

**CHAMBERS'S ELEMENTARY
SCIENCE MANUALS;
MYTHOLOGY, ILLUSTRATED
CHIEFLY FROM THE MYTHS AND
LEGENDS OF GREECE**

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Chambers's Elementary Science Manuals; Mythology, Illustrated Chiefly from the Myths and Legends of Greece by A. S. Murray

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A. S. MURRAY

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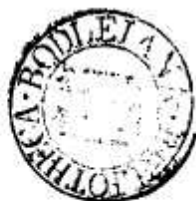
MYTHOLOGY

ILLUSTRATED CHIEFLY FROM THE MYTHS AND
LEGENDS OF GREECE

BY

A. S. MURRAY,

SENIOR ASSISTANT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF GREEK AND ROMAN
ANTIQUITIES, BRITISH MUSEUM.



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PREFACE.

THE vital importance of diffusing some knowledge of the leading principles of Science among all classes of society, is becoming daily more widely and deeply felt; and to meet and promote this important movement, W. & R. CHAMBERS have resolved on issuing the present Series of ELEMENTARY SCIENCE MANUALS. The Editors believe that they enjoy special facilities for the successful execution of such an undertaking, owing to their long experience—now extending over a period of forty years—in the work of popular education, as well as to their having the co-operation of writers specially qualified to treat the several subjects. In particular, they are happy in having the editorial assistance of ANDREW FINDLATER, LL.D., to whose labours they were so much indebted in the work of editing and preparing *Chambers's Encyclopædia*.

The Manuals of this series are intended to serve two somewhat different purposes:

1. They are designed, in the first place, for SELF-INSTRUCTION, and will present, in a form suitable for private study, the main subjects entering into an enlightened education; so that young persons in earnest about self-culture may be able to master them for themselves.

2. The other purpose of the Manuals is, to serve as TEXT-BOOKS IN SCHOOLS. The mode of treatment naturally adopted in what is to be studied without a teacher, so far from being a drawback in a school-manual, will, it is believed, be a positive advantage. Instead of a number of abrupt statements being presented, to be taken on trust and learned, as has been the usual method in school-teaching; the subject is made, as far as possible, to unfold itself gradually, as if the pupil were discovering the principles himself, the chief function of the book being, to bring the materials before him, and to guide him by the shortest road to the discovery. This is now acknowledged to be the only profitable method of acquiring knowledge, whether as regards self-instruction or learning at school.

For simplification in teaching, the subject has been divided into sub-sections or articles, which are numbered continuously; and a series of Questions, in corresponding divisions, has been appended. These questions, while they will enable the private student to test for himself how far he has mastered the several parts of the subject as he proceeds, will serve the teacher of a class as specimens of the more detailed and varied examination to which he should subject his pupils.

NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

In the present Manual an attempt is made to explain the principles on which the myths and legends of all nations have been formed, by illustrations drawn chiefly from the mythology of Greece. There are several reasons for giving this prominence to classical mythology. No doubt, it would have better qualified the book to appear in a scientific series, to have first proved the principles by a wide induction from the whole field of myth and legend, instead of in a manner taking their existence for granted, and then proceeding to apply them to only one department of the subject. But it was doubtful how far this process would lend itself to the order and clearness necessary for so limited a space; and it was felt that, as little doubt can be entertained of the general accuracy of the principles, the present method might safely be employed. Indeed, if mythology be at all capable of scientific treatment, its principles must be such as can obtain equally in the explanation of the myths of all nations, past and present; and to exemplify those principles in the myths of Greece has this advantage, that the materials are better and more widely known than in any other case. Besides, the book will thus serve the subsidiary purpose of providing non-classical readers with a key to the innumerable allusions to classic stories that occur in modern literature and art.

Much has been done in recent years to give us vivid notions of the mythology of the ancient Teutonic nations, and also of the peoples of India; and had space permitted, more use might have been made of these sources in corroborating the conclusions arrived at on our more circumscribed ground. The accounts given of the myths and legends of modern savage tribes in Tyler's *Primitive Culture*, Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation*, and similar collections, shew striking parallels to what once prevailed among the nations now civilised; they prove—to use the language of geology—that, in producing the modern deposit of savage beliefs, the same mental agencies are at work that produced the now fossil mythologies of the ancients.

It is now an accepted fact that Greek art was largely influenced in its early stages by the earlier civilisation of Assyria. Further research will probably shew that there was also a considerable migration of myths and legends from Assyria to Greece. But however this may affect our judgment as to the originality and inventiveness of the Greeks, it will not materially alter the nature of the myths themselves; and the fuller and more accessible Greek version of them will continue, it may be presumed, to be the preferable vehicle for expounding their nature and mode of growth.

LEITH,
February 1876.

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Fig. 1.—Zeus, Hera, and Hebe.

MYTHOLOGY.

I—DEFINITIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.

MYTH.

1. The Greeks, and to a less degree the Romans also, had a system of gods and goddesses, whom they thought of as beings possessed of human form, but entirely free from the limits and restrictions which are imposed on the mind and the bodily powers of men. These deities had been produced in the imaginations of the Greeks and Romans at a very remote and early stage of their civilisation, when there existed no knowledge of the laws of nature, but, instead of that, a deep sense of mystery as to the causes of the various changes which were constantly being seen and acutely felt in the order of life and of natural phenomena. Men began by measuring everything by themselves or parts of them-

selves ; for instance, they measured distance by feet, paces, ells, and so on. When it was necessary to express their idea of the cause of any mysterious occurrence, they had to do so from the analogy of human actions, and so it happened that the mysterious causes of natural phenomena were described as beings of human form, to whom habits and actions were ascribed resembling the habits and actions of men, but without the limits of power, time, or space, which at every turn beset mankind. Stories reflecting the habits, actions, or incidents connected with these deities were called myths (*mythoi*) ; and to discover the meaning which was hidden under these stories is what the science of mythology undertakes to do.

LEGEND.

2. The ancients (Greeks and Romans) gave a wider meaning than this to the word myth, including, as they did, under it every description of a supernatural incident, whether it referred to a deity or to the lower form of beings, whom they called heroes, and believed to be descended from deities. But it has since been found convenient to separate these incidents into two classes : (1) according as they refer to deities, and took place without the conditions of power, time, and space required by men ; or (2) according as they refer to heroes, and in some cases also to deities, but are accompanied by details which give them the appearance of historical narratives. While the former are described as myths, for the latter the more modern word *legend* is used. A legend is therefore a narrative which has the appearance of being historical, and may sometimes have had a foundation in the actions of men ; but a myth is a divine narrative, which has its foundation in a vivid sense of the mysteries of nature on the one hand, and of human life on the other.

TALES.

3. From myths and legends are to be distinguished the numerous class of child's stories about ogres and such like, which the Greeks called *mytharia*. They were merely the