

FRANCILLON

ROBERT

EDWARD

GODS AND HEROES

Robert Francillon

Gods and Heroes

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R. E. Francillon

Gods and Heroes / or The Kingdom of Jupiter

PREFACE

THESE stories will, I trust, explain their own purpose; but a few words touching their form are due to critical readers.

It will be seen that the Mythology adopted throughout is strictly of the old-fashioned kind which goes to Ovid as its leading authority, and ignores the difference between the gods of Greece and the gods of Rome. I have deliberately followed this plan because, while there is not the remotest fear – quite the contrary – that young people, when or if they become scholars, will not be duly initiated into the mysteries of scientific and comparative mythology, there is considerable danger that the stories of the gods and heroes which have saturated literature, and have become essential portions of the thought and life of ages, may become explained away only too thoroughly. It is easy for my readers to acquire the science of the subject hereafter; but where mythology is concerned, the poetry must come before the prose, and it will be a distinct loss for them if, under scientific teaching, they have never been familiar with the ancient stories as they were read by the makers of literature in the præ-critical times. Without the mythology of the Latin poets, modern literature in all languages becomes almost a dead letter: hundreds of allusions become pointless, and thousands of substances fade into shadows. Of the three mythologies, the Greek, the Roman, and the Poetic or Conventional, I have selected the last, because – among other reasons —

It is as useful, and as needful to be known, as the others, on general grounds;

It is more useful, and more needful, than the others, as a portion of literature and as an intellectual influence;

It is preferable as a means of exciting an interest in the subject;

It is not in the remotest degree an obstacle to more accurate knowledge, for which indeed it is an almost indispensable preparation.

After these observations, there is no occasion to explain why I have made a point of employing Latin names and Latin spelling.

Another point to which I should call attention is the attempt to cover (within limits) the whole ground, so that the reader may not be left in ignorance of any considerable tract of the realm of Jove. The stories are not detached; they are brought, so far as I have been able to bring them, into a single *saga*, free from inconsistencies and contradictions. Omissions owing to the necessarily prescribed limits will, I think, always find a place to fall into. Altogether, the lines of the volume diverge so entirely from those of Kingsley, or Hawthorne, or any other story-teller known to me, that I may feel myself safe from the danger of fatal comparisons. Of course this aim at a certain completeness has implied the difficult task of selection among variants of the same story or incident. Sometimes I have preferred the most interesting, sometimes the version most consistent with the general plan. But I have endeavored, as a rule, to adopt the most usual or familiar, as being most in accordance with my original intention.

I need not, however, enumerate difficulties, which, if they are overcome, need no apology; and, if they are not, deserve none. The greatest and most obvious, the strict observance of the “*Maxima reverentia*,” will, and must always remain, crucial. In this, at least, I trust I have succeeded, in whatever else I may have failed. These stories were begun for one who was very dear to me, and who was their first and best critic; and I shall be glad if what was begun, in hope, for him should be of use to others.

R. E. F.

Note. – Quantity is marked in proper names, when necessary, at their first occurrence.

SATURN

ONCE upon a time, the Sky married the Earth. The Sky's name was Cœlus, and the Earth's was Terra. They had a great many children: one of these, the eldest, was called Titan, and another was called Saturn.

Terra, their mother Earth, was very good and kind; but their father, Cœlus, was very unkind and cruel. He hated his own children, and shut them all up under ground, so that he might get rid of them – all of them, that is to say, except Saturn, whom he allowed to have his freedom. Saturn grew up; and he thought of nothing but how to set his brothers free. At last one day he went to his mother, and asked her what he could do. Terra had come to hate her husband for his cruelty: so she gave Saturn all the iron she had in her veins – (you know that iron comes from what are called the Veins of the Earth) – and he made a great scythe with it. With this scythe he wounded and punished his father so terribly that old Cœlus was never good for anything again – in fact, we never hear of him any more, except when we turn his name into Cœlum, which is the Latin for “the sky,” as you know.

Saturn instantly let all his brothers out from their underground prison. They were very grateful to him: and Titan, the eldest, said, “You shall be king of us all, and of all the world, if you will only promise me one thing.” Saturn promised. “It is this,” said Titan. “You know how our father treated us; and how you treated him. Children are plagues, and I don't want you to have anything to do with them. Therefore promise me to eat up all your children, if you ever have any, as soon as they are born. They'll be too young to mind and you'll be safe from them. I think so much of this, that if you don't eat them up, every one, I'll take the kingdom away from you. For I'm the eldest, and I might keep it if I pleased instead of giving it up to you.”

Saturn had no children then, and he gave the promise. But sometime afterwards he married a goddess named Rhea, who was very good and very beautiful. They, too, had a great many children. But, alas! there was that terrible promise that poor Saturn had made to Titan. Saturn could not break his word, so he ate every child as soon as it was born. Of course Rhea was very unhappy and miserable: it was worse, thought she, than if he had only shut them underground. But there was the promise – and she did not know what to do.

But she thought and thought, and at last she hit on a plan. When her next child was born, she hid it away, and when Saturn asked for it to eat it, she gave him a big stone instead of the baby. Saturn must have had good teeth, for he ate it up, and only thought that the new baby's bones were uncommonly hard. The trick answered so well that when the next child was born she did it again, – and again she did it a third time. She named the three children that she saved in this way, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto.

Jupiter, the eldest, was a very fine, strong child. He made such a noise with his crying that his mother Rhea was afraid Saturn would hear him. So she sent him away to the island of Crete, where he was brought up on goat's milk; and she ordered his nurses to make all the noise they could with drums, trumpets, and cymbals all day and all night long, so that nobody could hear him cry and so find out that he was alive.

But unluckily her secret was found out by Titan. Titan thought Saturn had been breaking his word; so he made war on him, and very nearly conquered him and took his kingdom from him.

Jupiter, however, heard the noise of the battle through all the cymbals, trumpets, and drums. He was only a year old, but so big and strong that he rushed out of Crete, and fought a most desperate battle against his uncles, the Titans, to save his father, Saturn. The Titans were wonderful people. All were giants; and one of them had a hundred arms. They threw mountains instead of stones. But Jupiter conquered them at last, and set his father free.

But somehow Saturn was very much afraid of his son. I think I should have been afraid of you if you had been such a wonderful baby. In some way or other – I don't know how – he tried to get rid

of Jupiter, and made himself so unpleasant that Jupiter had to take his kingdom away from him, and make himself king. That is how Jupiter became king of all the gods and goddesses.

Saturn, when he lost his kingdom, went to Italy, where a king named Janus received him very kindly. Saturn and Janus became such friends that Janus made him king with him; and Saturn ruled so well that he made his people the happiest in all the world. Everybody was perfectly good and perfectly happy. Saturn's reign on earth is called the Golden Age. His wife, Rhea, was with him, and was as good as he; – so he had peace at last after all his troubles, which had no doubt taught him to be wise.

The Greek name for Saturn means “Time”; and Saturn is called the god of Time, who swallows up all things and creatures. All creatures may be called “the Children of Time.” And the kingdom of Time, we may say, must always come to an end. The whole story means a great deal more than this; but this is enough to show you that it is not nonsense, and means something. One of the planets is called Saturn.

In pictures Saturn is always made an old man, because Time is old; and he carries his scythe, because Time mows everything away, just as a mower does the grass; or like “The Reaper whose name is Death.” Only Death, in the poem, is kinder than Saturn or Time.

JUPITER AND JUNO

PART I. – THE GODS AND THE GIANTS

WHEN Jupiter became god and king of the whole world, he made his two brothers, Neptune and Pluto, kings under him. He made Neptune god and king of the sea: Pluto he made god and king of Hades. Hades was a world underground, in the middle of the earth, where men and women go and live when they die.

The next thing that Jupiter did was to marry Juno. Their wedding was the grandest and most wonderful that ever was seen. Invitations were sent out to all the gods and nymphs. The nymphs were a sort of fairies – some of them waited upon the goddesses; some of them lived in rivers, brooks, and trees. All of them came to the wedding, except one nymph named Chelone.

She refused to come: and, besides that, she laughed at the whole thing. When they told her that Jupiter was going to marry Juno, she laughed so loud that Jupiter himself could hear her. I don't know why she thought it so ridiculous, but I can guess pretty well. I expect she knew Juno's bad temper better than Jupiter did, and how Jupiter was just the sort of husband to spoil any wife's temper. But Jupiter was very fond of Juno just then, and he did not like to be laughed at on his wedding-day. So he had Chelone turned into a tortoise, so that she might never be able to laugh again. Nobody ever heard a tortoise laugh, nor ever will.

Jupiter and Juno set up their palace in the sky, just over the top of Mount Olympus, a high mountain in the north of Greece. And very soon, I am sorry to say, his quarrels with Juno began – so that, after all, poor Chelone had been right in not thinking much of the grand wedding. He always kept her for his Queen; but he cared for a great many Titanesses and nymphs much more than he did for her, and married more of them than anybody can reckon, one after another. This made Juno very angry, and they used to quarrel terribly. But something was going to happen which was almost as bad as quarreling, and which must have made Jupiter envy the peace and comfort of old Saturn, who had become only an earthly king.

The Titans made another war. And this time they got the help of the Giants, who were more terrible even than the Titans. They were immense monsters, some almost as tall as the tallest mountain, fearfully strong, and horribly ugly, with hair miles long, and rough beards down to their middle. One of them had fifty heads and a hundred hands. Another had serpents instead of legs. Others, called Cyclopes, had only one eye, which was in the middle of their foreheads. But the most terrible of all was a giant named Typhon. He had a hundred heads, each like a dragon's, and darted flames from his mouth and eyes. A great battle was fought between the gods and the giants. The giants tried to get into the sky by piling up the mountains one upon another. They used oak-trees for clubs, and threw hills for stones. They set whole forests on fire, and tossed them up like torches to set fire to the sky. And at last Typhon's hundred fiery mouths set up a hundred different yells and roars all at once, so loud and horrible that Jupiter and all the gods ran away into Egypt and hid themselves there in the shapes of animals. Jupiter turned himself into a ram, and Juno became a cow.

But, when their fright was over, the gods came back into their own shapes, and fought another battle, greater and more terrible than before. And this time the gods won. Some of the giants were crushed under mountains or drowned in the sea. Some were taken prisoners: and of these some were beaten to death and others were skinned alive. Atlas, who was the tallest, was ordered to spend all his days in holding up the sky on his shoulders, – how it was held up before, I do not know. Some of the Cyclopes were set to work in making thunderbolts for Jupiter. They became the blacksmiths of the gods, and Mount Ætna, which is a volcano, was one of their forges.

After this, the gods lived in peace: though Jupiter and Juno never left off quarreling a good deal. Jupiter made most of his children gods and goddesses, and they all lived together over Mount Olympus, ruling the earth and the sky, and the air, the sun, and the stars. You will read the stories of all of them. They used to eat a delicious food called Ambrosia, and their wine was a wonderful drink called Nectar. Hebe, the goddess of Youth, mixed and poured out the Nectar, and Ganymede was Jupiter's own page and cup-bearer. These gods and goddesses of the sky were a sort of large family, with Jupiter and Juno for father and mother. Of course Neptune with his gods of the sea, and Pluto with his gods of Hades, were like different families, and lived in their own places.

Whenever it thunders, that is the voice of Jupiter. One of the planets is named after him – it is a beautiful large white star. In pictures, he is a large, strong man, with a thick brown beard, looking like a king. He sits on a throne, with lightning in his hand, and an eagle by his side. Juno is a large, beautiful woman, tall and grand, looking like a queen, with a proud face and splendid eyes. The peacock is her favorite bird, just as Jupiter's is the eagle.

PART II. – THE FIRST MAN; OR, THE STORY OF PROMETHEUS AND PANDORA

ONE of the Titans left two sons, Prometheus and Epimetheus. Prometheus means Forethought, and Epimetheus means Afterthought. Now Prometheus was not big and strong like the other Titans, but he was more clever and cunning than all of them put together. And he said to himself, “Well, the gods have shown themselves stronger than we. We can’t conquer them by fighting, that’s clear. But there are cleverer ways of winning than by fighting, as they shall see.”

So Prometheus dug up a good-sized lump of clay, more than six feet long, and nearly four feet round. And now, said he to himself, “I only want just one little spark of Heavenly Fire.”

Now the Heavenly Fire is only to be found in the sky; and Jupiter had ordered that no Titan was ever to enter the sky again. But Prometheus was much too clever to find any difficulty about that. The great goddess Minerva, who is the goddess of Wisdom, happened to be on a visit to the earth just then, so Prometheus called upon her and said: —

“Great goddess, I am only a poor, beaten Titan, and I have never seen the sky. But my father and my father’s father used to live there in the good old times, and I should like, just once, to see the inside of the beautiful blue place above the clouds which was once their home. Please, great goddess, let me go in just once, and I’ll promise to do no harm.”

Now Minerva did not like to break the rule. But she was very trusting and very good-natured, because she was very wise; and besides, Prometheus looked such a poor little creature, so different from all the other Titans and Giants, that she said: —

“You certainly don’t look as if you could do us any harm, even if you tried. Very well – you shall have a look at the sky, and I’ll show you round.”

So she told Prometheus to follow her up Mount Olympus; but she did not notice a little twig that he carried in his hand: and if she had noticed it, she would not have thought it mattered. Wise people don’t notice all the little things that cunning people do. Then she opened the golden gate of the sky, and let him in. She was very kind, and showed him everything. He went over the palace of the gods, and saw Jupiter’s great ivory throne, and his eagle, and the brew-house where the nectar is made. He looked at the places behind the clouds, where they keep the rain and snow. Then they looked at all the stars; and at last they came to the Stables of the Sun. For you must know that the sun is a great fiery car, drawn by four white horses from the east to the west, and is put away in a stable during the night-time, where the four horses eat wheat made of gold.

“Now you have seen everything,” said Minerva; “and you must go.”

“Thank you,” said Prometheus. And he went back to earth again. But just as he was leaving, he touched one of the wheels of the sun with his little twig, so that a spark came off upon the end.

The spark was still there when he got home. He touched his lump of clay with the spark of Heavenly Fire – and, lo and behold, the lump of clay became a living man!

“There!” said Prometheus. “There’s Something that will give the gods more trouble than anything that ever was made!”

It was the First Man.

Jupiter very soon found out what Prometheus had done, and was very vexed and annoyed. He forgave Minerva, who was his favorite daughter, but he said to the god of Fire: “Make something that will trouble the man even more than the man will trouble me.”

So the god of Fire took another lump of clay, and a great deal of Heavenly Flame, and made the First Woman.

All the gods admired her very much, for she had been made very nicely – better than the man. Jupiter said to her, “My child, go to Prometheus and give him my compliments, and tell him to marry you.” The gods and goddesses thought it a good idea, and all of them made her presents for her

wedding. One gave her beauty, another wit, another fine clothes, and so on; but Jupiter only gave her a little box, which was not to be opened till her wedding-day.

Prometheus was sitting one day at his door, thinking how clever he was, when he saw, coming down Olympus, the most beautiful creature he had ever seen. As soon as she came close —

“Who are you?” he asked. “From where do you come?”

“My name is Pandora,” said she. “And I am come from the skies to marry you.”

“With all my heart,” said Prometheus. “You will be a very nice wife, I am sure. But — let me see — Pandora means ‘All Gifts,’ doesn’t it? What have you got to give me, to keep house upon?”

“The gods have given me everything!” said Pandora. “I bring you Beauty, Wit, Love, Wisdom, Health, Wealth, Virtue, Fine Clothes — in a word, everything that you can wish for.”

“And that little box — what have you in that?” asked he.

“Oh, that’s only a little box that Jupiter gave me — I don’t know what’s in that, for it is not to be opened till after we’re married. Perhaps it is diamonds.”

“Who gave it you?” asked he.

“Jupiter,” said Pandora.

“Oho!” thought the cunning Prometheus. “Secret boxes from Jupiter are not to my fancy. My dear,” he said to Pandora, “on second thoughts, I don’t think I will marry you. But as you’ve had so much trouble in coming, I’ll send you to my brother Epimetheus, and you shall marry him. He’ll do just as well.”

So Pandora went on to Epimetheus, and he married her. But Prometheus had sent him a private message not to open the box that had been given by Jupiter. So it was put away, and everything went on very well for a long time.

But, at last, Pandora happened to be alone in the house; and she could not resist the temptation to just take one little peep into the box to see what was inside. Such a little box could not hold any harm: and it might be the most beautiful present of all. Anyhow, she could do no harm by lifting the lid; she could easily shut it up again. She felt she was doing what would displease Epimetheus, and was rather ashamed of her curiosity, but — well, she *did* open the box. And then — out there flew thousands and thousands of creatures, like a swarm of wasps and flies, buzzing and darting about with joy to be free. Out at the window, and over the world they flew. Alas! they were all the evil things that are in the world to torment and hurt mankind. Those flies from Pandora’s box were War, Pain, Grief, Anger, Sickness, Sorrow, Poverty, Death, Sin. What could she do? She could not get them back into the box again; she could only scream and wring her hands. Epimetheus heard her cries, and did all he could: he shut down the lid, just in time to keep the very last of the swarm from flying away. By good luck, it was the only one worth keeping — a little creature called Hope, who still lives in the box to comfort us when the others are stinging us, and to make us say, “There is good in everything — even in the box of Pandora.”

But Jupiter, when he heard how Prometheus had refused to marry Pandora, and had tried to outwit him again, was very angry indeed. He sent down one of the gods, who took Prometheus and carried him to Mount Caucasus, and bound him to the highest and coldest peak with chains. And a vulture was sent to gnaw his heart forever.

So cunning could not conquer the strength of the gods after all.

I have something to say about this story, which you may not quite understand now, but which you will, some day, when you read it again. Think how Man is made of dead common clay, but with one spark of Heavenly Fire straight from the sky. Think how Woman is made, with less clay, but with more of the Heavenly Fire. Think of that “Afterthought,” which saved Hope when there was nothing else to be saved, and think of the Pain sent to gnaw the heart of Prometheus, who used all his cleverness to make himself great in wrong-doing.

You will be glad to hear that, a long time afterwards, the greatest and best man in all Mythology came and killed the vulture, and set Prometheus free. You will read all about it in time. But I want you to know and remember the man's name. It was Hercules.

PART III. – THE GREAT FLOOD; OR, THE STORY OF DEUCALION

PROMETHEUS turned out to be quite right in saying that men would give more trouble to Jupiter than the Titans or the Giants, or anything that had ever been made. As time went on, men became more and more wicked every day.

Now there lived in Thessaly, on the banks of a river, a man and his wife, named Deucalion and Pyrrha. I think they must have been good people, and not like all the other men and women in the world. One day, Deucalion noticed that the water in the river was rising very high. He did not think much of it at the time, but the next day it was higher, and the next higher still. At last the river burst its banks, and spread over the country, sweeping away houses and drowning many people.

Deucalion and Pyrrha escaped out of their own house just in time, and went to the top of a mountain. But, to their terror, the waters still kept on spreading and rising, until all the plain of Thessaly looked like a sea, and the tops of the hills like islands.

“The water will cover the hills soon,” said Deucalion, “and then the mountains. What shall we do?”

Pyrrha thought for a moment, and then said: —

“I have heard that there is a very wise man on the top of Mount Caucasus who knows everything. Let us go to him, and perhaps he will tell us what to do and what all this water means.”

So they went down the other side, and went on and on till they reached the great Caucasian mountains, which are the highest in all Europe, and are always covered with snow. They climbed up to the highest peak, and there they saw a man, chained to the ice, with a vulture tearing and gnawing him. It was Prometheus, who had made the first man.

Deucalion tried to drive the horrible bird away. But Prometheus said: —

“It is no use. You can do nothing for me. Not even the Great Flood will drive this bird away, or put me out of my pain.”

“Ah! the Great Flood!” cried Deucalion and Pyrrha together. “We have left it behind us – are we safe up here?”

“You are safe nowhere,” said Prometheus. “Soon the waters will break over the mountains round Thessaly and spread over the whole world. They will rise and rise till not even this peak will be seen. Jupiter is sending this flood to sweep away from the face of the earth the wickedness of man. Not one is to be saved. Even now, there is nobody left alive but you two.”

Deucalion and Pyrrha looked: and, in the distance, they saw the waters coming on, and rising above the hills.

“But perhaps,” said Prometheus, “Jupiter may not wish to punish *you*. I cannot tell. But I will tell you what to do – it *may* save you. Go down the mountain till you come to a wood, and cut down a tree.” Then he told them how to make a boat – for nobody knew anything about boats in those days. Then he bade them good bye, and they went down the hill sorrowfully, wishing they could help Prometheus, and doubting if they could help themselves.

They came to the wood, and made the boat – just in time. The water rose; but their boat rose with the water. At last even the highest peak of Caucasus was covered, and they could see nothing but the sky above them and the waters round. Then the clouds gathered and burst, and the sky and the sea became one great storm.

For nine days and nights their little boat was tossed about by the winds and waves. But on the tenth day, as if by magic, the sky cleared, the water went down, and their boat was left high and dry on the top of a hill.

They knelt, and thanked Jupiter, and went down the hill hand in hand – the only man and the only woman in the whole world. They did not even know where they were.

But presently they met, coming up the hill, a form like a woman, only grander and more beautiful. They were afraid. But at last they had courage to ask: —

“Who are you? And where are we?”

“This hill is Mount Parnassus; and I am Themis, the goddess of Justice,” said she. “I have finished my work upon the earth, and am on my way home to the sky. I know your story. Live, and be good, and be warned by what has happened to all other men.”

“But what is the use of our living?” they asked, “and what is the use of this great world to us two? For we have no children to come after us when we die.”

“What you say is just,” said the goddess of Justice. “Jupiter will be pleased enough to give this empty world to a wiser and better race of men. But he will be quite as content without them. In short, you may have companions, if you want them, and if you will teach them to be better and wiser than the old ones. Only you must make them for yourselves.”

“But how can we make men?” asked they.

“I will tell you. Throw your grandmother’s bones behind you without looking round.”

“Our grandmother’s bones? But how are we to find them after this flood, or to know which are hers?”

“The gods,” said Themis, “tell people what to do, but not how it is to be done.” And she vanished into the air.

I think Themis was right. All of us are taught what we ought to do; but we are usually left to ask ourselves whether any particular thing is right or wrong.

Deucalion and Pyrrha asked one another; but neither knew what to say. The whole world, after the Great Flood, was full of bones everywhere. Which were their grandmother’s, and where? They wandered about over half the world trying to find them, but all in vain, till they thought they would have to give it up in despair.

At last, however, Pyrrha said to Deucalion: —

“I have a thought. We are all called the children of Jupiter, you know, because he is called the father of gods and men. And Jupiter and all the gods are the children of Coelus and Terra. Now, if we are the children of Jupiter, and Jupiter is the child of Terra, then Terra must be our grandmother. And Terra is the Earth; so our grandmother is the Earth, you see.”

“But,” asked Deucalion, “what about the bones?”

“What are the bones of the Earth but the stones?” said Pyrrha. “The stones must be our Grandmother’s Bones.”

“I don’t think you’re right,” said Deucalion. “It’s much too easy a thing – only to throw a few stones. But there’s no harm in trying.”

So they gathered two heaps of stones, one for him and one for her, and threw the stones behind them, over their shoulders, without turning round – just as Themis had told them.

When they had thrown away all their stones, they looked to see if anything had happened. And lo! every stone thrown by Pyrrha had become a woman, and every stone thrown by Deucalion had become a man.

So they kept on throwing stones till the world was full of men and women again. And Deucalion and Pyrrha became their king and queen.

APOLLO

PART I. – THE STORIES OF LATONA AND NIOBE

JUPITER once fell in love with a beautiful Titaness named Latona. This made Juno terribly angry: so she sent a huge and horrible snake, called Python, to hunt Latona all over the world. And she went to Terra, and made her swear not to give Latona a resting-place or a hiding-place anywhere.

So poor Latona was hunted and driven about by Python night and day. She also went to our Grandmother Earth, and begged for a corner to rest in or a cave to hide in. But old Terra said, “No. I have sworn to Juno that you shall have no rest in me.”

At last, in her despair, she went to Neptune, and prayed him to hide her in his waters, since Earth had refused her. Neptune said, “I wish I could, with all my heart; but what place is there, in the sea or on the land, where you can hide from the Queen of the Sky? But wait – there’s one thing that nobody knows of but me. There is an island under the sea; and this island is always moving and wandering about, so that nobody can see it, or tell where it may chance to be, for it is never in the same place two minutes together. It isn’t sea, because its land; but it doesn’t belong to Terra, because it’s under the sea, and has no bottom. I’ll tell you what I’ll do for you. I’ll fix it where nobody can find it, and you’ll be safe there, because it’s neither earth nor sea.”

So Neptune anchored the floating island in a part of the Ægean Sea. The island is called Delos; and it is there still, just where it was fixed by Neptune for Latona.

Latona went and lived there, safe from Juno and Python. After a time she had two children, a son and a daughter. The son was named Apollo, and the daughter Diana.

Both were beautiful, but Apollo was the most beautiful boy ever born. He was a wonderful child in every way. The very instant he was born he made a bow and arrow, and went across the sea, and found Python, and killed him. When he was four years old, he built one of the wonders of the world – a great altar to the gods, made of the horns of the goats that his sister Diana used to hunt and shoot in the mountains. With two such children to help her, Latona no longer felt afraid of Juno. So she left Delos, and came, with her two children, into a country of Asia Minor, called Lydia.

Now there was a princess in Thebes named Niobe, who had fourteen beautiful children – seven daughters and seven sons. She was very fond and proud of them, and she did not like to hear people talking about Latona’s wonderful children. “What signifies a miserable couple of children, when I have fourteen?” she used to say. “I don’t think much of Latona”; and, in her jealousy, she never lost a chance of insulting the mother of Apollo and Diana.

Of course these insults came to Latona’s ears. Apollo and Diana heard of them too; and they resolved to punish the proud princess who insulted and scorned their mother. I scarcely like to tell you of how they punished Niobe, for I cannot think of anything more cruel.

Each of them took a bow and seven arrows. Apollo shot with his arrows all the seven sons of Niobe. Diana shot six of Niobe’s seven daughters, leaving only one alive. “There!” said they; “what signifies a miserable one child, when our mother has two?”

When poor Niobe saw her children killed before her she wept bitterly, and she could not stop her tears. They flowed on and on, until she cried herself into stone.

As for Apollo, he kept on growing handsomer and stronger until he became a god – the most glorious of all the gods in the sky. Jupiter made him the god of the Sun, and made his sister, Diana, goddess of the Moon. He was also the god of all beautiful and useful things: of music, painting, poetry, medicine. Several names were given to him. One of his names is “Phœbus,” which means bright and splendid like the sun. “Apollo” means “the Destroyer”: people must guess for themselves why he was called “the Destroyer.”

In pictures and statues he is always made graceful, beautiful, and young. He has no hair on his face, but wears long waving hair. Sometimes he carries a lyre – a sort of small harp – and sometimes a bow. Very often he wears a wreath of laurel. You must take a great deal of notice of Apollo, or Phœbus, because he is the most famous of all the gods next to Jupiter. It will help you to know him if you think of him as always beautiful, wise, and bright, but rather cruel and hard.

PART II. – THE FLAYED PIPER; OR, THE STORY OF MARSYAS

THE men who filled the earth after the Great Flood were a great deal cleverer than people are now. A king's son named Cadmus invented the alphabet – which is, perhaps, the most wonderful thing in the world. And when he wanted to build the city of Thebes, he got a great musician, named Amphion, to play to the stones and trees, so that they, by dancing to his tunes, built themselves into walls and houses without the help of any masons or carpenters. At last men became so wonderfully clever in everything, that a physician named Æsculapius, who was a son of Apollo, found out how to bring back dead people to life again.

But when Jupiter heard that Æsculapius had really made a dead man live, he was angry, and rather frightened too. For he thought, "If men know how to live forever, they will become as great and as wise as the gods, and who knows what will happen then?" So he ordered the Cyclopes to make him a thunderbolt, and he threw it down from heaven upon Æsculapius and killed him. No other man knew the secret of Æsculapius, and it died with him.

But Apollo was very fond and proud of his son, and was in a great rage with Jupiter for having killed him. He could not punish Jupiter, but he took his bow and arrows and shot all the Cyclopes who had made the thunderbolt.

Then it was Jupiter's turn to be angry with Apollo for killing his servants, who had only done what they were told to do. He sentenced him to be banished from the sky for nine years.

So Apollo left the sky and came down to the earth, bringing with him nothing but his lyre. You know that Mount Olympus, where the gods live, is in Thessaly, so that Thessaly was the country in which Apollo found himself when he came down from the sky. He did not know what to do with himself for the nine years, so he went to a king of Thessaly named Admetus, who received him very kindly, and made him his shepherd. I don't think Admetus could have known who Apollo was, or he would hardly have set the great god of the Sun to look after his sheep for him.

So Apollo spent his time pleasantly enough in watching the king's sheep and in playing on his lyre.

Now there was a very clever but very conceited musician named Marsyas, who had invented the flute, and who played on it better than anybody in the world. One day Marsyas happened to be passing through Thessaly, when he saw a shepherd sitting by a brook watching his sheep, and playing to them very beautifully on a lyre. He went up to the shepherd, and said: —

"You play very nicely, my man. But nobody can do much with those harps and fiddles and trumpery stringed things. You should learn the flute; then you'd know what music means!"

"Indeed?" said Apollo. "I'm sorry, for your sake, that your ears are so hard to please. As for me, I don't care for whistles and squeaking machines."

"Ah!" said Marsyas, "that's because you never heard Me!"

"And you dare to tell me," said Apollo, "that you put a wretched squeaking flute before the lyre, which makes music for the gods in the sky?"

"And you dare to say," said Marsyas, "that a miserable twanging, tinkling lyre is better than a flute? What an ignorant blockhead you must be!"

At last their wrangling about their instruments grew to quarreling; and then Apollo said: —

"We shall never settle the question in this way. We will go to the next village and give a concert. You shall play your flute and I will play my lyre, and the people shall say which is the best – yours or mine."

"With all my heart," said Marsyas. "I know what they will say. But we must have a wager on it. What shall it be?"

“We will bet our skins,” said Apollo. “If I lose, you shall skin me; and if you lose, I will skin you.”

“Agreed,” said Marsyas.

So they went to the next village, and called the people together to judge between the flute and the lyre.

Marsyas played first. He played a little simple tune on his flute so beautifully that everybody was charmed. But Apollo then played the same tune on his lyre, even more beautifully still.

Then Marsyas took his flute again and played all sorts of difficult things – flourishes, runs, shakes, everything you can think of – in the most amazing manner, till the people thought they had never heard anything so wonderful. And indeed never had such flute-playing been heard.

But Apollo, instead of following him in the same fashion, only played another simple tune – but this time he sang while he played.

You can imagine how gloriously the god of Music sang! You can fancy how much chance Marsyas had of winning when Apollo’s voice was carrying the hearts of the people away... “There,” said Apollo, when he had finished, “beat that if you can – and give me your skin!”

“It is not fair,” said Marsyas. “This is not a singing match: the question is, Which is the best instrument – the flute or the lyre?”

“It *is* fair,” said Apollo. “If you can sing while you are playing the flute, then I have nothing to say. But you can’t sing, you see, because you have to use your lips and your breath in blowing into those holes. Is not that instrument best which makes you sing best – Yes or No? And if I mustn’t use my breath, you mustn’t use yours.”

You must judge for yourself which was right. But the people decided for Apollo. And so Apollo, having won the wager, took Marsyas and skinned him, and hung his body on a tree.

PART III. – TOO MUCH GOLD; OR, THE FIRST STORY OF MIDAS

THERE were other beings besides men upon the earth in those days. You ought to know something about them now, because Apollo, while he was banished from the sky, had a great deal to do with them. These beings were called Nymphs, Fauns, and Satyrs.

The Nymphs were a kind of beautiful she-fairies.

Dryads were nymphs who lived in forests.

Hamadryads were nymphs who lived in trees. Every tree has a Hamadryad, who lives in it, who is born when it first grows, and who dies when it dies. So that a Hamadryad is killed whenever a tree is cut down.

Naiads were nymphs belonging to brooks and rivers. Every stream has its Naiad.

Oreads were nymphs who lived upon hills and mountains. They used to attend upon Apollo's sister Diana, who went hunting every moonlight night among the hills.

The Fauns and Satyrs were he-creatures, like men, with the hind-legs of goats, short horns on their foreheads, and long pointed ears. But there was a difference between the Fauns and Satyrs. The Fauns were handsome, gentle, innocent, and rather foolish. The Satyrs were hideous, clumsy, hairy monsters, with flat faces, little eyes, and huge mouths, great gluttons, often drunk, and sometimes mischievous: most of them were dull and stupid, but many of them had plenty of sense and knowledge. The Fauns and Satyrs lived among the woods and hills, like the Dryads and Oreads.

The king of all these Nymphs, Fauns, and Satyrs was a god named Pan, who was himself a very hideous satyr. He had nothing to do with the gods of Olympus, but lived on the earth, chiefly in a part of Greece called Arcadia. "Pan" is the Greek for "all" – you may remember the same word in the name of "*Pan*-dora." He was called "Pan" because he was the god of "all" nature – all the hills and mountains, all the woods and forests, all the fields, rivers, and streams.

The ugliest, fattest, greediest, tipsiest, cleverest, and wisest of all the satyrs was named Silenus. He was hardly ever sober, but he knew so much and understood the world so well, that one of the gods, named Bacchus, made Silenus his chief adviser and counselor. You will hear more of Bacchus later on. I will only tell you now that he was not one of the great gods of Olympus, but lived on the earth, like Pan. Only, while Pan was the god of all wild, savage nature, Bacchus was the god of nature as men make it: Bacchus taught men to turn Pan's wild woods into corn-fields and gardens, to put bees into hives, and to make wine. I think Silenus had an especially great deal to do with the wine-making. You will often hear Bacchus called the god of wine, and so he was; but he was a great deal more and better.

This has been a long beginning to my story; but if you will get it well into your head, you will find it easy to remember, and will make a great step in understanding mythology.

Now once upon a time Silenus got very drunk indeed – more drunk even than usual. He was traveling about with Bacchus, but had strayed away by himself, and, when night came on, could not find his way back into the road. He could do nothing but blunder and stagger about in the middle of the thick, dark forest, stumbling and sprawling over the roots of the trees, and knocking his head against the branches. At last he gave a tremendous tumble into a bush, and lay there, too drunk and too fat to pick himself up again. So he went to sleep and snored terribly.

Presently some huntsmen passed by, and thought they heard some wild beast roaring. You may guess their surprise when they found this hideous old satyr helplessly drunk and unable to move. But they did not catch a satyr every day: so they took him by the head and shoulders, and brought him as a prize to the king.

This king was King Midas of Phrygia, which is a country in Asia Minor. As soon as King Midas saw the satyr, he guessed him to be Silenus, the friend of Bacchus: so he did everything to make him

comfortable till his drunkenness should pass away. It passed away at last; and then King Midas sent all round about to find where Bacchus was, so that Silenus might go back to him. While the search was being made, the king and the satyr became great friends, and Silenus, keeping fairly sober, gave Midas a great deal of good advice, and taught him science and philosophy.

At last Bacchus was found; and Midas himself brought Silenus back to him. Bacchus was exceedingly glad to see Silenus again, for he was beginning to be afraid that he had lost him forever. “Ask any gift you please,” he said to King Midas, “and it shall be yours.”

“Grant me,” said Midas, “that everything I touch shall turn into gold.”

Bacchus looked vexed and disappointed. But he was bound by his promise, and said: —

“It is a fool’s wish. But so be it. Everything you touch *shall* turn to gold.”

Midas thanked Bacchus, said good-bye to Silenus and went home. How rich he was going to be – the richest king in the whole world! He opened his palace door, and lo! the door became pure, solid gold. He went from room to room, touching all the furniture, till everything, bedsteads, tables, chairs, all became gold. He got a ladder (which turned into gold in his hands) and touched every brick and stone in his palace, till his whole palace was gold. His horses had golden saddles and golden bridles. His cooks boiled water in golden kettles: his servants swept away golden dust with golden brooms.

When he sat down to dinner, his plate turned to gold. He had become the richest man in the world, thought he with joy and pride, as he helped himself from the golden dish before him. But suddenly his teeth jarred against something hard – harder than bone. Had the cook put a flint into the dish? Alas! it was nothing of the kind. His very food, as soon as it touched his lips, turned to solid gold!

His heart sank within him, while the meat before him mocked his hunger. Was the richest man in the world to starve? A horrible fear came upon him. He poured out wine into a golden cup, and tried to drink, and the wine turned into gold! He sat in despair.

What was he to do? What was the use of all this gold if he could not buy with it a crust of bread or a draught of water? The poorest ploughman was now a richer man than the king. He could only wander about his golden palace till his hunger became starvation, and his thirst a fever. At last, in his despair, he set out and followed after Bacchus again, to implore the god to take back the gift of gold.

At last, when nearly starved to death, he found him. “What!” said Bacchus, “are you not content yet? Do you want more gold still?”

“Gold!” cried Midas, “I hate the horrible word! I am starving. Make me the poorest man in the whole world. Silenus taught me much; but I have learned for myself that a mountain of gold is not the worth of a single drop of dew.”

“I will take back my gift, then,” said Bacchus. “But I will not give you another instead of it, because all the gods of Olympus could not give you anything better than this lesson. You may wash away your folly in the first river you come to. Good-bye – and only don’t think that gold is not a good thing because too much of it is a bad one.”

Midas ran to the banks of the river Pactolus, which ran hard by. He threw off his golden clothes, and hurried barefoot over the sands of the river – and the sand, wherever his naked feet touched it, turned to gold. He plunged into the water, and swam through to the other side. The Curse of the Golden Touch left him, and he ate and drank, and never hungered after gold again. He had learned that the best thing one can do with too much gold is to give it away as fast as one can.

The sand of the river Pactolus is said to have gold in it to this day.

PART IV. – THE CRITIC; OR, THE SECOND STORY OF MIDAS

ONCE upon a time the god Pan fell in love with a Naiad, or water-nymph, named Syrinx. She was very beautiful, as all the nymphs were; but Pan, as you know, was very ugly – so ugly that she hated him, and was afraid of him, and would have nothing to do with him. At last, to escape from him, she turned herself into a reed.

But even then Pan did not lose his love for her. He gathered the reed, and made it into a musical instrument, which he called a Syrinx. We call it a Pan-pipe, after the name of its inventor, and because upon this pipe Pan turned into music all his sorrow for the loss of Syrinx, making her sing of the love to which she would not listen while she was alive.

I suppose that King Midas still kept up his friendship for Silenus and the satyrs, for one day he was by when Pan was playing on his pipe of reeds, and he was so delighted with the music that he cried out, “How beautiful! Apollo himself is not so great a musician as Pan!”

You remember the story of Marsyas, and how angry Apollo was when anybody’s music was put before his own? I suppose that some ill-natured satyr must have told him what King Midas had said about him and Pan. Anyway, he was very angry indeed. And Midas, the next time he looked at himself in his mirror, saw that his ears had been changed into those of an Ass.

This was to show him what sort of ears those people must have who like the common music of earth better than the music which the gods send down to us from the sky. But, as you may suppose, it made Midas very miserable and ashamed. “All my people will think their king an Ass,” he thought to himself, “and that would never do.”

So he made a very large cap to cover his ears, and never took it off, so that nobody might see what had happened to him. But one of his servants, who was very prying and curious, wondered why the king should always wear that large cap, and what it was that he could want to hide. He watched and watched for a long time in vain. But at last he hid himself in the king’s bedroom; and when Midas undressed to go to bed, he saw to his amazement that his master had Ass’s ears.

He was very frightened too, as well as amazed. He could not bear to keep such a curious and surprising secret about the king all to himself, for he was a great gossip, like most people who pry into other people’s affairs. But he thought to himself, “If I tell about the king’s ears he will most certainly cut off my own! But I *must* tell somebody. Whom shall I tell?”

So, when he could bear the secret no longer, he dug a hole into the ground, and whispered into it, “King Midas has the Ears of an Ass!” Then, having thus eased his mind, he filled up the hole again, so that the secret might be buried in the earth forever.

But all the same, before a month had passed, the secret about the king’s ears was known to all the land. How could that be? The king still wore his cap, and the servant had never dared to speak about it to man, woman, or child. You will never be able to guess how the secret got abroad without being told.

It was in this way. Some reeds grew up out of the place where the servant had made the hole, and of course the reeds had heard what had been whispered into the ground where their roots were. And they were no more able to keep such a wonderful secret to themselves than the servant had been. Whenever the wind blew through them they rustled, and their rustle said, “King Midas has the Ears of an Ass!” The wind heard the words of the reeds, and carried the news through all the land, wherever it blew, “King Midas has the Ears of an Ass!” And all the people heard the voice of the wind, and said to one another, “What a wonderful thing – King Midas has the ears of an Ass!”

PART V. – SOME FLOWER STORIES

I. – THE LAUREL

ONE day, Apollo, while following his flock of sheep, met a little boy playing with a bow and arrows.

“That isn’t much of a bow you’ve got there,” said Apollo.

“Isn’t it?” said the boy. “Perhaps not; but all the same, I don’t believe you’ve got a better, though you’re so big and I’m so small.”

Now you know that Apollo never could bear to be told that anybody could have anything, or do anything, better than he. You remember how he treated Marsyas and Midas for saying the same kind of thing. So he took his own bow from his shoulder, and showed it to the boy, and said, “As you think you know so much about bows and arrows, look at that; perhaps you’ll say that the bow which killed the great serpent Python isn’t stronger than your trumpety little toy.”

The boy took Apollo’s bow and tried to bend it; but it was much too strong for him. “But never mind,” said he. “My little bow and arrows are better than your big ones, all the same.”

Apollo was half angry and half amused. “You little blockhead! how do you make out that?” asked he.

“Because,” said the boy, “your bow can kill everybody else – but mine can conquer *you*. You shall see.”

And so saying he let fly one of his arrows right into Apollo’s heart. The arrow was so little that Apollo felt nothing more than the prick of a pin: he only laughed at the boy’s nonsense, and went on his way as if nothing had happened.

But Apollo would not have thought so little of the matter if he had known that his heart had been pricked by a magic arrow. The boy’s name was Cupid: and you will read a good deal about him both in this book and in others. Oddly enough, though the boy was one of the gods of Olympus, Apollo had never seen him before, and knew nothing about him. Perhaps Cupid had not been born when Apollo was banished from the sky. However this may be, there is no doubt about what Cupid’s arrows could do. If he shot into the hearts of two people at the same time with two of his golden arrows, they loved each other, and were happy. But if he shot only one heart, as he did Apollo’s, that person was made to love somebody who did not love him in return, and perhaps hated him: so he became very miserable.

So it happened to Apollo. He became very fond of a nymph named Daphne. But though he was so great and glorious a god, and she only a Naiad, she was only afraid of him and would have nothing to do with him – because Cupid, out of mischief, shot her heart with one of his leaden arrows, which prevented love. Apollo prayed her to like him; but she could not, and when she saw him coming used to hide away at the bottom of her river.

But one day she was rambling in a wood a long way from her home. And, to her alarm, she suddenly saw Apollo coming towards her. She took to her heels and ran. She ran very fast indeed; but her river was far away, and Apollo kept gaining upon her – for nobody on the earth or in the sky could run so fast as he. At last she was so tired and so frightened that she could run no longer, and was obliged to stand still.

“Rather than let Apollo touch me,” she said, “I would be a Hamadryad, and never be able to run again!”

She wished it so hard, that suddenly she felt her feet take root in the earth. Then her arms turned to branches, and her fingers to twigs, and her hair to leaves. And when Apollo reached the spot, he found nothing but a laurel bush growing where Daphne had been.

That is why “Daphne” is the Greek for “Laurel.” And forever after Apollo loved the bush into which Daphne had been turned. You may know Apollo in pictures by his laurel wreath as well as by his lyre and bow.

It is a very ancient saying that “Love conquers all things.” And that is exactly what Cupid meant by saying that his toy-bow was stronger even than the bow which had killed Python, and could conquer with ease even the god of the Sun.

II. – THE HYACINTH

You remember that Apollo and Diana were born in the island of Delos. The part of Delos where they were born was a mountain called Cynthus; and for that reason Apollo was often called Cynthius, and Diana, Cynthia. Bear this in mind, in order to follow this story.

While Apollo was on earth, Amyclas, the King of Sparta, engaged him to be the teacher of his son. This boy, named Hyacinthus, was so handsome and so amiable that Apollo became exceedingly fond of him; indeed, he could not bear to be away from his pupil’s company.

But the west wind, whose name is Zephyrus, was also very fond of the boy, whose chief friend he had been before Apollo came. He was afraid that the son of Amyclas liked Apollo best; and this thought filled him with jealousy. One day, as he was blowing about the king’s garden, he saw Apollo and the boy playing at quoits together. “Quoits” are heavy rings made of iron: each player takes one, and throws it with all his strength at a peg fixed in the ground, and the one who throws his quoit nearest to the peg wins the game. Zephyrus was so angry and jealous to see the two friends amusing themselves while he was blowing about all alone, that he determined to be revenged upon both of them.

First of all the boy threw his quoit, and came very near to the peg indeed – so near that even Apollo, who could do everything better than anybody, thought he should find it very hard to beat him. The peg was a great way off, so Apollo took up the heaviest quoit, aimed perfectly straight, and sent it flying like a thunderbolt through the air. But Zephyrus, who was waiting, gave a great blast, and blew Apollo’s quoit as it was flying, so that it struck the boy, who fell to the ground.

It was a cruel thing altogether. Apollo thought that he himself had struck his friend by aiming badly: the boy thought the same, for neither could tell it was Zephyrus, – nobody has ever seen the wind.

So perished Hyacinthus: nor could Apollo do anything to show his love and grief for his friend except change him into a flower, which is called Hyacinth to this day. It is said that, if you look, you will find “Hya” written in Greek letters upon every petal of the flower. Some people, however, say that it is not “Hya” at all, but “Aiai,” which means “alas.” I don’t know which is true; but if you will some day look at the petal of a hyacinth through a microscope (the stronger the better, I should say), you will find out for yourself and be able to tell me.

Apollo seems to have been rather fond of turning his friends into trees and flowers. There was another friend of his named Cyparissus, who once, by accident, killed one of Apollo’s favorite stags, and was so sorry for what he had done, and pined away so miserably, that the god, to put him out of his misery, changed him into a cypress-tree. “Cypress” comes from Cyparissus, as you will easily see. And we still plant the cypress in churchyards, because it is the tree of tears and mourning that cannot be cured.

III. – THE SUNFLOWER

There was a nymph named Clytie, who was so beautiful that Apollo fell in love with her. She was very proud and glad of being loved by the god of the Sun, and loved him a great deal more than

he loved her. But she believed that his love was as great as her own: and so she lived happily for a long time.

But one day, Apollo happened to see a king's daughter, whose name was Leucothoe. He thought she was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen: so he fell in love with her, and forgot Clytie as much as if there was nobody but Leucothoe in the world. Clytie, however, knew nothing of all this, and only wondered why Apollo never came to see her any more.

Now the king, whose name was Orchamus, kept his daughter very strictly: and did not wish her to have anything to do with Apollo. I suppose he was afraid of Apollo's loving her for a time, and then leaving her to be miserable and unhappy, as happened to many nymphs and princesses in those days besides Clytie. So when King Orchamus found that Apollo was making love to Leucothoe, he shut her up in his palace, and would not allow her to go out or anybody else to go in.

But Apollo was much too clever to be beaten in that way. He disguised himself as Leucothoe's own mother, and so came to see her whenever he pleased, without anybody being anything the wiser. And so everything went on just as he wished, if it had not been for Clytie, whom he had treated just as King Orchamus was afraid he would treat Leucothoe.

Clytie wondered why Apollo never came to see her till she could bear it no longer; and she watched him, to find out what was the reason of it all. She watched till at last she saw somebody who looked like a queen go into the palace of King Orchamus. But she knew Apollo much too well to be taken in by any disguise. She secretly followed him into the palace, and found him making love to Leucothoe.

In her misery and jealousy, she went straight to King Orchamus, and told him what she had seen. Perhaps she hoped that the king would send his daughter away altogether, so that Apollo would then come back to her. She could not possibly foresee what would really happen. King Orchamus was so enraged with his daughter for receiving Apollo's visits against his commands that he ordered Leucothoe to be buried alive. Of course he could not punish Apollo: because Apollo was a god, while he was only a king.

Perhaps you will think that Apollo might have managed to save Leucothoe from such a terrible death as her father had ordered for her. As he did not, I suppose that King Orchamus had her buried before anybody could tell the news – at any rate she was dead when Apollo arrived at her grave. All he could do for her was to show his love and his sorrow by turning her into a tree from which people take a sweet-smelling gum called myrrh.

As to Clytie, whose jealousy had caused the death of the princess, he refused ever to speak to her or look at her again: and he turned her into a sunflower, which has no perfume like the myrrh-tree into which he had changed Leucothoe. But, in spite of his scorn and of everything he could do to her, Clytie loved him still: and though he would not look at her, she still spends her whole time in gazing up at him with her blossoms, which are her eyes. People say that the blossoms of the sunflower always turn toward the sun – towards the east when he is rising, toward the west when he is setting, and straight up at noon, when he is in the middle of the sky. Of course, like all other blossoms, they close at night, when he is no longer to be seen. As for the sun himself, I suspect he has forgotten both Clytie and Leucothoe long ago; and sees no difference between them and any other trees or flowers.

IV. – THE NARCISSUS

This story has nothing to do with Apollo: but I may as well tell it among the other flower stories.

There was a very beautiful nymph named Echo, who had never, in all her life, seen anybody handsomer than the god Pan. You have read that Pan was the chief of all the Satyrs, and what hideous monsters the Satyrs were. So, when Pan made love to her, she very naturally kept him at a distance: and, as she supposed him to be no worse-looking than the rest of the world, she made up her mind

to have nothing to do with love or love-making, and was quite content to ramble about the woods all alone.

But one day, to her surprise, she happened to meet with a young man who was as different from Pan as any creature could be. Instead of having a goat's legs and long hairy arms, he was as graceful as Apollo himself: no horns grew out of his forehead, and his ears were not long, pointed, and covered with hair, but just like Echo's own. And he was just as beautiful in face as he was graceful in form. I doubt if Echo would have thought even Apollo himself so beautiful.

The nymphs were rather shy, and Echo was the very shyest of them all. But she admired him so much that she could not leave the spot, and at last she even plucked up courage enough to ask him, "What is the name of the most beautiful being in the whole world?"

"Whom do you mean?" asked he. "Yourself? If you want to know your own name, you can tell it better than I can."

"No," said Echo, "I don't mean myself, I mean *you*. What is *your* name?"

"My name is Narcissus," said he. "But as for my being beautiful – that is absurd."

"Narcissus!" repeated Echo to herself. "It is a beautiful name. Which of the nymphs have you come to meet here in these woods all alone? She is lucky – whoever she may be."

"I have come to meet nobody," said Narcissus. "But – am I really so beautiful? I have often been told so by other girls, of course; but really it is more than I can quite believe."

"And you don't care for any of those girls?"

"Why, you see," said Narcissus, "when all the girls one knows call one beautiful, there's no reason why I should care for one more than another. They all seem alike when they are all always saying just the same thing. Ah! I do wish I could see myself, so that I could tell if it was really true. I would marry the girl who could give me the wish of my heart – to see myself as other people see me. But as nobody can make me do that, why, I suppose I shall get on very well without marrying anybody at all."

Looking-glasses had not been invented in those days, so that Narcissus had really never seen even so much of himself as his chin.

"What!" cried Echo, full of hope and joy; "if I make you see your own face, you will marry *me*?"

"I said so," said he. "And of course what I say I'll do, I'll do."

"Then – come with me!"

Echo took him by the hand and led him to the edge of a little lake in the middle of the wood, full of clear water.

"Kneel down, Narcissus," said she, "and bend your eyes over the water-side. That lake is the mirror where Diana comes every morning to dress her hair, and in which, every night, the moon and the stars behold themselves. Look into that water, and see what manner of man you are!"

Narcissus knelt down and looked into the lake. And, better than in any common looking-glass, he saw the reflected image of his own face – and he looked, and looked, and could not take his eyes away.

But Echo at last grew tired of waiting. "Have you forgotten what you promised me?" asked she. "Are you content now? Do you see now that what I told you is true?"

He lifted his eyes at last. "Oh, beautiful creature that I am!" said he. "I am indeed the most divine creature in the whole wide world. I love myself madly. Go away. I want to be with my beautiful image, with myself, all alone. I can't marry you. I shall never love anybody but myself for the rest of my days." And he knelt down and gazed at himself once more, while poor Echo had to go weeping away.

Narcissus had spoken truly. He loved himself and his own face so much that he could think of nothing else: he spent all his days and nights by the lake, and never took his eyes away. But unluckily his image, which was only a shadow in the water, could not love him back again. And so he pined away until he died. And when his friends came to look for his body, they found nothing but a flower,

into which his soul had turned. So they called it the Narcissus, and we call it so still. And yet I don't know that it is a particularly conceited or selfish flower.

As for poor Echo, she pined away too. She faded and faded until nothing was left of her but her voice. There are many places where she can even now be heard. And she still has the same trick of saying to vain and foolish people whatever they say to themselves, or whatever they would like best to hear said to them. If you go where Echo is, and call out loudly, "I am beautiful!" – she will echo your very words.

PART VI. – PRESUMPTION; OR, THE STORY OF PHAËTHON

THERE was a nymph named Clymene, who had a son so handsome that he was called Phaëthon, which means in Greek, “bright, radiant, shining,” like the sun. When he grew up the goddess Venus was so charmed with him that she made him the chief ruler of all her temples, and took him into such high favor that all his friends and companions were filled with envy.

One day, when Phaëthon was foolishly bragging about his own beauty and greatness, and how much he was put by a goddess above other men, one of his companions, named Epaphus, answered him, scornfully: —

“Ah! you may boast and brag, but you are a nobody after all! *My* father was Jupiter, as everybody knows; but who was yours?”

So Phaëthon went to his mother Clymene, and said: —

“Mother, they taunt me for not being the son of a god; me, who am fit to be a god myself for my grace and beauty. Who was my father? He must at least have been some great king, to be the father of such a son as I.”

“A king!” said Clymene. “Ay – and a greater than all kings! Tell them, from me, that your father is Phœbus Apollo, the god of the Sun!”

But when he went back and told his friends, “My father is Phœbus Apollo, the god of the Sun,” Epaphus and the others only scorned him and laughed at him the more. “You’ve caught your bragging from your mother,” said they. “You’re *her* son, anyhow, whoever your father may be.”

When Clymene heard this, she felt terribly offended. “Then I will prove my words,” said she. “Go to the Palace of the Sun and enter boldly. There you will see the Sun-god in all his glory. Demand of him to declare you to be his son openly before all the world, so that even the sons of Jupiter shall hang their heads for shame.”

If Apollo had been still banished upon earth, of course Phaëthon could have found him very easily. But the nine years of banishment were over now, and the only way to find the god of the Sun was to seek him in his palace above the sky. How Phaëthon managed to get there I have never heard; but I suppose his mother was able to tell him the secret way. You may imagine the glorious and wonderful place it was – the House of the Sun, with the stars for the windows that are lighted up at night, and the clouds for curtains, and the blue sky for a garden, and the Zodiac for a carriage-drive. The sun itself, as you have heard, is the chariot of Apollo, drawn by four horses of white fire, who feed on golden grain, and are driven by the god himself round and round the world. Phaëthon entered boldly, as his mother had told him, found Apollo in all his glory, and said: —

“My mother, Clymene, says that I am your son. Is it true?”

“Certainly,” said Apollo, “it is true.”

“Then give me a sign,” said Phaëthon, “that all may know and believe. Make me sure that I am your son.”

“Tell them that *I* say so,” said Apollo. “There – don’t hinder me any more. My horses are harnessed: it is time for the sun to rise.”

“No,” said Phaëthon, “they will only say that I brag and lie. Give me a sign for all the world to see – a sign that only a father would give to his own child.”

“Very well,” said Apollo, who was getting impatient at being so hindered. “Only tell me what you want me to do, and it shall be done.”

“You swear it – by Styx?” said Phaëthon.

Now you must know that the Styx was a river in Hades by which the gods swore; and that an oath “by Styx” was as binding upon a god as a plain promise is upon a gentleman.

“I swear it – by Styx!” said Apollo, rather rashly, as you will see. But he was now in a very great hurry indeed.

“Then,” said Phaëthon, “let *me* drive the horses of the Sun for one whole day!”

This put Apollo in terrible alarm, for he knew very well that no hand, not even a god’s, can drive the horses of the Sun but his own. But he had sworn by Styx – the oath that cannot be broken. All he could do was to keep the world waiting for sunrise while he showed Phaëthon how to hold the reins and the whip, and pointed out what course to take, and warned him of the dangers of the road. “But it’s all of no use. You’ll never do it,” said he. “Give it up, while there is yet time! You know not what you do.”

“Oh, but I do, though,” said Phaëthon. “I know I can. There – I understand it all now, without another word.” So saying, he sprang into the chariot, seized the reins, and gave the four fiery horses four lashes that sent them flying like comets through the air.

“Hold them in – hold them hard!” cried Apollo. But Phaëthon was off, and too far off to hear.

Off indeed! and where? The world must have been amazed that day to see the sun rise like a rocket and go dashing about the sky, north, south, east, west – anywhere, nowhere, everywhere! Well the horses knew that it was not Apollo, their master, who plied the whip and held the reins. They took their bits between their teeth, and – bolted. They kicked a planet to bits (astronomers know where the pieces are still): they broke holes in the chariot, which we can see, and call “sun-spots,” to this day: it was as if chaos were come again. At last, Phaëthon, whose own head was reeling, saw to his horror that the horses, in their mad rush, were getting nearer and nearer to the earth itself – and what would happen then? If the wheels touched the globe we live on, it would be scorched to a cinder. Nearer, nearer, nearer it came – till a last wild kick broke the traces, overturned the sun itself, and Phaëthon fell, and fell, and fell, till he fell into the sea, and was drowned. And then the horses trotted quietly home.

The story of Phaëthon is always taken as a warning against being conceited and self-willed. But there are some curious things about it still to be told. The Greeks fancied that the great desert of Sahara, in Africa, is the place where the earth was scorched by the sun’s chariot-wheel, and that the African negroes were burned black in the same way, and have never got white again. And the poplars are Phaëthon’s sisters, who wept themselves for his death into trees.

DIANA; AND THE STORY OF ORION

YOU know that the fixed stars are divided into groups, called constellations. A name has been given to every constellation; and each is supposed to be like the shape of some creature or thing – such as the Great Bear, the Swan, the Cup, the Eagle, the Dragon, and so on. Most of their names were given by the Greeks, who fancied they could see in them the shapes after which they were named. We have kept the old names, and still paint the supposed figure of each constellation on the celestial globe, which is the image or map of the sky.

Now the grandest, brightest, and largest of all the constellations is named Orion. It is supposed to represent a giant, with a girdle and a sword, and is rather more like what is fancied than most of the constellations are. You are now going to read the story of Orion, and how he came to be placed among the stars. You may notice, by the way, that the planets, the sun, and the moon are named after gods and goddesses; the fixed stars after mortals who were raised to the skies.

There was once a man named Hyrius, whose wife died, and he loved her so much, and was so overcome with grief that he vowed never to marry again. But she left him no children. And when, in course of time, he grew old, he sadly felt the want of sons and daughters to make his old age less hard and lonely.

One day it happened that Jupiter, Neptune, and Mercury (who was one of the gods, and Jupiter's chief minister and messenger) were on a visit to earth. The night fell, and they grew tired and hungry. So they wandered on to find rest and food; and, as luck would have it, they came to the cottage of Hyrius, and asked for shelter. Hyrius thought they were only three poor benighted travelers who had lost their way. But he was very good and charitable, so he asked them in and gave them the best fare he had – bread, roots, and wine – he himself waiting upon them, and trying to make them comfortable. He poured out a cup of wine, and offered it first to Neptune. But Neptune, instead of drinking it, rose from his seat and gave the cup to Jupiter, like a subject to a king who should be first served. You may not think there was much to notice in this; but Hyrius noticed it, and then, looking intently upon the stranger to whom Neptune had given the cup, he was struck by a sudden religious awe that told him he was in the presence of the king and father of gods and men. He straightway fell on his knees and said: —

“I am poor and humble; but I have in my stall one ox to plough my field. I will gladly offer him up as a sacrifice for joy that Jupiter has thought me worthy to give him bread and wine.”

“You are a good and pious man,” said Jupiter. “Ask of us any gift you please, and it shall be yours.”

“My wife is dead,” said Hyrius, “and I have vowed never to marry again. But let me have a child.”

“Take the ox,” said Jupiter, “and sacrifice him.”

So Hyrius, being full of faith, sacrificed his ox, and, at the bidding of Jupiter, buried the skin. And from that skin, and out of the ground, there grew a child, who was named Orion.

Orion grew and grew till he became a giant, of wonderful strength and splendid beauty. He took the most loving care of Hyrius, and was the best of sons to him. But when the old man died, Orion went out into the world to seek his fortune. And the first service he found was that of Diana, the sister of Apollo, and queen and goddess of the Moon.

Diana, however, had a great deal to do besides looking after the moon. She was three goddesses in one – a goddess of the sky, a goddess of earth, and a goddess of Hades besides. In heaven she was called Luna, whose duty is to light the world when Apollo is off duty. In Hades she was called Hecate, who, with her scepter, rules the ghosts of dead souls. And on earth her name is Diana, the queen, of forests and mountains, of wild animals and hunters. She wears a crescent on her forehead and a quiver at her back; her limbs are bare, and she holds a bow, with which she shoots as well as her

brother Apollo. Just as he is called Phœbus, so she is often called Phœbe. She goes hunting all night among the hills and woods, attended by the Nymphs and Oreads, of whom she is queen. There are not so many stories about her as about the other gods and goddesses, and yet she is really the most interesting of them all, as you will see some day.

This great strange goddess had sworn never to love or marry – had sworn it by Styx, I suppose. But Orion was so beautiful and so strong and so great a hunter that she went as near to loving him as she ever did to loving any one. She had him always with her, and could never bear him to leave her. But Orion never thought of becoming the husband of a goddess, and he fell in love with a mortal princess, the daughter of Œnopion, King of Chios, an island in the Ægean Sea.

When, however, he asked the king for his daughter, Œnopion was terribly frightened at the idea of having a giant for his son-in-law. But he dared not say “No.” He answered him: —

“My kingdom is overrun with terrible wild beasts. I will give my daughter to the man who kills them all.” He said this, feeling sure that any man who tried to kill all the wild beasts in Chios would himself be killed.

But Orion went out, and killed all the wild beasts in no time, with his club and his sword. Then Œnopion was still more afraid of him, and said: —

“You have won my daughter. But, before you marry her, let us drink together, in honor of this joyful day.”

Orion, thinking no harm, went with Œnopion to the sea-shore, where they sat down and drank together. But Œnopion (whose name means “The Wine-Drinker”) knew a great deal more about what wine will do, and how to keep sober, than Orion. So before long Orion fell asleep with the strong Chian wine, which the King had invented; and when Orion was sound asleep, Œnopion put out both his eyes.

The giant awoke to find himself blind, and did not know what to do or which way to go. But at last, in the midst of his despair, he heard the sound of a blacksmith’s forge. Guided by the clang, he reached the place, and prayed the blacksmith to climb up on his shoulders, and so lend him his eyes to guide him.

The blacksmith consented, and seated himself on the giant’s shoulder. Then said Orion: —

“Guide me to the place where I can see the first sunbeam that rises at daybreak in the east over the sea.”

Orion strode out, and the blacksmith guided him, and at last they came to the place where the earliest sunbeam first strikes upon human eyes. It struck upon Orion’s, and it gave him back his sight again. Then, thanking the blacksmith, he plunged into the sea to swim back to Diana.

Now Apollo had long noticed his sister’s affection for Orion, and was very much afraid for fear she should break her vow against love and marriage. To break an oath would be a horrible thing for a goddess to do. While Orion was away, making love and killing wild beasts in Chios, there was no fear; but now he was coming back, there was no knowing what might happen. So he thought of a trick to get rid of Orion, and he said: —

“My sister, some people say that you can shoot as well as I can. Now, of course, that is absurd.”

“Why absurd?” asked Diana. “I can shoot quite as well as you.”

“We will soon see that,” said Apollo. “Do you see that little dark speck out there, in the sea? I wager that you won’t hit it, and that I can.”

“We *will* see,” said Diana. So she drew her bow and shot her arrow at the little dark speck, that seemed dancing on the waves miles and miles away. To hit it seemed impossible. But Diana’s arrow went true. The speck was hit – it sank, and rose no more.

It was the head of Orion, who was swimming back to Diana. She had been tricked into killing him with an arrow from her own bow. All she could do was to place him among the stars.

So her vow was kept; and from that time she never allowed herself to be seen by a man. Women may see her; but if men see her, they go mad or die. There is a terrible story of a hunter named

Actæon, who once happened to catch a glimpse of her as she was bathing in a pool. She instantly turned him into a stag, so that his own dogs fell upon him and killed him. And another time, when she saw a shepherd named Endymion on Mount Latmos, and could not help wishing to kiss him for his beauty, she covered herself with clouds as she stooped, and threw him into a deep sleep, so that he might not see her face, or know that he had been kissed by the moon. Only from that hour he became a poet and a prophet, full of strange fancies; and it is said that every man becomes a madman or a poet who goes to sleep in the moonlight on the top of a hill. Diana comes and kisses him in his dreams.

MINERVA; OR, WISDOM

ONE day Jupiter had a very bad headache. He had never had one before, so he did not know what it was or what to do. One god recommended one thing and another proposed another, and Jupiter tried them all; but the more things he tried the worse the headache grew. At last he said: —

“I can’t stand this any more. Vulcan, bring your great sledge-hammer and split open my skull. Kill or cure.”

Vulcan brought his sledge-hammer and split open Jupiter’s skull with a single blow. And out there came a fine, full-grown goddess, clad in complete armor from head to foot, armed with a spear and shield, and with beautiful large blue eyes. She was Minerva (or, in Greek, Athene), the Wisdom that comes from Jupiter’s brain, and makes it ache sometimes.

Minerva was wonderfully good as well as wonderfully wise: not that there is much difference between goodness and wisdom. She is the only goddess, or god either, who never did a foolish, an unkind, or a wrong thing. By the way, though, she once took it into her head that she could play the flute, and the gods laughed at her; but when she looked into a brook and saw what ugly faces she made when she played, she knew at once what made the gods laugh, laughed at herself, threw the flute away, and never played it again; so she was even wise enough not to be vain, or to think she could do well what she did badly.

The only bad thing about good people is that there are so few good stories to tell of them. She was Jupiter’s favorite daughter, and no wonder; and she was the only one of all the gods and goddesses whom he allowed to use his thunder. She was the only one he could trust, I suppose. She was rather too fond of fighting, considering that she was a lady, but she was as good at her needle as her sword. She was so good at spinning, that a woman named Arachne, who was the best spinner and seamstress in the world, hanged herself in despair because she could not spin a web so neatly and finely as Minerva. The goddess turned her into a spider, who is still the finest spinner in the world, next to Minerva alone.

Once the people of Attica wanted a name for their capital, which they had just been building. They asked the gods, and the gods in council decreed that the new city should be named by the god who should give the most useful new present to mankind. Neptune struck the earth with his trident, and out sprang the horse, and nobody thought that his gift could be beaten. But Minerva planted the olive, which is the plant of peace. So the gods gave the honor of naming the new city to Minerva, because the emblem of peace is better than the horse, who is the emblem of war. The name she gave was from her own – Athenæ; and the city is called Athens to this day. The Athenians always paid their chief worship to their goddess-godmother.

Minerva was very handsome, but rather manly-looking for a goddess, and grave; her most famous feature was her blue eyes. “The Blue-eyed Maid” is one of her most usual titles in poetry. She wore a large helmet with waving plumes; in one hand she held a spear; on her left arm she carried the shield on which was the head of the Gorgon Medusa, with living snakes darting from it. But sometimes she carried a distaff instead of a spear. The olive was of course sacred to her, and her favorite bird is the owl, who is always called the Bird of Wisdom.

VENUS

PART I. – THE GOD OF FIRE

YOU may remember reading, at the end of the story of “The Gods and the Giants,” that the quarrels of Jupiter and Juno never ceased to disturb the peace of the sky where the gods dwell. Juno’s temper was terrible, and so was her jealousy, and her pride was beyond all bounds. On the other hand, her character was without reproach, while Jupiter was the worst husband in the whole of heaven. To such a pitch did their quarrels at last reach, that Juno went away to earth, vowing never to see Jupiter again.

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