

ENGLISH CLASSICS SERIES

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A WONDER BOOK

BY NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

WITH CHINESE NOTES

BY TSEU YIH ZAN

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A WONDER BOOK

霍 觴 小 傳

(NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE).

(1804—1864)

霍觴，美產也，其六世祖曰威廉¹者，始自英遷居於美，時西歷一千六百三十年也，霍觴之生，在西歷一千八百零四年，生五年而父卒，童時依舅氏以居，嬉戲遊遨，視讀書爲大苦，年十四，小學尙未畢業，母氏深以爲憂，乃自舅家挈之歸，令入某氏私塾，仍不務正業，日以戲遊爲事，以蹴球折足，歷久不能行動，家居無事，雜取架上書讀之，始知讀書門徑，然猶未甚專心也，十七入大學，仍不甚讀書，又好以已意行事，視學規爲等閒，幸同學者皆好學之士，規過輔仁，深資匡助，年二十一，乃卒業焉。

霍氏之母，慈藹和厚，賢婦也，自其夫卒，終日閉居一室，卽膳食亦不出戶外，有女二，亦沈靜，寡言笑，霍氏自大學畢業後，家居者數年，母子姊妹，一家四人，各處一室，實尠談笑，或謂霍氏之居，雖曰一家，無異四姓，殆有由矣，但慈祥孝友，門庭之內，並未嘗有一間言，蓋其不好羣居，出於天性，無他故也，霍氏有言曰，余居家中，殊尠外出，邑中居人，知此屋之內，居有我者，殆不滿二十人也。

1. William Hawthorne.

霍氏初任爲某書肆編纂者，僅數月而去，繼任爲海關檢量官者約二年，又入某墾植公司者數年，更任爲海關監督者約三年，每歷一所，即積聚若干材料，而著一書，自海關去職後，潛心著述者四年，古史鈎奇錄一書，即於是時撰就，出版於一千八百五十一年，是後又爲利物浦²（在英國）領事者四年，自領事解職，即遍遊英倫之名山大川，并歷法意諸國，每至一區，即將其地之人情風俗，描畫演譯，撰成一書，嗚呼盛矣，一千八百六十四年，南北戰事起，霍氏以老邁之年，遭邦家之不造，憂鬱成疾，遂於其年六月化去。

論曰，霍觴者，近古之小說家也，其所著小說，尤以短篇爲傑出，夫短簡故事，演述者代不乏人，然其文字，不失之於太深，即失之於太俗，求其簡明切摯，雅俗共賞者，殆未有若霍觴之文也，世有不信余言者，請一讀古史鈎奇錄也可。

2. Liverpool.

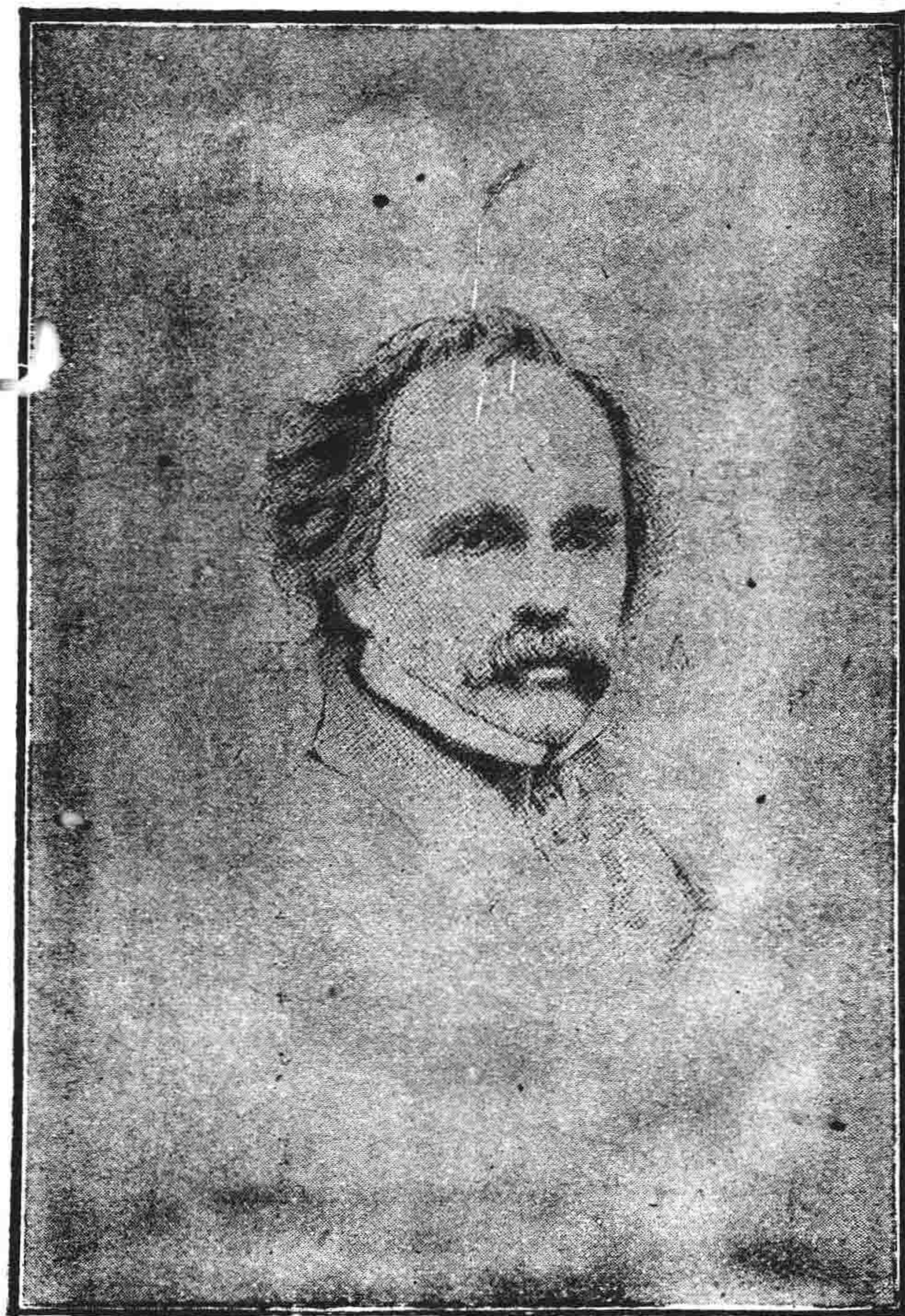
序 言

古史鈎奇錄者，霍氏生平得意之作也；全書之成，共歷三十五日，每就一篇，即爲其子女誦述之，故書方排印，而霍氏之子女，已能背述書中之故事，書中各篇之發凡，中有勃臘³其人者，乃霍觴之自況，其問答之辭，皆當日父子戲笑之真情，書中材料，皆取於古代神話，務使二千年前之古事，成爲十九世紀以後之新談，兒童讀之，不覺興味之橫生，第四篇中，所以引入柏零格⁴其人者，亦以見本書之爲初學說法，非欲於大巫之前，強作解人也，霍氏有言曰，古代神話，皆由詩家砌納而成，彼能以詩描摹之，余何以不能以散文複述之，推是理也，余之爲書，雖與古人之說略有出入，亦何能爲余罪，此可見是書撰著之宗旨矣。

民國二年周越然識

3. Bright.

4. Pringle.



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

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A WONDER BOOK

THE GORGON'S HEAD

TANGLEWOOD PORCH

INTRODUCTORY TO "THE GORGON'S HEAD"

BENEATH the porch of the country-seat called Tanglewood, one fine autumnal morning, was assembled a merry party of little folks, with a tall youth in the midst of them. They had planned a nutting expedition, and were impatiently waiting for the mists to roll up the hill-slopes, and for the sun to pour the warmth of the Indian summer over the fields and pastures, and into the nooks of the many-coloured woods. There was a prospect of as fine a day as ever gladdened the aspect of this beautiful and comfortable world. As yet, however, the morning mist filled up the whole length and breadth of the valley, above which, on a gently sloping eminence, the mansion stood.

This body of white vapour extended to within less than a hundred yards of the house. It completely hid everything beyond that distance, except a few ruddy or yellow tree-tops, which here and there emerged, and were glorified by the early sunshine, as was likewise the broad surface of the mist. Four or five miles off to the southward, rose the summit of Monument Mountain, and seemed to be floating on a cloud. Some

fifteen miles further away, in the same direction, appeared the loftier Dome of Taconic, looking blue and indistinct, and hardly so substantial as the vapoury sea that almost rolled over it. The nearer hills, which bordered the valley, were half submerged, and were specked with little cloud-wreaths all the way to their tops. On the whole, there was so much cloud, and so little solid earth, that it had the effect of a vision.

The children above mentioned, being as full of life as they could hold, kept overflowing from the porch of Tanglewood, and scampering along the gravel walk, or rushing across the dewy herbage of the ^{pasture} lawn. I can hardly tell how many of these small people there were; not less than nine or ten, however, nor more than a dozen, of all sorts, sizes, and ages, whether girls or boys. They were brothers, sisters, and cousins, together with a few of their young acquaintances, who had been invited by Mr. and Mrs. Pringle to spend some of this delightful weather with their own children at Tanglewood. I am afraid to tell you their names, or even to give them any names which other children have ever been called by; because, to my certain knowledge, authors sometimes get themselves into great trouble by accidentally giving the names of real persons to the characters in their books. For this reason, I mean to call them Primrose, Periwinkle, Sweet Fern, Dandelion, Blue Eye, Clover, Huckleberry, Cowslip, Squash-blossom, Milk-weed, Plantain, and Buttercup; although, to be sure, such titles might better suit a group of fairies than a company of earthly children.

• It is not to be supposed that these little folks were to be permitted by their careful fathers and mothers, uncles, aunts, or grandparents, to stray abroad into the woods and fields without the guardianship of some particularly grave and elderly person. O, no, indeed! In the first sentence of my book, you will recollect that I spoke of a tall youth, standing in the midst of the children. His name—(and I shall let you know his real name, because he considers it a great honour to have told the stories that are here to be printed)—his name was Eustace Bright. He was a student at Williams College, and had reached, I think, at this period, the venerable age of eighteen years; so that he felt quite like a grandfather towards Periwinkle, Dandelion, Huckleberry, Squash-blossom, Milk-weed, and the rest, who were only half or a third as venerable as he. A trouble in his eyesight (such as many students think it necessary to have, now-a-days, in order to prove their diligence at their books) had kept him from college a week or two after the beginning of the term. But, for my part, I have seldom met with a pair of eyes that looked as if they could see further or better than those of Eustace Bright.

This learned student was slender, and rather pale; but yet of a healthy aspect, and as light and as active as if he had wings to his shoes. By-the-by, being much addicted to wading through streamlets and across meadows, he had put on cow-hide boots for the expedition. He wore a linen blouse, a cloth cap, and a pair of green spectacles, which he had assumed, probably, less for the preservation of his eyes, than for

the dignity that they imparted to his countenance. In either case, however, he might as well have let them alone; for Huckleberry, a mischievous little elf, crept behind Eustace as he sat on the steps of the porch, snatched the spectacles from his nose, and clapped them on her own; and as the student forgot to take them back, they fell off into the grass, and lay there till the next spring.

Now, Eustace Bright, you must know, had won great fame among the children as a narrator of wonderful stories; and though he sometimes pretended to be annoyed when they teased him for more, and more, and always for more, yet I really doubt whether he liked anything quite so well as to tell them. You might have seen his eyes twinkle, therefore, when Clover, Sweet Fern, Cowslip, Buttercup, and most of their playmates, besought him to relate one of his stories, while they were waiting for the mist to clear up.

"Yes, Cousin Eustace," said Primrose, who was a bright girl of twelve, with laughing eyes, and a nose that turned up a little, "the morning is certainly the best time for the stories with which you so often tire out our patience. We shall be in less danger of hurting your feelings by falling asleep at the most interesting points,—as little Cowslip and I did last night!"

"Naughty Primrose," cried Cowslip, a child of six years old; "I did not fall asleep, and I only shut my eyes, so as to see a picture of what Cousin Eustace was telling about. His stories are good to hear at night,

because we can dream about them asleep; and good in the morning, too, because then we can dream about them awake. So I hope he will tell us one this very minute."

"Thank you, my little Cowslip," said Eustace; "certainly you shall have the best story I can think of, if it were only for defending me so well from that naughty Primrose. But, children, I have already told you so many fairy tales, that I doubt whether there is a single one which you have not heard at least twice over. I am afraid you will fall asleep in reality, if I repeat any of them again."

"No, no, no!" cried Blue Eye, Periwinkle, Plantain, and half a dozen others. "We like a story all the better for having heard it two or three times before."

"It would be a great pity," said he, "if a man of my learning (to say nothing of original fancy) could not find a new story every day, year in and year out, for children such as you. I will tell you one of the nursery tales that were made for the amusement of our great old grandmother, the Earth, when she was a child in frock and pinafore. There are a hundred such; and it is a wonder to me that they have not long ago been put into picture-books for little girls and boys. But, instead of that, old grey-bearded grandsires pore over them in musty volumes of Greek, and puzzle themselves with trying to find out when, and how, and for what, they were made."

"Well, well, well, well, Cousin Eustace!" cried all the children at once; "talk no more about your stories, but begin."

"Sit down, then, every soul of you," said Eustace Bright, "and be all as still as so many mice. At the slightest interruption, whether from great, naughty Primrose, little Dandelion, or any other, I shall bite the story short off between my teeth, and swallow the untold part. But, in the first place, do any of you know what a Gorgon is?"

"I do," said Primrose.

"Then hold your tongue!" rejoined Eustace, who had rather she would have known nothing about the matter. "Hold your tongues, and I shall tell you a sweet pretty story of a Gorgon's head."

THE GORGON'S HEAD

PERSEUS was the son of Danaë, who was the daughter of a king. And when Perseus was a very little boy, some wicked people put his mother and himself into a chest, and set them afloat upon the sea. The wind blew freshly, and drove the chest away from the shore, and the uneasy billows tossed it up and down; while Danaë clasped her child to her bosom, and dreaded that some big wave would dash its foamy crest over them both. The chest sailed on, however, and neither sank nor was upset; until, when night was coming, it floated so near an island that it got entangled in a fisherman's nets, and was drawn out high and dry upon the sand. The island was called Seriphus, and it was reigned over by King Polydectes, who happened to be the fisherman's brother.

This fisherman, I am glad to tell you, was an exceedingly humane and upright man. He showed

great kindness to Danaë and her little boy; and continued to befriend them, until Perseus had grown to be a handsome youth, very strong and active, and skilful in the use of arms. Long before this time, King Polydectes had seen the two strangers—the mother and her child—who had come to his dominions in a floating chest. As he was not good and kind, like his brother the fisherman, but extremely wicked, he resolved to send Perseus on a dangerous enterprise, in which he would probably be killed, and then to do some great mischief to Danaë herself. So this bad-hearted king spent a long while in considering what was the most dangerous thing that a young man could possibly undertake to perform. At last, having hit upon an enterprise that promised to turn out as fatally as he desired, he sent for the youthful Perseus.

The young man came to the palace, and found the king sitting upon his throne.

“Perseus,” said King Polydectes, smiling craftily upon him, “you are grown up a fine young man. You and your good mother have received a great deal of kindness from myself, as well as from my worthy brother the fisherman, and I suppose you would not be sorry to repay some of it.”

“Please your Majesty,” answered Perseus, “I would willingly risk my life to do so.”

“Well, then,” continued the king, with a cunning smile on his lips, “I have a little adventure to propose to you; and, as you are a brave and enterprising youth, you will doubtless look upon it as a great piece of good

luck to have so rare an opportunity of distinguishing yourself. You must know, my good Perseus, I think of getting married to the beautiful Princess Hippodamia; and it is customary, on these occasions, to make the bride a present of some far-fetched and elegant curiosity. I have been a little perplexed, I must honestly confess, where to obtain anything likely to please a princess of her exquisite taste. But, this morning, I flatter myself, I have thought of precisely the article."

"And can I assist your majesty in obtaining it?" cried Perseus, eagerly.

"You can, if you are as brave a youth as I believe you to be," replied King Polydectes, with the utmost graciousness of manner. "The bridal gift which I have set my heart on presenting to the beautiful Hippodamia is the head of the Gorgon Medusa with the snaky locks; and I depend on you, my dear Perseus, to bring it to me. So, as I am anxious to settle affairs with the princess, the sooner you go in quest of the Gorgon, the better I shall be pleased."

"I will set out to-morrow morning," answered Perseus.

"Pray do so, my gallant youth," rejoined the king. "And, Perseus, in cutting off the Gorgon's head, be careful to make a clean stroke, so as not to injure its appearance. You must bring it home in the very best condition, in order to suit the exquisite taste of the beautiful Princess Hippodamia."

Perseus left the palace, but was scarcely out of hearing before Polydectes burst into a laugh; being

greatly amused, wicked king that he was, to find how readily the young man fell into the snare. The news quickly spread abroad, that Perseus had undertaken to cut off the head of Medusa with the snaky locks. Everybody was rejoiced; for most of the inhabitants of the island were wicked as the king himself, and would have liked nothing better than to see some enormous mischief happen to Danaë and her son. The only good man in this unfortunate island of Seriphus appears to have been the fisherman. As Perseus walked along, therefore, the people pointed after him, and made mouths, and winked to one another, and ridiculed him as loudly as they dared.

“Ho, ho!” cried they; “Medusa’s snakes will sting him soundly!”

Now, there were three Gorgons alive, at that period; and they were the most strange and terrible monsters that had ever been seen since the world was made, or that have been seen in after-days, or that are likely to be seen in all time to come. I hardly know what sort of creature or hobgoblin to call them. They were three sisters, and seem to have borne some distant resemblance to women, but were really a very frightful and mischievous species of dragon. It is, indeed, difficult to imagine what hideous beings these three sisters were. Why, instead of locks of hair, if you can believe me, they had each of them a hundred enormous snakes growing on their heads, all alive, twisting, wriggling, curling, and thrusting out their venomous tongues, with forked stings at the end! The teeth of the Gorgons were terribly long tusks;

their hands were made of brass; and their bodies were all over scales, which, if not iron, were something as hard and impenetrable. They had wings, too, and exceedingly splendid ones, I can assure you; for every feather in them was pure, bright, glittering, burnished gold, and they looked very dazzling, no doubt, when the Gorgons were flying about in the sunshine.

But when people happened to catch a glimpse of their glittering brightness, aloft in the air, they seldom stopped to gaze, but ran and hid themselves as speedily as they could. You will think, perhaps, that they were afraid of being stung by the serpents that served the Gorgons instead of hair,—or of having their heads bitten off by their ugly tusks,—or of being torn all to pieces by their brazen claws. Well, to be sure, these were some of the dangers, but by no means the greatest, nor the most difficult to avoid. For the worst thing about these abominable Gorgons was, that, if once a poor mortal fixed his eyes full upon one of their faces, he was certain, that very instant, to be changed from warm flesh and blood into cold and lifeless stone!

Thus, as you will easily perceive, it was a very dangerous adventure that the wicked King Polydectes had contrived for this innocent young man. Perseus himself, when he had thought over the matter, could not help seeing that he had very little chance of coming safely through it, and that he was far more likely to become a stone image than to bring back the head of Medusa with the snaky locks. For, not to speak of other difficulties, there was one which it would have puzzled an older man than Perseus to get over. Not