



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK
HEROES EVERY
CHILD SHOULD KNOW
—
H. W. Mabie
COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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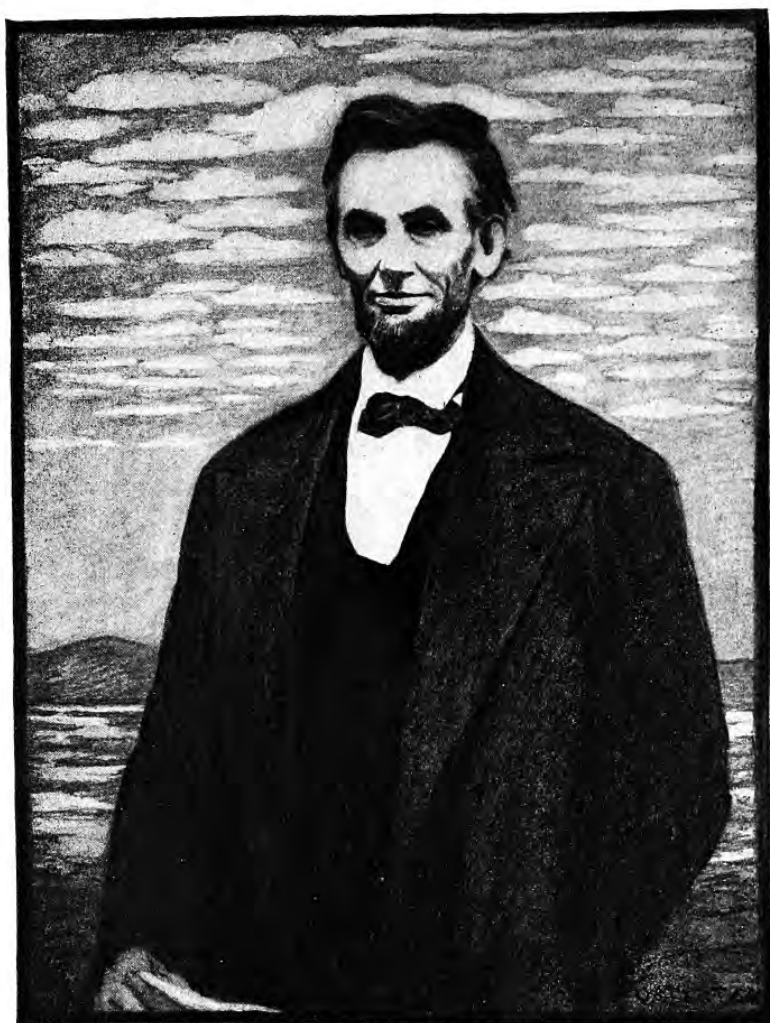
Heroes Every Child Should Know

*TALES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
OF THE WORLD'S HEROES
IN ALL AGES*

by

HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE





ABRAHAM LINCOLN

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right.”

—Second Inaugural Address, March 4th, 1865.

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A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

The heroes written about in this volume are a diverse group, encompassing figures from mythology, historical individuals, and some who exist in the realm in between: real people whose lives have been mythologized to such an extent that the stories told about them may serve more as moral or cultural lessons than factual accounts.

Those featured in this volume who lived in a time close enough to our own for us to have a nuanced understanding of their lives may no longer be universally seen as 'heroes.' Like all individuals, they were complex beings endowed with a range of qualities—some admirable, some less so. Through the lens of time and shifting societal values, certain actions once deemed acceptable are now viewed as abhorrent. There are aspects of these lives that we may wish to emulate, and others that serve as cautionary tales.

While this volume predominantly focuses on the admirable traits and actions of these figures, it's important to remember that no 'hero' is without flaws or complexities. Rather than elevating individuals wholesale, let us focus on the specific actions and qualities worthy of emulation, while critically examining those better left in the past.

L.B.P.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The endeavour has been made in this volume to bring together the heroic men of different races, periods and types; and in the selection of material the most attractive, intelligent and authoritative literature has been drawn upon. In cases in which the material selected belongs distinctively to the best literature, no changes have been made, although narratives have been abbreviated; in cases in which the material has a historical rather than a distinctively literary quality, the text has been treated for "substance of doctrine," and omissions have been freely made, and connecting words, phrases and even sentences have been introduced to give the narrative clear connection and completeness. In the preparation of the material for the volume the intelligence and skill of Miss Kate Stephens have been so freely used that she is entitled to the fullest recognition as associate editor.

H. W. M.

INTRODUCTION

If there had been no real heroes there would have been created imaginary ones, for men cannot live without them. The hero is just as necessary as the farmer, the sailor, the carpenter and the doctor; society could not get on without him. There have been a great many different kinds of heroes, for in every age and among every people the hero has stood for the qualities that were most admired and sought after by the bravest and best; and all ages and peoples have imagined or produced heroes as inevitably as they have made ploughs for turning the soil or ships for getting through the water or weapons with which to fight their enemies. To be some kind of a hero has been the ambition of spirited boys from the beginning of history; and if you want to know what the men and women of a country care for most, you must study their heroes. To the boy the hero stands for the highest success: to the grown man and woman he stands for the deepest and richest life.

Men have always worked with their hands, but they have never been content with that kind of work; they have looked up from the fields and watched the sun and stars; they have cut wood for their fires in the forest, but they have noticed the life which goes on among the trees and they have heard the mysterious sounds which often fill the air in the remotest places. From the beginning men have not only used their hands but their intellect and their imagination; they have had to work or starve, but they have seen the world, thought about it and dreamed about it.

They had worked and thought and dreamed only a little time before they began to explain the marvelous earth on which they found themselves and the strange things that happened in it; the vastness and beauty of the fields, woods, sky and sea, the force of the wind, the coming and going of the day and night, the warmth of summer when everything grew, and

the cold of winter when everything died, the rush of the storm and the terrible brightness of the lightning. They had no idea of what we call law or force; they could not think of anything being moved or any noise being made unless there was some one like themselves to move things and make sounds; and so they made stories of gods and giants and heroes and nymphs and fawns; and the myths, which are poetic explanations of the world and of the life of men in it, came into being.

But they did not stop with these great matters; they began to tell stories about themselves and the things they wanted to do and the kind of life they wanted to lead. They wanted ease, power, wealth, happiness, freedom; so they created genii, built palaces, made magic carpets which carried them to the ends of the earth and horses with wings which bore them through the air, peopled the woods and fields with friendly, frolicsome or mischievous little people, who made fires for them if they were friendly, or milked cows, overturned bowls, broke dishes and played all kinds of antics and made all sorts of trouble if they were mischievous or unfriendly. Beside the great myths, like wild flowers in the shade of great trees, there sprang up among the people of almost all countries a host of poetic, satirical, humorous or homely stories of fairies, genii, trolls, giants, dwarfs, imps, and queer creatures of all kinds; so that to the children of two hundred years ago the woods, the fields, the solitary and quiet places everywhere, were full of folk who kept out of sight, but who had a great deal to do with the fortunes and fates of men and women.

From very early times great honor was paid to courage and strength; qualities which won success and impressed the imagination in primitive not less than in highly developed societies. The first heroes were gods or demi-gods, or men of immense strength who did difficult things. When men first began to live in the world they were in constant peril and faced hardships of every kind; and from the start they had very hard work to do.

There were fields to be cultivated, houses to be built, woods to be explored, beasts to be killed and other beasts to be tamed and set to work. There were many things to be done and no tools to work with; there were great storms to be faced and no houses for protection; there was terrible cold and no fire or clothing; there were diseases and no medicine; there were perils on land, in the water and in the air, and no knowledge of the ways of meeting them.

At the very start courage and strength were necessary if life was to be preserved and men were to live together in safety and with comfort. When a strong man appeared he helped his fellows to make themselves more at ease in the world. Sometimes he did this by simply making himself more comfortable and thus showing others how to do it; sometimes he did it by working for his fellows. No matter how selfish a man may be, if he does any real work in the world he works not only for himself but for others. In this way a selfish man like Napoleon does the work of a hero without meaning to do it: for the world is so made that no capable man or woman can be entirely selfish, no matter how hard they try to get and keep everything for themselves.

It was not long before men saw that strong men could not work for themselves without working for others, and there came in very early the idea of service as part of the idea of heroism, and the demi-gods, who were among the earliest heroes, were servants as well as masters. Hercules, the most powerful of the heroes to Greek and Roman boys was set to do the most difficult things not for himself but for others. He destroyed lions, hydras, wild boars, birds with brazen beaks and wings, mad bulls, many-headed monsters, horses which fed on human flesh, dragons, he mastered the three-headed dog Cerberus, he tore asunder the rocks at the Strait of Gibraltar which bear his name to open a channel between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. He fought the Centaur and brought

back Alcestis, the wife of Admetus, from the pale regions of death where she had gone to save her husband's life. In all these labors, which were so great that works of extraordinary magnitude have since been called Herculean, the brave, patient, suffering hero, was helping other people rather than helping himself.

And this was true of Thor, the strong god of the Norsemen whose hammer was the most terrible weapon in the world, the roll and crash of thunder being the sound of it and the blinding lightning the flash of it. The gods were the friends of men, giving the light and warmth and fertility of the summer that the fields might bear food for them and the long, bright days might bring them peace and happiness. And the giants were the enemies of men, tirelessly trying to make the fields desolate and stop the singing of birds and shroud the sky in darkness by driving away summer with the icy breath of winter. In this perpetual conflict Thor was the hero of strength and courage, beating back the giants, defeating their schemes and fighting the battle for gods and men with tireless zeal; counting no peril or hardship too great if there was heroic work to be done.

Courage and achievement are the two signs of the hero; he may possess or lack many other qualities, but he must be daring and he must do things and not dream or talk about them.

From the days of Hercules to those of Washington and Livingston, men of heroic spirit have not stopped to count the cost when a deed must be done but have done it, usually with very little talk or noise; for heroes, as a rule, are much more interested in getting their work done than in making themselves conspicuous or winning a reputation. Heroes have often been harsh and even brutal, especially in the earliest times when humane feeling and a compassionate spirit had not been developed; Siegfried, Jason, Gustavas Adolphus and Von Tromp were often arbitrary and oppressive in their

attitude toward men; and, in later times, Alfred the Great, William the Silent and Nelson were not without serious defects of temper and sometimes of character. Men are not great or heroic because they are faultless; they are great and heroic because they dare, suffer, achieve and serve.

And men love their heroes not because they have been perfect characters under all conditions, but because they have been brave, true, able, and unselfish, A man may have few faults and count for very little in the world, because he lacks force, daring, the greatness of soul which moves before a generation like a flaming torch; a man may lead a stainless life, not because he is really virtuous but because he has very few temptations within or without. Some of the most heroic men have put forth more strength in resisting a single temptation than men of theories and more commonplace natures put forth in a life time. The serious faults of heroes are not overlooked or forgotten; the great man is as much the servant of the moral law as the little man, and pays the same price for disobedience; but generosity of spirit, devotion to high aims and capacity for self-sacrifice often outweigh serious offences. Nelson is less a hero because he yielded to a great temptation; but he remains a hero in spite of the stain on his fame. It is much better not to be profane under any circumstances, but when Washington swore fiercely at Charles Lee on the battle field of Monmouth his profanity was the expression of the righteous wrath of a good man. In judging the hero one must take into account the age in which he lived, the differences in moral standards between the past and the present, and the force of the temptations which come with strength of body, passion, imagination, great position, colossal enterprises; these do not conceal or excuse the faults of heroes but they explain those faults.

The men whose bravery and great deeds are described in these pages have been selected not because they are faultless

in character and life, but because they were brave, generous, self-forgetful, self-sacrificing and capable of splendid deeds. Men love and honour them not only because they owe them a great deal of gratitude, but because they see in their heroes the kind of men they would like to be; for the possibilities of the heroic are in almost all men. Stories of the heroes have often made other men strong and brave and true in the face of great perils and tasks, and this book is put forth in the faith that it will not only pass on the fame of the heroes of the past but help make heroes in the present.

H. W. M.

CHAPTER I
PERSEUS

Once upon a time there were two princes who were twins. Their names were Acrisius and Proetus, and they lived in the pleasant vale of Argos, far away in Hellas. They had fruitful meadows and vineyards, sheep and oxen, great herds of horses feeding down in Lerna Fen, and all that men could need to make them blest: and yet they were wretched, because they were jealous of each other. From the moment they were born they began to quarrel; and when they grew up each tried to take away the other's share of the kingdom, and keep all for himself.

But there came a prophet to Acrisius and prophesied against him, and said, "Because you have risen up against your own blood, your own blood shall rise up against you; because you have sinned against your kindred, by your kindred you shall be punished. Your daughter Danae shall have a son, and by that son's hands you shall die. So the gods have ordained, and it will surely come to pass."

And at that Acrisius was very much afraid; but he did not mend his ways. He had been cruel to his own family, and, instead of repenting and being kind to them, he went on to be more cruel than ever: for he shut up his fair daughter Danae in a cavern underground, lined with brass, that no one might come near her. So he fancied himself more cunning than the gods: but you will see presently whether he was able to escape them.

Now it came to pass that in time a son came to Danae: so

beautiful a babe that any but King Acrisius would have had pity on it. But he had no pity; for he took Danae and her babe down to the seashore, and put them into a great chest and thrust them out to sea, for the winds and the waves to carry them whithersoever they would.

The northwest wind blew freshly out of the blue mountains, and down the pleasant vale of Argos, and away and out to sea. And away and out to sea before it floated the mother and her babe, while all who watched them wept, save that cruel father, King Acrisius.

So they floated on and on, and the chest danced up and down upon the billows, and the baby slept upon its mother's breast: but the poor mother could not sleep, but watched and wept, and she sang to her baby as they floated; and the song which she sang you shall learn yourselves some day.

And now they are past the last blue headland, and in the open sea; and there is nothing round them but the waves, and the sky, and the wind. But the waves are gentle, and the sky is clear, and the breeze is tender and low.

So a night passed, and a day, and a long day it was for Danae; and another night and day beside, till Danae was faint with hunger and weeping, and yet no land appeared. And all the while the babe slept quietly; and at last poor Danae drooped her head and fell asleep likewise with her cheek against the babe's.

After a while she was awakened suddenly; for the chest was jarring and grinding, and the air was full of sound. She looked up, and over her head were mighty cliffs, all red in the setting sun, and around her rocks and breakers, and flying flakes of foam. She clasped her hands together, and shrieked aloud for help. And when she cried, help met her: for now there came over the rocks a tall and stately man, and looked down wonderingly upon poor Danae tossing about in the chest among the waves.

He wore a rough cloak of frieze, and on his head a broad hat to shade his face; in his hand he carried a trident for spearing fish, and over his shoulder was a casting-net; but Danae could see that he was no common man by his stature, and his walk, and his flowing golden hair and beard; and by the two servants who came behind him, carrying baskets for his fish. But she had hardly time to look at him before he had laid aside his trident and leapt down the rocks, and thrown his casting-net so surely over Danae and the chest, that he drew it, and her, and the baby, safe upon a ledge of rock.

Then the fisherman took Danae by the hand, and lifted her out of the chest, and said:

“O beautiful damsel, what strange chance has brought you to this island in so frail a ship? Who are you, and whence? Surely you are some King’s daughter and this boy has somewhat more than mortal.”

And as he spoke he pointed to the babe; for its face shone like the morning star.

But Danae only held down her head, and sobbed out:

“Tell me to what land I have come, unhappy that I am; and among what men I have fallen!”

And he said, “This isle is called Seriphos, and I am a Hellen, and dwell in it. I am the brother of Polydectes the King; and men call me Dictys the netter, because I catch the fish of the shore.”

Then Danae fell down at his feet, and embraced his knees and cried:

“Oh, sir, have pity upon a stranger, whom a cruel doom has driven to your land; and let me live in your house as a servant; but treat me honourably, for I was once a king’s daughter, and this my boy (as you have truly said) is of no common race. I will not be a charge to you, or eat the bread of idleness; for I am more skilful in weaving and embroidery than all the maidens of my land.”

And she was going on; but Dictys stopped her, and raised her up, and said:

“My daughter, I am old, and my hairs are growing grey; while I have no children to make my home cheerful. Come with me

then, and you shall be a daughter to me and to my wife, and this babe shall be our grandchild. For I fear the gods, and show hospitality to all strangers; knowing that good deeds, like evil ones, always return to those who do them.”

So Danae was comforted, and went home with Dictys the good fisherman, and was a daughter to him and to his wife.

Fifteen years were passed and gone and the babe was now grown to a tall lad and a sailor, and went many voyages after merchandise to the islands round. His mother called him Perseus; but all the people in Seriphos said that he was not the son of mortal man, and called him Zeus, the son of the king of the Immortals. For though he was but fifteen, he was taller by a head than any man in the island; and he was the most skilful of all in running and wrestling and boxing, and in throwing the quoit and the javelin, and in rowing with the oar, and in playing on the harp, and in all which befits a man. And he was brave and truthful, gentle and courteous, for good old Dictys had trained him well; and well it was for Perseus that he had done so.

Now one day at Samos, while the ship was lading, Perseus wandered into a pleasant wood to get out of the sun, and sat down on the turf and fell asleep. And as he slept a strange dream came to him—the strangest dream which he had ever had in his life.

There came a lady to him through the wood, taller than he, or any mortal man; but beautiful exceedingly, with grey eyes, clear and piercing, but strangely soft and mild. On her head was a helmet, and in her hand a spear. And over her shoulder, above her long blue robes, hung a goat-skin, which bore up a mighty shield of brass, polished like a mirror. She stood and looked at him with her clear grey eyes; and Perseus saw that her eyelids never moved, nor her eyeballs, but looked straight through and through him, and into his very heart, as if she could see all the secrets of his soul, and knew all that he had

ever thought or longed for since the day that he was born. And Perseus dropped his eyes, trembling and blushing, as the wonderful lady spoke.

“Perseus, you must do an errand for me.”

“Who are you, lady? And how do you know my name?”

“I am Pallas Athene; and I know the thoughts of all men’s hearts, and discern their manhood or their baseness. And from the souls of clay I turn away, and they are blest, but not by me. They fatten at ease, like sheep in the pasture, and eat what they did not sow, like oxen in the stall. They grow and spread, like the gourd along the ground; but, like the gourd, they give no shade to the traveller, and when they are ripe death gathers them, and they go down unloved into hell, and their name vanishes out of the land.

“But to the souls of fire I give more fire, and to those who are manful I give a might more than man’s. These are the heroes, the sons of the Immortals who are blest, but not like the souls of clay. For I drive them forth by strange paths, Perseus, that they may fight the Titans and the monsters, the enemies of gods and men. Through doubt and need, danger and battle, I drive them; and some of them are slain in the flower of youth, no man knows when or where; and some of them win noble names, and a fair and green old age; but what will be their latter end I know not, and none, save Zeus, the father of gods and men. Tell me now, Perseus, which of these two sorts of men seem to you more blest?”

Then Perseus answered boldly: “Better to die in the flower of youth, on the chance of winning a noble name, than to live at ease like the sheep, and die unloved and unrenowned.”

Then that strange lady laughed, and held up her brazen shield, and cried: “See here, Perseus; dare you face such a monster as this, and slay it, that I may place its head upon this shield?”

And in the mirror of the shield there appeared a face and

as Perseus looked on it his blood ran cold. It was the face of a beautiful woman; but her cheeks were pale as death, and her brows were knit with everlasting pain, and her lips were thin and bitter like a snake's; and, instead of hair, vipers wreathed about her temples, and shot out their forked tongues; while round her head were folded wings like an eagle's, and upon her bosom claws of brass.

And Perseus looked awhile, and then said: "If there is anything so fierce and foul on earth, it were a noble deed to kill it. Where can I find the monster?"

Then the strange lady smiled again, and said: "Not yet; you are too young, and too unskilled; for this is Medusa the Gorgon, the mother of a monstrous brood."

And Perseus said, "Try me; for since you spoke to me a new soul has come into my breast, and I should be ashamed not to dare anything which I can do. Show me, then, how I can do this!"

"Perseus," said Athene, "think well before you attempt; for this deed requires a seven years' journey, in which you cannot repent or turn back nor escape; but if your heart fails you, you must die in the Unshapen Land, where no man will ever find your bones."

"Better so than live despised," said Perseus. "Tell me, then, oh tell me, fair and wise Goddess, how I can do but this one thing, and then, if need be, die!"

Then Athene smiled and said:

"Be patient, and listen; for if you forget my words, you will indeed die. You must go northward to the country of the Hyperboreans, who live beyond the pole, at the sources of the cold north wind, till you find the three Grey Sisters, who have but one eye and one tooth between them. You must ask them the way to the Nymphs, the daughters of the Evening Star, who dance about the golden tree, in the Atlantic island of the west. They will tell you the way to the Gorgon, that you may slay her, my enemy, the mother of monstrous beasts. Once she was a maiden as beautiful

as morn, till in her pride she sinned a sin at which the sun hid his face; and from that day her hair was turned to vipers, and her hands to eagle's claws; and her heart was filled with shame and rage, and her lips with bitter venom; and her eyes became so terrible that whosoever looks on them is turned to stone; and her children are the winged horse and the giant of the golden sword; and her grandchildren are Echidna the witch-adder, and Geryon the three-headed tyrant, who feeds his herds beside the herds of hell. So she became the sister of the Gorgons, the daughters of the Queen of the Sea. Touch them not, for they are immortal; but bring me only Medusa's head."

"And I will bring it!" said Perseus; "but how am I to escape her eyes? Will she not freeze me too into stone?"

"You shall take this polished shield," said Athene, "and when you come near her look not at her yourself, but at her image in the brass; so you may strike her safely. And when you have struck off her head, wrap it, with your face turned away, in the folds of the goatskin on which the shield hangs. So you will bring it safely back to me, and win to yourself renown, and a place among the heroes who feast with the Immortals upon the peak where no winds blow."

Then Perseus said, "I will go, though I die in going. But how shall I cross the seas without a ship? And who will show me my way? And when I find her, how shall I slay her, if her scales be iron and brass?"

Now beside Athene appeared a young man more light-limbed than the stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire. By his side was a scimitar of diamond, all of one clear precious stone, and on his feet were golden sandals, from the heels of which grew living wings.

Then the young man spoke: "These sandals of mine will bear you across the seas, and over hill and dale like a bird, as they bear me all day long; for I am Hermes, the far-famed Argus-slayer, the messenger of the Immortals who dwell on Olympus."

Then Perseus fell down and worshipped, while the young man spoke again:

“The sandals themselves will guide you on the road, for they are divine and cannot stray; and this sword itself the Argus-slayer, will kill her, for it is divine, and needs no second stroke. Arise, and gird them on, and go forth.”

So Perseus arose, and girded on the sandals and the sword.

And Athene cried, “Now leap from the cliff and be gone.”

But Perseus lingered.

“May I not bid farewell to my mother and to Dictys? And may I not offer burnt offerings to you, and to Hermes the far-famed Argus-slayer, and to Father Zeus above?”

“You shall not bid farewell to your mother, lest your heart relent at her weeping. I will comfort her and Dictys until you return in peace. Nor shall you offer burnt offerings to the Olympians; for your offering shall be Medusa’s head. Leap, and trust in the armour of the Immortals.”

Then Perseus looked down the cliff and shuddered; but he was ashamed to show his dread. Then he thought of Medusa and the renown before him, and he leapt into the empty air.

And behold, instead of falling he floated, and stood, and ran along the sky. He looked back, but Athene had vanished, and Hermes; and the sandals led him on northward ever, like a crane who follows the spring toward the Ister fens.

So Perseus started on his journey, going dry-shod over land and sea; and his heart was high and joyful, for the winged sandals bore him each day a seven days’ journey. And he turned neither to the right hand nor the left, till he came to the Unshapen Land, and the place which has no name.

And seven days he walked through it on a path which few can tell, till he came to the edge of the everlasting night, where the air was full of feathers, and the soil was hard with ice; and there at last he found the three Grey Sisters, by the shore of the freezing sea, nodding upon a white log of driftwood,

beneath the cold white winter moon; and they chanted a low song together, "Why the old times were better than the new."

There was no living thing around them, not a fly, not a moss upon the rocks. Neither seal nor sea gull dare come near, lest the ice should clutch them in its claws. The surge broke up in foam, but it fell again in flakes of snow; and it frosted the hair of the three Grey Sisters, and the bones in the ice cliff above their heads. They passed the eye from one to the other, but for all that they could not see; and they passed the tooth from one to the other, but for all that they could not eat; and they sat in the full glare of the moon, but they were none the warmer for her beams. And Perseus pitied the three Grey Sisters; but they did not pity themselves.

So he said, "Oh, venerable mothers, wisdom is the daughter of old age. You therefore should know many things. Tell me, if you can, the path to the Gorgon."

Then one cried, "Who is this who reproaches us with old age?" And another, "This is the voice of one of the children of men."

Then one cried, "Give me the eye, that I may see him"; and another, "Give me the tooth, that I may bite him." But Perseus, when he saw that they were foolish and proud, and did not love the children of men, left off pitying them. Then he stepped close to them, and watched till they passed the eye from hand to hand. And as they groped about between themselves, he held out his own hand gently, till one of them put the eye into it, fancying that it was the hand of her sister. Then he sprang back, and laughed, and cried:

"Cruel and proud old women, I have your eye; and I will throw it into the sea, unless you tell me the path to the Gorgon, and swear to me that you tell me right."

Then they wept, and chattered, and scolded; but in vain. They were forced to tell the truth, though, when they told it, Perseus could hardly make out the road.

“You must go,” they said, “foolish boy, to the southward, into the ugly glare of the sun, till you come to Atlas the Giant, who holds the heaven and the earth apart. And you must ask his daughters, the Hesperides, who are young and foolish like yourself. And now give us back our eye, for we have forgotten all the rest.”

So Perseus gave them back their eye. And he leaped away to the southward, leaving the snow and the ice behind. And the terns and the sea gulls swept laughing round his head, and called to him to stop and play, and the dolphins gambolled up as he passed, and offered to carry him on their back. And all night long the sea nymphs sang sweetly. Day by day the sun rose higher and leaped more swiftly into the sea at night, and more swiftly out of the sea at dawn; while Perseus skimmed over the billows like a sea gull, and his feet were never wetted; and leapt on from wave to wave, and his limbs were never weary, till he saw far away a mighty mountain, all rose-red in the setting sun. Perseus knew that it was Atlas, who holds the heavens and the earth apart.

He leapt on shore, and wandered upward, among pleasant valleys and waterfalls. At last he heard sweet voices singing; and he guessed that he was come to the garden of the Nymphs, the daughters of the Evening Star. They sang like nightingales among the thickets, and Perseus stopped to hear their song; but the words which they spoke he could not understand. So he stepped forward and saw them dancing, hand in hand around the charmed tree, which bent under its golden fruit; and round the tree foot was coiled the dragon, old Ladon the sleepless snake, who lies there for ever, listening to the song of the maidens, blinking and watching with dry bright eyes.

Then Perseus stopped, not because he feared the dragon, but because he was bashful before those fair maids; but when they saw him, they too stopped, and called to him with trembling voices:

“Who are you, fair boy? Come dance with us around the tree in the garden which knows no winter, the home of the south wind and the sun. Come hither and play with us awhile; we have danced alone here for a thousand years, and our hearts are weary with longing for a playfellow.”

“I cannot dance with you, fair maidens; for I must do the errand of the Immortals. So tell me the way to the Gorgon, lest I wander and perish in the waves.”

Then they sighed and wept; and answered:

“The Gorgon! she will freeze you into stone.”

“It is better to die like a hero than to live like an ox in a stall. The Immortals have lent me weapons, and they will give me wit to use them.”

Then they sighed again and answered: “Fair boy, if you are bent on your own ruin, be it so. We know not the way to the Gorgon; but we will ask the giant Atlas above upon the mountain peak.” So they went up the mountain to Atlas their uncle, and Perseus went up with them. And they found the giant kneeling, as he held the heavens and the earth apart.

They asked him, and he answered mildly, pointing to the sea board with his mighty hand, “I can see the Gorgons lying on an island far away, but this youth can never come near them, unless he has the hat of darkness, which whosoever wears cannot be seen.”

Then cried Perseus, “Where is that hat, that I may find it?”

But the giant smiled. “No living mortal can find that hat, for it lies in the depths of Hades, in the regions of the dead. But my nieces are immortal, and they shall fetch it for you, if you will promise me one thing and keep your faith.”

Then Perseus promised; and the giant said, “When you come back with the head of Medusa, you shall show me the beautiful horror, that I may lose my feeling and my breathing, and become a stone for ever; for it is weary labour for me to hold the heavens and the earth apart.”

Then Perseus promised, and the eldest of the Nymphs went down, and into a dark cavern among the cliffs, out of which came smoke and thunder, for it was one of the mouths of hell.

And Perseus and the Nymphs sat down seven days and waited trembling, till the Nymph came up again; and her face was pale, and her eyes dazzled with the light for she had been long in the dreary darkness; but in her hand was the magic hat.

Then all the Nymphs kissed Perseus, and wept over him a long while; but he was only impatient to be gone. And at last they put the hat upon his head, and he vanished out of their sight.

But Perseus went on boldly, past many an ugly sight, far away into the heart of the Unshapen Land, till he heard the rustle of the Gorgons' wings and saw the glitter of their brazen talons; and then he knew that it was time to halt, lest Medusa should freeze him into stone.

He thought awhile with himself, and remembered Athene's words. He arose aloft into the air, and held the mirror of the shield above his head, and looked up into it that he might see all that was below him.

And he saw the three Gorgons sleeping. He knew that they could not see him, because the hat of darkness hid him; and yet he trembled as he sank down near them, so terrible were those brazen claws.

Two of the Gorgons were foul as swine, and lay sleeping heavily, with their mighty wings outspread; but Medusa tossed to and fro restlessly, and as she tossed Perseus pitied her. But as he looked, from among her tresses the vipers' heads awoke, and peeped up with their bright dry eyes, and showed their fangs, and hissed; and Medusa, as she tossed, threw back her wings and showed her brazen claws.

Then Perseus came down and stepped to her boldly, and looked steadfastly on his mirror, and struck with Herpe stoutly once; and he did not need to strike again.

Then he wrapped the head in the goat-skin, turning away his eyes, and sprang into the air aloft, faster than he ever sprang before.

For Medusa's wings and talons rattled as she sank dead upon the rocks; and her two foul sisters woke, and saw her lying dead.

Into the air they sprang yelling, and looked for him who had done the deed. They rushed, sweeping and flapping, like eagles after a hare; and Perseus's blood ran cold as he saw them come howling on his track; and he cried, "Bear me well now, brave sandals, for the hounds of Death are at my heels!"

And well the brave sandals bore him, aloft through cloud and sunshine, across the shoreless sea; and fast followed the hounds of Death. But the sandals were too swift, even for Gorgons, and by nightfall they were far behind, two black specks in the southern sky, till the sun sank and he saw them no more.

Then he came again to Atlas, and the garden of the Nymphs; and when the giant heard him coming he groaned, and said, "Fulfil thy promise to me." Then Perseus held up to him the Gorgon's head, and he had rest from all his toil; for he became a crag of stone, which sleeps forever far above the clouds.

Perseus thanked the Nymphs, and asked them, "By what road shall I go homeward again, for I have wandered far in coming hither?"

And they wept and cried, "Go home no more, but stay and play with us, the lonely maidens, who dwell for ever far away from gods and men."

But he refused, and they told him his road. And he leapt down the mountain, and went on, lessening and lessening like a sea gull, away and out to sea.

So Perseus flitted onward to the northeast, over many a league of sea, till he came to the rolling sand hills and the dreary Lybian shore.

And he flitted on across the desert: over rock ledges, and

banks of shingle, and level wastes of sand, and shell drifts bleaching in the sunshine, and the skeletons of great sea monsters, and dead bones of ancient giants, strewn up and down upon the old sea floor. And as he went the blood drops fell to the earth from the Gorgon's head, and became poisonous asps and adders, which breed in the desert to this day.

Over the sands he went, till he saw the Dwarfs who fought with cranes. Their spears were of reeds and rushes, and their houses of the eggshells of the cranes; and Perseus laughed, and went his way to the northeast, hoping all day long to see the blue Mediterranean sparkling, that he might fly across it to his home.

But now came down a mighty wind, and swept him back southward toward the desert. All day long he strove against it; but even the winged sandals could not prevail. So he was forced to float down the wind all night; and when the morning dawned there was nothing but the blinding sun in the blinding blue; and round him there was nothing but the blinding sand.

And Perseus said, "Surely I am not here without the will of the Immortals, for Athene will not lie. Were not these sandals to lead me in the right road? Then the road in which I have tried to go must be a wrong road."

Then suddenly his ears were opened, and he heard the sound of running water. And at that his heart was lifted up, though he scarcely dare believe his ears; and within a bowshot of him was a glen in the sand, and marble rocks, and date trees, and a lawn of gay green grass. And through the lawn a streamlet sparkled and wandered out beyond the trees, and vanished in the sand. And Perseus laughed for joy, and leapt down the cliff and drank of the cool water, and ate of the dates, and slept upon the turf, and leapt up and went forward.

Then he towered in the air like an eagle, for his limbs were strong again; and he flew all night across the mountain till the day began to dawn, and rosy-fingered Eos came blushing up

the sky. And then, behold, beneath him was the long green garden of Egypt and the shining stream of Nile.

And he saw cities walled up to heaven, and temples, and obelisks, and pyramids, and giant gods of stone. And he came down amid fields of barley and flax, and millet, and clambering gourds; and saw the people coming out of the gates of a great city, and setting to work, each in his place, among the water courses, parting the streams among the plants cunningly with their feet, according to the wisdom of the Egyptians. But when they saw him they all stopped their work, and gathered round him, and cried:

“Who art thou, fair youth? and what Dearest thou beneath thy goat— skin there? Surely thou art one of the Immortals; for thy skin is white like ivory, and ours is red like clay. Thy hair is like threads of gold, and ours is black and curled. Surely thou art one of the Immortals”; and they would have worshipped him then and there; but Perseus said:

“I am not one of the Immortals; but I am a hero of the Hellens. And I have slain the Gorgon in the wilderness, and bear her head with me. Give me food, therefore, that I may go forward and finish my work.”

Then they gave him food, and fruit, but they would not let him go. And when the news came into the city that the Gorgon was slain, the priests came out to meet him, and the maidens, with songs and dances, and timbrels and harps; and they would have brought him to their temple and to their King; but Perseus put on the hat of darkness, and vanished away out of their sight.

And Perseus flew along the shore above the sea; and he went on all the day; and he went on all the night.

And at the dawn of day he looked toward the cliffs; and at the water's edge, under a black rock, he saw a white image stand.

“This,” thought he, “must surely be the statue of some sea

god; I will go near and see what kind of gods these barbarians worship."

But when he came near, it was no statue, but a maiden of flesh and blood; for he could see her tresses streaming in the breeze; and as he came closer still, he could see how she shrank and shivered when the waves sprinkled her with cold salt spray. Her arms were spread above her head, and fastened to the rock with chains of brass; and her head drooped on her bosom, either with sleep, or weariness, or grief. But now and then she looked up and wailed, and called her mother; yet she did not see Perseus, for the cap of darkness was on his head.

Full of pity and indignation, Perseus drew near and looked upon the maid. And, lifting the hat from his head, he flashed into her sight. She shrieked with terror, and tried to hide her face with her hair, for she could not with her hands; but Perseus cried:

"Do not fear me, fair one; I am a Hellen, and no barbarian. What cruel men have bound you? But first I will set you free."

And he tore at the fetters, but they were too strong for him; while the maiden cried:

"Touch me not; I am accursed, devoted as a victim to the sea gods. They will slay you, if you dare to set me free."

"Let them try," said Perseus; and drawing Herpe from his thigh, he cut through the brass as if it had been flax.

"Now," he said, "you belong to me, and not to these sea gods, whosoever they may be!" But she only called the more on her mother.

"Why call on your mother? She can be no mother to have left you here."

And she answered, weeping:

"I am the daughter of Cepheus, King of Iopa, and my mother is Cassiopoeia of the beautiful tresses, and they called me Andromeda, as long as life was mine. And I stand bound here, hapless that I am, for the sea monster's food, to atone for my

mother's sin. For she boasted of me once that I was fairer than the Queen of the Fishes; so she in her wrath sent the sea floods, and her brother the Fire King sent the earthquakes, and wasted all the land, and after the floods a monster bred of the slime what devours all living things. And now he must devour me, guiltless though I am—me who never harmed a living thing, nor saw a fish upon the shore but I gave it life, and threw it back into the sea; for in our land we eat no fish, for fear of their queen. Yet the priests say that nothing but my blood can atone for a sin which I never committed."

But Perseus laughed, and said, "A sea monster? I have fought with worse than him: I would have faced Immortals for your sake: how much more a beast of the sea?"

Then Andromeda looked up at him, and new hope was kindled in her breast, so proud and fair did he stand with one hand round her, and in the other the glittering sword. But she only sighed, and wept the more, and cried:

"Why will you die, young as you are? Is there not death and sorrow enough in the world already? It is noble for me to die, that I may save the lives of a whole people; but you, better than them all, why should I slay you too? Go you your way; I must go mine." And then, suddenly looking up, she pointed to the sea, and shrieked:

"There he comes, with the sunrise, as they promised. I must die now. How shall I endure it? Oh, go! Is it not dreadful enough to be torn piecemeal, without having you to look on?" And she tried to thrust him away.

But he said: "I go; yet promise me one thing ere I go: that if I slay this beast you will be my wife, and come back with me to my kingdom in fruitful Argos. Promise me, and seal it with a kiss."

Then she lifted up her face, and kissed him; and Perseus laughed for joy, and flew upward, while Andromeda crouched trembling on the rock.

On came the great sea monster, coasting along like a huge black galley. His great sides were fringed with clustering shells and seaweeds, and the water gurgled in and out of his wide jaws.

At last he saw Andromeda, and shot forward to take his prey, while the waves foamed white behind him, and before him the fish fled leaping.

Then down from the height of the air fell Perseus like a shooting star; down to the crests of the waves, while Andromeda hid her face as he shouted; and then there was silence for a while.

At last she looked up trembling, and saw Perseus springing toward her; and instead of the monster a long black rock, with the sea rippling quietly round it.

Who then so proud as Perseus, as he leapt back to the rock, and lifted his fair Andromeda in his arms, and flew with her to the cliff top, as a falcon carries a dove?

Who so proud as Perseus, and who so joyful as all the AETHIOP people? For they had stood watching the monster from the cliffs, wailing for the maiden's fate. And already a messenger had gone to Cepheus and Cassiopoeia, where they sat in sackcloth and ashes on the ground, in the innermost palace chambers, awaiting their daughter's end. And they came, and all the city with them, to see the wonder, with songs and with dances, with cymbals and harps, and received their daughter back again, as one alive from the dead.

Then Cepheus said, "Hero of the Hellens, stay here with me and be my son-in-law, and I will give you the half of my kingdom."

"I will be your son-in-law," said Perseus, "but of your kingdom I will have none, for I long after the pleasant land of Greece, and my mother who waits for me at home."

Then Cepheus said, "You must not take my daughter away at once, for she is to us like one alive from the dead. Stay with us here a year, and after that you shall return with honour." And

Perseus consented. So they went up to the palace; and when they came in, there stood in the hall Phineus, the brother of Cepheus, chafing like a bear robbed of her whelps, and with him his sons, and his servants, and many an armed man, and he cried to Cepheus:

“You shall not marry your daughter to this stranger of whom no one knows even the name. Was not Andromeda betrothed to my son? And now she is safe again, has he not a right to claim her?”

But Perseus laughed, and answered: “If your son is in want of a bride, let him save a maiden for himself.”

Then he unveiled the Gorgon’s head, and said, “This has delivered my bride from one wild beast; it shall deliver her from many.” And as he spoke Phineus and all his men-at-arms stopped short, and stiffened each man as he stood; and before Perseus had drawn the goat-skin over the face again, they were all turned into stone. Then Perseus bade the people bring levers and roll them out.

So they made a great wedding feast, which lasted seven whole days, and who so happy as Perseus and Andromeda?

And when a year was ended Perseus hired Phoenicians from Tyre, and cut down cedars, and built himself a noble galley; and painted its cheeks with vermilion and pitched its sides with pitch; and in it he put Andromeda, and all her dowry of jewels, and rich shawls, and spices from the East; and great was the weeping when they rowed away. But the remembrance of his brave deed was left behind; and Andromeda’s rock was shown at Iopa in Palestine till more than a thousand years were past.

So Perseus and the Phoenicians rowed to the westward, across the sea, till they came to the pleasant Isles of Hellas, and Seriphos, his ancient home.

Then he left his galley on the beach, and went up as of old; and he embraced his mother, and Dictys his good foster-father, and they wept over each other a long while, for it was seven years and more since they had met.

Then he went home to Argos, and reigned there well with

fair Andromeda. But the will of the gods was accomplished towards Acrisius, his grandfather, for he died from the falling of a quoit which Perseus had thrown in a game.

Perseus and Andromeda had four sons and three daughters, and died in a good old age. And when they died, the ancients say, Athene took them up into the sky, with Cepheus and Cassiopoeia. And there on starlight nights you may see them shining still; Cepheus with his kingly crown, and Cassiopoeia in her ivory chair, plaiting her star-spangled tresses, and Perseus with the Gorgon's head, and fair Andromeda beside him, spreading her long white arms across the heavens, as she stood when chained to the stone for the monster. All night long they shine, for a beacon to wandering sailors; but all day they feast with the gods, on the still blue peaks of Olympus.