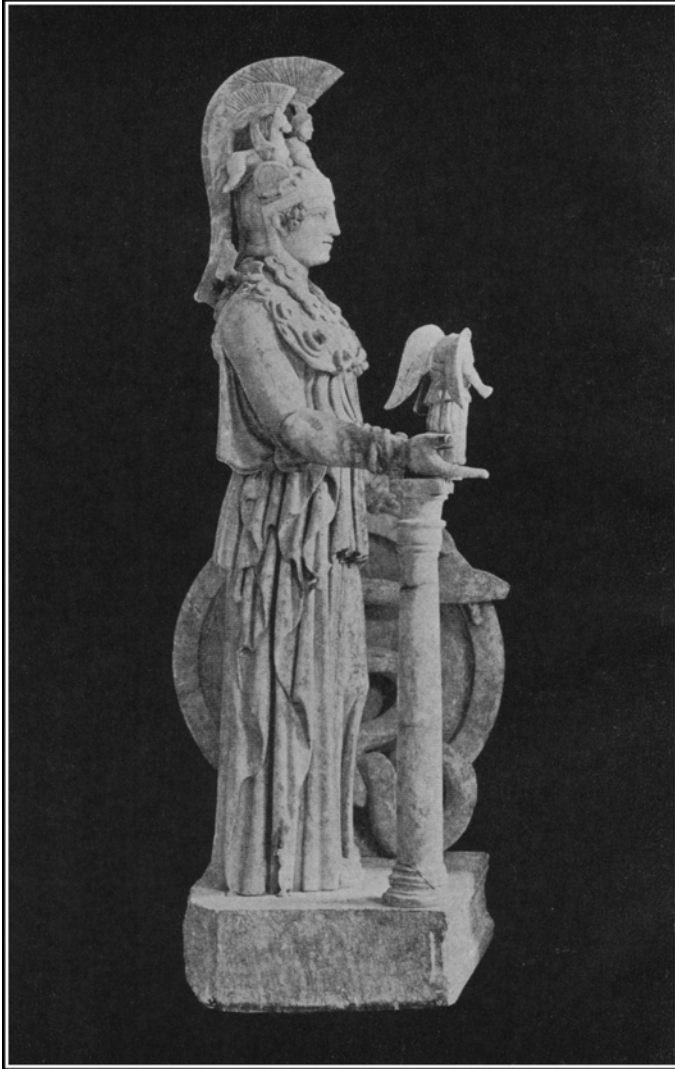


# **FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS**



**VARVAKEION STATUETTE**  
Antique copy of the Athena of Phidias  
National Museum, Athens

# **FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS**

**BY  
LILIAN STOUGHTON HYDE**

**YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS  
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## PREFACE

IN the preparation of this book, the aim has been to present in a manner suited to young readers the Greek myths that have been world favorites through the centuries, and that have in some measure exercised a formative influence on literature and the fine arts in many countries. While a knowledge of these myths is undoubtedly necessary to a clear understanding of much in literature and the arts, yet it is not for this reason alone that they have been selected; the myths that have appealed to the poets, the painters, and the sculptors for so many ages are the very ones that have the greatest depth of meaning, and that are the most beautiful and the best worth telling. Moreover, these myths appeal strongly to the child-mind, and should be presented while the young imagination can make them live. In childhood they will be enjoyed as stories; but in later years they will be understood as the embodiment of spiritual truths.



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## INTRODUCTION

MANY thousands of years ago there lived a race of people whom we call the Aryans. To this people everything seemed alive. When they looked up into the blue sky, where there were white clouds moving, they fancied that they saw a sea on which ships were sailing. Or, if the clouds were numerous and moved swiftly in one direction, driven by the wind, they believed that they saw cows driven by an invisible herdsman. In their eyes the dark storm-clouds were gigantic birds which flew over the sky carrying worms in their beaks. The lightning flashes were the worms, which these birds sometimes let fall. Or, the lightning was a fish, darting through the sea of cloud; or a spear, or a serpent. The storm-cloud was a dragon.

These people never tired of looking at the sky. They sometimes called the clouds treasure mountains, and the lightning an opening in the rock, which gave a glimpse of the bright treasure within. In time they came to think that the bright blue sky of day was a person, to whom they gave the name Father Dyaus (which means Father Sky), saying, because the sky seemed so high above everything else, that Father Dyaus ruled over all things. They also called the sun a shining wanderer, the golden-eyed and golden-handed god, and said that

## FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS

the darkness of night was a serpent, slain by their sun-god's arrows.

A time came when many tribes of this Aryan race moved on to other lands. Some of them settled in the land we now call Greece, taking with them their quaint stories of the sky and the clouds, of Father Dyaus, and the herdsman of the cloud-cattle, and the golden-eyed sun-god.

In Greece these stories and others were handed down from one generation to another through thousands of years; and while those who told these stories undoubtedly believed that every word was true, and took great pains to tell them exactly as they had heard them, yet in time the stories changed and grew.

After the Aryan tribes who moved into Greece had lived in that country for a long time, they forgot that Father Dyaus (*Dyaus pitar*) was the blue sky. Instead of calling him by his old name of Father Dyaus, they called him Father Zeus (*Zeus-pater*), the king and father of gods and men, while other Aryan tribes, who were afterward called Romans, knew him as Jupiter (*Ju-piter*). In the same way these people forgot, in time, that the herdsman who drove the cloud-cattle was the wind; they thought him a real person, or a god, and called him Hermes, or Mercury. In this way the old Greeks (that is, the descendants of the Aryans who had settled in Greece) came to believe in many gods, and it was a long, long time after this before they knew anything about the true God.

As time went on, every little kingdom in Greece

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had its own version of these old stories, or myths. They were told again and again, in the twilight, by the firesides of the people, and were often sung or chanted in kings' houses to the music of the lyre. In comparatively modern times, but still some thousands of years ago, the poets wrote them down, some writing one version and some another. Many of the books they wrote may still be read to-day.

According to the old Greek myths, Jupiter was the king and father of gods and men. He, with the other gods, lived high up on Mount Olympus, above the clouds. He was by far the strongest of the gods. His weapon was the thunderbolt; for the Greeks believed that the lightning flash was a kind of magic stone, shaped like a spear or an arrow, which Jupiter threw at his enemies, or at wrongdoers among men. The storm-loving eagle was Jupiter's bird, and it carried the thunderbolts in its claw.

Neptune and Pluto were brothers of Jupiter. Neptune ruled the sea, and Pluto was the king of the underworld, a dark, gloomy place where people were supposed to go after death. Juno was Jupiter's queen, and therefore the most powerful of the goddesses.

Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, of war for a right cause, and of the arts of peace. She gave the olive tree to the Greeks, and taught the Greek women how to spin and weave. She was the special protectress and helper of heroes.

Apollo was the god of prophecy, music, and poetry. Later, he was the god of the sun, especially of

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the light which comes from the sun, while Helios was the god of the sun itself. The rays of sunlight, which might sometimes be seen across a dark cloud, were Apollo's golden arrows. These arrows might bring death to mortals.

Diana was the twin sister of Apollo. Just as Apollo was the god of the light of the sun, she was the goddess of the light of the moon, while Selene, the real moon-goddess, was the goddess of the moon itself. Diana was a huntress who wandered over the mountains, carrying a bow and a quiverful of silver arrows. Her silver arrows, like Apollo's golden ones, were sometimes used to punish the guilty. She wore a crown shaped like the new moon, and her favorite animal was the stag.

Venus was the goddess of love and beauty. She was born from the foam of the sea, and was the most beautiful of all the goddesses. When she went abroad, her chariot was drawn by doves and surrounded by flocks of little singing birds.

Mars was the god of war in a bad sense. He loved fighting and bloodshed for its own sake.

Mercury was the herald and swift-footed messenger of the gods. He was the patron of herdsmen, travellers, and rogues. He wore a winged cap and winged sandals, and carried, as the sign of his office, a golden wand or staff, which had two wings at the top and two golden snakes twined around it. This staff was called the caduceus.

Ceres was the goddess of all that grows out of the earth, and was called the Great Mother.

## INTRODUCTION

Besides these great ones, there were others, not so strong and wonderful, who instead of living on Mount Olympus, above the clouds, had their homes in certain quiet places of the earth. These humbler ones were called nymphs, fauns, satyrs, river gods, and Tritons. The nymphs were everywhere; they haunted the meadows, groves, and mountains, and one of them was sure to be found at the bottom of every spring and fountain; they inhabited the trees; they lived in the sea. Fauns were the followers of Pan, the god of shepherds and other country folk. Like Pan, the fauns had little horns, pointed ears, and legs like a goat. Satyrs were the followers of Bacchus, the god of the vine. They had pointed ears, and little horns among their curls, but otherwise were very much like men. Tritons were said to have the upper part of the body like that of a man and the lower part like that of a fish. They lived in the sea, and could quiet its waters by blowing on their shell-trumpets.

In those days there were no solitary places; even the desert had its giants and its pygmies. That time of which the old myths tell us must have been wonderful indeed.



# PROMETHEUS

THERE once lived a race of huge giants called Titans. These giants were fierce, turbulent, and lawless—always fighting among themselves and against Jupiter, the king of the gods.

One of the Titans, whose name was Prometheus, was wiser than the rest. He often thought about what would be likely to happen in the future.

One day, Prometheus said to his brother Titans: “What is the use of wasting so much strength? In the end, wisdom and forethought will win. If we are going to fight against the gods, let us choose a leader and stop quarrelling among ourselves.”

The Titans answered him by a shower of great rocks and uprooted trees.

Prometheus, after escaping unhurt, said to his younger brother: “Come, Epimetheus, we can do nothing among these Titans. If they keep on, they will tear the earth to pieces. Let us go and help Jupiter to overcome them.”

Epimetheus agreed to this, and the two brothers went over to Jupiter, who called the gods together and began a terrible battle. The Titans tore up enormous boulders and cast them at the gods, while Jupiter hurled his thunderbolts and his lightnings in all directions.

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Soon the sky was a sheet of flame, the sea boiled, the earth trembled, and the forests took fire and began to burn.

At last the gods—partly by the help of the wise counsel of Prometheus—conquered the Titans, took them to the ends of the earth, and imprisoned them in a deep underground cavern. Neptune, the sea-god, made strong bronze gates with heavy bolts and bars, to keep the giants down, while Jupiter sent Briareus and his brothers, three giants with fifty heads and a hundred hands each, to stand guard over them.

All but one of the Titans who had fought against the gods were imprisoned in this cavern. This one who was not shut in with the others was Atlas, whose enormous strength was greater than that of his brothers, while his disposition was less quarrelsome. He was made to stand and hold up the sky on his head and hands.

As the Titans could now make no more trouble, there was comparative peace and quiet on the earth. Nevertheless, Jupiter said that, although the men who remained on the earth were not so strong as the Titans, they were a foolish and wicked race. He declared that he would destroy them—sweep them away, and have done with them, forever.

When their king said this, none of the gods dared to say a word in defence of mankind. But Prometheus, the Titan, who was earth-born himself, and loved these men of the earth, begged Jupiter so earnestly to spare them, that Jupiter consented to do so.

At this time, men lived in dark, gloomy caves.



## PROMETHEUS

Their friend, Prometheus, taught them to build simple houses, which were much more comfortable than the caves had been. This was a great step forward, but men needed more help yet from the Titan. The beasts in the forests, and the great birds that built their nests on the rocks, were strong; but men were weak. The lion had sharp claws and teeth; the eagle had wings; the turtle had a hard shell; but man, although he stood upright with his face toward the stars, had no weapon with which he could defend himself.

Prometheus said that man should have Jupiter's wonderful flower of fire, which shone so brightly in the sky. So he took a hollow reed, went up to Olympus, stole the red flower of fire, and brought it down to earth in his reed.

After this, all the other creatures were afraid of man, for this red flower had made him stronger than they. Man dug iron out of the earth, and by the help of his new fire made weapons that were sharper than the lion's teeth; he tamed the wild cattle by the fear of it, yoked them together, and taught them how to draw the plough; he sharpened strong stakes, hardening them in its heat, and set them around his house as a defence from his enemies; he did many other things besides with the red flower that Prometheus had made to blossom at the end of the reed.

Jupiter, sitting on his throne, saw with alarm how strong man was becoming. One day he discovered the theft of his shining red flower, and knew that

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Prometheus was the thief. He was greatly displeased at this act.

“Prometheus loves man too well,” said he. “He shall be punished.” Then he called his two slaves, Strength and Force, and told them to take Prometheus and bind him fast to a great rock in the lonely Caucasian Mountains. At the same time he ordered Vulcan, the lame smith-god, to rivet the Titan’s chains—in a cunning way that only Vulcan knew.

There Prometheus hung on the rock for hundreds of years. The sun shone on him pitilessly, by day—only the kindly night gave him shade. He heard the rushing wings of the sea-gulls, as they came to feed their young who cried from the rocks below. The sea-nymphs floated up to his rock to give him their pity. A vulture, cruel as the king of the gods, came daily and tore him with its claws and beak.

But this frightful punishment did not last forever. Prometheus himself knew that some day he should be set free, and this knowledge made him strong to endure.

At last the time came when Jupiter’s throne was in danger, and Prometheus, pitying his enemy, told him a secret which helped him to make everything safe again. After this, Jupiter sent Hercules to shoot the vulture and to break the Titan’s chains. So Prometheus was set free.



## HOW TROUBLES CAME INTO THE WORLD

A very long time ago, in the Golden Age, every one was good and happy. It was always spring; the earth was covered with flowers, and only gentle winds blew to set the flowers dancing.

No one had any work to do. People lived on mountain strawberries, which were always to be had for the gathering, and on wild grapes, blackberries, and sweet acorns, which grew plentifully in the oak forests. Rivers flowed with milk and nectar. Even the bees did not need to lay up honey, for it fell in tiny drops from the trees. There was abundance everywhere.

In all the whole world, there was not a sword, nor any weapon by means of which men might fight with one another. No one had ever heard of any such thing. All the iron and the gold were buried deep underground.

Besides, people were never ill; they had no troubles of any kind; and never grew old.

The two brothers, Prometheus and Epimetheus, lived in those wonderful days. After stealing the fire for man, Prometheus, knowing that Jupiter would be angry, decided to go away for a time on a distant journey; but

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before he went, he warned Epimetheus not to receive any gifts from the gods.

One day, after Prometheus had been gone for some time, Mercury came to the cottage of Epimetheus, leading by the hand a beautiful young woman, whose name was Pandora. She had a wreath of partly opened rosebuds on her head, a number of delicate gold chains twisted lightly around her neck, and wore a filmy veil which fell nearly to the hem of her tunic. Mercury presented her to Epimetheus, saying the gods had sent this gift that he might not be lonesome.

Pandora had such a lovely face that Epimetheus could not help believing that the gods had sent her to him in good faith. So he paid no heed to the warning of Prometheus, but took Pandora into his cottage, and found that the days passed much more quickly and pleasantly when she was with him.

Soon, the gods sent Epimetheus another gift. This was a heavy box, which the satyrs brought to the cottage, with directions that it was not to be opened. Epimetheus let it stand in a corner of his cottage; for by this time he had begun to think that the caution of Prometheus about receiving gifts from the gods was altogether unnecessary.

Often, Epimetheus was away all day, hunting or fishing or gathering grapes from the wild vines that grew along the river banks. On such days, Pandora had nothing to do but to wonder what was in the mysterious box. One day her curiosity was so great that she lifted the lid a very little way and peeped in. The result was

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similar to what would have happened had she lifted the cover of a beehive. Out rushed a great swarm of little winged creatures, and before Pandora knew what had happened, she was stung. She dropped the lid and ran out of the cottage, screaming. Epimetheus, who was just coming in at the door, was well stung, too.

The little winged creatures that Pandora had let out of the box were Troubles, the first that had ever been seen in the world. They soon flew about and spread themselves everywhere, pinching and stinging whenever they got the chance.

After this, people began to have headaches, rheumatism, and other illnesses; and instead of being always kind and pleasant to one another, as they had been before the Troubles were let out of the box, they became unfriendly and quarrelsome. They began to grow old, too.

Nor was it always spring any longer. The fresh young grasses that had clothed all the hillsides, and the gay-colored flowers that had given Epimetheus and Pandora so much pleasure, were scorched by hot summer suns, and bitten by the frosts of autumn. Oh, it was a sad thing for the world, when all those wicked little Troubles were let loose!

All the Troubles escaped from the box, but when Pandora let the lid fall so hastily, she shut in one little winged creature, a kind of good fairy whose name was Hope. This little Hope persuaded Pandora to let her out. As soon as she was free, she flew about in the world, undoing all the evil that the Troubles had done, that is,

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as fast as one good fairy could undo the evil work of such a swarm. No matter what evil thing had happened to poor mortals, she always found some way to comfort them. She fanned aching heads with her gossamer wings; she brought back the color to pale cheeks; and best of all, she whispered to those who were growing old that they should one day be young again.

So this is the way that Troubles came into the world, but we must not forget that Hope came with them.



## THE GREAT DELUGE

AFTER the Golden Age there came a time when men began to quarrel with one another. Then the gods sent hot summers and cold winters. Men made themselves places in which to live, in caves and grottos, where they might be protected from the hot sun in summer, and from cold winds in winter. They ploughed the ground and grew grain, which they laid away for food during the cold season.

As the world grew older, men became more and more quarrelsome. At last they dug gold out of the ground, where it had lain for so long a time; and they dug out iron too. They quarrelled more sadly than ever over the possession of the bright yellow gold they had found; and, what was worst of all, they made sharp knives and other weapons out of iron, and fought fiercely with each other.

After this, robbery, murder, and many other crimes were common on the earth. Things grew worse and worse, till a man's life was not safe anywhere. Finally, in all the whole world there were only two people who continued to sacrifice to the gods. These two were

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Deucalion and Pyrrha, who were good and gentle, like the people who had lived in the Golden Age.

Jupiter, the father of the gods, looking down from Mount Olympus and seeing how wicked the people of the earth had grown, made up his mind that he would destroy them all. So he shut up the North Wind in the caves of Æolus, and sent forth the South Wind, for the South Wind was the wind that would bring the rain.

Clouds gathered over all the earth, and great drops of rain began to fall, slowly at first, then faster and faster. It rained till the grain was laid flat in the fields, still the clouds did not lighten, nor the rain cease falling. The rivers overflowed their banks, and rushed in over the plains, uprooting great trees, and carrying away houses and cattle and men. The sea, as well as the rivers, flowed in over the land, till dolphins played among the branches of forest trees. Sea-nymphs, too, might have been seen peeping out from among great oaks. Still the rain never stopped, and the water rose higher and higher.

Men and animals made their way to the hills as well as they could, wolves, lions, and tigers swimming side by side with sheep or cattle, all in one common danger. They made their way first to the hills and then to the mountains, but the water came creeping up, up, till all but the tops of the highest mountains were out of sight. At last, when the rain stopped, and the clouds broke away a little, only the top of Mount Parnassus, which was the highest mountain of all, remained above water.



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Deucalion and Pyrrha were sailing in a little ship, which they had managed to keep afloat. When they saw that the top of Mount Parnassus was still out of water, they anchored their ship there, and sacrificed to the gods.

Now, as you know, Deucalion and Pyrrha had not become wicked like the rest of mankind. When Jupiter saw that only these two were left, he sent out the North Wind to blow away the clouds. Then Neptune, the god of the sea, sent his chief Triton, to blow a long, twisted horn, and the sea heard, and went back to the place where it rightfully belonged.

As the waters rapidly fell away, the earth appeared again, but what a change! Everything was covered with a dismal coating of yellow mud. And it was so very still—not a sound from any living thing! Deucalion and Pyrrha felt as if even the sound of quarrelling would be better than such perfect silence.

Near by, with its fires out, and covered with mud, was the temple of one of the gods. Deucalion and Pyrrha felt a sense of companionship in its familiar porch, so they went and sat there in the shade, wondering what would become of them—they two, alone in such a great world.

Then a mysterious voice told them to throw the bones of their great mother behind them. It sounded like a friendly voice, but neither Deucalion nor Pyrrha could imagine what was meant by “the bones of their great mother.” After they had puzzled over it for some time, they came to the conclusion that their “great

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mother” must mean Mother Earth, and that her “bones” must be the stones that lay around them. So, standing with their faces toward the temple, they threw the stones behind them. When they turned to see what had happened, they found that the stones which they had thrown had changed into men and women.

In this way, after the Great Deluge, the earth was peopled again; but it is to be feared that some of the people of this new race had hearts as hard as the stones from which they were made.



## APOLLO AND DAPHNE

ONE day Cupid, the little god of love, sat on the bank of a river, playing with his arrows. The arrows were very tiny. Some had points of gold, and others had points of lead. None of them looked as if they could do much harm.

That day Apollo, the great sun-god, walked along the bank of the same river, when returning from his fight with the serpent of darkness, called the Python. He had just used a great number of his wonderful golden arrows in killing this gigantic serpent. Feeling very proud of his victory over the Python, he said, when he saw Cupid at his play, "Ho! What are such little arrows as these good for?" Cupid's feelings were very much hurt at this. He said nothing, but he took his little arrows and flew to the top of Mount Parnassus.

There he sat down on the grass and took a leaden-pointed arrow from his quiver. Looking all about him for some mark for his arrow, he saw Daphne walking through a grove. Daphne was the daughter of Peneus, the river-god. She was so beautiful that the sleeping flowers lifted their heads and burst into full bloom at her coming. Cupid shot the leaden-pointed arrow straight

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at Daphne's heart. Although it did her no other harm, this little blunt arrow made Daphne feel afraid, and without knowing what she was running away from, she began to run.

Then Cupid, who was very naughty, took a golden-pointed arrow from his quiver, and with this wounded Apollo. The golden-pointed arrow had the power to make Apollo love the first thing he saw. This chanced to be Daphne, the river-nymph, who came running by just then, with her golden hair floating out behind her.

Apollo called to Daphne that there was nothing to fear; then, as she would not stop running, he ran after her. The faster Apollo followed the faster Daphne ran, and she grew more and more afraid all the time, for the little leaden-pointed arrow was sticking in her heart.

She ran till she came to the bank of her father's river, and by this time she was so tired that she could run no farther. She called on her father for help. The river-god heard, and before Apollo could overtake her, changed her into a tree, a beautiful tree with glossy evergreen leaves and blossoms as pink as Daphne's own cheeks.

When Apollo came up with Daphne, there she stood, on the bank of the river, not a nymph any longer, but a beautiful tree. Apollo was broken-hearted, at first, to see how he had lost Daphne. It was all the fault of the little golden-pointed arrow. Since this tree was all that was left of Daphne, Apollo loved the tree, and said that it should be planted by the side of his temple. He

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made himself a crown from its evergreen leaves, which he always wore for Daphne's sake. This tree still grows in Greece, and is called the Laurel of Apollo.



## HOW APOLLO GOT HIS LYRE

MERCURY was the child of Maia, the eldest of the Pleiades, and lived with his mother in a cave among the mountains. One day, when he was only just big enough to walk, he ran out of doors to play in the sunshine, and saw a spotted tortoise-shell lying in the grass. He laughed with pleasure at sight of the pretty thing, and quickly carried it into the cave. Then he bored holes in the edge of the shell, fastened hollow reeds inside, and with a piece of leather and strings made a lyre of it. This was the first lyre that was ever made, and most wonderful music lay hidden in it.

That night, when his mother was asleep, Mercury crept slyly out of his cradle and went out into the moonlight; he ran to the pastures where Apollo's white cattle were sleeping, and stole fifty of the finest heifers. Then he threw his baby-shoes into the ocean, and bound great limbs of tamarisk to his feet, so that no one would be able to tell who had been walking in the soft sand. After this, he drove the cattle hither and thither in great glee for a while, and then took them down the mountain and shut them into a cave—but one would

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think from the tracks left in the sand that the cattle had been driven up, instead of down the mountain.

A peasant, who was hoeing in his vineyard by the light of the full moon, saw this wonderful baby pass by, driving the cattle, and could hardly believe his own eyes. No one else saw Mercury; and just at sunrise, the little mischief went home to his mother's cave, slipped in through the keyhole, and in a twinkling was in his cradle with his tortoise-shell lyre held tightly in his arms, looking as if he had been sleeping there all night.

Apollo soon missed his cattle. It happened that the man who had been hoeing his grape-vines by moonlight was still working in the same field. When Apollo asked him whether he had seen any one driving cattle over that road, the man described the baby that he had seen, with the curious shoes, and told him how it had driven the cattle backward and forward, and up and down.

By daylight, the road looked as if the wind had been playing havoc with the young evergreens. Their twigs were scattered here and there, and great branches seemed to have been broken off and blown about in the sand. There were no tracks of any living thing, except the tracks of the cattle, which led in all directions. This was very confusing, but Apollo, knowing that no baby, except his own baby brother, could drive cattle, went straight to Maia's cave.

There lay Mercury in his cradle, fast asleep. When Apollo accused him of stealing his white cattle, he sat

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up and rubbed his eyes, and said innocently that he did not know what cattle were; he had just heard the word for the first time. But Apollo was angry, and insisted that the baby should go with him to Jupiter, to have the dispute settled.

When the two brothers came before Jupiter's throne, Mercury kept on saying that he had never seen any cattle and did not know what they were; but as he said so, he gave Jupiter such a roguish wink that he made the god laugh heartily. Then he suddenly caught up his lyre, and began to play. The music was so beautiful that all the gods in Olympus held their breath to listen. Even Jupiter's fierce eagle nodded his head to the measures. When Mercury stopped playing, Apollo declared that such music was well worth the fifty cattle, and agreed to say no more about the theft. This so pleased Mercury that he gave Apollo the lyre.

Then Apollo, in return for the gift of the wonderful lyre, gave Mercury a golden wand, called the caduceus, which had power over sleep and dreams, and wealth and happiness. At a later time two wings fluttered from the top of this wand, and two golden snakes were twined round it. Besides presenting Mercury with the caduceus, Apollo made him herdsman of the wonderful white cattle. Mercury now drove the fifty heifers back to their pastures. So the quarrel was made up, and the two brothers, Apollo and Mercury, became the best of friends.

On a day when the wind is blowing and driving fleecy white clouds before it, perhaps, if you look up,



*HOW APOLLO GOT HIS LYRE*

you will see the white cattle of Apollo. But you will have to look very sharp to see the herdsman, Mercury.



## MERCURY AND ARGUS

ARGUS was a watchman with a hundred eyes, set in a circle all around his head. When he slept, he closed only two eyes at a time; the other ninety-eight were always wide open. So it could not have been easy to steal away anything that Argus was watching.

Now it happened that Juno, the wife of Jupiter, was very jealous of a beautiful river-nymph, called Io. Jupiter, in order to save Io from the jealous anger of Juno, changed her into a white heifer. Juno, suspecting that the white heifer was really Io, set Argus with his hundred eyes to watch her.

Poor Io was very unhappy. Her father, the river-god, did not know her, neither did her sister-nymphs; but they used to pat the white heifer and feed it grass from their hands. At last Io wrote her name with her hoof in the sands of the river bank, and then her father and sisters knew that the pretty white heifer was their own Io.

She had no sooner revealed herself to her family in this way than Argus drove her away to a field that lay far back from the river, where the river-god and the

## MERCURY AND ARGUS

nymphs could not come, and then set himself down on the top of a high hill, meaning to watch her more closely than ever.

Jupiter felt sorry for Io, still he did not dare change her back into her natural form while Argus was watching her. But remembering how Mercury, when he was less than a day old, had stolen away the cattle of Apollo, he now set this prince of thieves, this mischief-loving Mercury, to steal Io away from Argus.

Mercury thought there could be no better fun. He laid aside his winged cap and his winged shoes, and dressed like the shepherds in that country. He carried his golden wand, the caduceus, in his hand, and as he walked along, played carelessly on a shepherd's pipe; then, finding a few goats feeding at the side of the road, he drove them slowly before him.

Argus found his watch rather tiresome, and was glad enough to talk to any one who happened to pass by. He was very glad when he saw Mercury coming with the goats, and he invited the pretended shepherd to come and sit by him, under the trees in the shade, and play on his pipe and tell stories.

Mercury sat down on a stone by the side of Argus, and began to play—very softly, so softly that the music was like the sighing of the wind through the branches of the trees. The day was warm, and there was no other sound except the shrill singing of the cicadas. Two of Argus's eyes soon closed. The others might have remained open if there had not been a drowsy magic in Mercury's piping. The soft notes came soothingly,

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

slower and slower, and one after another Argus's other eyes began to close, till only two remained open. These two eyes were very bright; they fairly twinkled, and they kept their watch on Io through all Mercury's playing. Then Mercury began to tell stories, and at last the two twinkling eyes closed, like the others. Argus, with all his hundred eyes, was fast asleep. To make him sleep more heavily, Mercury just touched him lightly with the dream-giving caduceus, and then he triumphantly led Io away.

Juno was very angry when she found that her wonderful watchman had slept at his post, slept with all his eyes at once. She said he did not deserve to have so many eyes, if he could not keep some of them open. So she took all of his hundred eyes away from him, and set them in the tail of her pet peacock, who was very proud to wear them. Ever since that day all peacocks have had eyes in their tails.



# CERES AND PROSERPINE

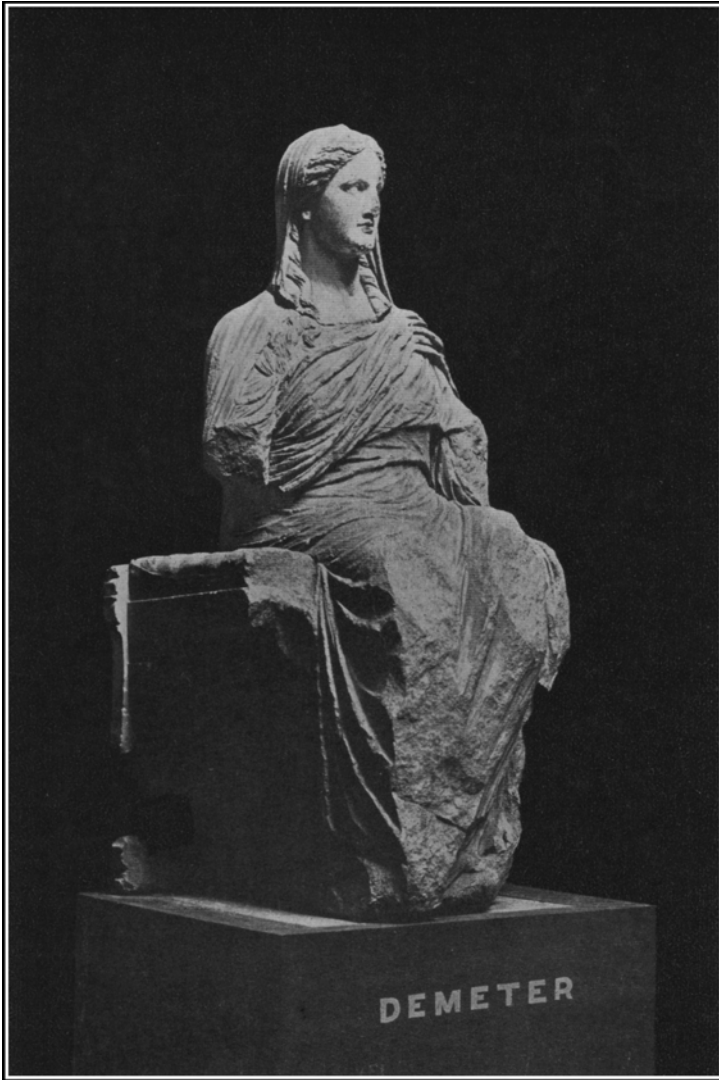
## I

### THE MOURNING OF THE EARTH-MOTHER

IN the island of Sicily, high up among the mountains, there was once a beautiful valley, called the valley of Enna. It was seldom that a human being, even a shepherd, climbed so high; but the goats, being able to climb by the steepest and most slippery paths, over the roughest rocks, knew well what soft, sweet grass grew there. Sheep, too, and sometimes wild swine, found their way to this spot.

Not another mountain valley anywhere was quite like this one. It was never visited by any of the winds except Zephyrus, who was always mild and gentle. The grass was always green and the flowers were always in bloom. There were shady groves on every side, and numberless fountains of sparkling water. It would have been hard to find a pleasanter spot.

This valley of Enna was the home of Ceres, the Earth-mother, one of the wisest of the goddesses. In fact, the valley owed its beauty to the presence of Ceres,



CERES (GREEK DEMETER) OF CNIDUS

British Museum

## *CERES AND PROSERPINE*

and the wonderful vegetation which covered the whole island of Sicily was due to her influence; for she was the goddess of all that grows out of the earth, and knew the secret of the springing wheat and the ripening fruits. She watched over the flowers, the lambs in the fields, and the young children. The springs of water, too, which came from hidden places of the earth, were hers.

One day Proserpine, the little daughter of Ceres, was playing in the meadows of Enna. Her hair was as yellow as gold, and her cheeks had the delicate pink of an apple blossom. She seemed like a flower among the other flowers of the valley.

She, and the daughters of the valley-nymphs, who were children of about her own age, had taken off their sandals and were running about on the soft grass in their bare feet. They were as light-hearted as the little lambs and kids. Soon they began to gather the flowers that grew so thick on every side—violets, hyacinths, lilies, and big purple irises. They filled their baskets, and then their dresses, and twisted long sprays of wild roses around their shoulders.

Suddenly, Proserpine saw a flower which made her forget everything else. This flower seemed to be a strange, new kind of narcissus. It was of gigantic size, and its one flower-stalk held at least a hundred blossoms. Its fragrance was so powerful that it filled the entire island, and might be noticed even out at sea.

Proserpine called to her playmates to come and see this wonderful flower, and then she noticed, for the first time, that she was alone; for she had wandered

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

from one flower to another till she had left the other children far behind. Running quickly forward to pick this strange blossom, she saw that its stalk was spotted like a snake, and feared that it might be poisonous. Still, it was far too beautiful a flower to be left by itself in the meadow, and she therefore tried to pluck it. When she found that she could not break the stalk, she made a great effort to pull the whole plant up by the roots.

All at once, the black soil around the plant loosened, and Proserpine heard a rumbling underneath the ground. Then the earth suddenly opened, a great black cavern appeared, and out from its depths sprang four magnificent black horses, drawing a golden chariot. In the chariot sat a king with a crown on his head, but under the crown was the gloomiest face ever seen.

When this strange king saw Proserpine standing there by the flower, too frightened to run away, he checked his horses for an instant and, bending forward, snatched the poor child from the ground and placed her on the seat by his side. Then he whipped up his horses and drove away at a furious rate.

Proserpine, still holding fast to her flowers, screamed for her mother.

Helios, the sun-god, saw how the gloomy-faced king had stolen Proserpine away, and Hecate, who sat near by in her cave, heard the scream and the sound of wheels. No one else had any suspicion of what had happened.

Ceres was far away across the seas in another country, overlooking the gathering in of the harvests.



## *CERES AND PROSERPINE*

She heard Proserpine's scream, and like a sea-bird when it hears the distressed cry of its young, came rushing home across the water.

She filled the valley with the sound of her calling, but no one answered to the name of Proserpine. The strange flower had disappeared. A few roses lay scattered on the grass, and near them were a child's footprints. Ceres felt sure that these were the traces of Proserpine's little bare feet, but she could not follow them far, because a herd of swine had wandered that way and left a confusion of hoofprints behind them.

Ceres could learn nothing about her daughter from the nymphs. She sent out her own messenger, the big white crane that brings the rain; but although he could fly very swiftly and very far on his strong wings, he brought back no news of Proserpine.

When it grew dark, the goddess lighted two torches at the flaming summit of Mount Ætna, and continued her search. She wandered up and down for nine days and nine nights. On the tenth night, when it was nearly morning, she met Hecate, who was carrying a light in her hand, as if she, too, were looking for something. Hecate told Ceres how she had heard Proserpine scream, and had heard the sound of wheels, but had seen nothing. Then she went with the goddess to ask Helios, the sun-god, whether he had not seen what happened that day, for the sun-god travels around the whole world, and must see everything.

Ceres found Helios sitting in his chariot, ready to drive his horses across the sky. He held the fiery

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

creatures in for a moment, while he told Ceres that Pluto, the king of the underworld, had stolen her daughter and had carried her away to live with him in his dark palace.

When Ceres heard this, she knew that Proserpine was lost to her, and she kept away from the other gods and hid herself in the dark places of the earth. She liked to keep away from the earth's people as well as from the gods, for wherever she went, she was sure to see some happy mother with her children around her, and the sight made her feel very lonely. She sometimes envied the poorest peasants, or even the little bird-mothers in the trees.

One day she sat down by the side of the road, near a well, in the shade of an olive tree. While she was sitting there, the four daughters of Celeus, carrying golden pitchers on their shoulders, came down from their father's palace to draw water. Seeing a sad old woman sitting by the well, they spoke to her in a kindly way. Not wishing them to know that she was a goddess, Ceres told the four young princesses that she had been carried away from her home by pirates, and had escaped from being sold for a slave by running away the instant that the pirate's ship reached the shore.

"I am old, and a stranger to every one here," she said, "but I am not too old to work for my bread. I could keep house, or take care of a young child."

Hearing this, the four sisters ran eagerly back to the palace, and asked permission to bring the strange woman home with them. Their mother told them that

## *CERES AND PROSERPINE*

they might engage her as nurse for their little brother, Demophoon.

Therefore Ceres became an inmate of the house of Celeus, and the little Demophoon flourished wonderfully under her care.

Ceres soon learned to love the human baby who was her charge, and she wished to make him immortal. She knew only one way of doing this, and that was to bathe him with ambrosia, and then, one night after another, place him in the fire until his mortal parts should be burned away. Every night she did this, without saying a word to any one. Under this treatment Demophoon was growing wonderfully godlike; but one night, his mother being awake very late, and hearing some one moving about, drew the curtains aside a very little, and peeped out. There, before the fire-place, where a great fire was burning, stood the strange nurse, with Demophoon in her arms. The mother watched in silence until she saw Ceres place the child in the fire, then she gave a shriek of alarm.

The shriek broke the spell. Ceres took Demophoon from the fire and laid him on the floor. Then she told the trembling mother that she had meant to make her child immortal, but that now this could not be. He would have to grow old and die like other mortals. Then, throwing off her blue hood, she suddenly lost her aged appearance, and all at once looked very grand and beautiful. Her hair, which fell down over her shoulders, was yellow, like the ripe grain in the fields. Demophoon's mother knew by these signs that her child's nurse must be the

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

great Ceres, but she saw her no more, for the goddess went out into the dark night.

After this Ceres continued her lonely wandering, not caring where she went. One day, as she stooped to drink from a spring, Abas, a freckled boy who stood near, mocked her because she looked sad and old. Suddenly he saw Ceres stand up very straight, with a look that frightened him. Then he felt himself growing smaller and smaller, until he shrunk into a little speckled water-newt, when he made haste to hide himself away under a stone.

Unlike Abas, most of the people whom Ceres met with felt sorry for her. One day, while she was sitting on a stone by the side of a mountain road in Greece, feeling very sorrowful, she heard a childish voice say, "Mother, are you not afraid to stay all alone here on the mountain?"

Ceres looked up, pleased to hear the word "mother," and saw a little peasant girl, standing near two goats that she had driven down from the mountain-pastures.

"No, my child," said she, "I am not afraid."

Just then, out from among the trees came the little girl's father, carrying a bundle of firewood on his shoulder. He invited Ceres to come to his cottage for the night. Ceres at first refused, but finally accepted the invitation.

"You are happier than I," said Ceres, as the

## *CERES AND PROSERPINE*

three walked toward the cottage. "You have your little daughter with you, but I have lost mine."

"Alas! I have sorrow enough," said the peasant. "I fear that my only son, little Triptolemus, lies dying at home."

"Let us hope that he may yet be cured," said Ceres, and stooping, she gathered a handful of poppies.

Soon they came into the little cottage, where they found the mother beside herself with grief for her boy.

Ceres bent over the child and kissed him softly on both cheeks. As she did so, the poppies in her hands brushed lightly against his face. Then his groans ceased, and the child fell into a quiet sleep.

In the morning Triptolemus woke strong and well; and when Ceres called her winged dragons and drove away through the clouds, she left a happy and grateful family behind her.

## II

### **THE RETURN OF PROSERPINE**

ALL this time, while Ceres had been mourning for her lost Proserpine, she had neglected to look after the little seeds that lay in the brown earth. The consequence was that these little seeds could not sprout and grow; therefore there was no grain to be ground into flour for bread. Not only the seeds, but all growing things missed the care of Mother Ceres. The grass turned brown and

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

withered away, the trees in the olive orchards dropped their leaves, and the little birds all flew away to a distant country. Even the sheep that fed among the water-springs in the valley of Enna grew so thin that it was pitiful to see them.

Jupiter saw that without Ceres, the Great Mother, there could be no life on the earth. In time, all men and animals would die for lack of food. He therefore told Iris to set up her rainbow-bridge in the sky, and to go quickly down to the dark cave where Ceres mourned for Proserpine, that she might persuade the goddess to forget her sorrow, and go back to the fields, where she was so much needed.

Iris found Ceres sitting in a corner of her cave, among the shadows, wrapped in dark blue draperies that made her almost invisible. The coming of Iris lighted up every part of the cave and set beautiful colors dancing everywhere, but it did not make Ceres smile.

After this, Jupiter sent the gods, one after another, down to the cave; but none of them could comfort the Earth-mother. She still mourned.

Then Jupiter sent Mercury down into Pluto's kingdom, to see whether he could not persuade that grim king to let Proserpine return to her mother.

When Mercury told his errand to King Pluto, Proserpine jumped up from her throne, all eagerness to see her mother again, and Pluto, seeing how glad she was, could not withhold his consent. So he ordered the black horses and the golden chariot brought out to take her back; but before she sprang to the chariot's

## *CERES AND PROSERPINE*

seat, he craftily asked her if she would not eat one of the pomegranates that grew in his garden.

Proserpine tasted the fruit, taking just four seeds. Then the black horses swiftly carried Mercury and herself into the upper world, and straight to the cave where Ceres sat.

What a change! How quickly Ceres ran out of the cave, when she heard her daughter's voice! No more mourning in shadowy places for her, now!

Proserpine told her mother everything—how she had found the wonderful narcissus, how the earth had opened, allowing King Pluto's horses to spring out, and how the dark king had snatched her and carried her away.

“But, my dear child,” Ceres anxiously inquired, “have you eaten anything since you have been in the underworld?”

Proserpine confessed that she had eaten the four pomegranate seeds. At that, Ceres beat her breast in despair, and then once more appealed to Jupiter. He said that Proserpine should spend eight months of every year with her mother, but would have to pass the other four—one for each pomegranate seed—in the underworld with Pluto.

So Ceres went back to her beautiful valley of Enna, and to her work in the fields. The little brown seeds that had lain asleep so long sprouted up and grew; the fountains sent up their waters; the brown grass on the hills became green; the olive trees and the grape-

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

vines put out new leaves; the lambs and the kids throve, and skipped about more gayly than ever; and all the hosts of little birds came back with the crane of Ceres to lead them.

During the eight months that Proserpine was with her, Ceres went about again among her peasants, standing near the men while they were threshing the grain, helping the women to bake their bread, and having a care over everything that went on. She did not forget the peasant family of Greece, in whose cottage she had been invited to pass the night, and where she had cured little Triptolemus. She visited this family again and taught the young Triptolemus how to plough, to sow, and to reap, like the peasants of her own Sicily.

The time came when Proserpine was obliged to go back to King Pluto. Then Ceres went and sat among the shadows in the cave, as she had done before.

All nature slept for a while; but the peasants had no fear now, for they knew that Proserpine would surely come back, and that the great Earth-mother would then care for her children again.





## PHAETHON

PHAETHON was the child of Helios, the sun-god. One could see the glint of the sun's rays in his bright yellow hair, and feel its warmth in the flash of his eyes. He was so full of life and energy that it was a pleasure to watch him. When he was playing with the other boys in the village, if they threw stones, it was Phaethon who could throw the farthest; if they ran races, Phaethon always reached the goal first; and it was the same in all their other sports.

Although these boys could not beat Phaethon in their games, they could say rude things to him, and one day, because they wished to get the better of him in some way, they all met him with a chorus of taunts and sneering words. Among other things, they said that he was not the child of Helios, and this hurt Phaethon very much, for he had always thought it a glorious thing to feel that the god of the great shining sun was his father.

The next morning, as he lay under a tree, gazing steadfastly at the sun, he thought he could see the sun-god, Helios, driving his golden chariot across the sky. "What a fine thing it would be," he said to himself, "if

## FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS

I, boy as I am, could drive that splendid chariot! Then the boys would believe that I am really the child of the sun-god.”



**AURORA**  
Guido Reni  
Rospigliosi Palace

The thought had no sooner entered his head than he set out to go to the country where the sun rises. It was a long journey, but at last he saw the golden palace of the sun-god; and then, as he came nearer, he saw Helios himself, sitting on a throne with a crown on his head, while the Hours and the Days stood around him ready to do his bidding. The crown that Helios wore was the most wonderful crown that was ever seen; it was set thick with precious stones of the most dazzling kind; in fact, these stones were so bright that they cast rays of light all around, and whoever looked at them long was sure to be almost blinded.

Even Phaethon's eyes could not long bear the brightness of the crown, so he stood well back from it and told Helios who he was and what the boys had said.

## *PHAETHON*

Then he asked if there were not some way by which his playmates could be made to believe that he was really the child of the Sun.

Helios took off his crown, so that Phaethon could come nearer, and then he promised to grant any wish that the boy should make. This was a great favor, and Phaethon would not have received it if he had not been a true child of the Sun.

Phaethon clapped his hands in triumph; for he thought that now he might have his wish. The Hours were already bringing out the golden chariot of the Sun, and it seemed almost as bright as the crown of Helios. Phaethon asked instantly if he might not drive this chariot for one day.

Helios was troubled at hearing such a wish as this, but he had promised, and the gods could not break their promises; accordingly, when the Hours brought out the horses, and made everything ready, he was obliged to let Phaethon take the reins.

The horses of the Sun were powerful animals, as fiery in their temper as any creature that ever lived, even in those days of fire-breathing bulls and dragons. They seemed to be made of fire inside, and they reared and plunged and champed their bits in a way that would have thoroughly frightened most boys. But Phaethon, remembering that he was a child of the Sun, gladly took his place in the chariot.

The four horses started off at a gallop, and Phaethon was so light that the chariot was tossed back and forth as if it had been empty. The horses were

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

frightened at once. They left the right path round the world, and began to run wildly, swerving first one way and then another.

Phaethon saw now, when it was too late, that he was too young to drive such horses. They grew more and more excited, and sparks of fire began to fly from their nostrils. The chariot, too, as it was carried faster and faster through space, began to grow brighter and hotter.

As the horses and chariot came close to the earth, mountain tops took fire and began to smoke. They came closer yet, rivers were dried up, and many, many miles of forest-land and green meadows were scorched and became like a desert. In some countries, too, the heat was so great that the people of those countries were turned to a dark color. It looked as if the whole world might be burned up.

By this time Phaethon was terrified, indeed, for his own hair was on fire. But he did not know what to do.

Jupiter, looking down from Mount Olympus, saw that the world was in great danger. Then suddenly came a terrible clap of thunder, and Phaethon fell from the chariot, down, straight down, like a falling star, into the broad river Eridanus.

And so poor Phaethon, though a true child of the Sun, failed in trying to drive his father's fiery chariot. Perhaps he would never have attempted so daring a deed, had it not been for the unkind taunts of

*PHAETHON*

his playfellows. There are some things which even the children of the Sun cannot do.

His sisters, the Heliades, wept for him on the banks of the Eridanus, till at last they were changed into larch trees; and their tears, continuing to fall into the water from the branches of the trees, became drops of clear amber.



## CLYTIE

CLYTIE and her sister, Leucothea, were water nymphs. Early every morning they used to come up from the depths of their river, with other nymphs from neighboring streams and fountains, and dance among the water-plants on its shores. But with the first rays of the rising sun, all the dancers plunged back into the water and disappeared; for that was the law among water-nymphs.

One morning Clytie and Leucothea broke this law. When the sun began to show above the hills, and all the other nymphs rushed back to their streams, these two sat on the bank of their river, and watched for the coming of the sun-god. Then as Helios drove his horses across the sky, they sat and watched him all day long.

They thought they had never seen anything so glorious. The god sat in his golden chariot with his crown on his head, and kept a firm rein on the four fire-breathing horses. The sisters were dazzled by the glitter of the chariot and the radiance of the jewelled crown. Helios smiled upon them, and they were happy.

When night came, they returned to their river,

## *CLYTIE*

where they could think of nothing else but Helios and his golden chariot.

Before morning they fell to quarrelling, as sisters sometimes will. Then Clytie told King Oceanus how Leucothea had broken the law of the water-nymphs, but she did not say that she herself had broken it also. King Oceanus was very angry, and shut Leucothea up in a cave.

Just before daylight, Clytie went up to dance with the other nymphs, as usual, and once more she remained on the shore all day to watch the Sun. This time Helios would not smile upon her, because he knew she had been unkind to her sister. When night came, she did not go down to her home at the bottom of the river, but sat on its sandy bank, waiting for the coming of the Sun; and when he came again, she watched him, all day, and so on for nine days and nine nights. As she had broken the law, she did not dare to go home, therefore she had nothing to live on but the dew which fell from the sky. She grew so very thin that you would have thought the wind might blow her away. Foolish Clytie!

Yet, she sat there and watched the Sun, who never looked her way, and never smiled on her any more. At last her dainty feet, that had danced so lightly with the other nymphs, took root in the loose sand; her fluttering garments became green leaves; and her face, which was always turned toward the Sun, became a flower.

This flower still grows, in wet, sandy places, and

*FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

still it turns slowly on its stem, always keeping its face toward the sun.





## THE SEVEN SISTERS

AMONG the nymphs of Diana's train were seven sisters, the daughters of Atlas. On moonlight nights these sisters used to dance in the forest glades; and one night Orion, the hunter, saw them dimly through the trees. They looked like a flock of beautiful wild birds, and the sight made the hunter's heart beat loud and fast. Just as he had chased the deer so many times, he began now to chase these nymphs. Not that he meant to hurt them, but he wanted to go near enough to them to see them better. The nymphs were frightened and ran away swiftly through the trees. The faster they ran, the faster Orion followed.

At last the poor frightened sisters came out into an open place, where it was almost as light as day, and there Orion nearly overtook them. Seeing how near he was, the sisters called to Diana for help; and then, when they were almost in the hunter's grasp, they suddenly disappeared, and seven white pigeons rose from the grass where they had been, and flew away—up, up, into the night sky.

When they reached the sky, the seven pigeons became seven bright stars. There the stars shone, in a

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

little group, close together, for hundreds of years. They were called the Pleiades.

Long after the time when the frightened nymphs were changed first into pigeons, and then into stars, one of the sisters left her place among the Pleiades, that she might not see the fall of Troy. While this city was burning, she rushed madly through space, her hair flying out behind her, and men called her a comet. She never returned to her place among the Pleiades.

At the end of his life on earth, Orion too was placed among the stars. He is there, in the sky, to this day, with his lion's skin, his club, and his jewelled belt. Some people say that the Pleiades still fly from before him.



## ENDYMION'S SLEEP

WHEN the plains below were parched and brown and dusty with the heat of summer, on Mount Latmus all was so still and cool, so fresh and green, that one seemed to be in another world. The mountain was most beautiful of all at night, when the moon drove her chariot overhead, and flooded every tree and all the grassy slopes with her pale light.

Endymion was a young shepherd who led his flocks high up on the sides of this mountain and let them browse on the rich pasturage along the margins of its snow-fed streams. He loved the pure mountain air, and the stillness of the higher slopes, which was broken only by the tinkle of his sheep-bells, or the song of birds. There he dreamed his days away, while his sheep and goats were feeding; or, at night, he leaned his head on a log or a mossy stone and slept with the flock.

Selene, the moon-goddess, loved to visit Mount Latmus; in fact, the mountain belonged, in some sense, to her. It was her influence that made everything there so quiet and beautiful. One night, when she had stolen down from her place in the sky for a walk through one

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

of the flowery meadows of Mount Latmus, she found Endymion there asleep.

The shepherd looked as beautiful as any flower on the mountain, or as the swans which were floating in the lake near by, with their heads tucked under their wings. If it had not been for his regular breathing, Selene would have believed that she stood looking at a marble statue. There, at a little distance, lay his sheep, and goats, unguarded, and liable to be attacked by wild beasts. Oh, Endymion was a very careless shepherd! That was the effect of the air on Mount Latmus.

Selene knew that it was the wonderful air of her mountain which had made the shepherd heedless, as well as beautiful, therefore she stayed by his flock all night and watched it herself.

She came the next night and the next, and for many nights, to gaze at the sleeper, and to watch the unguarded flock. One morning, when she returned to the sky, she looked so pale from her watching that Jupiter asked her where she had been, and she described the beautiful shepherd she had found on her mountain, and confessed that she had been guarding his sheep.

Then she begged of Jupiter that since Endymion was so very, very beautiful he might always look as she had seen him in his sleep, instead of growing old as other mortals must. Jupiter answered, "Even the gods cannot give to mortals everlasting youth and beauty without giving them also everlasting sleep; but Endymion shall sleep forever and be forever young."

So there, in a cave, on Mount Latmus, Endymion

*ENDYMION'S SLEEP*

sleeps on to this day; and his wonderful beauty has not faded in the smallest degree, but is a joy still to all who can climb those lofty heights.



# WHY CADMUS FOUNDED A CITY

## I

### THE LOSS OF EUROPA

ONE day, a little girl called Europa was playing in a meadow by the seashore. She sat on the grass with her lap full of flowers, and was plaiting the flowers into wreaths for her three big brothers, Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix, who were not far away.

Suddenly she looked up and saw a snow-white bull, with beautiful silvery horns, standing near her. At first she was afraid, but the bull seemed so gentle, and looked at her in such a friendly way, that she lost all fear of it. Taking some clover blossoms from her lap, she ran up to it and held them to its mouth. It ate the flowers daintily from her fingers, and then began skipping around on the grass almost as lightly as a bird. Finally, coming to the place where Europa was plaiting her flowers, it lay down by her side. She patted it and threw some of the wreaths over its horns, then clapped her hands to see how pretty they looked. After this, she climbed up to its back, when it got up and galloped around the meadow with her. Europa, holding on by

## *WHY CADMUS FOUNDED A CITY*

one of its white horns, laughed, and enjoyed the ride, and did not notice that the bull was taking her farther and farther away from home, and closer to the shore, till it suddenly jumped into the sea and began to swim away with her. Then she was frightened and screamed for her brothers, who heard her, and ran down to the shore. But they could not stop the white bull. Europa was carried off, and was never seen nor heard from again.

When the three brothers told their father, King Agenor, what had happened, he was quite broken-hearted and very angry besides. He said that little Europa should not have been left alone, and he blamed Cadmus more than the other brothers, because Cadmus was the oldest.

Finally he said to Cadmus, "Go and find Europa and bring her back; or, if you cannot find her, never enter the doors of your father's palace again."

In those days, one could not go far from a walled city without meeting with many dangers; hence, in order that Cadmus might not be entirely alone, his father sent two slaves to bear him company.

When the great gates of the city closed behind them, the three started out, walking toward the west, as that was the direction that the bull had taken. They passed through lonely forests; they crossed mountain-chains; they contrived to make their way across the sea to other lands; but they could not find Europa nor hear any news of her. Cadmus felt quite sure that the search was useless.

## II

### **CADMUS AND THE DRAGON**

As Cadmus did not dare to go home without his sister, he asked the oracle at the shrine of Apollo what he should do. The shrine of Apollo was in a cave at the foot of Mount Parnassus, and the oracle was a mysterious voice that seemed to come from the heart of the mountain. The voice told Cadmus to follow a white heifer he would see, and afterward to build a city on the spot where he saw her lie down.

After leaving the cave, Cadmus hardly had time to scramble down into the road again before he saw a white heifer, which he followed, as the voice had told him to do. When the heifer came to a certain beautiful valley, she raised her head, as if she were looking up to heaven, and then made a great lowing, after which she lay down, seemingly quite contented with the spot. Cadmus knew that this was the place where he must build his city.

Near the spot the heifer had chosen was a grove of very old trees, and among the trees, in a rocky place, was a cave. The mouth of the cave was so choked with willows that one could not see what it was like inside, but Cadmus thought he could hear water trickling down, and the sound seemed so cool and inviting that he sent



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one of his slaves into the cave to look for a spring. The man did not come back. Then Cadmus sent the other slave to see what had become of the first one. But that one did not come back either.

So Cadmus threw a lion's skin around his shoulders, took his lance and his javelin, and went into the mouth of the cave himself. At first, it was so dark inside that he could see nothing. When his eyes had become accustomed to the change from the bright sunshine he had just left, he saw, in the darkness, two bright spots, and knew that they must be the two eyes of some beast. As he could see better, he made out the form of a huge dragon lying with one of its ugly claws across something, which he feared might be the body of one of his faithful slaves. He took up a large stone and hurled it straight at the creature's head, but the scales of the dragon were so hard and tough that the stone rolled away without doing it any harm. Then he threw his javelin at it, and wounded it with that; but not being much disabled, the creature came out of the cave hissing, and attacked him fiercely. As it came nearer, he pushed his lance straight into its open mouth, and finally pinned it to an oak which grew there, and so killed it.

As Cadmus stood looking at the dragon, he realized that although he had killed the monster, he had lost his two slaves, and was alone in a strange country, where, without help, he would have to build the city ordered by the oracle. Just then he was aware that some one was standing at his side. He looked up and saw a tall, strong-looking woman with clear gray eyes. She had a

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lance in her hand and a helmet on her head. He knew at once that it was the warrior-goddess, Minerva, and as he looked at her he felt his courage coming back.

Minerva told him to plough the ground near by and sow the dragon's teeth. This seemed like strange seed to plant, but Cadmus did as he was bidden to do, and then stood waiting to see what would happen. After a short time the soil began to heave up a little in places, as it does when corn is growing, then, instead of blades of corn, sharp steel points began to show. As they came up farther, these looked like spear-points; then helmets appeared all along the rows; finally, fully armed men had grown up out of the earth and stood looking around fiercely, ready to fight.

Cadmus thought he had a worse enemy now than the dragon, and made ready to defend himself. But there was no need. For the armed men were hardly out of the soil before they began fighting, one with another, and they fell so fast that soon only five were left.

But these last five were wiser than their brothers, for they saw that they gained nothing by killing one another. Instead, they threw their arms on the ground with a crash, and shook hands, to see what would come from helping others.

This worked much better. Cadmus shook hands with the rest, and then they all united to build the city on the spot where the heifer had lain down. The new city was called Thebes. It was prosperous, and all lived there happily for many years, with Cadmus as king.



## ECHO

ECHO was a nymph who talked too much. She was very fond of having the last word. One day she spoke rudely to the great Juno, who said that for this offence Echo should never use her voice again, unless to repeat what she had just heard, but since she was so very fond of last words, she might repeat the last words of others.

This was almost as bad as if Juno had changed her into a parrot. Echo was very much ashamed, and hid herself in the forest.

Narcissus, a young man who had hair as yellow as gold and eyes as blue as the sky,—a very rare thing in Greece, where most people were very dark,—used to hunt in the forest where Echo was hiding. As she was peeping out shyly from some cave or from behind a great tree, Echo often saw Narcissus, and she admired him very much.

One day Narcissus became separated from his friends, and hearing something rustle among the leaves, he called out, “Who’s here?”

“Here,” answered Echo.

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“Here I am. Come!” said Narcissus.

“I am come,” said Echo; and, as she spoke, she came out from among the trees.

When Narcissus saw a stranger, instead of one of his friends as he had expected, he looked surprised and walked quickly away.

After this, Echo never came out and allowed herself to be seen again, and in time she faded away till she became only a voice.

This voice was heard for many, many years in forests and among mountains, particularly in caves. In their solitary walks, hunters often heard it. Sometimes it mocked the barking of their dogs; sometimes it repeated their own last words. It always had a weird and mournful sound, and seemed to make lonely places more lonely still.



## NARCISSUS

NARCISSUS had a twin sister whom he loved better than any one else in the world. This sister died when she was young and very beautiful. Narcissus missed her so very much that he wished he might die too.

One day, as he sat on the ground by a spring, looking absently into the water and thinking of his lost sister, he saw a face like hers, looking up at him. It seemed as if his sister had become a water-nymph and were actually there in the spring, but she would not speak to him.

Of course the face Narcissus saw was really the reflection of his own face in the water, but he did not know that. In those days there were no clear mirrors like ours; and the idea of one's appearance that could be got from a polished brass shield, for instance, was a very dim one. So Narcissus leaned over the water and looked at the beautiful face so like his sister's, and wondered what it was and whether he should ever see his sister again.

After this, he came back to the spring day after

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day and looked at the face he saw there, and mourned for his sister until, at last, the gods felt sorry for him and changed him into a flower.

This flower was the first narcissus. All the flowers of this family, when they grow by the side of a pond or a stream, still bend their beautiful heads and look at the reflection of their own faces in the water.



## HYACINTHUS

HYACINTHUS was a beautiful Greek boy who was greatly loved by Apollo. Apollo often laid aside his golden lyre and his arrows, and came down from Mount Olympus to join Hyacinthus in his boyish occupations. The two were often busy all day long, following the hunting-dogs over the mountains or setting fish nets in the river or playing at various games.

Their favorite exercise was the throwing of the discus. The discus was a heavy metal plate about a foot across, which was thrown somewhat as the quoit is thrown. One day Apollo threw the discus first, and sent it whirling high up among the clouds, for the god had great strength. It came down in a fine, strong curve, and Hyacinthus ran to pick it up. Then, as it fell on the hard earth, the discus bounded up again and struck the boy a cruel blow on his white forehead.

Apollo turned as pale as Hyacinthus, but he could not undo what had been done. He could only hold his friend in his arms, and see his head droop like a lily on a broken stem, while the purple blood from his wound was staining the earth.

## *FAVORITE GREEK MYTHS*

There was still one way by which Apollo could make Hyacinthus live, and this was to change him into a flower. So, quickly, before it was too late, he whispered over him certain words the gods knew, and Hyacinthus became a purple flower, a flower of the color of the blood that had flowed from his forehead. As the flower unfolded, it showed a strange mark on its petals, which looked like the Greek words meaning woe! woe!

Apollo never forgot his boy friend; but sang about him to the accompaniment of his wonderful lyre till the name of Hyacinthus was known and loved all over Greece.



# PRONOUNCING AND EXPLANATORY GUIDE

- Abas (ā'bas). A boy whom Ceres changed into a water-newt.
- Acrisius (a kris'i us). A king of Argos, the father of Danaë.
- Admetus (ad mē'tus). A king of Thessaly, the husband of Alcestis.
- Adonis (a dō'nis). A youth loved by Venus.
- Æetes (ē ē'tēz). A king of Colchis.
- Ægeus (ē'jūs). A king of Athens, the father of Theseus.
- ægis (ē'jis). A mantle fringed with serpents, worn by Minerva.
- Æolus (ē'ō lus). The god of the winds.
- Æson (ē'son). A king of Thessaly, the father of Jason.
- Æthra (ē'thra). The mother of Theseus.
- Agenor (a jē'nôr). The father of Cadmus and Europa.
- Alcmene (alk mē'ne). The mother of Hercules.
- Amazons (am'a zonz). A race of women who lived near the Black Sea, and who were devoted to warfare and hunting.
- ambrosia (am brō'zhi a). The food of the gods.
- Amphitryon (am fit'ry on). The husband of Alcmene.
- Amymone (am i mō'ne). See *Fountain of Amymone*.
- Andromeda (an drom'e da). The maiden who was rescued from a sea-monster by Perseus.
- Antæus (an tē'us). A giant slain by Hercules.
- Aphrodite (af ro dī'te). See *Venus*.
- Apollo (a pol' lo). The god of the light and heat that come from the sun. Sometimes called Phœbus Apollo.
- Arachne (a rak'ne). A maiden of Lydia, in Asia Minor, known for her skilful spinning and weaving.
- Arcadia (ar kā'di a). A region between Argolis and Elis. It was known for its rural simplicity.
- Ares (ā'rēz). See *Mars*.
- Argo (är'gō). The ship or galley in which Jason sailed to Colchis.
- Argolis (är'gō lis). A region of southern Greece, east of Arcadia.