

**A WONDER BOOK
FOR GIRLS
AND BOYS**

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A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys by Nathaniel Hawthorne & Walter Crane

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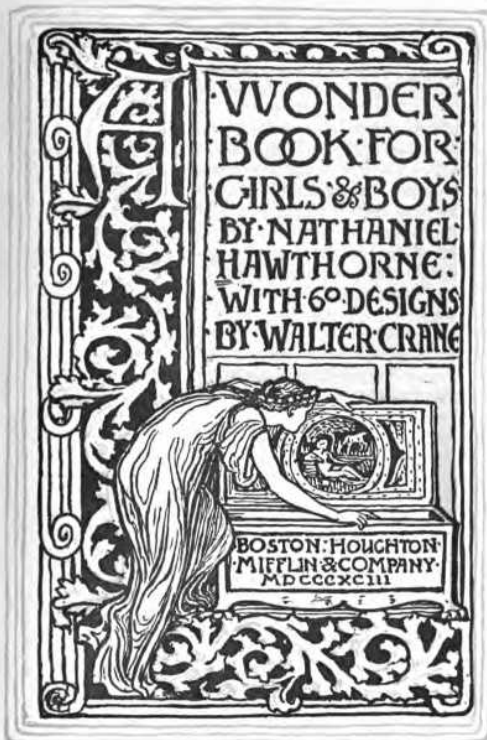
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NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE & WALTER CRANE

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PREFACE

THE author has long been of opinion that many of the classical myths were capable of being rendered into very capital reading for children. In the little volume here offered to the public, he has worked up half a dozen of them, with this end in view. A great freedom of treatment was necessary to his plan; but it will be observed by every one who attempts to render these legends malleable in his intellectual furnace, that they are marvellously independent of all temporary modes and circumstances. They remain essentially the same, after changes that would affect the identity of almost anything else.

He does not, therefore, plead guilty to a sacrilege, in having sometimes shaped anew, as his fancy dictated, the forms that have been hallowed by an antiquity of two or three thousand years. No epoch of time can claim a copyright in these immortal fables. They seem never to have been made; and certainly, so long as man exists, they can never perish; but, by their indestructibility itself, they are legitimate subjects for every age to clothe with its own garniture of manners and sentiment, and to imbue with its own morality. In

the present version they may have lost much of their classical aspect (or, at all events, the author has not been careful to preserve it), and have perhaps assumed a Gothic or romantic guise.

In performing this pleasant task, — for it has been really a task fit for hot weather, and one of the most agreeable, of a literary kind, which he ever undertook, — the author has not always thought it necessary to write downward, in order to meet the comprehension of children. He has generally suffered the theme to soar, whenever such was its tendency, and when he himself was buoyant enough to follow without an effort. Children possess an unestimated sensibility to whatever is deep or high, in imagination or feeling, so long as it is simple likewise. It is only the artificial and the complex that bewilder them.

LENEX, *July* 15, 1851.





	PAGE
THE GORGON'S HEAD.	
TANGLEWOOD PORCH. — Introductory to The Gorgon's Head	1
THE GORGON'S HEAD	7
TANGLEWOOD PORCH. — After the Story	39
THE GOLDEN TOUCH.	
SHADOW BROOK. — Introductory to The Golden Touch	42
THE GOLDEN TOUCH	46
SHADOW BROOK. — After the Story	69
THE PARADISE OF CHILDREN.	
TANGLEWOOD PLAY-ROOM. — Introductory to The Paradise of Children	73
THE PARADISE OF CHILDREN	78
TANGLEWOOD PLAY-ROOM. — After the Story	100
THE THREE GOLDEN APPLES.	
TANGLEWOOD FIRESIDE. — Introductory to The Three Golden Apples	102
THE THREE GOLDEN APPLES	109
TANGLEWOOD FIRESIDE. — After the Story	136
THE MIRACULOUS PITCHER.	
THE HILL-SIDE. — Introductory to The Miraculous Pitcher	140
THE MIRACULOUS PITCHER	144
THE HILL-SIDE. — After the Story	170
THE CHIMÆRA.	
BALD-SUMMIT. — Introductory to The Chimæra	172
THE CHIMÆRA	176
BALD-SUMMIT. — After the Story	206



Half-Title	i
Frontispiece — Bellerophon on Pegasus	
Title	iii
Preface	v
Tailpiece	vi
Contents	vii
List of Designs	ix
Tailpiece	x
Headpiece — TANGLEWOOD PORCH	1
THE GORGON'S HEAD — Headpiece	7
Perseus and the Gorgons	22
Perseus armed by the Nymphs	26
Perseus and the Gorgons	32
Perseus showing the Gorgon's Head	36
Tailpiece	38
Headpiece — TANGLEWOOD PORCH, After the Story	39
Tailpiece	41
Headpiece — SHADOW BROOK	42
THE GOLDEN TOUCH — Headpiece	46
The Stranger appearing to Midas	50
Midas' Daughter turned to Gold	62
Midas with the Pitcher	66
Tailpiece	68
Headpiece — SHADOW BROOK, After the Story	69
Tailpiece	72
Headpiece — TANGLEWOOD PLAY-ROOM	73
Tailpiece	77
THE PARADISE OF CHILDREN — Headpiece	78
Pandora wonders at the Box	80
Pandora desires to open the Box	86
Pandora opens the Box	92
Tailpiece	96