

THOUGHTAUDIO



GREEK MYTHS

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GREEK MYTHS

PART ONE

JUPITER AND HIS MIGHTY COMPANY

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

THE GOLDEN AGE

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

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

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

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

Nobody was poor, for everybody had the same precious things — the sunlight, the pure air, the wholesome water of the springs, the grass for a carpet, the blue sky for a roof, the

GREEK MYTHS

fruits and flowers of the woods and meadows. So, of course, no one was richer than another, and there was no money, nor any locks or bolts; for everybody was everybody's friend, and no man wanted to get more of anything than his neighbors had.

When these happy people had lived long enough they fell asleep, and their bodies were seen no more. They flitted away through the air, and over the mountains, and across the sea, to a flowery land in the distant west. And some men say that, even to this day, they are wandering happily hither and thither about the earth, causing babies to smile in their cradles, easing the burdens of the toil-worn and sick, and blessing mankind everywhere. What a pity it is that this Golden Age should have come to an end! But it was Jupiter and his brothers who brought about the sad change.

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

Then men began to grow dissatisfied with their lot. Some wanted to be rich and own all the good things in the world. Some wanted to be kings and rule over the others. Some who were strong wanted to make slaves of those who were weak. Some broke down the fruit trees in the woods, lest others should eat of the fruit.

Some, for mere sport, hunted the timid animals, which had always been their friends. Some even killed these poor creatures and ate their flesh for food.

At last, instead of everybody being everybody's friend, everybody was everybody's foe. So, in all the world, instead of peace, there was war; instead of plenty, there was starvation; instead of innocence, there was crime; and instead of happiness, there was misery.

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

GREEK MYTHS

THE STORY OF PROMETHEUS

I. How Fire Was Given to Men

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

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

For some cause Jupiter had not sent these brothers to prison with the rest of the Titans. Prometheus did not care to live amid the clouds on the mountaintop. He was too busy for that. While the Mighty Folk were spending their time in idleness, drinking nectar and eating ambrosia, he was intent upon plans for making the world wiser and better than it had ever been before.

He went out amongst men to live with them and help them; for his heart was filled with sadness when he found that they were no longer happy, as they had been during the golden days when Saturn was king.

Ah, how very poor and wretched they were! He found them living in caves and in holes of the earth, shivering with the cold because there was no fire, dying of starvation, hunted by wild beasts and by one another — the most miserable of all living creatures.

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

II. How Diseases and Cares Came Among Men

Things might have gone on very happily indeed, and the Golden Age might really have come again, had it not been for Jupiter. But one day, when he chanced to look down upon the earth, he saw the fires burning, and the people living in houses, and the flocks feeding on the hills, and the grain ripening in the fields, and this made him very angry.

GREEK MYTHS

"Who has done all this?" he asked.

And someone answered, "Prometheus!"

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

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

In the first place, he ordered his blacksmith Vulcan, whose forge was in the crater of a burning mountain, to take a lump of clay which he gave him, and mold it into the form of a woman.

Vulcan did as he was bidden; and when he had finished the image, he carried it up to Jupiter, who was sitting among the clouds with all the Mighty Folk around him. It was nothing but a mere lifeless body, but the great blacksmith had given it a form more perfect than that of any statue that has ever been made.

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

Then the others came in their turn, each with a gift for the marvelous creature. One gave her beauty; and another a pleasant voice; and another good manners; and another a kind

GREEK MYTHS

heart; and another skill in many arts; and, lastly, someone gave her curiosity. Then they called her Pandora, which means the all-gifted, because she had received gifts from them all.

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

"Epimetheus, here is a beautiful woman, whom Jupiter has sent to you to be your wife." Prometheus had often warned his brother to beware of any gift that Jupiter might send, for he knew that the mighty tyrant could not be trusted; but when Epimetheus saw Pandora, how lovely and wise she was, he forgot all warnings, and took her home to live with him and be his wife.

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

She opened the lid a very little, just to peep inside. All at once there was a whirring, rustling sound, and before she could shut it down again, out flew ten thousand strange creatures with death-like faces and gaunt and dreadful forms, such as nobody in all the world had ever seen. They fluttered for a little while about the room, and then flew away to find dwelling-places wherever there were homes of men. They were diseases and cares; for up to that time mankind had not had any kind of sickness, nor felt any troubles of mind, nor worried about what the morrow might bring forth.

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

going to come to them every day of their lives, and they would never have had any joy or hope so long as they lived.

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

III. How the Friend of Men Was Punished

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

Then, once upon a time, a white cow passed that way, — a strangely beautiful cow, with large sad eyes and a face that seemed almost human. She stopped and looked up at the cold gray peak and the giant body which was chained there. Prometheus saw her and spoke to her kindly, "I know who you are," he said. "You are Io who was once a fair and happy maiden in distant Argos; and now, because of the tyrant Jupiter and his jealous queen, you are doomed to wander from land to land in that unhuman form. But do not lose hope. Go on to the southward and then to the west; and after many days you shall come to the great river Nile. There you shall again become a maiden, but fairer and more beautiful than before; and you shall become the wife of the king of that land, and shall give birth to a son, from whom shall spring the hero who will break my chains and set me free. As for me, I bide in patience the day which not even Jupiter can hasten or delay. Farewell!"

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

THE FLOOD

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

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

"These men," he said to his mighty company, "are nothing but a source of trouble. When they were good and happy, we felt afraid lest they should become greater than ourselves; and now they are so terribly wicked that we are in worse danger than before. There is only one thing to be done with them, and that is to destroy them every one."

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

And so when the rain began to fall, Deucalion drew from its shelter a boat which he had built for just such a time. He called fair Pyrrha, his wife, and the two sat in the boat and were floated safely on the rising waters. Day and night, day and night, I cannot tell how long, the boat drifted hither and thither. The tops of the trees were hidden by the flood, and then the hills and then the mountains; and Deucalion and Pyrrha could see nothing anywhere but water, water, water — and they knew that all the people in the land had been drowned.

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

But Deucalion and Pyrrha were very sad, for they knew that they were the only persons who were left alive in all the land. At last they started to walk down the mountainside

GREEK MYTHS

towards the plain, wondering what would become of them now, all alone as they were in the wide world. While they were talking and trying to think what they should do, they heard a voice behind them. They turned and saw a noble young prince standing on one of the rocks above them. He was very tall, with blue eyes and yellow hair. There were wings on his shoes and on his cap, and in his hands he bore a staff with golden serpents twined around it. They knew at once that he was Mercury, the swift messenger of the Mighty Ones, and they waited to hear what he would say.

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

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

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

"What did he mean?" asked Pyrrha.

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

But we call the country Greece.

GREEK MYTHS

THE STORY OF IO

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

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

Jupiter saw her while she was yet a great way off, and he knew why she had come. So, to save Io from her, he changed the maiden to a white cow. He thought that when Juno had gone back home, it would not be hard to give Io her own form again.

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

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

Jupiter did not like to do this; but she coaxed so hard that at last he gave up, and let her have the cow for her own. He thought that it would not be long till he could get her away

GREEK MYTHS

from the queen, and change her to a girl once more. But Juno was too wise to trust him. She took the cow by her horns, and led her out of the town.

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

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

But no kind friend heard her, and no one came to help her; for none but Jupiter and Juno knew that the white cow who stood in the grove was Io, whom all the world loved. Day in and day out, Argus, who was all eyes, sat on a hill close by and kept watch; and you could not say that he went to sleep at all, for while half of his eyes were shut, the other half were wide awake, and thus they slept and watched by turns.

Jupiter was grieved when he saw to what a hard life Io had been doomed, and he tried to think of some plan to set her free. One day he called sly Mercury, who had wings on his shoes, and bade him go and lead the cow away from the grove where she was kept. Mercury went down and stood near the foot of the hill where Argus sat, and began to play sweet tunes on his flute.

This was just what the strange watchman liked to hear; and so he called to Mercury, and asked him to come up and sit by his side and play still other tunes.

GREEK MYTHS

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

This was just what Mercury wished. It was not a brave thing to do, and yet he drew a long, sharp knife from his belt and cut off the head of poor Argus while he slept. Then he ran down the hill to loose the cow and lead her to the town.

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

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

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

By and by she came to a narrow neck of the sea, and, since the land on the other side looked as though she might find rest there, she leaped into the waves and swam across;

GREEK MYTHS

and that place has been called Bosphorus — a word which means the Sea of the Cow — from that time till now, and you will find it so marked on the maps which you use at school. Then she went on through a strange land on the other side, but, let her do what she would, she could not get rid of the gadfly.

After a time she came to a place where there were high mountains with snow-capped peaks which seemed to touch the sky. There she stopped to rest a while; and she looked up at the calm, cold cliffs above her and wished that she might die where all was so grand and still.

But as she looked she saw a giant form stretched upon the rocks midway between earth and sky, and she knew at once that it was Prometheus, the young Titan, whom Jupiter had chained there because he had given fire to men.

"My sufferings are not so great as his," she thought; and her eyes were filled with tears. Then Prometheus looked down and spoke to her, and his voice was very mild and kind. "I know who you are," he said; and then he told her not to lose hope, but to go south and then west, and she would by and by find a place in which to rest.

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

Then Prometheus went on and told her that the time would come when she should be given her own form again, and that she should live to be the mother of a race of heroes. "As for me," said he, "I bide the time in patience, for I know that one of those heroes will break my chains and set me free. Farewell!"

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

The name of the hero was Hercules.

GREEK MYTHS

THE WONDERFUL WEAVER

I. The Warp

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

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

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

II. The Woof

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

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

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

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

And Jupiter himself nodded.

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

The web which she wove in the sky was full of enchanting pictures of flowers and gardens, and of castles and towers, and of mountain heights, and of men and beasts, and of giants and dwarfs, and of the mighty beings who dwell in the clouds with Jupiter. And those who looked upon it were so filled with wonder and delight, that they forgot all

GREEK MYTHS

about the beautiful web which Arachne had woven. And Arachne herself was ashamed and afraid when she saw it; and she hid her face in her hands and wept.

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

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

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

PART TWO

THE LORD OF THE SILVER BOW

I. Delos

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

One day she came to the sea, and as she fled along the beach she lifted up her hands and called aloud to great Neptune to help her. Neptune, the king of the sea, heard her and was kind to her. He sent a huge fish, called a dolphin, to bear her away from the cruel land; and the fish, with Leto sitting on his broad back, swam through the waves to Delos, a little island which lay floating on top of the water like a boat. There the gentle lady found rest and a home; for the place belonged to Neptune, and the words of cruel Juno were not obeyed there. Neptune put four marble pillars under the island so that it should rest firm upon them; and then he chained it fast, with great chains, which reached to the bottom of the sea, so that the waves might never move it.

By and by twin babes were born to Leto in Delos. One was a boy whom she called Apollo, the other a girl whom she named Artemis, or Diana. When the news of their birth was carried to Jupiter and the Mighty Folk on the mountaintop, all the world was glad.

GREEK MYTHS

The sun danced on the waters, and singing swans flew seven times round the island of Delos. The moon stooped to kiss the babes in their cradle; and Juno forgot her anger, and bade all things on the earth and in the sky be kind to Leto.

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

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

II. Delphi

"Where is the center of the world?"

This is the question, which someone asked Jupiter as he sat in his golden hall. Of course the mighty ruler of earth and sky was too wise to be puzzled by so simple a thing, but he was too busy to answer it at once. So he said, "Come again in one year from to-day, and I will show you the very place."

GREEK MYTHS

Then Jupiter took two swift eagles, which could fly faster than the storm-wind, and trained them till the speed of the one was the same as that of the other. At the end of the year he said to his servants, "Take this eagle to the eastern rim of the earth, where the sun rises out of the sea; and carry his fellow to the far west, where the ocean is lost in darkness and nothing lies beyond. Then, when I give you the sign, loosen both at the same moment."

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

"If that is the center of the world," said young Apollo, "then I will make my home there, and I will build a house in that place, so that my light may be seen in all lands."

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

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

And they said, "No one; and we and our children and our flocks shall all be slain by him." Then Apollo with his silver bow in his hands went up towards the place where the Python lay. The monster had worn great paths through the grass and among the rocks, and his lair was not hard to find. When he caught sight of Apollo, he uncoiled himself, and came out to meet him. The bright prince saw the creature's glaring eyes and blood-red mouth, and heard the rush of his scaly body over the stones. He fitted an arrow to his bow, and stood still. The Python saw that his foe was no common man, and turned to flee. Then the arrow sped from the bow — and the monster was dead.

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

Close to the foot of the steep cliff, and beneath the spot where Jupiter's eagles had fallen, he laid the foundations; and soon where had been the lair of the Python, the white walls of Apollo's temple arose among the rocks. Then the poor people of the land came and

GREEK MYTHS

built their houses near by; and Apollo lived among them many years, and taught them to be gentle and wise, and showed them how to be happy. The mountain was no longer savage and wild, but was a place of music and song; the valley was no longer dark and lonely, but was filled with beauty and light.

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

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

III. Daphne

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

The river smiled, and Daphne ran onward, climbing one hill after another, and wondering why the great mountain seemed still so far away.

By and by she came to the foot of a wooded slope where there was a pretty waterfall and the ground was bespangled with thousands of beautiful flowers; and she sat down there a moment to rest. Then from the grove on the hilltop above her, came the sound of the loveliest music she had ever heard. She stood up and listened. Someone was playing on a lyre, and someone was singing. She was frightened; and still the music was so charming that she could not run away.

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

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

"O Father Peneus, save me!"

Then it seemed as though the river rose up to meet her. The air was filled with a blinding mist. For a moment Apollo lost sight of the fleeing maiden. Then he saw her close by the river's bank, and so near to him that her long hair, streaming behind her, brushed his cheek. He thought that she was about to leap into the rushing, roaring waters, and he

GREEK MYTHS

reached out his hands to save her. But it was not the fair, timid Daphne that he caught in his arms; it was the trunk of a laurel tree, its green leaves trembling in the breeze.

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

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

IV. Deluded

Apollo did not care to live much of the time with his mighty kinsfolk on the mountaintop. He liked better to go about from place to place and from land to land, seeing people at their work and making their lives happy. When men first saw his fair boyish face and his soft white hands, they sneered and said he was only an idle, good-for-nothing fellow. But when they heard him speak, they were so charmed that they stood, spellbound, to listen; and ever after that they made his words their law. They wondered how it was that he was so wise; for it seemed to them that he did nothing but stroll about, playing on his wonderful lyre and looking at the trees and blossoms and birds and bees. But when any of them were sick they came to him, and he told them what to find in plants or stones or brooks that would heal them and make them strong again. They noticed that he did not grow old, as others did, but that he was always young and fair; and, even after he had gone away, — they knew not how, nor whither, — it seemed as though the earth were a brighter and sweeter place to live in than it had been before his coming.

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

For Apollo had a pet crow which was very wise, and could talk. The bird was not black, like the crows which you have seen, but as white as snow. Men say that all crows were white until that time, but I doubt whether anybody knows.

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

All went well for several days. Every morning the white bird would wing its way over hills and plains and rivers and forests until it found Apollo, either in the groves on the top

GREEK MYTHS

of Parnassus or in his own house at Delphi. Then it would alight upon his shoulder and say, "Coronis is well! Coronis is well!"

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

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

He heard the footsteps of someone running in the grove. He caught a glimpse of a white robe among the trees. He felt sure that this was the man whom the crow had seen, and that he was trying to run away. He fitted an arrow to his bow quickly. He drew the string. Twang! And the arrow which never missed sped like a flash of light through the air. Apollo heard a sharp, wild cry of pain; and he bounded forward through the grove. There, stretched dying on the grass, he saw his dear Coronis. She had seen him coming, and was running gladly to greet him, when the cruel arrow pierced her heart. Apollo was overcome with grief. He took her form in his arms, and tried to call her back to life again. But it was all in vain. She could only whisper his name, and then she was dead. A moment afterwards the crow alighted on one of the trees near by. "Cor — Cor — Cor," it began; for it wanted now to finish its story. But Apollo bade it begone. "Cursed bird," he cried, "you shall never say a word but 'Cor — Cor — Cor!' all your life; and the feathers of which you are so proud shall no longer be white, but black as midnight." And from that time to this, as you very well know, all crows have been black; and they fly from one dead tree to another, always crying, "Cor — cor — cor!"

V. Disgraced

Soon after this, Apollo took the little Aesculapius in his arms and carried him to a wise old schoolmaster named Cheiron, who lived in a cave under the gray cliffs of a mountain close by the sea. "Take this child," he said, "and teach him all the lore of the mountains, the woods, and the fields. Teach him those things which he most needs to know in order to do great good to his fellow-men." And Aesculapius proved to be a wise child, gentle and sweet and teachable; and among all the pupils of Cheiron he was the best loved. He learned the lore of the mountains, the

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

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

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

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

Then Jupiter, in his turn, was angry, and ordered Apollo to come before him and be punished for what he had done. He took away his bow and arrows and his wonderful lyre and all his beauty of form and feature; and after that Jupiter clothed him in the rags of a

GREEK MYTHS

beggar and drove him down from the mountain, and told him that he should never come back nor be himself again until he had served some man a whole year as a slave.

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

GREEK MYTHS

Admetus and Alcestis

I. The Slave

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

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

In the morning Admetus asked the poor man his name, but he shook his head and made no answer. Then Admetus asked him about his home and his country; and all that the man would say was, "Make me your slave, master! Make me your slave, and let me serve you for a year."

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

It was a tall and handsome young man, clad in robes lighter and finer than any king might wear. His face was as bright as sunbeams, and his eyes gleamed like lightning. Upon his shoulder was a silver bow, from his belt hung a quiver of sharp arrows, and in his hands was a golden lyre. Admetus stood still and wondered. Then the stranger spoke, "King Admetus," he said, "I am the poor beggar whom you fed — your slave to whom you were so kind. I have served you, as I agreed, for a whole year, and now I am going home. Is there anything I can do for you?"

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

and I became your slave, and you were as kind to me as though I were your son. What shall I give you to reward you?"

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

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

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

II. The Chariot

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

"I will let him know," said Admetus.

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

"Lord of the Silver Bow," he cried, "if ever I have shown kindness to the poor and the distressed, come now and help me. For I am in sore need, and I remember your promise." Hardly was he done speaking when bright Apollo, bearing his bow and his quiver of arrows, came down and stood before him.

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

Then Admetus told him all about the fair Alcestis, and how her father would give her only to the man who should come for her in a chariot drawn by a lion and a wild boar. "Come with me," said Apollo, "and I will help you."

GREEK MYTHS

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

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

Old King Pelias was astonished when he saw the wonderful chariot and the glorious charioteer; and when Admetus again asked him for the fair Alcestis, he could not refuse. A day was set for the wedding, and Apollo drove his team back to the forest and set the lion and the wild boar free.

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

GREEK MYTHS

III. The Shadow Leader

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

His father and mother were very old and could hope to live but a short time at best, and so it was thought that one of them would be glad to give up life for the sake of their son. But when someone asked them about it, they shook their heads and said that though life was short they would cling to it as long as they could.

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

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

At the very same time Admetus felt his sickness leave him, and he sprang up as well and strong as he had ever been. Wondering how it was that he had been so quickly cured, he made haste to find Alcestis and tell her the good news.

GREEK MYTHS

But when he went into her room, he saw her lying lifeless on her couch, and he knew at once that she had died for him. His grief was so great that he could not speak, and he wished that death had taken him and spared the one whom he loved.

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

At last the sun began to rise in the east, and then Admetus was surprised to feel the hand which he held growing warm. He saw a red tinge coming into the pale cheeks of Alcestis. A moment later the fair lady opened her eyes and sat up, alive and well and glad. How was it that Alcestis had been given back to life?

When she died and left her body, the Shadow Leader, who knows no pity, led her, as he led all others, to the cheerless halls of Proserpine, the queen of the Lower World. "Who is this who comes so willingly?" asked the pale-faced queen.

And when she was told how Alcestis, so young and beautiful, had given her life to save that of her husband, she was moved with pity; and she bade the Shadow Leader take her back again to the joy and sunlight of the Upper World.

So it was that Alcestis came to life; and for many years she and Admetus lived in their little kingdom not far from the sea; and the Mighty Ones on the mountaintop blessed

GREEK MYTHS

them; and, at last, when they had become very old, the Shadow Leader led them both away together.

GREEK MYTHS

CADMUS AND EUROPA

I. The Bull

In Asia there lived a king who had two children, a boy and a girl. The boy's name was Cadmus, and the girl's name was Europa. The king's country was a very small one. He could stand on his housetop and see the whole of it.

On one side of it there were mountains, and on the other side was the sea. The king thought that it was the center of the world, and he did not know much about other lands and people.

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

and so she stopped to look at him, he was so handsome. He came close to her, and rubbed her arm with his nose to say "Good-morning!"

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

The herdsman under the tree heard her scream, and jumped up to see what was the matter. He saw the bull running with her towards the shore. He ran after them as fast as he could, but it was of no use. The bull leaped into the sea, and swam swiftly away, with poor Europa on his back. Several other people had seen him, and now they ran to tell the king. Soon the whole town was alarmed. Everybody ran out to the shore and looked. All that could be seen was something white moving very fast over the calm, blue water; and soon it was out of sight.

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

GREEK MYTHS

Cadmus was glad to go. He chose twenty brave young men to go with him, and set sail the very next day. It was a great undertaking; for they were to pass through an unknown sea, and they did not know what lands they would come to. Indeed, it was feared that they would never come to any land at all. Ships did not dare to go far from the shore in those days. But Cadmus and his friends were not afraid. They were ready to face any danger. In a few days they came to a large island called Cyprus. Cadmus went on shore, and tried to talk with the strange people who lived there. They were very kind to him, but they did not understand his language. At last he made out by signs to tell them who he was, and to ask them if they had seen his little sister Europa or the white bull that had carried her away. They shook their heads and pointed to the west.

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

II. The Pythia

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

"I will tell you," said the man. "Delphi is a town, built near the foot of Mount Parnassus, at the very center of the earth. It is the town of Apollo, the Bringer of Light; and there is a temple there, built close to the spot where Apollo killed a black serpent, many, many years ago. The temple is the most wonderful place in the world.

GREEK MYTHS

In the middle of the floor there is a wide crack, or crevice; and this crevice goes down, down into the rock, nobody knows how deep. A strange odor comes up out of the crevice; and if any one breathes much of it, he is apt to fall over and lose his senses."

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

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

"What must I do?" said Cadmus.

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

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

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

III. The Dragon

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

When the sun rose the next morning, they saw that they were on the top of a beautiful hill, with woods on one side and a grassy meadow on the other. There the cow lay down. "Here we will build our city," said Cadmus.

Then the young men made a fire of dry sticks, and Cadmus killed the cow. They thought that if they should burn some of her flesh, the smell of it would go up to the sky and be pleasing to Jupiter and the Mighty Folk who lived with him among the clouds; and in this

GREEK MYTHS

way they hoped to make friends with Jupiter so that he would not hinder them in their work.

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

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

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

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

GREEK MYTHS

IV. The City

While Cadmus was still weeping, he was surprised to hear someone calling him. He stood up and looked around. On the hillside before him was a tall woman who had a helmet on her head and a shield in her hand. Her eyes were gray, and her face, though not beautiful, was very noble. Cadmus knew at once that she was Athena, the queen of the air — she who gives wisdom to men.

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

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

In a little while, the soil in the furrows began to stir. Then, at every place that a tooth had been dropped, something bright grew up. It was a brass helmet. The helmets pushed their way up, and soon the faces of men were seen underneath, then their shoulders, then their arms, then their bodies; and then, before Cadmus could think, a thousand warriors leaped out of the furrows and shook off the black earth which was clinging to them. Every man

GREEK MYTHS

was clothed in a suit of brass armor; and every one had a long spear in his right hand and a shield in his left.

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

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

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

After that they built other houses, and people came to live in them. They called the town Cadmeia, after Cadmus who was its first king. But when the place had grown to be a large city, it was known by the name of Thebes.

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

GREEK MYTHS

But the greatest thing that Cadmus did is yet to be told. He was the first schoolmaster of the Greeks, and taught them the letters which were used in his own country across the sea. They called the first of these letters alpha and the second beta, and that is why men speak of the alphabet to this day. And when the Greeks had learned the alphabet from Cadmus, they soon began to read and write, and to make beautiful and useful books. As for the maiden Europa, she was carried safe over the sea to a distant shore. She may have been happy in the new, strange land to which she was taken — I cannot tell; but she never heard of friends or home again. Whether it was really Jupiter in the form of a bull that carried her away, nobody knows. It all happened so long ago that there may have been some mistake about the story; and I should not think it strange if it were a sea robber who stole her from her home, and a swift ship with white sails that bore her away. Of one thing I am very sure: she was loved so well by all who knew her that the great unknown country to which she was taken has been called after her name ever since — Europe.

THE END