

**MYTHS AND MYTH-MAKERS:
OLD TALES AND SUPERSTITIONS
INTERPRETED BY COMPARATIVE
MYTHOLOGY**

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Myths and myth-makers: old tales and superstitions interpreted by comparative mythology by
John Fiske

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JOHN FISKE

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Henry W. Rawlin
1894.



Johannes.

MYTHS AND MYTH-MAKERS

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BY COMPARATIVE MYTHOLOGY

BY
JOHN FISKE



La mythologie, cette science toute nouvelle, qui nous fait suivre les croyances de nos pères, depuis le berceau du monde jusqu'aux superstitions de nos campagnes. — EDMOND SCHERER

SEVENTEENTH EDITION



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TO

MY DEAR FRIEND,

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS,

IN REMEMBRANCE OF PLEASANT AUTUMN EVENINGS SPENT AMONG
WEREWOLVES AND TROLLS AND NIXIES,

I dedicate

THIS RECORD OF OUR ADVENTURES.

PREFACE.

IN publishing this somewhat rambling and unsystematic series of papers, in which I have endeavoured to touch briefly upon a great many of the most important points in the study of mythology, I think it right to observe that, in order to avoid confusing the reader with intricate discussions, I have sometimes cut the matter short, expressing myself with dogmatic definiteness where a sceptical vagueness might perhaps have seemed more becoming. In treating of popular legends and superstitions, the paths of inquiry are circuitous enough, and seldom can we reach a satisfactory conclusion until we have travelled all the way around Robin Hood's barn and back again. I am sure that the reader would not have thanked me for obstructing these crooked lanes with the thorns and brambles of philological and antiquarian discussion, to such an extent as perhaps to make him despair of ever reaching the high road. I have not attempted to review, otherwise than incidentally, the works of Grimm, Müller, Kuhn, Bréal, Dasent, and Tylor; nor can I pretend to have added anything of consequence, save now and then some bit of explanatory comment, to the results obtained by the labour of these scholars; but it has rather been my