LEGENDS AND TALES IN PROSE AND VERSE; PP. 1-257

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Legends and Tales in Prose and Verse; pp. 1-257 by Isabel E. Cohen

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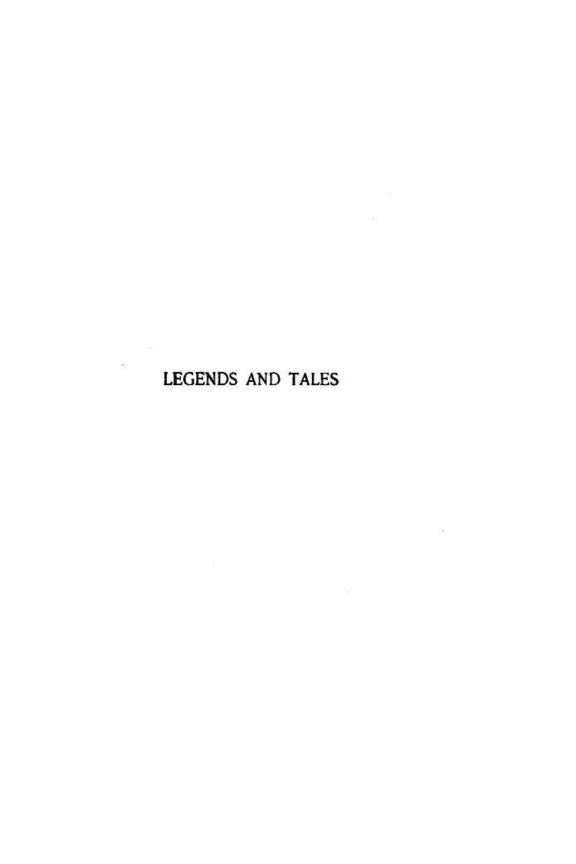
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Legends and Tales

IN

Prose and Verse

Compiled by Isabel E. Cohen



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The Birth of Man

A LEGEND OF THE TALMUD

By EMMA LAZARUS

W HEN angels visit earth, the messengers
Of God's decree, they come as lightning,
wind:

Before the throne, they all are living fire. There stand four rows of angels—to the right The hosts of Michael, Gabriel's to the left, Before, the troop of Ariel, and behind, The ranks of Raphael; all, with one accord, Chanting the glory of the Everlasting. Upon the high and holy throne there rests, Invisible, the majesty of God.

About His brows the crown of mystery Whereon the sacred letters are engraved Of the unutterable Name. He grasps

A sceptre of keen fire; the universe

Is compassed in His glance; at His right hand Life stands, and at His left hand standeth Death.

LL.

Lo, the divine idea of making man Had spread abroad among the heavenly hosts; And all at once before the immortal throne Pressed troops of angels and of seraphim, With minds opposed, and contradicting cries: "Fulfil, Great Father, Thine exalted thought! Create and give unto the earth her king!" "Cease, cease, Almighty God! create no more!" And suddenly upon the heavenly sphere Deep silence fell; before the immortal throne The angel Mercy knelt, and thus he spoke: "Fulfil, Great Father, Thine exalted thought! Create the likeness of Thyself on earth. In this new creature I will breathe the spirit Of a divine compassion; he shall be Thy fairest image in the universe."