

**DEAR OLD  
STORY-TELLERS**

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Dear old story-tellers by Oscar Fay Adams

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**OSCAR FAY ADAMS**

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STORY-TELLERS**



# DEAR OLD STORY-TELLERS

BY

OSCAR FAY ADAMS

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YEAR WITH THE PORTS," "CHAPTERS FROM JANE AUSTEN," etc.

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To

EDWIN

*Brother beloved, on that grave of thine  
I lay this wreath of blossoms, blown too late.  
Forgive their scanty fragrance and divine  
His voice who brings them is not bound by date.*

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# DEAR OLD STORY-TELLERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HOMER: TALES AND ROMANCES.

**H**ISTORY and fiction have always been unequal rivals for favor, and where ten men will read history with sincere interest, a hundred will turn from history to fiction with relief.

The more closely history adheres to facts, the less the general reader cares for it. The historical narratives that have been most widely popular have been those of a legendary character. The more unreal, the more romantic the history, the greater its hold upon the average reader.

An inability to separate the false from the true, the romance from the fact, is characteristic of the early chronicles of all nations. The lively imagination of ruder peoples in early times has always invested nearly everything with which they had to do with a veil of romance. Their religious rites, their daily tasks, their pleasures and their pains became mixed with this element of the unreal. Beside the gods and goddesses in whom they believed and whose bodily appearance on earth might be expected at any moment, all nature was by their imagination peopled with myriad forms, more or less human in their attributes, and more or less — but usually less — kindly disposed toward mankind. A firm belief in these existences made a love for the marvelous an universal thing. No hero arose but that half-miraculous powers were ascribed to him. It was not enough that he must be victorious over his fellowmen, he must have slain giants, have vanquished dragons or conquered his enemies by summoning to his aid the mysterious



HOMER.

*(Bust in British Museum, London.)*