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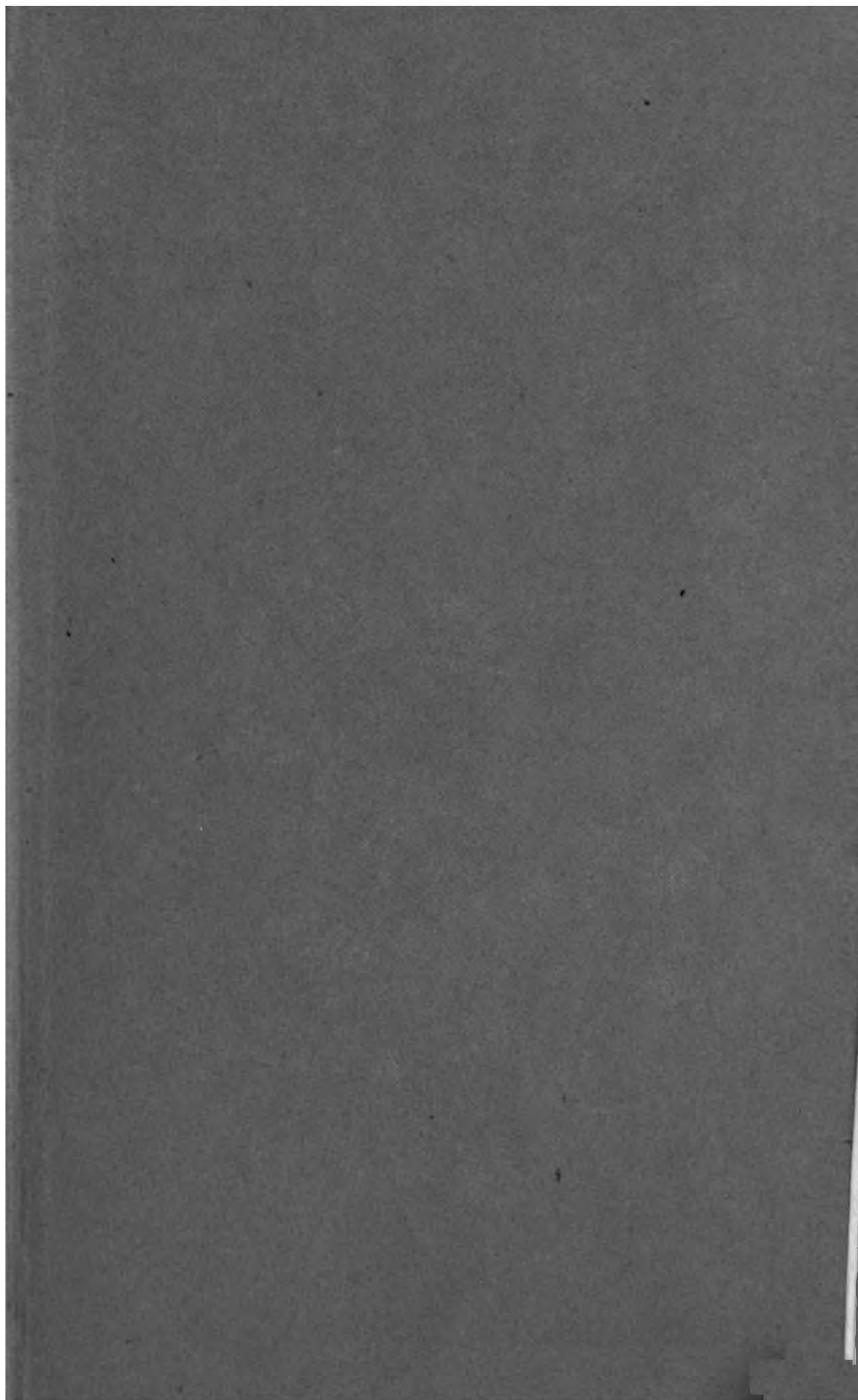


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NIEBUHR'S
GREEK
LEGENDS

43. 029







Stories
of the
Gods and Heroes of Greece,
told by
Berthold Niebuhr
to his Son.

Translated from the German.

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Sarah Austin.

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PREFACE.

THE following stories were told by the illustrious historian and scholar Niebuhr, to his son—the Marcus of whom he speaks with so much pride and fondness in his letters. By him they were recently published. They are translated by one who was his playfellow sixteen years ago, and who then caught some reflections of the delight with which they were heard and remembered and repeated.

The translation is, as nearly as may be, literal. The translator has tried to keep to the style of those who know how to narrate for children and childlike men; where each sentence is a simple uninvolved statement, and the sentences are bound together by the most direct and inartificial links.

Having carefully ascertained the accuracy of the translation, my task was at an end. I found nothing to alter, and was rather tempted to envy the youthful freshness and courageous *naïveté* of the style.

The reader will observe that the Greek names of the gods and heroes of Greece are retained. The reasons for this deviation from long-received usage are, I think, sufficiently cogent to justify it. It is by no means indifferent whether we adopt the Roman, or adhere to the Greek names. They do, in fact, denote different personages; for Jupiter is not Zeus, nor Venus, Aphrodite, in any sense which we ought

to be content to accept. The Romans not only altered the appellations, but corrupted and disfigured the myths, of the gods they borrowed; and there is no calculating the extent to which poetry and art have suffered by the adoption of names, and with those names, associations, engrafted upon the Greek mythology by a people so inferior in imagination, and in æsthetical and philosophical culture. The sooner these associations are broken the better. It has been suggested that such an innovation is out of place in a child's book. I venture to think the contrary; though, indeed, it is much in accordance with common practice, to teach the child what the man must unlearn. To the child, one name, unincumbered with associations, is as easily learned as another; and is it not far better that he should at once acquire those which were used by the eternal masters of art, than those which can only recall the fall of Greece, and the disfigurement of the images of celestial beauty with which the exquisite imagination and unerring taste of her sons had peopled all her borders?

In this, as in everything connected with art, the Germans are much in advance of the rest of Europe; and, doubtless, the conscientious industry with which they have applied themselves to understand Greece, is one main cause of their superiority. It is time that we should follow their example; and not begin our studies of the most singular and interesting people that ever existed, in words which must introduce incurable confusion into our conceptions. The subject is surely important enough to warrant some effort to shake off the yoke of custom. A list of the Greek

names which occur in the work, together with the corresponding Roman names, is subjoined.

It has been suggested by an eminent scholar, that the corrupt use of the Roman *c*, which, as we pronounce it, entirely changes the sound of many Greek words, ought to be abandoned. In deference to such an opinion, we have replaced the *k*; though I confess this (being a difference of sound alone) appears to me unimportant, as compared with the substitution of completely different words, associated with trains of different attributes and incidents. But on the general principle of bringing back names (no unimportant part of the characteristics of a nation) to their original and authentic forms, we have thankfully availed ourselves of corrections from so learned a hand.

S. A.

London, October 30, 1843.

*Greek.**Roman.*

ZEUS	JUPITER.
HERE	JUNO.
PALLAS-ATHENE	MINERVA.
APHRODITE	VENUS.
PHŒBUS-APOLLO, } or HELIOS (THE SUN) }	APOLLO.
ARTEMIS	DIANA.
ARES	MARS.
DEMETER	CERES.
PERSEPHONE	PROSERPINE.
POSEIDON	NEPTUNE.
HEPHÆSTUS	VULCAN.
HERMES	MERCURY.
DIONYSUS	BACCHUS.
HERAKLES	HERCULES.
POLYDEUKES	POLLUX.

GREEK LEGENDS.

THE VOYAGE OF THE ARGONAUTS.

THERE was once a king in Greece called Athamas, and his wife's name was Nephele, and they had two children, a son and a daughter, who were both very good, and loved each other dearly; the son was called Phrixus, and the daughter Helle. But their father was wicked, and he put away his wife, the mother of his children, and married another woman, whose name was Ino, and who was very wicked. Now Ino was a cruel step-mother; she treated the poor children very ill, and gave them bad things to eat and bad clothes, and beat them when they were good, because they cried after their own mother. At last she wanted to offer up Phrixus as a sacrifice, but when he was brought to the altar, the god Hermes came with a beautiful large ram that had golden wool, and could run upon the clouds. Hermes set Phrixus and his sister Helle upon this ram with the golden fleece, and told them to go through the air to the country called Colchis.

Now the ram knew the way, and the children held his horns with one hand, and put their arms round each other; but Helle let go her brother, and fell into the sea. Phrixus cried sadly because his dear sister was drowned; but he rode on till he got to Colchis, and there he sacrificed the ram, and nailed the golden fleece to an oak.

A long while after there was another king in Thessaly, called Pelias, who had a brother called Aeson, and Aeson

had a son called Jason, who was young, and a brave warrior, and lived with his father outside the city. Now it had been foretold to King Pelias that a man who should come to him with only one shoe, was to take away his kingdom. And it happened that King Pelias gave a feast, and invited Jason to come to it. But Jason had to pass a stream, on his way to the city, where there was no bridge; there had been a great storm in the night, and heavy rain, and the stream was very full and strong, and one of Jason's shoes came untied, and the stream washed it away, so that he arrived at the King's palace with only one shoe. When King Pelias saw this he was frightened, and ordered Jason to leave the country and not to come back again till he could bring him the golden fleece.

Jason was not afraid, and he asked many brave warriors to go with him; for before he could get the golden fleece he would have to fight with wild beasts and fierce men. Then he built a great ship for himself and his companions; and the goddess Pallas-Athene, who was fond of him, helped him, and gave him the mast, and the mast told him what he was to do whenever he asked it.

The ship's name was Argo, and all those who sailed in it were called Argonauts. Among the Argonauts was Herakles, and two brothers who had wings and could fly through the air, and Polydeukes, a hero who was so strong that he knocked down everybody who boxed with him.

The Argonauts first came to a country the king of which was called Amykus; whenever strangers came there he made them box with him, and killed them, for he was very strong. But Polydeukes threw him down and killed him because of his cruelty.

After that they came in the ship Argo to the city of Salmydessus, where lived a king called Phineus. Now Phineus had offended Zeus, and so Zeus to punish him

made him blind, and whenever he sat down to eat, there came dreadful great birds, called Harpies. They had skins like iron armour, so that when the followers of the blind king Phineus shot or struck at them, they did not feel it; and they had long sharp iron claws, with which they tore and wounded the people who wanted to drive them away. When the food was brought in, they came and snatched it away; and if they could not take it all, they dirtied the table and the dishes, so that it all stank horribly. So poor Phineus never could eat in comfort, and was nearly starved to death. When the heroes came, he told them his misfortunes and wept bitterly, and begged them to help him; and they sat down to eat with him, but as soon as the food was brought, in flew the Harpies. Jason and his companions drew their swords and attacked them, but it was of no use. Then the two sons of Boreas, Zetes and Kalais, who had wings, raised themselves in the air. At that the Harpies were frightened and flew away, and the two heroes after them; at last the Harpies got so tired and frightened, that they fell into the sea and were drowned, and Zetes and Kalais flew back again to poor King Phineus, who was now able to eat in peace again.

As soon as the wind was fair, the heroes embarked again in the ship Argo, to sail to Colchis; and when they took leave of Phineus, he embraced and kissed them, and thanked them many times for helping him in such distress, and gave them some good advice in return for their kindness. In the middle of the sea they had to cross floated two huge rocks, as the icebergs float in the seas where it is always winter. Now when these rocks knocked together, they crushed everything between them to pieces; and when a fish swimming in the water, or a bird flying in the air passed between them, they killed it; and when a ship sailed through, they crushed it to pieces and killed

all the people on board. These rocks had been put there by Zeus, so that nobody might get to Colchis. But Phineus knew that they always flew wide asunder after knocking together, and that they always knocked together when a fish swam, or a bird flew, or a ship sailed between them.

So he gave good counsel to the Argonauts, and they did what he told them, and passed safely between the rocks. And now I will tell you how they managed it.

When they came to the rocks, they found them floating far asunder, but already beginning to come nearer to each other. The Argonauts sailed right on towards the middle; and when they were close to the rocks, one of the heroes stood in front of the ship, with a dove in his hand, and let her fly. Now when anything living went between the rocks, they struck together and then flew wide asunder. But the dove flew fast, and Pallas helped her, because she was a good and kind dove, and she was snow-white; and when the rocks closed, they only pulled out the feathers of her tail, which soon grew again. And the rocks flew far apart, and the heroes rowed with might and main and got safely through, and the rocks only knocked off a little bit of the ship's stern; the dove alighted on the ship, and was not angry with the Argonauts; and afterwards Pallas took her and set her in the sky, where she may still be seen as a beautiful constellation.

After the Argonauts had passed safely through the Symplegades, they got into the river Phasis, which flows through Colchis. Some of them stayed in the ship, but Jason and Polydeuxes, and many other heroes, went to the city where the king lived. The king's name was Æetes, and he had a daughter, called Medea. Then Jason told Æetes that Pelias had sent them to fetch the golden fleece, and asked him to give it them. Now Æetes did

not like to lose the fleece, but he could not refuse it to Jason, because it was fated that he must give it to him who should come from Greece and ask for it. So he told Jason he should have it, but that he must first yoke the brazen bulls to a plough, and plough a large field and sow it with the dragon's teeth. Now the brazen bulls had been made by Hephæstus, and they lived and moved like real bulls, only they blew flames out of their mouths and nostrils, and were far stronger and fiercer than real bulls: on that account they were kept in a stable built with iron and huge stones and chained with great strong iron chains.

As for the dragon's teeth, when they were sown like corn in the earth, there grew up men in armour, with swords and spears, who killed the person that had sowed them. Thus, you see, the king wanted Jason to be killed, and he thought that if the brazen bulls did not kill him, the armed men certainly would.

But the king's daughter, Medea, saw Jason at her father's palace, and loved him, and it grieved her to think he was to die. Now she was a magician, and could brew magic potions and ointments. So she got into her chariot, drawn by winged serpents, and flew through the air, and gathered herbs on hill and dale, and by many streams and rivulets; she squeezed the juices out of all these herbs, and made an ointment, and gave it to Jason without her father's knowledge, and told him to rub his face and his hands, and his legs and arms with it, and also his armour, his shield and sword and lance. Jason did as she had told him; and for one whole day he was far stronger than all the other heroes; and fire could not burn him, and iron could not wound him, nor cut through his armour or his shield; but his sword and spear cut and thrust through iron as if it were butter.

Now this was the day fixed for Jason to yoke the bulls

and sow the dragon's teeth. And early in the morning before sunrise, King Æetes, with his daughter and his ministers, warriors, attendants and courtiers, came and seated himself on his throne near where Jason was to plough, and the others sat upon benches; and all the people came out of the city to see what would happen, and the little boys climbed into the trees to get a better view.

Jason rubbed himself and his armour as Medea had told him, and came out to the field, close by which was the stable in which the brazen bulls were kept shut up. Then the door was thrown open, and Jason went boldly in and unchained the bulls, and held each of them by one horn, one with one hand and one with the other, and dragged them out of the stable. The bulls bellowed frightfully, and fire and smoke came out of their mouths and noses, as out of a burning mountain. Then the wicked king Æetes was delighted, but those among the lookers-on who were good, and saw how brave and handsome Jason was, were grieved, and feared he would be killed; for they did not know that Medea helped him. And Jason bent the heads of the bulls down to the ground, and though they kicked and struggled, he threw them on their knees.

Then Polydeukes brought the plough to which they were to be yoked, which was all made of iron, and threw the yoke over their necks and an iron chain round their horns; meanwhile Jason held their noses so close to the ground that they could not breathe out fire. As soon as Polydeukes had yoked the bulls, he sprang quickly away, and Jason seized the iron chain with one hand and the handle of the plough with the other, and then let go their horns. Up jumped the bulls, and tried to run away; but Jason held the chain so tight that they were forced to go

slowly and plough properly. Now the sun had risen just as the bulls were harnessed, and by mid-day Jason had ploughed the whole field. Then he took the yoke off them and let them go; and they were so frightened that they ran away like a cat that has been beaten, and did not stop till they got to the mountains, and if Hephæstus had not caught them and taken them away, they would have set all the forests on fire.

When Jason had done ploughing he went to King Æetes and asked for the dragon's teeth, and Æetes gave him a brazen helmet quite full of teeth, and Jason went and scattered them with his hand all over the field; and then he took his great spear, and broke the clods and levelled the earth, like the gardener after he has sown seeds. And when he had done he went and lay down to rest till evening, for he was very tired.

Towards sunset Jason came out into the field again, and found the armed men growing up on all sides; some had grown up as far as their knees, others to their hips, some to their shoulders, and there were several, of whom only the helmet was beginning to appear; those whose arms were already out of the earth, so that they could move them, shook their spears and flourished their swords, and some were already getting their feet out of the ground and preparing to rush upon Jason.

Then Jason did as his friend Medea had told him. He took a great stone and threw it in among them, and when the armed men saw it they all rushed to seize it; so I think it must have been a beautiful block of marble, or some precious stone. Then they all began to quarrel for it among themselves, and to cut and thrust at each other; and as fast as a fresh one got his feet out of the earth, he ran to join the fight, and thus in a short time they had all killed one another. Meanwhile Jason went

about the field cutting off the heads of those who were just coming up. In this way the armed men were all destroyed, and King Æetes was quite furious; but Medea and the heroes and the bystanders rejoiced heartily.

The next morning Jason went to King Æetes and asked for the golden fleece; the king would not give it him, and told him to come for it another time; but he secretly intended to have Jason murdered. And Medea told Jason this, and told him besides that he must fetch the golden fleece himself, or he would never get it. Now the fleece was nailed to an oak, and at the foot of the oak lay a dragon who never slept and who ate up any one that tried to touch the fleece except King Æetes; and the dragon was immortal, so that Medea could not help Jason to kill him. But he was very fond of sweet cakes, so Medea gave Jason honey-cakes in which she had mixed a sleeping potion; and Jason took them and threw them to him, and the foolish dragon ate them all up and fell asleep directly. Then Jason drew out the nails which fastened the fleece to the tree, hid it under his cloak, and carried it on board his ship. And Medea went with him, and he married her and took her to Greece.

Æetes, thinking that the Argonauts would go back the same way they had come, sent out a fleet of ships to attack them. But they sailed up the great river Ister, and then the heroes carried the ship Argo to Okeanus, which surrounds the whole world, and set the ship afloat in it, and so they sailed round outside the earth till they got back to Iolchos. But the Colchians waited all this time at the Symplegades, which now stood still; and when they found that the Argo did not come, they went home again. King Æetes was terribly angry; for he had lost the golden fleece, and the brazen bulls, and the dragon's teeth; and his daughter was gone too, and had

taken all her jewels with her; and every one laughed at him into the bargain.

When Medea came to Thessaly with Jason she made old Aeson young again, so that his white hair grew black, and his teeth came again, and all his strength returned, and he lived many years after; but she caused Pelias to die, so that Aeson was king again in his stead.

STORIES OF HERAKLES.

HERAKLES was the son of Zeus and Alkmene, the wife of Amphitryon, king of Thebes, in Greece. Though Amphitryon was only the stepfather of Herakles, he loved him as much as if he had been his own son. Amphitryon and Alkmene had a son called Iphikles, the half-brother of Herakles.

Herakles and Iphikles did not sleep in a cradle as other infants do, but in a great brazen shield; in this their mother made their bed, and rocked them to sleep; and Herakles never cried. When he was little he was not called Herakles; but Alkæus, or Alkeides.

Now Here hated his mother Alkmene, and wanted to kill Herakles; and once in the middle of the night, when Amphitryon and Alkmene were asleep, and the two boys were asleep too in the shield by the side of their mother's bed, a couple of huge serpents crept in through a hole under the door of the chamber and crawled towards the shield, and the eyes of the serpents shone like fire and lighted up the whole room with a bright light.

When they got to the shield, they reared their heads and tried to get in on the side where Herakles lay, and wanted to bite him; this shook the shield and woke Iphikles, who was frightened and shrieked dreadfully. Alkmene was awakened by his cries, and seeing the light, called Amphitryon, who jumped up and seized his sword which hung on a nail by the bed side.

Now when Herakles saw the serpents, instead of crying and being frightened, he laughed and seized them by their throats, one in each hand, and pinched them hard,

so that they could not bite; and though they twisted themselves round him, he did not let go, but pinched them so hard that they died. As soon as they were dead their eyes did not shine any more, so that when Amphytryon came in, the chamber was quite dark; then he called to the attendant to bring light, and when it was brought, Herakles showed him the two dead serpents and laughed aloud for joy.

Herakles was very big when quite a young child, and he ate a great deal of meat and bread, but no sweet things. He learned to write and to read, and to ride and to drive chariots, and to shoot with a bow and arrow, and to hurl a javelin, and to wrestle, and fight with the cestus; and a good centaur called Chiron taught him to know the stars, and plants, and herbs, and beasts, and told him all about them; and Herakles liked to listen to all this, and remembered it, and learned fast. Herakles was very good-natured, but he had the fault that when he was angry he became quite furious and did a great deal of mischief: he was very sorry for it afterwards and cried bitterly; but then it was too late, and he could not mend it. Alkmene and Amphytryon had not punished him for it when he was little. He had a master called Linus, who taught him to play on the lute, and beat him one day because he did not attend, and this made Herakles so angry that he struck Linus on the head with the lute so that he died.

Then Amphytryon would not keep him any longer in his house, and sent him to tend his herds of cattle upon Mount Cithæron. This mountain was not far from Thebes, and was quite covered with wood, and in the wood lived a great fierce lion who had killed many bulls and herdsmen, and Herakles killed the lion with an iron club. Hereupon Amphytryon allowed him to come home to Thebes.

At this time the Thebans had to give a hundred oxen every year to the king of the Minyans: now Herakles did not choose his town to be tributary, and when the king of the Minyans sent heralds to demand the oxen, Herakles cut off their noses and ears and drove them away. Then King Erginus marched on Thebes with a great army. Now the king of Thebes, whose name was Kreon, was cowardly, and had no heart to meet the enemy; that, indeed, was the reason of his paying the tribute. So he made Herakles commander, at which the Thebans greatly rejoiced, and their courage for the war rose very much; and Pallas gave Herakles a suit of armour all of gold, and Hermes gave him a sword, and Phœbus-Apollo gave him a bow and arrows. And Herakles and the Thebans were victorious over the enemy, and killed King Erginus; and the Minyans, whose city was called Orchomenus, were obliged in their turn, to give two hundred oxen to the Thebans every year. Then Kreon gave Herakles his daughter Megara for a wife, and she bore him three children, and he lived happily at Thebes for a few years. But Here afflicted him with raving madness, so that he fancied his children were wild beasts, and took his bow and shot them; and when he had done it he saw that they were his own children, and would not be comforted, but ran out into the woods.

Now when the ancients did not know what to do, they went to the oracles and asked Phœbus for counsel. The oracles were temples inhabited by priests or priestesses of whom people asked questions to which Phœbus told them the answers; and when a king wished to declare war, he first sent to consult an oracle, and if Phœbus told him he would be beaten, he let the war alone.

The best oracle was at Delphi, at the foot of Mount Parnassus, where a priestess, called the Pythia, sat in the

temple on a tripod, and gave answers to all who came to ask; and when those who had consulted it were obedient to the oracle and successful in their undertakings, they gave beautiful things of gold, or silver, or bronze to the temple, which was quite filled with presents of this sort.

The unhappy Herakles went to Delphi and asked the Pythia what he should do in his great grief at having killed his children; and the Pythia told him to go to the city of Tiryns, and serve King Eurystheus with patience and submission, and do all that he would command him. She said that Eurystheus would order him to encounter twelve combats, all so terrible that he would be in danger of perishing in each; but that if he had courage and endurance, the gods would help him, and that when he had achieved the twelve labours he would be happy again, and after his death he would become a god.

Now King Eurystheus was wicked and cruel, and had no courage, and he hated all who did noble and generous things; nevertheless, Herakles went patiently to Tiryns, and came before King Eurystheus, and told him that Phoebus had commanded him by the Pythia to serve him, and that he was ready to do whatever he should order.

Then King Eurystheus told him to go to Nemea and kill the lion. Nemea was a valley filled with thick wood, between high mountains in the land of Eurystheus; and in this wood lived a fierce lion, whose skin was so thick and tough that no iron could wound him; and when the shepherds hurled spears at him, they fell without hurting him, and he flew at the shepherds and tore them to pieces. Herakles went and stood behind a tree, that the lion might not see him while he took aim; and the lion came with his mouth and his mane covered with blood, for he had just been eating a bull, and he licked his jaws with his

great red tongue and roared, and when he roared it sounded like thunder and the earth shook, and he lashed his sides with his tail. Then Herakles shot an arrow at him ; but it rebounded from the lion's hide. He shot again, but with no better success, though he could send an arrow through an armed man. In a minute the lion caught sight of Herakles ; then he crouched down close to the earth, and drew his tail between his hind-legs, and sprang at him ; but Herakles wrapped his mantle round his left arm to keep the lion off, and in his right hand he held a huge club which he had hewed down in the forest. With this he struck the lion on the head ; and though it did not kill him, or even knock him down, he was quite frightened. Then Herakles seized him by the neck, and strangled him in his arms, while he stood upon his hinder paws. As soon as the lion was dead he skinned him, and he put the lion's jaws on his head as a helmet, and tied the skin round his neck by the forepaws. His club was broken on the lion's head, so he cut another in the forest, and ever after he wore the lion's skin and carried a huge club.

Then Herakles went back to Tiryns, and sent the king word that the Nemean lion was dead ; and when Eurystheus heard this, he was excessively afraid of him, and he had a chamber all of brass made underground, in which he shut himself up whenever Herakles was there ; and there was a grated window in the chamber, and through this he spoke to Herakles, and commanded him to go to Lerna and kill the hydra. Now the hydra was a great serpent with nine heads, as long as a ship, and it lived in the marsh at Lerna. So Herakles mounted his chariot, and his friend Iolaus drove the horses, and they went to Lerna.

When the hydra saw Herakles she crawled away and

hid herself in a hole under the earth ; but Herakles took an arrow, and wound tow round it, and dipped it in pitch and brimstone and shot it into the hole. Then the hydra rushed out to attack Herakles, and he seized her with one hand round the neck, just where her nine heads grew, while she twisted her long tail round his leg. Herakles struck her heads with his club ; but for every head he destroyed there instantly grew two fresh ones. There came also a frightful huge lobster which pinched Herakles and held his legs fast with its claws, for it was a friend of the hydra's and wanted to help her ; but Herakles crushed it with his other foot. And he went on knocking off the hydra's heads, and fresh ones kept constantly growing, and he never could have conquered her if it had not been for his friend Iolaus, who cut down some trees and made a great fire, and brought burning brands from it, with which he seared the heads as Herakles crushed them, so that no others grew up. When all the heads were destroyed and the hydra was dead, Herakles dipped his arrows in her blood, which was so poisonous, that if his arrows only scratched the skin of man or beast, they died. This was the second labour that Herakles performed at the command of Eurystheus, according as Phoebus had decreed.

After this, Eurystheus ordered him to catch the Kerynian stag and bring it him alive. Now this stag had golden horns, and ran so fast that no horse or hound could overtake it. But Herakles was as swift as he was strong, and he ran after the stag for a whole year, till he caught it. Then he carried it on his back to Tiryns ; and this was the third labour.

Next Eurystheus commanded Herakles to bring him the wild boar of Erymanthus alive. Erymanthus is a mountain in Arcadia, and this wild boar lived there, and

laid waste the gardens and corn-fields all round; and when the people went out to attack him, he rushed upon them and threw them down and tore them with his great tusks, so that they died. So Herakles went to Erymanthus; but on his way thither he came one evening to a cave, in which lived a centaur called Pholus, and asked him for a night's lodging. Now there were a great many centaurs living in the mountain, and they had a great butt of wine, which was kept in the cave of Pholus, and they only drank of it when they met together in the cave to feast. Pholus had no other wine, and when Herakles asked him for some after supper, he told him that if he drew any for him out of the cask, the other centaurs would all come and kill him. But Herakles said he did not think that would happen, and helped himself to a pitcher of wine. Now this was not wine like what we drink, for Dionysus himself had given it to the centaurs, and its perfume was like that of the finest roses, and so strong, that when it was drawn out of the cask, it could be smelt as far as a man can see. Accordingly, the centaurs did smell it, and all came running to the cave to kill Pholus; some of them hurled large fragments of rock, others tore up pines and firs out of the earth; for the centaurs did not fight with swords and spears, and only a few of them had bows and arrows. But Herakles stood at the entrance of the cave and hurled burning brands at the centaurs, and shot at them with the arrows dipped in the hydra's blood; and all those he shot died, just as if the hydra herself had bitten them, and the rest were terrified and fled. Pholus wondered how such a little arrow could have power to kill so large a creature, and he drew one of the arrows out of a centaur that was lying dead, and examined it; but he held it carelessly and let it fall on his foot, and he died directly. Meanwhile, Herakles was

pursuing the flying centaurs, and when he came back and found poor Pholus lying dead, he was heartily sorry that he had tapped the cask of wine against Pholus's desire, and he made a funeral pile and burned his body and buried the ashes.

After that he went to Erymanthus, and he thought the wild boar would come and attack him, as it did all other hunters, and then he would catch it; but the boar was afraid of him and ran away. Herakles ran after it, and the boar in its fright jumped into a deep chasm full of snow; for the deep snow always lies on the mountains of Arcadia as it does on the Alps. Then Herakles made a noose of strong rope and threw it round the wild boar's legs and drew it up, and threw it over his shoulders and carried it to Tiryns. The boar lay on its back with its legs in the air, and grunted, and kicked, and struggled, but could not get away. And this was the fourth labour.

Then Eurystheus ordered him to cleanse the stable of Augeas in a single day. Now Augeas was king of Elis, and had three thousand oxen which were driven every evening into a huge court surrounded by a wall and rows of vaulted stalls; but the servants of King Augeas were lazy, and let the dung lie till it was so deep that the cattle could no longer get into the stalls, and it would have taken a whole year of constant work to dig it up and cart it away. So Herakles dug a deep ditch up to the wall of the court-yard, and broke a large hole in the wall; then he led the water of two mountain torrents into the ditch, so that it all ran into the court; next he broke another hole in the wall, opposite the ditch, and through that all the water ran out again and carried the dung with it, and by the end of the day the whole court was quite clean. Now Augeas had promised Herakles a tenth part of all his cattle for cleaning the stables in one day, but he was

wicked and did not keep his word. He was punished for it afterwards, for when Herakles had finished all his labours for Eurystheus, he came and made war upon him and killed him. Now this was the fifth labour.

Eurystheus next bade him drive away the birds out of the marsh Stymphalus. Now these birds had beaks and claws of iron like the harpies, and they tore men and beasts to pieces, and when they had eaten them they flew back into the marsh. This marsh looked like a great lake, only that many large trees grew in it: no one could go on it in a boat, because, instead of water, it was all thick mud; neither could anybody walk there, because the mud was so deep that they would have sunk in it. So you see, even Herakles could not have driven away the wicked birds if the good Hephæstus had not helped him, and made a brazen rattle and given it to him. Herakles took the rattle and went and stood on a hill by the marsh, and turned it, and it made such a terrible noise that the birds were frightened, and all flew away. Herakles took his bow and arrows and killed several of them, and the rest flew far beyond the sea and never came back again. And this was the sixth labour.

Eurystheus then commanded him to bring the savage bull from Crete. So Herakles went in a ship to Crete, and asked Minos, the king of the island, for leave to catch the bull, which Minos gave him willingly enough, for the bull devastated the country and no one dared to attack it. But Herakles seized it by the horns and dragged it on board the ship, and sailed back to the Peloponnesus and took the bull to Tiryns. But Poseidon forbade him to kill the bull, which ran away again and did a great deal of harm in the country, till Theseus killed it. This was the seventh labour.

After this Eurystheus ordered him to fetch the horses

of Diomedes, king of Thrace. So Herakles again embarked in a ship and sailed to Thrace. Now these horses were very savage and ate men; and King Diomedes was so wicked and cruel that he threw all strangers that came to his country to his horses who tore them to pieces and ate them up like tigers or fierce wolves. Herakles demanded the horses of King Diomedes, and as he would not give them up, he killed him and gave him to his own horses to eat. He then took the horses to Tiryns in his ship, and Eurystheus let them go, and they ran into the woods and were killed and eaten by the wild beasts; and this was the eighth labour.

The Amazons were a people only of women, who all rode on horseback and fought battles and were as brave as heroes. They had a queen called Hippolyte, who possessed a precious girdle all of gold and precious stones, which had been given to her by Ares. Now Eurystheus had heard of this girdle, and he wanted to have it for his daughter Admete, and ordered Herakles to go and get it. So Herakles had it proclaimed throughout Greece that he was going to make war upon the Amazons, and that brave men might go with him. He then went on board a ship with all those who had come to join him.

As soon as Herakles reached the land of the Amazons, he sent word to the Queen Hippolyte what Eurystheus had ordered him to fetch. Now Hippolyte knew that Herakles was forced to obey Eurystheus, because Phœbus had commanded him to do so, and would have given him the girdle, but the Amazons would not suffer it, and they attacked Herakles and his companions. Upon this a great battle was fought; the Amazons fought on horseback and Herakles and his companions on foot, and if it had not been for Herakles the Amazons would have been victorious; but he put them to flight and took Hippolyte

prisoner. However, he did her no harm, and set her free as soon as he had got the girdle.

Then Herakles set sail again for Greece, and when he came to Troy he cast anchor and landed and went to the city. At that time Laomedon was king of Troy, and he had been very rich and powerful till Phœbus and Poseidon became angry with him, and reduced him and his kingdom to great distress. Now the reason of their anger was this:—Troy was a great city, but it had no walls, and Phœbus and Poseidon came to Laomedon and offered to build walls round the city which no enemy should be able to destroy, if he would reward them for their work. King Laomedon thought they were mere men, and agreed to pay them a certain sum when they had finished the walls. Then Phœbus and Poseidon built the walls prodigiously high, all of huge masses of rock; but when they had finished them, Laomedon was so wicked as to refuse to give them anything, for he believed they were only heroes and he knew that no enemy could take the city. But the gods had only wanted to see whether he would keep his word, or whether he would tell a lie. Thereupon Poseidon sent a monster which came every day out of the sea and devoured every living thing, man and beast, so that none dared to leave the walls of the city; and the ground was not tilled, and want and famine came upon the Trojans, and they determined to kill the king, through whose crime this misfortune had fallen upon them. Then the king sent to the oracle and asked what he was to do in order to prevent the monster from coming out of the sea any more; and the oracle, commanded him to bind his daughter Hesione to a rock by the sea-shore; and said that after the monster had eaten her it would not return. Now Herakles arrived just as they were leading poor Hesione to the place where she was to be bound. He told the king to fear nothing

for his daughter, for that he would fight with the monster; but that if he killed it, Laomedon was to give him the horses which had been a present from Zeus, which were the most beautiful in the world. This Laomedon promised, and Herakles sent everybody back into the city and remained alone with Hesione. And when the monster came out of the sea and prepared to rush upon her and eat her, he attacked and killed it, and took Hesione back to her father. But Laomedon was wicked enough not to give him the horses. Herakles was very angry, but he would not begin a war till he had finished all the labours the gods commanded him. So he told Laomedon he should come and punish him at some future time. Then he sailed to Tiryns, and gave the girdle to Eurystheus. This was the ninth labour.

On the coast of Spain, where the city of Cadiz now stands, is an island which was then called Erytheia; and at that time there was no city, but fine rich pastures, on which grazed the cattle of King Geryon. Now these cattle were most beautiful and all red, and they were guarded by a dog called Orthrus, who had two heads and was so strong that he could fight and kill two wolves at once. King Geryon seemed like three great giants joined together into one; he had three heads, six arms, and six legs. So you see it was not easy to take his cattle from him, even if the dog was killed; and Eurystheus thought now to be sure Herakles must meet his death there; so he ordered him to fetch Geryon's cattle. Herakles went by himself, and took his club and his bow and arrows. He passed through Libya, where it is burning hot, and he was angry with Helios, the god of the sun, who was driving his chariot quite close to the earth, and told him to go a little on one side and not to scorch him so. But Helios

laughed, and said that it was his proper road and he could not leave it. Then Herakles grew very angry and drew his bow to shoot at Helios; though then he was only a mortal, and could never have been successful against a god. Helios, however, was pleased with his courage, and told him he must not find fault with his driving, but that he would lend him his own golden ship to take him to Erytheia; for between Libya and Europe lies the Mediterranean Sea, and the two great mountains which are opposite to each other, one on each shore, are called the Pillars of Herakles to this day. When Herakles sailed through the straits to the ocean, which we now call the Atlantic, the god Okeanus wished to see if he could frighten him, and sent a great storm; but Herakles drew his bow, upon which Okeanus was afraid and made the sea calm again.

Herakles landed on the island of Erytheia, and killed the dog Orthrus and then the herdsman Eurytion, who richly deserved it, for he gave his kine men to eat, as King Diomedes did to his horses. Then he drove away the cattle. King Geryon heard this, and came to fight with Herakles; but he had better have staid at home, for Herakles shot him dead.

Herakles drove the cattle through Spain and Liguria. Then all the Ligurians came together, to the number of many thousands, to take away the cattle, and they threw stones and shot at him. As soon as they came near him he killed them; but then they threw stones and shot at him from a distance, and Herakles had only his arrows to defend himself with, and they were soon exhausted upon such a number of enemies. So at last he must have been killed if his father Zeus had not helped him. But Zeus rained down stones from heaven, which killed a great number of the Ligurians, and Herakles picked up the

stones and threw them at his enemies. You may see all the stones lying about the field at this very day. It is in Provence in France, and its name is Cran.

Herakles drove the cattle over the Alps and made a road for them through the ice and snow. After that he came to the banks of the Tiber, where Rome now stands, but there was no city then; and in a cave under Mount Aventine lived a wicked giant, called Cacus, who breathed flames out of his mouth and nostrils and tormented all the people in the neighbourhood. Cacus went at night and stole some of the finest bullocks and took them to his cave; and in order that Herakles might not find out where they were gone, he dragged them in by their tails, so that the footmarks looked like those of cattle that had gone out of the cave.

Herakles sought everywhere for his lost cattle, and as he could not find them, he went on his way with what were left. But as he was driving them along under Mount Aventine, one of them lowed; and when those that were shut up in the cave heard their companion, they answered him. Now Cacus had blocked up the mouth of the cave with great masses of rock, but Herakles pulled them down, and Cacus, not being able to run away, blew flames against him; but that did not frighten Herakles, who fell upon him and killed him.

When Herakles got near Tiryns and had to cross the isthmus where there is a very narrow pass between the mountains and the sea, he was attacked by a cruel giant, called Alcyoneus, who threw a stone at him so heavy, that if it had been laid in a cart, four-and-twenty buffaloes would hardly have been able to move it. But Herakles was on his guard and struck it off with his club, and the stone fell down and there it lies at this very day. The next day he arrived at Tiryns, and the wicked Eurystheus

got the beautiful herds of kine. This was the tenth labour, and hard work Herakles found it.

Eurystheus next bade Herakles fetch him the golden apples of the Hesperides. Now when the marriage of Zeus and Here was celebrated, she gave him some golden apples; these Zeus planted in the garden of the nymphs called Hesperides, and from them there grew trees which bore golden apples in their turn. So many people tried to steal these apples, that the Hesperides were forced to guard them themselves, with the help of a great dragon that had a hundred heads. Herakles did not even know where the garden was, and had to wander about for many days inquiring for it.

On his way he met Antæus, a son of Gaia, or the Earth, who was prodigiously strong and wrestled with all he met and killed them; for even if any one was strong enough to throw him down, he jumped up again directly and was stronger than ever, because his mother, the Earth, gave him fresh vigour every time he touched her. But if, on the other hand, he threw down his adversary, he killed him easily. As soon as Herakles perceived that Antæus gained fresh strength with every fall, he lifted him in his arms quite off the earth, so that he could not touch it even with his feet, and pressed him so tight in his arms that he died.

Herakles next came to Egypt, where Busiris, the king of the country, offered up all strangers as sacrifices to the gods. Herakles allowed them to tie his hands and to bind a fillet round his head, like a victim, and to lead him to the altar and sprinkle salt and flour on his head; but when the priest took the knife to cut his throat, Herakles broke the cords with which his hands were bound, and killed the priests and the cruel king Busiris.

As Herakles was so big and strong, you may guess

that his appetite was very great too; and one day, when he was very hungry, he met a peasant who was ploughing with two oxen yoked to his plough. Herakles asked him for something to eat, but the peasant would give him nothing. Upon this, Herakles was angry and drove him away; he then unyoked the oxen and killed one of them, and broke the plough to pieces and made a fire with the wood of it, at which he roasted the ox and ate it all up.

Soon after, Herakles came to Mount Caucasus, a very high mountain towards the east; and against one side of this mountain, which was so steep and high that no one could climb up it, Zeus had chained down Prometheus, one of the Titans who had offended him, and every day he sent a vulture to tear his side. But Herakles took his bow and shot the vulture and prayed Zeus to set Prometheus free again; and Zeus did so, and Prometheus returned to Olympus and to the company of the other gods.

At last he came to Atlas, the huge giant who stood on the edge of the earth and carried the vault of heaven on his shoulders, so that it might not fall upon the world and crush it. Atlas was brother to the father of the Hesperides, so Herakles begged him to persuade his nieces to give him the apples; this was not because Herakles was afraid of the dragon, for he knew he could kill him, but because he did not like to take the apples by force from the nymphs. So Atlas went to the Hesperides, and while he was gone Herakles supported the heavens on his shoulders. And the Hesperides gave three apples to Atlas, and told him to give them to Herakles, on condition that he would promise to restore them; for everybody knew that Herakles always did what he had promised.

When Atlas came back he wanted to leave Herakles there to stand and carry the vault of heaven for ever; but Herakles threatened to let it fall, upon which, Atlas took it

on his back again and gave Herakles the apples. Herakles carried them to Eurystheus, telling him at the same time that he had promised to give them back again. Now Eurystheus wished very much to keep them, but he knew that if he did Zeus would allow Herakles to punish him; so he gave them back to Herakles, who took them to Pallas, who sent them to the Hesperides; and this was the eleventh labour.

And now there was only one more labour to be accomplished, after which Herakles was to be free, and Eurystheus would have no right to command him any more. Eurystheus bade him fetch the dog Cerberus out of Hades.

Then Herakles went to Tænarus, a high rocky promontory in Greece; and between the rocks there were clefts and caverns through which one could descend into the infernal regions. Herakles entered one of these, and went on and on till he came to the river Styx, which flowed all round Hades, where Pluto was king. Over this river there was no bridge—only a ferry-boat in which Charon ferried backwards and forwards; and Charon said that Herakles was too big and heavy and would sink his boat; however, he was forced to obey and ferry him over, and Hermes went with Herakles to show him the way. On the opposite side of the river, Medusa or Gorgo appeared before him, the sight of whose head turned to stone all who were afraid of her; but she could not frighten Herakles, and he drew his sword upon her and she fled. At length he came to Cerberus, who would have torn to pieces any other living man, but when he saw Herakles he howled and hid himself under Pluto's throne.

Then Herakles wished to offer a sacrifice to the gods; so he took a bull from a great herd belonging to Pluto. The herdsman Meneceus seeing this, came running up

and struck him, whereupon Herakles seized him and squeezed him so hard that he would have crushed all his bones, had not Persephone begged his life. But Pluto and Persephone greeted Herakles kindly, and told him he was quite welcome to take Cerberus with him if he was able, and would promise to bring him back again. Now Cerberus was as large as an elephant, and had three heads and a mane all of snakes, and his tail was a huge serpent; but Herakles put on the armour Hephæstus had given him, and wound his lion's skin tightly round him, and seized Cerberus by the throat and dragged him away; and though the serpent which was the dog's tail kept biting him, he did not let him go, but went up through all the caverns by which he had descended; and when Cerberus saw the light of day he became quite furious, and the foam dropped from his mouth, and wherever it fell there sprang up poisonous plants which kill those who eat them. All who saw Cerberus fled, and Eurystheus hid himself at the sight of him. Then Herakles took him back again and gave him to Charon, who ferried him back to the other side of the Styx.

This was the twelfth and last labour of Herakles, and having accomplished that he was free again. But his father did not choose that he should live in ease and pleasure, without using the strength he had given him to punish the wicked and to help the oppressed; on the contrary, he bade him labour hard so long as he was on earth, and above all, restrain his anger; and when he failed to do so, he was to bear the punishment for it with patience, as he had done while serving Eurystheus; and Zeus promised that if he was obedient till the end of his life, he would receive him into Olympus and reward him richly for all he had endured on earth.

Herakles might easily have punished the wicked

Eurystheus for all his ill-usage, but he knew that he had endured his service as a chastisement; so he departed from Tiryns without doing him any harm.

In the island of Eubœa was a city called Œechalia, and the king of this city was called Eurytus. Now Eurytus was an admirable archer, and his sons shot as well as himself; and he proclaimed throughout Greece that no one should marry his daughter Iole who could not shoot further and hit the mark better than himself and his sons. Iole was very beautiful, and many had come to try whether they could not win her; but no one could shoot so well as Eurytus and the Eurytids. And now Herakles came and shot better than they did; but Eurytus broke his word and would not give him Iole in marriage. This made Herakles very angry; for as he always kept his word himself, he expected others to do the same; but he repressed his anger and went away to Thessaly.

Admetus, king of Phæræ in Thessaly, was a dear friend of Herakles, and Herakles went to his house to find food and lodging; but when he arrived he found all the household in sorrow and tears, for King Admetus had been very ill and would have died, had not his wife Alkestis, who was quite well, prayed the gods to let her die instead of her husband, so dearly did she love him. The gods consented, and she died and Admetus immediately recovered; but when he heard how Alkestis had died for him, he grieved bitterly, and wished to die that she might return to life. Herakles fortunately came before the body was burnt, and he went down directly to the infernal regions, and prayed Pluto so earnestly to set free the soul of Alkestis, that at length the god granted his request; and her spirit returned again into her body, and it became warm and living, and Alkestis and Admetus

lived happily together for many years, and always looked on Herakles as their greatest benefactor. But if Pluto had not sent back the soul of Alkestis when Herakles prayed him, Herakles would have used force to compel him to do so, though all the gods were afraid of Pluto.

Soon after this Iphitus, one of the sons of Eurytus, came to Herakles, and begged that he would help him to find his father's cattle which had been stolen by the cunning thief Autolycus, who was able to change everything he stole into some other shape, so that the right owner could not recognise his property when he saw it. But Herakles thought this was a stratagem of Eurytus to entice him back to Eubœa; moreover, he was very angry that a man who had behaved so ill to him should have the impudence to ask him to give himself any trouble to serve him; and he became quite furious, and took Iphitus by the arm and threw him over the wall of the city, so that he pitched upon his head and was killed. Now Zeus was very angry that Herakles forgot again that he was to control his anger and use all his strength to help other people; and he punished Herakles with a violent fever, in which he became raving, and he went to Delphi to ask the oracle of Phœbus how he could be cured. But Phœbus would give no answer; whereupon Herakles took away the tripod on which the Pythia sat when she delivered the oracle, and would have destroyed the temple. Then Phœbus sprang forth from the *adytum*, or sanctuary, and drew his bow upon Herakles, and Herakles drew his against Phœbus. But Zeus threw his thunderbolt between them and commanded Phœbus to give the oracle. And Phœbus said that if Herakles sold himself as a slave for three years he would recover from his fever and madness. This was very hard, but Herakles was now obedient again, and suffered himself to be sold, and he was bought by

Omphale, queen of Lydia; and she mocked at him and made him put on women's clothes and sit among her women and spin; and she took his lion's skin and put it on herself. But she was not cruel like Eurystheus, and did not make him encounter such fearful dangers.

When the three years were over and Herakles was free again, he returned to Greece and gathered together heroes and warriors to go and punish King Laomedon. He could not destroy the walls of the city, because Phœbus and Poseidon had built them, but he and his companions scaled them with ladders; and Herakles killed Laomedon and gave his daughter Hesione in marriage to his friend Telamon, who had been the first to mount the wall with him. Herakles did not destroy the city of Troy, but made a son of Laomedon, called Priamus, king of it. And Priamus was the father of Paris, who carried off the beautiful Helen, and of the noble Hector, who defended Troy when the Greeks, led by Menelaus and Agamemnon, attacked it; and Priamus was killed when Troy was taken, after the famous siege which Homer wrote the story of.

Then Pallas summoned Herakles to Phlegra, (that is, the beautiful country near Naples, on this side of Vesuvius) which was then inhabited by rebellious giants who made war upon the gods; and Herakles fought for the gods against the giants. At last the gods were victorious, and Zeus threw the island of Sicily on their king Typhoeus, so that he fell under it and could not get up again. And the Greeks said that every time he tried to rise and throw off the burden which weighed him down, there was an earthquake in Italy. When the Titans were subdued Herakles returned to Greece and went to Æneus, king of Kalydon, who had a most beautiful daughter, called Dejanira. Herakles wished to marry her, and Æneus was very willing to give her to him, but the river god Ache-

lous also wished to marry her, and Herakles was forced to fight with him. When Achelous found himself worsted, he changed into a terrible dragon, but Herakles seized him by the throat; then he changed into a huge bull and tried to gore Herakles with his horns, but Herakles held them in his hands and broke off one of them. At last Achelous begged for mercy, so Herakles married Dejanira and took her away with him. At this time he no longer carried the club which he had cut from a wild olive on the day when he killed the Nemean lion, for he had set it in the earth and dedicated it to the gods; and it took root and grew into a tree, which was still standing in the time of Marcus Aurelius.

Herakles wanted to take Dejanira to a city called Trachin, and on their way they had to cross the river Euenus, which is very deep and wide after rain, and there was no boat. Herakles waded through the river himself, and a centaur, called Nessus, who lived on its banks and carried over travellers for hire, promised to let Dejanira ride over on his back. But the centaur was a traitor, and had determined to carry off Dejanira and run away with her into the mountains. When Herakles saw him set off he shot him with one of the arrows poisoned with the hydra's blood; but the wicked centaur before he died told Dejanira to keep the blood which ran out of his wound, and, whenever she saw that Herakles no longer loved her, to pour it on the robe he was going to wear, and that then he would love her again more than ever. Nessus wickedly did this to revenge himself; and it was a great pity that Dejanira believed him and kept the blood without saying anything to Herakles about it.

Parnassus and Oeta are great chains of mountains between which lie deep valleys. In these mountains lived the Dorians, a very brave people though few in

number. The Dorians were attacked by another nation far more numerous, called the Dryopians. Now Ægimius, the king of the Dorians, had heard that Herakles always came to the assistance of those who could not defend themselves against their powerful oppressors; so he sent to Herakles and begged him to help his people and himself against the Dryopians. This Herakles did most willingly, and beat the Dryopians so completely that the Dorians afterwards lived in peace and quiet in their mountains. And Ægimius was old and had no children, so he bequeathed his kingdom at his death to Herakles and his descendants after him. To this the Dorians gladly agreed, and, under the Herakleids, they became a great and powerful nation instead of a small and weak one.

When this war was over Herakles went to Trachin and lived there with Dejanira and his children and the good King Keyx, and rested for a time from his labours. After some time he proclaimed throughout Greece that he was going on a warlike expedition, and instantly brave warriors flocked together from all parts of the country and all cities to fight under his command. As soon as his army was assembled, he crossed the sea between Trachin and Eubœa, where it is very narrow, and made war on Eurytus. Eurytus and his sons were killed in the battle; Æchalia was taken, and Herakles took Iole, with the rest of the prisoners, back to Trachin. And Herakles intended to marry her to his eldest son Hyllus; but wicked people told Dejanira that he intended to put her away and marry Iole himself; and Dejanira was very miserable.

Herakles did not go straight to Trachin, but stopped at the foot of Mount Oeta to offer a sacrifice to Zeus, in gratitude for the victory. Now, as every one who offered sacrifice first dressed himself in clean white garments, and as those of Herakles had grown bloody and dirty in the war,

he sent a servant to his house in Trachin to fetch him fresh clothes. But Dejanira unhappily remembered the wicked counsel of Nessus, and smeared some of his blood on the garment she sent to Herakles by the servant. When Herakles had put on the garment and it had got warm on his body, it stuck to his skin, and the poison burnt into his flesh and put him to insupportable torture. He tried to pull it off, but it stuck fast, and the poison penetrated into his body, and he felt he must die. Then he cut down trees and heaped them one upon the other, and laid himself down on the pile and begged his friends to set fire to it. Now Herakles had with him a youth called Philoctetes, the son of one of his friends, and the youth loved Herakles dearly and obeyed him in all things; and Herakles gave him his bow and arrows and commanded him to light the funeral pile; and Philoctetes obeyed him, though with great sorrow.

And now all the labour and suffering of Herakles was at an end, for as soon as the pile began to burn there came a great storm, and a cloud descended with thunder and lightning on the pile, and received the soul of Herakles, and his body was burnt. And he went to Olympus, and Zeus made him a god; and he and all the gods, who had always loved him, welcomed and embraced him; and even Here, who had always been his enemy, was reconciled to him, and gave him her beautiful daughter Hebe in marriage; and all nations to whom Herakles had done good by destroying tyrants or wild beasts, remembered him with gratitude and paid him divine honour. And now that many thousand years have passed away, men speak of Herakles with love and respect, but the wicked Eurystheus is hated and despised by all.

THE HERAKLEIDS AND ORESTES.

EURYSTHEUS was so very wicked, that when Herakles was dead he persecuted his children and wanted to kill them. For he well knew that one day they would punish him for all his ill-treatment of their father, who was not allowed to revenge himself. Now the old king Ægimius was not able to protect them, so they fled to Athens. Then Eurystheus went to Athens with a great army, and demanded that the Herakleids should be given up to him; but the Athenians and their king Theseus were brave and good and were ready to dare anything rather than act so basely. Iolaus, the friend of Herakles, was by this time dead; but he heard in Hades that the children of his friend were in danger, and implored Pluto to grant him one day of life to return on earth and fight for them. Pluto heard his prayer, and a great battle was fought, in which the Athenians gained the victory, and Iolaus killed Eurystheus with his own hand, and then returned to Hades; but the Herakleids went back to King Ægimius, and when he died, Hyllus was king of the Dorians in his stead.

The forefathers of Alkmene, the mother of Herakles, were kings of Argos; so that Herakles had a right to the throne of that country, and his sons and descendants after him. When Eurystheus was dead, Hyllus and his Dorians tried to conquer the Peloponnesus, but they failed in their attempt, and Hyllus was killed in single combat with Echemus, king of Arcadia, and his son Cleodæus was forced to return with his Dorians to their own country on Parnassus. Now the Peloponnesus is a peninsula,—that is to say, the sea flows all round it, except at one spot,

where a narrow neck of land joins it to the rest of Greece; this is called the Isthmus, and is a high mountain-ridge with no road across it; the road runs along the foot of the mountains by the sea, and is so narrow that it might be defended by a very small number of men, and if a few others were to climb up on the mountains and throw down stones, no one could pass along the narrow road below. The Peloponnesus is a wide country, full of mountains, many of which are nearly as high as the Alps, and like them always covered with ice and snow at the top; others are clothed with thick forests or rich pastures; and the valleys are very fruitful, and full of corn and olives and vines; and there were many noble cities in the Peloponnesus,—Sparta, Argos, Mykenæ, Tiryns, Corinth, Pylus, and many more besides.

After the death of Hyllus, his son Cleodæus marched upon the Isthmus again, but neither could he force his way into the Peloponnesus; and after his death his son Aristomachus made the same attempt, but with no better success. Now Aristomachus had three sons, Temenus, Kresphontes and Aristodemus; and they were not discouraged because their father, grandfather and great-grandfather had failed, but remembered what their great ancestor Herakles had gone through before he achieved such high honour. So they assembled a fresh army, and the Dorians were quite willing to go with them, for their country was small and barren, and if their kings conquered the Peloponnesus, those who went with them would become possessors of a wide and fruitful land. But before they set out, the three Herakleids went to ask the oracle at Delphi what they should do in order to be more successful than their forefathers. Phœbus-Apollo answered that they must take a man with three eyes as their leader. This answer seemed very strange to them, and they were afraid

that they never should find a man with three eyes; but as they left Delphi they met Oxylus of Ætolia, who was leaving his country because he had killed a man by accident with a quoit. Now Oxylus had but one eye, for the other had been shot out with an arrow, and he was riding on a mule which had both eyes perfect. When the Herakleids saw this, they guessed that he was the man whom the oracle had commanded them to take as a leader, and, as it turned out, they guessed right. For Oxylus told them that their forefathers had not done wisely in marching on the Isthmus; and he advised them to build ships, and make their attack on the Peloponnesus from the sea; for that the princes of the country would not know at what point they would land, and would be unable to make head against them. So the Herakleids encamped with their whole army on the shore which lies opposite to the northern coast of the Peloponnesus, where the sea between is very narrow. The surrounding mountains were covered with trees which they cut down and sawed in pieces and built boats with them, and the trees which were very big they only hollowed out into canoes. And the place where they made all these boats was called, from that circumstance, Naupactus. It is now known under the name of Lepanto, and is celebrated for a great battle fought two hundred and fifty years ago between the Christians and the Turks. The kings and the people of the Peloponnesus were not united among themselves; for the Ionians, who lived on the shore opposite to Naupactus, and the Arcadians, who lived in the middle of the peninsula, made peace with the Herakleids and the Dorians, and allowed them to pass through their lands. Now this was very foolish of them, and they suffered for it in the end, as you will hear afterwards.

Menelaus had died and left no son who could inherit

his kingdom, for Helen, his wife, had only one daughter called Hermione, and Megapenthes was the son of a female slave. Agamemnon, the king of Mykenæ, who had led the Greeks in the war against Troy as commander of all the kings of Greece, had one son named Orestes, who was but a child at the time his father returned from Troy, and was murdered by his false wife Klytæmnestra and her lover Ægisthus. Ægisthus wanted to murder Orestes too; but the boy's sister Electra, who was older than he, hid him, and sent him with a faithful servant to the land of Phokis, to a friend of her father's, called Strophius. And Strophius told no one that the boy was Orestes, for he was afraid that if the wicked Ægisthus knew where he was, he would send assassins to murder him. Strophius had a son called Pylades who was very good, and Orestes was brought up with him and they learned everything together: and the boys loved each other dearly, and were never happy asunder, and the older they grew, the stronger their friendship became. And when two friends love each other so dearly that each thinks only of what will please the other and is ready to do anything for him, even to venture his life, people say, down to this very day, that they are such friends as Orestes and Pylades. And both the friends were tall and strong and brave.

When Orestes was grown up, he went to Delphi and asked the oracle what he was to do in order to get back his father's kingdom; and the oracle told him he must revenge the death of his father on Ægisthus and Klytæmnestra, but that he must do it with his own hand and without the help of an army; and that he must invent some stratagem to effect his purpose. So Orestes set out on his way to Mykenæ, accompanied by his faithful friend Pylades, and by the old servant who had taken him to Strophius when he was a boy. When they got near the

town, Orestes and Pylades hid themselves in a tomb; and the old servant, who was not afraid that any one would know him again, went to the royal palace, and said that he was a traveller who had just come from Delphi, where he had seen Orestes killed by a fall from his chariot in a chariot-race. Klytæmnestra believed the story, and was so wicked as to rejoice at the news of her son's death; for her conscience told her that she deserved to be killed by her son in revenge for the murder of his father. And Ægisthus and Klytæmnestra held a solemn feast to celebrate their deliverance from the fear of the vengeance of Orestes. Then Orestes and Pylades went to the palace and asked to see the king and the queen, in order to tell them more particulars about the manner in which Orestes had been killed; and when they were let into their presence they stabbed them both to death. But although Orestes had destroyed his mother at the command of the oracle, even Phœbus and Athene could not protect him from the Eumenides. The Eumenides were terrible goddesses who were armed with serpents and burning torches, and pursued those who had killed their parents, brothers and sisters, or guests. And when Orestes saw them, he was struck with terror and fled; and the Eumenides still pursued him everywhere; but his friend Pylades and his sister Electra did not forsake the unhappy Orestes, but shared all his misery with him. At last he fled to Athens and took refuge in the temple of Athene; and the goddess would not suffer the Eumenides to torment him in her sanctuary. And Phœbus and Athene persuaded the Eumenides to let the Areiopagus decide whether Orestes had done right to kill his mother or not; since Phœbus had commanded him to go, and he had no other means of avenging his father. The Areiopagus was a tribunal consisting of twelve judges, before whom stood

an urn; and each judge had two little stones, one black and the other white; and he who held the accused to be guilty threw the black stone into the urn, and he who thought him innocent, the white one. Six of the judges found Orestes innocent, because he had obeyed the gods in avenging his father's murder; and six found him guilty, because, after all, Klytæmnestra was his mother. But Phœbus and Athene worked a miracle to save him; for when the stones were taken out of the urn, seven white stones were found in it, that is, one more than had been put in; and thus Orestes was freed from the fearful Eumenides, who could torment him no longer. After this Orestes wandered about through many strange countries, in expiation of his mother's death, and Pylades never left him; but Electra returned to Argos.

Orestes and Pylades came to the land of the Taurians, which is a peninsula in the Black Sea, or as the Greeks called it, the Pontus Euxinus. Now this is a great sea which washes the shores of Europe on one side and those of Asia on the other; and at Constantinople a broad arm of this sea joins it to another small sea, called the Propontis, from which there is still another branch into the Mediterranean. The peninsula where the Taurians lived was called the Chersonesus, and is a beautiful and fruitful country; but the Taurians were a savage and cruel nation who sacrificed all foreigners that went to their country to the goddess Artemis. You may imagine, therefore, that very few strangers went there of their own accord, but a great number were shipwrecked on their coast, for there are very violent storms in the Pontus Euxinus, and the navigation in it is very dangerous.

Orestes and Pylades were taken to the priestess of Artemis to be sacrificed; but when the priestess saw that they were Greeks, she was very sorrowful, for she was a

Greek herself; and she asked them who they were and who were their parents. Then Orestes told her that he was the son of the unfortunate King Agamemnon; and when the priestess heard this, she embraced him, and told him that she was his sister Iphigeneia, whom he had always believed to be dead.

And now you shall hear how Iphigeneia came to be at Tauris. When the Greeks were preparing to attack Troy, their ships assembled in the harbour of Aulis, in Boeotia; but when they were all ready to set sail, the wind continued so contrary that they could not leave the harbour. The soothsayer Calchas being consulted, declared that Agamemnon had offended Artemis at a sacrificial ceremony, and that the wind would not change nor the fleet ever reach Troy, unless he consented to offer his eldest daughter Iphigeneia as a sacrifice to the goddess. This Agamemnon refused to do, and declared that he would rather give up the war altogether and allow the Greek princes to return home again with their forces; but the Greeks would not consent to what was against their honour, and they forced Agamemnon to give up his daughter. Iphigeneia even resolved to offer herself as a voluntary sacrifice to save the honour of her nation, which bound them to take vengeance on Paris and the Trojans. Iphigeneia, crowned with flowers, was led to the altar as a victim; but Artemis enveloped her and the altar in a thick cloud, and when that disappeared there stood a white doe in the place of Iphigeneia; and the Greeks sacrificed the doe to Artemis, and immediately the wind became favourable, and the Greeks went on board their vessels and reached Troy in safety. But Artemis carried Iphigeneia in the cloud through the air to Tauris, and made her priestess of her own temple there, and Iphigeneia had remained in Tauris ever since.

As soon as Orestes and Iphigeneia knew that they were

brother and sister, they determined to try to escape together; and Iphigeneia prayed to Artemis for help, and the goddess commanded the king of the Taurians to let them go away unhurt. So Iphigeneia went back to Mykenæ with Orestes, who from that time forward stayed quietly in his own country. Pylades married Electra and lived at Mykenæ with his friend. Orestes married his cousin Hermione, the daughter of Menelaus, and when Menelaus died and was carried to the Elysian Fields, Orestes inherited his kingdom of Lakedæmon, so he was king both of Lakedæmon and Mykenæ. Now when Orestes died, his son Tisamenus succeeded, and was king when the Herakleids invaded the Peloponnesus with their Dorians. Tisamenus marched with his Achæans against the Herakleids, but he was beaten, and the Herakleids conquered his whole kingdom. Then Tisamenus led all the Achæans, who did not choose to be subject to the Dorians, against the Ionians who had let the Herakleids march through their country; and he drove them out of their land and lived there himself with his Achæans, and it was called Achæa down to the time when Greece was conquered by the Turks. So the Ionians were punished for allowing a strange people to enter the Peloponnesus without opposing any resistance to them.

At the time the Dorians were at Naupactus preparing to cross over to the Peloponnesus, they were governed by three kings, Temenus, Kresphontes, and Aristodemus, who were brothers and Herakleids, being the sons of the great-grandson of Herakles. Aristodemus was killed by lightning and left two sons, Eurysthenes and Procles, who were quite little children, and their mother's brother was their guardian. Now when the Dorians had conquered the territory of Tisamenus and the land of Pylus, they resolved to separate into three kingdoms, Argos,

Lakedæmon, and Messene. But Messene was much the finest country, and the Herakleids could not agree amongst themselves which should have it. So they determined to draw lots, and that he whose name was first drawn out of the urn should have Argos, and the second Lakedæmon, and the third Messene. Now in those days there was very little paper, and people wrote on pieces of broken earthenware; so Temenus wrote his name on a potsherd, and Theras, the uncle of Eurysthenes and Procles, wrote theirs on another, and Kresphontes wrote his on a third, and the three potsherds were put into a vase filled with water, and a priest was to draw them out one after another. But Kresphontes, instead of writing his name on a piece of burnt earthenware, had written it on a bit of dried clay which entirely dissolved in the water. So the priest only found two potsherds, and drew first that of Temenus, and then the one belonging to the sons of Aristodemus. Thus Temenus had Argos, and the Aristodemids had Lakedæmon, and Kresphontes got Messene. But on account of this deceit there was always enmity between the kings of Lakedæmon and the descendants of Kresphontes.

Kresphontes had a wicked brother called Polyphontes, who wanted to get the kingdom and murdered Kresphontes and all his children, save one son, Æpytus, whom his mother Merope managed to hide, and then sent him to a friend of her murdered husband, who lived in Ætolia, a wide tract of land on the river Achelous. In the house of this friend Æpytus grew up and was educated, and his mother often sent the old servant who had carried him to Ætolia to see how he fared, and whether he was well and good. Æpytus heard from his father's friend and from the old servant that his uncle had murdered his father Kresphontes, and he resolved to avenge his death, and

when he was grown old and strong enough, he left Ætolia without telling any one what he intended to do; for he was wise enough to know that a man ought to keep any great and dangerous undertaking a profound secret from every one.

He went through Achæa and Elis to Messene, and announced himself to King Polyphontes as an Ætolian who had killed the young Æpytus, of whom Polyphontes was as much afraid as Ægisthus had been of Orestes, and that he was come to claim his reward. Polyphontes rejoiced greatly and promised him a rich reward, and invited him to live in the palace as long as he should stay at Messene. Then he proclaimed a great feast for the next day, to celebrate some joyful news he had just received. Now Merope heard that the murderer of her son was in the palace; and it happened that the old servant had come back from Ætolia that very day, with the news that Æpytus had disappeared and that no one knew what had become of him; so she was convinced that her son was dead, and that the stranger certainly had murdered him. At this she wept and tore her hair; and as she was rushing wildly about the palace, she found Æpytus sleeping in one of the galleries, for he was very tired from his journey. She had not seen him since he was a little child, and he was now a tall handsome youth, so she did not know him, and seized a dagger to stab him as the murderer of her son. But fortunately the old servant came and recognized him and told his mother who he was. Then she threw herself upon him and kissed him, and he awoke and heard from the old servant that it was his mother, and they all wept for joy and consulted together how to take vengeance on Polyphontes.

The following morning every thing was prepared for a great sacrifice and feast, and the tyrant Polyphontes sent

for the stranger to bear him company; he was even atrocious enough to order Merope herself to be present at the ceremony. Æpytus walked by the side of Polyphontes, who sacrificed a whole hecatomb, and begged to be allowed, as an honour, to sacrifice one bull with his own hand. He took the axe, and instead of striking the bull, he felled Polyphontes to the earth with one blow; and Merope called out to the people, "This is my son Æpytus, your king, who has avenged his father, Kresphontes, your good ruler." The people, who loved Kresphontes and hated his murderer, greeted Æpytus as their king with cries of joy, and he reigned over Messene, and his descendants, who were called Æpytids, after him.

The sons of Aristodemus, Eurysthenes and Procles, were little children when the Herakleids conquered the Peloponnesus, so their uncle Theras governed for them till they were grown up. They then governed Sparta together, and as both of them left children, there were always two kings of Sparta at once. Kresphontes treated the Messenians very kindly; but the sons of Aristodemus were very cruel to the inhabitants of Lakonia, and made them subject to the Dorians, who commanded them in everything and took away much of their land and their property from them. At last the citizens of a great city, called Helos, rebelled against them and were joined by many more Lakonians; but King Agis, the son of Eurysthenes, conquered them, and destroyed the city of Helos. And all the Lakonians who had taken arms against the Dorians were made serfs and were forced to give half the produce of their fields to the Spartans every year; if a Spartan killed a Helot he was not punished for it; and the Helots were not allowed to have any other weapons than slings and javelins when the Spartans led them to war.

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