

Preface

Perhaps no other stories have ever been told so often or listened to with so much pleasure as the classic tales of ancient Greece. For many ages they have been a source of delight to young people and old, to the ignorant and the learned, to all who love to hear about and contemplate things mysterious, beautiful, and grand.

They have become so incorporated into our language and thought, and so interwoven with our literature, that we could not do away with them now if we would. They are a portion of our heritage from the distant past, and they form perhaps as important a part of our intellectual life as they did of that of the people among whom they originated.

I have here attempted to tell a few stories of Jupiter and his mighty company and of some of the old Greek heroes, *simply as stories*, nothing more.

I have carefully avoided every suggestion of interpretation. Attempts at analysis and explanation will always prove fatal to a reader's appreciation and enjoyment of such stories.



Homer and His Guide

To inculcate the idea that these tales are merely descriptions of certain natural phenomena expressed in narrative and poetic form, is to deprive them of their highest charm; it is like turning precious gold into utilitarian iron: it is changing a delightful romance into a dull scientific treatise. The wise teacher will take heed not to be guilty of such an error.

It will be observed that while each of the stories in this volume is wholly independent of the others and may be read without any knowledge of those which precede it, there is nevertheless a certain continuity from the first to the last, giving to the collection a completeness like that of a single narrative.

In order that the young people of our own country and time may be the better able to read these stories in the light in which they were narrated long ago, I have told them in simple language, keeping the supernatural element as far as possible in the background, and nowhere referring to Jupiter and his mighty company as gods.

I have hoped thus to free the narrative still more from everything that might detract from its interest simply as a story.

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CONTENTS

Volume I

1	Jupiter and His Mighty Company	I
2	The Titans and the Golden Age	9
3	The Story of Prometheus	19
	1. How Fire Was Given to Men	20
	2. The First Woman: Pandora	26
	3. Pandora's Box	31
	4. How Prometheus Was Punished	35
	5. How Prometheus Was Rescued	38
4	The Flood and the Creation of Humans	41
	1. The Flood: Destroying All Humans	42
	2. The Creation of Human Beings	46
5	The Story of Io	49
	1. Changing Io Into a White Cow	50
	2. Argus and Peacock	53
	3. Gadfly and Bosphorus	57
	4. Meeting Prometheus	58
	5. Coming to Egypt	60

6	The Wonderful Weaver	63
	1 .Arachne:The Boastfull Weaver	64
	2.The Contest in Weaving	68
7	Apollo:The Lord of the Silver Bow	73
	1 . Leto's Escape and Dolphin	74
	2.The Birth of Apollo and Diana	76
	3.The Center of the World: Parnassus	78
	4.The Serpent Python and the City of Delphi	80
	5.Apollo Chasing Daphne and Laurel	82
	6 . Coronis and Crow	88
	7. Grieving for the Dead Son Aesculapius	94
8	Cadmus and Europa	99
	1 . Europa and the White Bull	100
	2. Searching for Europa	103
	3. Pythia, the Priestess of Apollo at Delphi	106
	4.The City Location and the Fierce Dragon	110
	5. Sowing Dragon's Teeth and the City of Thebes	113
	6.Alphabet and Europe	117

Volume 2

1	The Story of Perseus	I
	1. Danae and the Golden Shower	2
	2. The Wooden Chest and Exile	5
	3. The Quest of Medusa's Head	9
	4. Mercury's Winged Slippers	12
	5. The Gray Sisters: With One Eye and One Tooth	15
	6. The Western Maidens and the Tree of Golden Apples	19
	7. The Dreadful Gorgons	24
	8. Andromeda and the Sea Beast	28
	9. Medusa's Head and Turning Into Stone	35
	10. The Death of Grandfather	37
2	The Origins of Athens	39
	1. King of Athens: Cecrops	40
	2. Athena Named Her City: Athens	44
3	The Adventures of Theseus (I)	53
	1. Unstable Athens	54
	2. Theseus Lifting the Stone	59
	3. The Robber Giant: Club-Carrier	65
	4. Pine-Bender: Sinis	67
	5. Perigune and Asparagus	70
	6. Vile Sciron	73
	7. Wrestler of Wrong-Doer	77
	8. The Stretcher: Procrustes	81

9. Returning Home	87
10. The Wicked Witch: Medea	92

4 The Wonderful Artisan 97

1. Perdix and Partridge	98
2. The King of Crete: Minos	103
3. Minotaur and Labyrinth	106
4. Daedalus Wings	109
5. The Fall of Icarus and Icarian Sea	112

5 The Adventures of Theseus (II) 115

1. The Cruel Tribute	116
2. Bound for Crete	120
3. The Princess: Ariadne	123
4. The Labyrinth and the Aegean Sea	126

God and Goddess in Greek and Roman Mythology

	Greek	Roman	
1	Zeus	Jupiter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› principal god of the Greek pantheon› ruler of the heavens› king of the sky and the earth
2	Hera	Juno	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› principal goddess of the Pantheon› queen of the Gods› goddess of marriage
3	Poseidon	Neptune	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› king of the sea, earthquakes, and horses
4	Hades	Pluto	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› god of the dead› ruler of the underworld
5	Persephone		<ul style="list-style-type: none">› queen of the Dead, grain-goddess
6	Demeter	Ceres	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› goddess of the earth, flowers, plants, and harvest
7	Prometheus		<ul style="list-style-type: none">› a Titan, brother of Atlas
8	Heracles	Hercules	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› a divine hero

9	Dionysus	Bacchus	› god of wine and sensual pleasures
10	Pan	Faunus	› god of woods, fields, and flocks
11	Ares	Mars	› god of war
12	Hermes	Mercury	› god of commerce, invention, travelers and shepherds › messenger of the gods
13	Hephaestus	Vulcan	› god of fire and metalworking
14	Athena	Minerva	› goddess of wisdom and war
15	Aphrodite	Venus	› goddess of love and beauty
16	Apollo	Phoebus Apollo	› god of the sun, poetry, music, dance, medicine, and oracles
17	Artemis	Diana	› goddess of the hunt, the moon, virginity, animals, and childbirth
18	Eros	Cupid	› god of love
19	Muses		› sisterhood of goddesses › embody the arts, inspire the creation
20	Hebe	Juventas	› goddess of youth and spring
21	Pandora		› the first woman

1 Jupiter and His Mighty Company



Jupiter & Juno
on Mount Ida



A long time ago, when the world was much younger than it is now, people told and believed a great many wonderful stories about wonderful things which neither you nor I have ever seen.

They often talked about a certain Mighty¹ Being² called Jupiter, or Zeus, who was king of the sky and the earth; and they said that he sat most of the time amid the clouds on the top of a very high mountain where he could look down and see everything that was going on in the earth beneath.



Jupiter and Thetis

He liked to ride on the storm-clouds and hurl³ burning thunderbolts⁴ right and left among the trees and rocks; and he was so very, very mighty that when he nodded⁵, the earth quaked, the mountains trembled⁶ and smoked, the sky grew black, and the sun hid his face.

1 mighty ['mɜːti] (a.) of great strength and power

2 being ['biːɪŋ] (n.) a person or thing that exists

3 hurl [hɜːrl] (v.) to throw forcefully

4 thunderbolt ['θʌndərbəʊlt] (n.) a flash of lightning and the sound of thunder together

5 nod [nɒːd] (v.) move head in agreement

6 tremble ['trembəl] (v.) to shake involuntarily





The Horses of Neptune



Jupiter had two brothers, both of them terrible fellows, but not nearly so great as himself. The name of one of them was Neptune, or Poseidon, and he was the king of the sea. He had a glittering⁷, golden palace far down in the deep sea-caves where the fishes live and the red coral⁸ grows.

And whenever he was angry the waves would rise mountain high, and the storm-winds would howl⁹ fearfully, and the sea would try to break over the land; and men called him the Shaker of the Earth.

7 glittering ['glɪtərɪŋ] (a.) to shine brightly, with sparkling or lustrous reflected light

8 coral ['kɔːrəl] (n.) a rock-like substance, formed in the sea by groups of particular types of small animal

9 howl [haʊl] (v.) to make a long whining sound





The Abduction of Persephone by Hades

The other brother of Jupiter was a sad pale-faced being, whose kingdom was underneath the earth, where the sun never shone and where there was darkness and weeping and sorrow all the time. His name was Pluto, or Aidoneus, and his country was called the Lower World, or the Land of Shadows, or Hades.

Men said that whenever any one died, Pluto would send his messenger, or Shadow Leader, to carry that one down into his cheerless kingdom; and for that reason they never spoke well of him, but thought of him only as the enemy of life.

A great number of other Mighty Beings lived with Jupiter amid the clouds on the mountain top,—so many that I can name a very few only.