

STORIES OF OLD GREECE



PANDORA

STORIES OF OLD GREECE

BY

EMMA M. FIRTH

Oh myths of ancient days, when earth, and air
And water teemed with visions wondrous fair,
And loveliest spirits! Ne'er shall knowledge bold
Wrest from your ashes the sweet charm you hold.

**YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

Cover and arrangement © 2009 Yesterday's Classics, LLC.

This edition, first published in 2009 by Yesterday's Classics, an imprint of Yesterday's Classics, LLC, is an unabridged republication of the text originally published by D. C. Heath and Company in 1894. For the complete listing of the books that are published by Yesterday's Classics, please visit www.yesterdaysclassics.com. Yesterday's Classics is the publishing arm of the Baldwin Online Children's Literature Project which presents the complete text of hundreds of classic books for children at www.mainlesson.com.

ISBN-10: 1-59915-315-7

ISBN-13: 978-1-59915-315-5

Yesterday's Classics, LLC
PO Box 3418
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

The child lives wholly in the present. He is semi-barbaric in his tendencies toward self-interest. He needs to be lifted from an indefinite present of childish

pleasure to a definite understanding of his own powers, and a better exercise of his will. If by means of a story, well told, he can grasp the simple truth contained in it, he is making progress in the right direction. He is getting a foundation for the future study of literature, and gaining an appreciation for the beautiful in art.

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

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

These myths are meant to do for the little beginner what the study of literature does for the "children of a

larger growth.” They are but beginnings for beginners; but with the sincere hope that they may accomplish the desired results, the writer submits them to her fellow-teachers and to the dear children of America.

CONTENTS

GREECE AND THE GREEKS.....	1
HELIOS AND CLYTIE.....	5
PHAETHON.....	9
APOLLO, THE BEAUTIFUL	15
HYACINTHUS	18
APOLLO AND THE PYTHON	21
DAPHNE, THE DAWN-MAIDEN	25
HERMES AND APOLLO	30
BAUCIS AND PHILEMON.....	37
RHOECUS	43
ARACHNE, THE LITTLE SPINNER	47
PSYCHE.....	52
ORPHEUS, THE SWEET SINGER	59
THE STORY OF THE HALCYON BIRDS.....	65
PROMETHEUS	71
EPIMETHEUS AND PANDORA.....	74
PERSEUS, "THE SON OF THE BRIGHT MORNING" ..	79

GREECE AND THE GREEKS

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

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

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

Their chariots were clumsy because they were very

STORIES OF OLD GREECE

heavy; but the finer ones were as beautiful as the Greeks could make them with carvings, gold, and jewels.

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

They made statues of their heroes and their gods.

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

Poseidon lived in a beautiful palace at the bottom of the sea. With his trident he caused mighty tempests, or stilled the angry waves. He was carried from place to place in a shell chariot drawn by fish-horses, which bounded so swiftly over the water that the chariot scarcely touched its waves. Demeter looked after the fields, and brought good harvests to the people. Athena taught them to be wise in many ways. She taught them to do all kinds of hard work; and Helios, the sun-god,



DEMETER

STORIES OF OLD GREECE

drove his golden chariot across the sky every morning. There were many other gods of whom the Greeks asked help, and of whom they told the stories which we shall read.

HELIOS AND CLYTIE

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

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

STORIES OF OLD GREECE



HELIOS

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

The beginning of the journey, was very pleasant to Helios. The birds sang a greeting, the brooks and rivers made music for him, and the people down upon the green earth sang songs in his praise. Everybody and everything loved him. Even the little ants, toiling away at their tiny sand mountains, watched for his coming. Helios should have been happy and contented at all times; but he was not. Sometimes his discontent darkened his bright face, so that people on the earth were frightened. In vain they sang their songs of praise and inquired, "Where is Helios?" No one could tell.

HELIOS AND CLYTIE

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

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

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

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

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

STORIES OF OLD GREECE

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

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

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

PHAETHON

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

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

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

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

Now Phaethon had never seen his father. In order that he might be self-dependent he had been brought up far away from the palace to which his mother intended to

STORIES OF OLD GREECE

take him when he had proven himself worthy. Clymene told him how difficult he would find the journey; but Phaethon was willing to overcome all difficulties, and he started at once. On the way he had many adventures, but at last found himself in a far Eastern country, which has for its boundary a wall of high mountains.

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

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

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

At this moment the goddess of the morning, Eos, drew aside a beautiful crimson veil, and the chariot and horses were brought in. It was a glorious moment. The attendants burst into a chorus of glad music; the air

PHAETHON

became sweet with perfume, as from many flowers, and the spirited horses stamped impatiently at the delay.

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

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

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

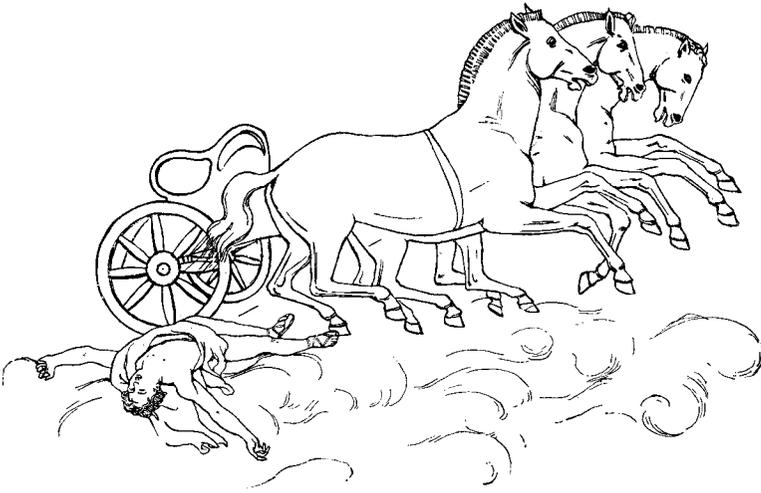
Phaethon was very stubborn. He longed for the glory of having driven the sun-chariot for a day, and with this desire strong in his heart, he forgot to respect the wishes of an older and wiser person.

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

At first it was fine sport holding the reins over the fire-breathing horses. Helios had wisely allowed them their own pace, which was far from slow; but Phaethon

STORIES OF OLD GREECE

urged them on until they were rushing at a terrific speed quite out of their regular course. At length they came so near to the poisonous Scorpio, that Phaethon was in danger of being grasped by the great claws, and dropping the reins in his fright, he clung desperately to the chariot.



PHAETHON

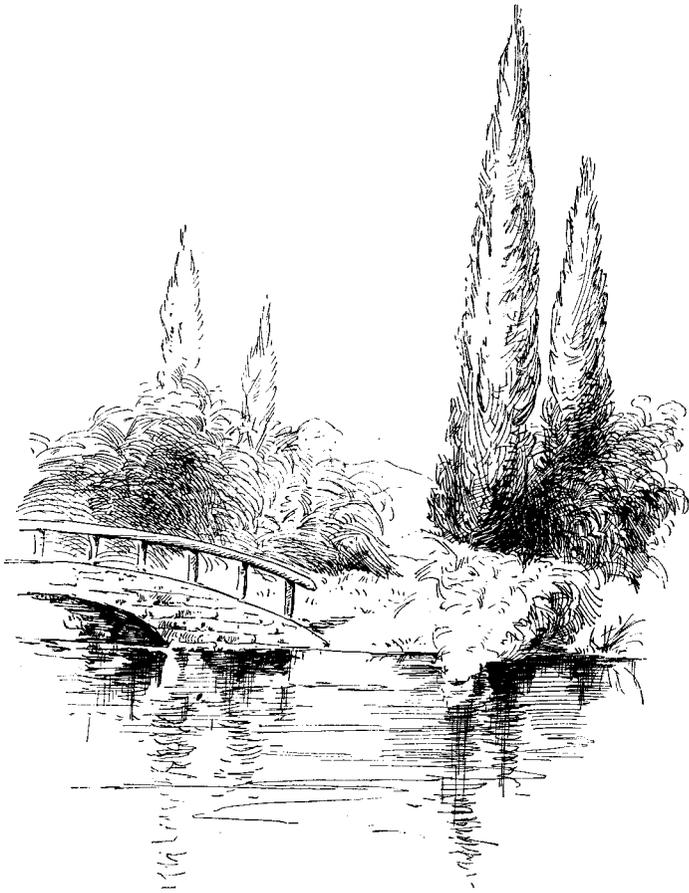
The horses plunged wildly on. They came so near to the earth that the oceans and rivers dried up, the mountains began to smoke, and the people cried to Zeus for help.

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

A sad ending was this to Phaethon's great day. But,

PHAETHON

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



POPLAR-TREES

STORIES OF OLD GREECE

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