

**THE BOOK OF  
WONDER  
VOYAGES**

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The Book of Wonder Voyages by Joseph Jacobs

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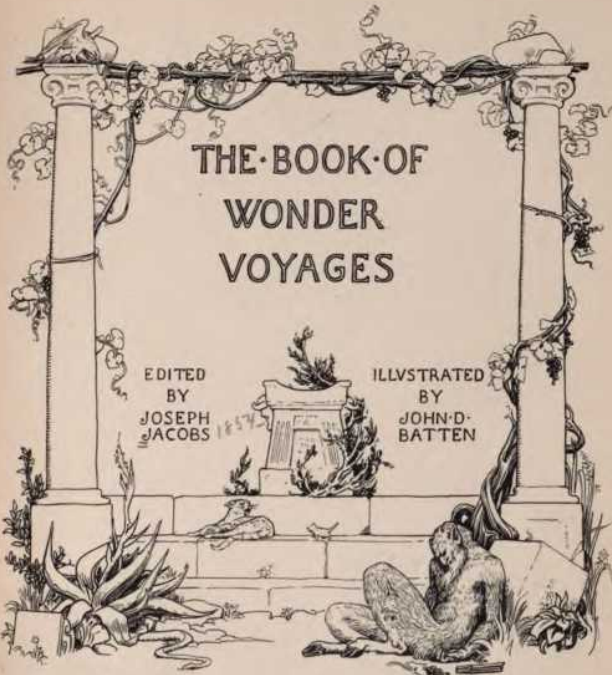
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**JOSEPH JACOBS**

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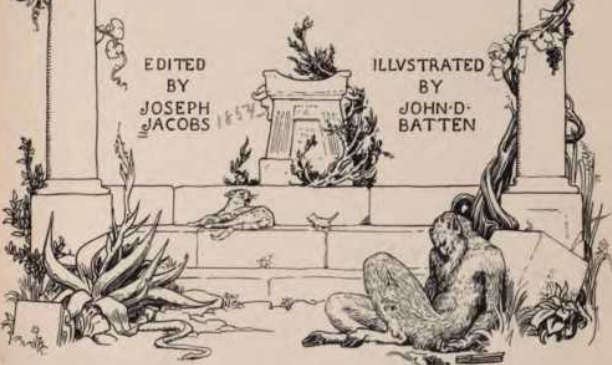




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WONDER  
VOYAGES

EDITED  
BY  
JOSEPH  
JACOBS

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BY  
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LONDON  
DAVID NUTT, IN THE STRAND  
1896

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OF  
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## PREFACE



It was my custom for several years to tell my children every Friday night a voyage, told in the first person, but, if the truth must come out, simply "lifted," or at best adapted from all the imaginary voyages I could come across. I led the youngsters to understand that I had gone through one hundred voyages in my time, but that I should never be able to tell them my hundredth voyage, for if I told *that* I should burst. Sure enough I got to the ninety-ninth voyage, and on the following Friday there was, of course, no narrative forthcoming. But the following week a deputation from the young ones begged for my hundredth voyage, whatever the consequences.

I have thought that if my poor recital of these imaginary voyages could rouse interest and curiosity to such an unfilial pitch among my own children the originals from which I derived them might be equally attractive to other children ; and I have brought together

in the present volume the most memorable of those flights of the imagination which form almost as marked a class of popular literature as fairy tales themselves. It seems as natural to build ships, as to build castles, in the air; and there can be but few children of any age that have not at one time or another seen themselves transported to lands where the ordinary Laws of Mechanics or Physiology do not apply, and things throw off the causal nexus of common life. But though we fly our kite of imagination, it is always secured, if only by a thread, to earthly fact, and in the wildest flights of imaginary voyagers there is always some germ of geographic truth.

So natural is this tendency towards these voyages to the Land of Fancy that we find specimens of them in almost all lands, and it has been my aim in the present collection to bring characteristic specimens from as many and as diverse quarters as my space permitted. Hellas gives us *The Argonauts*; the Celts tell *The Voyage of Maelduin*, which attracted Tennyson's notice. *Sindbad* would have perhaps been the appropriate representative of Arabia, but one hesitates to divorce him from the "Nights," and Mr. Batten had treated him in his appropriate connection. So I have selected Hasan of Bassorah and his *Voyage to the Islands of Wak-Wak* to represent



Arabia. Curiously enough, the greatest voyagers of all, the Norsemen, seemingly found little temptation to let their imagination play about their business concerns, and in order to obtain a representative Wonder Voyage from the most wonderful voyagers of medieval times, I have had to combine two minor sagas which can be classed under that *genre*.

To be at all effective, a Wonder Voyage requires a certain amount of sea-room. One does not get one's sea legs, so to speak, till a sheet or two of print has been let loose. Hence I have not been able to include more than four or five voyages in the present volume, but they will surely serve as Winter Nights' Tales. They should be read when the stormy winds do blow, do blow.

The story of *The Argonauts* had been told so well by Kingsley that I dared not commit the sacrilege of producing a rival version. I have to thank Messrs. Macmillan for permitting me to utilise his "Heroes." Mr. Alfred Nutt with his usual kindness has provided me with a version of *Maelduin*, in which he has had permission from Dr. Whitley Stokes to use his translation which appeared in the *Revue Celtique*. Hasan I have retold in an abridged form, using as my "originals" the three translations from the Arabic, none of which were sufficiently simple to suit the audience for whom I

intended his Adventures. For my Icelandic I have had to resort to the friendly offices of the Rev. J. Sephton, who has been good enough to translate the *Eric Saga* for this volume, while I have combined with it an adaptation of Thorkill's "Voyage to the World Beyond the Ocean." from *Saxo Grammaticus*, utilising for that purpose Mr. Elton's version published by the Folk-Lore Society. To all these gentlemen I hereby record my grateful thanks.

As the world grows old and grey, and men become everywhere alike, the value of the imagination for ornament and for delight will become more and more appreciated, even in education. The training and the practice of the imagination will become ever increasingly important as life gets more neutral tinted. Let therefore our children be early trained to adventurous voyages on the Sea of Imagination.

JOSEPH JACOBS.

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