the Greeks did,

every stone of which they carved and fitted as a stepping stone on the way to the abode of the gods.

But who were these gods, and what did a belief in their existence mean to the Greek and Roman people?

There have been certain changes in two thousand years on our earth. We have automobiles instead of chariots, our ships are propelled by steam instead of by a favorable wind, and we have books that attempt to tell us why spring always follows winter and that courage is a better part than cowardice. But we still have hard winters and times when it is most difficult to be brave. We still experience war and famine and crime and peace and plenty and love in just about the same measure that they were to be found in Greece and Rome. The only difference is that we are a little closer to understanding life than the ancients were. They tried to find a means of knowing life facts and of explaining the miracles of outdoors and of ruling their conduct by their daily intercourse with this higher race of beings, the gods, on Mount Olympus.

There was a gate of clouds on the top of Mount Olympus that the goddesses, who were known as the Seasons, opened to allow the inhabitants of the Mount to descend to the earth and return. Jupiter, the ruler of the gods, sat on the Olympian throne holding thunderbolts and darts of light-ning in his mighty hands. The same arts and labors as those of men were practised by these celestial beings. Minerva and her handmaidens, the Graces, wove garments for the goddesses of more exquisite colors and textures than any that could be made by human hands. Vulcan built the houses of the gods of glittering brass. He shaped golden shoes that made it possible for them to travel with great speed, and he shod their steeds so that their chariots could ride upon the water. Hebe fed the gods with nectar and ambrosia, prepared and served by her own fair hands. Mars loosed the dogs of war, and the music of Apollo's lute was the song of victory and peace when war was ended. Ceres tended and blessed the fields of grain, and

Venus, clad in beautiful garments by the Seasons, expressed the desire of the nations, of dumb beasts and of all nature for love.

There were many more than these, making the great immortal family of the gods, like men, but different in their higher understanding of life and its meaning. They lived apart on their Mount, but they descended often to mingle with the people. They stood beside the forge and helped with the harvest, their voices were heard in the rustling leaves in the forest and above the tumult and crash of war. They guarded the flocks and crowned the victors in games and carried brave warriors to Elysian fields after their last battles. They loved adventure and outdoors; they felt joy and knew pain. These gods were the daily companions of the ancients who have given them to us in our priceless inheritance of the classics and art.

When you read the poems of the blind Roman, Homer, and those of Ovid and Virgil; when you see a picture of a columned Greek temple or the statue of the Apollo Belvedere or the Guido Reni painting of Aurora lighting the sky with the torches of day, you, too, are following the age-old stepping stones that led to Mount Olympus. The myths were the inspiration for the greatest writing and architecture and sculpture and painting that the world has ever known. They were more than this.

Among the ruins of the ancient cities there was found one temple with a strange inscription on the altar: "To the unknown God." The temple was placed on Mars Hill as if, out of the horrors of war, this new hope had come to the people.

The word mythology means an account of tales. The myths were just that, tales, but most beautiful and worthwhile stories. So that people who made them and retold them and lived as the gods would have had them live came, finally, to feel that there was need for them to build this other, last altar.

What Prometheus Did with a Bit of Clay

Every boy and girl has the same wonder at one time or another.

"How was the world made?" they ask.

So did the boys and girls of that long ago time when the myths were new, and the Greek teachers told them that the earth and sky were all a huge Chaos at first until the gods from their thrones, with the help of Nature, straightened out all things and gave order to the world. They separated the earth from the sea, first, and then the sky from both of these. The universe was all a flaming mass in the beginning but the fiery part was light and ascended, forming the skies. The air hung just below the skies. The waters were very heavy and took the lowest place where the earth held them safely in its hollows.

Just as one takes a ball of clay and moulds it into shape, some one of the gods, it was said, moulded the Earth. He gave places to the rivers and the bays, raised mountains, planted the forests and laid out fertile fields. And, next, the fishes swam in the waters, birds flew through the woods and built nests, and four-footed beasts began to be seen everywhere.

But the earth was not finished then by any means. There were two giants of the race of the Titans who inhabited the earth at that time, and both of these brothers, Prometheus and Epimetheus, could do marvellous things with their hands. Prometheus took a little of the new earth in his hands and as he looked it over he saw, hidden in it, some heavenly seeds, very tiny of course but they gave him an idea about something wonder-ful that he might be able to do. So Prometheus mixed some water with this handful of earth and seed; he kneaded

it well, and then he skilfully moulded it into a form as nearly like the gods as he could make it. This figure of clay stood upright. Instead of turning its eyes down to the ground as the four-footed creatures did, this form that Prometheus had made looked up toward the sky where the sun and the stars shone now that the air had cleared.

Prometheus had made man.

While the giant was accomplishing this, his brother, Epimetheus, had been busy with the task of equipping the other creatures of the earth so that they could take care of themselves. To some he gave the gift of courage, to others wisdom, great strength, or swiftness. Each creature was given that which he most needed. It was then that the slow moving tortoise found his shell and the eagle his talons. The deer was given his slender limbs and the dove his wings. The sheep put on his woolly covering that was to be renewed as often as man sheared it, and the horse, the camel and the elephant were provided with such great strength in their backs that they were able to draw and carry heavy loads.

Epimetheus was greatly interested in the man that his brother had made and he felt that he might be in danger from the wild beasts that were now so numerous and haunted the forests. So he suggested something to the giant and Prometheus took a torch, cut in the first forest, up to heaven and lighted it at the chariot of the sun. In this way he brought down fire to the earth.

That was the most useful gift he could possibly have given man. This first man had begun to dig caves and make leafy covers in the woods and huts woven of twigs to be his shelters. Now that fire had come to the earth he was able to light a forge and shape metals into weapons and tools. He could defend himself from wild beasts with the spear he made, and cut down trees with his axe for building a stronger home. He made a ploughshare and harnessed Epimetheus' oxen to it as he planted his fields with food grains.

It seemed as if the earth was going to be a very good place indeed for man and his children, but after awhile all kinds of unexpected things began to happen. The strange part about it was that man, Prometheus' mixture of clay and heavenly seed, seemed to be at the bottom of most of the trouble. Men used the axe to rob the forests of timber for building war ships and fortifications around the towns, and they forged swords and helmets and shields. Seamen spread their sails to the wind to vex the face of the ocean. Men were not satisfied with what the surface of the earth could give them, but dug deep down underneath it and brought up gold and precious stones about which they fought among themselves, each wanting to possess more than his neighbor. The land was divided into shares and this was another cause of war, for each landowner wanted to take away his brother's grant and add it to his own.

Even the gods began to augment the troubles of the earth.

In the beginning, before the forge fires were lighted, there had been a Golden Age. Then the fields had given all the food that man needed. Flowers came up without the planting of seeds, the rivers flowed with milk, and thick, yellow honey was distilled by the honey bees. But the gods sent the Silver Age, not so pleasant as the one of gold. Jupiter, the king of the gods, shortened the spring and divided the year into seasons. Man learned then what it was to be too cold in the winter and too warm in the summer. Then came the Bronze and the Iron ages. That was when war and greed broke out.

Jupiter decided that the people of the earth should be further punished. He imprisoned the north wind which scatters the clouds and sent out the south wind to cover the face of the sky with pitchy darkness. The clouds were driven together with a crash and torrents of rain fell. The crops were laid low so that all the year's labor of the husbandman was destroyed. Jupiter even called upon his brother, Neptune, who was the god of the sea, to let loose the rivers and pour them over the land. He tore the land with an earthquake so

that even the sea overflowed its shores. Such a flood as followed; the earth was nearly all sea without shore! The hills were the only land, and people were obliged to ride from one to another of them in boats while the fish swam among the tree tops. If an anchor was dropped, it found a place in a garden. Awkward sea-calves gamboled about where there had once been lambs playing in green pastures; wolves struggled in the water among sheep, and yellow lions and tigers were submerged by the rush of the sea.

It really seemed as if the earth was about to be lost in a second chaos, but at last a green mountain peak appeared above the waste that the waters had made and on it a man and woman of the race the giant Prometheus had made took refuge. Remembering the heavenly seed that was part of their birthright, they looked up toward the sky and asked Jupiter to take pity on them. Jupiter ordered the north wind to drive away the clouds, and Neptune sounded his horn to order the waters to retreat. The waters obeyed, and the sea returned to its basins.

It was a very bare and desolate earth upon which the people looked down from the Mount of Parnassus. They had not forgotten how to build and mine and plant and harvest and keep a home. They would have to begin things all over again, they knew, and there were two ways of going about it.

One way would be to leave the earth the desert place which it now was and try to wreak vengeance on the gods for the destruction they had brought upon the earth. Prometheus, the Titan, still lived and he was possessed of a secret by means of which he could take Jupiter's throne away from him. He would probably never have used this secret, but the fact that he had it came to the ears of the mighty Jupiter and caused much consternation among the gods. Jupiter ordered Vulcan, the smith of the gods, to forge some great links for a heavy chain. With these he chained Prometheus to a rock and sent a vulture to eat his flesh which grew again

continually so that Prometheus suffered most terrible pain as the vulture returned each day.

His torture would come to an end the moment he told his secret, Jupiter assured Prometheus, but the giant would not speak because of the harm his words might cause the men and women of earth. He suffered there without any rest, and the earth began to take on its former guise of fertility and prosperity as man tried to bring again the Golden Age through his own efforts. And whenever a man felt like giving up the task, which was indeed a mighty one, he would think of Prometheus chained to the rock. His flesh that came from the earth was the prey of the vulture, but the seed of the gods which was hidden in every mortal, gave him strength to resist what he believed to be wrong and bear suffering.

A strange old story, is it not? But it is also a story of today. Ours is the same earth with its fertile fields and wide forests, its rich mines and its wealth of flocks and herds. They are all given to us, just as the gods gave them to the first men, for the development of peace and plenty. And man, himself, is still a mixture of earth stuff and something else, too, that Prometheus called heavenly seed and we call soul. When selfishness and greed guide our uses of land and food and the metals there is apt to be pretty nearly as bad a time on the earth as when Jupiter and Neptune flooded it. But there is always a chance to be a Prometheus who can forget about everything except the right, and so help in bringing again the Golden Age of the gods to the world.

The Paradise of Children

Long, long ago, when this old world was in its tender infancy, there was a child named Epimetheus who never had either father or mother; and that he might not be lonely, another child, father-less and motherless like himself, was sent by the gods to be his playfellow and helpmate. Her name was Pandora.

The first thing that Pandora saw when she entered the cottage where Epimetheus lived was a great box. And almost the first question that she put to him was this, "Epimetheus, what have you in that box?"

"My dear little Pandora," answered Epimetheus, "that is a secret, and you must be kind enough not to ask any questions about it. The box was left here to be kept safely, and I do not myself know what it contains."

It is thousands of years since the myths tell us that Epimetheus and Pandora lived; and the world now-a-days is a very different sort of place from what it was then. There were no fathers or mothers to take care of the children, because there was no danger or trouble of any kind, and no clothes to be mended, and there was plenty to eat and drink. Whenever a child wanted his dinner, he found it growing on a tree. It was a very pleasant life indeed. No labor had to be done, no tasks studied, all was sport and dancing and the sweet voices of children talking, or caroling like birds, or laughing merrily all day long.

But Pandora was not altogether happy on account of Epimetheus' explanation about the box.

"Where can it have come from?" she continually asked

herself, "and what on earth can be inside it?" At last she spoke to Epimetheus.

"You might open the box," Pandora said, "and then we could see its contents for ourselves."

"Pandora, what are you thinking of?" Epimetheus exclaimed. And his face expressed so much horror at the idea of looking into a box, which had been given him on condition that he never open it, that Pandora thought it best not to suggest it any more. Still she could not help thinking and talking about it.

"At least," she said, "you can tell me how it came here."

"It was left at the door," Epimetheus replied, "just before you came and by a person who looked very smiling and intelligent, and who could hardly keep from smiling as he set it down. He was dressed in an odd kind of a cloak, and had on a cap that seemed to be made partly of feathers so that it looked as if it had wings."

"What sort of a staff had he?" asked Pandora. "Oh, the most curious staff that you ever saw!" cried Epimetheus. "It was like two serpents twisting around a stick, and was carved so naturally that I, at first, thought the serpents were alive."

"I know him," said Pandora thoughtfully. "Nobody else has such a staff. It was Mercury, and he brought me here as well as the box. No doubt he intended it for me, and most probably it contains pretty dresses for me to wear, or toys for us both, or something nice for us to eat."

"Perhaps so," answered Epimetheus, turning away, "but until Mercury comes back and gives his permission, we have neither of us any right to lift the lid."

One day not long after that Epimetheus went to gather figs and grapes by himself without asking Pandora. Ever since she had come he had heard about that box, nothing but the box, and he was tired of it. And as soon as he was gone, Pandora kneeled down on the floor and looked intently at it.

It was made of a beautiful kind of wood, and was so highly

polished that Pandora could see her face in it. The edges and corners were carved with most wonderful skill. Around the edge there were figures of graceful men and women and the prettiest children ever seen, reclining or playing in gardens and forests. The most beautiful face of all was done in high relief in the centre of the box. There was nothing else save the dark, rich smoothness of the wood and this one face with a garland of flowers about its brow. The features had a kind of mischievous expression with all their loveliness and if the mouth had spoken it would probably have said, "Do not be afraid Pandora! What harm can there be in opening a box. Never mind that poor, simple Epimetheus. You are wiser than he and have ten times as much courage. Open the box and see if you do not find something very pretty."

And on this particular day, when Pandora was alone, her curiosity grew so great that at last she touched the box. She was more than half deter-mined to open it if she could.

First, however, she tried to lift it. It was heavy, much too heavy for the slender strength of a child like Pandora. She raised one end of the box a few inches from the floor, and then let it fall with a pretty loud thump. A moment afterward she almost thought that she heard something stir inside the box. She was not quite sure whether she heard it or not, but her curiosity grew stronger than ever. Suddenly her eyes fell on a curious knot of gold that tied it. She took it in her fingers and, almost without intending it, she was soon busily engaged in trying to undo it.

It was a very intricate knot indeed, but at last, by the merest accident, Pandora gave the cord a kind of twist and it unwound itself, as if by magic. The box was without a fastening.

"This is the strangest thing I ever knew," Pandora said. "What will Epimetheus say? And how can I possibly tie it again?"

And then the thought came into her naughty little heart that, since she would be suspected of looking into the box,

she might as well do so at once.

As Pandora raised the lid of the box the cottage was suddenly darkened, for a black cloud had swept quite over the sun and seemed to have buried it alive. There had, for a little while past, been a low growling and grumbling which all at once broke into a heavy peal of thunder. But Pandora heeded nothing of all this. She lifted the lid nearly upright and looked inside. It seemed as if a sudden swarm of winged creatures brushed past her, taking flight out of the box while, at the same time, she heard the voice of Epimetheus in the doorway exclaiming as if he was in pain,

"Oh, I am stung! I am stung! Naughty Pandora, why have you opened this wicked box?"

Pandora let fall the lid and looked up to see what had befallen Epimetheus. The thundercloud had so darkened the room that she could not clearly see what was in it. But she heard a disagreeable buzzing, as if a great many huge flies or giant bees were darting about. And as her eyes grew accustomed to the dimness she saw a crowd of ugly tittle shapes, looking very spiteful, and having bats' wings and terribly long stings in their tails. It was one of these that had strung Epimetheus. Nor was it a great while after before Pandora herself began to cry. An odious little monster had settled on her forehead, and would have stung her very deeply if Epimetheus had not run and brushed it away.

Now, if you wish to know what these ugly things were that made their escape out of the box, I must tell you that they were the whole family of earthly Troubles. There were evil Passions. There were a great many species of Cares. There were more than a hundred and fifty Sorrows. There were Diseases in a vat number of strange and painful shapes. There were more kinds of Naughtiness than it would be of any kind of use to talk about. In short, everything that has since afflicted the souls and bodies of mankind had been shut up in the mysterious box given to Epimetheus and Pandora to be

kept safely in order that the happy children of the world might never be molested by them. Had they been faithful to their trust all would have gone well with them. No grown person would ever have been sad, nor any child have had cause to shed a single tear, from that hour until this moment.

But it was impossible that the two children should keep the ugly swarm in their own little cottage. Pandora flung open the windows and doors to try and get rid of them and, sure enough, away flew the winged Troubles and so pestered and tormented the people everywhere about that none of them so much as smiled for many days afterward. And the children of the earth, who before had seemed ageless, now grew older, day by day, and came soon to be youths and maidens, and men and women, and then old folks, before they dreamed of such a thing.

Meanwhile, the naughty Pandora and Epimetheus remained in their cottage. Both of them had been painfully stung. Epimetheus sat down sullenly in a corner with his back to Pandora. As for poor little Pandora, she flung herself upon the floor and rested her head on the fatal box. She was crying as if her heart would break. Suddenly there was a gentle little tap on the inside of the lid.

"What can that be?" cried Pandora, lifting her head.

But Epimetheus was too much out of humor to answer her.

Again the tap! It sounded like the tiny knuckles of a fairy's hand.

"Who are you?" asked Pandora, "who are you inside of this dreadful box?"

A sweet little voice came from with saying, "Only life the lid and you shall see."

"No, no," answered Pandora, "I have had enough of lifting the lid. You need never think that I shall be so foolish as to let you out."

"Ah," said the sweet little voice again, "you had much

better let me out. I am not like those naughty creatures that have stings in their tails. They have no relation to me as you would soon find out if you would only lift the lid."

Indeed, there was a kind of cheerful witchery in the tone that made it almost impossible to refuse anything which this little voice asked. Pandora's heart had grown lighter at every word that came from the box. Epimetheus, too, had left his corner and seemed to be in better spirits.

"Epimetheus!" exclaimed Pandora, "come what may, I am resolved to lift the lid."

"And as the lid seems very heavy," said Epimetheus, running across the room, "I will help you."

So, with one consent, the two children lifted the lid. Out flew a sunny and smiling little personage and hovered about the room, throwing light wherever she went. Have you ever made the sunshine dance into dark corners by reflecting it from a bit of looking glass? Well, so appeared the winged cheerfulness of this fairylike stranger amid the gloom of the cottage. She flew to Epimetheus and laid the least touch of her finger on the inflamed spot where the Trouble had stung him and immediately the pain of it was gone. Then she kissed Pandora on the forehead and her hurt was cured likewise.

"Who are you, beautiful creature?" asked Pandora.

"I am to be called Hope," explained the sunshiny figure, "and because I am such a cheerful person, I was packed by the gods into the box to make amends for the swarm of ugly Troubles. Never fear! We shall do pretty well in spite of them."

"Your wings are colored like the rainbow," exclaimed Pandora, "How beautiful!"

"And will you stay with us," asked Epimetheus, "forever and ever?"

"As long as you need me," said Hope, "and that will be as long as you live in the world. I promise never to desert you."

So Pandora and Epimetheus found Hope, and so has

everybody else who has trusted her since that day. The Troubles are still flying around the world, but we have that lovely and lightsome fairy, Hope, to cure their stings and make the world new for us.

What Became of the Giants

The giants had decided to invade Mount Olympus. They thought they could easily do this, for there were none of the gods who could hurt them; the giants were proof against all their weapons. They believed that this wonderful place among the clouds was theirs by right just because they were larger and stronger than the heroes. If the gods refused to give up their abode with its palaces, the gilded car of day, its stores of food such as had never been tasted by mortals and its weapons, the thunder and lightning, the giants were going to destroy the Mount. That would have been a pity, for with Mount Olympus would go some of the most beautiful foundations the world has ever known.

There was one of the gods, Apollo, who held the light of the whole universe in his right hand. It was not only that of the sun, but the light that shone in the hearts of the Greeks and made life brighter when they had wisdom, and knew truth, and could appreciate beauty. There was no question at all about this light being Apollo's and coming as a gift to men from Mount Olympus, because of his great deeds.

There was a deep cavern on the green hillside of Parnassus in Greece where a goat herd, passing by its mouth in ancient times, had inhaled a strange fragrance that had made him able to speak with the knowledge of a seer. Apollo decided to preserve this cave. The city of Delphi grew around it and Apollo sent a priestess crowned with laurel to be its oracle and welcome those mortals who wanted to breathe its magic air. But a monster of darkness, the Python, placed itself in front of the oracle and allowed no man to approach Delphi.

Apollo, with his shaft of light, drove away the Python and made it possible for any one who wanted better eyesight or keener hearing or more truthful speech to come to the oracle.

That was not all, either, that Apollo had accomplished for the good of men. He protected the Muses, who were the daughters of Jupiter and Memory and could do all sorts of things to make happiness. They could sing, and draw music from the strings of the lire, write stories and poems and paint pictures. It was said, also, that the laurel tree belonged to Apollo for making wreaths with which to crown those who had done great deeds or made dark paths bright.

But the giants could see little value in Apollo's light. They thought mainly of how to wrest riches and nectar and ambrosia from the gods, and they decided to try and kill Apollo and the Muses first of all.

Thessaly had the wildest forests and the most rocky coasts of any part of Greece. It was a fitting place for the giants to meet, and it must have been a terrible sight when they landed and formed their ranks for battle. They say that Tityus, one of their leaders, covered nine acres when he lay down for a nap on a plain. Certain others had a hundred arms, limbs made of huge serpents and could breathe fire. The worst part about this race of giants was the fact that their hearts were different from those of the celestials and the mortals. They had hearts made of solid stone which could never beat and feel warm. That was why the giants made preparations to climb up to steep sides of Mount Olympus.

No one in all Greece dared to try and stop this war of the giants. They pulled up the mountain Ossa and balanced it on top of Pelion to bridge the way from the earth to the sky. They armed themselves by tearing up great oak and cypress trees for clubs and carrying rocks as large as small hills with them. Then the giants climbed up and attacked the habitation of the gods.

It seemed as if the giants were going to win, for even the

gods were frightened and made haste to change their forms. The mighty Jupiter took upon himself the figure of a ram. Apollo became a crow, Diana a cat, Juno a cow, Venus a fish and Mercury a bird. But Mars, the god of war, got out his chariot and went to meet the giants, and the others returned at last, for there was really no courage like theirs.

The battle was still with the giants, though, for no weapons could kill them. Mars threw his spears and they rebounded from the stone hearts of the giants. No one knew what would happen, for certain of the giants went down to the earth again and brought up hills with which to crush the habitations of the gods, but just then a great idea came to Apollo. He believed that there were unseen forces which were quite as powerful as the giants' trees and rocks and hills in deciding this battle. So Apollo sent Mercury, the messenger with winged shoes, post haste with a secret message to Helios who lived in the palace of the sun commanding him to close and lock the doors. There was no light for the giants to fight by and they were well known to be hulking, awkward creatures, very clumsy about using their hands and feet. They needed the light. They had even made attempts to steal the summer from mortals that they might have more sunshine themselves and they had succeeded in a way, for winter came upon the earth every year with its cold and shorter days. But the giants had neglected to bring any sunshine with them and it was suddenly as dark as night on Mount Olympus.

The giants fumbled about and stumbled and fell upon their own weapons. Taking advantage of this temporary rout, Jupiter sent a sky full of thunderbolts into their midst and they tumbled back to earth again. It was odd, but Apollo. whom the giants had thought so unessential because he protected knowledge and the oracle of Delphi and the tender Muses, had conquered with his own special weapon, light.

The giants were not particularly hurt by their fall; they were only driven out of the habitation of the gods and they

began taking counsel together at once as to how they might begin their war all over again. But they suddenly discovered that they had nothing to eat. In their absence, Ceres had cut down and uprooted from the earth the herbs that they needed to keep them alive and preserve their strength. Then, to make sure that their destruction would be complete, Jupiter covered each giant with a volcano. Each was imprisoned fast underneath a mountain, and all he could do was to breathe through the top once in a while in a fiery way.

That was the end of the giants. For a while they did some damage, particularly the giant Enceladus whom it took the whole of the volcano Aetna to cover and keep down. But gradually even the volcanoes became quiet and there was more peace upon the earth.

Mortals, for all time, though, have followed the example of the giants and have tried to use their strength in battle for pillage. They have destroyed beautiful buildings and put out home fires and interfered with teaching and music and painting and writing, because they could not see the light shining in these. But what usually happens to them in the end is just what happened to the giants who started out to destroy Mount Olympus. They find that they have pulled a volcano down over their shoulders.

Where the Labyrinth Led

Daedalous stood in the shadows at the entrance of the Labyrinth and watched one of the heroes enter the dark passageway. It was a strange, secret edifice that Daedalous, an artist of the gods, had built with his mighty skill. Numberless winding passageways and turnings opened one into the other in a confusing maze that seemed to have no beginning or end. There was a river in Greece, the Maeander, that had never been traced to its source, for it flowed forward and backward, always returning and Daedalous had planned the Labyrinth like the course of the river Maeander.

There was hardly anything that Daedalous was not able to do with his hands, for he had been given great gifts by the gods. But he liked trickery more than honesty and had spent years and used his clever brain in inventing this maze.

As he peered into the dark alleys of the Labyrinth he saw the hero disappear. He would never return, Daedalous knew, for no one yet had ever been able to retrace his steps through its turnings. Like many secret things, the Labyrinth caught and destroyed even the brave.

It was a pity that anything so dreadful should have happened on such a day as that. The olive trees of Crete were in full leaf, and Daedalous could hear a nightingale singing in the forest nearby. He was deaf to the music of birds, though, for he was listening for another sound. It was May of the year, and the day when Athens sent a tribute of seven of the strongest lads and seven of the fairest daughters of Greece to be driven into the Labyrinth, a tribute to King Minos of Crete. The Minotaur, a raging beast half man and half bull, waited

in its secret passageways to devour them. Daedalous had built the Labyrinth and confined the Minotaur in it to commend himself to King Minos. The sound he listened for was the crying of these youths and maidens on their way to the sacrifice.

The road was strangely quiet, although Daedalous could see the white garments of the children as they made their way toward him through the aisles of flowering trees. Their eyes were bright with courage, and a youth who was taller and older than the others led them. Daedalous trembled and hid behind a bank of moss as he saw him.

All Greece was beginning to talk of this youth, Theseus, the son of the King of Athens. He had but lately come to Athens, having lived with his grandfather at Troezen, and had astounded the populace with his prowess. The boys in the streets had ridiculed him a bit at first because of the long Ionian garment that he wore and his long hair. They called him a girl and told him that he should not be out alone in public. Hearing this ridicule, Theseus had unyoked a loaded wagon that stood near by and had thrown it lightly up into the air to the marvel of all who saw him. Next, Theseus had overpowered some fifty giants who hoped to overthrow the government of Athens and set up their own rule of pillage and terror in the city. Then Theseus had, by his extraordinary strength, captured a furious bull that was destroying the fields of grain outside the city, and had brought it captive into Athens.

Daedalous did not know, however, of this last adventure which Theseus had taken upon himself.

The Athenians were in deep affliction when he had come to the court of Athens, for it was the time of the year when its sons and daughters must be sent for the annual offering to King Minos. Theseus resolved to try and save his countrymen from this too great sacrifice and had offered himself as one of the victims to leave for Crete. His father, King Aegeus, was loath to have him go. He was growing old, and Theseus was

his hope for the throne of Athens. But the day of the tribute came, seven girls and six boys were drawn by lot, and they set sail with Theseus in a ship that departed under black sails.

When they arrived at Crete, the victims were exhibited before King Minos, and Theseus saw Ariadne, his daughter, seated at the foot of his throne. Ariadne was so beautiful that we may still see her crown of gems in the sky, a starry circle above the constellation of Hercules who kneels at her feet. She was also as good as she was beautiful, and a great pity filled her heart when she saw Theseus and these young people of Athens so soon to perish in the Labyrinth. She wanted to save them all to be the glory of Athens when they grew up, so she gave Theseus a sword for his encounter with the Minotaur and a coil of slender white thread.

Daedalous, from his hiding place, saw these and wondered as Theseus approached the Labyrinth and fearlessly entered.

As he followed the crooked, twisting passages, Theseus unwound his white skein and left the thread behind him. He went on boldly until he reached the devouring beast in the center of the Labyrinth and slew it easily with Ariadne's keen blade. Then Theseus retraced his steps, following the thread, as he found his way out of the Labyrinth and into the light again. Deadalous was seized with an overpowering fear, for the artifice of his work had been discovered. There would be no more sacrifices of the heroes and the children of Greece to the Minotaur. The crooked ways of the Labyrinth had been made plain by Theseus' white thread of truth.

King Minos was most angry of all Daedalous at this failure of the maze. He imprisoned Daedalous and his son, Icarus, whom Daedalous loved more than anything else in the world, in a high tower in Crete. When they escaped, he set guards along the entire shores of the island and had all ships searched so that the two might not leave by sea. Icarus had great faith in his father and entreated him to find some way by which they might elude the guards and begin their life anew on some

other island. So Daedalous forgot his lesson of the Labyrinth and set about making wings for himself and Icarus.

The wings were as false as the maze had been crooked. Daedalous set the boy to gathering all the feathers he could find that the sea birds and the birds of the forest had dropped. Icarus brought his hands full of these; he was very proud of his father and had always longed to be old enough to help him in his work. He sat beside his father in the shelter of a cedar grove, sorting the larger from the smaller feathers, and bringing wax that the bees had left in the hollow trees. Daedalous wrought the feathers together with this skilful fingers, beginning with the smallest ones and adding the longer to imitate the sweep of a bird's wings. He sewed the large feathers with thread and fastened the others with wax until he had completed two pairs of wings. He fastened them to his own shoulders and to those of Icarus, and they ran to the shore, buoyed upwards and feeling the power of birds as they made ready for their flight.

Icarus was as joyous as the nightingale that spreads his wings to carry his song as far as the sky. But Daedalous was again terrified at the work of his hands. He warned the boy:

"Fly along the middle track, my Icarus," he said, "not high or low. If you fly low, the ocean spray will weight your wings, and the sun may hurt you with his fiery dart if you fly too far. Keep near me."

Then Daedalous kissed his boy, rose on his wings and flew off beckoning for Icarus to follow. As they soared away from Crete, the ploughmen stopped their work and the shepherds forgot their flocks as they watched the strange sight. Daedalous and his son seemed like two gods chasing the air above the blue sea.

Together they flew by Samos and Delos, on the way to Sicily, a long distance. Then Icarus, exulting in his wings, began to rise and leave the lower course along which his father had been guiding him. He had wanted, all his life, to

see the city of the gods on Mount Olympus and now his chance had come to reach it. Icarus was sure that his wings were strong enough to carry him as far as he had a desire to fly, because his father whom he had trusted had made them for him.

Up, up toward the heavens Icarus mounted, but the coolness of the waters changed to blazing heat, for Icarus was near the sun. The heat softened the wax that held the feathers together and Icarus' wings came off. He stretched his arms wide, but there was nothing to hold him in mid air.

"Icarus, my Icarus, where are you?" Daedalous cried, but all he could see was a ripple in the ocean where his son had fallen and the bright, scattered plumage floating on the surface.

That was the real end of the Labyrinth, where the daughters of the sea, the Nereids, took Icarus in their arms and carried him tenderly down among their gardens of pearly sea flowers. For Daedalous had to fly on alone to Sicily, and although he built a temple to Apollo there and hung his wings in it as an offering to the god he never saw his son again.

How Perseus Conquered the Sea

A heavy storm raged at sea. The billows, as tall and stronger than ships, rolled from the cave on the coast of Greece where Medusa, the Gorgon, ruled and directed them. She drove them out in an endless line of destruction to crush any frail craft that braved the waters, send the sailors to the bottom and leave only broken oars and spars to be washed up on the rocks outside her stony dwelling place.

As the sea arose and the winds shrieked, a ship far out from the land could be seen, riding on the crest of the waves and coming closer to the shore. Then its form changed and the fishermen who had dared the weather saw that it was a chest made of carved cedar wood and having hinges of chased gold. It would be almost submerged one minute and then it would appear again, floating bravely on the surf. At last it was tossed upon the rocks, and the fishermen ran to salvage the treasure that some ruthless destroyer had cast out for Medusa to capture if she could.

When they reached the chest the fishermen saw a young mother inside it clasping her baby son closely in her arms. It had held a human treas-ure abandoned to the Gorgon's cruel powers of the sea. They conducted her to their King, Polydectes, of Seriphus, and she told him her story.

"I am Danae, the princess of Argos," she said "but my father, King Acrisius, is afraid of the powers that this little son of mine may develop in manhood. He caused us to be shut up in a frail chest and set adrift among the waves. I pray your protection, O King, for my son, who is strong and of noble birth, until he is able to dare great deeds and reward you for

your kindness."

No one could have resisted the pleading of Danae, so lovely and holding her baby in her arms. She remained in Seriphus and her son, Perseus, grew to a boy and then to a fearless, daring young hero.

All this time Medusa was working sorrow on land and sea. She had once been a beautiful maiden of the coast of Greece, but she had quarreled with Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, and for this act the gods had changed her into a Gorgon. Her long, curling hair was now a mass of clustering, venomous serpents that twined about her white shoulders and crawled down to her feet where they twisted themselves around her ankles. No one could describe the terrible features of Medusa, but whoever looked in her face was turned from a living thing to a creature of stone. All around the cave where she lived could be seen the stony figures of animals and men who had chanced to catch a glimpse of her and had been petrified in an instant. Above all, Medusa held the ruthlessness of the sea in her power. Those captains who had cruel hearts abandoned their enemies to the waters and she crushed them with her billows.

So it seemed to Perseus that his first adventure on coming to manhood must be the conquest of Medusa, the snaky haired Gorgon, and the gods approved of his decision and met in counsel on Mount Olympus to decide how they should help the young hero.

"I will lend Perseus my shield for his adventure," Minerva, the wisest goddess of them all, said.

"And I will lend Perseus my winged shoes," Mercury, the god of speed, decided, "to help him hasten on his brave errand."

Even Pluto, the king of the dark regions beneath the earth, heard of Perseus' determination and sent him his magic helmet by means of which any one was able to become invisible.

Perseus was well equipped when he started out. He wore Pluto's helmet and Mercury's shoes, and travelled to the lonely cave of the Gorgon without being seen and as fast as a dart of fire sent by Jupiter.

Medusa paced the halls of her cave endlessly, moaning and crying in her despair, for she was never able to escape those crawling, slimy snakes which covered her head and body. Perseus waited until she was so weary that she sank down on the stones of the cave and slept. Then, taking care not to look at her hideous face but only following her image that was reflected in his shield, Perseus cut off Medusa's head and carried it away in triumph.

Then the people who travelled the sea in ships were saved from her cruelty, and her power for evil was changed in Perseus' hands to a power for good. Carrying the head of Medusa high, the hero flew in the winged shoes far and wide over land and sea until he came at last to the western limit of the earth where the sun goes down.

That was the realm of Atlas, one of the giants who was rich in herds and flocks and allowed no one to share his wealth or even enter his estates. Atlas' chief pride was his orchard whose fruits were all of gold, hung on golden branches and folded from sight by golden leaves. Perseus had no ambition to take this golden harvest.

"I stop in your domain only as a guest," he explained to the giant, "I am of noble birth, having sprung from the gods, and I have just accomplished the brave deed of destroying the terror Medusa wrought on the sea. I ask only rest and food of you."

But Atlas could think of nothing but his greed for his gold apples.

"Be gone, boaster!" he cried, "or I will crush you like a worm beneath my heel. Neither your parentage or your valor shall avail you anything."

Perseus did not attempt to meet the force of the giant's

greater strength, but he held up the head of the Gorgon full in his face. Then the massive bulk of Atlas was slowly but surely turned to stone. His iron muscles, his brawny limbs, his huge body and head increased in size and petrified until he towered above Perseus, a mighty mountain. His beard and hair became forests, his arm and shoulders cliffs, his head a summit, and his bones rocks. For all the rest of the centuries Atlas was to stand there holding the sky with its weight of stars on his shoulders.

Perseus continued his flight and he came to the country of the Ethiopians. The sea was as ruthless here as it had been when Medusa ruled the billows in her cave on the coast of Greece. As Perseus approached the coast he saw a terrible sight.

A sea monster was lashing the waves to fury and coming closer and closer to the shore. And a beautiful girl was chained to the rocks, waiting to be devoured by this dragon. She hung there, so pale and motionless that if it had not been for her tears that flowed in a long stream down the rocks, and her bright hair that the breezes from the sea blew about her like a cloud, Perseus would have thought her a marble statue carved and placed there on the rocks.

Perseus alighted beside her, startled at her horrible plight, and entranced with her beauty.

"Why are you fastened here in such danger?" he asked.

The girl did not speak at first, trying to cover her face, but her hands were also chained. At last she explained to Perseus.

"I am Andromeda, the princess of Ethiopia," she said, "and I must be a sacrifice to the sea because my mother, Queen Cassiopeia, has enraged the sea by comparing her beauty to that of the nymphs. I am offered here to appease the deities. Look, the monster comes!" she ended in a shriek

Almost before she had finished speaking, a hissing sound could be heard on the surface of the water and the sea monster appeared with his head above the surf and cleaving the

waves with his broad breast. The shore filled with people who loved Andromeda and shrieked their lamentations at the tragedy which was about to take place. The sea monster was in range of a cliff at last and Perseus, with a sudden bound of his winged feet, rose in the air.

He soared above the waters like an eagle and darted down upon this dragon of the sea. He plunged his sword into its shoulder, but the creature, was only pricked by the thrust and lashed the sea into such a fury that Perseus could scarcely see to attack him. But as he caught sight of the dragon through the mist of spray, Perseus pierced it between its scales, now in the side, then in the flank, and then in the head. At last the monster spurted blood from its nostrils. Perseus alighted on a rock beside Andromeda and gave it a death stroke. And the people who had gathered on the shore shouted with joy until the hills re-echoed their glad cries.

Like the prince of a fairy tale,Perseus asked for the fair Andromeda as his bride to reward him for this last victory over the sea, and his wish was granted. It seemed as if his tempestuous adventures were going to reach a peaceful ending as he took his bride. There was a banquet spread for the wedding feast in the palace of Andromeda's father and all was joy and festivity when there came a sound of warlike clamor from outside the gates. Phineas, a warrior of Ethiopia, who had loved Andromeda, but had not had the courage to rescue her from the terror of the sea, had arrived with his train to take her away from Perseus.

"You should have claimed her when she was chained to the rock," Perseus said. "You are a coward to attack us here with so overpowering an army."

Phineas made no reply but raised his javelin to hurl it at Perseus. The hero had a sudden thought to save him from destruction.

"Let my friends all depart, or turn away their eyes," he said, and he held aloft the hideous snaky head of the Gorgon.

His enemy's arm that held the javelin stiffened so that he could neither thrust it forward nor pull it back. His limbs became rigid, his mouth opened but no sound came from it. He and all his followers were turned to stone.

So Perseus was able to claim Andromeda as his bride after all, and they both had a great desire after a while to go to Argos and visit Perseus' old grandfather, the king of that country who had been so afraid of a baby that he had sent his grandson drifting across the sea in a chest.

"I want to show him that he has nothing to fear from me," Perseus said.

It happened that they found the old king in a sad plight. He had been driven from the throne and was a prisoner of state. But Perseus slew the usurper and restored his grandfather to his rightful place.

In time, Perseus took the throne and his reign in Argos was so wise and kind that the gods at last made a place for him and beautiful Andromeda among the stars. You may see them on any clear night in the constellation of Cassiopeia.

How Mars Lost a Battle

Terminus was the god of boundaries, and a kind of picnic was being held in his honor one day in the long-ago myth time on the edge of a little Roman town.

No one had ever really seen Terminus but every farmer who owned a few acres of land, and the men who governed the cities were quite sure as to how he looked. It was likely that he wore such garb as did Pan, they had decided, and carried instruments for measuring similar to those that a surveyor uses today. His chariot was loaded with large stones and finely chiselled posts for marking the limits of a man's farm, or that of a town. There were no fences in those days, but the gods had appointed Terminus to protect land holders and to safeguard citizens by keeping all boundaries sacred from invasion by an enemy.

No wonder the Terminalia, as they called this holiday, was a joyous time. All through the neighboring vineyards and fields and on the edge of the village stones had been placed to mark the boundaries, and there were stone pillars, also, having carved heads to make them beautiful. Everyone who came to the picnic brought an offering for the god Terminus, a wreath of bright roses, a garland of green laurel, or a basket of grapes and pomegranates which they placed on one of these boundary stones or posts. The law of the gods that prevented invasion was the greatest blessing these people had, for it made them free to till the earth and build homes and keep their hearth fires burning.

Suddenly the merrymaking was interrupted. The children who had been gathering wild flowers ran, crying, to their

fathers and mothers, for the sky was darkened in an instant as if a hurricane was approaching. The young men who had been playing games and the maidens who had been dancing huddled together in frightened groups, for they saw between rifts in the clouds the tracks of dark chariot wheels making their swift way down to earth from the sky. And the older folk, who knew the meaning of the rumblings and dull roar and occasional darts of fire that parted the clouds, shuddered.

"See who stands in our midst in his black cloak, scattering hoar frost that blights the fields and freezes us!" they exclaimed. "It is Dread, the courier of Mars, the god of war, who is approaching in his chariot."

There came dreadful sounds soon that almost drowned the voices of the people, the crashing of swords and shields, and the cries of women and little children as a chariot plunged through their midst, its wheels dripping with blood. It was driven by two other attendants of war, Alarm and Terror, the face of one as dark as a thunder cloud, and the other with a countenance as pale as death.

"What shall we do; we are unarmed and will perish?" one man cried. And another answered him, "Look to yourself and your own safety. Why did you leave your sword at home, and what care is it of mine that you have no means of protecting yourself?"

Strange words for a noble people to speak to one another in a time of such need, were they not?

But it was not the heart or the soul speech of these Romans. The two other attendants of war, Fear and Discord in tarnished armor, had appeared in their midst and had put these thoughts into the minds of the men.

"Mars comes!" they said then, and the air grew dense and suffocating with smoke, only pierced at intervals by fiery arrows. Thunderbolts forged by the black, one-eyed Cyclopes in their workshops under the volcanoes fell all about, tearing up the earth and bursting in thousands of burning pieces.

Through this slaughter and carnage rode the mailed Mars, one of the gods of war.

His steeds were hot and bleeding, and his own eyes shone like fire in his dark, cruel face, for Mars had no pity and took pleasure in war for the sake of itself. It was never the purpose but always the battle that gave him pleasure. With his attendants he sat on a throne that was stained with blood, and the worship that delighted his ears like music was the crash of strife and the cries of those who were sorely wounded.

Mars' palace on Mount Olympus was a most terrible place. Fancy a grim old stronghold built for strength only, without a chink or a crack for letting in Apollo's cheerful sunlight, and never visited by the happy Muses or by Orpheus with his sweet toned lute, or by jolly old Momus, the god of laughter. The palace was guarded, night and day, by a huge hound and a vulture, both of them the constant visitants of battle fields. Mars sat on his throne, waited upon by a company of sad prisoners of war, and holding forever the insignia of his office, a spear and a flaming torch. Wy had he left his abode and descended upon the peaceful merrymaking of the Terminalia?

Mars was a very ruthless kind of god. In fact he was so cruel and thoughtless that the family of the gods was rather sorry that Jupiter had appointed him to so important a position, and they decided at last to have two war-gods. But who the other one was and what happened when this second chariot of war crashed down through the clouds is another story that you shall hear presently. The reason for Mars riding out with those frightful friends of his, Dread, Alarm, Fear, and Discord, was that he had not the slightest respect for Terminus, the god of boundaries. He had decided to knock down his stones and shatter his pillars.

Everyone, from the days of the myths down to the present time, has believed in a fair fight. It is about the greatest adventure a man can have, that of using all his strength and giving

up his life perhaps in a battle to right a wrong or protect a defenseless people. But fancy this old fight of Mars when he rode down in the chariot that the gods had given him upon a people who were without arms and with the purpose of violating their boundaries.

With a rumble like that of all the thunder storms in the world rolled into one and a crashing like the sound of a thousand spears, Mars touched the earth and rode across Terminus' carefully laid out boundary lines and destroyed them. The wheels of his chariot ground the stones Terminus had so honestly placed to powder, and the beautifully carved pillars were shattered, and the pieces buried in the dust. The shouts of Mars and his followers drowned all the peaceful melody of earth, the singing of birds, the laughter of the children, and the pleasant sounds of spinning and mowing and grinding.

It was indeed a most dreadful invasion and for a while it seemed as if it was going to end in nothing but destruction of the people and the industry on the earth which the gods loved and had helped. But in an instant something happened.

There was a roar as if wild beasts of the forests for miles around had been captured, and the earth trembled as it did when the giants were thrown out of the home of the gods, for Mars had fallen and was crying about it. He had thought himself invulnerable, but whether an arrow from some unseen hero had hit him or whether his steeds had stumbled over one of Terminus' boundary posts, the invincible Mars lay prostrate on the field he had himself invaded, and before he could pick himself up, something else happened.

It was really rather amusing, for Mars was not hurt. He was only taught a much needed lesson.

Just beyond the lines of Terminus which Mars had violated there lived two giant planters, Otus and Ephialtes, whose father had been a planter also and his fther before him. They had been much too busy to attend the Terminalia picnic. In fact they almost never took a holiday, but toiled from

sunrise to sunset on their farm which supplied the nearby market with fruits and bread stuffs. Otus and Ephialtes were very much sur-prised to hear the thundering crash that Mars made when he tumbled down; and they dropped their tools and ran to see what was the matter.

It is said that the fallen Mars covered seven acres of ground, but the two giants started at once picking him up and he began to shrink then like a rubber balloon when the air leaks out of it.

"What shall we do with this troublemaker?" Otus asked his brother.

"We must put him where he will not interfere with our work or the other work of the earth for a while at least," Ephialtes said as they tugged Mars, still roaring, home.

"That's a good idea," Otus agreed. "We will shut him up."

And so they crammed the troublesome Mars into a great bronze vase and took turns sitting on the cover so that he was not able, by any chance, to get out for thirteen months. That gave every-one an opportunity to plant and gather another harvest, and to place Terminus' boundary stones again.

These giant planters would have liked to keep this god of war bottled up in the vase for all the rest of time, but he was one of the family of the Olympians and so this was not possible. In time he was allowed to drive home and both the Greek and the Roman people tried to make the best of him, not as a protecting deity, but as the god of strength and brawn.

The Greeks named a hill for him near Athens, and here was held a court of justice for the right decision of cases involving life and death. That put Mars to work in a very different way. And the Romans gave him a great field for military manoeuvres and martial games. We would call it a training camp today. There, in Mars Field, chariot races were held twice a year and there were competitions in riding, in discus and spear throwing, and in shooting arrows at a mark. Once

in five years the able-bodied young men of Rome came to Mars Field to enlist for the army, and no Roman general started out to war without first swinging a sacred shield and spear which hung there and saying, "Watch over me, O Mars." For Mars could put muscle into a man's arm, and the heroes themselves were learning to choose the good fight.

Cadmus, the Alphabet King

There are many ways of building a city, and this is how Cadmus, in the days of the myths, built Thebes, the beautiful.

Cadmus was but a youth when he began his wanderings which took him from shore to shore of the earth, for he was descended from Neptune, the god of the sea, and had been born with the spirit of the restless tides in his heart. But Cadmus had a longing to search out and make for himself a home on land where he could gather the heroes about him and make temples and a market place and set up fair statues.

So he consulted the oracle of Apollo to know what country he should settle in, and a voice issued from that strange, deep cleft in the rock at Delphi saying that he would find a cow in a field, and should pursue her wherever she wandered. Where she stopped Cadmus also should stop and build a city which he was to call Thebes.

As soon as Cadmus left the cave of the oracle, he was surprised to see a white cow wearing a garland of flowers about her neck and cropping in the grass nearby. She raised her head when Cadmus appeared, and walked slowly before him. So he followed her, and she went on until she came to a wide plain in the fertile land of Egypt. Here she stood still and lifted her broad forehead to the sky, filling the air with her lowings.

Cadmus stooped down and lifted a handful of the foreign soil to his lips, kissing it, and looking with delight at the beauties of the blue hills which surrounded this spot to which Apollo had guided him. He felt that he ought to offer his thanks to Jupiter, and so he went to a nearby fountain to draw

some pure water to bathe his hands before he lifted them up to the sky.

The fountain spouted, as clear as crystal, from a cave covered with a thick growth of bushes and situated in an ancient grove that had never been profaned by an axe. Cadmus pushed his way into it, and when he was inside the cave it seemed as if he had left the world behind, so dark was it, with the shadows of the boughs and thick leaves.

Cadmus dipped a vase which his servants had brought him in the waters of the fountain, and was about to raise it, brimming full, when it sud-denly dropped from his hands, the blood left his cheeks, and his limbs trembled. A venomous serpent whose eyes shone like fire and who showed triple fangs and triple teeth raised its head from the waters with a terrible hiss. Its crested head and scales glittered like burnished bronze; it twisted its body in a huge coil and then raised itself, ready to strike, to a height that over-topped the trees of the grove. And while Cadmus' servants stood still, unable to move for their fright, the serpent killed them all, some with its poisonous fangs, some with its foaming breath, and others in its choking folds.

There was only Cadmus left, and at last he crept out of the cave, screening his body behind the bushes, and made ready to take his stand against the serpent. He covered himself from head to foot with a lion's skin. In one hand he carried a javelin and in the other a lance, but in his heart Cadmus carried courage which was a stronger weapon than either of these. Then he faced the serpent, standing in the midst of his fallen men and looking into its bloody jaws as he lifted a huge stone and threw it straight. It struck the serpent's scales and penetrated to its heart. The creature's neck swelled with rage, the panting breath that issued from its nostrils poisoned the air. Then it twisted itself in a circle and fell to the ground where it lay like the shattered trunk of a tree. Cadmus, watching for his chance, went boldly up to the monster and thrust

his spear into its head, fastening it to the tree beneath with it had fallen. The serpent's weight bent and twisted the tree as it struggled to free itself, but at last Cadmus saw it give up the fight and hang there, quiet in death.

Then a marvellous thing happened. As Cadmus stood, looking at his fallen foe, a voice came to him which he could hear distinctly, although he was not able to know from whence it came, and it said, "It is creed, O Cadmus, that you shall take out the teeth of this dragon and plant them in the plain upon which you are to found the city of Thebes."

So Cadmus obeyed the command. He pulled out the serpent's triple row of sharply pointed teeth. He made a furrow and planted them in it, and scarcely had he covered them with earth than the clods raised themselves. As happened in the days when Jason had traveled all the long way in search of the fleece of gold, the ground where the dragon's teeth had taken root was pierced by the metal points of helmets and spears. After these sprouting signs of war came the heads and breasts of an army of warriors until the entire plain was bright with their shields and the air smoked and resounded with the din of fearful fighting.

Cadmus was only one against the terrible ranks of all these earth-born brothers of his, but he made ready to do his best and encounter this new enemy. As he advanced, however, he heard the unknown voice again, "Meddle not with civil war, Cadmus," it said. But Cadmus' spirit was fired with his high desire to build a city which would be a place of peace and industry, and he knew that civil strife was the destruction of such a city. So he entered the battle, single handed, and smote one of these, his fighting brothers, with a sword, but fell, pierced in his side by an arrow. He was up and advancing again as soon as he staunched the flow of blood, killing four of the warriors. In the meantime the warriors seemed to become mad with the spirit of warfare and killed each other until the whole crowd was pitted against one another. At last

all of the warriors fell, mortally wounded, except five. These five survivors threw aside their weap-ons and cried, as with one voice, "Brothers, let us live in peace."

And they joined with Cadmus in laying the foundations of a great city which they called Thebes.

They measured and laid out roads, making them hard and strong for the wheels of heavy chariots which would bear kings to and from the city. They built houses whose decorations of carvings and precious metals were not to be equalled in all Greece, and they filled them with rare furnishings, and they painted pictures of the contests of the gods on the walls, and shaped golden plates and cups for the tables. They set up a strong citadel at the boundary line of the city to protect it from invasion, and Cadmus built factories for making tools and furniture and household utensils so as to draw traders to the city and increase its prosperity through commerce. And there were seven gates to Thebes, in honor of the seven strings of Apollo's lyre from which he drew the sweet strains that brought harmony to the earth.

When Thebes was finished, it seemed as if it had no rival among the cities of the earth, it was so good to look upon, so full of industry, and peace, and plenty. But Cadmus had yet one gift more to make to Thebes.

For a long time he worked secretly, carving with a sharp pointed tool upon a stone tablet. One day he brought forth the result of his work. Cadmus had invented the alphabet; he had given the power of learning through reading and writing to his people.

That made his city complete, for a people who are through with civil strife, and able to work and be educated can be as great as the gods if they will it so.

They became great and they made Cadmus the king of Thebes for a rule that was long and just and good.

The Picture Minerva Wove

Arachne, the wonderful girl weaver of Greece, took a roll of white wool in her skilled hands and separated it into long white strands. Then she carded it until it was as soft and light as a cloud. She was at work out of doors in a green forest and her loom was set up under an old oak tree with the sunlight shining down between the leaves to brighten the pattern that she set up on it. In and out her shuttle flew without stopping until she had woven at last a fair piece of fabric.

Then Arachne threaded a needle with wool dyed in rainbow colors. She had all the colors of this long arch, that the sunbeams shining through raindrops make, to use in her work.

"What design will the clever Arachne embroider on her tapestry to day?" one of the Nymphs of the forest who had clustered about her to watch her work asked. Then all the Nymphs, looking like a part of the forest in their soft green garments, crowded close as Arachne began to embroider a picture. The grass seemed to grow in it beneath her needle, and the flowers bloomed just as they always bloom in the spring.

"You weave and sew as if the great Minerva herself had taught you her arts," a Nymph said timidly to Arachne.

The girl's face flushed with anger. It was true that the goddess Minerva who presided over the arts that women need to know, spinning, weaving and needlework, had taught Arachne her skill, but the girl was vain and always denied it.

"My skill is my own," she replied. "Let Minerva try to compete with me and if she is able to finish a rarer piece of

work than mine, I am willing to pay any penalty."

It was a thoughtless, daring boast which Arachne had made. As she spoke the leaves of the trees fluttered, for the Nymphs, frightened at a mortal's presumption, were moving away from Arachne. She looked up and in their place saw an old dame standing beside her.

"Challenge your fellow mortals, my child," she said, "but do not try to compete with a goddess. You ought to ask Minerva's forgiveness for your rash words."

Arachne tossed her head in disdain.

"Keep your counsel," she replied, "for your hand-maidens. I know what I say and I mean it. I am not afraid of the goddess. I repeat it; let Minerva try her skill with mine if she dare venture."

"She comes!" said the old dame, dropping her disguise and appearing before Arachne in the shining silver mail of the goddess Minerva.

Arachne grew pale with fear at first, but her presumption overcame her fear. Her heart was full of her foolish conceit and she set a new piece of work on her loom as Minerva produced a second loom, and the contest began. They attached the web to the beam and began tossing their slender shuttles in and out of the threads. They pushed the woof up into place with their fine reeds until the fabric was compact. Then the needlework was begun.

Arachne, though, had decided to work something that was forbidden by the gods. She was going to use her skill of hand and all her art for evil instead of good.

She began embroidering a picture that would be displeasing to the gods, and she was able to make it seem as if it were alive, because of the figures and scenes she could outline with her needle and fill in with her colored wools. The picture Arachne embroidered was that of the fair Princess Europa tending her father's herds of cattle beside the sea. One of the bulls seemed so tame that Europa mounted his back, and he

plunged into the sea with her and carried her far away from her native shores to Greece. Arachne pictured this bull as the great god Jupiter.

Minerva's embroidery was of a very different pattern from this. She was the goddess of wisdom and her gift from Mount Olympus to the earth had been the beautiful olive tree that gave mortals shade, and fruit, and oil, and wood for their building. Minerva stitched the pattern of a green olive tree on the tapestry she was embroidering.

Among the leaves of the olive tree Minerva embroidered a butterfly. It seemed to live and flutter in and out among the olives. One could almost touch the velvet nap that lay on its wings and the silk down which covered its back; there were its broad, outstretched horns, its gleaming eyes, its glorious colors. Minerva's workmanship was more wonderful than Arachne could ever hope to learn. As they finished she knew that she was outdone.

Minerva looked at Arachne's tapestry, woven of pride and a desire for vain conquest. It could not be allowed to stand beside hers that showed the gift of life to man in the olives and such beauty as that of the butterfly. The goddess struck Arachne's tapestry with her shuttle and tore it in pieces.

Arachne was suddenly filled with an understanding of how she had wasted her skill, and she longed to get away from all sight and sound of her weaving. A vine trailed down to the ground from a near by tree. Arachne twisted it about her body and tried to pull herself up by it to the tree, but Minerva would not allow this. She touched Arachne's form with the juices of aconite and at once her hair came off, and her nose and her ears as well. Her body shrank and shrivelled and her head grew smaller. Her fingers fastened themselves to her side and served for legs. She hung from the vine which changed to a long gray thread.

Arachne, the skilful weaver of Greece, was changed to Arachne, the spider of the forest. Through all the centuries

since then she has been spinning her fragile threads and weaving her frail webs that a breath of wind, even, can destroy.

The Horn of Plenty

Dejanira was one of the most beautiful of princesses who lived in the long ago days of the Greek gods and goddesses. It seemed as if all the charm of the world in this, its myth time, was hers. Her hair was bright with the yellow of the first spring sunshine, and her eyes were as blue as the skies of spring. Summer had touched Dejanira's cheeks with the pink of rose petals, and the colors of the autumn fruits shone in her jewels, crimson and purple and gold. Her robes were as white and soft as the snows of winter, and all the music of soft winds and bird songs and rippling brooks was in this princess' voice.

Because of her beauty and her goodness, which even surpassed it, princes came from all over the world to ask Dejanira's father, Aeneus, if she might go home to their kingdoms to be their queen. But to all these Aeneus replied that to none but the strongest would he give the princess.

So there were many tests of these strangers' skill and strength in games and wrestling, but one by one they failed. At last there were only two left, Hercules who was strong enough to hold the sky on his broad shoulders, and Achelous, the river-god, who twisted and twined through the fields making them fertile with the brooks and the streams. Each thought himself the greater of the two, and it lay between them which by his prowess should gain the princess to be his wife.

Hercules was massive of limb and of powerul strength. Beneath his shaggy eyebrows, his eyes gleamed like balls of fire. His garment was of lions' skins and his staff was a young tree. But the clever Achelous was able to slip between the huge

fingers of Hercules. He was as slender and graceful as a willow tree and his garment was of the green of foliage. He wore a crown of water lilies on his fair hair, and carried a staff made of twined reeds. When Achelous spoke, his voice was like the rippling of a stream.

"The Princess Dejanira shall be mine!" said Achelous. "I will make her the queen of the river lands. The music of the waters shall be always in her ears, and the plenty that follows wherever I go shall make her rich."

"No!" shouted Hercules. "I am the strength of the earth. Dejanira is mine. You shall not have her."

Then the river-god grew very angry. His green robe changed its color to that of the black of the sea in a storm, and his voice was as loud as that of a mountain cataract. Achelous could be almost as powerful as Hercules when he was angered.

"How do you dare claim this royal maiden?" he roared, "you, who have mortal blood in your veins! I am a god and the king of the waters. Wherever I take my way over the earth grains and fruits ripen and flowers bud and bloom. The Princess Dejanira is mine by right."

Hercules frowned as he advanced toward the river-god. "Your strength is only in words," he said scornfully. "My strength is in my arm. If you would win Dejanira, it must be by hand-to-hand combat." So the river-god threw off his garments and Hercules his lion's skin, and the two fought for the hand of the princess.

It was a brave and valorous battle. Neither yielded; both stood their ground. Achelous slipped in and out of Hercules' mighty grasp a dozen times, but at last the hero's powerful strength was too much for this god who had to depend upon adroitness only. Hercules gripped the river-god fast by his neck and held him, panting for breath.

Then Achelous resorted to the trickery that he knew. He suddenly changed his form through the magic arts he could

practise to that of a long, slimy serpent. He twisted out of Hercules' grasp and darted a forked tongue out at him, showing his fangs. Hercules was not yet undone. He only laughed scornfully at the serpent and grasped the creature by the back of its neck, ready to strangle it.

Achelous struggled in vain to escape and at last resorted once more to sorcery. In a second the serpent had changed its form to that of a ferocious, roaring bull. It charged upon Hercules with lowered horns. But the hero was still unvanquished. He seized hold of the bull's horns, bent its head, gripped its brawny neck and threw it, burying its horns in the ground. Then he broke off one of the horns with his iron strong hand and held it up in the air shouting, "Victory! Dejanira is mine!"

Achelous returned to his own shape and, crying with pain, ran from the castle grounds where the combat had taken place and did not stop until he had plunged into a cooling stream. It had been right that Hercules should triumph, for his was the strength of arm, not of trickery.

The Princess Dejanira came to him and with her the goddess of plenty, Ceres, to give the conqueror his reward.

Ceres took the great horn which Hercules had torn from Achelous' head and heaped it full to overflowing with the treasures of the year's harvest. Ripe grain, purple grapes, rosy apples, plums, nuts, pomegranates, olives and figs filled the horn and spilled over the edge. The wood-nymphs and the water-nymphs came and twined the horn with vines and crimson leaves and the last bright flowers of the year. Then they carried this first horn of plenty high above their heads and gave it to Hercules and the beautiful Dejanira as a wedding present. It was the richest gift the gods could make, that of the year's harvest.

And ever since that long-ago story time of the Greeks, the horn of plenty has stood for the year's blessing of us.

The Wonder the Frogs Missed

Latona had very wonderful twin babies and the queen of the gods, Juno, was jealous of her on account of these little ones. Perhaps Juno had the power to look ahead through the years to the time when Latona's children should be grown up and take their places with the family of the gods on Mount Olympus.

Who were these twins? Oh, that is the end of the story.

So Juno, who could work almost any good or evil which she desired, decreed that this mother should never have any fixed home in which to bring up her babies. If Latona found a shelter and a cradle for the twins in the cottage of some hospitable farmer, a drought would descend at once upon his fields and dry up the harvest, or a hailstorm would destroy his fruit crop so that there would be no food for the family. If Latona stopped with the vine dressers, laying her babies in the cool shade of an arbor while she helped to pick the grapes, a gale might arise and sweep down upon the vineyard and all would have to flee for their lives.

She was obliged to wander up and down the land with her little ones, wrapping her cloak about them to shield them from the weather, and she grew very weary and despaired of ever raising her little boy and girl to be the fine man and woman she longed to have them.

One day in the heat of the summer Latona came to the country of Lycia in Greece and it really seemed as if she could not walk a single step farther. The babies were heavy and she had found no water for refreshing herself for a long time. By chance, though, she saw a pool of clear water just beyond in

the hollow of a valley. Some of the country people of Lycia were there on the edge of the water gathering reeds and fine willows with which they were weaving baskets for holding fruits. Latona summoned all her strength and dragged herself to the pool, kneeling down on the bank to drink and dip up water for cooling the babies' heads.

"Stop!" the rustic people commanded her. "You have no right to touch our waters!"

"I only wish to drink, kind friends," Latona explained to them. "I thought that water was free to all, and my mouth is so dry that I can hardly speak. A drink of water would be nectar to me. The gods give us as common property the sunshine, the air, and the streams and I would only share your pool to revive me, not to bathe in it. See how my babies, too, stretch out their arms to you in pleading!"

It was quite true; Latona's little ones were holding out their arms in supplication, but the rustics turned their heads away. They did more than this. They waded into the pool and stirred up the water with their feet so as to make it muddy and unfit to drink. As they did this they laughed at Latona's discomfiture and jeered at her sorry plight.

She was a long suffering mother, but she felt as if this unkindness was more than she could bear. She lifted her hands toward the habitation of the gods and called to them for help.

"May these rustics who refuse to succor two children of your family be punished!" Latona begged. "May they never be able to leave this pool whose clear waters they have defiled!"

The company of the gods, and perhaps Juno also, heard Latona's entreaty and one of the strangest things of all mythology happened.

The rustics tried to leave the pool and return to their basket-making, but they discovered that their feet had suddenly grown flat and shapeless and were stuck fast in the mud. They called for help, but their voices were harsh, their throats bloated, and their mouths had stretched so that they were

unable to form words. Their necks had disappeared and their heads, with great bulging eyes, were joined to their backs. Their flesh was turned to thick green skin and they could not stand erect.

It was as Latona had asked. These boorish, unseeing country clowns would never leave the slimy water into which they had stepped, for the gods had changed them into the first frogs.

"This is indeed a terrible punishment for so slight an offence as ridiculing a stranger," the people of Lycia said to each other as they visited the pools and rivers during the seasons that followed and listened to the continual, hoarse croaking of the frogs. The river god, Peneus, knew them also and so did the lovely nymph, Daphne, his daughter, who was never happier than when she was flying on her fairy like feet, her soft green garments fluttering about her, along the edge of some stream.

Daphne was more like a spirit of the woods than a girl. She would rather live within the shadow of leaves than under a palace roof, and she liked better to follow the deer and gather wild flowers than to have any intercourse with the boys and girls of the villages. But she was unmatched by the most beautiful daughter of all Greece, her long hair flung loose like a veil over her shoulders, her eyes as soft and shining as stars, and her body as graceful and well moulded as some rare vase.

At that time a strange youth was seen to haunt the forests and banks of the river god. He was as fair and well shaped as Daphne, and there was also something unusual about him. Whenever he was seen, there seemed to be more light along the paths where he walked. He made the daytime brighter and the gold rays of the sunshine more gloriously. When this youth stopped for a while with a shepherd, no wolves attacked the flock, and he kept herds safe from the mountain lions. He had made a lyre for himself, a musical instrument of many tuneful strings that had not been heard in Greece before. He

was touching the strings into a song about the pastures and the woods in the spring one day when he suddenly saw the nymph, Daphne.

He had seen her before moving like a green bough blown by the wind along the shores of many waters. He thought that he had never seen so beautiful a creature or one so much to be desired, but whenever Daphne caught a glimpse of this strange, strong youth, she was frightened and was at once off and away. Now, though, he was determined to pursue Daphne and catch her. He dropped his lyre and ran after her, but she eluded him, running more swiftly than the wind.

"Stay, daughter of Peneus," he called. "Do not fly from me as a dove flies from a hawk. I am no rude peasant, but one of the gods and I know all things, present or future. It is for love that I pursue you, and I am miserable in the fear that you may fall and hurt yourself on these stones and I shall have been the cause of your hurt. Pray run slower and I will follow more slowly!"

But Daphne was deaf to the youth's entreating words. On she sped, the wind blowing her green garments, and her hair streaming loosely behind her. It was, at last, like the fleet running hound pursuing the hare; the youth was swifter and gained on her. His panting breath touched her neck. In her terror she did not stop to understand that he pursued her only because he loved her so much and that he would not do her any harm.

At last she came to the edge of a stream.

On one side of Daphne were the croaking frogs and the water reeds and the deeper waters beyond. On the other side was her pursuer. Daphne called to her father, the river god, "Help me, Peneus! Open the earth to take me into it out of sight and sound!"

But the god of light and music knew what was better far for Daphne than this. He touched her fair form and it stiffened and her feet stood firmly upon the bank of the stream.

Her body was suddenly enclosed in tender bark and her hair became leaves. Her arms were long, drooping branches and her face changed to the form of a tree top. There had never been a tree like the one into which Daphne was transformed, the green laurel tree.

The young god looked at her and saw how fair a work of his hands was this changing of a nymph. The tree would never fade, but would stretch its green top up toward the sky to feel the light that he would pour down on it. When the wind touched the laurel's leaves they would sing as his lyre sang.

"Come and see what beauty I have given to the nymph, Daphne, whom I loved," he called, and out of the forest came a brave young huntress, a deer walking quite unafraid at her side. It was Diana, his sister, and she hung her quiver of arrows on the laurel tree and led the deer to a shelter underneath its branches.

"This shall be my tree," he said putting his hands on the laurel. "I will wear it for my crown, and when the great Roman conquerors lead their troops to the Capitol in triumphal pomp it shall be woven into wreaths for their brows. As eternal youth is mine, the laurel shall always be green and its leaves shall never wither."

The sun began to sink behind the hills and the youth saw the light fade in terror. He could give the laurel the brightness of day but he had no power to keep it safe through the darkness of night. Just then a silver ball appeared in the purple sky rising higher and higher and sending down long white beams to brighten the dusk.

"Diana, see, there is a light in the evening sky!" the youth exclaimed, but his sister had disappeared. Diana, the huntress, was now Diana, the moon, the queen of the darkness and shedding her light on the laurel tree that her brother, Apollo, the god of the sun, loved so much.

The frogs along the river bank croaked harshly and could not understand any of these wonders that had come to pass

right beside them. They had missed a wonder when they were rustics, too. There are some people like that. They, too, would see only a ragged, weary stranger with her tired babies, not worth the trouble of helping, when those little ones might be an Apollo and a Diana, the gods of the day and the night.

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 to-day 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 cannot 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." Phateon 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.

When Apollo was Herdsman

Apollo had incurred the anger of his father, Jupiter, and for the very good reason that this god of light had interfered with Jupiter's will.

It was Jupiter's privilege to throw thunderbolts about whenever he wished and to strike down anyone he chose. He kept the Cyclopes busy night and day forging his bolts down under the mountains so that he might have a never-failing supply. One day a thunderbolt directed by Jove hit Aesculapius, a man of the Greeks who could heal almost any sickness among mortals by means of his herbs. Apollo looked upon this physician as an adopted son, because his art of healing brought so much joy and light to men. He resented the injury done him by Jupiter's hand and he did what even mortals do when they are angry; Apollo vented his wrath on whoever was handiest. He aimed his arrows at those innocent workmen, the Cyclopes, and wounded several.

Jupiter could not have his authority put aside in this way and he knew that he must punish Apollo. So he commanded him to descend to the earth and offer his services as herdsman to Admetus, the king of Thessaly.

It was very humble work for a god to wear a shep-herd's dark cloak and pasture his flocks in the meadows outside of Thessaly, particularly a god who was used to living in the sumptuous palace of the sun. Apollo's slender hands were little suited to the work of ploughing, sowing and reaping, but he took excellent care of his ewes and lambs and grew to enjoy his task. In his leisure time he found an empty tortoise-shell and stretched some cords tightly across it. Then he ran his

slender finger tips across the cords and drew from them most beautiful music. That was the first lute, and Apollo played on it every day. King Admetus heard his music and came out to listen to the tunes his herdsman played, sitting beside Apollo on a mossy bank, but he looked very sorrowful. The sweet strains seemed to have no power to cheer him, or even rouse him from his sadness.

"Why do you mourn, O King?" Apollo asked Admetus at last.

"I long for the hand of the fair Alcestis, the princess of a neighboring kingdom, that I may make her my queen," King Admetus explained, "but she has expressed a strange desire. She demands that her suitor appear before her in a chariot drawn by lions and bears in which she will ride home with him. In no other way will Alcestis come to my court and it is impossible for me to harness wild beasts to any one of my chariots."

Apollo could not help but be amused at the foolish whim of this wayward princess, but he had a desire to bring happiness wherever he went so he decided to humor her. He went with his lute to the edge of the forest that lay just next to his pasture and he played a tune upon it so sweet as to tame any wild beasts. Then out of the forest came two lions and two bears, as quietly as if they had been sheep. The king fastened them to a gilded chariot and drove off for Alcestis with great rejoicing. And Apollo had the pleasure of seeing the two return and Alcestis crowned as the queen of Thessaly.

It seemed as if Admetus were destined to enjoy a long and prosperous reign, but shortly after he brought his queen home he fell ill of a very deadly plague. Aesculapius, the physician, was no longer able to come to the king's aid and it seemed as if there was no hope for him. But his celestial herdsman, Apollo, again befriended him. Apollo was not able to entirely remove the plague but he decreed that the king should live if someone, who cared enough for him, would die in his stead.

Admetus was full of joy at this hope. He remembered the vows of faith and attachment that bound all his courtiers to him and he expected that a score would at once offer themselves, willing to sacrifice their lives for their king. But not one was to be found. The bravest warrior, who would willingly have given his life for his king on the battlefield, had not the courage to die for him on a sick-bed. Old servants, who had known the king's bounty and that of his father from the days of their childhood, were not willing to give up the rest of their few days for their sovereign. Each subject wished someone else to make the sacrifice.

"Why do not the parents of Admetus give their lives for their son?" was asked, but these aged people felt that they could not bear to be parted from him for even a short time, and looked to others.

What was to be done about it. It was an irrevocable decree on the part of Apollo that he had wrested only by means of much persuasion from the Fates. There was no remedy for Admetus except this sacrifice.

Then a very strange and wonderful thing happened. Queen Alcestis, the fair princess who had wanted to ride behind lions and bears when she was a girl in her own kingdom, had grown very wise and gracious since she had attained to the throne of Thessaly. It had never for an instant entered the minds of anyone that she could be offered to the gods in the place of the king. But Queen Alcestis offered herself to save Admetus, and as she sickened the king revived and was restored to his old health and vigor.

Apollo was, of all the mourners of Thessaly, the saddest to see Alcestis so ill. She had often found her way to the pastures where he led his flock and had sat on a bank twining wreaths of wild flowers that she liked better to wear than a crown, while he entertained her with the music of his lute. And, for once, Apollo did not know what to do, banished as

he was from the council of the gods for a while, and unable to summon the physician, Aesculapius, to his aid.

He knew that only great strength could bring Alcestis back from the stupor in which she now lay, neither moving or speaking, and with her rosy cheeks pale and her eyes closed. He knew, too, that of all the heroes Hercules was the strongest. Hercules had performed feats that no one had believed possible. Would he attempt to keep Alcestis safe from death, Apollo wondered, particularly when he was entreated by a lowly herdsman?

Hercules assented, however. He took his station at the gates of the palace and wrestled with Death, throwing him, just as he was about to enter and claim Alcestis. She lost her weakness, opened her eyes, the color came again to her cheeks and she was restored to Admetus by this last labor of Hercules.

So the matter which had bade fair to be so disastrous for a good many people turned out very well after all. Apollo returned to Mount Olympus when the period of his exile on the earth was up and he delighted the Muses much with the sweet tones of his lyre. He even pleaded with his father, Jupiter, to take pity on Aesculapius and the god at last made a place for the physician on the road of stars that leads across the sky.

How Jupiter Granted a Wish

Each of the villagers in a town of Phrygia heard a knock at the door of his cottage one summer day in the long-ago time of the myths. Each, on opening it, saw two strangers, weary travellers, who sought food and a shelter for the night.

It was a part of the temple teachings that a man should succor a stranger, no matter how humble, but these Phrygians were a pleasure-loving, careless people, neglectful of hospitality and of their temple, even, which had fallen into decay.

So it happened that the same retort met the strangers at whatever door they stopped.

"Be off! We have only sufficient food for ourselves and no room for any but members of our own family."

There was not a single door but was shut in the faces of these travellers.

The afternoon was passing and it would soon be dusk. The strangers, tired and half famished, climbed a hill on the edge of the village and came at last upon a little cottage set there among the trees. It was a very poor and humble cottage, thatched with straw, and barely large enough for the two old peasants, Philemon and his wife, Baucis, who lived there. But it opened at once when the strangers knocked to let in the two strangers.

"We have come to-day from a far country," the one who seemed to be the older of the two explained.

"And we have not touched food since yesterday," added the younger one who might have been his son.

"Then you are welcome to whatever we have to offer you," said Philemon. "We are as poor as the birds that nest in

the straw of our eaves, but my old wife, Baucis, can prepare a meal from very little which may perhaps serve you if you are hungry. Come in, and share with us whatever we have."

The two guests crossed the bumble threshold, bowing their heads in order to pass beneath the low lintel, and Baucis offered them a seat and begged them to try and feel at home.

The day had grown chilly and the old woman raked out the coals from the ashes, covered them with leaves and dry bark, and blew the fire into flame with her scanty breath. Then she brought some split sticks and dry branches from a corner where she had kept them like a treasure and put them under the kettle that hung over the fire. Afterward, she spread a white cloth on the table.

As Bauds made these preparations, Philemon went out to their small garden and gathered the last of the pot-herbs. Baucis put these to boil in the kettle and Philemon cut a piece from their last flitch of bacon and put it in to flavor the herbs. A bowl carved from beech wood was filled with warm water that the strangers might be refreshed by bathing their faces, and then Baucis tremblingly made the preparations for serving the meal.

The guests were to sit on the only bench which the cottage afforded and Baucis laid a cushion stuffed with seaweed on it and over the cushion she spread a piece of embroidered cloth, ancient and coarse, but one that she used only on great occasions. One of the legs of the table was shorter than the other, but Philemon placed a flat stone under it to make it level, and Baucis rubbed sweet smelling herbs over the entire top of the table. Then she placed the food before the strangers, the steaming, savory herbs, olives from the wild trees of Minerva, some sweet berries preserved in vinegar, cheese, radishes, and eggs cooked lightly in the ashes. It was served in earthen dishes and beside the guests stood an earthenware pitcher and two wooden cups.

There could hardly have been a more appetizing supper, and the kindly cheer of the two old peasants made it seem even more delectable. The guests ate hungrily and when they had emptied the dishes Baucis brought a bowl of rosy apples and a comb of wild honey for dessert. She noticed that the two seemed to be enjoying their milk hugely and it made her anxious, for the pitcher had not been more than half full. They filled their cups again and again and drained them.

"They will finish the milk and ask for more," Baucis thought, "and I have not another drop."

Then a great fear and awe possessed the old woman. She peered over the shoulder of the older of the strangers into the pitcher and saw that it was brimming full! He poured from it for his companion and it was again full to overflowing as he set it down. Here was a miracle, Baucis knew. Suddenly the strangers rose and their disguise of age and travel stained garments fell from them. They were Jupiter, the king of the gods, and his winged son, Mercury!

Baucis and Philemon were struck with terror as they recognized their heavenly guests, and they fell on their knees at the gods' feet. With their shaking hands clasped they implored the gods to pardon them for their poor entertainment.

They had an old goose which they tended and cherished as the guardian of their cottage, and now they felt that they must kill it as a sacrifice and offering to Jupiter and Mercury. But the goose ran nimbly away from them and took refuge between the gods themselves.

"Do not slay the bird," Jupiter commanded. "Your hospitality has been perfect. But this inhospitable village shall pay the penalty for its lack of reverence. You alone shall remain unpunished. Come and look at the valley below."

Baucis and Philemon left the cottage and hobbled a little way down the hill with the gods. In the last light of the setting sun they saw the destruc-tion which the people below had brought upon themselves. There was nothing left of the

village. All the valley was sunk in a blue lake, the borders of it being wild marsh land indented with pools in which the fen-birds waded and called shrilly.

"There is no house left save ours," Philemon gasped.

Then, as they turned, they saw that their cottage, also, had disappeared. It had not been destroyed, though. It was transformed. Stately marble columns had taken the place of the wooden corner posts. The thatch had grown yellow and was now a golden roof. There were colored mosaic floors and wide silver doors with ornaments and carvings of gold. Their little hut, that had been scarcely large enough for two, had grown to the height and bulk of a temple whose gilded spires reached up toward the sky. Baucis and Philemon were too awed for words, but Jupiter spoke to them.

"What further gift of the gods would you like, good people? Ask whatever you wish and it shall be granted you."

The two old folks consulted for a moment and then Philemon made their request of Jupiter.

"We would like to be the guardians of your temple, great Jupiter. And since we have passed so much of our lives here in harmony and love, we wish that we might always remain here and never be parted for a moment."

As Philemon finished speaking, he heard Jupiter say, "Your wish is granted." And with these words the gods disappeared from earth. There was a long trail of purple light in the sky like Jupiter's robe, and beside it lay two wing-shaped clouds which marked the road Mercury had taken, but that was all.

Baucis and Philemon went into the temple and were its keepers as long as they were able. One day in the spring when the old couple had become very ancient indeed they stood on the temple steps side by side, looking at the new green the earth was putting forth. In that moment another miracle happened to them.

Each grew straight instead of bent with age, and their

garments were covered with green leaves. A leafy crown grew upon the head of each and as they tried to speak, a covering of bark prevented them. Two stately trees, the linden and the oak, stood beside the temple door to guard it in the place of the two good old people who, for their reverence, had been thus transformed by the gods.

How Hyacinthus Became a Flower

Kings and athletes, country folk and the musicians, sages and merchants from the towns were all on their way toward the green hill of Parnassus, one of the long-ago days of the myths, where the city of Delphi stood. The kings rode in their gaily adorned chariots which were drawn by the fleetest steeds from the royal stables. The youths were dressed for running, or they carried flat, circular discs of stone for throwing at a mark, javelins and bows and quivers of arrows. The road that led to the white temple of Apollo at Delphi was choked with people on foot, people on horseback, and people riding in farm wagons, all going in the same direction. It was a very great occasion indeed, one that came but once in five years, the day when the Pythian games in honor of Apollo were held at Delphi.

They climed the hill of Parnassus which was a very famous mount, because of all that had happened there. When the gods saw fit to destroy the earth, Parnassus, alone, had raised its head above the waters and sheltered man. There, too, Apollo had transformed his beloved, Daphne, into a laurel tree and ever since then the slopes of the hill had been green and pink with the branches and blossoms of the laurel. Now, Parnassus sheltered one of the most famed cities of Greece, Delphi, and on a wide plain, near a deep cleft in the rock where the oracle was supposed to speak, the games of the Greeks were held in honor of Apollo, who was the god of sports.

The ground about the game field and the tiers of stone seats surrounding it were soon filled with a crowd of onlookers

in their holiday garments of white and purple and gold. Upon a carved marble pillar at the entrance of the field was hung a great wreath of laurel, the prize of the winner, and everyone was talking about who this would be.

"The greatest test of all is the discus throwing," a lad on the edge of the crowd said to another. "The stone that is hurled from a javelin, or a spear thrown by a trained soldier has a chance to go straight to the mark, but who can aim the thin discus with the wind waiting to tum it from its course and carry it wide of the mark?"

The other lad thought for a moment. Then he spoke.

"The youth, Hyacinthus, could," he said.

"Oh, Hyacinthus!" the first lad replied as if the name was a kind of spell to work magic. "Hyacinthus, of course, would win the prize, for is he not the friend of Apollo? It is said that the great god of sports has visited and played games with Hyacinthus ever since the lad was able to swing a javelin. He comes to him in the form of a youth like himself because he loves him so, and they run races and have contests of skill here on Parnassus, and roam the groves together. How great an honor to have a god for one's friend!" the boy said wistfully.

But both boys stepped back then and watched breathlessly as four war chariots, driven abreast, approached. The horses sweated and foamed, the drivers stood up perilously, shouting and gripping the reins as the chariots tipped and crashed along the course. Two chariots locked wheels and the drivers fell beneath the terrified, stamping steeds, but no one heeded them as the other two rolled and swayed past them, and one reached the goal heralded by a shout the crowd sent up as if from one giant throat.

"Now, the discus combat!" the boy who had spoken before said, as a slender youth in a robe of Tyrian dyes stepped proudly into the centre of the field holding the flat, round discus in his hand.

"Hyacinthus, by my word!" the second lad exclaimed,

"but who is that beside him?" he asked, as another youth, dark eyed, straight limbed, and with a countenance that shone like fire appeared, as if he had dropped from the clouds, and took his place beside Hyacinthus.

"It is Apollo himself in the guise of a youth!" the awed whisper ran through the crowd. "He has come to guide the discus that his friend Hyacinthus carries straight to the mark."

That was the wonder that had happened. Those who had far-seeing eyes could discern in the strange youth on the game field the god Apollo, his crown of light showing in bright rays about his head. No one spoke. All faces were turned toward the two as Apollo grasped the discus, raised it far above his head, and with a strange power mingled with skill sent it high and far.

Hyacinthus watched the discus cut through the air as straight as an arrow shot from a bow. He was perfectly sure that it would skim, without turning, as far as the goal at the opposite end of the field and perhaps farther, for he had great faith in this heavenly youth who had been his companion in so many good times. As swiftly as the discus traveled, did Hyacinthus' thoughts wing their memories of Apollo's friendship. He had accompanied Hyacinthus in his tramps through the forest, carried the nets when he went fishing, led his dogs to the chase and even neglected his lyre for their excursions up to the top of Parnassus.

"I will run ahead and bring back the discus," Hyacinthus thought, and excited by the sport and the crowds, he leaped forward to follow the flight of the swift stone.

At that instant the discus, turned from its course by Zephyrous, the wind-god, who also loved Hyacinthus and was jealous of Apollo's affection for him, struck the earth and bounded back, hitting Hyacinthus' forehead.

Apollo, as pale as the fallen Hyacinthus, ran to his side, raised him, and tried with all his art to stop the bleeding of his wound and save his life. But the youth's hurt was beyond the

power of all healing. As a white lily, when one has broken it, hangs its head in the garden and turns toward the earth, so the head of the dying Hyacinthus, too heavy for his neck, lay upon his shoulders.

"I have killed you, my dearest friend," Apollo cried, as the people pushed closer to see the tragedy and then turned their faces away from this grief of a god which was greater than a mortal could feel. "I have robbed you of your youth. Yours was the suffering and mine the crime. I would that I were able to mingle my blood with yours which is spilled here for me." Then Apollo was silent, looking at the ground where Hyacinthus' blood had stained the grass, for a wonder was happening.

The crimson stain on the leaves changed to royal purple, and the stern and foliage and petals of a new flower appeared, so sweetly fragrant that it filled the whole field with its perfume. There had never been so beautiful a blossom as this. Touching its wax-like flowers, Apollo knew that the gods had comforted him in his sorrow. His friend would live always in the flower that had sprung where he fell on Parnassus, our hyacinth, the promise of the spring.

A Little Errand Girl's New Dress

Once upon a time there was a child of the gods named Iris who had many very interesting relatives. On her mother's side was the Pleiades family, daughters of old Atlas who held the earth on his shoulders and nymphs in the train of Diana, the huntress. Diana was to be seen in the silvery moon of the night sky, and the Pleiades surrounded her there, seven shining stars.

Iris had a most distinguished grandfather, Oceanus, the sea god. So she spent part of her time in the sky with the Pleiades and part in the ocean with her grandfather. It was very interesting to be in either place, for she loved the bright lights of the heavens, and the coral palaces of the sea made delightful places to explore.

All of her family loved Iris, and it is surprising that she was not spoiled with the amount of freedom she had, going here and there between earth and sky without any one saying no to her. But Iris had been well brought up, and she began when she was still quite small making herself just as useful as she possibly could.

At that time another child of the gods, Proserpine, had made a great deal of trouble by straying away from home and being kidnapped by Pluto. Her mother Ceres, the goddess of the fields, had to neglect her work for a long time as she searched for Proserpine, and the earth grew dry and barren in her absence. As Iris took her way from the sky to the sea and then back again, she felt sorry for the grain, the fruits and the flowers that were withering, and she did wish that she might help them.

One summer day Iris was paying a visit to Oceanus, her grandfather, and having a most beautiful time riding the crest of the waves on a frolic-some dolphin. The sea was covered with soft, light vapor and when it was time for Iris to go home to the sky in order to be there in time to help light the lamps of the Pleiades, she wrapped herself all about with this fleecy vapor. Still wearing it like a cloak, Iris reached the sky when a most unusual thing happened. It was so cool up there among the clouds that the sea foam turned to raindrops. Iris had to hurry away or she would have been wet through. Leaning over the edge of a cloud bank to see what was happening, she discovered that a shower of rain was falling to cool the earth and comfort it a little in its condition of drought.

Iris could travel with the speed of the wind from one end of the world to the other, and after that she busied herself searching for thirsty plants and trying to help them. She would descend to the ocean, a lake or a river, wherever she might be, and carry vapor that was full of water to the sky from which it dropped to earth to nourish all growing things. The farmers looked upon Iris as their most important help, and at last the news of her good works came to the ears of the gods on Olympus.

The gods had one messenger, Mercury, who wore wings on his heels and also on his cap. He was so swift that he was detailed to carry out the most difficult and delicate errands of the gods such as taking new suits of armor to the warriors of Greece, guiding the heroes, and even rescuing Mars, the god of war, when he once found himself bound by the chains he had designed for others. But one never knew exactly how Mercury would carry out a commission. He liked to linger with Pan in the woods and forests, giving as an excuse the care of young Bacchus, god of the vine, whom he must guard.

So the gods decided that they would have an errand girl who would live on Olympus and leave the habitation of the gods only when it was necessary to go to man as a guide and

adviser.

That was the high trust which was given Iris by the gods. She had to use her own judgment to quite an extent as to when and where she was most needed by the dwellers of the earth, and how she could bet help them. One day she noticed something happening in the kingdom of her grandfather.

A ship glided out of a harbor, the breeze playing among the ropes, and the seamen drew in their oars and hoisted their sails. The night drew on, the sea began to whiten with swelling waves, and the east wind blew a gale. The captain gave orders to strengthen the ship and reef the sail but none of the sailors could hear his voice above the roar of the wind and the sea. The cries of the men, the rattling of the shrouds, and the breaking surf mingled with the thunder. Then the swelling sea seemed to be lifted up to the heavens, to scatter its foam among the clouds, and then sink away to the bottom.

The ship could not stand the storm; it seemed like a wild beast charged upon by the spears of the hunter. There came a flash of lightning, tearing the darkness asunder, and illuminating all with its glare. It shattered the mast and broke the rudder, and the triumphant surge, rising over the ship, looked down on the wreck, then fell and crushed it to fragments. As the ship went down, the captain cried out in longing, "Halcyone!"

Then Iris, who could see beyond and through the darkness, had a vision of the beautiful Queen Halcyone, of Sicily, who mourned her shipwrecked husband, the captain of this ship.

Without a moment's hesitation, Iris set out for the palace of Somnus, the king of sleep. It was a long and dangerous journey. Even Apollo did not dare to approach it at dawn, noon, or evening. It was set in a country where the light glimmered but faintly, and clouds and shadows rose out of the ground. No wild beast, or cattle, or tree moved by the wind, or any sound of voices broke the stillness, but the river Lethe flowed

through it, rippling with a low kind of lullaby.

Iris approached the home of Somnus very timidly. All the way there were fields of poppies and the herbs from which Night distilled sleep to scatter over the darkened earth. There was no gate to the palace to creak as it opened, or any watchman. So this little errand girl of the gods went inside and made her way to the room where there was a throne of black ebony draped with dusky plumes and curtains. On the throne reclined Somnus, scarcely opening his eyes, and with his hair and beard covering him like a mantle.

Iris knelt before him, "Somnus, gentlest of the gods, and soother of careworn hearts," she said, "will you not allow me to despatch a dream to Halcyone about her husband whom she mourns. See these dreams that lie around you, as many as the harvest bears stalks, or the forest leaves, or the seashore grains of sand! Can you not spare one beautiful dream for Halcyone?"

Somnus called his servant, Morpheus, who selected a dream and flew, making no noise with his wings, until he came to the city of Trachine where Halcyone could not sleep, but lay and tossed and wept in terror at the thought of what might have happened to her husband's ship. And at that moment Halcyone fell into a deep and happy dream in which she saw her husband. He stood beside her couch and spoke to her.

"The stormy winds have sunk my ship in the Aegean Sea," he told Halcyone, "let me not be alone. Arise and come with me!"

It was the most enlightening dream that Somnus could have sent. Halcyone left off her lamentations and implored the gods that she be allowed to join her husband, and the pitying gods turned them both into birds. They became the Halcyone gulls of the sea, riding the surf together, guarding their nest that floated upon the sea, and never again separated.

As soon as she felt sure that her errand was safely

accomplished, Iris made haste to leave the domain of Somnus, for she felt its drowsiness creeping over her. She tried not to crush any of the sleep producing herbs as she went, and she was careful not to pick a single poppy. At last she was safely outside the boundaries, and then she could hardly believe what she saw, for a wonder had happened to her.

The gods had built her a long bridge that arched from the earth to the sky and over which she could go home to Olympus. It was made of colored stones, the ruby, the topaz, the emerald, the sapphire, and the amethyst. Row upon row the glistening stones of the arch made a bright path for Iris' feet. She passed along it, the light of the brilliant gems scintillating about her, and when she came to the abode of, the gods, Iris found another surprise. There was a beautiful new dress waiting for her there.

It had the same colors as those of the precious stones that made the bridge, crimson, orange and yellow, green, blue, and violet and so marvellously blended that they seemed to be one pattern and one piece of brightness. There were wings that went with the dress, and when Iris put it on not even Juno had so beautiful a garment.

Iris wore her dress of colors as she took her way along her arched bridge from Olympus to earth and then back again. And her errands were those of help and courage and bright hope.

Have you guessed who she was? Wy, of course you have, for you see her bridge of colors in the sky after a shower when the sun is shining through the clouds. Iris was the child of the gods who gave us the rainbow.

When Pomona Shared Her Apples

Pomona was a dryad, and Venus had given her a wild apple tree to be her home. As Pomona grew up under the shadow of its branches, protecting the buds from winter storms, dressing herself in its pink blossoms in the spring time, and holding up her hands to catch its apples in the fall, she found that her love for this fruit tree was greater than anything else in her life. At last Pomona planted the first orchard and lived in it and tended it.

The dryads were those favored children of the gods who lived in the ancient woods and groves, each in her special tree. Dressed in fluttering green garments, they danced through the woodland ways with steps as light as the wind, sang to the tune of Pan's pipe, or fled, laughing, from the Fauns. They missed Pomona in the woods, and tales came to these forest dwellers of the wonders she was working in the raising of fruits fit for the table of the gods.

She had trees on which golden oranges and yellow lemons hung among deep green leaves. She raised citrons and limes, and even cultivated the wide spreading tamarind tree whose fruit was of such value to Epictetus, the physician of Greece, in cooling the fires of fever. The wood folk left their mossy hiding places to peer over the wall of Pomona's orchard and watch her working so busily there.

They were a strange company. Pan came from Arcadia where he was the god of flocks and shepherds. He had fastened some reeds from the stream together to make his pipes, and on them he could play the merriest music. It sounded like birds and the singing of brooks and summer breezes all in one.

With Pan came his family of Fauns, the deities of the woods and fields. Their bodies were covered with bristling hair, there were short, sprouting horns on their heads, and their feet were shaped like those of a goal Pan was of the same strange guise as the Fauns were, but to distinguish his rank, he wore a garland of pine about his head.

These and Pomona's sisters, the dryads, watched her longingly from the budding time of the year until the harvest. It was a pleasant sight to see Pomona taking care of her apples. She was never without a pruning knife which she carried as proudly as Jupiter did his sceptre. With it she trimmed away the foliage of her fruit trees wherever it had grown too thick, cut the branches that had straggled out of shape, and sometimes deftly split a twig to graft in a new one so that the tree might bear different, better apples.

Pomona even led streams of water close to the roots of the trees so that they need not suffer from drought. She looked, herself, a part of the orchard, for she wore a wreath of bright fruits and her arms were often full of apples almost as huge and golden as the famous apples of Hesperides.

The dryads and the Fauns begged one, at least, of the apples, but Pomona refused them all. She had grown selfish through the seasons in which she had brought her orchard to a state of such bounteous perfection. She would not give away a single apple, and she kept her gate always locked. So the wood creatures were obliged to go home empty handed to their forest places.

In those days Vertumnus was one of the lesser gods who watched over the seasons. The fame of Pomona's fruits came to the ear of Vertumnus and he was suddenly possessed of a great desire to share the orchard and its care with her. He sent messengers in the form of the birds to plead his cause with Pomona, but she was just as cruel to him as she had been to the family of Pan and to her own sisters. She had made up her mind that she would never share her orchard with any one in

the world.

Vertumnus would not give up, though. He had the power to change his form as he willed, and he decided to go to Pomona in disguise to see if he could not win her by appealing to her pity. She was obliged to buy her grain, and one day in October when the apple boughs bent low with their great red and yellow balls a reaper came to the orchard gate with a basket of ears of corn for Pomona.

"I ask no gold for my grain," he said to the goddess, "I want only a basket full of fruit in return for it."

"My fruit is not to be given away or bartered for. It is mine and mine alone until it spoils," Pomona replied, driving the reaper away.

But the following day a farmer stopped at the orchard, an ox goad in his hand as if he had just unyoked a pair of weary oxen from his hay cart, left them resting beside some stream, and had gone on to ask refreshment for himself. Pomona invited him into her orchard, but she did not offer him a single apple. As soon as the sun began to lower she bade him be on his way.

In the days that followed Vertumnus came to Pomona in many guises. He appeared with a pruning hook and a ladder as if he were a vine dresser ready and willing to climb up into her trees and help her gather the harvest. But Pomona scorned his services. Then Vertumnus trudged along as a discharged soldier in need of alms, and again with a fishing rod and a string of fish to exchange for only one apple. Each time that Vertumnus came disguised to Pomona he found her more beautiful and her orchard a place of greater plenty than ever; but the richer her harvest the deeper was her greed. She refused to share even a half of one of her apples.

At last, when the vines were dripping with purple juice of the grape and the boughs of the fruit trees hung so heavily that they touched the ground, a strange woman hobbled down the road and stopped at Pomona's gate. Her hair was

white and she was obliged to lean on a staff. Pomona opened the gate and the crone entered and sat down on a bank, admiring the trees.

"Your orchard does you great credit, my daughter," she said to Pomona.

Then she pointed to a grape vine that twined itself about the trunk and branches of an old oak. The oak was massive and strong, and the vine clung to it in safety and had covered itself with bunches of beautiful purple grapes.

"If that tree stood alone," the old woman explained to Pomona, "with no vine to cling to it, it would have nothing to offer but its useless leaves. And if the vine did not have the tree to cling to, it would have to lie prostrate on the ground."

"You should take a lesson from the vine. Might not your orchard be still more fruitful if you were to open the gate to Vertumnus who has charge of the seasons and can help you as the oak helps the vine? The gods believe in sharing the gifts they give the earth. No one who is selfish can prosper for long."

"Tell me about this Vertumnus, good mother," Pomona asked curiously.

"I know Vertumnus as well as I know myself," the crone replied. "He is not a wandering god, but belongs among these hills and pastures of our fair land. He is young and handsome and has the power to take upon himself any form that he may wish. He likes the same things that you do, gardening, and caring for the ruddy fruits. Venus, who gave you an apple tree to be your first home, hates a hard heart and if you will persist in living alone in your orchard, refusing to share your apples, she is likely to punish you by sending frosts to blight your young fruits and terrible winds to break the boughs."

Pomona clasped her hands in fear. She suddenly understood how true was everything that this old woman said. She had known a spring-time when a storm of wind and hail had shaken off the apple blossoms, and frosts had touched the

fruits one fall before she had been able to pick them.

"I will open my gate to the country people and to strangers," she said, "I will open it also to Vertumnus if he is still willing to share my orchard and my work."

As Pomona spoke, the old woman rose and her gray hair turned to the dark locks of Vertumnus. Her wrinkles faded in the glow of his sunburned cheeks. Her travel stained garments were replaced by Vertumnus' russet gardening smock and her staff to his pruning fork. He seemed to Pomona like the sun bursting through a cloud. She had never really seen him before, having never looked at anyone except with the eyes of selfishness. Vertumnus and Pomona began the harvesting together, and they opened the gate wide to let in those who had need of sharing their plenty.

Then the fauns danced in and made merry to the tunes that Pan played. The dryads found new homes for themselves in the trunks of the trees, and the seasons gave rain and sunshine in greater abundance than ever before as these two pruned, and trimmed, and grafted the trees and vines together.

Achelous, the river god, took his way past the orchard kingdom of Pomona and Vertumnus and brought with him Plenty who was able to fill her horn with gifts of fruit for all, apples, pears, grapes, oranges, plums, and citrons until it overflowed. Ever since the October when Pomona opened her gate and shared her apples, an orchard has been a place of beauty, bounty, and play.

How Psyche Reached Mount Olympus

Once upon a time there was a king of Greece who had three beautiful daughters, but the youngest, who was named Psyche, was the most beautiful of all. The fame of her lovely face and the charm of her whole being were so great that strangers from the neighboring countries came in crowds to enjoy the sight and they paid Psyche the homage of love that was due to Venus herself. Venus' temple was deserted, and as Psyche passed by the people sang her praises, and strewed her way with flowers and wreaths.

Venus had a son, Cupid, who was dearer to her than any other being on Mount Olympus or in the earth. Like every mother, Venus had great ambitions for the future of her son, but she was not always able to follow him, for Cupid had wings and a golden bow and arrows with which he was fond of playing among mortals. What was Venus' wrath to discover at last that Cupid had lost his heart to Psyche, the lovely maiden of earth! It was like a fairy story in which a prince marries a peasant girl and may not bring her home to the palace because of her mean birth. Venus quite refused to recognize Psyche or award her a place in the honored family of the gods.

Cupid and Psyche had a very wonderful earthly palace in which to live. Golden pillars supported the vaulted roof, and the walls of the apartments of state were richly carved and hung with embroidered tapetries of many colors. When Psyche wished food, all she had to do was to seat herself in an alcove when a table immediately appeared without the aid of servants and covered itself with rare fruits and rich cakes and honey. When she longed for music, she had a feast of it played

by invisible lutes, and with a chorus of harmonious voices. But Psyche was not happy in this life of luxury, for she had to be alone so much of the time. Venus could not take Cupid away from her altogether, but she allowed him to be the Psyche only in the hours of darkness. He fled before the dawn. There had been a direful prophecy in Psyche's family of which her sisters had continually reminded her.

"Your youngest daughter is destined for a monster whom neither gods nor men can resist," was the oracle given to the king, and the memory of it began to fill Psyche's heart with fear. Her sisters came to visit her and increased her fear. They asked all manner of questions about Cupid, and Psyche was obliged to confess that she could not exactly describe him because she had never seen him in the light of day. Her jealous sisters began at once to fill Psyche's mind with dark suspicions.

"How do you know," they asked, "that your husband is not a terrible and venomous serpent, who feeds you for a while with all these dainties that he may devour you in the end? Take our advice. Provide yourself with a lamp well filled with oil and tonight, when this villain returns and sleeps, go into his apartment and see whether or not our prophecy is true."

Psyche tried to resist her sisters, but at last their urging and her own curiosity were too much for her. She filled her lamp, and when her husband had fallen into his first sleep, she went silently to his couch and held the light above him.

There lay Cupid, the most beautiful and full of grace of all the gods! His golden ringlets were a crown above his snowy forehead and crimson cheeks, and two wings whose feathers were like the soft white blossoms of the orchard sprang from his shoulders. In her joy at finding no cause for her fears, Psyche leaned over, tipping her lamp, that she might look more closely at Cupid's face. As she bent down, a drop of the burning oil fell on the god's shoulder. He opened his eyes,

startled, and looked up at Psyche. Then, without saying a word, he spread his wide wings and flew out of the window.

Psyche tried to follow him, but she had no wings and fell to the ground. For one brief moment Cupid stayed his flight and turned to see her lying there below him in the dust.

"Foolish Psyche," he said, "why did you repay my love in this way? After having disobeyed my mother's commands and made you my wife, could you not trust me? I will inflict no further punishment upon you than this, that I leave you forever, for love cannot live with suspicion." And with these words Cupid flew out of Psyche's sight.

That was the beginning of the long road of trouble Psyche had to follow. She wandered day and night, without food or rest, in search of Cupid. One day she saw a magnificent temple set upon the brow of a lofty hill and she toiled the long way up to it, saying to herself, "Perhaps my love inhabits here."

When Psyche reached the top of the hill and entered the temple, she saw heaps of corn, some in sheaves and others in loose ears, and there was barley mingled with it. There were sickles and rakes and all the other instruments of the harvest scattered about in great confusion as if the reapers, at the end of the sultry day, had left them in this disorder. In spite of her sorrow, Psyche could not bear to see this disarray and she began trying to set the place in order. She worked so busily that she did not see Ceres, whose temple it was, enter. Turning at last, Psyche saw the goddess of the harvest, wearing her fruit trimmed garments and standing at her side.

"Poor Psyche!" she said pityingly. "But it is possible for you to find a way to the abode of the gods where Cupid has his home. Go and surrender yourself to Venus and try by your own works to win her forgiveness and, perhaps, her favor."

So Psyche obeyed this command of Ceres, although it took a great deal of courage, and she travelled to the temple of Venus in Thebes where the goddess received her in anger.

"The only way by which you can merit the favor of the gods, unfortunate Psyche," she said, "is by your own efforts. I, myself, am going to make a trial of your housewifely skill to see if you are industrious and dilligent."

With these words Venus conducted Psyche to a storehouse connected with her temple where there was an enormous quantity of grain laid up; beans, lentils, barley, wheat and the tiny seeds of the millet which Venus had stored to feed her pigeons.

"Separate all these grains," the goddess said to Psyche, "putting those of the same kind in a pile, and see that you finish before evening." Then she left Psyche who was in consternation at the impossible task spread before her.

Psyche dipped her fingers into the golden heap gathering up a handful to sort the grains, but it took her a long time and the grain lay about her on every side like a yellow river. The grains she held were less than a drop taken from its surface.

"I shall not be able to finish. I shall never see my husband again!" Psyche moaned.

Still she worked on steadily and at last a little ant, a native of the fields, crawled across the floor and took compassion on the toiling Psyche. It was a king in its own domain and was followed by a host of its little red subjects. Grain by grain, they separated the seeds, helping to put them in their own piles, and when the work was accomplished they vanished as quickly as they had appeared.

When evening came Venus returned, breathing odors of nectar and crowned with roses, from a banquet of the gods. When she saw that Psyche's task was done, she scarcely believed her eyes.

"You must have had assistance," she said. "To-morrow you shall try a more difficult undertaking. Beyond my temple you will see a grassy meadow which stretches along the borders of the water. There you will find a flock of sheep with golden shining fleeces on their backs and grazing without a

shepherd. Bring me a sample of their precious wool that you gather from each of the fleeces."

Psyche once more obeyed, but this was a test of her life as well as of her endurance. As she reached the meadow, the river god, whispering to her through the rushes, warned her.

"Do not venture among the flock while the sun shines on them," he told her. "In the heat of the rising sun, the rams burn with a cruel rage to destroy mortals with their sharp teeth. Wait until twilight, when you will find their woolly gold sticking to the bushes and the trunks of the trees."

The compassion of the river god helped Psyche to do as Venus had commanded her and she returned to the temple in the evening with her arms full of golden fleece.

Still Venus was not satisfied.

"I have a third task for you," she told the weary Psyche. "Take this box to the realm of Pluto and give it to Proserpine saying to her, 'My mistress, Venus, desires you to send her a little of your beauty, for in tending her son whom Psyche burned she has lost some of her own.' And make all possible haste, for I must use it before I appear next in the circle of the gods on Mount Olympus."

Psyche felt that now her destruction was surely at hand. It was a dangerous road that led to the dark, underground kingdom of Pluto and there were deadly dangers on the way. But Psyche was finding a new courage with each of the difficulties that she had to encounter, and she set out with the box. She passed safely by Cerberus, Pluto's three headed watch dog. She prevailed upon Charon, the ferryman, to take her across the black river and wait for her while she begged Proserpine to fill the box. Then she started back to the light again.

All would have gone well with Psyche if she had not grown curious. That was why her road to the dwelling place of the gods was so long and difficult. Psyche was always mixing up a little bit of earth with her good intentions. Having come

so far successfully with her dangerous task, she wanted to open the box.

"I would take only the least bit of this beauty from Venus," Psyche thought, "to make myself more fair for Cupid if I ever behold him again."

So she carefully opened the box, but there was nothing in it of beauty at all. It was a potion that caused Psyche to fall beside the road in a sleep which seemed to have no waking. She did not stir, or breathe, or remember.

It was there that love, in the form of Cupid found Psyche. He was healed of his wound, and he could not bear her absence any longer. He flew through a crack in the window of the palace of Venus and made his way to earth and straight to the spot where Psyche lay. He gathered the deadly sleep from her body and put it fast inside the box again. Then he touched her lightly with one of his arrows and she woke.

"Again you have almost perished because of your curiosity," he said as Psyche reached up her arms to him "but perform exactly this task which my mother asked of you and I will attend to the rest."

Then Cupid, as swift as a bird flies, returned to Mount Olympus and pleaded with Jupiter for a welcome for Psyche. Jupiter consented at last to have this daughter of earth admitted to the family of the gods and Mercury was sent to bring her and offer her the cup of ambrosial nectar that would make her one of the immortals.

It is said that at the moment when Psyche completed her tasks and took her departure for Mount Olympus a winged creature, the butterfly, that had never been seen before on earth, arose from a garden and flew on golden wings up toward the sun. So it was thought that the story of Psyche was the story of the butterfly who bursts its gray house of the cocoon and rises, with a new beauty and the power of wings, toward the sky. And the Greeks had still another name for Psyche whom neither her troubles or the sleep of Pluto could

keep from the abode of the gods when Love pleaded for her. They spoke of her as the Soul.

The Fables of Æsop
Selected, Told Anew

By Joseph Jacobs

The Cock and the Pearl

A cock was once strutting up and down the farmyard among the hens when suddenly he espied something shinning amid the straw. "Ho! ho!" quoth he, "that's for me," and soon rooted it out from beneath the straw. "What did it turn out to be but a Pearl that by some chance had been lost in the yard? "You may be a treasure," quoth Master Cock, "to men that prize you, but for me I would rather have a single barley-corn than a peck of pearls."

Precious things are for those that can prize them.

The Wolf and the Lamb

Once upon a time a Wolf was lapping at a spring on a hillside, when, looking up, what should he see but a Lamb just beginning to drink a little lower down. "There's my supper," thought he, "if only I can find some excuse to seize it." Then he called out to the Lamb, "How dare you muddle the water from which I am drinking?"

"Nay, master, nay," said Lambikin; "if the water be muddy up there, I cannot be the cause of it, for it runs down from you to me."

"Well, then," said the Wolf, "why did you call me bad names this time last year?"

"That cannot be," said the Lamb; "I am only six months old."

"I don't care," snarled the Wolf; "if it was not you it was your father;" and with that he rushed upon the poor little

Lamb and

Warra warra warra warra warra

ate her all up. But before she died she gasped out—

"Any excuse will serve a tyrant."

The Dog and the Shadow

It happened that a Dog had got a piece of meat and was carrying it home in his mouth to eat it in peace. Now on his way home he had to cross a plank lying across a running brook. As he crossed, he looked down and saw his own shadow reflected in the water beneath. Thinking it was another dog with another piece of meat, he made up his mind to have that also. So he made a snap at the shadow in the water, but as he opened his mouth the piece of meat fell out, dropped into the water and was never seen more.

Beware lest you lose the substance by grasping at the shadow.

The Lion's Share

The Lion went once a-hunting along with the Fox, the Jackal, and the Wolf. They hunted and they hunted till at last they surprised a Stag, and soon took its life. Then came the question how the spoil should be divided. "Quarter me this Stag," roared the Lion; so the other animals skinned it and cut it into four parts. Then the Lion took his stand in front of the carcass and pronounced judgment: The first quarter is for me in my capacity as King of Beasts; the second is mine as arbiter; another share comes to me for my part in the chase;

and as for the fourth quarter, well, as for that, I should like to see which of you will dare to lay a paw upon it."

"Humph," grumbled the Fox as he walked away with his tail between his legs; but he spoke in a low growl—

"You may share the labours of the great, but you will not share the spoil."

The Wolf and the Crane

A Wolf had been gorging on an animal he had killed, when suddenly a small bone in the meat stuck in his throat and he could not swallow it. He soon felt terrible pain in his throat, and ran up and down groaning and groaning and seeking for something to relieve the pain. He tried to induce every one he met to remove the bone. "I would give anything," said he, "if you would take it out." At last the Crane agreed to try, and told the Wolf to lie on his side and open his jaws as wide as he could. Then the Crane put its long neck down the Wolf's throat, and with its beak loosened the bone, till at last it got it out.

"Will you kindly give me the reward you promised?" said the Crane.

The Wolf grinned and showed his teeth and said: "Be content. You have put your head inside a Wolf's mouth and taken it out again in safety; that ought to be reward enough for you."

Gratitude and greed go not together.

The Man and the Serpent

A Countryman's son by accident trod upon a Serpent's tail, which turned and bit him so that he died. The father in

a rage got his axe, and pursuing the Serpent, cut off part of its tail. So the Serpent in revenge began stinging several of the Farmer's cattle and caused him severe loss. Well, the Farmer thought it best to make it up with the Serpent, and brought food and honey to the mouth of its lair, and said to it: "Let's forget and forgive; perhaps you were right to punish my son, and take vengeance on my cattle, but surely I was right in trying to revenge him; now that we are both satisfied why should not we be friends again?"

"No, no," said the Serpent; "take away your gifts; you can never forget the death of your son, nor I the loss of my tail."

Injuries may be forgiven, but not forgotten.

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

Now you must know that a Town Mouse once upon a time went on a visit to his cousin in the country. He was rough and ready, this cousin, but he loved his town friend and made him heartily welcome. Beans and bacon, cheese and bread, were all he had to offer, but he offered them freely. The Town Mouse rather turned up his long nose at this country fare, and said: "I cannot understand, Cousin, how you can put up with such poor food as this, but of course you cannot expect anything better in the country; come you with me and I will show you how to live. When you have been in town a week you will wonder how you could ever have stood a country life." No sooner said than done: the two mice set off for the town and arrived at the Town Mouse's residence late at night. "You will want some refreshment after our long journey," said the polite Town Mouse, and took his friend into the grand dining-room. There they found the remains of a fine feast, and soon the two mice were eating up jellies and cakes and all that was nice. Suddenly they heard growling and barking. "What is that?"

said the Country Mouse. "It is only the dogs of the house," answered the other. "Only!" said the Country Mouse. "I do not like that music at my dinner." Just at that moment the door flew open, in came two huge mastiffs, and the two mice had to scamper down and run off. "Good-bye, Cousin," said the Country Mouse. "What! going so soon?" said the other. "Yes," he replied;

"Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear."

The Fox and the Crow

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. "That's for me, as I am a Fox," said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. "Good-day, Mistress Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds." The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. "That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future—

"Do not trust flatterers."

The Flatter doth rob by stealth,
His victim, both of Wit and Wealth.

The Sick Lion

A Lion had come to the end of his days and lay sick unto

death at the mouth of his cave, gasping for breath. The animals, his subjects, came round him and drew nearer as he grew more and more helpless. When they saw him on the point of death they thought to themselves: "Now is the time to pay off old grudges." So the Boar came up and drove at him with his tusks; then a Bull gored him with his horns; still the Lion lay helpless before them: so the Ass, feeling quite safe from danger, came up, and turning his tail to the Lion kicked up his heels into his face. "This is a double death," growled the Lion.

Only cowards insult dying majesty.

The Ass and the Lapdog

A Farmer one day came to the stables to see to his beasts of burden: among them was his favourite Ass, that was always well fed and often carried his master. With the Farmer came his Lapdog, who danced about and licked his hand and frisked about as happy as could be. The Farmer felt in his pocket, gave the Lapdog some dainty food, and sat down while he gave his orders to his servants. The Lapdog jumped into his master's lap, and lay there blinking while the Farmer stroked his ears. The Ass, seeing this, broke loose from his halter and commenced prancing about in imitation of the Lapdog. The Farmer could not hold his sides with laughter, so the Ass went up to him, and putting his feet upon the Farmer's shoulder attempted to climb into his lap. The Farmer's servants rushed up with sticks and pitchforks and soon taught the Ass that

Clumsy jesting is no joke.

The Lion and the Mouse

Once when a Lion was asleep a little Mouse began running up and down upon him; this soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws

to swallow him. "Pardon, O King," cried the little Mouse: "forgive me this time, I shall never forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?" The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him, that he lifted up his paw and let him go. Some time after the Lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who desired to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a waggon to carry him on. Just then the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the sad plight in which the Lion was, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the Beasts. "Was I not right?" said the little Mouse.

Little friends may prove great friends.

The Swallow and the Other Birds

It happened that a Countryman was sowing some hemp seeds in a field where a Swallow and some other birds were hopping about picking up their food. "Beware of that man," quoth the Swallow. "Why, what is he doing?" said the others. "That is hemp seed he is sowing; be careful to pick up every one of the seeds, or else you will repent it." The birds paid no heed to the Swallow's words, and by and by the hemp grew up and was made into cord, and of the cords nets were made, and many a bird that had despised the Swallow's advice was caught in nets made out of that very hemp. "What did I tell you?" said the Swallow.

Destroy the seed of evil, or it will grow up to your ruin.

The Frogs Desiring a King

The Frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy

swamp that just suited them; they went splashing about caring for nobody and nobody troubling with them. But some of them thought that this was not right, that they should have a king and a proper constitution, so they determined to send up a petition to Jove to give them what they wanted. "Mighty Jove," they cried, "send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order." Jove laughed at their croaking, and threw down into the swamp a huge Log, which came down splashing into the swamp. The Frogs were frightened out of their lives by the commotion made in their midst, and all rushed to the bank to look at the horrible monster; but after a time, seeing that it did not move, one or two of the boldest of them ventured out towards the Log, and even dared to touch it; still it did not move. Then the greatest hero of the Frogs jumped upon the Log and commenced dancing up and down upon it, thereupon all the Frogs came and did the same; and for some time the Frogs went about their business every day without taking the slightest notice of their new King Log lying in their midst. But this did not suit them, so they sent another petition to Jove, and said to him, "We want a real king; one that will really rule over us." Now this made Jove angry, so he sent among them a big Stork that soon set to work gobbling them all up. Then the Frogs repented when too late.

Better no rule than cruel rule.

The Mountains in Labour

One day the Countrymen noticed that the Mountains were in labour; smoke came out of their summits, the earth was quaking at their feet, trees were crashing, and huge rocks were tumbling. They felt sure that something horrible was going to happen. They all gathered together in one place to

see what terrible thing this could be. They waited and they waited, but nothing came. At last there was a still more violent earthquake, and a huge gap appeared in the side of the Mountains. They all fell down upon their knees and waited. At last, and at last, a teeny, tiny mouse poked its little head and bristles out of the gap and came running down towards them, and ever after they used to say:

"Much outcry, little outcome."

The Hares and the Frogs

The Hares were so persecuted by the other beasts, they did not know where to go. As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, off they used to run. One day they saw a troop of wild Horses stampeding about, and in quite a panic all the Hares scuttled off to a lake hard by, determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continual state of fear. But just as they got near the bank of the lake, a troop of Frogs, frightened in their turn by the approach of the Hares scuttled off, and jumped into the water. "Truly," said one of the Hares, "things are not so bad as they seem:

"There is always someone worse off than yourself."

The Wolf and the Kid

A Kid was perched up on the top of a house, and looking down saw a Wolf passing under him. Immediately he began to revile and attack his enemy. "Murderer and thief," he cried, "what do you here near honest folks' houses? How dare you make an appearance where your vile deeds are known?"

"Curse away, my young friend," said the Wolf.

"It is easy to be brave from a safe distance."

The Woodman and the Serpent

One wintry day a Woodman was tramping home from his work when he saw something black lying on the snow. When he came closer he saw it was a Serpent to all appearance dead. But he took it up and put it in his bosom to warm while he hurried home. As soon as he got indoors he put the Serpent down on the hearth before the fire. The children watched it and saw it slowly come to life again. Then one of them stooped down to stroke it, but the Serpent raised its head and put out its fangs and was about to sting the child to death. So the Woodman seized his axe, and with one stroke cut the Serpent in two. "Ah," said he,

"No gratitude from the wicked."

The Bald Man and the Fly

There was once a Bald Man who sat down after work on a hot summer's day. A Fly came up and kept buzzing about his bald pate, and stinging him from time to time. The Man aimed a blow at his little enemy, but—whack—his palm came on his head instead; again the Fly tormented him, but this time the Man was wiser and said:

"You will only injure yourself if you take notice of despicable enemies."

The Fox and the Stork

At one time the Fox and the Stork were on visiting terms and seemed very good friends. So the Fox invited the Stork to dinner, and for a joke put nothing before her but some soup in a very shallow dish. This the Fox could easily lap up, but

the Stork could only wet the end of her long bill in it, and left the meal as hungry as when she began. "I am sorry," said the Fox, "the soup is not to your liking."

"Pray do not apologise," said the Stork. "I hope you will return this visit, and come and dine with me soon." So a day was appointed when the Fox should visit the Stork; but when they were seated at table all that was for their dinner was contained in a very long-necked jar with a narrow mouth, in which the Fox could not insert his snout, so all he could manage to do was to lick the outside of the jar.

"I will not apologise for the dinner," said the Stork:

"One bad turn deserves another."

The Fox and the Mask

A Fox had by some means got into the store-room of a theatre. Suddenly he observed a face glaring down on him and began to be very frightened; but looking more closely he found it was only a Mask such as actors use to put over their face. "Ah," said the Fox, "you look very fine; it is a pity you have not got any brains."

Outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth.

The Jay and the Peacock

A Jay venturing into a yard where Peacocks used to walk, found there a number of feathers which had fallen from the Peacocks when they were moulting. He tied them all to his tail and strutted down towards the Peacocks. When he came near them they soon discovered the cheat, and striding up to him pecked at him and plucked away his borrowed plumes. So the Jay could do no better than go back to the other Jays,

who had watched his behaviour from a distance; but they were equally annoyed with him, and told him:

"It is not only fine feathers that make fine birds."

The Frog and the Ox

"Oh Father," said a little Frog to the big one sitting by the side of a pool, "I have seen such a terrible monster! It was as big as a mountain, with horns on its head, and a long tail, and it had hoofs divided in two."

"Tush, child, tush," said the old Frog, "that was only Farmer White's Ox. It isn't so big either; he may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself quite as broad; just you see." So he blew himself out, and blew himself out, and blew himself out. "Was he as big as that?" asked he.

"Oh, much bigger than that," said the young Frog.

Again the old one blew himself out, and asked the young one if the Ox was as big as that.

"Bigger, father, bigger," was the reply.

So the Frog took a deep breath, and blew and blew and blew, and swelled and swelled and swelled. And then he said: "I'm sure the Ox is not as big as this. But at this moment he burst.

Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction.

Androcles

A slave named Androcles once escaped from his master and fled to the forest. As he was wandering about there he came upon a Lion lying down moaning and groaning. At first he turned to flee, but finding that the Lion did not pursue him, he turned back and went up to him. As he came near,

the Lion put out his paw, which was all swollen and bleeding, and Androcles found that a huge thorn had got into it, and was causing all the pain. He pulled out the thorn and bound up the paw of the Lion, who was soon able to rise and lick the hand of Androcles like a dog. Then the Lion took Androcles to his cave, and every day used to bring him meat from which to live. But shortly afterwards both Androcles and the Lion were captured, and the slave was sentenced to be thrown to the Lion, after the latter had been kept without food for several days. The Emperor and all his Court came to see the spectacle, and Androcles was led out into the middle of the arena. Soon the Lion was let loose from his den, and rushed bounding and roaring towards his victim. But as soon as he came near to Androcles he recognised his friend, and fawned upon him, and licked his hands like a friendly dog. The Emperor, surprised at this, summoned Androcles to him, who told him the whole story. Whereupon the slave was pardoned and freed, and the Lion let loose to his native forest.

Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.

The Bat, the Birds, and the Beasts

A great conflict was about to come off between the Birds and the Beasts. When the two armies were collected together the Bat hesitated which to join. The Birds that passed his perch said: "Come with us"; but he said: "I am a Beast." Later on, some Beasts who were passing underneath him looked up and said: "Come with us"; but he said: "I am a Bird." Luckily at the last moment peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and wished to join in the rejoicings, but they all turned against him and he had to fly away. He then went to the Beasts, but soon had to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces. "Ah," said

the Bat, "I see now,

"He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends."

The Hart and the Hunter

The Hart was once drinking from a pool and admiring the noble figure he made there. "Ah," said he, "where can you see such noble horns as these, with such antlers! I wish I had legs more worthy to bear such a noble crown; it is a pity they are so slim and slight." At that moment a Hunter approached and sent an arrow whistling after him. Away bounded the Hart, and soon, by the aid of his nimble legs, was nearly out of sight of the Hunter; but not noticing where he was going, he passed under some trees with branches growing low down in which his antlers were caught, so that the Hunter had time to come up. "Alas! alas!" cried the Hart:

"We often despise what is most useful to us."

The Serpent and the File

A Serpent in the course of its wanderings came into an armourer's shop. As he glided over the floor he felt his skin pricked by a file lying there. In a rage he turned round upon it and tried to dart his fangs into it; but he could do no harm to heavy iron and had soon to give over his wrath.

It is useless attacking the insensible.

The Man and the Wood

A Man came into a Wood one day with an axe in his hand, and begged all the Trees to give him a small branch

which he wanted for a particular purpose. The Trees were good-natured and gave him one of their branches. What did the Man do but fix it into the axe head, and soon set to work cutting down tree after tree. Then the Trees saw how foolish they had been in giving their enemy the means of destroying themselves.

The Dog and the Wolf

A gaunt Wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a House-dog who was passing by. "Ah, Cousin," said the Dog. "I knew how it would be; your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you. Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?"

"I would have no objection," said the Wolf, "if I could only get a place."

"I will easily arrange that for you," said the Dog; "come with me to my master and you shall share my work."

So the Wolf and the Dog went towards the town together. On the way there the Wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the Dog's neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about.

"Oh, it is nothing," said the Dog. "That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it."

"Is that all?" said the Wolf. "Then good-bye to you, Master Dog."

Better starve free than be a fat slave.

The Belly and the Members

One fine day it occurred to the Members of the Body that

they were doing all the work and the Belly was having all the food. So they held a meeting, and after a long discussion, decided to strike work till the Belly consented to take its proper share of the work. So for a day or two, the Hands refused to take the food, the Mouth refused to receive it, and the Teeth had no work to do. But after a day or two the Members began to find that they themselves were not in a very active condition: the Hands could hardly move, and the Mouth was all parched and dry, while the Legs were unable to support the rest. So thus they found that even the Belly in its dull quiet way was doing necessary work for the Body, and that all must work together or the Body will go to pieces.

The Hart in the Ox-Stall

A Hart hotly pursued by the hounds fled for refuge into an ox-stall, and buried itself in a truss of hay, leaving nothing to be seen but the tips of his horns. Soon after the Hunters came up and asked if any one had seen the Hart. The stable boys, who had been resting after their dinner, looked round, but could see nothing, and the Hunters went away. Shortly afterwards the master came in, and looking round, saw that something unusual had taken place. He pointed to the truss of hay and said: "What are those two curious things sticking out of the hay?" And when the stable boys came to look they discovered the Hart, and soon made an end of him. He thus learnt that

Nothing escapes the master's eye.

The Fox and the Grapes

One hot summer's day a Fox was strolling through an

orchard till he came to a bunch of Grapes just ripening on a vine which had been trained over a lofty branch. "Just the thing to quench my thirst," quoth he. Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch. Turning round again with a One, Two, Three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again he tried after the tempting morsel, but at last had to give it up, and walked away with his nose in the air, saying: "I am sure they are sour."

It is easy to despise what you cannot get.

The Peacock and Juno

A Peacock once placed a petition before Juno desiring to have the voice of a nightingale in addition to his other attractions; but Juno refused his request. When he persisted, and pointed out that he was her favourite bird, she said:

"Be content with your lot; one cannot be first in everything."

The Horse, Hunter, and Stag

A quarrel had arisen between the Horse and the Stag, so the Horse came to a Hunter to ask his help to take revenge on the Stag. The Hunter agreed, but said: "If you desire to conquer the Stag, you must permit me to place this piece of iron between your jaws, so that I may guide you with these reins, and allow this saddle to be placed upon your back so that I may keep steady upon you as we follow after the enemy." The Horse agreed to the conditions, and the Hunter soon saddled and bridled him. Then with the aid of the Hunter the Horse soon overcame the Stag, and said to the Hunter: "Now, get off, and remove those things from my mouth and back."

"Not so fast, friend," said the Hunter. "I have now got you under bit and spur, and prefer to keep you as you are at present."

If you allow men to use you for your own purposes, they will use you for theirs.

The Fox and the Lion

When first the Fox saw the Lion he was terribly frightened, and ran away and hid himself in the wood. Next time however he came near the King of Beasts he stopped at a safe distance and watched him pass by. The third time they came near one another the Fox went straight up to the Lion and passed the time of day with him, asking him how his family were, and when he should have the pleasure of seeing him again; then turning his tail, he parted from the Lion without much ceremony.

Familiarity breeds contempt.

The Lion and the Statue

A Man and a Lion were discussing the relative strength of men and lions in general. The Man contended that he and his fellows were stronger than lions by reason of their greater intelligence. "Come now with me," he cried, "and I will soon prove that I am right." So he took him into the public gardens and showed him a statue of Hercules overcoming the Lion and tearing his mouth in two.

"That is all very well," said the Lion, "but proves nothing, for it was a man who made the statue."

We can easily represent things as we wish them to be.

The Ant and the Grasshopper

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and moiling in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."

"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew:

It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.

The Tree and the Reed

"Well, little one," said a Tree to a Reed that was growing at its foot, "why do you not plant your feet deeply in the ground, and raise your head boldly in the air as I do?"

"I am contented with my lot," said the Reed. "I may not be so grand, but I think I am safer."

"Safe!" sneered the Tree. "Who shall pluck me up by the roots or bow my head to the ground?" But it soon had to repent of its boasting, for a hurricane arose which tore it up from its roots, and cast it a useless log on the ground, while the little Reed, bending to the force of the wind, soon stood upright again when the storm had passed over.

Obscurity often brings safety.

The Fox and the Cat

A Fox was boasting to a Cat of its clever devices for escaping its enemies. "I have a whole bag of tricks," he said, "which contains a hundred ways of escaping my enemies."

"I have only one," said the Cat; "but I can generally manage with that." Just at that moment they heard the cry of a pack of hounds coming towards them, and the Cat immediately scampered up a tree and hid herself in the boughs. "This is my plan," said the Cat. "What are you going to do?" The Fox thought first of one way, then of another, and while he was debating the hounds came nearer and nearer, and at last the Fox in his confusion was caught up by the hounds and soon killed by the huntsmen. Miss Puss, who had been looking on, said:

"Better one safe way than a hundred on which you cannot reckon."

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

A Wolf found great difficulty in getting at the sheep owing to the vigilance of the shepherd and his dogs. But one day it found the skin of a sheep that had been flayed and thrown aside, so it put it on over its own pelt and strolled down among the sheep. The Lamb that belonged to the sheep, whose skin the Wolf was wearing, began to follow the Wolf in the Sheep's clothing; so, leading the Lamb a little apart, he soon made a meal off her, and for some time he succeeded in deceiving the sheep, and enjoying hearty meals.

Appearances are deceptive.

The Dog in the Manger

A Dog looking out for its afternoon nap jumped into the Manger of an Ox and lay there cosily upon the straw. But soon the Ox, returning from its afternoon work, came up to the Manger and wanted to eat some of the straw. The Dog in a rage, being awakened from its slumber, stood up and barked at the Ox, and whenever it came near attempted to bite it. At last the Ox had to give up the hope of getting at the straw, and went away muttering:

"Ah, people often grudge others what they cannot enjoy themselves."

The Man and the Wooden God

In the old days men used to worship sticks and stones and idols, and prayed to them to give them luck. It happened that a Man had often prayed to a wooden idol he had received from his father, but his luck never seemed to change. He prayed and he prayed, but still he remained as unlucky as ever. One day in the greatest rage he went to the Wooden God, and with one blow swept it down from its pedestal. The idol broke in two, and what did he see? An immense number of coins flying all over the place.

The Fisher

A Fisher once took his bagpipes to the bank of a river, and played upon them with the hope of making the fish rise; but never a one put his nose out of the water. So he cast his net into the river and soon drew it forth filled with fish. Then he took his bagpipes again, and, as he played, the fish leapt up in

the net. "Ah, you dance now when I play," said he.

"Yes," said an old Fish:

"When you are in a man's power you must do as he bids you."

The Shepherd's Boy

There was once a young Shepherd Boy who tended his sheep at the foot of a mountain near a dark forest. It was rather lonely for him all day, so he thought upon a plan by which he could get a little company and some excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out "Wolf, Wolf," and the villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a Wolf actually did come out from the forest, and began to worry the sheep, and the boy of course cried out "Wolf, Wolf," still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody stirred to come to his help. So the Wolf made a good meal off the boy's flock, and when the boy complained, the wise man of the village said:

"A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."

The Young Thief and His Mother

A young Man had been caught in a daring act of theft and had been condemned to be executed for it. He expressed his desire to see his Mother, and to speak with her before he was led to execution, and of course this was granted. When his Mother came to him he said: "I want to whisper to you," and when she brought her ear near him, he nearly bit it off. All

the bystanders were horrified, and asked him what he could mean by such brutal and inhuman conduct. "It is to punish her," he said. "When I was young I began with stealing little things, and brought them home to Mother. Instead of rebuking and punishing me, she laughed and said: "It will not be noticed." It is because of her that I am here to-day."

"He is right, woman," said the Priest; "the Lord hath said: *"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart therefrom."*

The Man and His Two Wives

In the old days, when men were allowed to have many wives, a middle-aged Man had one wife that was old and one that was young; each loved him very much, and desired to see him like herself. Now the Man's hair was turning grey, which the young Wife did not like, as it made him look too old for her husband. So every night she used to comb his hair and pick out the white ones. But the elder Wife saw her husband growing grey with great pleasure, for she did not like to be mistaken for his mother. So every morning she used to arrange his hair and pick out as many of the black ones as she could. The consequence was the Man soon found himself entirely bald.

Yield to all and you will soon have nothing to yield.

The Nurse and the Wolf

"Be quiet now," said an old Nurse to a child sitting on her lap. "If you make that noise again I will throw you to the Wolf."

Now it chanced that a Wolf was passing close under the

window as this was said. So he crouched down by the side of the house and waited. "I am in good luck to-day," thought he. "It is sure to cry soon, and a daintier morsel I haven't had for many a long day." So he waited, and he waited, and he waited, till at last the child began to cry, and the Wolf came forward before the window, and looked up to the Nurse, wagging his tail. But all the Nurse did was to shut down the window and call for help, and the dogs of the house came rushing out. "Ah," said the Wolf as he galloped away,

"Enemies' promises were made to be broken."

The Tortoise and the Birds

A Tortoise desired to change its place of residence, so he asked an Eagle to carry him to his new home, promising her a rich reward for her trouble. The Eagle agreed and seizing the Tortoise by the shell with her talons soared aloft. On their way they met a Crow, who said to the Eagle: "Tortoise is good eating." "The shell is too hard," said the Eagle in reply. "The rocks will soon crack the shell," was the Crow's answer; and the Eagle, taking the hint, let fall the Tortoise on a sharp rock, and the two birds made a hearty meal of the Tortoise.

Never soar aloft on an enemy's pinions.

The Two Crabs

One fine day two Crabs came out from their home to take a stroll on the sand. "Child," said the mother, "you are walking very ungracefully. You should accustom yourself, to walking straight forward without twisting from side to side."

"Pray, mother," said the young one, "do but set the example yourself, and I will follow you."

Example is the best precept.

The Ass in the Lion's Skin

An Ass once found a Lion's skin which the hunters had left out in the sun to dry. He put it on and went towards his native village. All fled at his approach, both men and animals, and he was a proud Ass that day. In his delight he lifted up his voice and brayed, but then every one knew him, and his owner came up and gave him a sound cudgelling for the fright he had caused. And shortly afterwards a Fox came up to him and said: "Ah, I knew you by your voice."

Fine clothes may disguise, but silly words will disclose a fool.

The Two Fellows and the Bear

Two Fellows were travelling together through a wood, when a Bear rushed out upon them. One of the travellers happened to be in front, and he seized hold of the branch of a tree, and hid himself among the leaves. The other, seeing no help for it, threw himself flat down upon the ground, with his face in the dust. The Bear, coming up to him, put his muzzle close to his ear, and sniffed and sniffed. But at last with a growl he shook his head and slouched off, for bears will not touch dead meat. Then the fellow in the tree came down to his comrade, and, laughing, said "What was it that Master Bruin whispered to you?"

"He told me," said the other,

"Never trust a friend who deserts you at a pinch."

The Two Pots

Two Pots had been left on the bank of a river, one of brass, and one of earthenware. When the tide rose they both floated off down the stream. Now the earthenware pot tried its best to keep aloof from the brass one, which cried out: "Fear nothing, friend, I will not strike you."

"But I may come in contact with you," said the other, "if I come too close; and whether I hit you, or you hit me, I shall suffer for it."

The strong and the weak cannot keep company.

The Four Oxen and the Lion

A Lion used to prowl about a field in which Four Oxen used to dwell. Many a time he tried to attack them; but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them. At last, however, they fell a-quarrelling among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field. Then the Lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four.

United we stand, divided we fall.

The Fisher and the Little Fish

It happened that a Fisher, after fishing all day, caught only a little fish. "Pray, let me go, master," said the Fish. "I am much too small for your eating just now. If you put me back into the river I shall soon grow, then you can make a fine meal off me."

"Nay, nay, my little Fish," said the Fisher, "I have you now. I may not catch you hereafter."

A little thing in hand is worth more than a great thing in prospect.

Avaricious and Envious

Two neighbours came before Jupiter and prayed him to grant their hearts' desire. Now the one was full of avarice, and the other eaten up with envy. So to punish them both, Jupiter granted that each might have whatever he wished for himself, but only on condition that his neighbour had twice as much. The Avaricious man prayed to have a room full of gold. No sooner said than done; but all his joy was turned to grief when he found that his neighbour had two rooms full of the precious metal. Then came the turn of the Envious man, who could not bear to think that his neighbour had any joy at all. So he prayed that he might have one of his own eyes put out, by which means his companion would become totally blind.

Vices are their own punishment.

The Crow and the Pitcher

A Crow, half-dead with thirst, came upon a Pitcher which had once been full of water; but when the Crow put its beak into the mouth of the Pitcher he found that only very little water was left in it, and that he could not reach far enough down to get at it. He tried, and he tried, but at last had to give up in despair. Then a thought came to him, and he took a pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. At last, at last, he saw the water mount up near him, and after casting in a few more pebbles he was able to quench his thirst and save his life.

Little by little does the trick.

The Man and the Satyr

A Man had lost his way in a wood one bitter winter's night. As he was roaming about, a Satyr came up to him, and finding that he had lost his way, promised to give him a lodging for the night, and guide him out of the forest in the morning. As he went along to the Satyr's cell, the Man raised both his hands to his mouth and kept on blowing at them. "What do you do that for?" said the Satyr.

"My hands are numb with the cold," said the Man, "and my breath warms them."

After this they arrived at the Satyr's home, and soon the Satyr put a smoking dish of porridge before him. But when the Man raised his spoon to his mouth he began blowing upon it. "And what do you do that for?" said the Satyr.

"The porridge is too hot, and my breath will cool it."

"Out you go," said the Satyr. "I will have nought to do with a man who can blow hot and cold with the same breath."

The Goose with the Golden Eggs

One day a countryman going to the nest of his Goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But he took it home on second thoughts, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the Goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing.

Greed oft o'er reaches itself.

The Labourer and the Nightingale

A Labourer lay listening to a Nightingale's song throughout the summer night. So pleased was he with it that the next night he set a trap for it and captured it. "Now that I have caught thee," he cried, "thou shalt always sing to me."

"We Nightingales never sing in a cage." said the bird.

"Then I'll eat thee." said the Labourer. "I have always heard say that a nightingale on toast is dainty morsel."

"Nay, kill me not," said the Nightingale; "but let me free, and I'll tell thee three things far better worth than my poor body." The Labourer let him loose, and he flew up to a branch of a tree and said: *"Never believe a captive's promise;* that's one thing. Then again: *Keep what you have.* And third piece of advice is: *Sorrow not over what is lost forever."* Then the songbird flew away.

The Fox, the Cock, and the Dog

One moonlight night a Fox was prowling about a farmer's hen-coop, and saw a Cock roosting high up beyond his reach. "Good news, good news!" he cried.

"Why, what is that?" said the Cock.

"King Lion has declared a universal truce. No beast may hurt a bird henceforth, but all shall dwell together in brotherly friendship."

"Why, that is good news," said the Cock; "and there I see some one coming, with whom we can share the good tidings." And so saying he craned his neck forward and looked afar off.

"What is it you see?" said the Fox.

"It is only my master's Dog that is coming towards us. What, going so soon?" he continued, as the Fox began to turn away as soon as he had heard the news. "Will you not stop

and congratulate the Dog on the reign of universal peace?"

"I would gladly do so," said the Fox, "but I fear he may not have heard of King Lion's decree."

Cunning often outwits itself.

The Wind and the Sun

The Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger. Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road, and the Sun said: "I see a way to decide our dispute. Whichever of us can cause that traveller to take off his cloak shall be regarded as the stronger. You begin." So the Sun retired behind a cloud, and the Wind began to blow as hard as it could upon the traveller. But the harder he blew the more closely did the traveller wrap his cloak round him, till at last the Wind had to give up in despair. Then the Sun came out and shone in all his glory upon the traveller, who soon found it too hot to walk with his cloak on.

Kindness effects more than severity.

Hercules and the Waggoner

A Waggoner was once driving a heavy load along a very muddy way. At last he came to a part of the road where the wheels sank half-way into the mire, and the more the horses pulled, the deeper sank the wheels. So the Waggoner threw down his whip, and knelt down and prayed to Hercules the Strong. "O Hercules, help me in this my hour of distress," quoth he. But Hercules appeared to him, and said:

"Tut, man, don't sprawl there. Get up and put your shoulder to the wheel."

The gods help them that help themselves.

The Miser and His Gold

Once upon a time there was a Miser who used to hide his gold at the foot of a tree in his garden; but every week he used to go and dig it up and gloat over his gains. A robber, who had noticed this, went and dug up the gold and decamped with it. When the Miser next came to gloat over his treasures, he found nothing but the empty hole. He tore his hair, and raised such an outcry that all the neighbours came around him, and he told them how he used to come and visit his gold. "Did you ever take any of it out?" asked one of them.

"Nay," said he, "I only came to look at it."

"Then come again and look at the hole," said a neighbour; "it will do you just as much good."

Wealth unused might as well not exist.

The Man, the Boy, and the Donkey

A Man and his son were once going with their Donkey to market. As they were walking along by its side a countryman passed them and said: "You fools, what is a Donkey for but to ride upon?"

So the Man put the Boy on the Donkey and they went on their way. But soon they passed a group of men, one of whom said: "See that lazy youngster, he lets his father walk while he rides."

So the Man ordered his Boy to get off, and got on himself. But they hadn't gone far when they passed two women, one of whom said to the other: "Shame on that lazy lout to let his poor little son trudge along."

Well, the Man didn't know what to do, but at last he took his Boy up before him on the Donkey. By this time they had come to the town, and the passers-by began to jeer and point

at them. The Man stopped and asked what they were scoffing at. The men said: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for overloading that poor donkey of yours and your hulking son?"

The Man and Boy got off and tried to think what to do. They thought and they thought, till at last they cut down a pole, tied the donkey's feet to it, and raised the pole and the donkey to their shoulders. They went along amid the laughter of all who met them till they came to Market Bridge, when the Donkey, getting one of his feet loose, kicked out and caused the Boy to drop his end of the pole. In the struggle the Donkey fell over the bridge, and his fore-feet being tied together he was drowned.

"That will teach you," said an old man who had followed them:

"Please all, and you will please none."

The Fox and the Mosquitoes

A Fox after crossing a river got its tail entangled in a bush, and could not move. A number of Mosquitoes seeing its plight settled upon it and enjoyed a good meal undisturbed by its tail. A hedgehog strolling by took pity upon the Fox and went up to him: "You are in a bad way, neighbour," said the hedgehog; "shall I relieve you by driving off those Mosquitoes who are sucking your blood?"

"Thank you, Master Hedgehog," said the Fox, "but I would rather not."

"Why, how is that?" asked the hedgehog.

"Well, you see," was the answer, "these Mosquitoes have had their fill; if you drive these away, others will come with fresh appetite and bleed me to death."

The Fox Without a Tail

It happened that a Fox caught its tail in a trap, and in struggling to release himself lost all of it but the stump. At first he was ashamed to show himself among his fellow foxes. But at last he determined to put a bolder face upon his misfortune, and summoned all the foxes to a general meeting to consider a proposal which he had to place before them. When they had assembled together the Fox proposed that they should all do away with their tails. He pointed out how inconvenient a tail was when they were pursued by their enemies, the dogs; how much it was in the way when they desired to sit down and hold a friendly conversation with one another. He failed to see any advantage in carrying about such a useless encumbrance. "That is all very well," said one of the older foxes; "but I do not think you would have recommended us to dispense with our chief ornament if you had not happened to lose it yourself."

Distrust interested advice.

The One-Eyed Doe

A Doe had had the misfortune to lose one of her eyes, and could not see any one approaching her on that side. So to avoid any danger she always used to feed on a high cliff near the sea, with her sound eye looking towards the land. By this means she could see whenever the hunters approached her on land, and often escaped by this means. But the hunters found out that she was blind of one eye, and hiring a boat rowed under the cliff where she used to feed and shot her from the sea. "Ah," cried she with her dying voice,

"You cannot escape your fate."

Belling the Cat

Long ago, the mice had a general council to consider what measures they could take to outwit their common enemy, the Cat. Some said this, and some said that; but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal to make, which he thought would meet the case. "You will all agree," said he, "that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous manner in which the enemy approaches us. Now, if we could receive some signal of her approach, we could easily escape from her. I venture, therefore, to propose that a small bell be procured, and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the Cat. By this means we should always know when she was about, and could easily retire while she was in the neighbourhood."

This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse got up and said: "That is all very well, but who is to bell the Cat?" The mice looked at one another and nobody spoke. Then the old mouse said:

"It is easy to propose impossible remedies."

The Hare and the Tortoise

The Hare was once boasting of his speed before the other animals. "I have never yet been beaten," said he, "when I put forth my full speed. I challenge any one here to race with me."

The Tortoise said quietly, "I accept your challenge."

"That is a good joke," said the Hare; "I could dance round you all the way."

"Keep your boasting till you've beaten," answered the Tortoise. "Shall we race?"

So a course was fixed and a start was made. The Hare darted almost out of sight at once, but soon stopped and, to show his contempt for the Tortoise, lay down to have a nap.

The Tortoise plodded on and plodded on, and when the Hare awoke from his nap, he saw the Tortoise just near the winning-post and could not run up in time to save the race. Then said the Tortoise:

"Plodding wins the race."

The Old Man and Death

An old labourer, bent double with age and toil, was gathering sticks in a forest. At last he grew so tired and hopeless that he threw down the bundle of sticks, and cried out: "I cannot bear this life any longer. Ah, I wish Death would only come and take me!"

As he spoke, Death, a grisly skeleton, appeared and said to him: "What wouldst thou, Mortal? I heard thee call me."

"Please, sir," replied the woodcutter, "would you kindly help me to lift this faggot of sticks on to my shoulder?"

We would often be sorry if our wishes were gratified.

The Hare With Many Friends

A Hare was very popular with the other beasts who all claimed to be her friends. But one day she heard the hounds approaching and hoped to escape them by the aid of her many Friends. So, she went to the horse, and asked him to carry her away from the hounds on his back. But he declined, stating that he had important work to do for his master. "He felt sure," he said, "that all her other friends would come to her assistance." She then applied to the bull, and hoped that he would repel the hounds with his horns. The bull replied: "I am very sorry, but I have an appointment with a lady; but I feel sure that our friend the goat will do what you want." The

goat, however, feared that his back might do her some harm if he took her upon it. The ram, he felt sure, was the proper friend to apply to. So she went to the ram and told him the case. The ram replied: "Another time, my dear friend. I do not like to interfere on the present occasion, as hounds have been known to eat sheep as well as hares." The Hare then applied, as a last hope, to the calf, who regretted that he was unable to help her, as he did not like to take the responsibility upon himself, as so many older persons than himself had declined the task. By this time the hounds were quite near, and the Hare took to her heels and luckily escaped.

He that has many friends, has no friends.

The Lion in Love

A Lion once fell in love with a beautiful maiden and proposed marriage to her parents. The old people did not know what to say. They did not like to give their daughter to the Lion, yet they did not wish to enrage the King of Beasts. At last the father said: "We feel highly honoured by your Majesty's proposal, but you see our daughter is a tender young thing, and we fear that in the vehemence of your affection you might possibly do her some injury. Might I venture to suggest that your Majesty should have your claws removed, and your teeth extracted, then we would gladly consider your proposal again." The Lion was so much in love that he had his claws trimmed and his big teeth taken out. But when he came again to the parents of the young girl they simply laughed in his face, and bade him do his worst.

Love can tame the wildest.

The Bundle of Sticks

An old man on the point of death summoned his sons around him to give them some parting advice. He ordered his servants to bring in a faggot of sticks, and said to his eldest son: "Break it." The son strained and strained, but with all his efforts was unable to break the Bundle. The other sons also tried, but none of them was successful. "Untie the faggots," said the father, "and each of you take a stick." When they had done so, he called out to them: "Now, break," and each stick was easily broken. "You see my meaning," said their father.

Union gives strength.

The Lion, the Fox, and the Beasts

The Lion once gave out that he was sick unto death and summoned the animals to come and hear his last Will and Testament. So the Goat came to the Lion's cave, and stopped there listening for a long time. Then a Sheep went in, and before she came out a Calf came up to receive the last wishes of the Lord of the Beasts. But soon the Lion seemed to recover, and came to the mouth of his cave, and saw the Fox, who had been waiting outside for some time. "Why do you not come to pay your respects to me?" said the Lion to the Fox.

"I beg your Majesty's pardon," said the Fox, "but I noticed the track of the animals that have already come to you; and while I see many hoof-marks going in, I see none coming out. Till the animals that have entered your cave come out again I prefer to remain in the open air."

It is easier to get into the enemy's toils than out again.

The Ass's Brains

The Lion and the Fox went hunting together. The Lion, on the advice of the Fox, sent a message to the Ass, proposing to make an alliance between their two families. The Ass came to the place of meeting, overjoyed at the prospect of a royal alliance. But when he came there the Lion simply pounced on the Ass, and said to the Fox: "Here is our dinner for today. Watch you here while I go and have a nap. Woe betide you if you touch my prey." The Lion went away and the Fox waited; but finding that his master did not return, ventured to take out the brains of the Ass and ate them up. When the Lion came back he soon noticed the absence of the brains, and asked the Fox in a terrible voice: "What have you done with the brains?"

"Brains, your Majesty! it had none, or it would never have fallen into your trap."

Wit has always an answer ready.

The Eagle and the Arrow

An Eagle was soaring through the air when suddenly it heard the whizz of an Arrow, and felt itself wounded to death. Slowly it fluttered down to the earth, with its life-blood pouring out of it. Looking down upon the Arrow with which it had been pierced, it found that the shaft of the Arrow had been feathered with one of its own plumes. "Alas!" it cried, as it died,

"We often give our enemies the means for our own destruction."

The Cat-Maiden

The gods were once disputing whether it was possible for a living being to change its nature. Jupiter said "Yes," but Venus said "No." So, to try the question, Jupiter turned a Cat into a Maiden, and gave her to a young man for a wife. The wedding was duly performed and the young couple sat down to the wedding-feast. "See," said Jupiter, to Venus, "how becomingly she behaves. Who could tell that yesterday she was but a Cat? Surely her nature is changed?"

"Wait a minute," replied Venus, and let loose a mouse into the room. No sooner did the bride see this than she jumped up from her seat and tried to pounce upon the mouse. "Ah, you see," said Venus,

"Nature will out."

The Milkmaid and Her Pail

Patty the Milkmaid was going to market carrying her milk in a Pail on her head. As she went along she began calculating what she would do with the money she would get for the milk. "I'll buy some fowls from Farmer Brown," said she, "and they will lay eggs each morning, which I will sell to the parson's wife. With the money that I get from the sale of these eggs I'll buy myself a new dimity frock and a chip hat; and when I go to market, won't all the young men come up and speak to me! Polly Shaw will be that jealous; but I don't care. I shall just look at her and toss my head like this. As she spoke she tossed her head back, the Pail fell off it, and all the milk was spilt. So she had to go home and tell her mother what had occurred.

"Ah, my child," said the mother,

"Do not count your chickens before they are hatched."

The Horse and the Ass

A Horse and an Ass were travelling together, the Horse prancing along in its fine trappings, the Ass carrying with difficulty the heavy weight in its panniers. "I wish I were you," sighed the Ass; "nothing to do and well fed, and all that fine harness upon you." Next day, however, there was a great battle, and the Horse was wounded to death in the final charge of the day. His friend, the Ass, happened to pass by shortly afterwards and found him on the point of death. "I was wrong," said the Ass:

"Better humble security than gilded danger."

The Trumpeter Taken Prisoner

A Trumpeter during a battle ventured too near the enemy and was captured by them. They were about to proceed to put him to death when he begged them to hear his plea for mercy. "I do not fight," said he, "and indeed carry no weapon; I only blow this trumpet, and surely that cannot harm you; then why should you kill me?"

"You may not fight yourself," said the others, "but you encourage and guide your men to the fight."

Words may be deeds.

The Buffoon and the Countryman

At a country fair there was a Buffoon who made all the people laugh by imitating the cries of various animals. He finished off by squeaking so like a pig that the spectators thought that he had a porker concealed about him. But a Countryman who stood by said: "Call that a pig's squeak! Nothing like it.

You give me till tomorrow and I will show you what it's like." The audience laughed, but next day, sure enough, the Countryman appeared on the stage, and putting his head down squealed so hideously that the spectators hissed and threw stones at him to make him stop. "You fools!" he cried, "see what you have been hissing," and held up a little pig whose ear he had been pinching to make him utter the squeals.

Men often applaud an imitation and hiss the real thing.

The Old Woman and the Wine-Jar

You must know that sometimes old women like a glass of wine. One of this sort once found a Wine-jar lying in the road, and eagerly went up to it hoping to find it full. But when she took it up she found that all the wine had been drunk out of it. Still she took a long sniff at the mouth of the Jar. "Ah," she cried,

"What memories cling 'round the instruments of our pleasure."

The Fox and the Goat

By an unlucky chance a Fox fell into a deep well from which he could not get out. A Goat passed by shortly afterwards, and asked the Fox what he was doing down there. "Oh, have you not heard?" said the Fox; "there is going to be a great drought, so I jumped down here in order to be sure to have water by me. Why don't you come down too?" The Goat thought well of this advice, and jumped down into the well. But the Fox immediately jumped on her back, and by putting his foot on her long horns managed to jump up to the edge of the well. "Good-bye, friend," said the Fox, "remember next time, *"Never trust the advice of a man in difficulties."*

Legends and Stories of Italy for Children

by Amy Steedman

The Legend of the Christmas Rose

It was the night on which our Blessed Lord was born, and the angels had brought their message of peace and goodwill to the shepherds upon the lonely hillside.

The glory of that heavenly vision had left the men awed and silent as they gathered round their fire. The news of the birth of the long looked for Infant King filled their hearts so full of wonder and of joy that for a while they could not speak. But ere long they roused themselves and in low tones began to talk of what they had seen and of all that the message of the angels meant. There was surely but one thing to be done they must set out at once to seek the new-born King. So they began to plan how they might safely leave their sheep, and to pile the fire high with dry branches that the blaze might keep away all evil beasts.

So intent were they on their preparations, and so filled with the wonder of that night, that none of them gave a thought to the little child who lay in the warm shelter of a rock close to the fire. She had been helping her father tend the sheep all day, and had crept into the bed of dry leaves to rest, for she was very tired. The shepherds never noticed her as she lay in the shadow of the rock, and even if they had, they would have deemed her far too young to understand the glorious vision of that starry night.

But the little maid had seen the opening of heaven's gates and heard the angels' message. With wondering eyes she had gazed upon those white-robed messengers of peace and listened to their words. There was much that she did not understand, but this at least she knew, that a little Baby had

been born that night in the village close by, that He was the King of Heaven and had brought God's love and forgiveness to all the poor people upon earth.

Now as she lay in her warm corner watching the bright flames as they rose and fell, a little lamb nestling close at her feet for warmth, she had but one thought in her heart, How could she see this Bambino, this new-born King. Very anxiously she watched the shepherds and tried to hear what they were saying. She saw one lift a lamb in his arms, another take a home-made cheese from their little store, another a loaf of barley-bread. Then there was a movement away from the fire, and she saw they were preparing to set out down the hill. They were going to seek the King, and if she followed she would see Him too.

In an instant she had left her warm corner and was speeding after the men. Quickly and silently she crept along behind them, trying always to keep out of sight lest one of them should turn his head and bid her go home. But the shepherds were all too eager to think of aught but the wonderful quest which lay before them, and they never thought of looking back, nor did they hear the patter of small bare feet upon the frozen ground.

It was a bitterly cold night. The moon shone down on ice-bound streams and fields white with hoar-frost. Not a sound was to be heard but the soft sighing of the wind passing gently through the bare branches of the trees. Not a light was to be seen in any of the huts they passed, for every one was fast asleep. But overhead there shone a wonderful star like a silver globe of light going before them as they went. So the little company passed on, and the child kept bravely up behind, although the ground was rough and hard and sorely hurt her bare feet. It was not easy to keep pace with the men's swift stride, but she never stopped to rest until she had entered the village street of Bethlehem, and the shepherds paused before a little shed over which the silver star was shining down.

Here they halted and talked together in low tones, while the child drew aside into the shadow of the house to watch what they would do.

She saw them take out from their wallets the things which they had brought, and realised for the first time that they were presents for the Infant King. There was the loaf of barley-bread, the home-made cheese, a handful of dried fruit and the fleece of a lamb, white and soft, fit to wrap around a baby's limbs this cold wintry night. There were other things besides, but all were poor simple gifts, and the shepherds looked at the array half sadly.

'They make but a poor show,' said one with shame.

'They are indeed but simple offerings,' said another; 'but He will understand that it is our best we give with the true love of our hearts.'

'Ay, surely,' said a third, 'and poor though they be, they are better than nothing. It would be a sin indeed to come empty-handed to greet our King this night.'

Those words fell on the listening ears of the child, and when she heard them, all hope and joy died out of her heart. She had no gift to offer. She looked down at her little empty sun-browned hands and a great sob rose in her throat. If it were a sin to go in without a gift, then she must stay outside. She had come so far and longed so greatly to see the Infant King, and now it was all no use, the sight was not for her. Perhaps if she crept near the door she might peep in when it was opened and catch if it were only a glimpse, while she herself remained unseen.

The shepherds knocked at the door and reverently bared their heads. A low sweet voice bade them enter, and the door was opened. Pressing forward, the child tried to look in. There in the soft light she saw a fair young mother with head bent low, and behind her an ox and an ass feeding from a low manger. She tried to see the Bambino, but the forms of the kneeling shepherds came between, and even as she looked,

the door was shut and she was left outside.

Then it seemed as if her heart would break. She was so weary and so footsore, and all her trouble had been for naught. The King was so near, only a wall between Him and her, and yet she was not to see Him. She threw herself down on the hard gravel and buried her head in her arms, while the sobs came thick and fast and her tears made the very ground wet.

Presently the door opened and the shepherds came out with slow and reverent steps. They did not see her, for she had crept close to the wall, and when they started on their homeward way she did not move to follow them. She was too tired and sorrowful to care what became of her now.

But presently as she lay there, with the tears still dropping one by one, she started and looked closely at the ground. What were those pale-green shoots that were bursting up between the cracks of the stones? Now they were growing into glossy leaves. She held her breath with wonder, but true it was that wherever a tear had fallen and thawed the frozen earth, a bud had begun to swell. The pale-green shoots grew taller and taller, the glossy leaves unfolded and showed pink-tipped buds hanging between, which, as she gazed, opened into blossoms with petals as silver white as moonbeams upon the glistening snow.

A glad thought came into the child's sorrowful heart. Why, here was the very gift she was seeking, and she yet might see the King. Eagerly she stretched out her hands and gathered the open blossoms and pink flushed buds, with one or two glossy leaves to place around them. Then she went close to the door and timidly ventured on a very little knock. She waited, scarcely daring to breathe, but no one answered, and so putting both hands against the door she pushed it a little way open.

The Madonna was sitting in the poor stable by the little bed of hay on which the Gesu Bambino slept. She was bend-

ing over Him and softly singing a lullaby, her eyes still shining with quiet joy over the thought of the wondrous tale told her by the simple shepherds. Suddenly a draught of cold air came sweeping in, and she turned her head to see who had opened the door. A little child stood there with flushed cheeks on which the tears were scarcely dry. Wistful eyes were raised to hers, and two small hands held out a bunch of snowy blossoms.

The Madonna needed no words to tell her what it meant. Her mother-heart understood at once what the little one wanted. Very gently she drew her in and led her to the little manger-bed and bade her lay her flowers there in the little, helpless hands of the new-born King. The child knelt and gazed at the sleeping Bambino. She forgot her tiredness and weary feet, she forgot her tears and disappointment, and she dimly felt that the happiness that filled her heart would live on and on for ever.

And now when winter-time comes and the days are dark and the nights are long, when the snow covers up all the sleeping flowers and the Christmas bells ring out, the white blossoms of the child's flowers appear above the cold, dark earth. We call them the Christmas roses now, in memory of the little one who had no other gift to offer that first Christmas morning, but the gift of her sorrowful tears.

The Merciful Knight

In the long-ago days, when the clash of arms was often heard in the streets of Florence, and when the sons of the great families were brought up early to learn the use of sword and lance, men thought more of a strong arm and brave deeds than of kindness and compassion for the weak. It is true that the knights were gentle and courteous to fair ladies, and truth and honour were as dear to them as their swords, but they had learnt to repay evil for evil, never to forgive an injury, and to take vengeance into their own hands.

In such a time as this, then, the story of the Merciful Knight shines out like the steady gleam of a single bright star, set in a dark sky. The beauty of its clear light is the more precious because of the darkness around.

It was in one of the proudest of the great Florentine families that the two little brothers, Giovanni and Hugo Gualberto, were brought up. The boys were taught all that noble children were expected to learn in those days, especially how to be skilful and quick in the use of all knightly weapons, so that they might be trained to be brave knights and courageous soldiers.

But besides this they were taught the lessons of their creed, for it was the duty of a Christian knight to hold in reverence all holy things. Together the two little brothers would kneel in the great dim church at Christmastide when the story of Bethlehem was pictured once more. The little waxen Bambino lying in the straw, guarded by the gentle mother and S. Joseph, taught the old lesson of humility and God's goodwill towards men. The ox and the ass too, that

stood by the manger looking on with such wise eyes, would help them to remember that God's dumb creatures have also a share in His merciful kindness.

Then when Holy Week came round and all the city bells had ceased to ring, because it was Good Friday, the boys would kneel again beneath the crucifix and gaze with awe upon the sad scene of suffering. That was a difficult lesson to learn, why the King should suffer so at the hands of His servants. It was easier to understand the joy and brightness of Easter-tide, when the bells rang out once more, and the world seemed full of joy because the King had triumphed over His enemies.

So the boys grew up, learning their lessons together, and loving each other with a deep and special love. They were the only children in the old grey palace, and shared with each other every joy and sorrow that came into their lives.

Then when all was sunshine and joy, when life was spreading out all its pleasures at the feet of the two young knights, suddenly the blow fell which seemed to blot out for ever the light from Giovanni's life. His brother Hugo, setting out one morning full of life and gaiety, was brought back ere nightfall pierced through the heart by an enemy's dagger.

There had been, perhaps, some hot quarrel, but the boy had been cruelly done to death by treachery, and no more than that was known.

It seemed impossible to believe, but it was only too true. Hugo was dead, and a deep wail of grief went up to heaven and a wild cry for vengeance upon the murderer.

The old father seemed turned to stone in his grief. The broken-hearted mother wept until she could weep no more. And then both turned to Giovanni, their one hope, and bade him avenge his brother's cruel death.

It was little urging that Giovanni needed. His heart burned within him like a red-hot coal in his wrath. No softening tears quenched the light of vengeance that glowed in

his eyes. With his strong right hand he grasped his sword, and looking up to heaven he vowed that he would rest not, night nor day, until he had killed the murderer of his brother. He would hunt him down, no matter where he was hid. Nothing should save him from the vengeance which was his due. So Giovanni set out on his search, and it seemed as if in a few hours the light-hearted boy was changed into a stern-faced man.

It was springtime, but to Giovanni all seasons seemed alike. The sky was blue and the earth was bursting into flowers, but it might have been dead winter for all he knew. There was no sun in his sky. All was black before his eyes, lightened only by the glow of that one desire for vengeance. Day by day and hour by hour he searched, but no sign of his enemy could he find, and at last he turned wearily away from the city, and set out for the country-house, outside Florence, where his father and mother were waiting for news.

It was the evening of Good Friday, and a solemn stillness seemed to brood over the land. But Giovanni never noticed that the bells were silent and that there was no sound to tell the passing hours. Slowly he began to mount the steep hill which leads from the city gates to the church of San Miniato, which he must needs pass on his way home.

Half-way up the hill, a little road turns off sharply to the right, and there at the corner Giovanni suddenly came face to face with the man he was seeking, the enemy who had so cruelly killed his brother.

Quick as lightning Giovanni drew his sword, and a wild rush of joy filled his heart. Here was his enemy, given into his hand, alone and unarmed. There could be no escape. Vengeance had triumphed.

The wretched man saw too that all chance of escape was hopeless. Neither could he fight for his life, for he had no weapon. He was indeed given into the hand of the avenger. There was but one thing he could do, and throwing himself

upon his knees he pleaded for mercy.

'For the love of Christ,' he cried, 'I beseech thee to spare my life. He who on this day hung upon the Cross to save mankind, would He not have us show mercy to one another? For the love of Him, our Saviour, have mercy upon me!'

And as he spoke he spread out his arms in the form of a cross, and looked upwards beseechingly into the eyes of the avenging knight.

There was a moment's pause. The uplifted sword was stayed. A terrible struggle was going on in Giovanni's heart. Could he forgo the revenge for which he had thirsted so long? The man was a murderer and deserved punishment. But had not Christ upon the Cross prayed for forgiveness for His own murderers? The meaning of the old lesson, so hard to understand, became clear. This was the higher devoir. Was not He, the perfect Knight, the example of all true courage and knightliness?

The struggle was fierce, but a prayer rose from his heart for help to overcome, and slowly he lowered his sword. Then as he gazed at the trembling wretch at his feet, a great pity began to flow into his heart, and he bent down and raised the man from his knees, and embraced him in token of forgiveness. There they parted, and Giovanni, still trembling after the fierce struggle that had gone on in his heart, went slowly on his way up the steep hill, until he came to the church door. Turning aside he went in, and found his way in the darkness to the high altar where a great crucifix hung. There he knelt and hid his face in his hands, and the great hot tears forced their way through his fingers and dropped on the marble floor.

He saw now that revenge was but a cruel black act, which no Christian knight should take into his own hands. He thought how often he had offended and grieved that gentle Master Who had hung so uncomplainingly upon the Cross to save his soul. And in the silence, the prayer rose to his lips: 'O Christ, Who hast taught me to be merciful to mine enemy,

have mercy upon me and forgive me, as I have shown mercy to him.'

And surely the prayer was heard, for as the words fell upon the stillness, lo! the figure of the Christ above bent down, and in gracious answer kissed the bowed head of the Merciful Knight.

The Saint-Maid of Lucca

Up among the marble mountains of Carrara there are beautiful glens where many a little village clings to the side of the hills or nestles in the valley below. Lower down in these glens are fruitful vineyards and olive woods, while higher up the chestnuts and pine-trees grow, with little patches of corn-fields between. But high and low there are always flowers springing up to make the world beautiful with their colours of purple, white, and gold.

It was in one of these little villages among the hills; nine miles north of the city of Lucca, that one of the fairest flowers in God's Garden blossomed long years ago. She was only a poor little peasant baby, born in a humble home, and she never became rich or grand or powerful. But the story of her life, laid by now and almost forgotten, has still the sweet perfume of those hidden flowers which never fade.

It was to a very poor home that little Zita came, poor at least as the world counts poverty. Her father and mother worked hard, but even then there was not always enough to eat, and in winter-time Zita was often cold and hungry. But there are other things that count more than gold, and the little home was rich in goodness and kindness and honesty. There was not a better man in all the countryside than the father, Giovanni Lombardo, and the mother, who was called Buonissima (which in Italian means very good), early taught her little daughter all that was good and true.

The child was easily trained, for she was so sweet-tempered and obedient and thoughtful for others. She was quick and merry too, and very helpful in the house. It was only when she knelt in church that she grew quiet and

dreamy. She loved to think of the Gesu Bambino who was born in just such a poor little place as theirs, and of the years He walked on earth. She pictured Him going from one little village to another, helping all the poor people she knew, and then on to the great city below where rich and powerful people lived, who still needed His help. The charm of that life seemed to fill her whole heart.

The little mountain maidens very quickly leave their childhood behind and learn to be helpful women, and Zita was only twelve years old when she began to think it was time she should try to earn her own living. Her father worked so hard and her mother too. She could not bear to think that she was doing nothing, and she prayed that the good God would send her some work to do.

'Little daughter,' said her mother that very day, 'thy father and I have found a place for thee with a noble family at Lucca. I know thou wilt do thy best to be a good servant, for in serving thy master thou wilt be serving God.'

'I am ready to start at once,' said Zita cheerfully, 'and I will do my very best.'

There were not many preparations to make, and the little maid soon set out with her father to walk the nine miles that lay between them and the city of Lucca, where her work was waiting for her.

It was to the Casa Fantenelli that they were bound, and Zita thought herself most fortunate to be engaged to serve such a noble family. But it must have been very hard for the little maid, in spite of the twelve years which made her feel so grown-up and womanly, to keep back the tears as she said good-bye to her father. It felt so lonely to be left standing at the door of the Casa, in a strange town, among strange people.

But Zita seldom wasted much time thinking of herself. She was always looking for the work that was waiting to be done next, and had no thought to spare beyond the desire to do that well. So, although there was perhaps a mist of tears

over her dark eyes as she watched her father turn and go down the street, she did not watch for long, but passed through the great door, anxious to begin work at once. She was but a child when she entered that service, but she never left it again, and served the family well and faithfully until her death.

Never had there been a more hard-working little maid. No one knew how early she got up, and how much work she got through before the sun began to rise. There was only one favour she asked, and that was to be allowed to go to the early service at the church close by. And as she always came quickly home and worked twice as well when it was over, she was allowed to go each morning as she wished.

All the family grew fond of the cheerful, busy little maid who served them so faithfully, and as the years went by, everything was left in her hands, for they knew she could be trusted.

There was no waste in the kitchen now, for Zita had always a thought for the poor, and nothing was thrown away that could with care be used for them. Even her leisure time she spent in helping others, and many a sick and lonely person was cheered and fed by the little maid, who often went hungry herself that she might share her food with them.

It was indeed seldom that Zita neglected or forgot a duty, but one morning a strange thing happened. It was the day when the bread was to be baked, and the loaves should have been ready before Zita started for church. She could not think afterwards how she had forgotten, and it was only when she rose from her knees after the service that she suddenly remembered that she had left her work undone. In great distress she hurried home, and was quite breathless with running when she entered the kitchen.

But as she looked towards the table she stood quite still and her eyes grew round with wonder. There lay a row of loaves, all evenly shaped and ready to be baked, with a white

cloth laid over them to keep them from the dust. Could it possibly be her mistress who had come down and done her work? But no, no one was stirring in the house, every one was fast asleep.

Then a great feeling of contentment filled the heart of the little maid. Something told her that it was God's good angels that had done this kindness. Their helpful hands had not scorned the lowly service, that they might help a little hard-working maid-servant while she prayed in church.

Zita had always loved her work, but the thought of the angels' help seemed to make the common duties of life beautiful in her eyes, and she felt more than ever that it was the service of the King.

That winter was a hard one for the poor. The cold was bitter and lasted long. Zita had given away all the warm clothes she had, and still she grieved for the poor souls who shivered in the keen wind and whom she could not help. And when Christmas morning dawned it was the coldest day of all. The air was thick with snow, and the icy wind swept every thought of warmth away. The people who were hurrying to church were wrapped up to their ears in their cloaks, and walked with their heads well down to escape the sting of the bitter mountain wind.

Zita as usual was ready to start, never giving a thought to the cold, though her dress was thin and she had no cloak to cover her. But she had not gone many steps from the door when she heard her master's voice calling to her.

'Zita,' he said, 'it is madness to go out in such weather as this. Thou hast no cloak and thy garments are but thin. Be content and stay at home to-day.'

'O master!' she cried, and the tears started to her eyes, 'bid me do anything but that. It is the festa of the Christ-child, and I go to greet Him in His church.'

'Nay, but thou wilt be frozen,' said her master.

'The church is near,' said Zita pleadingly, 'and I shall

scarce feel the cold.'

Her master smiled and bade her take her own way, but as he spoke he took off his own warm cloak and wrapped it round her shoulders.

'I will lend thee this,' he said, 'that it may keep thee warm whilst thou art in the church. But remember it is but lent and thou must bring it safely back to me.'

Never had Zita felt so warm and comfortable before. The thick soft cloak kept out the piercing cold and sent a glow of warmth down to her very toes. She said to herself that now she knew what the young birds must feel like when they creep under their mother's wing.

But with the warmth and comfort came another thought. This was the day when Christ was born in a poor bare stable where all had been cold and hard for Him. No fine soft clothing had covered Him, and it seemed scarcely right that she, His servant, should fare so much better than her Master.

'Forgive me, Lord,' she prayed. 'Thou knowest I did not ask to wear this cloak, and I would gladly suffer far more than cold for Thy dear sake.'

She reached the church door just as her prayer was ended, and there she stopped for a moment to look with pity upon a poor beggar-man who stood leaning against the wall. He was very poor and thin, and he shivered as he stood there, as if half dead with cold. Zita's heart was filled with a great pity as she looked at him, and she went closer and gently touched his arm.

'Brother,' she said, 'art thou so very cold? See here, I will lend thee this soft warm cloak. I cannot give it thee, for it is not mine. But while we kneel together in church it shall keep thee warm, and afterwards thou shalt come with me and warm thyself at my kitchen fire.'

So Zita and the beggar-man knelt together through the service, and though the stones were cold on which the little maid knelt, she never missed the soft warmth of the fine

cloak. Her heart was warm with her great love and the worship she had brought. But presently, the service ended, people began to stream out, and Zita turned to where the man had knelt beside her to bid him once more come home with her. But the beggar was gone. Up and down the church she went seeking him, but he was nowhere to be found. At last the sacristan crossly bade her begone, for it was time to shut the doors. Poor Zita! she scarcely knew what to do.

'I had no right, even in my pity, to lend the cloak,' she sobbed. 'How can I face my master now?'

And with a heavy heart she turned at last and went slowly home.

Her face was white and she trembled with fear as she entered the house and stood silent before her master. He looked her over and his eyes grew stern.

'Where is the cloak I lent thee?' he asked. 'Did I not bid thee bring it back to me most carefully?'

His voice was loud and angry, for he was in a terrible rage, seeing that the cloak was gone. His angry words thundered out, and Zita stood silently weeping before him with bowed head.

But who was this that stood at her side and touched her arm so gently? She looked up. Could it indeed be the beggar-man? It certainly was her master's cloak which he placed in her hands, but round the face that smiled so kindly down on her there was a wondrous light, which seemed to lighten all the place. She tried to speak, but before the words would come he was gone.

'Who was the man?' the master asked in low, awed tones.

'I thought at first it was the poor beggar-man, to whom I lent thy cloak,' said Zita, 'for, see, he hath brought it safely back. But when I saw his face, I knew it was the Angel of the Lord.'

The master was ashamed of the anger he had shown. How could he blame her now? From that day his words grew more

gentle, and angry tones were seldom heard in the house. Indeed, it seemed as if all evil things, all unkind thoughts, and selfish deeds were banished at the presence of the faithful serving-maid.

It was one day in summer when the heat was so great that there seemed no air to breathe, that, as Zita went to draw water from the well, a poor pilgrim passed that way. His throat was parched and he was faint and weary, and seeing Zita, he stopped and begged for a draught of water to quench his thirst.

'I only wish that it was wine,' said Zita, for she knew that it was not wise in the great heat to drink that water.

But what could she do? She had nothing else to give him, and he was so thirsty. There was only one thing she could do to guard against the danger, and so she silently prayed the Lord that He would bless the water and not suffer it to hurt His poor servant.

The pilgrim smiled at her words.

'I, too, wish that it was wine,' he said, as he raised the cup to his lips.

Then he started and looked at the lowly servant-maid who had handed him the water.

'See, but it is wine,' he said, 'the most delicious wine that I have ever tasted.' So Zita knew the Lord had heard her prayer.

The years went by and Zita grew old in the service of her master, working well and faithfully until the end, when the angels came and bore her gentle soul to heaven.

She was only a poor serving-maid, but the people of Lucca knew that a saint had lived among them, and they crowded to her funeral that they might kiss her hand and touch her garments. It was said too that a bright star shone above the house the day she died, but her pure life shone out more brightly than any star, and shines on even now with a soft radiance wherever her memory still lingers.

S. Mark and the Fisherman

Near the Palace of the Doges in Venice there is a wide marble bridge which is crossed by hundreds of busy feet all day long. But few of the people who pass that way ever notice a little marble picture, close to the pavement, tucked away into a corner of the bridge. It is the picture of a gentle-faced Madonna with her Baby, and underneath are two quaint-looking boats, with some words cut out in the marble.

Sometimes when a gondola goes gliding under the bridge some one with noticing eyes will see the little marble picture and ask the gondolier why it was put there.

'Signorina,' says the gondolier, 'there is a wonderful and true story about that little Madonna. I cannot tell you the story now because there is so much noise and confusion in these little canals. But some night when we are out on the great lagunes I will tell you why the Madonna and the boats are there.'

And this is the story which the gondolier tells under the stars, out on the calm, still water of the lagunes. The far-away lights of Venice shine like a circlet of diamonds with their long reflections in the calm waters. The world seems to our eyes like a crystal globe, for who can tell where the sky begins and the water ends, or which are the most real, the stars overhead, or their twin reflections below? The fireflies come out and breathe and vanish and glow again. A little flame of blue fire breaks the surface of the water as the oar dips down. There is magic in everything around, which well befits the telling of the old Venetian legend.

Long years ago there lived an old fisherman in Venice. He

was an honest, hard-working old man, who had nothing in the world but his nets and his fishing-boat. But what more would you have?

At night he tied up his boat under the wide, white bridge, and slept there snugly until the morning. It was as good as a marble palace to him.

Of course there were storms in winter, but his boat was always safe in the shelter of the bridge until one terrible night.

The winter was almost past, for it was in the month of February, when a storm burst over Venice, such as no one had ever seen before, and no one has ever seen since. For three days the storm raged, and the waters rose higher and higher until it seemed as if Venice would be swept from her foundations.

The old fisherman in his little boat was moored as usual under the bridge, but the mad swirl of the waters broke the moorings and he was swept out into the open, and only managed with great difficulty to reach the steps by the Riva of San Marco. There he landed wet through and greatly fearing what would happen next. There was nothing to do but to sit down and wait patiently for the storm to cease, while the angry waves beat against his little boat, and the night grew darker and darker.

Presently, as he sat there alone, a man came down the steps and stood beside him. The old fisherman knew most of the Venetian people by sight, but he had never seen this man before.

'Fisherman,' said the stranger, 'wilt thou row me across the water to San Giorgio?'

Now the island on which San Giorgio stands was not far off, but between was a grey belt of raging waves lashed ever higher and higher by the fierce gathering storm.

The old fisherman pointed to the waves and then to his little boat.

'How can I row thee across?' he shouted, for he needs

must shout to be heard above the roar of the wind; 'my boat would be dashed to pieces in a moment, and we would both be drowned.'

'I must reach San Giorgio to-night,' said the stranger, 'and I will pay thee generously.'

Well, seeing it was the will of heaven and hearing that he would be well paid, the old fisherman entered the boat with the stranger and managed to push off from the shore. What then was his amazement to find that it was quite easy to guide the boat. The tempest still raged around him, but the waves seemed to spread themselves out in a smooth pathway before them.

It was not long, therefore, before they reached San Giorgio, and there the stranger landed, bidding the old fisherman wait for him.

Presently the stranger came out of the church again and with him came a young knight. He was straight as an arrow, upright as a dart, and his face was very good to look upon, it was so brave and beautiful.

Both the men entered the boat, and the stranger, turning to the fisherman, said quietly, 'Now, thou shalt row us over to San Niccolo di Lido.'

'But how is that possible?' cried the old fisherman, throwing out his hands. 'Even were it fair weather it would be impossible to row so far with but one oar.'

'It shall be possible for thee,' answered the stranger calmly, 'and remember thou shalt be paid generously.'

Well, the fisherman looked at the wide stretch of angry waters and then at the quiet face of the stranger, and took up his oar again.

'We shall certainly all be drowned,' he said. But he pushed off once more and set out in the direction of San Niccolo di Lido.

And just as it had happened before, the waves spread themselves out smoothly under the little boat, and the

fisherman rowed without the slightest difficulty until they came to San Niccolo di Lido.

Then both the men got out, again bidding the fisherman wait for them.

This time they came back with an old man, dressed in the robes of a bishop. He had a kind, gentle face, and even to look at him comforted the heart of the frightened old fisherman.

'Now, row to the gates of the two castles,' said the stranger, when all three were safely in the boat.

'But that is the open sea,' said the fisherman, trembling with fear; 'we shall be certainly overwhelmed.'

'Row boldly,' said the stranger, 'and fear naught.'

The winds howled and the waves roared, and the tempest shrieked louder than ever. It seemed impossible that a little boat could live in such angry waters.

And lo! when they came to the gates of the sea, a terrible sight met the eyes of the old fisherman. Sweeping down upon them, full in front, was a huge ship or galley with all sails set. The ship was crowded in every corner with black demons whose shrieks rang even louder than the scream of the wind.

On and on they came, tearing through the waves, and the old fisherman fell on his knees and began to say his prayers, for he thought in another moment his boat would be swallowed up.

But the stranger and the knight and the old bishop rose to their feet, and with uplifted hands they calmly made the Sign of the Cross as the demon ship came near. Instantly the waters grew still, the wind dropped, and the demon ship disappeared with a sound like the crack of thunder.

'Now row us back from whence we came,' said the stranger.

And the trembling old fisherman obeyed, wondering greatly what all this could mean. One thing he felt sure of. That demon ship had been on its way to overwhelm and destroy Venice, and he rejoiced to think his beloved city was

now safe.

So back they went to San Niccolo di Lido, and there they left the old bishop; then on to San Giorgio, and there the brave knight silently landed.

But when the old fisherman rowed back to the Riva di San Marco, and the stranger was about to land, he began to bethink himself of the promised payment.

'Miracles are wonderful things,' he said to himself, 'but I want something more than miracles.'

So he stood with his hat in his hand, and asked the stranger to pay him as he had promised.

'Thou art right,' said the stranger. 'I must not forget thee. Thou shalt be well rewarded. Dost thou know for whom thou hast worked to-night? I am Saint Mark, the patron saint of this city. The young knight we took with us was the brave Saint George, and the bishop was none other than the good Saint Nicholas. Together we have saved Venice. For had it not been for us the demons would utterly have destroyed her. To-morrow thou shalt go to the Doge and tell him all thou hast seen, and how Venice was saved with thy help, and he will reward thee.'

The old fisherman shook his head.

'And how will the Doge know that I speak the truth?' he asked. For though he held Saint Mark in great reverence, and felt how great an honour it was for the saint to talk with him, he still felt a little anxious about the payment.

Then Saint Mark drew a ring off his finger and handed it to the old fisherman.

'Take this ring,' he said, 'and show it to the Doge, and tell him I gave it to thee. Then should he still doubt thy word, bid him look in the treasury of San Marco, and he will find the ring is no longer there.'

So the old fisherman took the ring and thanked the Saint. And the next day he went as early as possible to the Doge and told him the whole story of what had happened, showing him

the ring.

The Doge sent quickly to search in the treasury for the Saint's ring, which was always kept there, but they found it had disappeared. So they were sure that it was Saint Mark himself who had given it to the old fisherman. Whereupon there was a great thanksgiving service held in Venice, and a solemn procession went to each of the three churches, where the bones of the saints were enshrined.

The old fisherman was not only rewarded with gold, but a certain privilege was granted to him. He alone was allowed the right of selling the silver sand from the shore of the Lido. So he grew richer than any fisherman in Venice, but in spite of his riches he always lived in his little boat under the white marble bridge. And when he died the city rulers ordered that little marble picture to be made, with the boats carved beneath it, in memory of the old fisherman who had helped to save Venice that terrible night from the vengeance of the demon crew.

Domenica

Not many miles outside the city of Florence, in the fertile valley of the Arno, there is a little village called Bagno a Ripoli. Here, many, many years ago, there lived in one of the poorest of the village houses a little girl called Domenica. Her father and mother were poor contadini or peasants, who worked in the fields all day, and the little Domenica early learned to take care of herself during the long hours she was left alone. Her mother knew it was not likely she would come to any harm, although she was but five years old, for she was a wise little maid and seldom got into any mischief. She would play about the house or go out to gather flowers in the fields when the sun was not too hot, and when she was hungry she knew where to get the slice of good black bread and handful of fruit which had been put aside for her dinner.

Domenica never thought about being lonely. Her head was always full of busy thoughts and plans. And then, too, the picture of the Madonna and Gesu Bambino always seemed to keep her company. It hung high up on the wall of the little room, and the lamp that hung before it threw a faint light upon the mother's face.

How Domenica wished that the picture hung lower down that she might see it better. Even when she climbed on the old wooden chair and stood on tiptoe, she could not see it clearly. The picture was blackened by smoke and age, and the light was so bad. She could see the sweet smile on the Madonna's face as she looked downwards, but the rest of the picture was dark, and Domenica could only just trace the faintest outline of the Holy Child.

But how she loved that picture! The Madonna and the Baby were her friends and companions all day long. Kneeling upon the wooden chair, she would tell all the thoughts that came into her head to the gentle mother, for she was never tired of listening, and always smiled so kindly and always understood.

Every morning the first thing Domenica loved to do was to wander out into the fields and gather flowers for her Madonna. There was a little shelf below the picture which she could just reach, and there, in an old cracked jug, she placed her offering. She was very particular which kind of flowers she gave to the Madonna, and if possible she always gathered a bunch of the small pink-tipped daisies. They were the flowers she loved best herself, and she was sure the Gesu Bambino must love them too, just as all babies did. They did not make a very grand show, for their stalks were often very short and they would not hold up their heads, but the Madonna knew the ways of daisies and would not need any excuses made for their waywardness.

It was just the one drawback to Domenica's happiness that the picture should hang so high, and every morning she told the Madonna how hard it was for her.

'My Lady,' she said, looking up with folded hands, 'thou art holding the Gesu Bambino in thy arms I know, but I cannot see Him at all. Thou art so kind and good, and thou knowest how much I long to see His face. Wilt thou not some day bend down and show Him to me, if I am very good?'

Her face grew very wistful as she prayed this prayer over and over again. It almost seemed as if the Madonna never meant to show her the Baby, for she never came nearer, and the shadow over the Bambino never lifted.

Domenica had gathered her daisies as usual one morning, and was playing quietly by herself in the little room, when a gentle knock sounded at the door.

She trotted across the floor and opened the door a very

little way, and then peeped out to see who was there. She knew that it was not wise to open the door too far and allow any stranger to come in. A poor, tired-looking woman was standing on the doorstep, and wrapped in her old shawl was a little bundle which Domenica was sure must be a baby.

'May I come in and rest awhile?' the woman asked, and she smiled at the little eager face peeping through the half-open door. 'The sun is very hot and I cannot find shade in which to rest.'

'Come in, come in,' said Domenica, opening the door quite wide. 'Come in and rest.'

She dragged forward the wooden chair and smiled a shy smile of welcome as the poor woman sat wearily down and began to undo the little bundle wrapped in her shawl. Domenica loved babies, and she stood watching with intense interest while the shawl was being unfolded. Then the woman spoke again.

'We have come a long weary way,' she said, 'and have tasted nothing to-day. I would be very grateful for a mouthful of bread, and the baby too is hungry. For the love of the Gesu Bambino, little maid, give us something to eat.'

'You shall have my dinner,' said Domenica joyfully. 'How glad I am that I have not eaten it yet.'

She ran to the cupboard and reached down the thick slice of black bread, and brought too the bunch of sweet white grapes, which had been set aside for her by her careful mother that morning.

'It is all I have,' said Domenica; 'but how I wish there was some milk for the bambino.'

'Thou hast given us all thy dinner, little one,' said the woman very gently; 'thou couldst not do more. But if I might have a drink of cool water from the well, it would do instead of milk.'

The copper water-pot was heavy to carry, but Domenica struggled bravely with it down the path to the spring close by,

and before very long came panting back with as much of the water as had not been spilt by the way. She put the pot down on the floor and then stood upright to take a long breath.

But what was it that had made the little room suddenly so bright, brighter even than the sunshine outside? Domenica gazed at the mother and child. A soft, bright light shone round the mother's head, and a still brighter light made a circle round the head of the sleeping baby. Domenica caught her breath almost with a sob of fear, but the mother stretched out her hand and drew the little one close to her knee.

'Dost thou not know me, little maid?' she asked.

And Domenica, looking up, was afraid no longer. It was her own Madonna who was looking down so kindly at her.

'I have come to grant thy prayer and to show thee my Baby,' said the gentle voice again. 'But first I had to prove if thou wert worthy. Thou hast given thine all for the love of the Gesu Bambino, and now thou shalt look upon His face.'

Then the Mother folded back the shawl, and Domenica, with hands clasped tight together, bent over and looked with all her heart in her eyes.

'He is more beautiful even than I thought He could be,' she whispered, 'but, my Lady, tell me why He is so small.'

'He is small because the love for Him in thy heart is still but small,' said the Mother gently. 'As thy love grows bigger, He will grow too.'

Domenica knelt down and pressed closer to the Madonna's knee.

'Now that thou hast indeed come, thou wilt not take the Bambino away again,' she said. 'Or if thou must go, take me with thee that I may be always near Him.'

But the Madonna shook her head.

'I cannot take thee now,' she said, 'and I must not stay. But some day thou shalt see Him again. If the love grows ever greater in thy heart, if thou wilt learn to do His work here, to care for His little ones, the poor, the sick and the sorrowful,

for His dear sake, then thou wilt always belong to Him, and by-and-bye, when He is ready, He will return and take thee home where thou wilt ever be near Him.'

The tears had gathered in Domenica's brown eyes, and for a moment everything looked dim. Then she quickly raised her hand to brush the tears away, that she might look once more on the face of the little sleeping Child.

But the room was dim again. There was no one sitting in the old wooden chair by which she knelt. High above her the lamp cast its light on the pictured Madonna, and the heavy shadow lay dark as ever over the outline of the Gesu Bambino.

Domenica knelt on there, gazing at the empty chair, the tears all dried, and her eyes shining like two stars. She had seen the Christ-child, and that vision would never again fade from her heart.

In after years, when she told this wonderful story, people asked her reverently to tell them what He looked like as He lay upon His Mother's knee. But Domenica would only shake her head and say she could not tell. There were no earthly words that could describe the beauty of that face. But perhaps the look on her own face, and the wonderful light that came into her eyes when she spoke of the vision, told more than words could have done.

She grew to be a great saint, this little Domenica, and in the convent where she went to serve her Lord they called her 'The heavenly sister.' Then when her work on earth was done she saw once more the vision of the Lord she loved. Not this time did He come as a tiny, helpless Baby, but in the fulness of His strength, just as the love for Him had grown great in her heart. Did she know Him again? Ah! yes. The look that she had seen in the face of the Gesu Bambino had never faded from her memory, and she knew Him at once, knew that He had come to fulfil the promise made on that sunny morning years ago when He lay a helpless Baby in His Mother's arms

'He will return and take thee home where thou wilt ever be near Him.'

The Legend of the Castellano

The Count of Castellano sat in the banqueting-hall of his castle thinking deeply. He was growing old. Very soon, he knew, his life must come to an end, and the thought of that end made him feel uneasy and afraid. All the wicked deeds he had committed seemed to rise up and stalk past him like grim ghosts, and they were so black and terrible that he hid his face and dared not look at them.

'We are the poor you have robbed,' cried a crowd of grey ghosts as they swept wailing by.

'We are the wicked passions you have allowed to dwell in your heart,' shrieked an evil-looking band.

'We are your lost days, lost opportunities, and all the good deeds you have left undone,' sighed a train of sorrowful spectres.

It was all quite true. He had riches and all that heart could wish, but what good had he ever done? How often had his gentle wife implored him to repent. But the more she urged him the worse he had become. He knew that the demons were rejoicing to think they had his soul in safe keeping.

The door of the banqueting-hall was cautiously opened and a servant looked in.

'Signer,' he said, 'a holy father, on his way from Rome, begs for hospitality to-night.'

'Let him come in,' said the Castellano, much to the surprise of the servant who had scarcely dared to bring the message.

The priest entered and the old Count received him courteously, and ordered meat and wine to be placed before him.

'I have done but few good deeds in my life,' he added; 'I can at least show hospitality to one of God's servants.'

Then he began to tell the priest all that he had been thinking about as he sat there alone.

The priest sighed deeply, and looked earnestly at the old man.

'What will be the use of all your gold, your splendid castle and your feasts and pleasures, when the demons come to carry off your soul?' he asked.

'I would it were not now too late to repent,' said the Castellano, gazing with troubled eyes at the earnest face of the holy father.

'It is never too late,' answered the priest. 'Make your confession now, and I will pray God to have mercy.'

But as the good father listened to the long list of black sins he was almost too horrified to speak.

'Indeed, you have but little time in which to repent for such a long, wicked, wasted life,' he said at length. 'But perhaps if you do penance for two whole years God may have mercy on your soul.'

The Count shook his head when he heard those words.

'How can I do penance for two years?' he asked, 'I who cannot pass one day without committing some sin? I will not begin by making a promise to God which I know it will be impossible for me to keep.'

'Well, your sins are certainly grievous,' said the priest, 'but perhaps the good God will be satisfied with a year's penance.'

'Neither is that possible,' answered the Count. 'A year would be a long, long trial. My penitence would not last half that time. No, it is no use giving me a month or even a week. I am not strong enough to trust myself. I can but promise to do penance for one whole night, and if that is no use, I must give up all hope of pardon.'

Then the priest saw that the Count was truly in earnest, and he longed that his soul should be saved.

'God alone can give true penitence,' he said, 'and with Him time is as nothing. Go, then, to the little ruined chapel which I passed on my way hither, and spend the night in prayer before the altar. But see that nothing draws you away or interferes with your prayers. For this one night you must belong only to God.'

The Count rose with a lightened heart and prepared to set out for the little chapel. He was strong in his purpose to pray for pardon for his sins.

But as he knelt in the chapel saying the prayers which had not passed his lips since he was a little child, the demons, who were never far off from him, gnashed their teeth with rage and anger.

'What is all this?' cried the chief diavolo. 'Here we have worked for years and waited for this man's soul, and now at last he seeks to cheat us of what surely is our own possession.'

'Oh! leave him to me,' laughed a little demon; 'I have always known how to tempt him, and I will not fail now.'

'Be off then!' said the chief diavolo, 'and do not rest until you have done your work.'

So the little demon made haste, and took the form of the Castellano's sister and came hurrying into the chapel where the Count knelt before the altar.

'Brother, brother, help, help!' cried the demon. 'Our castle is surrounded by enemies. They have spoiled all your lands. Your servants have fled, and your wife and daughters are helpless in the castle.'

'My sister,' answered the Castellano, 'I cannot come. I dare not break my word to God. I have promised to spend this night in penitence in the chapel, and here I must stay.'

'But, brother,' cried the demon, 'do you not care for your wife and children? Do you not mind that your castle will soon be in the hands of your enemy and all your riches gone?'

'My gold and silver, my castle and lands are nothing compared to my honour,' answered the Count, 'and as to my wife

and children, God will protect them.'

The demon saw it was no use, and returned to his master very sad and crestfallen.

'I can do nothing with the man,' he said gloomily.

'You are but a useless little diavolo,' said his master, 'and I shall no longer send you on earth to do my work.'

'Then let me try,' said another demon eagerly; 'I have great cunning which never fails.'

So the cunning demon made it appear as if a great fire was raging in the castle, and the glare of the flames lighted up the windows of the little chapel. Then he called loudly to the Castellano to escape, telling him that the castle was on fire and the flames were spreading.

But the Count only answered quietly, 'I am in God's hands and He will allow no harm to come near me.'

Then the red glare died away and the Castellano went on with his prayers.

The demon looked on in despair. Soon it would be morning, and when day broke the Count's soul would be saved unless he could be forced before then to leave the chapel.

So as a last hope the demon took the form of a priest and came solemnly into the chapel. A little diavolo walked in front of him, pretending to be a server and swinging his censer of incense.

The demon touched the kneeling Count on the shoulder.

'It is time for the morning Mass,' he said, 'and you are too great a sinner to stay here. Begone ere I begin the service.'

'I know I have been a great sinner,' said the Castellano, 'but since God has promised to pardon me, you need not seek to thrust me out.'

At these words the whole crowd of listening demons gave a howl of rage, and rushed in upon the Count to drag him out of the chapel by force.

But what was that faint light in the east, and what sound was that which stilled the demons' cries? Surely it was dawn

and the little chapel bell was ringing out the Ave Maria. The day had come, and with the darkness the whole evil crew must flee before the light.

So the Castellano had saved his soul, but there he knelt on silently, never moving. And when, later on, the real priest entered, he found the Count still kneeling there with a peaceful, happy smile upon his face. The pardon he had prayed for had been granted, and he would never more fall into the hands of the evil demons, for the angels had carried his soul safely home to God.

Stella Marts

Blue and still lie the waters of the Bay of Naples, blue as the sky above, with only a dainty ripple on their surface, where the summer wind comes wooing from the land and the water trembles at its kiss. The little fishing-boats that busily flit to and fro look like gay butterflies enjoying life in the sunshine and warmth. But the waters are not always quiet and blue. Sudden storms sweep down and change the smiling bay into a black swirl of angry waves, rising mountains high, and hissing under the lash of the furious wind. Alas for the little fishing-boats then when night comes on, and there is no friendly light to guide them to home and shelter, nothing but the angry glow of the fiery mountain, shining red against the stormy sky.

Then it is that the fishermen, huddled together in fear, and driven before the lashing wind, send up a prayer to their Madonna Stella Maris, star of the sea. Her picture it is which hangs in the convent church high on the hill above, and they feel sure she will protect them in their danger and guide them safely home. Has she not always been their friend? How could one doubt that, knowing the old story of her wonderful appearing?

Long years ago, before the monastery was built, the hillside was a waste and desolate place. It was said that evil spirits had their dwelling there, dwarfs and mountain gnomes, and imps that worked mischief to peaceable folk. No one dared pass by that way, especially after dark, and yet, strange to say, night after night a beacon fire was lighted on that wild hillside.

It could not be the work of evil spirits, neither could it have been lighted by human hands, but every night the light shone up, and shot steadily over the bay, warning the boats to steer clear of the peril of the rocks below.

The grateful sailors, steering their course by the friendly light, thanked heaven for the kindly aid, but no one dared go near the spot to see what the light might be.

Then it happened that one dark night, when a company of fishermen were drawing in their nets, full of the silvery fish which shone in the light of the friendly beacon, one of the men, looking up, gave a great cry of fear and astonishment.

There, upon the path of light which shone from the hill over the dark waters of the bay, came a wondrous vision. It was the Madonna herself, clothed in shining garments of light, coming towards their little boat. Her eyes looked kindly upon them with the mother-love that ever fills her heart, and she smiled as she drew near.

'My children,' she said, 'you knew not that the guiding light from yonder hill was lighted by me. A mother must always care for her children in peril. But to-night I come to bid you do me a service. Where that light burns nightly on the wild hillside there is an old well, and there hidden away is an image of myself. Go, therefore, to the bishop and bid him search, and place it in a safe spot where my children may do it honour.'

Then the light faded, and the Madonna vanished from their sight.

The fishermen gazed at one another in trembling fear.

'Has the spell been cast upon us?' they asked. 'What can this vision of the night mean?' and they were too frightened to speak of it to any one, and never once thought of going to the bishop, as the Madonna had directed.

But the next night again the vision came to them, and again they were told what they must do, but still they doubted and did nothing.

Then on the third night the Madonna appeared, not as the gentle mother, but as the Queen of Heaven, sternly reproving them for their disobedience.

This time they did not dare to disobey the vision, but when morning broke they left the boat and journeyed with all speed to the good bishop.

'But who will believe our story?' asked one, as they climbed the steep road and pushed on their way. 'Even if the bishop receives us he will think we are mad when we tell our tale.'

'Better that than risk once more the frown of the Madonna,' said another.

'We have only to do as she bade us, and leave the rest,' said a third.

But when they reached the bishop's house it almost seemed as if they had been expected. No one asked what was their business there, but they were treated with great courtesy and taken at once into the good bishop's presence.

'Ye are welcome,' said the bishop, when the three rough, poorly clad fishermen had knelt to receive his blessing. 'Tell me your errand quickly. It has been shown to me in a dream that ye would come as bearers of a heavenly message, so speak without fear.'

Then the fishermen, one by one, took up the tale and told of the lonely watch on the dark waters, of the friendly beacon which shone from the deserted hill, and of the wondrous vision that had come to them over the silent sea.

'Never before have our eyes beheld such beauty,' they said. 'Her garments were of woven light and her eyes like the stars. Her voice sounded in our ears as the music of the distant church bells whispering over the sea to welcome us home when our nightly toil is o'er. At first we thought it must only be a dream, but for three nights now we have seen the vision, and dare no longer disobey her command.'

The bishop asked no more, but at once made ready to set

out. He bade his priests robe themselves, and with the fishermen as guides the procession started. Chanting the psalms as they went, they wended their way over the rough road and climbed the wild, deserted hill, until they came to the spot from whence the beacon had shone, night after night. There, as the Madonna had said, they found an old ruined well, and hidden away at the bottom was the beautiful picture of the Madonna, which now hangs in the convent chapel.

This is the tale of long, long ago which the fishermen repeat to each other to-day. Never again has the Madonna been seen in the lonely night watches, coming upon the golden path across the dark waters. But the fishermen look up to the light shining from the monastery on the hill, where her picture still hangs, and the thought of her beautiful face comforts and cheers them in their peril. 'Our lady, Star of the Sea,' they still call her, in memory of the friendly beacon that was once lighted there to guide poor mariners home.

The Angel and the Diavolo

'Where shall we go to-day?' asked the Saint.

'Oh, take me to some place that has a story,' said the child. 'I want a new story to-day.'

It was early morning in Venice, and the Saint and the child came hand in hand out of the dim old church into the pearly light of the great square. Every morning they wandered together through the narrow byways, before the bustle and business of the day began. Sometimes they went to watch the sunrise over the lagunes, sometimes they found their way to the old mercato, where the heavily laden boats brought in their heaped-up treasures of yellow pumpkins, purple artichokes, pale-green salads, shining piles of crimson cherries, and little, long-shaped baskets with strawberries peeping out of the narrow necks. But wherever they went they would find some curious tale, or legend, which the Saint would tell to the listening child.

Slowly now they turned their steps out of the great square, underneath the dim archway of the Clock Tower, into the narrow street beyond. They always walked slowly, there was so much to see, and those who hurry, miss much in Venice. Then at last, after many bewildering turns leading over as many little bridges, they came out opposite an old palace, which stood at the corner of the two broad waterways. Every window, every niche was reflected clear below as if in a mirror, and the white marble of the sculptured figure which was let into the house above had its twin in the green water below.

'Here is our story,' said the Saint. 'Tell me, child, what do you see carved above that window?'

'It is a beautiful angel,' said the child, looking across at the marble figure with its clasped hands and peacefully folded wings. Then she looked up into the sweet face of the Saint and waited eagerly for the story.

The Saint smiled down on the listening child. 'It is only a strange old legend,' she said, 'which most people have forgotten. But I will tell you why the angel is there.

'Many, many years ago, a clever lawyer of Venice lived in that house. He was known all over the city as the wisest and most learned of men, and was very rich and powerful. But although men praised him for his wisdom, they would always end by shaking their heads and lowering their voices when they spoke of him. For it was said there was no man as wicked as he in all the countryside. Strange tales were told of wild and wicked deeds done in the old house, and gradually one by one his servants left him, frightened by his evil ways. At last the lawyer was left all alone in the great house, and never a friend came nigh him.

'"He has sold his soul to the Evil One," said the citizens in whispers one to another. And even as they spoke they started and looked round swiftly over their shoulders, half afraid lest the clever lawyer or the Diavolo might be standing there listening to their words.

'Now it was very uncomfortable to live in a great house all alone, and the lawyer did not like it. There was no one to wait on him or prepare his meals, and he began to think it would be better to mend his ways, and persuade some of the old servants to come back.

'Just as this thought entered his head one evening, the door of the room where he was sitting was pushed open. With a bound there sprang into the room a large furry animal, which stood grinning and chattering before him in the most friendly manner. It was a very large black monkey, as tall as a child and as strong as a man, and as it gambolled about and uttered its queer chattering cries, the lawyer laughed more

heartily than he had done for years.

'"Come," he said, "here is a merry companion arrived just when he is most needed."

'The monkey grinned as if he understood his welcome and began to make himself quite at home. In a short time he learned to do anything which the lawyer taught him. His hands were so deft and his head so intelligent that there seemed no end to his usefulness. He could sweep the rooms, light the fires, cook the food, and indeed do more than all the trained servants had ever done. Wherever the lawyer went he boasted of his wonderful monkey, and was never tired of telling stories of its clever and amusing ways.

'But the fact was that this monkey was none other than the Diavolo himself. He had made up his mind to come and live with the lawyer that he might be quite sure of securing his soul. For there was still some good in the lawyer, and the Evil One thought it wiser to be always near him, ready to stamp it out.

'Now, although the lawyer had often and often grieved his good angel and driven him away, still the angel watched over him from afar, and longed to help and protect him. Time after time he had tried and failed, until it seemed quite hopeless. But now when he saw with sad, grieved eyes how the Evil One, in the form of the monkey, was always present, he made up his mind to try once more.

'So one evening the good angel took the form of one of the lawyer's friends, and went to call at the old lonely house.

'The lawyer was somewhat surprised when the visitor came in. It was many a long day since any friend had cared to cross his door. Strangely enough, since the monkey had come, people seemed to avoid him more than ever.

'"I hear you have a wonderful servant," said the angel visitor, after they had talked together for a little. "I would like to hear all about him."

'Nothing pleased the lawyer more than to talk of his

strange pet, and he began at once to tell of his clever ways.

'"He would seem to be a most wonderful animal," said the visitor. "I would greatly like to see him."

'"There is nothing easier," said the lawyer in high good-humour. "I will call him at once."

'And going to the door he shouted, "Babbuino, Babbuino, come hither, thou rascal, and show thyself."

'But the Diavolo knew all too well who it was who had come in the guise of a friend to sup with his master. Instead of running as usual at the lawyer's call, he had fled away with all haste, and hidden himself in the furthest corner of the old house.

'"Babbuino, Babbuino!" called the lawyer again. Then he began to grow angry, and stamped his foot in a great rage.

'"Let us go and look for him," said the angel quietly.

'So together the lawyer and his guest went and searched each room carefully, but no signs of the missing monkey could they find. At last, however, in a little dark cupboard they saw a crouching form, and the angel went forward to touch it.

'But as soon as the Diavolo caught sight of the angel he gave a great cry and sprang headlong against the outer wall of the room. At his touch the wall gave way, stones rattled down, and a great hole was made. Then, in the midst of a cloud of smoke and dust, the Evil One disappeared.

'The lawyer looked on in terror and amazement, and then turned to his visitor. But the visitor too was gone, and instead there stood an angel looking at him with sad, pleading eyes.

'"I have returned once more to try to save thee," he said; "see that this last time be not in vain."

'Then he spread his great white wings, and he too flew out into the starry night.

'The lawyer trembled from head to foot, and fell upon his knees, thanking heaven for his deliverance from the wiles of the Evil One. And as he grew calmer he prayed earnestly that his good angel might never leave him, but evermore might

guard and bless him.

'So happy times returned to the old corner palace. Servants and friends came back to the lawyer, and evil whisperings ceased.

'The hole in the wall was built up with new stones, but lest it should be forgotten the lawyer caused the figure of an angel to be carved in white marble and placed over the spot.

'There through all the years the figure of the angel has stood with folded hands and peaceful, happy face. There it still stands to-day, silently teaching the old lesson that good shall triumph in the end, telling the happy tale "of evil conquered and wrong made right."'

Little Legends of the Madonna

In the lonely country places of Italy, where the people live a struggling life of toil, where comforts are few and hardships are many, the poor often tell to each other the stories of our Blessed Lord and the Madonna. These stories never fail to bring comfort and cheer to their weary hearts, for they love to remember that the Lord was just as poor as they, and that His dear Mother knew what it meant to toil and care for her Child. It seems to lighten their burdens and make them more content, when they think that the King of Heaven once shared their lot.

And sometimes when the children complain that they have only lupin beans to eat, and say that lupins leave them just as hungry as they were before, the mother will tell them this old legend, which the children never tire of hearing.

We all know how the Gesu Bambino was born in a poor stable with no royal servants to guard Him, although He was King of Heaven. But we must remember, that He had something better than royal servants. He had His own dear Mother, and she was the best guard of all. She needed to be brave and watchful, for very soon danger drew near. The wicked King of that country sent out his cruel soldiers to kill the newborn Child, and the guards were soon on their way to Bethlehem to do his bidding. Then the Madonna wrapped the precious Bambino in her shawl, and set out swiftly and secretly by night, to save Him from King Herod's fury.

Early in the morning, when the faint light was beginning to dawn over the hills, and the olive-trees showed silver in the morning dew, the poor Madonna sat down to rest by the

wayside. She was very weary, for she had walked all night. Her heart too was heavy with fear, though her precious burden felt light.

So far she had escaped, but even now as she rested she heard the tramp of feet close by, and saw a company of soldiers wending their way down the long white road. It was useless to think of hiding, for they must already have seen her, and it was useless, too, to think of flight, for the men would so easily overtake her. There was nothing to do but to sit still quietly and pray to the good God for help. So she did not move or start, but gently and carefully she laid the Bambino in her lap and covered Him with her apron, tying the corners together to hide what lay there.

'Sleep, Little One, sleep,' she whispered. 'Thy Mother will see that no harm comes near Thee. Only sleep.'

Then up came the guards heated and angry with their fruitless search. Very roughly they spoke to her.

'Hast thou seen a woman and child pass by this way?' they asked. 'Answer truly or it will be the worse for thee.'

'I have seen no one pass by,' said the Madonna, lifting her gentle eyes to their scowling faces.

'What hast thou got in thy apron?' shouted one of the men.

'Gran' Signer,' she answered, and by the way she said those words it sounded as if she meant that her apron was full of grain. But what she truly said was 'the great lord.' Then one of the soldiers rudely caught at a corner of her apron and shook it. And lo! a stream of golden grain trickled out.

The men seemed satisfied then that this was but a poor peasant woman who could tell them nothing, so they turned back grumbling to seek some other road.

The Madonna bent her head over the sleeping Child and thanked God for the miracle of the grain, and then she once more lifted Him in her arms and set out on her way. But she had not gone far before she again heard the tramp of soldiers'

feet, and turning aside she hurried through a field of lupins. The lupin beans were dry and ready to be cut, and their tall stalks hid her as she passed. She stepped as lightly as she could and held her breath as she sped on noiselessly, holding her Treasure in her arms. But these lupin beans were senseless things, and instead of keeping very still and quiet as she passed, they rattled so loudly and made such a busy, bustling noise that it was a wonder the soldiers did not hear.

The Madonna stopped, trembling, to listen, but the tramp of feet grew fainter, and she knew that the pursuers had passed on and the danger was over for the time. Then she turned back to the field of lupins and shook her head over the noisy beans.

'Could ye not be silent when the Gesu Bambino was in danger?' she said. 'Henceforth when men eat of you, ye shall not satisfy their hunger, and this shall be your punishment.'

So that is why the lupin beans leave ever a hungry, empty feeling within us.

But the Madonna journeyed on, and when the sun was high in the heavens and she was faint with heat, again she heard the sound of pursuing feet. She was passing through a field just then where the peasants were sowing their corn, and the kind people seeing her tired face came round her and asked if they could help her on her way.

'I have a great favour to ask,' she said. 'A guard of soldiers will presently come up, and should they ask if ye have seen a woman and child pass by this way, only answer, I pray you, that one passed by when ye were sowing your corn.'

The men were puzzled, but promised to do as she asked. And lo! when she had crossed the field, the corn in the furrows began to sprout, the green blades shot up, and the ears of corn appeared, swelled and ripened before their eyes, so that by the time the soldiers arrived the men were in the midst of the harvest.

'Have ye seen a woman and child pass by this way?'

shouted the soldiers.

The peasants stopped their cutting and looked up, answering quietly just as the Madonna had bade them.

'We saw a woman and child pass by when we were sowing this corn,' they said.

'What use is that to us?' stormed the soldiers. 'Keep thy foolish jests for those that are in the humour for such things.'

'It is no jest,' said one of the reapers, 'we only speak the truth.'

'Well,' said the soldiers to each other, 'these men are too stupid to deceive us. It is no use going on. We must search in some other direction.'

So the Madonna and the Bambino escaped unhurt, for the good God has many ways of saving His children.

The poor Madonna! She had but a sad, anxious life to the very end, and even now one can see the traces of her tears. It was when she stood all trembling and weeping beneath the Cross that the swallows, swooping and darting overhead, longed to comfort and help her. Even the birds were sorrowful at that sight, and they flew closer and closer, circling round and round until at last they swept her breast with their soft feathers as they passed. The great tears were dropping slowly from her eyes, and fell on the upturned breasts of the little birds, and wherever a tear fell the feathers turned from black to pure white. And so the swallows have worn their white badge ever since in memory of the comfort they longed to give.

The Little Countess

There lived in Venice in the year 1288 a nobleman and his wife, who had one little daughter. They had only this one child, and they did not wish for any more. They thanked heaven for the precious little daughter, who was dearer to them than anything else in the world. She was fairer than any child in Venice, a little white lily with a heart of gold. Wherever she went people were gladdened by the sight of her fair face, but the sunshine she carried with her shone from her golden heart which was so kind and loving and true.

There was one thing that the little Countess loved above all others, and that was to go to the daily service in the church close by. At first she could only go when her mother took her on Sundays and saints' days, but when she grew a little older, she would often go by herself. Every one in Venice knew the little Countess, so she was quite safe, even when she went out alone.

Now the church which the child loved was on the other side of the canal, and there was no bridge across. So those who wished to go over were obliged to take a boat at the ferry. But the boatmen were always ready to row the little maiden across.

After a while the nobleman began to think that his daughter went too often to church. He was glad she was such a good child, but he did not want her to become a saint. He meant her to marry some rich, great lord, and live a gay life in the world. He was afraid that if she went to church so much she would think too much of heaven and too little of earth.

So one day he told her she must no longer go each

morning to church.

The little Countess had always been as good and obedient as a child could be, but now she told her father that she could not obey him. God was her Father too, and she must try to please Him. The father did not wish to seem harsh, for he loved his little daughter dearly, so he said no more. But that very day he went to the boatmen at the ferry and told them they were on no account to row the little Countess across the water when she wanted to go to church. He slipped some gold pieces into their hands to help them to remember his command, and they promised faithfully they would do as he directed.

Early the next morning the child came to the ferry as usual, and was going to slip into the first boat when the boatman told her he could not take her across. She went to the next boat, but there, too, the boatman said the same. One by one they refused to take her across the canal.

The little Countess gazed at the men with her innocent, questioning eyes. She wondered what it could mean. But the men looked shamefacedly away.

For one moment her lips began to tremble and her eyes filled with tears, but then she wiped the tears quickly away and smiled as happily as ever.

Stepping down to the side of the canal, she took off her little blue apron and laid it upon the water. Then quite fearlessly she stepped down upon it. The boatmen started forward, but the child was in no danger. Not only did the apron float like a boat, but it began to be wafted gently across the canal, until it landed the little Countess safely on the other side The boatmen stood looking on in amazement while the child quietly entered the church.

The story of that wonderful crossing on the frail little boat was soon told all over Venice, and the people talked in reverent tones of the child-saint who dwelt among them. The young nobles begged for her hand in marriage when she

should be old enough, and her father found that he could choose from among the richest and noblest of the land to wed his little daughter.

But God had chosen something better than earthly honours for the little Countess. Before very long His messenger came to carry her across the dark river of death to the golden city of heaven. She was not at all afraid to go. Just as gladly and with as perfect a trust as she had stepped upon that frail little boat to be carried across to God's house, she now set out to go to the heavenly city.

All Venice mourned for the little Countess, and they buried her in the church she loved so well. In after years mothers, carrying their babies in their arms, would often go and pray by the tomb of the little saint and ask her to protect their little ones and save them from the perils of the water, just as the good God had protected and saved her, when she was a child.

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