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"Into the ocean Jupiter plunged, and away he swam."

Frontispiece.
ONCE UPON A TIME:
CHILDREN'S STORIES FROM THE CLASSICS

RETOLED BY
BLANCHE WINDER

WITH 48 COLOUR PLATES
BY HARRY G. THEAKER

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED
LONDON & MELBOURNE
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THE stories in this book are all derived from the beautiful literature of ancient Greece and Rome. Just as they have inspired the finest poetry and painting of the world, so they cannot fail to delight any child who loves a tale about princes and princesses, enchanted forests, sparkling water-nymphs, scaly dragons, stags with golden hoofs, and horses with silver wings. Never was there a finer fairy palace than that which sheltered Psyche, never were there seas so marvellous as those Ulysses sailed “once upon a time.” The stories have been handed down to the children of the new world from the children of the old—those little Greek maidens who, on the eve of marriage, placed their hair-nets, their pretty balls, their tambourines, their dolls, and their dolls’ dresses on Diana’s altar, and those little shepherd-lads who laid baskets of fruit upon the shrines of Pan.
"Her name was Diana."
LONG, long ago, on the top of a high mountain in Greece, called Olympus, a wonderful palace stood, with its windows in the clouds and its doors in the snow. It was quite invisible to the human beings who lived in the valleys beneath, but they knew it was there, and that shining and beautiful people dwelt in it, some of them crowned like kings and queens, and some with wings on their shoulders, like birds. Now and then one or another of these fairy-like people would come floating down the side of the mountain, leaving the sound of music and the scent of violets and roses on the air as they passed. Nobody knew when the Shining People had been born, and it was said of them that they could never die. So the shepherds who minded their flocks in the
THE WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN

meadows, and the fishers who set their crab-pots in the rocky bays, called them "The Immortals." And as The Immortals they are known to this day.

First of all there was Jupiter, who ruled over the others, and who had the power to turn himself into an eagle, a cuckoo, or a ram, or whatever he found convenient at any moment. Once he changed himself into a white bull with golden horns; and, coming to a meadow where a pretty Princess was taking a walk, he thought he would like to carry her away with him from her father's kingdom, and give her a fine new country, all to herself, to live in. So he went up to her, very gently, with a crocus in his mouth, and looked at her with big, soft eyes, from under his golden horns. She was quite pleased, and gathered flowers for him to eat, and wove some of the prettiest into a garland which she hung round his white neck. Then Jupiter knelt down, and the Princess jumped on to his back, calling excitedly to her two brothers, who were playing not far away, to come and ride with her on this new and delightful steed. But before the brothers could run up to her, the bull had sprung to his feet, and was galloping over the meadow towards the shore as fast as he could, the Princess holding on by his golden horns. Into the ocean he plunged,
THE WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN

and away he swam, through the deep waves, to the land that lay in the West. There he set the Princess down in a wood and told her he had decided that she was to be the Queen of the country, and that, as her name was Europa, it should be called Europe after her. When Jupiter made up his mind about a thing, it always happened: so Princess Europa accepted the crown and sceptre that he gave her, and settled down to reign happily over the kingdom to which she had been carried, in such a strange fashion, by the big white bull.

King Jupiter, when he was not busy arranging things of this kind among human beings, had to settle many matters for the Shining People themselves. One day as he sat on his throne in the glittering palace on top of Mount Olympus, thinking deeply, he suddenly felt movement and bustle going on inside his crowned head. It seemed that something was there which wanted to get out! After asking everybody near if they could help, and finding that they could not, he decided that the only thing to be done was to have his head cut open without delay! So he sent a messenger at full speed to tell one of his sons, called Vulcan, to come immediately and to bring his axe with him!

Now Vulcan was the most wonderful workman
"Then, sitting down among the blossoms on Olympus, the wonderful baby struck the silver strings, and brought from the tortoise shell the most beautiful music that had ever been heard in the world."
THE WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN

ever known. He had built many of the towers and rooms of the palace, and once, in a fit of mischief, he had made a throne with a number of hidden springs in it; so that when the Queen sat down sedately, she found herself shut in by little golden bars springing up all round her, and was quite unable to get out. As Vulcan was lame, and could not move about easily, he had made two fine golden ladies, also full of hidden springs, who walked, one on each side of him, whenever he went out, and helped to hold him up. These ladies came with him now, supporting him with their golden arms, as he hobbled along to the top of Olympus, bearing his magical axe on his shoulder.

Vulcan was quite willing to cut open his brave father's head when he heard it was for this purpose that Jupiter had sent for him. He swung his axe high in the air (while everybody who stood round the throne trembled with fright), and brought it down, with a tremendous blow, among the royal curls. Jupiter was none the worse, and only put up his hand to rub the deep hole that had been made. As he did so, out of the hole sprang the most beautiful maiden that had ever been seen in the palace on Mount Olympus.

The maiden was dressed in glittering armour and waved a spear round and round the plumed
THE WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN

helmet on her hair. She sang a song of triumph as she stood before the amazed King, who could hardly believe that his head had held anything so big and bright. While she sang, the pine-trees on the lower hill-slopes were shaken by a great wind, and the waves of the sea rose up, crested with foam. And, amid the noise of the wind and the sea, voices called to each other from mountain to mountain saying that Minerva, who was to be a great lady among the Shining People, had arrived upon Olympus, out of a hole in the King’s head!

Among the surprised people in the palace was a tall, fair maiden, who carried a bow and arrows, and wore a crown shaped like a little new moon. Her name was Diana, and the shepherds in the valleys knew more about her than about any of the other Immortals, for she would often chase the big red deer over the hilltops and through the woods, and do many a kindly turn to people who caught a glimpse of her, like the good fairy huntress that she was. Also there was Queen Juno, herself, whose sceptre was carved like a cuckoo, while a peacock spread its tail at her feet, the pattern on its feathers matching the embroidery on the royal gown.

And presently down the river floated a great golden boat, bringing others to welcome Minerva,
for in the boat was a chariot, and four horses stood by the bows, close to a bright-haired Prince, who held the loose reins of the horses in one hand, and a bow and arrows, like those of Diana herself, in the other. This was Apollo, Diana’s twin brother. All through the day he had been driving the chariot, which carried the sun, across the high blue sky; and now he had come home to Olympus, that he might rest there for a time, before starting afresh next morning.

One night, Apollo surprised the people of Olympus almost as much as they had been surprised by Minerva. He arrived rather late and very angry, and seated beside him in the round golden boat was a baby, with the most innocent eyes in the world, who held a funny sort of little harp, made with silver cords strung across a tortoise shell, in its plump fingers.

Apollo sprang out of the boat and, leaving the horses and chariot to the nymphs who ran to take them, he hurried with the baby to the throne of Jupiter. The King’s head had healed up again quite nicely by now, but he started rubbing it once more with perplexity when Apollo told his story.

The baby, it seemed, had stolen fifty of Apollo’s beautiful, shining, white cattle!
THE WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN

Nobody could really believe it. Apollo’s cattle were so big, and the baby was so very small! It smiled cheerfully at the astonished Immortals, and played funny little tunes on its funny little harp while they all asked it questions at once. Apollo’s story was that he had left his cattle grazing peacefully in the meadows, as usual, and that, when he went to look at them, towards evening, they had all disappeared, not leaving even their footprints behind. Instead of the marks of their hoofs there were broken blossoms, and bent rushes, and strewn leaves, as if the meadow had been swept by a great wind. And then Apollo remembered he had been told that a most remarkable baby had been born that very morning in a cave under a hill—a baby who could do all sorts of mischievous things, and could do them without anybody finding him out. So away Apollo hastened to the cave, and there he found the baby in his cradle, fast asleep, holding in his hands the tortoise shell strung with silver strings. Waking him up, Apollo had insisted that he should come immediately to be questioned by Jupiter.

The King looked severely at the baby and ordered him to confess at once. And then the baby admitted that he had stolen the cattle, tied up their feet with flowering branches, and
THE WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN

Driven them away. He added that he had eaten two of them—telling this just as an afterthought. But, he said, he would show Apollo where the remaining forty-eight were hidden; and, to make up for the two he had eaten, would give him the tortoise shell (which he had strung with silver that very morning, and which was called a lyre), so that Apollo could play tunes on it whenever he liked. Then, sitting down among the blossoms on Olympus, the wonderful baby struck the silver strings, and brought from the tortoise shell the most beautiful music that had ever been heard in the world.

When Apollo took the lyre he played even more exquisitely than the baby. Nine charming ladies, who were sitting a long way off, on Mount Parnassus, and were called the Muses, heard the clear notes and began to sing to them more sweetly than nightingales. The nymphs in the palace gardens, pretty as fairies, started dancing in and out of the fountains, their white feet twinkling through the water and shaking drops of spray into the open cups of the flowers. And all the Shining Ones gathered round Apollo, and listened with joy to the tunes that he played so delightfully on the strings of the wonderful lyre.

The baby, when he grew up, was quicker than quicksilver, and the Immortals called him
THE WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN

Mercury. Fitting his heels and his cap with little wings, they sent him flying backwards and forwards as their messenger between the invisible palace and the people in the valley below. And Apollo’s cattle were safe ever afterwards, for he and Mercury became the best of friends.

All the inhabitants of Olympus thought a lot of Mercury, and none more than Queen Juno’s peacock, for it was through Mercury that it gained the beauty of its tail. The Queen was jealous of the pretty maidens to whom the King gave gifts; and one day she turned one of them, a water-nymph, into a white cow! It was always guarded by a strange creature, called Argus, with a hundred eyes. Only two of the eyes went to sleep at the same time—the other ninety-eight stayed wide awake. The poor little white cow could never manage to escape, until one day Mercury sang lovely lullabies so that the eyes went to sleep, one by one, until they were all fast closed, and then he killed the monster, and the white cow turned back into a maiden. But Juno took the hundred eyes, and set them, like starry jewels, in her peacock’s tail.
THE LOVING NYMPH AND THE FAIR WHITE FLOWER

In the green glades of old Greece, where anemone and crocus grew, lived the wood nymphs, who danced in the sunlight and the moonlight upon the soft moss. They did not take much notice of human beings, but were content to laugh and play with all the strange fairy creatures that lived among the flowers. One morning, however, as they chased each other through the trees, they came upon a beautiful youth named Narcissus, hunting with bow and arrows in the golden-green shadows of the forest. They peeped at him between the branches and whispered to each other, saying how handsome he was. Then all danced away again except one, who stood gazing, and gazing, and gazing at the tall, strong youth, longing, with all her heart, to speak to him.

But she could not do so, because she was Echo, and the only words she could pronounce were those that had just been said by somebody else!
THE LOVING NYMPH

However, she waited her opportunity, and when the youth suddenly called out to some distant companions, "Are you here?" Echo answered, "Here," and came joyfully out of the bushes! Narcissus was very much surprised, but tried to talk to her as best he could. Then, as she only repeated his own words, he called to his companions, "Come and join me!" "Join me!" whispered Echo, still following him through the trees. Narcissus, however, walked off the faster; and all the loving looks that Echo cast on him she cast in vain.

Every time Narcissus came into the forest to hunt he met the pretty nymph, and saw that she was daily growing paler and sadder, though she went on echoing his words as earnestly as ever. But Narcissus had never been in love in his life, and had no idea how unhappy Echo was. He thought it was a foolish fancy on her part, of which she would soon be cured. And he did not even try to kiss her when she came and sat beside him on the river-bank where he was fishing, or suddenly appeared among the green laurel trees as he chased a stag.

At last, one day, Echo's story reached the ears of Venus, the most beautiful of the Shining Immortals and the Queen of Love among them. Venus had been born out of the foam of the sea,
"In the green glades of old Greece lived the wood nymphs, who danced in the sunlight and the moonlight upon the soft moss."
and had sailed to land on a great silver shell, with the whiteness of the ocean spray on her arms and shoulders, and the gold of sunlight in her hair. She was always intensely interested in anyone in love; and, when she heard of Echo’s hopeless devotion, she said that the hard-hearted Narcissus should be made to know what it was like to love without return. By this time Echo was so thin and pale that she looked like nothing but a little gossamer spirit as she followed Narcissus through the trees. But she went on loving him just the same, and murmuring the last words of all his sentences. At last she wandered away to the caves in the mountains, and there, in these hollow, lonely places, she pined away, until she became nothing but a voice, which fell sadly upon the mists of the lakes, and into the narrow valleys between the hills.

Meanwhile, though all the other Immortals said that Echo had been rightly punished for loving a mortal, the Queen of Love had not forgotten her determination to make Narcissus suffer the same sort of grief; and one day, when he was hunting gaily in the forest, as usual, she set a magic spell upon him. He knew nothing of this spell, and he had quite forgotten poor Echo; his only thought at the time was how hot and thirsty the chase had made him. Coming
THE LOVING NYMPH

to a clear pool which glimmered, fresh and cool, among the tall reeds and green ferns, he knelt down, meaning to take a long drink, and also to bathe his face and hair in the pure water. As he leant out, far over the mossy bank, he saw another face, smiling and beautiful, rise up to meet his own. The rosy lips seemed ready to kiss him; the clear blue eyes, pretty as forget-me-nots, laughed under the bright curls which shadowed them. For a moment he gazed, delighted. Then, drawing a long breath of wonder, he raised his head a little, still looking intently at the exquisite face in the pool. The face, too, drew back; but, seen more dimly, it seemed to take on an even sweeter beauty. Stooping quickly again, he plunged his arms into the water to catch the lovely spirit who dwelt there. But his fingers only caught the wet weeds at the bottom of the pool, and, in the spray which fell about him, the face vanished.

Narcissus moved a little away from the water, and sat very still upon the bank, watching and waiting. "You beautiful being," he cried aloud, "will you not come to me?" "Beautiful —being—come to me," answered a faint voice from the mountains. But Narcissus never thought of the nymph who had once loved him; though now, indeed, he was deeply in love, himself, with
"For a moment Narcissus gazed, delighted."
THE LOVING NYMPH

the face which haunted the sparkling waters of the pool.

He waited a long time, hoping that this fairy-like creature would, perhaps, step out of the ripples, and, stealing softly up the bank, come and sit by his side upon the grass. He felt sure she must have wanted to kiss him when she put her face up to his so confidingly, with only the delicate silver veil of the water between them. But, as the minutes passed and nothing happened, he crept, very softly, back to the pool again, pushed aside the tall flowers and rushes, and once more bent over the water.

There, sure enough, was the face, looking up at him, with eyes as eager as before. With a cry of joy he tried once more to catch her in his arms. But, again, he caught nothing save the deep weeds and the spray.

Poor Narcissus! How could he know that he was all the time looking at his own reflection, and that this was the spell thrown upon him by Venus? He had fallen hopelessly in love with his own beautiful face mirrored in the pool.

There were no looking-glasses that showed him to himself in the way he was shown in that lovely and enchanted water. Day after day he visited it; day after day he tried to catch the fairy of the ripples. When he went in the sunshine the
THE LOVING NYMPH

face glowed bright and beautiful among the sparkling rays; when he hastened to seek it at night-time it smiled up through the dim silver of the moonlit water, with eyes that were like the stars. But never, never, could he clasp the fairy form in his arms! At last, he began to pine and fade just as Echo had pined and faded, with the sad hopelessness of unanswered love; and, as he stooped over the pitiless water, his tears would fall into the pool like rain.

Then the Immortals, as they floated across the sky one evening and saw him gazing, always gazing, into the pool, took pity on him, and turned him into a flower, which still hung, pale and beautiful, over the water, towards the reflection below. Narcissus, as he breathed his last breath before his lips gave out nothing but silent fragrance, whispered the one word, "Beloved." Echo, from her cave, replied, "Beloved." So that the voices mingled in tenderness at the very moment that Narcissus became a lovely blossom swaying on the bank of the water that now reflected, not a face, but a delicate, snow-white flower.
THE PRETTY MAIDEN AND THE DARK-EYED KING

ONE beautiful day a maiden, pretty as Spring itself, was playing with her companions in a meadow full of flowers. Sometimes they gathered great bunches of violets and lilies, and made wreaths for their necks and heads; sometimes they danced; and sometimes they played at ball. The pretty maiden was called Proserpine, and the meadow where she played was quite close to an enchanted pool, where fairy-swans sang like nightingales. Proserpine was young and happy, and never thought of anything so serious as getting married. All she wanted was to laugh and sing in the sunshine, and to gather nosegays to show her mother at night.

But, as she danced among the lilies, a great King watched her through the flowering trees. He had a gold crown on his long black hair, and his eyes were dark and fierce.

"This pretty child," said he to himself, "is
"As Proserpine danced among the lilies a great King watched her through the flowering trees."
THE PRETTY MAIDEN

old enough to be married, yet if I propose to her I know she is quite sure to refuse me, so I will carry her off by force!" Having made up his mind, he pushed aside the bushes, and stood in front of laughing Proserpine and her friends.

You can imagine how startled the girls were to see a fierce, dark King in a gold crown suddenly appear among the pink almond-blossom. They dropped their flowers and drew close together, staring at him with frightened eyes. He put out his strong arms, and caught up Proserpine as if she were a baby. Then he strode off over the grass; and, round the corner, the terrified little maiden saw a strange coach waiting, with four horses impatiently pawing the ground. The horses’ manes and coats were as black as the King’s hair, their eyes were as fierce, and their strength was even greater than his. Into the coach sprang the King, placing Proserpine on the seat beside him, and drove off as fast as he could, the chariot sweeping over the country like a black cloud, and the spring flowers, that Proserpine had dropped in her terror, lying crushed and broken on the moss.

Her pretty playmates, left behind, cried in vain for help. The fierce King, whose name was Pluto, and who was a distant relative of the Shining People on the Mountain, only drove the
faster. Presently he reached a river; in this lived a kindly water-fairy, called Cyane, who, seeing what was happening, tried to stop the chariot by making the stream rush up over the bank, and pour itself all round the dark wheels and the horses' black hoofs. This frightened Pluto, and he decided that he must make his way at once to his own kingdom, which lay far down below the flowers and the sunshine, right underneath the earth. So he lifted his great sceptre and struck the ground as hard as he could. Whereupon, with a loud rumble, the earth opened, showing a long dark passage through which the coach and horses could easily pass. Down this terrible road drove the King; but, just as the chariot was disappearing, Proserpine caught sight of the anxious river-fairy looking despairingly after her. With a quick thought she pulled off her embroidered girdle, and threw it to Cyane, crying:

"Take that to Ceres, my darling mother, and tell her what has become of me!"

Proserpine had only just time to see that Cyane had caught the girdle, before the earth closed over her head, and there she was, all alone with Pluto, being swept along by the fierce horses down a road where everything was dark.

Her playmates, as night came on, ran home,
THE PRETTY MAIDEN

sobbing with terror. Then, just as the flowers began to close and the dew to fall, a beautiful and gracious lady, dressed in a silken robe the colour of growing corn, and wearing a wreath of barley mixed with roses, came stepping over the grass to the bank where Proserpine had been playing. This was Ceres, who had arrived to take her daughter home. She stopped short when she saw the scattered wild flowers, and raised her voice in a clear call.

"Proserpine! Proserpine!" she called. But, though the cry echoed all over the meadow, there was no reply.

Then Ceres, wringing her hands, began to hurry up and down the land in search of her child. She looked in all the orange-groves, and the almond-orchards, and the sea-caves. When it grew too dark for her to see anything, she lit a great torch and went on seeking and calling all through the night. But she could not find Proserpine, who was deep under the earth with the fierce black King.

So, day after day, the poor mother wandered over the fields, having many adventures. One evening, as she sat and wept on the bank of a river, she suddenly saw a shining girdle among the water-lilies. As she gazed a ripple ran over the stream and a white hand and arm rose above
the water, and threw the girdle gently to her feet. The arm belonged to Cyane, the river-fairy, who had been taking care of Proserpine’s girdle all this time, and who was at last able to give it into the care of the lost maiden’s mother.

Of course Ceres recognized it instantly, and covered it with kisses. Full of hope, she went a little further, and presently came to a spring that gushed in crystal foam out of a mossy bank, and then tinkled away down among the ferns and the yellow iris with a noise like silver bells. Ceres sat down to rest by this dainty brook, and presently, among the little bell-like noises of the water, she thought she heard the sound of words. Listening still more carefully, she became quite sure. Then, with a thrill of delight, she realized that the little brook was talking to her!

This was the tale the streamlet told.

Once—so whispered the hurrying, glittering water—the brook had been a maiden as beautiful and gay as Proserpine herself, and had gone hunting the stags on the mountains with Diana. Becoming hot with running, this maiden, named Arethusa, had slipped away into the woods to find a pool in which to bathe. While she was swimming alone in the cool water, a great river-spirit, crowned with shells and weeds like a
merman, had fallen in love with her, and tried to catch her in his arms, just as Pluto had caught Proserpine. Springing out of the water, she had run away as fast as she could, the river-spirit running after her. Finding that she could not escape she had called loudly to Diana; and Diana had turned her into a brook! In this form Arethusa had slipped gaily away between the reeds and rushes, with forget-me-nots all about her, and kingfishers catching the little fishes that were swimming in her bright hair! But the spirit who chased her, not to be outdone, instantly turned himself into a river, so big that ships could have sailed on the water. Once more, however, Diana came to the rescue. She suddenly opened a rock, and down into the little cave that was made by the opening slipped Arethusa—down, down, down, till she came to the deep kingdom of Pluto himself, from which she at once did her best to escape.

As she was hurrying away, so she told Ceres, she caught a glimpse of poor lost Proserpine, sitting, dressed in long black robes, on a great black throne, with the fierce black King beside her. And there were no sunbeams, no birds, no pretty spring lambs, and no flowers but dark purple poppies and big red pomegranate blossoms, which glowed like fire among the shadows, while
a black river watered the gloomy bushes on which they grew.

When Arethusa had finished her story, she went on murmuring and murmuring, until at last she seemed to sing herself to sleep. But Ceres was even more unhappy than before, and, giving up all hope of ever rescuing Proserpine from the dark kingdom under the earth, she went, all alone, to a gloomy cave, where she threw away her wreath of withered roses, and sat down to weep afresh.

Now it was the love and care of Ceres that helped the juicy fruits to ripen, and that filled the ears of wheat with golden grain. In the same way, it was the sound of Proserpine's little dancing feet upon the ground that made all the birds begin to sing, and the wood-anemones to peep up through the dead leaves. Without Ceres and Proserpine the days were dark, the meadows were flowerless, and the streams were covered with ice. What would have happened to the world nobody can tell, if Ceres had stayed weeping in her cave, and Proserpine had been kept seated on her throne by Pluto, a most unwilling and unhappy little Queen.

Ceres, however, had many wise and loving friends among the Shining People on Mount Olympus. And through the Shining Ones Pros-
THE PRETTY MAIDEN

erpine was saved. These fair and kind Immortals took the tale to Jupiter, who said that the world could not possibly be left without violets, and roses, and green grass, and yellow corn, and so Proserpine must be brought back from the dark kingdom, and Ceres coaxed out of the dreary cave. One morning, therefore, just at the time of year that the cuckoos would have liked to begin calling if everything had not been so cold and sad, Ceres heard a clear voice speaking to her at the entrance of her cavern in the rocks. Looking up, she saw a beautiful boy with a gold wand in his hand and little wings on his head and on his heels. And she knew that it was Mercury, who had flown down to her with a message.

"Come with me!" he said. "I have been sent down from the Mountain to bring Proserpine from the dark kingdom under the earth."

How gladly Ceres sprang to her feet! How joyfully she followed Mercury as, half-running and half-flying, just as a bird might, he led her towards the deep, gloomy passage which only the messenger of the Shining Ones knew where to find.

But there, while they waited, Ceres heard voices all about her, saying that if Proserpine had eaten anything while she was in Pluto's kingdom, she could never be let out. From what
THE PRETTY MAIDEN

Arethusa had told her, however, Ceres was quite sure there could be nothing there to eat! She had forgotten the red flowers, which by this time must have grown into fruit on the boughs of the pomegranate trees.

Mercury paused at the entrance to the sad cave, and, signing to Ceres to keep quiet, bent a little forward and gave a long, sweet call. Then he waited, breathlessly, the pretty wings on his feet still all a-flutter, rustling like butterflies in the long, dead grass. Everything was still, and he gave a second call, sweet as a bird's. And, this time, there came an answer, very far-away and faint.

Up through the gloom floated a small figure, as pale as thistle-down, and almost as delicately airy. Mercury ran a little way into the cave and brought Proserpine out into the light. Then he turned about and laid the poor trembling little Queen in the arms of her mother.

How glad Ceres was! How tightly she hugged her pretty child! Very, very anxiously she begged to be told if Proserpine had eaten anything while in the palace of the dark, stern King. And Proserpine faltered out the confession that she had swallowed six of the pomegranate seeds.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sighed Ceres, "what is to be done now?"
“Proserpine sitting, dressed in long black robes, on a great black throne, with the fierce black King beside her.”
THE PRETTY MAIDEN

She turned to Mercury, who shook his head but smiled at the same time, saying:

"For every seed that she has eaten she must spend a month in the dark kingdom with the sad King! But all the rest of the year she may pass with you among the birds and flowers."

Then he waved them "good-bye," and turned and flew off to his own palace-home on the high Mountain, while the sweet blossoms began to grow round Proserpine's feet, and the little birds to sing about her head.

"It is spring, spring, spring!" they sang. "What does the future matter? For six months we can all be happy, now that Proserpine has come back to play in the sunshine on the green earth!"
A CERTAIN King and Queen, who lived in a wonderful land more years ago than anyone can count, had three daughters, all of whom were beautiful, while the youngest, called Psyche, was the loveliest maiden that the people of the country had ever seen. So fair was she that her father's subjects declared she was fairer than Venus herself. This made the Queen of Love—who, like others among the Shining Ones, could sometimes be very jealous—so angry that she decided poor Psyche must be punished for daring to become her rival. So, calling her son Cupid to her side, she told him to go at once in search of the maiden who was called Psyche, and, by wounding her with some magical arrows Venus had given him, make her fall in love with the first hunchback or beggar that she met.

In the meantime the King and Queen had become very perplexed because, for all her beauty, no fine Prince came along who wanted
to marry their youngest daughter. Both her sisters were quickly wooed and won by neighbouring kings; but it looked as if Psyche were going to be an old maid! So at last her royal father, who knew of a hidden place in the mountains where he could ask questions of Apollo, went to this secret cave and inquired how it was that Princess Psyche remained unmarried.

The answer the King received made him dreadfully unhappy, for Apollo told him that beautiful Psyche must become the bride of a great winged serpent which flew to and fro among the stars, and which was stronger than even the Shining Ones themselves, so that there was no hope of saving the maiden from its clutches. The only thing to do was to take her to a high hill opposite the cave, and set her on the rocky summit to await her fate.

The King and Queen knew it was of no use to resist a winged serpent that was more powerful than the Bright People of Olympus, so they had a long procession formed of their weeping subjects, and the procession took Psyche to the lonely hill and left her there.

But no winged serpent came to her. Instead, a little sweet, soft breeze lifted her on its fragrant wings, and, wafting her down from the cold mountain-top into a warm valley, laid her in a
“A little sweet, soft breeze lifted Psyche on its fragrant wings.”
THE ENCHANTED PALACE

grassy bed of sweet and delicate flowers, where, drying her tears, she soon fell fast asleep.

When she awoke all was still and peaceful, and she sat up and looked about. She saw, then, that she was on the edge of a beautiful wood, with a stream running through it, clear as crystal. Rising to her feet, she went a little way into the dim shadows of the trees, and presently caught sight of the walls of a palace built of ivory, silver and gold. It seemed quite deserted; and, as she drew nearer, she saw that all the doors were set wide open, with no servants to guard them. She crossed a lovely garden, full of flowers, and stepped into a hall paved with rubies and sapphires and mother-of-pearl, which glowed under her feet as she walked across it. Peeping into the rooms, one by one, she saw that they held chairs and couches of gold, and were hung with curtains of exquisitely embroidered silk. As she stole, marvelling, down the empty, shining corridors, she heard a voice speaking to her very gently, though nobody was to be seen.

"Do not be afraid, pretty Princess!" said the voice. "All the palace belongs to you, and we, though we are only voices, are ready to obey any order that you like to give."

Psyche listened in amazement, then said, timidly, that she would like a bath prepared for
her, and a couch where she could rest. Immediately invisible hands led her to a room where the bath, smelling of roses and lavender, was all ready, with a couch quite near to it, spread with blue and purple cushions. Then dishes of delicious cakes were brought to her by the same invisible hands, while a harp played sweetly, with no one fingerling the strings. The voices talked to her in the intervals of the music, telling her to have no fear, for good spirits were about her, and the Prince who owned the palace would come to her as soon as it was dark.

The sun sank, the daylight faded, and Psyche, soothed and happy, nestled down among the silken cushions of the couch. Then by and by she heard the sound of soft wings beating gently upon the air, and caught the fragrance of many flowers, and knew that some spirit had flown in through the open window. All the air trembled with love and gladness, and a voice, far sweeter than the music of the harp, told her not to be afraid, for this was the Prince of the palace himself, and Psyche was to be his bride.

You may imagine how happy she was to find that no winged serpent meant to carry her to his dreadful home in the clouds. She and the Prince talked for many hours in the soft, sweet darkness. But, before daylight came to show him to
"Behold, the fairy Prince was no other than Cupid himself."
THE ENCHANTED PALACE

her, he opened the window again, and flew away.

So, for many weeks, Psyche lived in the enchanted palace, waited on by invisible servants all day, and visited by the Prince every night. But he told her that she could never be allowed to see him; she knew him only by the sound of his wings and the tones of his clear, soft voice.

Then, one day, her two sisters, who were very anxious to know what had become of her, came to the top of the high mountain, and, like Psyche herself, were gently lifted by the West Wind and carried down into the valley below. There Psyche, walking in the wood, suddenly found them, sitting all amazed upon the grass.

She was, oh, so pleased to greet them! She took them through her beautiful garden, and showed them all over the palace with its floors of gems and its walls of ivory and gold. She commanded the harp to play to them and ordered dishes of fruit to be brought in by the invisible hands. And then she told them about the unseen Prince who flew in at the window every night.

But the sisters shook their heads. They had been getting more and more envious of Psyche every minute, and to hear of the winged Prince put the finishing touch to their jealousy, for
their own husbands were ugly and old. So they declared that they did not believe it was a Prince who flew in at the window at all; it was the winged serpent in disguise, and one of these days it would certainly fall upon Psyche and eat her up! Psyche listened in dismay. She had been so sure that the fragrant wings and the beautiful voice belonged to a fairy Prince that it was terrible to think her loved visitor might be the terrible serpent, after all! Her sisters went on declaring that they knew this to be so, and, before going away, left her a lamp, which she could light that evening, in order to look at the being who flew in through her window; and also a knife with which she could cut off its head. For, said they, even if the winged one looked, as well as sounded, like a Prince, that was only because the serpent wore such a very clever disguise.

So, that night, when the Prince came to her and, after talking to her for some time of his love, fell asleep on the silken-cushioned couch, Psyche, all trembling, rose and lit her lamp. Then, creeping to the side of the sleeper, she raised the light high, and peeped down at him through the little golden glow made by the flame. And behold, the fairy Prince was no other than Cupid himself!

Psyche looked, and looked, bending nearer
and nearer, wonderstruck by his beauty. She could not see his wings, for they were folded under him, but by and by, she found his quiverful of arrows. Lifting them, she gazed at them curiously, and, pricking herself with one, loved him even more. But, as she bent over him, the lamp she held tilted forward, and a drop of hot oil fell on to his shoulder. Cupid woke with a start, gazed into her rapt face, all lit up with love and, with a cry of reproach, flew straight out of the window.

Poor Psyche! She hastened, sobbing, into the garden, but Cupid only called back to her from where he hung, sorrowfully, above a dark cypress-tree. "I, who was commanded to make you love a beggar, or a hunchback, came down from Olympus and made you love me!" he cried. "I told you that you must never look into my face! You disobeyed! Good-bye!"

Then he was gone.

But Psyche, loving him now better than life itself, left the beautiful palace, wrapped herself in an old dark cloak, and wandered through the world, seeking him. Sometimes, in her roamings, she met the water-nymphs and begged them to tell her where he had gone. Once she met Ceres in her golden gown, and once she came across the Queen of the Shining Ones herself. And to all
of them she put the sobbing plea, "Would they not help her to recover Cupid?"

And where was Cupid all this time? He had flown to his Mother's palace with his hurt shoulder, and she had changed him from a beautiful youth into a helpless little boy, and locked him up with a golden key in a golden chamber! But, as he sat there rubbing his shoulder, he fell more deeply in love than ever with the memory of Psyche.

You see, he had wounded himself on purpose with one of his own arrows, so now he could never forget her. And, while he was locked up in the golden room, who should come to Venus's palace but Psyche herself, still seeking him. The Queen of Love, who had heard the whole story from a sea-gull, was now angrier than ever. She forced the pretty Princess to be her servant, and compelled her to do all sorts of hard tasks, sending her at last right into Pluto's underground kingdom, to bring back a pot of magical ointment, with which Proserpine kept her beauty unfaded during the months that she spent below the earth.

Psyche succeeded in obtaining the ointment and came wearily back to Venus's palace with the little jar. Then the idea occurred to her to use some of the magic stuff herself, for her hard life was making her tired and old. She opened the
pretty pot carefully, but, behold, there was no ointment there—nothing but clouds and clouds of mist, which, as they enfolded her, sent her by degrees into the sweetest and soundest of sleeps.

While she slept, with the silvery mists all about her, Cupid managed to climb out of his golden window, and to turn himself once more into the shining-winged, grown-up Prince. Flying down to the ground he saw the silvery mists, and his own beautiful Princess asleep in the centre of them. With a cry of joy he sprang to her, wiped the sleep from her face, and waked her with a dainty, playful prick from one of his golden arrows. Then, after he had kissed her a hundred times for joy, he shut the mists up again in the pot, and, flying right up the slopes of Olympus to the throne of Jupiter, begged the King of the Shining People to consent to his open marriage with Psyche.

Jupiter, hearing all, could not refuse. He sent for both Venus and Psyche, and gave the mortal Princess a cup of nectar to drink, which turned her into one of the Immortals. When Venus saw that Psyche had indeed become one of the Shining Ones, she too consented to her son’s marriage. So Cupid and Psyche were joined together, for ever, amid the songs and shouts of all the Shining People of Olympus.
THE PRINCE WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

ONE fine morning, in those days of long and long ago, a beautiful baby, the son of a still more beautiful Princess, was born in a little room at the top of a high tower built of brass.

That was a strange birthplace for a prince, you will think, but the fact is that the whole matter was a close secret. The poor Princess had been shut up in the tower for months, just because her father, the King, did not want her to get married. He had been told that, some day, he would be killed by his own grandson, so he decided that the best way to avoid this would be not to allow his only daughter to be married, so that then he would never have any grandchildren at all. But the Princess, whose name was Danaë, was so lovely that one of the Immortals, catching sight of her one day, as he flew along the sky, fell in love with her. He dropped straight down on to the open roof of the tower, hidden in a shower of rain, of which the drops
THE PRINCE WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR were like sparkling fragments of gold. He and the Princess got married immediately, and the golden shower fell all round Danaë in a most beautiful wedding veil.

Well, when the King heard that he had a grandson after all, he made up his mind to send the poor baby straight out of the kingdom without delay. He had a large barrel sawn in two, and he launched one of the halves on the waters of the bay, where it rocked up and down like a big washing-tub. Then he ordered his guards to go to the brass tower, bring the Princess and the baby to the beach, and send them floating out to sea in this strange round boat.

The guards did as they were ordered, and away sailed Danaë and her little son. He was the very prettiest baby, with hair as golden as the gold drops of the shower, fair skin and blue eyes. His mother had named him Perseus, and she held him very tightly in her arms as the barrel swung up and down in the waves.

They sailed on until the land they had left was quite out of sight, but in front of them suddenly rose the blue mountains of another country. The barrel was carried by the tide right up to the shore, and a big wave lifted it gently up, and then washed it safely on to the sands of a low beach.

Walking along the beach was a fisherman, and
you may imagine how surprised he was to have a Princess and a baby washed up in a boat like a washing-tub at his very feet. This fisherman was the King's brother; and he thought that anybody so lovely as Danaë he had never seen. He gave her dry clothes and nice food, and a room in his own cottage to live in. And there Perseus grew up, tall and vigorous, and more beautiful every day of his life.

When this fair Prince had just reached manhood the King of the country, who had often seen him and his mother, suddenly thought that he would like to marry the fair lady who lived in his brother's cottage, and he begged Danaë to become his Queen. But Danaë refused indignantly. The King pressed her to consent, and young Perseus, angry because he saw his mother was vexed, sprang to her side and declared that no one, King or courtier, should trouble Danaë so long as he was there to protect her.

The King, however, turned to the Prince mockingly.

"If you are so strong and brave," said he, "do something to prove it! For my part, I will not let you dictate to me unless you come to me with Medusa's head in your hand!"

Perseus was exceedingly startled, for Medusa was one of three sisters called Gorgons, who lived
"Away sailed Danaë and her little son."
THE PRINCE WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

far away in a country of stony hills and dreadful, dark valleys. All three sisters were terrible, with tusks like boars, hands of brass, and strong bat's wings made of gold; and of the three Medusa was much the worst. She had live snakes growing out of her head instead of hair; and one look into her strange, wicked face would instantly turn anybody into stone. How could it be possible for a human being to kill her and carry away her head?

But Perseus felt he could do anything for his mother's sake. He drew himself up proudly and gave the King a brave answer.

"I will!" said he, with flashing eyes. Then he went away to think how to do it.

Down to the sea-shore he wandered, to the very spot where, years ago, he had arrived, a little baby, in a barrel. It began to grow dark, and, all at once, there was a sound of wings, and a lovely light, and he thought for a moment that two big stars had fallen out of the sky. Then he saw that here, by his side, stood Minerva and Mercury, Minerva very magnificent and stately in her shining armour, and Mercury smiling and fluttering the wings on his heels.

They told Perseus, then, that his own father was one of the Immortals, and that all the Shining People on the Mountain were very much inter-
THE PRINCE WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

ested in him. And they said they were going to help him to secure the Gorgon’s head. So Minerva gave him her own magical shield, which was as bright as a looking-glass, and explained to him that if he did not look at Medusa herself, but only at her reflection in the shield, she would not be able to turn him into stone. And Mercury took off the wings from his heels, and tied them to the feet of Perseus by little golden straps. He also placed a dark helmet on the Prince’s head, with cloudy plumes that were black as the skies of night. It belonged to Pluto himself, and anyone who wore it became invisible at will. Then they bade him good luck and good-bye, and told him to fly away on Mercury’s wings to the land of the Grey Ladies, who would reveal to him where the terrible Gorgons lived. So, with the helmet on his head, the wings on his feet, and the shield buckled to his arm, Perseus sprang lightly on to the waves of the sea, and flew, like some bright, new, ocean bird, along the glimmering water, towards the land of the Grey Ladies.

This country was all dark with mists, and Perseus felt sadly lonely when he alighted on a rough rock, and ran along the cliffs in a cold, thick fog. Presently, through the fog, came a low muttering sound, as if some old women were talking to each other, none of whom had any
"Perseus struck off the Gorgon's head with a single blow."
THE PRINCE WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

teeth. Then Perseus knew he must be near the Grey Ladies, because he had been told that they had but one eye and one tooth among the three of them. In order to see anything, they had to borrow the eye from one another, and, in order to eat anything, they had to borrow the tooth! What a dreadful life for three old women to lead in the middle of a dense fog! But, as they were not at all nice, and would never do a kind turn to anybody if they could help it, perhaps it served them right.

Well, Perseus put up his hand and felt his helmet, to make sure that it was on his head, and that he was therefore quite invisible, and, going up to where he heard the sound of talking, found himself face to face with the Grey Ladies, who were quarrelling as to which of them should have the eye for the next half-hour. One of them was holding it tightly in her skinny fingers, and both the others were groping about, trying to get hold of it, so Perseus need not have been so particular about his helmet after all. At last the old lady who held the eye consented to part with it. She produced it from where she was hiding it under her cloak, and one of her sisters held out trembling fingers for it. Quick as thought, Perseus thrust his own young hand above the withered palm, and grasped the eye.
securely. And the startled Grey Ladies heard a clear voice bidding them say where was the hiding-place of Medusa, for, if they would not tell, they would never get back their precious eye.

In frightened tones, they instantly told the secret. Then Perseus gave them back their eye, and, before they could recover from their fear and amazement, he was off again on his magical wings, flying fast for the country of the Gorgons.

This land was even worse than the country of the Grey Ladies. There was nothing to be seen but long stretches of sand, with trees, and flowers, and animals, all turned into stone. Whenever Medusa went for a walk she left ever so many strange shapes, cold and hard as rocks, behind her. Presently Perseus came upon a number of stone figures that had once been princes brave as himself; and there, in the middle of them, lay Medusa asleep, her golden wings folded over her eyes, and nothing moving near her except the horrible snakes that grew on her head instead of hair.

Perseus had kept his eyes, all this time, on the reflections in Minerva’s shield, and now he saw Medusa mirrored in it, quite clearly. Holding it before his face, he stepped lightly and silently past the stone figures, lifted his sword, and struck
THE PRINCE WITH THE GOLDEN HAIR

off the Gorgon’s head with a single blow. Then, very quickly indeed, he thrust the head deep down into a bag that he carried, and set off home as fast as he could, lest the other two Gorgons should come after him and kill him.

And that was the way in which Perseus got possession of Medusa’s head. What he did with it on the way home, and how, by its means, he was able to marry the most beautiful Princess in the world, you shall hear in another story.
PSYCHE AS SERVING-MAID

In a previous story you heard how poor Psyche, when she was the servant of Venus, was made to do all kinds of difficult things and was finally sent down under the earth for a pot of Proserpine's ointment. You shall now hear exactly what these hard tasks were; and, also, the full tale of the sorrowful Princess's visit to the kingdom of Pluto and his six months' Queen.

You must know that, after Venus had forced Psyche to become her servant, she prepared to set off to a grand wedding, saying that Psyche must stay at home to perform the first of the tasks that would be set for her. Leading her to a great piled-up quantity of wheat, barley, millet, poppy-seed, peas, lentils and beans, the Queen of Love declared that all the seeds were to be sorted into different heaps before she came back from the wedding-breakfast. Then she mounted her chariot drawn by four doves, shook the jewelled reins, and was driven swiftly away.

Psyche sat by the great heap of seeds and
"Cerberus, a terrible dog with three heads."
gazed at them despairingly, knowing well that she could not separate one kind from another even if she toiled for a week. But a little ant, who had overheard Venus’s command, ran quickly to all the other ants in the fields about the palace, and told them that they must come at once to the help of the Princess whom Cupid loved. So up the ants marched in an army—just as you may sometimes see them marching now—travelling over the ground in tiny black waves, one after another, and began to work as hard as ever they could to separate the grain and the seeds into heaps. So well did they succeed that, on Venus’s return, the task that she had set poor Psyche was finished.

When the Queen of Love saw this she was angrier than ever, for she thought it was Cupid’s doing. Next morning she called Psyche into the garden and pointed to a dark forest in the distance. "Go into that wood," said she, "and you will see a stream flowing through the bushes. Wild sheep are feeding there that shine like gold. Bring me some of the wool from their fleeces."

Psyche set off willingly—not to try and catch the sheep, but to throw herself into the river and so end her sorrows, for she knew that the wild sheep were terribly fierce, and had long pointed horns and poison-tipped teeth with which
they bit anybody who came near them. As she stood on the river bank, however, preparing to jump in, she heard the sweetest music in the world coming from somewhere near the ground. Stooping to listen, she found that the sound came from a green reed, which was growing, with many others, on the brink of the cool, running water.

"O Psyche!" sang the reed, very softly and tenderly, "you must not throw yourself into my beautiful river! Wait until this afternoon, when the fierce wild sheep will wander farther along the green meadow and lie down to rest in the distant shade. Then go into the bushes where they have been feeding, and gather the torn pieces of golden wool which they are sure to have left hanging on the thorns."

Psyche listened to the gentle words of the reed, and, when she saw the terrible sheep move away, she ran hastily to the bushes and collected the torn fragments of golden wool that clung to the briers. Putting them into her apron, she carried them home to Venus, who now lost her temper entirely.

"Somebody has been helping you to do this!" cried she. "Now you shall have a much harder task! Go to the top of yonder mountain, where you will find a stream called the Styx, inky-black
and icy-cold, gushing out of a rock. Bring me this crystal bottle full of the water!"

Poor Psyche took the bottle and climbed to the top of the mountain as fast as she could, meaning to throw herself from the top, just as she had meant to fling herself into the river. She saw the rock that Venus had described, and the black Styx, quite out of reach, and guarded by many horrible dragons. For a moment she was so frightened that she stood quite still, and, as she stared at the dragons, suddenly a great eagle swooped down from the sky, spread its wings over her head, and spoke to her as tenderly as the reed had done.

"Give me your bottle, Psyche," said the eagle. Then, taking the crystal bottle in its big claws, it swept between the angry dragons like a gust of wind, dipped the bottle into the river, and brought it back to Psyche quite full of the strange inky-black water.

Joyfully Psyche hurried once more to Venus; but again the Queen of Love—quite forgetting the meaning of her own beautiful title—declared that the poor Princess had been helped.

"It seems to me that you can call witches and wizards to obey your orders!" said she. "Very well! You shall find some sorcerer who can lead you down into the kingdom of Pluto and
you shall bring me back some of Proserpine's beauty ointment!"

Psyche went away, more dismayed than ever. "This time I certainly will kill myself," she thought. So she climbed the highest tower in the palace, and, for the third time, made ready to throw herself down, on this occasion into the garden. But behold! The tower itself suddenly found voice, and spoke to her out of its depths as softly and sweetly as the reed and the eagle had done.

"You must not despair, poor Psyche," said the tower, "I will tell you what to do. Go straight through the streets of the city you see in the distance, and from there to the marshes beyond. In the midst of the marshes you will find a deep hole in the ground, which you must be brave enough to enter! Carry in either hand a little cake made of barley and honey, and put two copper coins in your mouth. Presently, as you travel down the dark passage below the hole, you will meet a lame man driving a lame donkey. He will ask you to pick up some sticks that have fallen from the donkey's back, but be sure you pass on without answering him. After that you will come to a black river, which is the very same Styx from which the eagle filled your crystal bottle, and a ferry-boat will be
rocking upon it, with a strange-looking ferry-man, called Charon, seated in the bows. He will demand a copper coin from you, so make him take, with his own fingers, one of the two that are in your mouth. As Charon is rowing you across the river you will see another old man, pretending to drown in the water. He, too, will call on you for help, but you must not heed him. Near the bank on the far side you will find some old women seated, weaving. They also will cry for aid, but once again you must pass onwards without reply. All these things are only traps to make you drop your little honey and barley cakes, without which you would never be able to return to the sunlight through the strange hole in the marshes. Last of all you will hear a furious barking, and, at the very gate of Pluto’s palace, you will see Cerberus, a terrible dog with three heads. Throw one of your cakes to him and hurry on, and you will find yourself at the foot of the throne of Proserpine herself.

“She will speak kindly to you, and offer you delicate cakes and meats, but you must refuse everything except a morsel of brown bread. Then, seated humbly on the ground, ask her for a pot of her magical ointment, and she will grant your request. On your way from the palace throw the second cake of barley and honey to
the fierce three-headed dog, and, once more, he will let you pass. Give Charon your other coin, and he will ferry you back across the river. Then hasten homewards along the dark passage—

*but be sure you do not open the pot of ointment, for it is not well to know the secrets of the Shining People and their friends.*

Psyche thanked the friendly tower most earnestly, and set off for the dark hole in the marshes, carrying her copper coins and her honey and barley cakes. Everything happened just as the tower had said it would. She saw the lame man with the lame donkey, Charon in the ferry-boat, the drowning man, the old women who weaved, and the terrible dog with the three heads. Proserpine was even kinder than she expected, and gave her the little jar of ointment quite unwillingly. In safety, the pretty Princess returned to the sunshine; but then, as you have been told in another story, she disobeyed the tower's orders, and opened the pot of ointment!

What would have happened to her if Cupid had not found her in her deep sleep nobody can tell. But the story had a very happy ending. And perhaps the nicest part of all was Venus's forgiveness of Psyche when Jupiter made the Princess one of the Immortals. After all, the Queen of Love only wanted her son to make a
happy marriage, and she must have been very glad that she herself was not the one to open the pot of Proserpine’s ointment, for she might never have been found as Psyche was found by Cupid, and so might have remained folded in the silvery enchanted mists of sleep for ever.
THE STRANGE PEOPLE OF THE WOODLANDS

Among the Immortals were several people of whom you have not yet heard, but about whom many songs were sung and numberless tales told, not only by the shepherds of the mountain pastures, but by the huntsmen who rode with their hounds through the leafy woods, in pursuit of the wild deer.

First of all were the Centaurs, marvellous creatures who were half-horses, half-men. Very wild they were, very strong, and gay, and free. They lived in the green glades of the deep forests, and sometimes the sound of their galloping might be heard in the hush of the noon-day heat; or, under the starlight, a glimpse caught of their eyes that shone like glow-worms, and of their tossing manes of human hair. How startled anyone who saw them must have been! For they had strange men's faces with which they could peer through the branches; yet, when they took to flight, their four hoofs might clearly be
Pan.

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seen kicking up the grass and moss as they sped away! Sometimes they would come and fight in the armies of the different kings; now and then, if they took a fancy to a beautiful princess, they would steal her and carry her to their far-off hidden caves. Most of them knew no law but their own fancies; yet, strangely enough, one of their number, called Chiron, was a great teacher, and those kings who wanted their sons to grow up good, and brave, and wise, would send the young princes to spend their early years in fine old Chiron’s school.

Then, besides the Centaurs, there was a very odd Immortal, called Pan, who had the feet and legs not of a horse but of a goat, and who produced the loveliest music in the world from a sort of flute, made from a bunch of reeds. Pan knew all the secrets of the woods—where the nightingales nested and where the small furry rabbits were born. The hunters who went after the hares in the snow would always murmur a sort of little prayer to Pan. At one time he had been without his sweet-toned pipes; and he had come by them in a very strange manner. He had fallen in love with a beautiful nymph called Syrinx, as he saw her standing on the bank of a river; and, without waiting to see how she liked him, had sprung forward to catch her in his arms.
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Of course Syrinx was terribly startled when such a fierce-looking lover, with tangled hair, and a goat’s feet and legs, suddenly bounded out of the thicket to embrace her. She gave a loud scream and the kindly spirit of the earth on which she stood instantly turned her into a bunch of reeds. It was now Pan’s turn to be startled. He had just seized her by her pretty slender waist, and there she was, turned into a bunch of reeds in his very arms! He called to her longingly, and, behold, his voice echoed through the reeds with the most delicate melody possible, like thrushes and linnets and willow-warblers all making music together. Pan caught his breath with surprise and delight, and called into the bunch of reeds a second time, very softly indeed. Again they gave back their pretty music. He was so pleased that he sat down by the river-bank, bound the reeds together with wax, and went on playing with them until nightfall. By that time, he had forgotten all about Syrinx, and thought of nothing but the music of his reeds. And from that day to this he has made melody with them, wandering happily along the margins of the rivers, or through the meadows deep in summer flowers.

Sometimes Pan’s music would be interrupted by much gayer sounds—timbrels, and bells, and
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tambourines. Then, down the moonlit glades would come a rollicking company of merry-makers, laughing, shouting and dancing round a beautiful youth, with a crown of vine-leaves on his hair, who sat in a wonderful car drawn by wild beasts. Sometimes these beasts were lions; sometimes they were panthers; and sometimes they were tawny leopards with spots all over their skins. This youth was Bacchus, and he had grown up in a cave among the wood-nymphs. He was a great friend of Pan’s, for he had known the man who was half a goat from the time when Pan, as a little baby, had been carried down from Olympus in Mercury’s arms, cosily wrapped up in the warm skins of mountain hares. In fact, Pan and Bacchus were rather alike in some ways—in their love of music and laughter and the dances of fairies in moonlit forest glades. But, while Pan spent many lonely hours afoot on the snowy hillcrests and among the rushing torrents, Bacchus never liked to be alone. He always wanted his friends to be singing and shouting round him as he drove about the woodlands in his car. He had taught his followers how to make wine out of grapes; and that was the reason he wore vine-leaves in his hair.

Another man, who was also half a goat, had been the tutor of Bacchus when he was a little
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boy in the cave among the wood-nymphs. This
tutor's name was Silenus, and he used to ride
alongside the car of his pupil, mounted on a
prancing wild ass. The woodlands must have
been marvellous places in those days, what with
the galloping Centaurs, and the exquisite pipes
of Pan, and the songs of Bacchus and his merry
crowd of friends!

Once, when Bacchus was not much more than
a boy, he had a very strange adventure. He was
sitting on the rocks by the sea, with the sun
shining on his thick, dark hair and his purple
robe, when a ship came sailing along over the
sparkling waters. In the ship were a company
of pirates who, when they saw this handsome
youth, thought he must certainly be the King's
son. So they sprang ashore and kidnapped him,
thinking they would be sure to get a large ransom
for so grand a Prince. But, when they tried to
put bonds on his hands and feet, the cords fell
away; and Bacchus just sat still, smiling quietly
to himself, in the bows of the vessel.

Then the helmsman understood, and cried out
to his fellow pirates:

"Madmen! you have captured no human
Prince, but one of the Shining Immortals! No
ship will carry him away! Put him ashore before
it is too late!"
"A beautiful youth, with a crown of vine-leaves on his hair, who sat in a wonderful car drawn by wild beasts."
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But the captain of the ship laughed at the helmsman, and ordered all sails set, to catch the wind.

"This is a rich Prince whom we have kidnapped!" said he. "We will make him tell us where his money is, and steal it for ourselves!"

The pirates had just begun to hoist the sails when a marvellous thing happened. First of all, the whole ship began to run with sweet, fragrant wine. Then, out of the top of the mast a vine commenced to grow, spreading its green leaves and purple bunches of grapes among the black pirate-sails. After that, long trails of ivy were seen to be twining themselves below the vine, mingling their black berries with the grapes. Garlands of flowers appeared in other parts of the ship; and, instead of the Prince whom they thought they had captured, the terrified crew saw a great lion standing in the bows. As he stood there, roaring loudly, a second wild beast, in the form of a bear, suddenly appeared amidships; and then, across the waves, came riding a great company of the followers of Bacchus, all mounted on forest animals, and all singing and shouting at the very top of their voices. Never was so strange a sight seen on the high seas before.

While the pirates stood still, frozen with fear,
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staring at all these wonders, the lion sprang upon the captain and killed him. Then the terrified crew tried to escape. As there was nowhere for them to go, except the sea itself, they all flung themselves head-first into the water. And, no sooner had their bodies touched the ripples, than they were, every one, turned into dolphins. So there they were, with big heads, and goggling eyes, and curly tails, and fishy scales all over their bodies instead of human skin; while the wild friends of Bacchus, seated astride their panthers and tigers and asses, plunged and splashed and shouted on the top of the waves, and the purple wine poured from the deck of the ship and mixed with the clear, salt water of the ocean! Through it all the bunches of grapes which hung from the mast swayed in the breeze, and the yellow-maned lion stood in the bows and roared with all its might.

But when the helmsman—who had not at once thrown himself into the sea with the other pirates—was about to follow their example, the lion turned back again into a beautiful youth and prevented him, saying:

"No, no, you must not be afraid! I am indeed one of the Shining People. My name is Bacchus and I will make you a happy, fortunate man for ever."
THE BRAVEST SWIMMER IN THE WORLD

BEAUTIFUL Venus, the Queen of Love, travelled over the sea and through the sky every day of her life, looking for princes and princesses, or shepherds and shepherdesses, who wanted her help. When she went across the sea she sailed in the great silver shell which had first carried her to land, while blue and green water-nymphs sometimes played about her and sometimes rode on their dolphins, laughing and singing, with the foam sparkling like diamonds in their long hair. Tritons, too, swam like mermen through the water, blowing trumpets made of shells. When Venus travelled in the air the procession was more wonderful still. She had a golden chariot drawn by four white doves, harnessed with strings of emeralds and rubies and pearls; and hundreds of little birds flew round it in a cloud, singing with all their might. With her in the chariot went Cupid, who, as you know, could sometimes look like a fairy Prince, and sometimes like a little laughing child. But,
"Hero ran down to the beach."
THE BRAVEST SWIMMER

whether he were a Prince or tiny boy, he always had his beautiful wings on his shoulders, and carried his bow and arrows, which he used whenever his mother told him so to do.

Now those of Cupid’s arrows which were tipped with magical gold, could make people fall hopelessly in love, as Psyche had done. If ever Venus saw a handsome couple who, she thought, ought to get married, she would tell Cupid to fit his gold-tipped arrows, one by one, to his bow and to shoot at the good-looking pair. The youth and the maiden would each feel a little prick somewhere near their hearts, and the magic would get into the tiny wound made by the arrow. Instantly they would make up their minds that, unless they could get married, there would never be happiness in the world for either of them.

Among the fairest of all fair maidens in those times was a girl of princely race, called Hero, whose parents had vowed her to the service of the Queen of Love for ever. So she spent her days in a big and beautiful temple, where the people sang songs in honour of Venus and burnt fragrant spices to give pleasure to the Shining Lady. One morning when Hero was there, hanging the temple with garlands and filling the crystal dishes with sweet-smelling spices, a youth
THE BRAVEST SWIMMER

called Leander came walking up between the ivory pillars, and caught sight of her. He paused, thinking how beautiful she was. At that moment Venus, who was in the temple, hidden among the silvery mists of the burning spices and the bowers of the delicate blossoms, saw the handsome stranger and decided, all in a minute, that Hero and Leander must be made to fall in love. She whispered quickly to Cupid, who was with her, to take his bow and arrows and to shoot at the fair maiden and the handsome youth. Cupid obeyed, and Hero and Leander, meeting each other's glances, immediately loved each other better than anybody or anything in the world.

All day Leander lingered near the temple, waiting for an opportunity to speak to Hero. She, however, kept shyly away from him, busy with her flowers and spices, yet thinking of him the whole time, her heart beating very fast indeed. At last, when she left the temple to go home, he drew near to her and gazed into her face. Then, without a word, they both knew that separation from each other would kill them with grief.

When once they were sure of this they talked, and kissed, and told each other how wonderful and how beautiful it all was. Hero explained that, although she spent the day in the temple,
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she went every night to a big tower at the edge of the sea, where she lived quite alone with her old nurse. Then Leander said joyfully that he knew the tower quite well. The sea by which it stood was merely a narrow strait called the Hellespont, and his own home was at Abydos, just across the water. He added that a strong swimmer, such as he, could swim across the strait, and that he intended to do so and to visit Hero in her tower every evening when she came home from the temple.

Hero trembled with joy, but also with fear. She knew that her father and mother, who meant her to spend her life weaving garlands and burning spices to please the Queen of Love, would never consent to her marriage with Leander. How could they know that it was Venus herself who had made their daughter fall so deeply in love with the youth from Abydos? Still, the maiden longed so greatly to see Leander again, to hold his hand and to hear his voice, that she consented to his plan. They parted with many kisses, and Hero promised that, the following evening, she would set a light in the window of her tower to guide Leander as he swam to visit her across the Hellespont.

All next day, in the temple, Hero thought of her lover, and was full of joy as she walked down
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to her tower by the sea. When the sun had set, and the dark sky was studded with silver stars, she looped back the curtain from the casement, and set her golden lamp upon the sill. Then she and the old nurse moved their spinning-wheel into the window, drew the thread from the distaff, and told each other that soon Leander would come.

On the farther shore, where the rocks stood dark and lonely, Leander was preparing for his long swim. He took off his rich robes and laid them where he could find them in the morning. Then, looking up into the sky, he saw the gleaming crescent moon that was the crown of Diana herself. So, with a whispered word of homage to all the Shining People of the Mountain, he lifted his arms high above his head, and dived, straight as an arrow, into the water.

The hours passed as he swam, and, all the time, Hero watched for him from her tower. At last, lifting his head as high as he could above the waves, he saw her light. With a cry of gladness, which only the sea-nymphs heard, he raised an arm and waved it in the air. Hero saw it, ran down the long staircase of the tower, and sped, fleet as a little fawn, to the dark beach. Leander called to her from the waves, close to shore, and she would have run straight into the water.
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to meet him if the old nurse had not held her back.

They had brought a beautiful dry robe for Leander, gleaming with bright embroidery, and soft and warm as silky wool. How Hero laughed, and clapped her hands, and sang for joy, as Leander shook the water from his eyes and hair. Then they went back to the tower, and the kind old nurse set fruits and cakes and wine before them, and they talked about their love for each other until the morning.

When the sky was rosy with dawn Leander said he must return to Abydos. So Hero and the nurse once more went down to the beach, and watched him plunge into the sea. Then they took the embroidered robe back to the tower, and hung it up, and Hero kissed it as they did so, for had it not been worn by Leander?

So, each night, Leander swam twice across the Hellespont, for love of beautiful Hero in her lonely tower.

But at last the summer, with its soft breezes, and calm seas, and silver moons, passed into autumn and winter, and the winds grew harsh and cold, and heavy clouds hung their long strands in the dreary sky. Leander found it more and more difficult to swim through the rough water, and on some nights he was obliged
to stay away from Hero altogether. Then a fiercer storm than ever arose, and raged for many days. Hero, sobbing, would set her light in the window; Leander, brave, yet almost hopeless, would dive into the sea, only to be beaten back to land. But, after a whole week of absence, he felt that, come what might, he must see Hero again, hold her hand, and hear her voice. With reckless courage he sprang into the wild water and fought his way through the waves until he was within sight of the shining lamp in the window. Then his strength failed him, and, calling aloud to Hero, he sank under the raging foam.

Hero had watched for so many nights that, overcome with weariness, she had fallen asleep. Suddenly she awoke with a start, and told her old nurse that she had dreamt she saw a dead dolphin thrown up by the sea upon the shore. The dream frightened her; and, hastily wrapping herself in a cloak, she ran down to the beach, and stood at the edge of the angry, tossing Hellespont.

As she stood there she heard the sad crying of the halcyons, the wild sea-birds who live in the furrows of the waves. Straining her eyes, she saw something in the spray that looked like Leander's form. With a low cry, Hero sprang
THE BRAVEST SWIMMER

into the water and tried to reach him. At last she caught his cold hands in hers, and threw her arms about him, and then she knew that he was drowned. Even while she strained him to her the sea drew her down, also, and her loving spirit left her body. The Shining People took it, together with the soul of Leander, to a beautiful place called the Elysian Fields, where the sun shines always and winter never comes at all.

There, in green meadows, Hero and Leander still tell each other of their love, among lilies that are as white as the sea-spray itself, while the gentle sounds of warm rivers fill the calm air, and make them forget the raging of the cold and cruel sea.
ONE of the handsomest, cleverest and bravest princes of those wonderful days was called Theseus. His father, who was a great king, was obliged to leave his little son to be brought up entirely by the Queen; while he himself went away to rule over his kingdom of Athens. But, before he started, he lifted a big rock, and placed his sword and sandals beneath it. Then he told the Queen that, as soon as Theseus was big and strong enough to raise the stone, he must take the sword in his hand, fasten the sandals on his feet, and set off to join his royal father at the court in the city.

Well, little Theseus grew up, and one day his mother led him to the stone and asked him if he thought he could lift it. Easily the young prince raised the big rock—and there lay the sword and sandals! Delighted at her son’s strength, the Queen told him why they had been left there, and to whom they belonged. So Theseus fastened the sword to his side, the sandals on his feet, and
"Easily the young prince raised the big rock—and there lay the sword and sandals!"
set off immediately, as his father had commanded.

He had all sorts of adventures on the way, and began to find out that he was both stronger and cleverer than even the giants he met in the mountains, who did their best to kill him. However, Theseus killed them instead, and went on, stepping as bravely and proudly as a young stag over the hills. When he reached Athens he was welcomed with great joy by his father, and took his place at court as the King's only son and heir.

A short time after he had arrived at the fine city he heard, one morning, people sobbing and crying in the street below his window. When he asked what was the matter he was told that this was the saddest day in the year for the people of Athens. In a distant island lived a wicked king who had once conquered them in battle, and, as the result of his victory, they were obliged every year to send him a present of seven fair maidens and seven handsome youths. If these beautiful boys and girls had been meant for slaves it would have been sad enough, but they were meant for something much, much worse! The enemy king kept a horrible monster in the island, called the Minotaur, which was half a man and half a wild, fierce bull. It lived on human beings, and the youths and maidens were given to this terrible creature to eat!
Theseus stood up, squared his shoulders, and lifted high his proud, young head. Here was an adventure after his own heart! He remembered the giants he had killed when they tried to bar his way to Athens. How much finer would it be to go with the seven youths and seven maidens to the distant island, and to slay the Minotaur!

Girding on his sword, he strode into his father's presence, and announced what he meant to do. In vain he was told that such an idea was madness; the Minotaur would kill and eat him as if he were a little mouse in the jaws of a lion. Theseus only laughed at the fears of his father and the courtiers, bade them good-bye, and set off in a big black-sailed vessel with the weeping, trembling maidens and youths.

They reached the island after some days, and were taken at once into the presence of the wicked King. By his side stood the sweetest Princess Theseus had ever seen in his life. She looked sadly at the bright-haired boys and girls who were to meet so dreadful a fate. Her eyes filled with tears; and, as her lids closed to hide the drops, Theseus thought they were as pretty as white rose-petals folding over dew. Her face, too, was like a flower in the dark mass of her hair. It was no wonder he fell in love with her.

Her name was Ariadne—a name as soft and
“Up sprang Icarus, like a lark, and soon found himself winging his way through the air.”
THE MONSTER IN THE MAZE

sweet as herself. With his glances continually turning upon her, Theseus stood out in front of his companions. Bowing courteously to the King, he made his request, which was that he should be the first victim to be thrown to the dreadful beast.

The King laughed scornfully. He had just come from the banqueting-table, where he was holding a feast in memory of his victory. He told Theseus that he might certainly have his wish. Then he went back to his plates of rich meats and his goblets of sparkling wine. Theseus, however, was put in prison for the night, in case he should change his mind and try to run away.

The sun sank and the bright stars came out in the sky, while Theseus sat alone in the dark prison. Then, among the shadows, all at once he saw the dim figure of sweet Ariadne, who had stolen from the palace and persuaded the prison-guards to let her pass. Whispering to him to keep very still, she gave him a sharp sword and a ball of string. The sword was a magical weapon, and was the only sword in the world that could kill the Minotaur. But what was the use of the ball of string?

Well, you must know that the Minotaur was so dangerous that it had to have the strongest den that was ever made in the world. This den was
THE MONSTER IN THE MAZE

called the Labyrinth, and it was formed of hundreds of passages carved in the rocks, which ran in and out of each other and criss-crossed, and wound about, far worse than any puzzle. It had been planned and arranged by a very clever architect, who had been helped by his son, Icarus. The wicked King, determined that so clever an architect must remain in the island, would not give him a ship in which to sail away. But the architect collected all the feathers he could find that had belonged to the great mountain-birds, and, fastening them together with wax, made wings for himself and his son, Icarus. Then, fitting one pair to the young man’s shoulders, he told him to fly up, out of the valley where they stood, into the blue sky overhead. He added that, in a minute or two, when he had fitted on his own wings, he would follow.

Up sprang Icarus, like a lark, and soon found himself winging his way through the air. But he was so pleased with his accomplishment that he forgot his wings were only fastened together with wax, and flew too near the sun. The heat melted the wax, and down, down, down fell poor Icarus, into the sea, where the sea-nymphs found his body and sang sad songs about him for many a day afterwards. But his father, who was older and wiser, did not forget how easily wax
THE MONSTER IN THE MAZE

melted, and, keeping well away from the sun, flew home in safety.

Theseus, however, had to go into the Labyrinth without any wings, not even wings fastened together with wax. At dawn next day the guards came to fetch him and led him to the entrance of this strange, deep den. And now you have guessed the reason for Ariadne’s gift of the ball of twine! The brave young Prince carefully fastened one end to the entrance of the maze, and then plunged boldly into the narrow passages, unwinding the string as he went!

On and on marched the hero, sword in one hand, string in the other. Presently he heard strange growlings in the distance, low and deep. If you have ever heard a very angry bull roar deep in its throat, that would be just the sort of sound made by the Minotaur. Heaps of bones lay all round, too, for the monster only ate the nicest portions of its victims. Then, blocking up the whole passage, Theseus caught sight of a great dark form, with horns on its head and hair on its neck, and with angry red eyes—a form that stood upright as if it had the legs of a man. With a loud bellow, it sprang upon the Prince. And Theseus nearly fell with the shock, though he met it with the point of his magical sword.

What a fight he had, in that deep, dark den,
“They suddenly caught sight of poor, lost, weeping Ariadne.”
THE MONSTER IN THE MAZE

with the horrible Minotaur! The passages echoed from end to end with roars and trampling. But at last Theseus triumphed. Deep into the heart of the great beast went Ariadne's sword. The Minotaur gave a worse bellow than ever, sank down in its blood, and died.

Off, then, went Theseus, hurrying down the rocky corridors, following the string with which he had marked his way. How glad he was to leave the dark shadows of the Labyrinth, and to be out once more in the sunshine. Away to the beach he hastened, where pretty Ariadne had joined the youths and maidens in the ship with the black sails. Springing on board, Theseus made the sailors pull up the anchor and head the vessel to the wind. And so, with songs of joy and shouts of triumph, they all set off home for Athens, to give the good news to their own king.

Yet Theseus, though he had fallen so deeply in love with Ariadne, never married her after all. A dream came flying to him from the dark cave decked with poppies, where all dreams lived in those days, and told him that Ariadne was to be the bride of one of the Shining People themselves. When the Prince woke up and remembered what the dream had whispered in his ear he no longer dared to think of Ariadne as his wife. One day, therefore, he left her fast asleep on an island;
THE MONSTER IN THE MAZE

and who do you think came to her and kissed away her tears when she opened her eyes and found herself alone?

Why, none other than Bacchus himself, who had sailed that way after his adventure with the pirates, which you have already heard related. He and his merry friends landed at the island, where they often held their banquets; and they were dancing, laughing and singing across the hill-tops when they suddenly caught sight of poor, lost, weeping Ariadne. Bacchus was so charming to her, and told her so much about his carriage drawn by wild beasts and his beautiful home among the dewy vines, that, by and by, she forgot Theseus and allowed herself to be quite comforted by this gay and handsome Immortal, who was, after all, a fairy Prince, instead of a mere human Prince of Athens. So they were married, very grandly indeed, and the bridegroom gave the bride a crown made of seven real stars, finer than the finest tiara any human being could have presented to her. They loved each other so deeply and faithfully that Jupiter turned Ariadne into an Immortal, while her crown was taken and hung up in the sky. And there it hangs to this day.

As for Theseus, he got safely home again, but a sad thing happened on the way. He had
THE MONSTER IN THE MAZE

promised his father that, if he succeeded in killing the Minotaur, he would change his black sails into white. As his ship neared his own country, however, he was so busy thinking of his fight with the monster, and wondering if Ariadne would be happy among the Shining People, that he forgot all about the sails! The King was watching from the cliffs, and when he saw the ship come over the water like a black-winged bird of ill omen, he made sure his son was dead and, in his sorrow, threw himself into the sea.

Theseus was dreadfully grieved at being made King of Athens in this sad fashion. He tried to make up for it in every way, and ruled so well and wisely that people for generations after spoke of his brave deeds, his kingly wisdom and his kindness to all who asked for his protection.
THE PRINCESS AND THE SEA-MONSTER

In one of the countries which Perseus had passed as he flew to the land of the Gorgons lived a King and Queen who had a most beautiful daughter, called Andromeda. They loved her better than anything in the world, and the Queen was so proud of her that she said she was fairer than all the fairies of the mountains and the nymths of the sea put together. This boast was overheard by the sea-nymphs, and they were very angry indeed. So they persuaded Neptune, who was King of the Sea, just as Jupiter was King of Olympus, to send a great monster, like a scaly water-dragon, out of the caves at the bottom of the ocean, to eat up everybody it could catch and hold in its terrible claws.

One night, therefore, a sad outcry was heard among the fishermen on the beach. They said that, as they were setting their nets, they had seen the king of the sea-serpents come swirling out of the waves in the moonlight, and return to the sea, carrying a fair maiden in its wicked
THE PRINCESS AND THE SEA-MONSTER

mouth. This happened again the next night, and the next, and the next.

After several weeks of the terror, the people of the country said that there must be some reason for Neptune sending them so terrible a curse. So they consulted a wise woman who lived in a temple specially built for her, and who could answer nearly any question that anybody liked to ask. She told them that all the trouble had come about through the Queen’s foolish boast, and that the sea-monster would go on stealing and eating the people of the country until the beautiful Princess Andromeda was given up to him.

What a dreadful thing for the King and Queen to be told! They declared that nothing would make them give up Andromeda. But the people, who were losing their pretty daughters and their sons night after night, said that it was a case of sacrificing one maiden in order to save hundreds of others. So they went to the Palace in a big procession, tied poor Andromeda’s hands behind her, singing songs to Neptune, but at the same time crying almost as bitterly over their sweet Princess as did the King and Queen, and marched down to the sea in the evening. There they chained her to a big rock at the edge of the water, put wreaths of flowers round her
THE PRINCESS AND THE SEA-MONSTER

white neck and upon her fair hair, and left her.

At that very moment, Perseus, in his bright armour, with the plumed helmet on his head, and the golden wings on his heels, came flying along the rosy clouds of the sunset, carrying Medusa's head.

He heard the sorrowful chanting of the procession, and saw the poor, beautiful figure chained to the rock, with the waves of the incoming tide already washing round her arms and shoulders, and swaying her long, wet hair, with the flowers in it, up and down in the curling foam. Down he flew, like a sea-bird, and half-stood, half-floated, on the water. Then he saw a wild swirling and billowing a little way off in the ocean, and the scaly back and great jaws of the monster, which came swimming through the sea towards Andromeda. It rose up from the water, and on to it swept Perseus, like an eagle upon a hare, and struck the scaly neck with his sword. The monster turned upon him with a roar, and they fought until the sea was churned into froth and the wings on the Prince's feet were as heavy with foam as the petals of a flower are heavy with dew. He sprang, then, upon a little rock to drive the finishing blow right through the monster's heart. The great beast gave a shudder
THE PRINCESS AND THE SEA-MONSTER

that shook the whole bay like an earthquake, and slowly stiffened, and stiffened, and stiffened in the water. Before long it had sunk, dead, below the surface, and nothing could be seen of it but what looked like a long low ridge of rock just showing above the ripples, as if the creature had been turned into stone by Medusa’s face and hair.

Perseus laid the Gorgon’s head aside for a moment, among the sea-weeds, that he might cleanse his hands and sword. The sea-weed turned into coral on the spot, to the great surprise of the sea-nymphs, when they found the pretty pink sprays of this new stuff. Springing again to Andromeda’s side, he cut her chains, and carried her to land, while she clung to him as if she would never let him go. The people had seen all that happened from the shore, and when Perseus restored the Princess to the delighted King and Queen they said, in their joy and thankfulness, that he, and he alone, was worthy to become Andromeda’s husband.

The Princess was only too pleased to marry the brave and handsome Prince who had saved her, and everything was arranged for an immediate wedding. The banquets were spread, the palace was decked with flowers, and the minstrels brought out their golden harps for the songs
and dances. But just as everybody was sitting down to the feast, a noise of armed steps and clashing swords was heard outside the palace, and strided another lover of Andromeda, called Phineus. He declared that Andromeda was engaged to him, and that he had come with his soldiers to kill Perseus and to carry away his bride.

Armed followers surrounded him, and it looked as if there were going to be a great battle. But Perseus made the King and Queen, the Princess, and everybody else, stand behind him. Then he went alone towards Phineus, and, drawing his sword with one hand, drew Medusa's head out of his bag with the other. Holding it high in the air, he mockingly told Phineus to step forward and win the Princess in single fight. Everybody expected Phineus to spring upon the laughing Prince, but the boasting lover who had come to claim Andromeda neither moved nor spoke. He had been instantly turned into stone, and all his soldiers with him!

Then the wedding feast was begun afresh, and finished with great shouting and songs of joy. Princess Andromeda bade a happy good-bye to her father and mother, and went away with her golden-haired bridegroom to be introduced to his mother, Danaë, who was still in the country
"The Monster came swimming through the sea towards Andromeda."
THE PRINCESS AND THE SEA-MONSTER

where Perseus had grown up. How happy Danaë was to see her son again; how proud when he told her that, in his bag, he had the Gorgon’s head; and, above all, how overjoyed to welcome such a beautiful Princess as her daughter-in-law!

But the King of the country had never given Danaë a happy moment since her son had left her on his dangerous task. When Perseus heard how unhappy his mother had been made all the time he was very angry. He went to the King and rebuked him severely. But the King only laughed at him and once more said he would not let Perseus dictate to him unless he brought him Medusa’s head.

He had no idea, you see, that Perseus had already killed the Gorgon. But, when the King spoke in this way, Perseus instantly pulled the head out of the bag. The King, looking at it, turned straightway into a rock, where he sat on his throne, and a rock he remains to this very day.

Then Perseus took his mother and his wife home to his grandfather’s country, and, making friends with the father of Danaë, who was by now a very old man, lived happily with him for many years.

But, strange to say, as had been foretold, the
THE PRINCESS AND THE SEA-MONSTER

bright-haired Prince did really kill his grandfather, quite accidentally, for a quoit with which the Prince was playing one day hit the poor old man on the head. Perseus was very much grieved about it, and he and his mother mourned the King faithfully. However, Perseus was ruler of the country now, so he mounted the throne, and reigned long and happily over his own land. As for Medusa's head, he gave it to Minerva, who set it in the middle of the shield which she had lent to him; and there it was always to be seen when Minerva flew to earth to help the heroes whom she loved.

And of course he returned the wings to Mercury, and sent the helmet back to Pluto, with many thanks to the dark King of the Underworld.

There were many brave, bright princes in those days, but the Immortals loved none of them better than the one who had been born a little golden-haired baby in the tower built of brass.
THE STRONG MAN AND HIS WONDERFUL DEEDS

ONE bright morning a little baby woke very early, wondering what in the world had climbed into his cradle.

Opening his eyes, he saw two enormous serpents that were just going to eat him up, while his nurse sat by, stiff with horror. But this extraordinary baby only gave a shout of amusement, caught the snakes, one in each hand, as if they had been paper toys, and strangled them to death. Then he sat up on his pillows, and looked round complacently; while his mother, who had darted in, shrieked for help, and his father rushed through the doorway, brandishing his sword.

The baby, whose name was Hercules, grew up, and, as was only to be expected, turned out to be the strongest man in the whole world. When he was a boy, his parents sent him into the woods to the school of Chiron, the wise old centaur, who taught him that he must always use his
"This extraordinary baby only gave a shout of amusement, caught the snakes, one in each hand, as if they had been paper toys, and strangled them to death."
strength a right. However, in spite of this, Hercules sometimes did wrong things. He had a very hot temper; and, when he was in a rage, would strike the people who vexed him. He even killed some of them with his heavy fist, or did them serious harm in other ways. And at last the Immortals—who loved this strong man, and wished him to become a true hero—told him that he could only gain forgiveness for his acts of passion and fury if he became the slave of his cousin, the King, and did whatever that monarch commanded him.

Hercules, who was really very sorry that he had such a terrible temper, sadly and humbly consented. He went to the King where he sat on his golden throne, and offered himself as a slave, and the King, in accepting the offer, said he must perform twelve great and difficult deeds; after which he should again be free.

The strong man agreed to this. Then he was told to go to a far-away forest and kill a terrible lion that was the dread of all the people for miles around. Instantly Hercules took his bow and arrows, and set off in search of the lion. On his way he thought he would like a second weapon, so he pulled up an olive-tree by the roots, lopped off its head, and turned it into a mighty club. Armed with the club and the bow,
he reached the borders of the forest, and strode, like a new kind of giant, through the trees, his strong naked feet crushing down the ferns and flowers.

Suddenly a loud roar came from a thicket close at hand, and out rushed the largest and fiercest lion that ever was seen. It sprang at the throat of Hercules, but he hit it on the head with the olive club. Then, when the lion sank to the ground, he dropped the club, and seizing the struggling beast round the neck, choked it to death, just as he had choked the serpents, with his bare hands. After which he took its sharp claws, and, with them, skinned the dead body where it lay on the moss. Then he put the skin round his shoulders, and placed the head on his curly hair, as if it had been a crown. So, looking very like a lion himself, he strode back to the city and once more entered the presence of the King.

But his Majesty was so terrified when he saw his awful-looking cousin that, with a cry of fear, he sprang into a large brass jar and stayed there, commanding Hercules, in future, to remain outside the city and to take his orders from one of the sentries, or generals, or courtiers—from anybody in fact, but the King himself. With some scorn, Hercules received the next command.
“Hercules, however, sprang to the ground and rushed towards the monster, waving his great gleaming sword.”
THE STRONG MAN AND HIS DEEDS

This was to destroy a horrible seven-headed serpent, like a dragon, which lived in a lonely marsh, and did even more harm than the lion had done. Fearlessly, the fine and brave hero set off then in search of the serpent, while the King, greatly relieved by his departure, hopped out of the jar.

This time Hercules drove in a chariot, with his nephew as coachman on the box. Also he carried a very sharp sword. Presently they reached the marsh where the monster lived; and by and by, among the tall, rank bulrushes, they saw a strange, scaly head, with bright, wicked eyes moving and waving about. Then another head appeared—and another, and another, and another! The next minute out came a great long neck, to which all the seven heads were fastened; and at this sight the nephew of Hercules was so frightened that he wanted to drive away as fast as possible!

Hercules, however, sprang to the ground and rushed towards the monster, waving his great gleaming sword. The weapon gave a great twist and cut off the first head that it could reach with a single blow. But, to his horror, the bleeding stump instantly shot out seven more heads!

So now there were thirteen heads instead of seven, each of them with grinding jaws that...
THE STRONG MAN AND HIS DEEDS

wanted to eat the hero up! It would never do for this to go on; so Hercules hurried away to find his nephew—who had managed to go off alone and hide himself—and made him set a torch alight, and come back to face the growling, raging, thirteen-headed snake. And now, each time that Hercules cut off a head, the nephew—who was perhaps even more frightened of his amazing uncle than of the dragon—thrust the flaming brand into the wound, so that no more heads could grow out of it. In this way the huge serpent was killed at last: and Hercules, before he left the marshes which had been its home, gave all his arrows poisoned tips by dipping them in its blood.

Now, the lion and the dragon killed, Hercules must go on a lighter errand—yet one which had its own dangers. Over the hills lay a cold and snow-bound country, haunted by a fairy stag, with horns and hoofs of gold. This stag, also, must be brought as a gift to the King. Away went Hercules, stout-hearted and swift-footed, over the misty mountains, and up the precipices seamed with snow. There the stag lived in loneliness, visited, at times, by Diana herself, who would never have it hunted, for she loved the beautiful creature with its flashing hoofs and horns. You may guess how excited Hercules
THE STRONG MAN AND HIS DEEDS

was when he first came across the track of those bright feet in the snow! Far and wide he followed it, sometimes spending many days without seeing a trace of it, sometimes glimpsing its noble gold-antlered head through the mists, or against the grey and stormy sky. At last, one day, coming suddenly round a corner, he met the beautiful beast face to face! In a flash, it had turned and bounded away from him, but he set off at full speed in pursuit, drove it into a deep chasm where the snow lay thick and deep, and, seizing the animal by the antlers when it had gone too far into the drift to get out again, bound it with cords and, laying it across his mighty shoulders, carried it home in triumph.

After that, the King told Hercules to capture a great boar, which also lived among the snow-drifts of the mountains; this he caught and carried home just as he had caught and carried the stag. Then he was sent to clean out some stables, where three thousand cows were kept, and where no cowman had been with brush and shovel for more than thirty years! The stables belonged, not to a farmer, but to a King, who did not in the least mind them being so dirty, and who laughed heartily when Hercules came and offered to clean them out.

"Do it if you can," said the King; "should
you succeed I will give you three hundred cows for yourself!" So Hercules, who was never at a loss, set to work very cleverly. Two broad rivers flowed near the stables, and, by working all night, he managed to make a deep channel from one river to one door, and from the other river to the other door. Then he let the waters rush right through the stables, and the current was so strong that the stables were as clean as a new pin when he dammed up the channel again and cut the water off.

The next thing Hercules did was to catch and take home a mad bull, which, the moment it saw him, tried to toss him over its head as it had tossed hundreds of other men. How silly it must have felt when it was slung across the shoulders of Hercules as easily as if it had been a baby lamb! Then the King, his cousin—still keeping Hercules outside the royal gates, and with one eye always on the jar—told this terribly strong man to visit a neighbouring kingdom, where all strangers were given to the King's horses, who ate them up instead of hay! Hercules not only strode defiantly through the kingdom, but went into the stables, looked at the horses, and then coolly captured the King himself and put him into the manger of the fiercest mare among them, who instantly devoured her royal master;
THE STRONG MAN AND HIS DEEDS

which, you will agree, served him perfectly right! And, as there was nobody about now to teach the horses to eat human beings, they took to hay again, became kind and gentle, and, when Hercules set off for home, went with him as contentedly as a circus troupe.

Then Hercules fought a whole band of fierce women-soldiers called Amazons, and took away the jewelled girdle of their Queen; he killed an army of terrible birds whose wings grew brass arrows instead of feathers—and drove home a herd of shining, copper-coloured cattle as wonderful as those which belonged to Apollo, and tethered them safely in his cousin's pastures, where the whole world came to admire them. He went on a long, long journey, after some golden apples—and the story of those golden apples is so interesting that it will have to have a whole chapter to itself—and, last of all, he was told he was to go down into Pluto's kingdom, and to bring back the three-headed dog that barked and growled at the gates of the dim, dark garden that, for six months every year, waved its sad trees over the crowned hair of pretty Proserpine.

This was the worst task that had yet been set, but Hercules was still undaunted. He went off, quite alone, down the path that Psyche had
trodden, and had many adventures on the way. He even came face to face with dark Pluto himself, who angrily barred his passage until Hercules began shooting arrows at him, when Pluto gave in and ran away! At last he found the great dog, fought with it, conquered it, and slung it across his shoulders, where it barked and growled with all its three heads, and dropped purple nightshade from its foaming jaws, the whole of the way to the palace of the King. And, this time, Hercules insisted on striding right into the royal presence and flinging the raging dog down at the very foot of the throne!

You may imagine how terrified the King was! With a shriek of fear, he sprang into the brass jar. And there he would probably have stayed for ever if Hercules had not agreed to carry the dog straight back to Pluto’s kingdom, where it started barking and growling at the door again just as if it had never been away.

So Hercules finished the last of his labours and was set free. But nobody, from that day to this, has ever forgotten the wonderful things he did. His temper was never really quite cured, but in every other way he was so good and brave and noble that, when he died, Jupiter himself carried his soul away to Olympus to live with the Shining People for ever.
AMONG the pupils of Chiron was a prince called Jason, who had been put in the care of the wise old Centaur when he was not much more than a baby. He had a very wicked uncle, who had stolen the kingdom from Jason’s father, and set himself upon the throne. But little Jason was hidden in the forest-caves of those strange creatures, the Centaurs, who were half-horses, half-men. There Chiron played on a golden harp, and sang songs about the heroes of the earth. Under his care Jason grew up strong and fearless, able to wrestle and to run and hunt with the best of the young princes. When he had grown into a vigorous youth, Chiron disclosed to him who he was, and said he must go into his own country and recover the lost kingdom for his father.

So one morning Jason set off through the woods, a panther-skin thrown over one shoulder, a hunting spear in his right hand. Singing gaily, he strode down the glades until he came to a
THE GOLDEN FLEECE

river, swollen and rapid with rain. On the bank sat a poor, ragged old woman, looking despairingly at the rushing brown water, all creamy with foam. Jason spoke to her kindly, asking if she wanted to get to the other side.

"Indeed I do," she answered, "but how can an old body like myself wade through such a torrent?"

"Certainly you cannot," answered Jason, "but I am young and strong. I will carry you."

On to his shoulders he hoisted the old dame, ragged cloak and all, and into the river he plunged. She held him so tightly round the neck that Jason thought she would throttle him, but he struggled on, losing one of his sandals in the mud and stones. At last, out of breath, he reached the other side. The old woman slid from his shoulders and he saw her feet touch the ground, where, to his amazement, they showed white and beautiful, and bound with gems, among the violets and daffodils.

Then he caught the fragrance of myrrh and roses, and felt the soft touch of a gossamer veil. Bewildered, he looked into the beggar's face. Behold, her skin was delicate and her eyes as blue as the sky! In her hand was a wand with a golden cuckoo perched on top; by her side a royal peacock spread its spangled tail. It was
"It was Juno herself he had carried across the stream."
THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Juno, herself, whom he had carried across the stream.

"Jason," said she, smiling, "you are good as well as handsome. What you have done for an old woman the Queen of Olympus will not forget!" Then, all at once, a car drawn by golden-winged dragons glittered through the white cherry-trees. She mounted it, and, in a flash, was gone.

Jason, full of wonder, went on, one foot bare, the other still bound with a sandal. He came to a great city, and walked down streets paved with marble. This was the royal city of the kingdom to which he was heir. Looking upon its beauty, he clenched his hand, and vowed that his uncle should restore it to its rightful king.

By and by, he saw a magnificent procession coming down a great flight of steps; and in the middle was his wicked uncle himself. The Prince pushed forward eagerly to get a better sight, and the King saw the stranger in the crowd. He started and turned pale, staring at the feet of his unknown nephew. In his ears rang the memory of a warning he had received years before:

"Beware of the man who will come to you with only one sandal!"

The King made a sign, and his guards seized
THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Jason and held him fast, while his uncle, staring at him fixedly, asked who he was.

"I am Jason, the son of your brother, and I have come to claim my father’s kingdom," was the youth’s brave reply.

The King went still paler. He would have liked to order Jason’s head to be cut off, but he dared not. Instead, he pretended to be glad to see him, and invited him to the palace to a feast that was about to be held. So Jason joined the procession, and presently found himself in the royal home where he had been born.

Everybody sat down to the banquet, which was very wonderful. Beautiful maidens served wine in golden goblets; pretty pages burnt perfumes on amber stands; and minstrels played on silver harps. Jason was soon quite excited with these new sights and sounds; but nothing excited him so much as the songs of heroes that the harpists sang.

The wicked uncle was watching all the time, furtively and sombrely, wondering how he could get rid of him. At last, with his white jewelled hand, he made a sign to the chief minstrel. All the other harps were hushed; the servers of the feast drew aside; and the chief minstrel, striking his strings, began to fill the hall with his melody.

A wonderful song he sang, how, at a King’s
THE GOLDEN FLEECE

court, in the long-ago, lived a little maiden and a fair-haired youth, both of royal blood. Their father, the King, loved them; but the Queen, their stepmother, looked at them with cold and jealous eyes. He sang how this cruel Queen plotted and planned against the sweet young princess and her brother, and at last had the pair taken to a high hill to be put to death. He sang, how, as they stood there, bound and helpless, suddenly a bright, strange creature appeared before them, a sheep in form, but with wings and fleece of radiant gold. It took them upon its back, their bonds fell off, and away it flew with them over land and sea, towards a country far away. The Prince hung on tightly, but the poor little Princess grew frightened as they sped over the dark waters; losing her grasp of the golden fleece, she fell into the waves, where the sea-nymphs took care of her ever afterwards. He sang how the beautiful creature set the Prince on the shore of the far country, and how the Prince took its golden fleece and hung it up in a deep glade; while its kindly spirit flew away to the flowery meadows of the Elysian Fields, and lived on golden buttercups and silver daisies, such as all good animals eat when they go to those immortal pastures. And then the minstrel's voice grew even sweeter and
THE GOLDEN FLEECE

clearer as he sang of the Golden Fleece that still hung on the oak-tree in the dim glade, of the dragon who had been set to guard it, and of the heroes who had died in trying to secure it and bring it back again to Greece.

All the time the King was watching Jason from under his eyelids. When the singer began about the heroes the young man’s eyes commenced to glisten. He tightened his grip on his goblet as if he were holding a sword. Louder and louder sang the minstrel; ever more eager grew the Prince’s face. At last he could contain himself no longer. He sprang to his feet, and raised his voice above the clear notes of the song.

“Sing no more of the heroes who have failed!” he cried. “You shall soon sing of one who succeeded, for I—I—Jason, Prince of this country, will go in search of the Golden Fleece!”

Then the wicked uncle’s smile shone out in triumph, for this was just what he had wanted. He sent heralds north and south, east and west, to sound the news that Jason was going in search of the Golden Fleece, and to ask what heroes would be brave enough to accompany him—thinking that every one of them would certainly be killed by the dragon if ever they reached the enchanted glade. But, while the heralds were
"Crying out joyfully, Orpheus tried to catch it in his arms."
speeding through the land with their trumpets, Jason stole off to a quiet grove where Juno could sometimes be found, and, kneeling before an oak-tree, begged the Queen of Olympus to remember the old woman whom he had carried across the river.

Behold, the oak-tree began to talk to him in Juno’s own voice. It told him to take one of its boughs, and to make a ship’s figure-head from the wood, through the mouth of which Juno would always answer his questions and give him advice. So Jason broke off a bough, all covered with green leaves, took it away, and set it at the bows of a fine ship which had been built for him from mountain-pines by a man called Argus. The ship was named the Argo, after him; and the heroes who came at the call of the heralds to set sail in her were called the Argonauts, a word which means sailors of the Argo.

Such a band of heroes never met together before or since, unless it were before the walls of Troy. Theseus came, bright and brave in kingly armour, followed by Hercules, lion-skin, club, and all. Then there rose a great clattering of hoofs, and down pranced two magnificent white horses, carrying two riders bright as stars. These were Castor and Pollux, twins who had been hatched, together with a little sister, out of a
THE GOLDEN FLEECE

swan's egg. By and by wonderful music sounded far off in the woodlands and everybody looked up from examining the Argo, and faced towards the sound.

Then strange things began to happen on the beach. The little pebbles, and the big stones, and the bigger rocks, all began to dance to the tune that the unseen harpist was playing. The waves sparkled as the fishes' heads peeped up—and the fishes were dancing, too! Presently flowers of all kinds, lilies, violets and crocuses, came delicately down the glades, making fragrant steps and perfumed motions under the trees. Then the trees themselves drew their roots from the ground and began to move in company. In this way, surrounded by circling greenery and arched swinging boughs, with blossoms trailing about his feet, and white clouds softly floating round his head, came Orpheus, prince of minstrels, whose music drew every living thing to follow the sound.

Long, long afterwards, Orpheus loved and married a maiden called Eurydice, who was carried away into the underworld to Proserpine's garden. But Orpheus followed her there, and played to Proserpine so beautifully that the little Queen persuaded the dark King to let Eurydice go, on the one condition that Orpheus
THE GOLDEN FLEECE

never looked back at her as she followed him down the shadowy road back to the light. Orpheus promised, and set off home, with Eurydice, pale and silent, just behind. So soft and soundless were her footsteps that Orpheus could hardly believe she was really following, and when they were very near the gate that led back to earth he broke his promise, and turned round to look.

A shrouded form was just behind, and, crying out joyfully, he tried to catch it in his arms. But instantly it vanished. He had broken his promise, and Eurydice had gone back to Proserpine's garden for evermore.

That, however, was not until long after the day when Orpheus came, playing his harp, down to the sunlit beach, and, springing on board the Argo with all the other heroes, made the loveliest of music for them as the big ship sailed from the shore; while the flowers danced back to the woods, and the fishes to their homes among the rocks and caves.

So the Argonauts set off, and in another story you shall hear how Jason found and carried home the Golden Fleece from the enchanted glade.
THE SECRET OF THE CASKET

YOU have heard that some of the Shining People could be very jealous. Even Jupiter himself used to get quite angry if he thought that anyone, whether mortal or Immortal, was receiving too much admiration and praise. So, knowing that a certain man, called Prometheus, was very great and wise, the King of Olympus kept a careful eye on him, and was always ready to interfere if Prometheus in any way usurped the royal power. Prometheus, for his part, was too busy teaching other people all he knew to give much thought to Jupiter’s jealousy. He was like a clever giant among men, and cared for nothing but making everybody happier and wiser than they had been before.

There was one thing that, above all the rest, Prometheus wanted to present to mankind—and that was the gift of fire. He knew all about it, and the wonderful things that could be done with it. He knew that the sun itself was a ball of this beautiful and flaming mystery, which
"Pandora could restrain herself no longer."
THE SECRET OF THE CASKET

Apollo drove daily across the sky in his jewelled car drawn by glittering, winged horses. Prometheus knew, too, that there was fire in the high stars, and in the heart of the smoking volcanoes. But on the Earth itself, in the homes and workshops of men, there was no fire; for Jupiter hid the secret of it, and would never tell any mortal how to produce even one little tongue of living, leaping flame.

The big generous giant was quite aware that it was of no use to ask Jupiter to reveal this great secret; for Jupiter’s jealousy would make him refuse at once. But Prometheus was a friend of Minerva’s, and he begged that beautiful and kindly lady to show him the way to Olympus. She admired him so much that she could never refuse him anything; so, one dark night, she led him up the rocky path towards the Shining Palace, the mortal wrapped in his dark, warm cloak, the Immortal sending little shafts of light through the dim trees from the glittering of her bright armour.

As they went, Prometheus stooped and gathered a fennel stalk, long and hollow, and placed it in his bosom, under his mantle. Then on they moved, through the dark pine-woods, past the rushing mountain streams, up, up, up, towards the palace among the snows and the stars.
Presently the stranger caught a glimpse of the bright halls where the nymphs danced, and the nine Muses sang, and the Immortals laughed and talked at their banqueting-tables. Here, while the earth below was so cold and gloomy, was a delightful warmth and light. On silent feet Prometheus, in his dark mantle, drew nearer and nearer to the Shining People's home, while Minerva pointed, in pride, to one or another wonder. At last he was within full view of the long, beautiful rooms, with their aisles of golden pillars that Vulcan had made, and saw, not only the pillars, but the magical throne, and the tall tripods from which gold and silver vases hung. Above all, he saw the exquisite stands for the flaming torches, and the jewelled lamps in which glowed the radiance of that living fire which he was risking so much to carry away.

Even as Prometheus stood, marvelling, in the doorway, there came a tread of spirited horses, a blinding flash of wheels, and up drove Apollo in his glorious car. In an instant Prometheus shot out his hand, and, from the chariot, stole one splendid jewel of light. Down in the hollow stem of the fennel stalk he hid it, placed the stalk in his breast, folded his mantle tightly about it, and fled away, afraid lest even Minerva should see what he had done. As fast as feet
THE SECRET OF THE CASKET
could carry him, he sped down the steep slopes of Olympus back to earth, breathless with anxiety lest the flame in the jewel should die out before he reached the valley. But the fennel stalk guarded well the little treasure of fire that had been entrusted to it. Prometheus arrived at his home, drew the precious stem from below his mantle, and setting light to a torch which stood upon a high stand, let the flame shine forth on earth like a new and wonderful star.

That same night Jupiter, looking down upon the shadowy world from the bright glories of Olympus, saw little jewels of light peeping here and there, just as you may see the lamps glowing in distant windows nowadays when twilight falls. The King of the Shining People started with surprise, and stared more closely. Then, all at once, he knew what had happened! He knew, too, that only Prometheus would have dared to pass the doors of the sacred palace, and to steal the stuff of which the sun was made—the sacred fire that belonged to the Immortals alone.

Jupiter was, oh, so angry with the fearless mortal who had carried to earth the greatest secret of Olympus. He sent in hot haste for Vulcan, who had always used fire himself in the workshop where he had made his golden ladies. He was to make another lady now, said Jupiter,
THE SECRET OF THE CASKET

but not of gold. She was to be formed of delicate and beautiful clay, and was to have a face as fair as a wood-nymph’s and a voice as sweet as Apollo’s lyre. All the Shining People were to present her with some gift of charm or beauty. In fact, she was to be a sort of fairy princess; and, when she was finished, he would tell the Immortals what he meant to do with her.

So Vulcan limped off between his golden ladies to make the nymph the King had ordered. He moulded the most beautiful maiden that had ever been seen; and he gave her the loveliest face and the sweetest voice on Olympus—let alone on the earth that lay so far below. Then Minerva, who could make all kinds of exquisite embroideries, although she was dressed in armour herself, robed this fair being in a gown worthy of a Queen, and hung a veil about her hair that was a marvel to look upon. Bright blossoms garlanded it, and it was held in place by a magnificent crown. Venus—forgetting her occasional jealousy of a beautiful woman—gave the maiden every charm she could think of; and Mercury taught her gaiety and laughter, and merry, delicate speech. While all the Shining Ones were admiring the beautiful lady, Jupiter spoke from his royal throne, and commanded
THE SECRET OF THE CASKET

Mercury to take her down to earth, and present her to Epimetheus, the brother of Prometheus, to be his wife.

At the same time the King of Olympus gave Mercury a most exquisitely ornamented casket. This carved and jewelled box was, said he, to be taken to earth by the maiden, and left in her charge. But she was to be told that on no account was she ever to raise the lid. Then, having given this order, Jupiter said that the maiden was to be called Pandora, which means the “All-Endowed”; and he settled himself to wait while Mercury went down to earth with Pandora and the mysterious box.

Down, down, down they went, along the very path by which Prometheus had come up. Presently, in a glade of oak-trees, they found the house of Epimetheus. Mercury knocked at the door with his golden wand and Epimetheus opened it at once. He recognized the winged messenger of the Shining People immediately; but, of course, he was a good deal surprised to see the lovely maiden in the golden crown and silver wedding veil, all garlanded with the flowers of the Immortals, with, apparently, the rest of her luggage in a beautifully ornamented box at her feet.

However, when Mercury informed him that
THE SECRET OF THE CASKET

this fair creature's name was Pandora, and that Jupiter had had her made on purpose to be his wife, Epimetheus accepted her without hesitation, as, indeed, who would not? Taking her indoors with him, he began to admire her lovely complexion, her bright eyes, her charming smile, and her delicately embroidered robes. The box, however, he took away from her and set in the corner; for Mercury, before he left, had repeated Jupiter's orders that, on no account, was either of the happy pair to lift the lid.

Well, Epimetheus and Pandora settled down together as cheerily as possible. Pandora found life on earth quite delightful, her husband was so fond of her and they had so many friends. She had not a single wish ungratified—save one! That one wish was a consuming, overwhelming desire to know what was inside the box!

Day after day the desire grew till, at last, she could hardly attend to anything. She was always pausing in her work to stare at the mysterious casket in the corner of the room, which was tied up securely with a golden cord. Epimetheus scolded her more than once for her curiosity; but he could not cure her. And at last, one day when her husband had gone from home, Pandora could restrain herself no longer. She seized the box, pulled off the golden cord, raised the lid,
THE SECRET OF THE CASKET

and prepared, in the greatest of haste, to examine whatever was hidden inside.

Alas, poor Pandora! She soon knew the secret! Out from the box, with a buzz of wings, flew hundreds of the strangest little brown creatures, like moths, with the stings of wasps or bees. They settled on her neck and arms, and stung her heartily, before they flew off, in a cloud, out of the window! Meeting Epimetheus just outside, they stung him as well; so that he rushed into his house, calling out to know what was the matter. There, in the middle of the room, guilty and sobbing, stood Pandora. With one hand she was rubbing her stings; with the other, too late, she was holding down the lid of the box.

You see, Jupiter had known this would happen. It was his revenge on Prometheus for stealing the fire. The strange brown insects were the dreadful and nasty things that are so disagreeable in the world to-day; things like measles, and whooping-cough, and unkind stories, and sums that won't come right, and dangerously thin ice when you want to skate on the pond. Worse things than these, too, flew out when Pandora opened the box. And Jupiter smiled most unkindly as he sat on his throne, and declared that it served everybody right.
THE SECRET OF THE CASKET

While Epimetheus scolded his poor, beautiful wife, and Pandora continued to sob, suddenly both of them heard a low sweet murmuring coming from inside the box. Pandora stopped crying, and Epimetheus stopped scolding, to listen. This is what they heard:

"Let me out, too! Let me out, too! Let me out, too! I am not anything disagreeable, but the sweetest gift that was ever made to man! Only let me out, and I will tell you my name, and you will understand!"

Pandora and Epimetheus looked at each other. Then, very cautiously, Pandora lifted the lid of the casket once more. There was a flash of wings, a little song of delight, and a glimpse of a lovely small being with shining eyes and hair. Out of the window the delicate little creature sped, like a glittering humming-bird. For a moment it hung among the climbing roses, a tiny jewelled form, sparkling and beautiful. Then it sped away into the world beyond, and Pandora and Epimetheus just caught the echo of its last words as it went:

"My name is Hope."

So, you see, although Pandora did let loose everything that is disagreeable in life, she set Hope free, as well. And Hope is the very sweetest thing on earth.
"There in the silence of the woods Medea would stand."
THE MAGIC OF THE HERBS

In that far country to which Jason and his band of heroes set off in their great ship with its fifty oars lived a mighty King and his beautiful daughter, Medea. This Princess was dark-haired, and dark-browed, and her wonderful eyes were as full of mystery as the peat-pools which lie black and still on mountain moors. She knew many, many secrets that the earth hid from other people; and she would go fearlessly, at night, through the Enchanted Glade where the Golden Fleece gave out its mysterious light among the boughs of the oak, and the dragon swayed its high enormous head to and fro between the dim trees and the silver stars.

In the shadowy forests Medea would wander quite alone, her little white feet without sandals, her long hair streaming about her like a veil. There, in the silence of the woods, she would stand and lift her arms up to the stars, singing softly to the spirits who lived among them. Then she
THE MAGIC OF THE HERBS

would turn round three times, and, stooping to the stream at her feet, throw water from it, three times, over her head. Last of all, she would give three long, low cries, weird and plaintive, like an owl that called to its mate through the night.

Down then, from the stars, would drop a bright car, drawn by a dragon, sparkling with little arrows of flame. Medea would spring into this fairy chariot, and the dragon would fly with her to the tops of the high mountains, where she would gather all kinds of rare flowers and herbs. These she would carry to the palace, and mix together in a golden cauldron, singing low enchantments all the time. The perfumed oils that were so made she would pour carefully into little pots and jars; and never were there any ointments more full of sorcery than those made by the Princess Medea.

Lovely and clever as she was, she would not marry; for she had once seen Jason in a dream, and he seemed to her the only man that she could ever love. She knew that he would come some day to her father’s kingdom; and, sure enough, one bright morning the sails of the Argo appeared in the bay, the music of Orpheus floated over the water, and Prince Jason and his noble company stepped ashore.

Straight up the beach towards the palace they
THE MAGIC OF THE HERBS

came, and were met by the King himself; for was not Jason, also, of royal blood? With the King came beautiful, dark-eyed Medea, eager and expectant. The King led his guests to his banqueting-hall and set them down to eat and drink, asking questions all the time. They told him of the many adventures they had had on their journey—adventures almost too exciting for anyone to believe. Among other experiences, they had passed safely between two strange floating ice-rocks which tried to crush them, but, closing together with a snap just as the vessel slipped from between them, had met with such force that they stuck together entirely. And stuck they remained ever afterwards, which was a good thing for all the travellers who, later, passed that way. Jason explained, too, that they had been obliged to leave Hercules behind on an island, which he had refused to leave, because a beautiful lad whom he loved had been stolen from him by the island-nymphs and turned into a frog! Many other things Jason told the King before he began to talk of the object of his journey, and announced, boldly, that he and his companions had passed through all these perils for the purpose of winning and carrying away the Golden Fleece from the Enchanted Glade.

Medea clasped her hands in excitement and
admiration, but her father's brows met in an angry frown.

"Win the Golden Fleece!" he thundered. "There are many tasks for anyone who would do that! Rash Prince! Go back to your vessel, and to-morrow morning come and plough that stony field you see there, with my fire-breathing bulls!"

He rose from the banqueting-table and stalked wrathfully to his chamber, while Jason, sad and disappointed, returned to his ship. Next morning he rose early, and went ashore to see the sun rise, wondering if it would be for the last time. Then, lo! and behold, coming through the early rosy rays, he saw a slim, veiled figure, who stole to his side and gave him a little silver jar.

"Rub yourself all over with the sweet-smelling oil in the jar," whispered a soft voice, "then the bulls can do you no harm!"

The slender, cloaked figure slipped away as hastily and silently as it had come, but Jason knew the voice had been that of the King's daughter, Medea. He bathed in the sea, just as the sun began to warm the sparkling waves; then, opening the jar, rubbed himself all over with the perfumed ointment, and not only himself, but his shield and sword as well. Then he set off for the palace once more.

With the King and his courtiers—all of whom
THE MAGIC OF THE HERBS

were very surprised at his return—Jason set off for the stables of the fire-breathing bulls. This stable was underground, and the bulls, set loose, rushed out of it much as if they were Pluto's horses themselves. Everybody fled but Jason, as the terrible animals pranced and bellowed, their golden hoofs flashing, their eyes blazing, and hundreds of tongues of fire shooting from their mouths. But Jason sprang fearlessly to meet them, laid his hand on the neck of the nearest, and spoke to it in a gentle voice. Those who were watching from a safe distance saw it pause; saw, too, the other bulls crowd round the hero with tossing horns. For a moment both Prince and bulls were hidden among the flames; but, when the smoke cleared, the onlookers, to their amazement, perceived that the bulls were already harnessed to the iron plough, and were drawing it across the stony field, fast as the wind, with Jason guiding them from behind.

He ploughed the ground well and truly, with deep, straight furrows ready for seed. Then he drove the bulls back to their stables, and, as he stood, wiping his forehead, the King came forward. Smiling angrily, he handed the Prince a helmet made of brass.

"There is your seed!" said he. "Sow it in the furrows you have made!"
THE MAGIC OF THE HERBS

Jason took the helmet, and what do you think was in it? A great quantity of dragons’ teeth! Dismay came into the hero’s eyes, for he knew what sort of a crop he might expect from seed like that.

However, he set to work, and strode off along the furrows, swinging his hand in a wide circle, as he sowed the dragons’ teeth. Immediately the teeth began to grow! But, instead of coming up as pretty green blades of corn, they sent up a crop of soldiers, armed with spears and shields, helmets and swords, who made a rush at Jason in a body, and prepared to kill him.

Jason sprang aside, seized a big stone, and threw it among them. It hit one of the soldiers on the head, and he, thinking it had been thrown by the man next to him, instantly returned the blow. This soldier, in his turn, attacked a third; and, in a few minutes, the whole army was fighting itself, in a wild tangle, until the soldiers had killed each other, and not one was left.

The King’s face was very sullen as he and his courtiers turned away. He spoke a last word to brave Jason, in a whisper like a hiss:

“Very good! Very good!” said he. “You can have the Golden Fleece—if you can get it!”

Jason’s friends, proud and thankful, surrounded
THE MAGIC OF THE HERBS

their Prince as he returned to his ship. That night Medea came to him once more.

"Let your companions make the ship ready for instant departure," said she, "and come with me."

She took Jason's hand, and led him away up the dark beach, and as they went she sang. Low and sweet was her song as Jason walked softly by her side. Presently they came to the dark entrance of the Enchanted Glade and saw in the distance the Golden Fleece hanging on the oak-tree, shining with a fairy light. Then into the sound of Medea's song broke the dragon's watchful hiss—and Jason saw its scales glittering here and there in the moonlight as it moved its coils silently about the tree. It was a terrible sight, but Medea went on singing and drew the Prince onwards down the glade. There were no flowers or leaves upon the thickly growing trees, but the moon threw down little silver blossoms of light and made garlands about the tangled brake. At last the Prince and Princess reached the tree, and met the gaze of the dragon in the moonshine. It was listening intently to Medea's song. Still chanting that sweet lullaby, she opened one of her jewelled jars and sprinkled the scaly monster with delicate perfume, so that the thicket seemed to be full of the scent of mountain flowers. The
dragon closed its eyes, and down from the tree slipped its great folds—down, down, down, till the huge serpent lay in motionless coils upon the ground. Then, at last, Medea stopped singing, and with her slender white fingers pointed Jason to the Fleece.

He moved forward, placing his feet upon the very coils of the sleeping dragon as he reached eager hands towards the Golden Fleece, so beautiful, so shining, so mysterious, hanging above his head. Tearing it from its bough, he sprang back to Medea. Then, side by side, they sped through the thicket, down the ferny path of the Enchanted Glade, across the meadows, to the shore. Once on board the Argo, the sails were set and the crew bent to their oars. Away sped the good ship from the harbour, carrying with it the Prince, the Princess, and the Golden Fleece of the beautiful ram that had flown across the sea with that fair brother and sister so many, many years ago.

In this way Jason bore home the wonderful Fleece, and, soon after he got there, his wicked uncle died miserably, and Jason gave the kingdom back to his own father.
"Jason sowed the dragon's teeth."
THE KING WITH THE TOUCH OF GOLD

BACCHUS, of whom you heard in another story, was very powerful and clever, and could give to human beings almost any gift for which they asked. No wonder the helmsman was pleased to be under his protection! However, Bacchus had a good deal of mischief in his nature, and here is a tale of a prank he once played upon a rich and greedy King.

The King’s name was Midas. He was very wealthy indeed, but he was a shocking miser. He loved gold for its own sake; not for what he could do with it. He collected as much of it as he could, and he loved to count his coins by the hour together. Some of the treasures in his palace were made of pure gold, and he was never tired of looking at them, and handling them, and wishing from his heart that he owned many more.

One morning King Midas was sitting on his throne, when there was a great noise outside,
THE KING WITH THE TOUCH OF GOLD

and in came a number of his harvesters and gardeners, leading a strange figure tied up with chains of roses! It was old Silenus, who had lost himself—and not only himself, but all his friends and his prancing wild ass as well. He was very miserable and upset, for the country people had found him asleep in the King’s rose-garden, and thought it a great thing to have caught a wild Satyr. Midas was delighted, for some of his own distant relations were Satyrs; and he entertained Silenus most hospitably for ten days. Then he said he would himself take him back to Bacchus, and he set off through the woods in search of the vine-crowned Immortal. When they reached the flowery glade where Bacchus was living just then, King Midas gave Silenus into the care of his pupil, and prepared to set off home again.

But Bacchus stopped him and said that the King, in return for his kindness, might ask for any gift that he wanted. Midas instantly declared that what he wanted, above everything else, was more money and more treasure. Would Bacchus grant him the gift of turning everything he touched into gold?

Bacchus smiled, and made a little movement of warning with his head. Then he told Midas he would grant his request. But the Shining Immortal shook his head again, and looked
THE KING WITH THE TOUCH OF GOLD

amused, as the King went joyfully away. Bacchus was wondering how long it would be before Midas felt very sorry indeed that such a gift had been presented to him.

The greedy King walked homewards through the woods, much pleased with his morning’s work. Presently he thought he would put his wonderful new power to the test. Lifting his hand, endowed with its strange magic, to a green bough that hung just overhead, he drew down a twig, his eyes, shining with excitement, fixed upon the pretty brown bark and green leaves. Lo! and behold, the moment his fingers touched the twig it turned into the brightest, purest gold, and, breaking it away from the branch, Midas carried it homewards with him, his heart beating with excitement as he turned it this way and that, to make it glitter and flash in the sun.

On went the King, holding aloft his golden twig. Presently he thought he would try his power again, so he stooped and picked up a stone; this also turned immediately into gold. Putting it into the pocket of his robe—which had itself been quietly turning into gold all this time—he walked a little farther and came out of the wood into a field of corn. He gathered one of the ears, and that, too, shone instantly with a golden radiance in his fingers. Then he reached his own
THE KING WITH THE TOUCH OF GOLD

orchard and, plucking an apple, found himself laden with another treasure. The same thing happened when he picked a bunch of roses in the garden. So, laden with golden fruit and corn and flowers, his pockets heavy with golden stones, and his golden robes trailing heavily about him, King Midas walked up the steps of his palace, and, passing through his surprised courtiers, reached the steps of his throne. He paused for a moment, laid down his spoils, and placed his hand on a pillar—which, of course, turned into gold on the spot. Then he told his lords-in-waiting to send out invitations for a great feast to be held in the banqueting-hall as soon as ever the tables could be spread with delicious food and wine. "For," thought he, "I will show off my magical gift to all the neighbouring princes and their ministers! How they will envy me my extraordinary powers!"

King Midas sat and played with his glittering golden treasures until the feast was spread, and the guests had gathered round the table. Then he walked, very slowly and magnificently, to his place at the head. Everybody was watching him, for they had heard all sorts of rumours, and were very excited to see what would happen.

King Midas took his seat, and requested his visitors to start eating and drinking. They at 196
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once began to enjoy the savoury dishes, the delicate fruits, and the rich cakes. The King watched them for a moment, then, with a smile, lifted a crystal goblet, full of water mixed with wine, to his own lips. He wanted to enjoy their surprise when the goblet turned to gold.

And turn to gold it did—but the water and the wine turned with it! No sooner had the fragrant purple liquid touched the royal lips than down it trickled in a golden stream over the King’s chin! Thirsty and dismayed, he set down the goblet, and reached for some bread, only to find that it turned into gold before he could swallow it! So with the fruit—so with the cakes—so with the savoury meat-pies! The guests, whispering among themselves, began to smile behind their damask table-napkins; and at last King Midas, hungry, thirsty, and very angry, rose from the feast and hurried away.

But a worse trouble even than hunger and thirst was in store for him. Coming to meet him, across the hall of the palace, were his beautiful little sons and daughters, radiant with health, and laughing over their play. They ran to him to kiss him, and, unthinkingly, he took one of them into his arms: to his intense horror, he found that the child in his embrace changed into a golden statue!
THE KING WITH THE TOUCH OF GOLD

He set the statue down, and burst into tears of agony. Then, waving away the other startled and dismayed children, he went to weep in his own chamber. After a night of despair upon a hard, golden bed, he rose early and went off through the orchards and cornfields, until he reached the wood where Bacchus lived. Hurrying down the green, shadowy glades, he never paused until he found the vine-crowned Immortal, seated among his goat-footed friends, with all his wild beasts round him.

Falling on his knees, King Midas lifted imploring hands, and sobbed out his trouble, begging Bacchus to take his terrible gift away from him. So Bacchus told the King he must go and wash at the source of a river not very far away, and he would become quite ordinary once more. The poor King hardly waited to say "thank you" before he hurried off, never stopping until he reached the source of the river, where it bubbled, clear and cool, from the rock. He sprang straight into the water, and plunged his head below the ripples. Behold! to his joy the sticky gold was all washed from his mouth and the sparkling fragments from his wet hair. When he climbed the bank again, he knew that he was, once more, like other men.

But a strange thing had happened! The spell
THE KING WITH THE TOUCH OF GOLD

that Bacchus had laid on Midas could never be destroyed, so instead of remaining with the King, it passed into the river itself! A new glimmer shone ever after through the water—the sands ran yellow—and the flowers on the banks nodded golden heads, and dropped golden petals on to golden grass. Even the corn that was sown in the fields near by would sometimes sprout golden ears, and the ground was always hard and difficult to plough. But King Midas was only too happy when, on reaching home, he found that the spell was removed, and that he had his child again, instead of the poor little gold statue that he had left glittering among the pillars of the hall.

King Midas was quite cured of his miserliness, but he seemed to be born to trouble, and he had another unhappy adventure in his old age. He had always been fond of wandering in the woods, and he was a very great admirer of Pan and his music. One day he found Pan and Apollo quarrelling in a quiet, green glade as to which could make the sweeter melody, Pan with his pipes or Apollo with his lyre. The nymphs, who sat round listening, seemed quite unable to judge, so both Pan and Apollo appealed to Midas to settle the dispute. The King, without a moment’s hesitation, declared that Pan’s music was the
THE KING WITH THE TOUCH OF GOLD

more delightful—whereupon Apollo lost his temper and cried angrily:

"Whoever says a thing like that must have ass's ears!"

No sooner had he spoken than the unhappy King's ears turned into the ears of an ass, just as quickly as his apples and bread had turned into gold!

Poor King Midas! He went home in no lordly manner this time, but as quickly and quietly as he could, and, sending for his lord-of-the-bed-chamber, at once ordered an enormous new headdress. Until it came, he hid from sight. With the great new head-dress on his head nobody could see the ears, and he only looked like a rather eccentric King of the East. However, he was not able to keep the secret from his barber, whom the King threatened with immediate death if he ever told. The barber was so worried by the knowledge that he felt quite sure he would, one day, let it out. In order to relieve his feelings, he used, each time he cut King Midas's hair, to go down to the river, and put his face deep among the reeds. Then he would whisper:

"King Midas has ass's ears! King Midas has ass's ears! King Midas has ass's ears!"

Over and over again he would whisper it, until his mind felt relieved, when he would go home again
“Midas was not able to keep the secret from his barber.”
THE KING WITH THE TOUCH OF GOLD

in peace. But unfortunately the reeds learnt the words by heart, and began to repeat them, so that anyone who passed near the river at twilight would hear a little whisper:

"King Midas has ass’s ears!"

This happened so often that at last the secret was a secret no longer. But, as it was only the reeds who told it, nobody took much notice, and King Midas lived quite happily, dressed up in his big cap. No doubt, though, as he grew still older, he gave up wandering in the woods, for nobody could tell what would happen to any mortal who made friends with strange beings like Bacchus and Pan.
GOLDEN APPLES

This is a story, not only about the golden apples that Hercules brought to his cousin, the King, but of other apples made of the same fairy metal. First of all, however, you shall hear about Hercules and the hidden far-off garden where the apples grew.

When the King told him he must find this garden, and gather some of the glittering fruit from the tree, poor Hercules was in despair; for he knew very well that the apple-tree had been lost a long, long time ago, and had never been found again. It had been given to Queen Juno as a wedding-present, covered with its crop of gold; and she had put it in the care of some beautiful maidens whose father, Hesperus, carried the evening star to the sky every night in a lantern set with gems. These maidens were called the Hesperides; and, in order that the apples might never be stolen, they had taken the tree far away into Africa, had planted it in a secret garden, and had set a wary dragon to live
GOLDEN APPLES

under the branches and to guard the treasured fruit both day and night.

However, Hercules shouldered his lion-skin, took his club, and set off to discover some one who would tell him where to find the garden of the Hesperides. But nobody knew! Every one had heard of the apples, and of the beautiful maidens who had hidden them, but not a soul had any idea where the garden could be found. At last he was told to go and find Prometheus, who would really be able to tell him about the garden. So away he went in search of Prometheus, whom he discovered chained to a rock in a lonely mountain-gorge, with a great vulture guarding him and pecking at him in the most cruel fashion. This was Jupiter's way of punishing Prometheus for stealing the fire—as if all the trouble brought on men by poor, pretty Pandora had not been revenge enough! However, Hercules shot the vulture with one of his poisoned arrows, broke the iron fetters, and set Prometheus at liberty. And this wise, brave, good man was never chained up to the lonely rock again, but was allowed to go free, for ever.

Prometheus, overjoyed, bade Hercules journey a little farther, and find Atlas, who was a great strong giant, and lived on the top of a high mountain, holding the sky up with his mighty head
and shoulders. Atlas knew all about the garden, said Prometheus, and would be only too willing to help.

Very glad and proud at having freed the man who had stolen the fire from the shining palace, Hercules strode off, yet again. And, sure enough, after a few more adventures, he found Atlas on top of the very mountain that Prometheus had described.

What a weary, patient, bored old giant Atlas must have been! For centuries and centuries he had stood up there in the snow, his head among the clouds and stars. Some people, when they tell you the story of Atlas, will say that it was not the sky which he held up, but the world itself. However that may be, he was certainly so pleased to see Hercules that he told him, in a minute, all about the garden, and the beautiful maidens, and the wide-awake dragon that guarded the tree. And then Atlas said that, if Hercules would be good enough to hold the sky up for him during his absence, he would go to the garden, and bring back the apples himself!

Hercules consented to this plan; and with wonderful ease, considering what a business it must have been, Atlas slipped the sky off his own shoulders on to the back of Hercules. So there stood the strongest man in the world, the
“Prometheus chained to a rock.”
sky, full of stars, with perhaps a comet or two rushing about, pressing upon his neck and head; while Atlas hurried off at full speed, muttering to himself, after the way of giants. Hercules watched him out of sight, and, if he had not been very brave as well as very strong, must have heartily wished to see him back again.

By and by, as Hercules stood on the top of the mountain, thinking what a terrible weight the sky was, and probably wondering what would happen if, by any chance, Atlas ever let it fall, heavy footsteps sounded once more on the mountain path, and up loomed the big figure of the giant, with three golden apples in one of his great hands. Hercules gasped with relief; but Atlas only stood still, when he was within a few paces, and, looking at the sky with extreme dislike, declared that he was thoroughly tired of holding it up, and would leave the task to Hercules, while he himself carried the golden apples to the King!

Here was a terrible plight for Hercules! He was determined not to spend the rest of his life holding up the sky—and, of course, he dared not let it drop! However, he pretended to agree to the plan, and said he was quite willing to take the giant's place if Atlas would be kind enough to let him have something soft, such as a big
cushion, on his neck and shoulders. Atlas sympathized with the request, and consented to hold the sky again for a few minutes, while Hercules made his arrangements. But no sooner had the poor giant taken back his burden, than Hercules snatched up the apples from the ground where they were lying, and hurried off at full speed, leaving Atlas to his old task, all alone with the stars. And so terribly tired did Atlas get in the end that, when Perseus chanced to pass that way with the Gorgon’s head, he begged the Prince to let him have a look at it—or so some folks will tell you—and was turned at once into a stony top to the mountain. And a stony mountain top Atlas is to this very day.

Those apples of the Hesperides were very famous apples, and you may be sure the King was so delighted to see them that he did not think it necessary, this time, to jump into his brass jar. No less famous were three other apples that Venus gave to a handsome youth called Hippomenes, in whom she took a great interest, for the usual simple reason that he was in love!

The Princess whom Hippomenes loved was young and beautiful, but in her ways she was much more like a boy than a girl. Her name was Atalanta, and everybody knew how brave
GOLDEN APPLES

and swift-footed she was. She would lead the boar-hunts, shouting with excitement; and no skilled archer's arrow was more true in its flight, no practised hunter's spear quicker to slay. A true follower of Diana was this spirited Princess; like Diana, too, she was determined to remain unmarried. Whenever her father, the King, presented a suitor to her, she would laugh with scorn, and tell each new lover that she would only marry him if he could beat her in a race. If he agreed to try, she would add that, if he were beaten, his head would be cut off. But plenty of youths were to be found who were quite sure they could never be beaten in a race by a maiden, and were ready enough to accept her challenge.

So they ran races with Atalanta; but the Princess always won. Then the poor lovers' heads were cut off, by Atalanta's orders—no doubt that she might be saved further worry in the way of proposals.

Hippomenes, however, had watched Atalanta run a lot of these races, and had fallen deeply in love with her. But he did not think, swift-footed though he was, that he could ever win if he were to challenge her to a trial against him. So he went to Venus, and Venus gave him three golden apples which she had just plucked from a favourite tree, and told him what to do with them.
GOLDEN APPLES

With the apples hidden under his scarf, Hippomenes drew near to Atalanta, and asked her to run a race with him, as she had done with the others. She consented—scornfully as usual. They went together down to the royal meadows where Atalanta’s races were always run; and there were all the suitors’ heads set round on poles! This was enough to frighten any stranger, but Hippomenes knew all about them, so he was not at all alarmed. He fingered the hidden apples, and prepared to start.

All the Court had come to see the race, and, when the signal was given, off went the beautiful long-limbed Princess like the wind, her rosy feet treading down the flowers. Then, after running a little way, she pretended, as she had often done before, to allow her lover to overtake her. Looking back, rather mockingly, over her shoulder, she saw him close on her heels. And at that very moment, he deliberately dropped one of the apples.

Atalanta saw it fall and begin to roll away—a wonderful, glittering, fairy ball of gold. She hesitated, paused, and then stopped dead, in order to pick it up. As she stooped for it, Hippomenes shot past her and took the lead.

But it did not take Atalanta long to recover the ground she had lost. Off she flashed, again,
"Atalanta saw it fall."
like an arrow. In a moment she would have overtaken Hippomenes, but he dropped a second apple!

The beautiful thing rolled away among the meadow-blossoms, and, once more, Atalanta checked her flying feet. Turning back, she stooped for the shining fruit. As she set her face again towards the goal, she saw that Hippomenes was much farther ahead than before. She had to put on all her speed to come up to him; but, as they neared the winning-post, down to the ground fell the third golden ball, seeming even more beautiful to the Princess than the two she already carried.

It was no use—she could not leave the apple behind! Trusting that her fleetness could still make up for the pause, she stooped yet again, and lifted the apple from the ground. The next moment, a wave of shouts fell upon the air. Hippomenes had reached the winning-post. The race and the prize were his!

In that way the boy-like Princess was won by her lover, and married him in fulfilment of the promise she had made.
SAILORS of to-day who come back from far countries will often tell stories of the marvels they have seen; but these marvels are nothing compared with the wonders met with by the seamen of old Greece. Of course they might, any day, come across Neptune, with his green sea-ladies, his blue and white horses, and his dolphins wagging their curly tails; not to speak of Venus, floating along on her pretty silver shell, with her fairies playing around her. These people were generally the sailors’ friends; but there were also among the ocean-folk some horrible monsters, of which the very worst were two witch-like creatures called Scylla and Charybdis.

Scylla had once been a beautiful Princess, but she had been turned into a monster as a punishment for a very shocking thing she had done. Her father’s country was invaded by a neighbouring monarch, with whom she fell in love. She knew that, among her father’s silvery hair, one
lock was coloured purple, and hung in this strange tint over his wrinkled forehead. She also knew that so long as the purple lock grew safely among the white hairs of the old King, his country could never be taken from him. So, because she was in love with the enemy King, she crept one night into her father’s bed-chamber, and cut off the purple lock while he slept. Then, with the little tuft of hair in her hand, she went to the camp of the invading King, and, offering him the purple lock, told him what she had done for his sake.

But he, a brave and honest man, was filled with horror. He declared that he could never benefit by such a wicked deed, and ordered his ships to be made ready to sail immediately. When Scylla saw the royal boat moving from the shore of her father’s kingdom, she leapt into the water and tried to cling to its stern. But she was instantly changed into a terrible monster, with six heads and twelve feet, who lived on dolphins, and sea-dogs, and sailors, and fishermen, whenever she was able to catch and devour them.

Almost opposite Scylla’s sea-cave in the high rocks, Charybdis, the other monster, had her home. She was the haunting spirit of a great crag; and three times every day she would cause the sea to form an enormous whirlpool, which
SOME OLD, OLD TRAVELLERS' TALES

she would suck down into the deep caverns that yawned below a precipice crowned with a giant fig-tree. Woe betide any ship that sailed on that treacherous water! Without a moment's warning the waves would begin to churn and swirl and roar—and then down into the caves of Charybdis they would go in a great rush, carrying ship, and mariners, and all! No wonder the heroes and sailors who manned the travelling vessels in those days told each other, in awed tones, to take every possible care if they had to sail along the narrow strait of water that flowed between Scylla and Charybdis.

Then there were the two great floating rocks like icebergs, that shone white and terrible in the sunshine which never melted them. They were called the Symplegades, and, though they were not really alive, they behaved as if they were. They rode on the sea, side by side, close to a strait that was as narrow as the strait which divided Scylla and Charybdis. Whenever a ship came sailing proudly through the strait, the Symplegades would place themselves in readiness, just where the channel was at its narrowest. Then, when the vessel was passing between them, these two great, white, cruel rocks would begin to draw together, moving with deadly certainty and swiftness, until they met with a
terrible crash, and ground the ship to powder in their hard embrace. It took a brave and clever captain to steer his ship between the Symplegades, but, as you know, Jason managed it, and the rocks stuck together at last.

There were also the Sirens’ Islands, which were as dangerous as anything else, though in a different way. They were inhabited by beautiful maidens, who sang the most lovely and haunting songs, which floated out over the moonlit seas on calm nights, until the sailors who heard them nearly went out of their minds with Love, and with longing to see the owners of those thrilling voices. But whoever landed among the silvery mists that hung over the enchanted islands, and saw the white nymphs dancing among the dewy starlit flowers, was instantly struck down by death, and left his bones to whiten among the bones of those other men who had been overcome by the magic of the Sirens’ melodies.

Floating up and down in the cradles made by the furrows of the waves were the nests of the Halcyons, sad-voiced sea-birds who gave plaintive warning of a storm. The first Halcyon of all had been a Queen whose husband was drowned and who, like Hero, had flung herself into the sea to die also. But, as soon as she touched the water, her mouth changed into a bill, long and slender,
her delicate toes into claws, and her arms into white wings. Then, across the waves, came flying another bird, just like herself, who met her with cries of joy. It was her husband, who had been changed into a Halcyon also, and who lived with her, ever after, among the foam of the waves.

Very different from the Halcyons were some other birds, bigger than eagles, with feathers made of brass, which used to fly along the sky in flocks. The sailors who saw them come sweeping over the sea out of the west were very much afraid, for the great birds would hang overhead in a thick cloud, and send their brass feathers rattling down, like jangling arrows, on to the decks of the ships below. These fierce creatures were called the Stymphalides, and they hunted over the ocean, like a pack of fierce hounds, until Hercules killed them.

Not least among the wonders of the sea was the Island of the Winds. Here lived Æolus, the King of all the breezes that ever blew. He kept the winds in a cave, and he would let out first one, and then another, and very fine sport he must have had with them. He was friendly with Neptune, of course, and, if the Sea-King wanted to make a big storm, the King of the Winds would help him, and you may be sure that they
SOME OLD, OLD TRAVELLERS’ TALES could manage to get up a truly terrific tempest between them.

Among the dolphins which had been born in the sea were those who had once been the pirates who tried to capture Bacchus. And among the Tritons and Mermen and other ocean-folk was a very happy Immortal who once had been a fisherman. He was called Glaucus, and, when he was living on earth as an ordinary mortal, he earned his livelihood by selling the fish that he caught in the bay near his home. One night he drew up his net so full of fishes that it nearly broke, and it was with great difficulty that he placed it on a grassy bank near which his boat was moored. He began to take the fish out, one by one, and, as he did so, he saw that those which were left in the net were nibbling the grass through the meshes, with a most extraordinary result. For, the moment a fish had swallowed a blade, it became so strong that it leapt high out of the net, flashed through the air like silver lightning, and dived deep into the sea again, disappearing instantly from sight.

Glaucus watched one fish after another vanish back into the water in this fashion, and at last was seized with the desire to nibble a blade of grass himself. He lifted the slender, green thing to his lips, bit it, and swallowed it. Immediately
a strange thrill ran through all his limbs—a feeling of strength and vigour and freshness, and, with it all, a passionate desire for the cool, salt freshness of the sea. Without a moment’s hesitation he sprang to his full height on the bank, raised his arms above his head, and dived after the fishes into the deep blue water. And, behold, he found that he could breathe, and swim, and dart about, as comfortably as any lusty trout or silver salmon. So, discovering that it was really very much nicer to live in the sea than on the land, he made up his mind to stay there; and stay he did, for ever.

Other folk there were in those blue waves which lapped round the fair islands of Greece in the long-ago, and one of the most wonderful was called the Wise Old Man of the Sea. But before you come to the tale of the Wise Old Man of the Sea, you must read some more stories, and make the acquaintance of the greatest traveller of all, Ulysses himself.
“The Sirens’ Islands were inhabited by beautiful maidens, who sang the most lovely and haunting songs.”
THE MYSTERIOUS WOODEN HORSE

MINERVA was the wisest among the Immortals, just as Venus was the most beautiful. The vigorous and lovely maiden who had sprung out of the King's head was always ready to teach and help mortals who wanted to do brave and good things. Besides Minerva, she was now and then called Pallas Athene; and, one day when she saw some people building a fine and beautiful city in Greece, she went to Jupiter, and said that she would like to take the city under her special protection and name it Athens, after herself.

Jupiter was willing, and everything was about to be settled without dispute. But, at that moment, tramping heavily up the mountainside, his crown of shells and pearls pulled down over his angry eyes, and the sea-anemones dropping from his wet robes among the wood-anemones that bloomed in the path, Neptune, the Sea-King, himself arrived on Olympus, most terribly annoyed.
The city belongs to me,” he said, “I have always built cities, as every one knows. I intend to give my own name to it. So your new favourite need say nothing further in the matter! I am much cleverer than she!”

Jupiter hesitated, and looked at Minerva, who was standing proudly beside him, and who answered with spirit:

“If the Sea-King is so much cleverer than I, let him do something to show it!”

Neptune made a sound under his glistening beard that was rather like the roar of the sea itself. Then he struck the earth with his three-pronged sceptre, and out of the ground leapt a beautiful horse, shaking a mane that was white and curling as the foam. But Minerva, smiling, thrust her spear deep among the mountain-flowers, and an olive-tree grew up, slow and stately, and shook out its silver-green leaves against the blue sky. Then she turned to Jupiter, serenely.

“Which is the better gift to men,” she asked, “the horse or the olive-tree? On horses they can ride magnificently to battle, or drive their chariots to visit neighbouring princes. But the olive-trees will give them wood for their houses, oil to knead their bread, and soft shade in their orchards. Which is the better gift? Let the Shining Ones decide!”

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And, with one consent, the bright Immortals who were gathered about the King’s throne decided in favour of the olive-tree. So Neptune marched angrily back to his royal caves under the ocean, and Minerva was allowed to call the city “Athens” as she had desired. And, as everybody knows, it is called Athens to this day.

Minerva visited this beautiful city regularly, as well as all the others that were built in the valleys of Greece. Whenever a new baby was born she hastened to it, to breathe into it something of her own wise and serene spirit. Perhaps, of all men, she loved best a King who was called Ulysses, whom she taught to be very strong and brave indeed. Yet, though she inspired him with courage, she always told him that the peace which broods in the olive-groves is better than the battles to which men ride on the horses loved by the Sea-King. So that, when a great war broke out, and other kings and princes were hurrying to the fight, Ulysses determined to stay at home in his kingdom with his little son, and his sweet wife, Penelope. He pretended, therefore, that he had lost his wits—though it is certain that he kept them very much about him—and, going out one spring morning with a plough, yoked an ox and a horse together, and set to work to plough the sands of the sea-shore,
"Neptune struck the earth with his three-pronged sceptre, and out of the ground leapt a beautiful horse."
and to sow the furrows, quite gaily, with wide-thrown handfuls of salt!

But the messenger who had come to summon Ulysses to battle was even wilier than he, and, watching him, said to himself, "This King of Ithaca is not so mad as he seems!" Then he slipped away to the palace, stole the baby-prince from his cradle, and laid him, still sound asleep, in one of the strange and sandy furrows made by his royal father's plough.

Ulysses, singing and staring, came foolishly along. But, when he caught sight of the baby, his face altered. With a quick movement, he swung aside the horse and ox, upset the plough, and snatched his little son into his arms. Then, looking round, he saw the triumphant messenger; so, confessing that his silly madness was all a pretence, he took up his shield and sword, buckled on his armour, and went bravely off to the war with the rest of the world.

The Grecian kings and captains set sail in white-winged ships, and travelled till they reached a sea-coast, with green fields and woods beyond, where purple hills rose high behind the shining towers of a glorious city that was called Troy. On the walls of Troy stood a great host of Trojans, as strong and fearless as the Greeks themselves, who shook their spears, and sang their war-songs,
and shouted defiantly at those who had come to conquer them. The Grecians made a most wonderful camp outside the city, hauling their ships on to the beach and setting them in rows, and building reed-thatched huts for their leaders. Then they marched up to the walls, their minstrels chanting, and their clear trumpets pealing. About their feet the sands of the shore were tossed up in a golden mist; from their great shields and helmets were reflected the dazzling rays of the sun; and their leaders shouted to them from war-chariots drawn by great horses. So that all the little wood-nymphs, and sea-nymphs, and river-nymphs, who cared nothing for battle, nor which side should be the winner, fled away to the quiet glades and streams of the forest, and only stayed still when, once more, they heard no sounds about them but the singing birds, and the rippling water, and the wind among the trees.

But not so Minerva! She floated on her strong wings, high as an eagle, above the Grecian armies, her piercing looks bent down upon Ulysses, her mind set on his victory and his fame. She, who had taught him to love peace, must now teach him to triumph in war.

For many years the fighting lasted, and, over and over again, during those years, the Greeks
"It was a huge Wooden Horse."
flung themselves, shouting and singing, against the walls of Troy. The Sea-King looked on at the battle earnestly, peering up through the green waves of the bay. Minerva, watching just as eagerly from the sky, saw that the Greeks could never, by themselves, throw down those ramparts of smooth and polished stone. So, one evening, knowing that Ulysses would be sure to visit a little grove near the shore, where a statue of her was set up, she sailed down from the clouds to the earth; and the King of Ithaca, coming along all alone in the moonlight, saw her shining robe, and heard the throbbing of her eagle-wings.

Then she told him what to do, and he hurried back to the other kings and captains with a wonderful plan. All that night the Trojans heard strange noises on the shore, as if a thousand carpenters were at work. Towards morning the bustle died away, and there came up to the city the sound of creaking ropes, and clanking rudders, and wind in the wide sails of moving ships. The Trojans peeped over the walls as soon as the dawn showed like a silver veil shaken out over the purple hills, and there, on the beach, they saw no more streets of ships, nor moving companies of men—nothing but deserted tents and huts, and, in the middle of them, a great mysterious,
THE MYSTERIOUS WOODEN HORSE

Shadowy thing, very tall and broad, reared up against the morning sky.

The people of Troy looked, and pointed, and then stole cautiously out, in little companies, through the city gates. With great curiosity, they peeped into the deserted tents. Then they gathered about the strange, towering thing on the beach, and saw that it was a huge Wooden Horse, its vast head thrust high towards the clouds, its great hoofs buried among the shells and pebbles left by the tide.

As they stood in amazement round this surprising monster, a wise man called Laocoon, who was one of their priests, came running, in his white robes, down the shore-path, crying out to them to beware.

"Ulysses, that clever and crafty warrior, has done this!" he called. "That is no horse, but a hiding-place for soldiers, or else a new kind of battering-ram!" As he shouted his warning, he threw his spear with all his might at the great statue, and, when it pierced the horse's side, there were some people who declared that the wooden monster groaned!

Then, from the city, another crowd came along, with a prisoner in their midst—the only Grecian, it seemed, that was left in the land. He told them that they must by no means break down the
THE MYSTERIOUS WOODEN HORSE

Wooden Horse, for it had been raised by the Greeks in honour of Minerva herself, before their ships had sailed away. They had made it of an enormous size, so that it could not be taken through the gates of the city; for, he added, if the monster were set up within the walls of Troy, Minerva would follow it there, and would give her protection to the Trojans instead of, as before, to their Grecian enemies.

While they all talked, the priest in the white robes drew near to the sea, and laid gifts for the Sea-King at the edge of the waves, turning his back on his foolish fellow-citizens as they chattered round the Wooden Horse. But, to everybody's horror, the ocean suddenly divided with a roar, and out came two huge sea-serpents, their flaming heads throwing burning shadows upon the smooth, green water. The serpents swept along till they reached the land, where they devoured not only Laocoon but his sons as well; and then they made their way to the little grove where Ulysses had, the night before, talked with Minerva, laid themselves down at the foot of her statue, and licked its feet!

The Trojans were sure, now, that the prisoner spoke the truth. Had not the Immortal Lady, herself, sent sea-serpents to destroy the rash man who had thrown his spear at her Wooden Horse?
THE MYSTERIOUS WOODEN HORSE

So everybody set to work to get the Horse into Troy. Some tied ropes to its head, and some made wheels for its hoofs; while others knocked a great hole in the walls of the city, as they could not possibly push the huge steed through the gates. Then down came a procession of beautiful girls, dancing along the streets and out on to the beach; they danced and sang round the Horse, and threw garlands of flowers about its mighty neck and limbs. And so, with music and laughter, and a great tossing of roses and cowslip-balls, the Trojans dragged the wooden monster up the slopes, through the big hole in the walls, right into the very heart of the glorious city of Troy.

Then, thinking all was safe, they feasted and shouted until the middle of the night, when, tired with rejoicing, they rested, and let silence fall upon the walls and roofs. In the silence, the Greek prisoner, whom they had set free as a reward for his help, crept to the feet of the Wooden Horse, unlocked a door that was hidden there, and threw up a rope. Then, down the rope, from the inside of the horse, slid Ulysses! Soldier after soldier followed, and in this way, in the dead of the night, the Greeks spread themselves through the sleeping city; while, at a given signal, their ships, which were hidden in a quiet bay not far off, came sailing back into the
THE MYSTERIOUS WOODEN HORSE

harbour from which the Trojans thought they had gone for ever.

Morning broke to the sound of another and a last battle. But, as there were Greeks within, and Greeks without, the people of the city had no chance now against their enemies. So that, through the cleverness of Ulysses, and the lessons he had learnt from beautiful Minerva, Troy fell into the hands of the Grecians, and they set fire to it, and, for many days it burnt, its flaming towers sending out a terrible, golden light over the waters of the ocean, where the Sea-King, who had little love for Ulysses, shook his three-pronged spear fiercely at Minerva, as she floated triumphantly in the clouds above.
YOU have heard how Troy fell, and no doubt felt you wanted to know what all the fighting was about? Well, it is a story that began with another golden apple.

There was a wedding, one day, of a sea-nymph to a mortal King, and a very grand feast was going on in the caves of the sea—a feast to which all the Immortals had come down from Olympus. Suddenly, at the banqueting-table, appeared a being whom nobody loved, whose hair was snaky, and whose eyes were cruel and hard. She was the spirit of Discord, and she had, naturally, not been invited to the wedding, which was the last place where anyone wished to see her. With angry looks, she threw a golden apple upon the table, and then vanished. When one of the guests picked up the fruit, everybody saw that on it were written the words:

"For the fairest!"

Now this set the Immortal Ladies quarrelling very hotly indeed. Juno, Minerva and Venus
THE ARROWS OF TROY

were all equally determined to have the apple. They carried the quarrel up from the sea-caves to the slopes of the mountains, but still they could not settle it. And settled it might never have been if a handsome shepherd-boy had not come, singing, along one of the mountain-paths, and walked right by the three Shining Ladies, just when they were disputing more hotly than ever, with Mercury standing near, holding the apple.

The Immortals stared at the shepherd-boy, and the shepherd-boy stared back at the Immortals. Then they all called upon him to be the judge, and Mercury handed him the apple. Holding it in his hand, the young man looked the Shining Ladies shyly up and down while they showed themselves off like so many pretty peacocks. In the end he made a step forward and gave the apple to Venus.

After all, Venus was really the most beautiful spirit on Olympus, so nobody need have been surprised. Besides that, she had softly whispered to the shepherd that, if he would give her the apple, she would give him the loveliest woman in the world for his bride. Now that she had won the glittering fruit she set to work to keep her promise; and she began by telling him to go to Troy, and introduce himself to the King and Queen.
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The young shepherd, whose name was Paris, set out for Troy, leaving his mountain-flocks and his sweet, musical pipe behind. And when he reached Troy he was recognized by the King's daughter as her own brother, left long ago to die on a distant hillside, because his parents had been told that through him the whole royal family would one day perish. However, when the King and Queen saw how handsome and graceful their long-lost son now was, they felt sorry for their cruelty to him as a little baby. They took him back to his home in the palace, dressed him in magnificent clothes of purple and gold, and proclaimed him to be a prince of their own blood, who must be treated like royalty, and take his place beside his brothers. They hoped that the evil prophecy would never be fulfilled; but their hopes were vain, for what do you think that foolish, handsome, young Paris did?

He stole the Queen Helen of Sparta and carried her away in a big ship to his own country! Queen Helen had been hatched with Castor and Pollux out of a swan's egg, and she had grown up into the loveliest woman in the world. It was to rescue her that the King of Sparta, and Ulysses, and many another, spent ten long years in trying to break down the walls of Troy, and might have spent another twenty if Minerva (who, you may
"He made a step forward and gave the apple to Venus."
THE ARROWS OF TROY

be sure, had never forgotten about the apple) had not given Ulysses the clever idea of the Horse. So the magicians of those days, who knew the things that were going to happen in the future, might well say it would be through Paris that the King, and Queen, and the Princes and Princesses of Troy would all perish in the most unhappy manner.

Meanwhile the sea-nymph and the mortal King at whose wedding the whole trouble of the apple began had a beautiful little baby. The sea-nymph, Thetis, thought such a baby had never been born, either in the dim, pearly sea-caves, or in the palace-nurseries with their pillars of ivory and gold. She wanted to make him a fairy-like being, as she was herself, so she carried him one day to the river Styx, where the eagle had filled the crystal bottle for Psyche, and dipped him in its strange, dark waters, which flowed away into the underworld, and watered Proserpine's garden of sad fruits and purple poppies. But, as Thetis dipped the child, she held him by one heel; and that heel was not touched by the magical water, but remained just like the heel of an ordinary human being. So the baby grew up into a man, whom no spear nor sword nor arrow could hurt in any way, unless it pierced him in the heel that had been grasped in
his mother’s fingers when she dipped him in the magical stream.

This baby was named Achilles, and he went, like nearly every other royal youth, to old Chiron’s school in the deep, green woods. He became a fine, manly prince, but his mother was always dreadfully afraid of anything happening to him. So when the great war broke out, because Paris had stolen the beautiful Queen Helen, Thetis was so nervous lest Achilles should be called upon to go and fight, that she sent him away to another king’s court, dressed in the disguise of a lady-in-waiting, where he had to serve the king’s daughters among their other attendants. How unhappy and foolish Achilles, who was really so brave and strong, must have felt! Everybody was asking for him, and wondering why he did not join the armies of the Greeks. Even Ulysses, who, as you know, tried his very best to stay at home, was now among the kings who were ready to start. But what had happened to Achilles? And why could no messenger who went to his father’s court ever catch a glimpse of him, or hear the faintest whisper of where he was hiding?

At last Ulysses, always shrewd and clever, began to suspect the truth. He said he believed he could find Achilles. He dressed himself up as
"As Thetis dipped the child, she held him by one heel."
THE ARROWS OF TROY

a merchant, and went off to the very court where Achilles was pretending to be lady-in-waiting to the princesses. When he arrived he asked to be allowed to show his fine things to the palace ladies; and, before their delighted eyes, he unrolled his silks, and displayed his rich embroideries and his delicate, spangled veils. While the excited damsels handled and admired these lovely wares, Achilles stood by, rather bored. No jewelled belt for his waist; no gossamer covering for his thick, yellow hair! Suddenly his face lit up. He made a step forward, and snatched at something his eye had caught sight of among the gleaming fabrics. It was a warrior’s spear, with a warrior’s sword lying alongside. Achilles seized both triumphantly; and Ulysses knew then that, under the robes of the only maiden indifferent to his wares, was concealed the form of the young prince he had come to seek.

How gladly Achilles went with Ulysses! How bravely he fought among his friends before the walls of Troy! But, after long, long fighting, an arrow, shot by Paris, one day struck him in the heel by which Thetis had held him when dipping him into the magical river. Then, as it seemed, he passed from among men, and the Greek soldiers said that Achilles was dead. But there
THE ARROWS OF TROY

were others who knew better, and they told how Thetis, his mother, had come, soft and silent as moonlight, over the waves of the sea, had taken her wounded son in her loving arms and carried him away to the Isles of the West. There Hesperus lifted his bright lantern in greeting, and in a fragrant valley apples grew that were even brighter and sweeter than the fruit that had been hidden in the African garden by the daughter of the Evening Star.

But Paris himself died from a poisoned arrow, and I really think every one will agree that he deserved no better fate. Philoctetes, the armour-bearer of Hercules, a brave and valiant man, had set sail with all the other Greek heroes to conquer Troy. With him he carried those wonderful arrows which had been dipped in the dark blood of the many-headed serpent of the swamps, and which, long ago, had been given to him by Hercules. Everybody thought that the arrows would help their side to victory; but, in spite of this, the sailors insisted on leaving Philoctetes alone on an island, arrows and all, because a snake had bitten him, and the wound was so poisonous that nobody would have Philoctetes near him.

So poor Philoctetes was left for ten years, living in a cave, and shooting stags and birds
THE ARROWS OF TROY

with the poisoned arrows of Hercules. But at last, as the walls of Troy still stood proudly, and as the beautiful Queen whom Paris had stolen was still shut up inside, Ulysses and the son of Achilles set off together to find Philoctetes, and to bring him and his wonderful arrows to the fight. When Philoctetes saw them arrive he was, at first, very angry, and refused to go back with them to Troy. They had managed without him and his arrows for ten years, said he; they could manage without them for another twenty! But Ulysses—who, as you know by this time, always had his own way—in the end persuaded the indignant armour-bearer to join them. So Philoctetes came along with the arrows, and, although he did not bring down the walls of Troy, he managed to shoot Paris and to kill him with the poison of the serpent's blood.

That was the end of the foolish prince, who had far better have stayed piping to his flocks on the mountains, instead of going to Troy and making all that mischief. How Troy fell in the end you have already read in an earlier story. But the whole sad business began with the golden apple that the Spirit of Discord threw down on the banqueting-table when the pretty sea-nymph, mother of Achilles, was married in a cave under the sea to the mortal King.
“Penelope did her best to bring up her little son, Telemachus, in the way Ulysses would have liked.”
THE WISE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

For many years, as you know, Ulysses fought with the other kings and captains in front of the walls of Troy. But when the city fell and the conquering armies set off in their ships for their own lands, they were all broken up and divided by quarrels among themselves, and also by violent storms at sea. Some of the kings after a time reached their homes in safety; but sweet Penelope, Ulysses's wife, waited in vain for her husband's return.

She did her best to rule the kingdom for him, and to bring up her little son, Telemachus, in the way Ulysses would have liked, but she found the task very difficult. The nobles of the country began to do just as they chose, and treated the palace of Ulysses exactly as if it were their own. Not only that, but one by one they came to Penelope, and, declaring that the King was dead, made her offers of marriage. Almost every morning one or another of them would seek out the Queen, and, putting on quite
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absurd airs and graces, would propose to her! Penelope began by refusing them all indignantly, but her refusals made no difference. They kept on proposing as regularly as before. So at last, in despair, she called these foolish suitors together, and made a bargain with them.

She was at work, she told them, on a beautiful piece of tapestry, which she bade her maidens exhibit. The lords looked with great interest at this delicate length of weaving, where fair pictures were wrought in threads of scarlet and purple and gold; and they all greatly admired it. Then Penelope said that it would take some time to finish, as it was so very elaborate, but that her lovers could watch her working at it, and, when it was complete, she would make her choice among them.

With this the suitors for her hand were obliged to be content; and day after day they watched the Queen twirling glittering threads on her golden distaff, and weaving them into pictures with an ivory shuttle on a silver loom. Being men, they knew very little about tapestry; but, even to them, the progress of the work seemed amazingly slow. And, after three whole years of waiting, a little maid came to them and gave away the secret.

The Queen, said she, certainly worked very
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hard at the tapestry all day, and the nobles could see for themselves how industrious she was. But, no sooner did night come, and she went to her beautiful bedchamber, than she lit her lamp, and, sitting beside it, unravelled every bit of the weaving she had done during the day. This she had been doing all through the three years; and the suitors for her hand, had they not been so silly and conceited, could have found it out for themselves.

The nobles were, of course, exceedingly angry; and what made them even angrier was that young Telemachus, whom they had looked upon as nothing but a boy, suddenly showed himself to be a man. He took his father’s sceptre in his hand one day, put on his father’s robes of state, and mounted the royal throne. Also he told his mother, Penelope, to have no more fear. He, her son, would not only protect her, but would, himself, go in search of the lost Ulysses.

Nobody quite understood this sudden courage and kingliness on the part of the youthful Prince. But the fact was that Minerva herself had come to him, at first in the disguise of an old man, but, later, showing herself as the lovely Immortal Lady she was, with her shining armour, her brilliant wings, and her glittering spear. And she had promised not only to protect him and
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his mother, but always to be near him, in one form or another, if he would set off to find the lost King, and to bring him back to his own country.

So Telemachus ordered a ship to be made ready and had it manned by the bravest sailors in Ithaca. Then he set off to visit in turn all the Kings who, he knew, had been with his father at Troy, and who had returned home once more. And, at the court of the King of Sparta, where Queen Helen was living again in safety, more beautiful than ever, he got the news he wanted.

And a strange tale it was that the King of Sparta told him.

"It was near the coast of a very hot and sandy country that I last heard of your dear father, Ulysses," said the monarch sorrowfully. "My ship was kept there by a great calm. I had set sail without making any offering to the spirits of the waves and winds, and this calm was their revenge upon me. My sailors and I watched the sun rise and set, rise and set, for twenty days, and never moved more than the length of our boat all the time. Then, on the twentieth evening, as the great, golden wheels of the bright-haired one's chariot began to dip into the waves, suddenly I saw a beautiful nymph rise up quite close to me from the depths of the sea, and sit on a rock near at hand.

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"‘Why are you lingering here,’ she asked wonderingly, ‘where your sailors can find neither food nor water?’

"I told her that I waited because, as there was no wind to carry me away, I had no choice in the matter. And I begged her to help me.

"Then she told me that her father was the Wise Old Man of the Sea, and that, every afternoon, he came up out of his watery caves to sleep on the shore, guarded by strange and slimy monsters. And she said he could help me, but I should have a great fight to catch him. Then she bade me bring three of my bravest men, and meet her, next morning, at a certain place among the rocks. When she had arranged this with me, she slipped back into the water, and the waves rustled above her head as she shook out her silk robes among them.

"As soon as the lovely purple light came up next morning from the East, my three brave men and I hurried to the shore. There the nymph met us, all blue and silver-robed, and sweet as the dawn itself. She scooped out for us four deep hiding-places in the sand, and we crouched down in them. Then she covered us, one by one, with the skins of four dead and vast monsters—and very horrible these skins looked and smelt, so that the pretty nymph had to
comfort us, and drive away our disgust, with drinks of nectar.

"There, half stifled, but consoled by the honeyed wine of the Shining Ones, we stayed, under the skins of the dead monsters, until their living companions flounced noisily, one by one, out of the surf at the edge of the ocean. They lay down in a great group about us, and then up came the Old Man of the Sea himself, and counted them, and counted us, too, among them, thinking us living monsters, and not dead skins at all. And, in the belief that everything was right, he lay down quite close to us and fell asleep.

"Out, then, from under the horrible skins rushed my heroes and I, shouting our war-cry. We seized the Old Man of the Sea, catching hold of an arm or a leg apiece, and so dividing him among the four of us. What would happen next the nymph had warned us, but I could hardly have guessed it would be so strange! For, what do you think, Prince? The Old Man turned into a lion in our grasp, and there we were, fighting with his claws, as he shook his mane and roared with rage. No sooner had we got used to the lion than it vanished, and we found ourselves clinging for dear life, to the neck and tail of a spotted leopard! Next thing, the leopard grew tusks, and we were struggling with a boar; and then,
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up above our heads, the boar rode on the air in the form of a dragon, that we only held back by the beating tips of its wings. As we still clung on, the loud noises made by the dragon’s feathers turned into the rushing of water, and away streamed the Sea-Wizard, laughing loudly. He had turned himself into a brook! But we stemmed its waves just as they were about to disappear into the waves of the ocean, and then, behold, there were green boughs about us, with leaves growing on them, and all four of us were hugging the branches of an oak! And then at last this great magician gave in to us, and, becoming a funny old man again, stood quite sedately in the middle of his monsters, and asked us what we wanted!

"We told him we wanted, most of all, to get home again, and he promised that we should. Then he answered many questions that we put to him, for there is hardly anything that the Wise Old Man of the Sea does not know. Last of all, he gave us news of my dear friend, Ulysses.

"Your father, Prince, is in a cave far away, that belongs to a lovely nymph, called Calypso. She has thrown her enchantments over him, and he lives under a vine hung with purple grapes, while the bees make golden honey for him, and the sea-birds nest overhead, and sea-fairies heap
silver dishes with fragrant fruits for him to eat. Calypso sings sweet songs to him, and weaves lovely robes for him to wear. But, with it all, he is unhappy. Dreams trouble him by day and night—they are the dim dreams of his wife, Penelope, and of you, Telemachus, his only son.

"This is what the Old Man of the Sea told us, Prince, before he plunged from the shore back into the green depths of the ocean, which shook with a great noise like thunder as the wizard returned to the salt, wave-crested waters of his home."

The King of Sparta finished his story, and Telemachus raised his drooping head.

"I must hasten onwards," he said. "I know now where to seek my father. I will find him yet, and take him safely home to my mother, Penelope."

At home, in her lonely palace, the Queen Penelope spent her days in weaving and embroideries, her nights in sad dreams about her husband and son. The suitors, for their part, went on feasting at the royal banqueting-tables, and spending the rest of the day in songs, laughter and games. What cared they for the sadness of their Queen, or the absence of their young Prince? They simply hoped he would stay away until Penelope married one of them, and gave Ithaca a new King.
"Sea-fairies heap silver dishes with fragrant fruit for him to eat."
THE WISE OLD MAN OF THE SEA

Then, one day, they were startled out of their idle, luxurious lives. Somebody got a sudden idea that Telemachus had really gone away to invite some foreign monarch to come and help him to recover his lost power in Ithaca. This terrified the nobles, and also made them exceedingly angry. They talked the matter over, and finally decided to send a ship to wait in a quiet bay on the coast, by which Telemachus would have to pass as he came home. The sailors would be instructed to capture the Prince and put him to death. Many of the nobles themselves went on board to make sure Telemachus should not escape.

But Minerva was always watching over the son of Ulysses, as well as over the long-lost King. She appeared to Telemachus in a dream, and told him to go back to Ithaca at once; for she, herself, would guide his brave father's footsteps home again. She told him, too, of the ship with the wicked nobles in it, and explained exactly where it was waiting in the little hidden bay. So, when the Prince’s ship neared the bay where the nobles waited, the seamen rowed the vessel through a little hidden rocky strait, where hardly ever vessel went, and, in this way, passed the danger, and carried Telemachus safely to the land.
THE LOST KING AND THE ONE-EYED GIANT

AND what had Ulysses been doing through all these long years, before he came under the enchantment of Calypso in her vine-draped cave?

Well, first of all, he had nearly fallen a prey to the magic of the Lotus-Eaters. They were the laziest people in all the world, and they lived on an island where lotus-trees grew everywhere, bearing fruits most lovely to look at and delicious to eat. But whoever tasted the lotus apples never wanted to do anything but sit under the shade of the trees, and eat the enchanted fruit for ever. Luckily for Ulysses, when he and his crew landed on the island he did not taste the fruit himself; but three of his men gathered and ate from the laden boughs, and, settling down immediately to rest on the flowery grass, declared they never intended to go home to their wives and families again. So Ulysses and the other seamen took them back to the ship by main
THE LOST KING AND THE GIANT

force; and then they sailed away as fast as they could before any more of the crew could taste the fruit that was so delicious, but that made people lazy and useless for the rest of their lives.

The next place the King’s vessel touched at was the country of the Cyclopes—awful-looking giants who had only one eye apiece, right in the middle of their foreheads! They were great shepherds in their own way, and lived on the milk of vast herds of goats and sheep. Ulysses and his followers landed on the beach, crept up the hill through the laurel bushes, and soon found themselves at the entrance to an enormous cave, fenced round with a marble wall, and hidden from the world by woods of pine and oak. Bravely they entered this gloomy cavern, and, looking round, saw that it was lined with shelves, laden with big round cheeses; while many sheep and lambs were folded in the deep, quiet places beyond. As the sailors gazed with interest at all these things, they heard heavy footsteps outside, and in stalked the greatest Cyclops of the country, a huge giant with one blazing eye, who carried a load of pine-trees on his back as easily as a bundle of faggots. Running in front of him came flocks of sheep and goats; and, when all were inside, the giant rolled an enormous rock before the cave’s mouth, and shut everybody up.
"With a frightful roar of rage, the Cyclops glared at them out of his huge eye."
THE LOST KING AND THE GIANT

At this Ulysses and his men were so much frightened that they hurried silently to the very farthest corners of the cavern, and flattened themselves out against the damp walls, like so many bats. But the giant—after setting out a cheese or two, with some bowls as big as beer-barrels, filled with milk, which he meant to have for his supper—lit a blazing fire in the middle of the cave; and, as the red glow shone into the far corners, caught sight of his unexpected and terrified visitors.

With a frightful roar of rage, he glared at them out of his huge eye, and demanded to know what they were doing in his secret cavern. Ulysses, shaking with fright, did his best to answer bravely, telling the giant that he and his men were lost wanderers, trying to find their way home to Greece. The Cyclops listened sullenly; then, with another roar, he stretched out his hand, seized a couple of the poor sailors, and, without hesitation, ate them up! Having done this, he coolly stretched himself in front of the fire and went to sleep.

Ulysses recovered his courage at this terrible sight, for anger made him strong and brave again. He drew his sword to kill the snoring giant; then paused and thought better. No one but the Cyclops was strong enough to roll away
the rock in front of the entrance to the cave. If he were killed the King and his followers would remain shut up and must starve to death. So Ulysses went back to his frightened companions; and they all lay, crouched and huddled together, as far as possible from the sleeping giant, until the morning.

When dawn came, this horrible Cyclops, without saying a word or even giving one of his dreadful roars, calmly ate two more of the sailors for his breakfast. Then, pleased and whistling, he rolled away the mountain of rock from the door, and drove his flocks out into the cool air of the morning. Following them with his great strides, he closed the cave again; and Ulysses heard his enormous voice echoing outside, like thunder rolling and roaring among the wooded hills.

So there was the King fastened up with what was left of his unhappy crew in the cave of this frightful monster. But Ulysses was one of the cleverest people in the world. Had not Minerva always looked after him and taught him wisdom? He thought things over for some time; then had a good look at the giant's club, which was really a big tree, as tall and strong as a ship's mast. Cutting off the top of this tree, he made his sailors shape and sharpen it until it was like an
THE LOST KING AND THE GIANT

enormous wooden spear. Then they hardened the point in the fire, and hid the weapon they had so cunningly made. Afterwards they all sat down—a long way from the door—to wait for evening and the giant’s return.

Presently they heard the earth shake with his tread. Once more he rolled back the great rock and drove the bleating flocks into the cave. Then, as usual, he shut everything up and made his supper from milk and cheese, finishing off with two more of the unhappy crew! Just as he was lying down to go to sleep, however, Ulysses approached him humbly, and in his hand the King carried a brimming goblet of wine.

Now this wine had been brought into the cave by the sailors when they first found their way there. It was delicious, and tasted like the nectar of the Immortals. Pretending to be very friendly, the King offered the goblet to the Cyclops, who seized it greedily, and emptied it at a draught.

The giant thought it quite the nicest drink he had ever tasted—so much sweeter and richer than his usual bowl of milk. Instantly he demanded more, and for the first time asked the name of the person who carried about with him so excellent a drink.
THE LOST KING AND THE GIANT

Ulysses, re-filling the goblet, said very craftily that his name was "Noman." "Then, Noman," replied the giant, "I will grant you a special favour. You shall be the last of my visitors that I will eat!"

Then he went on drinking the King's wine until he had had so much that all he wanted was to go to sleep. He sank stupidly by the embers of the fire, and soon began to snore.

Then Ulysses and the sailors that were left brought out the great wooden spear. The King made the point quite hot in the glowing ashes, raised the club high in the air, and plunged it, straight as a mighty arrow, into the Cyclops' one and only eye! With a terrible roar, like a hundred lions growling at once, the giant awoke, and began to plunge about the cavern in his pain and rage. Hearing his shouts and screams, all the other giants in the neighbourhood rushed from their dens among the rocks and, gathering about the mouth of the cave, called out to know what was the matter.

"Matter!" roared the Cyclops inside, "Noman is the matter! Noman has done this! Noman is answerable. Come inside and you will see Noman—hear Noman—and be able to kill Noman!"
"If that is the case," answered his friends in a huff, "we can do nothing for you! You say no man is the author of your trouble. Then it must be the Shining Ones themselves who are afflicting you, and the best thing we can do is to go away!"

So all the giants went away, and the raging monster within, spreading out his wide arms, found and rolled away the great rock from the cavern's mouth. He thought he could catch "Noman" and his friends as they tried to get out. When the sheep and goats saw that the way was open, they quickly began to pass through the entrance into the meadows outside. As they stepped past, the giant carefully felt each animal with his great hands, to see that it really was sheep or goat, and not one of his hidden foes. When Ulysses saw this, he did the cleverest thing he had ever done in his life. He tied three sheep together, very swiftly and silently, and bound one of his sailors right underneath the body of the middle animal, so that as the three pressed out side by side the giant never discovered that they were carrying a man in the midst of them. This Ulysses did for all his men in turn. Then, trembling with anxiety, he, himself, slipped under the body of a great, strong, beautiful ram, fixed his hands firmly in its wool, and was also
THE LOST KING AND THE GIANT

drawn out from the cave, all unknown to the blinded, angry, growling giant.

So there they were, this brave, clever King and his handful of sailors, safe outside the cave of the Cyclops. No sooner were they free than they ran for the shore, driving many of the giant's flocks before them. Hurriedly they drove the sheep and goats on board, hoisted their sails, and began to move away from this dreadful country, while Ulysses, unable to help boasting of his triumph, raised a loud shout of victory, which reached the blinded giant on the heights above.

Then the Cyclops knew that "Noman" had really escaped, after all. Rushing to the cliff he began hurling great stones down into the sea-channel through which he knew the ship must pass. But Ulysses steered his vessel safely past this new danger, and, standing in the bows, sent another mighty shout of victory up to the cliffs above.

"Cyclops!" he cried, "you need no longer think that it was Noman who conquered you, for it was I, Ulysses, King of Ithaca, who also overthrew the great city of Troy!"
AFTER Ulysses had escaped from the cave of the terrible one-eyed giant, he and his companions went sailing onwards, hoping, yet not knowing, that they were on their way to Greece. But Neptune was very angry; for the Cyclops whose eye had been put out by "Noman" was the son of the Sea-King. Ulysses, knowing that Neptune would do all he could to raise storms about his ship, made his way to the island of Æolus, the King of the Winds, who lived in a fine brazen palace on top of the cliffs. Æolus was so delighted with the tales of Ulysses's bravery that he promised to help him; and, in order that no more tempests should trouble him, gave him all the strong and angry winds tied up by force in a big leather bag. Only one wind was left outside; this was Zephyr, the gentle west breeze, which had once been so kind to Psyche, and which was always ready to be nice and gracious to men.
THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE PIGS

Zephyr, left alone on the sea, filled the sails of the King's vessel; and, with songs and laughter, the lost Greeks sailed onwards over the calm, blue water. Then, one night, they saw their own friendly lighthouse, and, as dawn broke, recognized the mountains of their long-lost country. How delighted they were! Ulysses, for the first time for ten days, left the helm, and went below to get an hour's sleep. But, while he slept, his companions did a shocking and treacherous thing.

They did not know what it was that the King kept so carefully in the leather bag, but they thought it must be a lot of gold and jewels. Wanting to steal some of this treasure, they crept on tip-toe to the cabin where the bag hung on the wall, and untied the silver cord which secured it. And, behold, with a shriek and a roar, out rushed all the fierce strong winds in a body!

Round and round spun the ship; then, as all the winds wanted to get home again, they set off for the brazen palace of Æolus as fast as they could, carrying the vessel with them. Æolus was so angry that he would do nothing more for Ulysses; and refused firmly to shut the winds up in the bag again. Even as Ulysses begged Æolus to think the better of his determination, the winds blew the ship away from the shore on
THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE PIGS

to an island where lived a giant who was even fiercer and hungrier than the Cyclops. After the giant had eaten a few of them, the remainder of the crew took to the oars, and managed to row the vessel away to another island, where in the evening they dropped anchor in a lonely bay, and, quite exhausted, slept soundly until the dawn.

When morning came the sailors found that the land was covered with thickets, and was as lonely as the waters of the bay; but, far off, they spied a little curling column of smoke rising in the middle of a wood. So Ulysses divided his men into two parties. He himself took command of one party, and the bravest of his crew, called Eurylochus, he made captain of the other party. Then they cast lots which should go to see where the smoke came from, and which should stay and look after the ship; and the lot fell upon Eurylochus and his party.

Off, then, they set through the forest, and presently a gloomy stone palace showed through the glades. Out of the courtyard of this castle wild animals peered, curiously, at the sound of footsteps. Then, instead of rushing to devour the strangers, these mountain creatures—bears and wolves and lions—came trotting up with a strange and gentle timidity, wagging their tails
THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE PIGS

and licking their visitors' hands! In great surprise, Eurylochus and his companions walked on, but presently stood still to listen. For, from the inside of the gloomy palace, they heard somebody singing even more sweetly than the Sirens sang.

The glorious voice swept up to the roof and out into the courtyard. Peeping through the door, the men saw a lovely maiden with golden hair, and white hands busy with tapestry upon a loom. She looked up from her work, and ceased her song as she saw the wondering faces at the entrance. Then, rising to her feet, she went to meet them with an enchanting smile, and invited them to come in.

One after another, the crew shyly entered—except Eurylochus. He was suspicious of this beautiful being, and hid himself outside in the courtyard, waiting to see what would happen. The enchantress, whose name was Circe, seemed to be quite alone in the palace. She herself showed her visitors to the fine seats, piled with soft cushions, that were placed all round the hall; and, with her own hands, served them with a feast of delicate white bread, ruby-coloured wine, creamy milk and golden honey. Very hungry and thirsty the men were, and they all ate and drank gladly; but, as time went on, they
began, one by one, to nod with drowsiness. Well they might, for Circe had mixed with the wine and the milk magical herbs of which she alone knew the secret. As soon as her guests were half-asleep, she drew out her sorceress's wand, and waved it round and round their nodding heads.

Then what do you think happened? The poor unfortunate sailors, who had been enjoying themselves so thoroughly, felt their noses growing very long, their legs very short, and their bodies very round and coarse. Their hair turned to bristles on their heads, and their ears became like little flaps. Their eyes grew small, round and cunning; and, when they tried to speak, they could only grunt or squeal! Squealing and grunting, they jumped from their beautiful thrones on to the floor; still squealing and grunting, they ran out of the door as Circe went on waving her wand. She had turned them all into pigs, and, as pigs, she drove them before her into another courtyard behind the palace and locked them up in a big, empty sty. Then, instead of wine and honey, she threw them down a meal of beech-nuts and acorns, and went disdainfully away.

Eurylochus, who had waited a long time for their return, at last made his way from the home
of this beautiful and wicked enchantress, and went back to the bay, tears streaming from his eyes and down his cheeks at the disappearance of his companions. When Ulysses, also in great distress, inquired what had happened, his friend could only say that everybody, save himself, had vanished behind Circe's doors; and that not a single man had come out to tell the story of their fate. Instantly the King buckled on his sword-belt and seized his bow, to set out to rescue the lost crew; although Eurylochus clung round his knees, still weeping, and begging his monarch not to risk his own life, most likely in vain. Sternly and haughtily, Ulysses rebuked his follower for cowardice, and set off through the enchanted wood. And enchanted indeed he found it, for, as he stalked down the sunny glades, with brave, proud step, suddenly a light that was not sunlight shone upon the green boughs, a golden wand glittered through the brown twigs, and a beautiful boy, with wings on his feet, appeared, smiling, among the green leafiness of the oaks. It was Mercury himself, sent by the Immortals to the rescue.

"Ulysses!" he cried, "brave Ulysses!" And, taking the monarch's hand, he informed him of all that had happened. Then he told the King to go on to Circe's palace, to eat the white bread
and honey, and drink the milk and wine that the fair sorceress would set before him. Then, stooping to the ground, Mercury pulled up a little modest-looking plant, with milk-white flowers and a black root like a small, shiny, dark snake—a little plant that was very rare, and grew in places known only to the Shining Ones.

"See, this is moly—the plant which makes witchcraft harmless," said he. "Place it in your bosom, and Circe’s magic poisons will be as powerless to hurt you as Circe’s magic wand."

Then, waving Ulysses onwards, the beautiful Immortal sprang into the air on his silver wings and flew back to Olympus.

Ulysses, with the pale, moly flowers hidden in his bosom, stepped on. He was greeted by the sad, timid wild beasts, by the sound of the wonderful singing, and, at last, by the Enchantress herself, with her golden hair and her white hands, just as his lost friends had been. He sat on a jewelled throne among soft cushions, and he ate and drank the delicious honey and milk and wine. But he remained wide awake and watchful, and, when Circe, thinking that her time had come, waved her wand over him in order to turn him into a beast, he stood before her, brave, strong and manly, and flashed his sword in her face!
THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE PIGS

Then the silver-voiced witch-lady sank on her knees before him, and owned herself conquered. Also, she instantly fell in love with this fearless King. She waved her wand with a new purpose, and nymphs sprang out of all the fountains in the courtyard and from the rivers in the woods. They brought fine cushions and carpets to deck the palace, and even richer food, in silver dishes, than that which had appeared before. But Ulysses would have nothing to do with them, nor with their beautiful mistress. He merely commanded Circe to take her spell from his companions, and to set them free.

So Circe, very slowly and disconsolately, went to the sty and let out the poor, bewitched pigs. Then she waved her wand over them as they ran grunting and squealing about, and, behold, they rose up on their hind feet and became men again. Rushing to Ulysses, they greeted him with broken words and cries of joy. Even Circe, her hard heart melted at last, could not help shedding tears at the scene. By order of Ulysses, she turned back all the sad bears and wolves into the princes and nobles they had been in the days of long ago. Then, bidding the King good-bye, and telling him how to avoid many more dangers that would still spring up in his homeward path, the Enchantress went back into her stone palace; and, from its
“Circe had turned them all into pigs.”
THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE PIGS
open doorway, watched Ulysses and his sailors pass, in a happy group, down the long glades of the forest, on their way back to the vessel that was to bear them once more to Greece.
"WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?"

Once again, then, Ulysses and his men found themselves sailing the high seas, where the halcyons called to each other across the lonely waves. Presently, all soft and silver-misted on the horizon, they caught sight of a new land; and, by the sudden hush that fell over the ocean, and by a dim sweet echo of far-away music, Ulysses knew that his vessel was drawing near to the Sirens' Enchanted Isles.

This was one of the dangers from which Circe had taught him the way of escape. So, while the crew took up oars to row the ship through the calm water, the King sat in the bows, busily making little balls of soft wax. By and by, he rose from his seat, and approached the sailors; and, one by one, he stopped up their ears with the wax balls, having first explained to them what they were to do when they were no longer able to hear his orders. In obedience to what he had commanded, the seamen—who were, of course, all made deaf by the rolls of wax in their ears—
“WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?”
took their King respectfully by his royal shoulders and bound him, as tightly as they could, to the mast of the vessel. Then they lifted their oars again, and, once more, rowed steadily in the direction of the Enchanted Isles.

The wax in their ears prevented them from hearing anything at all, and nothing was to be seen through the silvery mist except occasional glimpses of white shores and green hills. But Ulysses, tied to the mast, heard a sudden thrill of high, sweet melody travel across the water; then, all at once, a choir of fairy-voices rang out from the half-hidden land. Never had the King heard anything so exquisite as the magical singing! It seemed to be everywhere at the same time—in the sky, and round the mast, and down in the depths of the sea among the coral and the pearls. The voices of these unseen nymphs called to him to land on the shores beyond the mist, for he would find there all the things his heart desired. Unable to help himself, Ulysses fought and struggled to be free, so that he might steer his ship straight into the Sirens’ bay. But his men, having been warned what to expect, obeyed the orders he had given before stopping up their ears with wax. Bending to their oars, they rowed with might and main until their King’s struggles ceased, and he sank exhausted to the
“Up through the water came the Sea-King in his sparkling chariot, his green horses tossing their white manes.”
WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?'

dock. Then they pulled the wax out of their ears, and unbound Ulysses; for the dangerous islands had been left far behind, quite out of hearing, and the last echo of the Sirens' songs had died away.

But no sooner were they safely past the Sirens' Isles than, to their horror, they saw six awful heads suddenly rise, like six serpents, from the waves, and heard Scylla snapping her terrible jaws. This time their speed was vain; for Scylla seized a sailor in each of her wide mouths, and ate them up as hungrily as their companions had been eaten by the one-eyed giant. Ulysses, pale with horror, had no time even to stay to mourn them; he was obliged to hurry his ship forward as fast as possible, so that he might get past the deadly whirlpools of Charybdis. Swift as a sea-swallow the vessel flew over the water; and, to the great thankfulness of everybody on board, soon left Scylla's deep growlings, and the bubbling, boiling floods of her dreadful companion, far behind.

Breathing more easily, the crew still drove the vessel on; and by and by they heard the soft bleating of flocks in the quiet evening air. Looking eagerly ahead, they saw the sky all a-glitter with radiant mountains that rose high in the West. There, a very short way off, were
spread the fair and shining islands of the sun. Apollo's sheep and cows wandered on pastures bright as emeralds; and the evening light fell upon their fleeces of silver and their hides of gold. The sailors, overjoyed, leapt ashore; and, despite the earnest warnings of Ulysses, caught and killed some of these sacred cattle that belonged to the bright Immortal who drove the sun daily in his golden chariot across the sky.

Apollo, on his homeward way, looked towards the beautiful islands and saw what had been done. This was even a worse business than Mercury's! Full of rage, he hurried to the foot of Jupiter's throne, and demanded instant vengeance. By that time the crew had returned to the ship; so the King of Olympus sent down a great black thunderstorm right on top of the vessel, which was struck here, there and everywhere by blue forks of lightning, and whirled round and round in the wind like an autumn leaf. One by one the sailors were swept into the raging sea, till at last poor storm-beaten Ulysses was the only man left on board. The tempest drove the vessel—little more than a wreck now—in and out of the whirlpool of Charybdis, and once again past the dreadful heads of Scylla, who, however, luckily, did not catch sight of it. Then Jupiter's anger calmed down. He decided to
“WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?”

save Ulysses, because he had not himself eaten any of Apollo’s beautiful flocks; and so the Immortal King of Olympus, drawing back his thunderstorm, allowed the mortal King of Ithaca to drift on the wreck over calm, blue seas beneath calm, blue skies, until he reached the haven of Calypso’s cave.

There, as you have already been told, he fell under the sea-nymph’s spell, though, at night, he dreamt disturbed dreams about his sweet wife, his handsome son, and the lordly towers of his own palace-home. But no one can say how long Ulysses would have stayed with Calypso, or whether Telemachus would ever have managed to find her cave, and rescue his father, if Jupiter himself had not listened to Minerva’s pleading, and commanded Mercury to go and tell Calypso that she must set Ulysses free.

Over the waves, like a gull, flew the silver-white messenger, and was royally entertained by Calypso with wine and cakes and meats, in the green shade of her vine. But she was very sorrowful when she heard Jupiter’s orders. However, she dared not disobey, so she went to Ulysses and, giving him an axe, showed him the way to a great pine-wood, where he could cut down enough wood to build a raft, for his ship had gone to pieces as soon as he had left it. While
"WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?"

Ulysses hewed down the big pine-trees, Calypso wove a sail for him. Then she bade him good-bye, with tears in her eyes, and sent him away on his raft. And, the moment he lost sight of her, the last bit of the spell under which she had laid him fell away, so that he never threw a thought back to her magical bower, but only longed to return, as quickly as ever he could, to his home in Ithaca.

No sooner, however, was Ulysses out of sight of land than Neptune, peering from his caves, perceived the raft! Up through the water came the Sea-King in his sparkling chariot, his green horses tossing their white manes. How angry he was when he saw that the raft was carrying his old enemy, Ulysses! Without a moment's hesitation he raised a great storm of wind and wave; and, in the tempest, the raft was wrecked, and this time Ulysses had to swim for his very life to the nearest shore.

Worn-out and hungry, he managed to reach land, and, stumbling up the beach on bare, weary feet, sought the shelter of the woods. There he flung himself down on a bed of soft leaves, and slept soundly for a long time. At last he was awakened by most delightful sounds—the calls and cries and laughter of young girls who seemed to be playing at ball.
"WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?"

Peeping through his leafy screen, Ulysses saw the prettiest maiden that ever was born, dressed like a Princess, who, with her dainty skirts gathered round her knees, stood among the tall lilies and ferns at the edge of a sparkling river. On the ripples of the river floated a gleaming many-coloured ball, which the maiden had thrown too far for any of her playmates to catch. Little shrieks of laughter rang through the woods as one after another of these merry girls kept trying to rescue the ball. At last the youngest of them turned and saw Ulysses peeping through the boughs! With still louder shrieks—this time of dismay—the company of maidens scattered and fled to hide themselves among the mossy rocks and within the little caves. The Princess alone stood her ground, and stared gravely back at the fierce-looking stranger, who, with rough, sea-soaked hair and beard, was peering stealthily at her from between the branches.

Ulysses came forward, and, begging the Princess not to be frightened, told her something of his unhappy tale of adventure. She comforted him with queenly grace, like the true King's daughter that she was; gave him food and warm, dry clothing; and then, mounting with her maidens, who had recovered from their fright, into a fine chariot drawn by white mules, she set off for her
“WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?”

father’s palace, assuring Ulysses that, if he would follow her presently, she, the Princess Nausicaa, would see that he was kindly received. She fulfilled her promise faithfully, and when Ulysses reached the fine palace where she lived the King and Queen treated him with the utmost graciousness, so that their visitor, at last, told them everything, and proved to them that he was no mere shipwrecked, friendless mariner, but the lost King of Ithaca himself.

Then Nausicaa’s father had a fine ship fitted up, and treasure placed in it, and a crew told off to man it, as befitted the great hero of Troy. With every good wish from the royal pair and their pretty daughter, the vessel set sail; and Ulysses, worn-out and happy, fell so soundly asleep that he never woke even when the ship touched the shore of his native land. So the kind sailors carried him and his treasure up the beach, laid him down, still sleeping, in a warm corner among the rocks, and set sail again for their own country.

Ulysses woke to find himself surrounded by a strange fog; and out of the fog came a shepherd, who, after talking to him for a little while, turned into Minerva herself. Waving her wand, she drove away the fog, which was really a fairy mist, and Ulysses found that at last he was really
in his own long-lost kingdom. But Minerva said that he must not show himself yet to anybody; so she hid the treasure for a time and turned him into a very old man, like a beggar. In this disguise, Ulysses went to the cottage of a swineherd, who was very kind to him, and gave him food and a rough bed on which to sleep.

He lived for a few days quietly with the swineherd. This good man used to tell him stories of Ulysses, of poor faithful Penelope and her lovers, and of brave young Telemachus, who had gone far away to seek his lost father. Ulysses, as he listened, vowed vengeance on his treacherous and greedy nobles. Every day, however, he longed more and more to embrace his son, and wondered when Minerva would let them meet.

Then, one day, looking out of the swineherd's window, he saw a beautiful and comely youth approaching the little house. With a shout of joy, the faithful swineherd rushed to meet him, for the handsome youth was none other than Telemachus himself, who, as you know, had been told, in a dream, to turn back home, and wait there for his father.

He entered the cottage, and Ulysses rose to give the young man his seat. But the kindly Prince—who did not, of course, recognize the King—insisted that the old beggar should stay
"WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?"

upon his comfortable seat of osiers, saying that white hairs must be respected. With joy Ulysses heard him. With greater joy did he listen while Telemachus vowed that he would never rest until he had found his father and restored the ruler of Ithaca to the arms of his Queen.

Then Minerva appeared again, and once more waved her wand. The startled Prince saw the beggar’s silver hair become thick and dark, the wrinkled cheek turn ruddy, the faded eyes glow and glisten with life. The rags turned into silk and velvet, the staff into a sceptre gleaming with gems. The beggar held out his arms, and Telemachus, understanding all, was quickly folded into them, and father and son almost wept over each other for joy.

Together they set out for the palace; but, as they drew near, Ulysses once more put on the form of an old and ragged man. In this manner he entered the gates, and stood and watched the nobles as they tried, one after another, to bend the great bow that he, himself, had used for hunting when he was their King.

This was the last task set them, in despair, by Penelope. She had said that she really would marry the man who could bend Ulysses’s bow! For, through all these years, it had leant against one of the ivory pillars of the palace, and nobody
"Ulysses watched the nobles as they tried, one after another, to bend the great bow."
“WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?”

had been found strong enough to shoot an arrow from the string.

Ulysses watched in silence, as, through the whole day, the nobles tried in vain to bend the bow. Then, when evening fell, the old beggarman stepped forward, and asked to be allowed to try! Everybody scoffed and sneered at him, but Telemachus bade them be silent, for it was his princely command that the beggar should be allowed to try as everybody else had done and, possibly, to win the prize.

So Ulysses, lovingly, took up his own old bow. He passed his hand along the polished wood, and turned it this way and that examining it carefully. Then he fitted an arrow to the cord, drew the great bow easily into a curving arch, and shot the arrow straight and true to the mark.

And now, throwing off his rags, Ulysses stood among them, dark-haired, blazing-eyed, and purple-robed, and showed himself their King! He and Telemachus drove the nobles from the courtyard and killed the wickedest among them. Trembling with love and haste, Ulysses hurried to the apartments of the Queen. For a little time she could not believe that it was indeed her husband who had returned to her, and held away from him, trembling and shy. At last, with a sweet look at her, he asked a question:
"WHO CAN BEND THE GREAT BOW?"

"Penelope," he said, "do you not remember the great fig-tree in your father’s courtyard under which I told you of my love?"

Then the Queen knew that this was indeed Ulysses. Nobody in the world but the King and herself knew that it was under the great fig-tree that he had first shown her his love. And, with a happy sob, she ran straight into his arms, and was folded tightly to his breast, never to be parted from the husband she had so faithfully loved.
ONE dark night a Prince, young and handsome, but very worn and weary, lay fast asleep beside a fountain in a wood. The trees waved softly above him; the stars shone like distant jewels; and the sound of the water mingled with the soft stirring of the breeze. But the Prince, whose name was Bellerophon, moved uneasily in his sleep. He was dreaming not of the scents and the dews of the forests, but of a horrible monster that the King of the country had ordered him to go and kill, a beast even worse than the Minotaur, for it had a lion’s head, a goat’s body, and a dragon’s tail, and it breathed fire every time it opened its enormous mouth.

Poor Bellerophon had not done anything to deserve such a task, but the King’s daughter, who was the Queen of another country, disliked him, and had plotted to get rid of him. As a result of her plot, he had been commanded to go and slay the monster, of which everybody in the country was terribly afraid. He did not think he could
"The silver-winged horse swept downward in answer to Bellerophon's hand and heel."
possibly do this; but he was brave, and had made up his mind to try. While thinking of the best way to begin, he sat down by the fountain and fell asleep. Then, overhead, came the gleam of wings among the stars—wings that stretched out far, far wider than an eagle’s, and that shone, silver and beautiful, under the crescent moon. The wings belonged, not to a great bird, but to a white horse! Round and round this beautiful creature flew, now circling high above the sleeping Prince’s head, now poised in the air like an enormous, glittering hawk. Never was there such a sight on any mountain as that of this bright, winged steed, hanging, starry and wonderful, between the shadowed forest and the silver-studded, purple-blue sky of night.

It was Pegasus, the fairy horse of the Shining People themselves. Presently he dropped, with silent hoofs, upon the mossy rock, and trod lightly across the violets and thyme, his great wings folded and smooth. Even as he stepped towards the fountain, so noble, so graceful, so serene in his easy strength, the Prince’s dream changed. Instead of the monster which had been troubling his sleep he thought he saw one of the Immortal Ladies standing by his side, none other than Minerva herself, with her kind, blue eyes and her encouraging smile. In her hand she held a golden
bridle, and she stooped and laid it near him on the grass. Then, waving her hand to him, she flew away, and he awoke.

But it could not have been merely a dream! For there, beside him, lay the golden bridle; and, stepping through the starlit forest came the beautiful, silver-winged horse!

Then Bellerophon knew why Minerva had given him the golden bridle. Many a time before had he tried to catch Pegasus, but had always failed. Now, smiling to himself, he watched the glittering creature move towards the fountain, bend his fine head and drink. As he drank the Prince drew silently near, bridle in hand. Then, with a bound, he sprang upon the horse's back, and slipped the golden bit into his open mouth. In a moment Pegasus knew the feel of it, and realized that the bridle of the Shining People lay upon his neck. Those reins he had never tried to shake off nor to resist, and immediately he spread his silver wings, rose from the ground, and, carrying Bellerophon on his back, floated away with him, up, up, up towards the stars.

What a triumph for Bellerophon! How wonderful to ride through the air, the breeze from the great, sweeping wings fanning his face. He drew the golden reins through his fingers, and Pegasus snorted softly, arching his gleaming neck as he
"Down, down Phaeton fell, his very hair in flames, like a beautiful falling star, right into a deep, cool river."
flew. Then with gentle hands, the Prince turned the horse’s head towards the dark valley where, among tangled thickets, the monster lurked for the helpless men and women who formed its prey.

The silver-winged horse swept downward in answer to Bellerophon’s hand and heel. With a roar of rage and a red glare of fire, the great beast sprang from the thicket, and tried to drag the Prince from his fairy steed. But Pegasus shot upwards again; and Bellerophon fitted an arrow to the bow that he carried slung across his shoulders. Straight and true, he shot the arrow into the creature’s shaggy hide; then another, and another and another, while the monster bel-lowed and leapt uselessly into the air, lashing the ground with its tail. The fight was over at last, and the beast sank down, and died. When it had drawn its last fiery breath, and lay there in stillness, nothing but smoke coming from its jaws, Bellerophon gently guided Pegasus to earth, sprang from the horse’s back and cut off the horrible creature’s tail and head. Then the horse of the Shining Ones carried him back to the King’s palace, where he gave the dragon’s tail and its lion-like head to the monarch in proof of his victory.

Another hero there was in those days who once travelled in the sky, but came to a sad end through
HEROES OF THE SKY

his rashness. This was Phaeton, the son of Apollo himself. Phaeton's mother was a sweet, young woman, who was very proud of her son and of his wonderful father. But the lad's school friends would not believe that he was the child of Apollo, and teased him and laughed at him until he began himself to think that it could not be true. So, to convince him, his mother told him to go and find Apollo in his palace on Olympus, and ask the great Immortal to acknowledge him as his son.

Off, then, went Phaeton, and climbed the rocky path until he reached the top of the mountain. There stood the palace of Apollo, on high pillars, with bright, silver gates. Phaeton entered boldly, but when he saw his father seated on a great throne sparkling with emeralds, rainbow lights flashing round him, and a dazzling crown on his head, the young man covered his eyes with his hands, for he could not face the radiance. With bowed head, he told his father who he was; and instantly the Immortal put off his crown, and, bidding his son draw near without fear, stooped and embraced him. Then he swore that he would grant any request the youth might make, and what do you think foolish Phaeton asked for?

He asked that he might, for a whole day, drive the chariot of the sun in his father's place!
HEROES OF THE SKY

Apollo was startled and dismayed. But he would not break his word. Warning his boy of the terrible risk and danger, he ordered the chariot and horses of the sun to be brought forth. Out from the stables, then, beautiful nymphs led the shining horses and the jewelled car; and Aurora, the Lady of the Dawn, opened the gates that led from the palace on to the wide silences of the sky. Pointing to that strange, deep space, without any roads or paths, Apollo gave his son many more warnings: told him of the giddy heights, of a Serpent that wriggled among the stars, and of the steep hill that he must drive down at the journey's end. Then he placed his own crown on Phaeton's head, and gave the reins into his hands. With a great bound, the horses set swiftly off.

Then, indeed, Phaeton knew how rash he had been. The horses soon felt the uncertain hand upon the shining reins, and began to take the car where they would. All among the wonders of the sky, they galloped madly; and Phaeton, when he saw the strange and terrible creatures, was simply frightened out of his wits. There was a black Scorpion among them, with a great long tail; and there were two Bears, that looked as white and cold as ghosts. But cold they were no longer when the chariot dashed by, far out of its
HEROES OF THE SKY

track, its horses trampling the air into sparks, and shaking out fire from their manes, on to the hills below. At last the mountains broke into flames, and the people who were near were scorched black and turned into negroes on the spot. The fishes fled into the coolest corners of the rocks, and the sea-nymphs crept into the far, green shadows of the deep caves. What would have happened to the world is more than anyone can say if Jupiter, seeing what was happening, had not thrown a great thunderbolt from Olympus straight at Phaeton, as he sat terrified in the chariot, clinging to its rocking sides, his reins loose on the horses' backs. The thunderbolt hurled him from the car, and down, down, down he fell, his very hair in flames, like a beautiful falling star, right into a deep, cool river. And there he lay among the water-lilies, with the fire that was burning him put out at last.

So poor Phaeton perished, and the horses of Apollo galloped wildly back to their stables behind the doors of the Dawn. For a whole day Apollo wept over his boy's death; and the sun-chariot remained at home in the palace yard. But the people on the earth were only too glad to have twenty-four hours of quiet sleep in the stillness that followed that terrible day of heat. And when Apollo had recovered from his grief he set
HEROES OF THE SKY

out once more upon his wonderful journey, his horses stepping lightly through the pearly mists of morning, and answering faithfully to their own master's hand upon the reins.
SOME WONDERFUL ENCHANTMENTS

YOU have come to understand, by this time, that the Shining People were the greatest magicians that ever came, with their enchantments, among the human beings who walk the world. It would take dozens of books to tell you of even half their deeds. But certainly one of the most wonderful of all was something that Venus did for a King called Pygmalion.

This King did not care about fighting, like other monarchs who lived near. Nor did he want to hunt, nor feast, nor show his strength in the great games that everybody played. Instead, he was always carving, either in ivory or marble. He said he would never marry, for the maidens he carved with his marvellous chisel were more beautiful than any princess he was ever likely to meet. So he shut himself up in his studio, and worked at his creations in dreamy solitude.

Then, one day, he carved the statue of a maiden that was lovelier than any sculptor had ever made. It had rounded, delicate limbs,
dainty hands and feet, and a face full of sweetness and charm. Pygmalion looked at it for a long, long time when he had finished. And, while he looked, he positively fell in love with it.

What despair, yet what delight, the poor King felt! To be deeply in love with an ivory statue was a hopeless affair; yet he was proud that anything so beautiful should be the work of his own hands. He kissed her pretty slender fingers, her still feet, and even her curved, quiet mouth. He hung jewels about her rounded neck, and soft fragrant silks upon her white shoulders. All among her chiselled hair he wound wreaths of real blossoms, red roses, purple wind flowers, and jessamine like little stars. He brought in birds from the forest to sing to her, and he made her a golden bed. How sweet the flowers smelt when he went to visit his ivory lady in the twilight! How pure and good her face looked in the dusk! But how silent her pale lips were, and how unseeing her creamy-lidded eyes!

At last poor Pygmalion began to fade away for love of his statue. So he went to the temple, where a great feast was being held in honour of Venus. There he stood before a fire which burnt fragrantly, sending little clouds of rosy smoke floating through the pillars; while crowds of people stood round, singing about the Lady of
SOME WONDERFUL ENCHANTMENTS

Love. And, as he stood there, he sang a special song to Venus himself.

"Sweet Immortal!" sang Pygmalion, very softly, "Lady of Love! I have carved a statute from my dreams. It is in the form of a maiden, such a maiden as was never seen before! I have named her Galatea! I love her as I shall never love any mortal. Sweetest Lady of the Shining Ones, give my lady life!"

As Pygmalion finished singing he saw a wonderful sight. The little fire before which he stood, which had glowed fragrantly through his song, suddenly sent up a slender tongue of high, clear flame—once, twice, thrice! Pygmalion's heart leapt in answer to the flame. He felt sure that this was Venus's reply.

He almost ran home in his excitement, and hurried to his studio at full speed. Opening the door, he looked eagerly at the statue of his fair maiden as she stood there in her meek stillness, the flowers resting on her head, the long rich robes gleaming about her quiet form. All at once a little tremble ran through her, the flowers quivered as if a breeze shook them, and the silken hems stirred about her feet. Then her eyelids flickered, her head moved, and her fingers unclasped themselves, as if she were a child awaking from sleep. Life came into her beautiful...
"Life came into her beautiful face—and with life came immediate love."
face—and with life came immediate love. Before Pygmalion could speak or move, he saw his Galatea step down, slowly and dreamily, from her pedestal, and come towards him holding out her hands!

With a cry of joy the King caught the maiden to him, and as he kissed her lips he felt them soft and warm. Venus had granted his wish, and had given the statue life.

So Pygmalion married his lovely ivory lady and made her his Queen, and they lived for many years, two of the happiest people who ever wore crowns.

But, if Venus turned a statue into a maiden, Minerva once turned a maiden, not into a statue, but into a spider!

It happened this way. Arachne was a young girl who was very clever with her loom, on which she would weave most marvellous tapestries. She wove so much better than anybody else that at last she grew intolerably conceited, and was always boasting of her skill. She even declared that her purple and gold embroideries were more beautiful than those of Minerva herself.

One day, when Arachne was boasting more loudly than usual, she suddenly heard a little grunt at her elbow. Looking round, she saw a
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queer old woman, rather like a witch, who was leaning on a long stick and staring hard at Arachne’s latest tapestry. The old lady grunted again, and shook her white-haired head.

“Boastful! Too boastful!” she muttered.

“This will never do!”

Then she looked full at Arachne, and went on, more loudly:

“So you think your work is finer than that of Minerva, do you?”

“There is no doubt that it is!” answered Arachne. “If she herself does not think so, why does she not come down from Olympus and show me that she can do better!”

“She will show you!” exclaimed the old lady angrily. And, lo, and behold! her stick turned into a spear, her hood into a helmet, and her ragged cloak fell off and showed her shining breastplate and rich tunic. The old woman was Minerva herself!

“Now,” said the indignant Immortal Lady, “bring me another loom, and we will begin!”

So another loom was set up by the side of Arachne’s and she and Minerva began to weave, the sound of their shuttles mingling with the song of the swallows under the eaves. The Shining Visitor from Olympus wove a marvellous design, showing all the great things that the Immortals
“Looking round, she saw a queer old woman, rather like a witch, who was leaning on a long stick, and staring hard at Arachne’s latest tapestry.”
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had done. But Arachne, full of conceit and mischief, made a great picture, in many coloured threads, of the silly quarrels and jealousies of the Shining Ones, turning them, one by one, into ridicule! When she had finished, she showed her work to Minerva, laughing in the great lady’s face!

Now, was she not a rash and foolish maiden? Minerva gave a cry of anger, and, seizing the tapestry, tore it to pieces. Then she threatened to do such terrible things to Arachne that the poor girl, proud no longer, thought she had really better be dead than alive, and took a rope with which to hang herself! Minerva, however, would not even allow her to die. Sprinkling Arachne with some magical oil, she turned the rope into a long, delicate, silken thread. Arachne, who was already dangling at the end of it, felt her body becoming small, round and hairy! Her arms disappeared, and she grew eight legs instead of her own two pretty ones! Her eyes started out on either side of her head, and her skin went hard and brown. She ran up the silken thread as fast as she could, and sat down in a little gossamer web that she found at the top! And there she sat, spinning and weaving for ever, for Minerva had turned her into a spider!

Whenever you see a spider spinning its web
SOME WONDERFUL ENCHANTMENTS

among the ivy-leaves now, you will always think of Arachne.

And when you see the bluebells in the spring woods you can remember another story—the story of Hyacinth. He was a handsome and noble youth, and Apollo himself came down from Olympus to make friends with him. They used to play at quoits together; but one day, Zephyr, the spirit of the West Breeze, passed by, and became very angry. He was always rather jealous of Apollo, and he wanted himself to play at quoits with handsome Hyacinth. So he sent a great puff of wind which caught Apollo’s quoit and blew it right against poor Hyacinth’s head. The youth sank down like a broken flower, and Apollo, catching him in his arms, saw that he was dying. The great Sun-Spirit, in deep distress, tried to staunch his mortal playmate’s blood; but he could not save Hyacinth. So he turned all the drops, as they fell, into lovely blue flowers, which soon began to nod their fragrant heads among the shine and shadow of the wood where the two friends had laughed and run together at their games; while Zephyr, heart-broken at what he had done, moved softly among the blossoms, and carried their perfume far and wide through the fields.
SOME WONDERFUL ENCHANTMENTS

Another spring flower there is on those Greek mountains which also blooms in memory of a beautiful youth. Adonis was a hunter, very bold and daring, and one day he came across a fierce wild boar in the forest. He chased it eagerly through the glades with his long spear; but, just as he came near enough to kill it, the great beast turned on him and drove its ivory tusk into his side. With a cry, he sank down, and Venus, who loved Adonis very tenderly for the sake of his beauty, heard the cry and instantly turned her snowy doves in the direction of the sound. But she was too late, the spirit of Adonis had been led away to the shadowed garden of Proserpine. In despair, Venus hurried through the glades towards Olympus, and the tears which fell from her eyes unheeded turned into delicately blue anemones, with petals like fairy silk. At the same time, the blood which flowed from the wound of Adonis turned also into anemone-blossoms, as scarlet as the drops themselves. When Venus reached Olympus she begged Jupiter to let Adonis return to earth; and the King said that he might come back for six months every year, like Proserpine herself.

Sometimes, too, in Greece, you may see beautiful cypress trees, planted to shade people’s graves. The first cypress tree had once been a
youth as handsome as Hyacinth, who loved Apollo just as much. He killed Apollo’s pet stag, by accident, and pined away with remorse; so Apollo changed him into a cypress, dark-boughed, faithful, and strong. There is a delicately-flowering shrub, too, called Daphne. This pretty bush was once a maiden whom Apollo loved, and wanted to make love him, in return. But she was frightened, and ran away, and, when Apollo pursued her and tried to kiss her, she turned into a bush.

These are some of the wonderful things on the Greek mountains, where Glaucus and Neptune peep up through the sparkling waters of the bays. Pan pipes to the goats and hares; and the reeds by the river where Midas bathed gleam with gold. Zephyr plays softly in the dawn with the hyacinth bells, and the crown of Ariadne sparkles in the evening sky.

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