

# **STORIES OF OLD GREECE**

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Stories of Old Greece by Emma M. Firth

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**EMMA M. FIRTH**

**STORIES OF  
OLD GREECE**





**PANDORA**

# STORIES OF OLD GREECE

*H. B. March*

BY

EMMA M. FIRTH

1917

Oh myths of ancient days, when earth, and air,  
And water teemed with visions wondrous fair,  
And loveliest spirits! Ne'er shall knowledge bold  
Wrest from your ashes the sweet charm you hold.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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"**THERE** is an instinct in the human heart  
Which makes all fables it has coined —  
To justify the reign of its belief,  
And strengthen it by beauty's right divine —  
Veil in their inner cells a mystic gift,  
Which, like the hazel twig in faithful hands,  
Points surely to the hidden springs of truth."

**ASIDE** from their use as a means of strengthening the imagination, the myths embody ethical truths, which are helpful just in proportion to the intellectual activity which the stories arouse. The child lover will seek for the best means in accomplishing her end, — the harmonious culture of the child. In all that she does, she will be governed by the purest motives.

The telling of a story has a broader meaning than that of entertainment. Its real motive is the making of what the child loves a means by which he may be led to a clearer understanding of his own powers and possibilities, and of his relations to others.

The child lives wholly in the present. He is semi-barbaric in his tendencies toward self-interest. He needs to be lifted from an indefinite present of childish pleasure to a definite understanding of his own powers, and a better exercise of his will. If by means of a story, well told, he can grasp the simple truth contained in it, he is making progress in the right direction. He is getting a foundation for the future study of literature, and gaining an appreciation for the beautiful in art.

All modern tendencies are to make children too realistic, and to stifle, rather than to cultivate, the fine imagination necessary to the creation or enjoyment of art and literature. By presenting these myths, the product of a primitive people, and therefore adapted to the child, because of their beauty and simplicity, we are giving him good material for the growth of a healthful imagination.

While the general motive for telling stories is this, there are special motives in each story, which, if thoroughly appreciated, may enhance the value of the story. The first myth, a flower and sun myth, is designed to inspire in the child a feeling for the beauty and dignity of friendship. The story of Phaethon emphasizes the folly of unreasonable requests. Baucis and Philemon teach respect for the aged, and



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hospitality. The Rhoecus urges the doing of the "duty which lies nearest." In nearly all the myths courage and self-forgetfulness are shown; and by arousing admiration for these qualities we may inspire in the child a desire to possess them.

These myths are meant to do for the little beginner what the study of literature does for the "children of a larger growth." They are but beginnings for beginners; but with the sincere hope that they may accomplish the desired results, the writer submits them to her fellow-teachers and to the dear children of America.



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