THE WONDER-BOOK OF HORSES



"Pegasus rose high in the air."

James Baldwin

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The Taming of Bucephalus

Oh, dream not helm or harness

The sign of valor true;

Peace hath higher tests of manhood

Than battle ever knew.

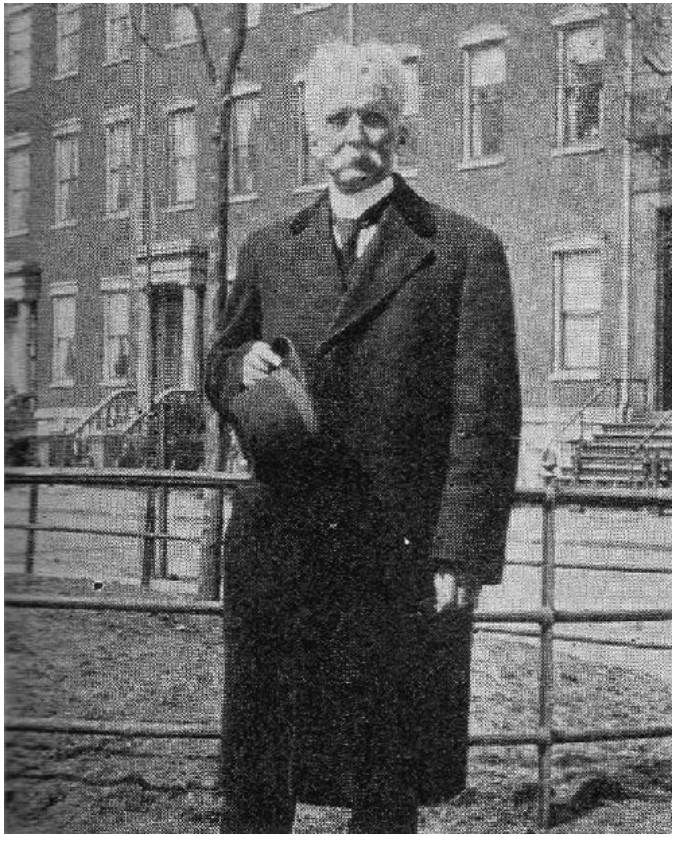
- John G. Whittier

Table of Contents

About the Author: 6
NOTE TO THE READER 9
HELIOS'S FOUR-IN-HAND 11
THE HORSES OF SOL AND MAANE 21
THE BLACK STEEDS OF AIDONEUS 26
THE EIGHT-FOOTED SLIPPER 33
THE WINGED HORSE OF THE MUSES 43
I. THE FOUNTAIN OF THE HORSE 43
II. THE YOUNG TRAVELER 44
III. BELLEROPHON'S STORY 47
IV. THE DREAM AND THE GIFTS 50
V. THE FIGHT WITH THE CHIMÆRA 52
GRIFFEN THE HIGH FLYER 56
I. THE WIZARD OF THE PYRENEES 56
II. THE CASTLE IN SPAIN 58
III. THE FOILED ENCHANTER 61
IV. THE FLIGHT TO THE MOON 65
THE SHIP OF THE PLAINS 69
AL BORAK 77
THE GREAT TWIN BRETHREN 80
THE DANCING HORSES OF SYBARIS 86
BUCEPHALUS 90
RAKUSH AND HIS MASTER 94
I. THE PRINCE 94
II. THE STEED 97
III. THE DRAGON 101
IV. THE PITFALL 105

BROIEFORT, THE BLACK ARABIAN 108
I. THE GIFT OF FORTUNE 108
II. THE BATTLE 110
III. THE FLIGHT 112
IV. THE SIEGE 113
V. THE CAPTURE 115
VI. THE PRISON 117
VII. THE PARDON 119
ROZINANTE 122
SWIFT AND OLD-GOLD 126
FIRST HEAT—THE WEDDING PRESENTS 126
SECOND HEAT—BEFORE TROY 130
THIRD HEAT—THE KING'S MESSENGERS 132
FOURTH HEAT—THE FIERCE FIGHT 134
FIFTH HEAT—ÆTHON AND GALATHE 138
SIXTH HEAT—THE THREAD OF FATE 142
SEVENTH HEAT—THE GOAL 145
THE GREAT WOODEN HORSE 147
I. THE PUZZLED TROJANS 147
II. THE CAPTURED GREEK 150
III. THE FATE OF LAOCOON 153
IV. THE SUCCESS OF THE STRATAGEMS 154
THE HORSE OF BRASS 157
THE ENCHANTED HORSE OF FIROUZ SCHAH 160

About the Author:



James Baldwin (1841 - 1925)

According to his biography in the *Junior Book of Authors* (1951), Baldwin, a native of Indiana and largely self-educated, began teaching at the age of 24. After several years he became superintendent of the graded schools in Indiana, a post he held for 18 years. The last

37 years of his life he worked with publishers, first with Harper and Brothers and later with the American Book Company. In addition to editing school books, he started writing books of his own. After the publication in 1882 of *The Story of Siegfried*, he went on to write more than 50 others.

His influence was widely felt because at one time it was estimated that of all the school books in use in the United States, over half had been written or edited by him. Unfortunately, his works are much less widely known today. So far as known, only some of his books are in print and published today.

Books:

Date	Story	Category
1882	The Story of Siegfried	Legends
1883	The Story of Roland	Legends
1887	A Story of the Golden Age of Greek Heroes	Mythology
1895	Fairy Stories and Fables	Readers
1895	Old Greek	Mythology

	Stories	
1896	Fifty Famous Stories Re-told	Collective Biography
1897	Four Great Americans	Collective Biography
1903	The Wonder-Book of Horses	Mythology
1904	Abraham Lincoln, A True Life	----
1905	Thirty More Famous Stories Retold	Collective Biography
1905	Robinson Crusoe Written Anew for Children	Adapted Literature
1907	An American Book of Golden Deeds	Ethical Faith Stories
1910	Stories of Don Quixote Written A new for Children	Fiction
1912	The Sampo	Legends
1912	Fifty Famous People	Collective Biography
1914	In My Youth	Individual Biography

* * *

NOTE TO THE READER

SINCE the publication of my larger book, "The Horse Fair," many letters have been received from teachers and their scholars telling of the pleasure derived from the reading of it, and incidentally suggesting that much of its contents is directly in line with the courses of literary instruction pursued in our elementary schools. This suggestion has led me to collect certain of the stories into a smaller volume especially adapted for use as a school reading-book.

The eighteen stories in this volume have been chosen with a thought to their educative value as well as for the intrinsic charm of the original narratives, which in various forms have delighted many generations of readers. All have a literary interest connecting them with subjects with which every educated person is supposed to be familiar. In the first four, you will be introduced to the sun myths and season myths of the Greeks and of our Norse ancestors. Following these, the tale of song-inspiring Pegasus is presented in contrast with that of Griffen, the base imitation invented by the romancing poets of the Middle Ages. Then in "The Ship of the Plains," you may read of the mythical founding of Athens; and in the sketch that follows, you may enjoy a brief glimpse of Arabic imagery in the story of one of the most interesting episodes in the life of the prophet Mohammed. The story of the twin brethren will acquaint you with the thought of some of the old Latin writers, while the tale of Rakush will give you a taste of Persian literature as it is found in the great epic written by

Firdusi. The romances of Charlemagne and his peers are represented by the story of Broiefort and his indomitable master; and the world-famous Don Quixote is introduced by his sorry but scarcely less famous steed, Rozinante. The epic of the Iliad is briefly condensed in the biography of Swift and Old-Gold; and the tragic fall of Troy is narrated in the story of the Great Wooden Horse. Then with the Horse of Brass you may

Call up him that left half told

The story of Cambuscan bold;

and finally with Firouz Schah you may take a bold flight into the enchanting regions of romance depicted in the "Arabian Nights' Entertainment."

And so, while you are reading this WONDER-BOOK OF HORSES and finding entertainment in the biographies of winged steeds and war horses, of knights-errant and god-like heroes, you are really doing something more—you are making acquaintance with some of those wonderful and beautiful conceptions which in the form of classic literature have come down to us through the ages.

JAMES BALDWIN



HELIOS'S FOUR-IN-HAND

HELIOS, as you know, was the most famous charioteer that the world had ever seen. Just how long he had been driving the chariot of the Sun nobody could tell; but it must have been many, many years. People said that he had never done anything else; and the oldest inhabitant had no recollection of the time when he began. He never missed a day—not even Sunday; and on holidays he was always up and at it early, cracking his whip cheerily to waken the children. Starting from the home of the Dawn in the far, far East, he made a daily trip to the verge of Old Ocean's stream in the distant West. How it was that he always got back to his starting-point before the next morning was somewhat of a mystery. Nobody had ever seen him making his return trip, and hence all that men knew about it was guesswork. It matters very little to us, however; for that question has nothing to do with the story which I am going to tell.

The old charioteer always slept soundly in the morning, and seldom awoke until he heard his young sister, the maiden whom men call Aurora, rapping at the door of his bedroom, and making her voice echo through the halls of the Dawn.

"Up, up, brother Helios!" she would cry. "It is time for you to begin your journey again. Up, and delight the world once more with your shining morning face and your life-giving presence!"

Then Helios would hasten to the meadows where his steeds were feeding, and would call them each by name:

"Come hither, beautiful creatures! Hasten, for Aurora calleth. Eös, thou glowing one! Æthon, thou of the burning name!

Brontë, thou thunderer! Sterope, thou swifter than lightning! Come quickly!"

The wing-footed steeds would obey. The servants would harness them to the golden car, and Aurora and the Morning Star would deck their manes with flowers and with wreaths of asphodel. Then Helios would step into the car and hold the long, yellow reins in his hands. A word from him and the proud team would leap into the sky; then they would soar above the mountain tops and mingle with the clouds, and grandly career in mid-air. And Helios, holding the reins steadily, would gently restrain them, or if they lagged would urge them forward with persuasive words. It was the grandest sight that men ever saw, and yet they never seemed to think much about it—perhaps because it was seen so often. If Helios had failed for a single day, what a wonderful hub-bub and fright there would have been!

The wife of Helios was a fair young lady named Clymene, who lived not far from the great sea, and who, according to some, was a nymph, but according to others a fisherman's daughter: and they had an only son named Phaëthon. Helios loved this son above all things else on earth; and he gave him many rich and noble gifts, and counseled him to be brave and wise, and especially to be contented with his lot in life. And Phaëthon grew to be a tall and comely lad, fond of his looking-glass, soft-handed, and proud of his ancestry. Some of his companions, who were only common mortals, liked to flatter him because of his supposed wealth, while there were many others who despised him because he affected to look up to the Sun.

"See the upstart who calls himself the son of Helios," sneered one.

"Ah, but he will have a sorry fall some of these days," said another.

"You are a pretty fellow to claim kinship with the charioteer of the Sun," said a worthless loafer whose name was Epaphos. "With your white face, and your yellow curls, and your slender hands, you are better fitted to help your mother at her spinning than to be a leader of men."

"But," said the boy, "my father Helios, who drives the burning chariot, and who—"

"Don't talk to me," interrupted the unmannerly fellow—"don't talk to me about your father the chariot-driver. Why, you would be frightened to death to drive your sister's goat-cart over the lawn; and you would shriek at the sight of a real horse. How dare you claim descent from the charioteer of the skies? Nonsense!"

"A pretty son of Helios, indeed!" laughed the other rowdies who were with Epaphos; and some young girls that were passing tossed their heads and smiled.

"I will show you!" cried Phaëthon, angrily. "I will do what none of you dare do: I will ride the wild horses of the plain; I will harness them to the king's war-chariot, and drive them in the great circus! I will prove to you that I am worthy to be called the son of Helios!"

"Perhaps you will take his place as driver of the sun-chariot? A day's rest now and then would do the old man great good," sneered Epaphos.

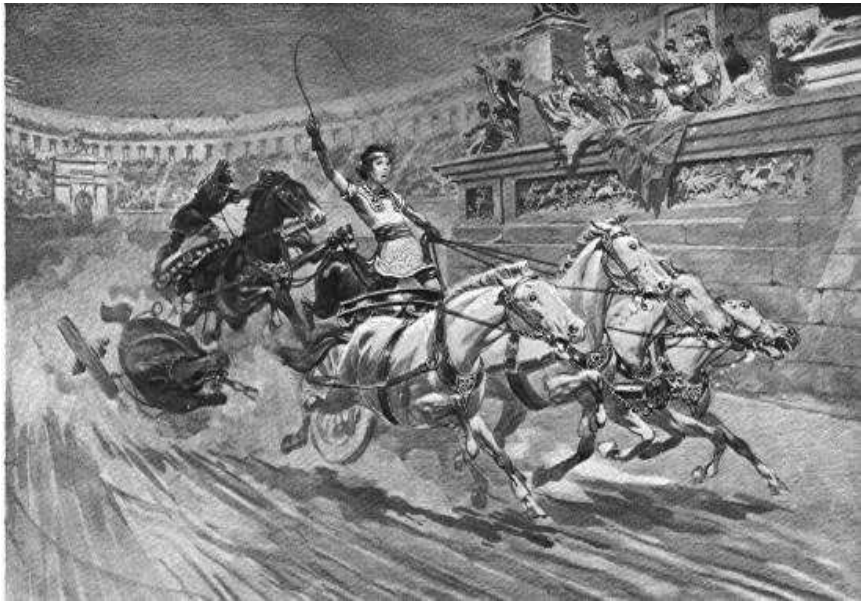
Phaëthon hesitated. "My father," said he, "is one of the immortals, and I am earth-born. And yet—and yet—"

"And yet," shouted his tormentors, "until you have driven the sun-chariot through the skies, nobody will believe that you are the son of Helios!"

And they went on their way laughing.

"You may sneer, and you may laugh," said Phaëthon, "but the time will come when you will honor me, both for what I am and for what I can do."

Steadily, and with a determined purpose, he set about making himself ready for the great undertaking of his life. He exercised himself daily in feats of strength; he practised running and leaping and throwing weights, until his muscles were hardened and made as elastic as Apollo's bow. Then he took lessons in horsemanship from the greatest riding-masters in the world. He spent months on the grassy steppes of the Caspian, where he learned to lasso wild horses, and, leaping astride of them, to ride them bareback and bridleless until they were subdued to his will. He entered the chariot races at Corinth, and with a team of four outdrove the most famous charioteers of Greece; and at the great Olympian games he won the victor's crown. No other young man was talked about as much as he.



"And with a team of four outdrove the most famous charioteers of Greece."

"A bright young fellow with a brilliant future before him," said some.

"A fine example of what hard work and a little genius can do," said others.

"A lucky chap," said still others—"a mere creature of circumstances. Any of us could do as well, if as many favorable accidents would happen to us to help us along."

"A vain upstart," said those whom he had beaten in the race—"a fop with a girl's face, and more hair than brains, whom the gods have seen fit to favor for a day."

"He claims to be of better blood than the rest of us," said the followers of Epaphos; "yet everybody knows that he was born in a miserable village a long way from Athens, and that his mother is the daughter of a fisherman."

But the young girls whispered among themselves: "How handsome he is, and how deftly he managed the reins! What if he be indeed the son of Helios! Wouldn't it be grand to see him sitting in his father's chariot, and guiding the sun-steeds along their lofty road?" And they said to him, "Phaëthon, if you will drive your father's team for only one little day, we will believe in you."

At length Phaëthon made a long journey to the golden palace of the Dawn in the far distant East. Helios, with his steeds, had just returned from the labors of the day, and he was overjoyed to see his son. He threw his arms about him, and kissed him many times, and called him by many endearing names.

"And now tell me," he said, "what brings you here at this quiet hour of the night, when all men are asleep. Have you come to

seek some favor? If so, do not be afraid to tell me; for you know that I will do anything for you—that I will give you anything that you ask."

"There is something," said Phaëthon, "that I long for more than anything else in the world; and I have come to ask you to give it to me."

"What is it, my child?" asked Helios, eagerly. "Only speak, and it shall be yours."

"Father, will you promise to do for me that which I shall ask?"

Then Helios lifted up his hands, and vowed by the river Styx which flows through the underworld, that he would surely grant to his son Phaëthon whatsoever he desired. And this he did, knowing full well the terrible punishment that would be his in case he should not observe that vow. Nine years he would have to lie on the ground as though he were dead, and nine other years he would be shut out from the company of his friends; his sun-car would be broken in pieces, and his fleet horses lost forever, and the whole world doomed to everlasting night.

The young man was glad when his father had made this vow. He spoke quickly, and said: "This, then, O father, is the boon which I have come to ask, and which you have promised to give: it is that I may take your place to-morrow, and drive your chariot through the flaming pathway of the sky."

Helios sank back terrified at the request, and for a time could not speak.

"My child," he said at last, "you surely do not mean it. No man living can ever drive my steeds; and although you have kinship with the immortals, you are only human. Choose, I pray you, some other favor."

Phaëthon wept, and answered: "Father, there are some people who do not believe that I am better than mere common men, and they scorn me to my face. But if they could once see me driving the sun-car through mid-air, they and all the world would honor me. And I can drive your steeds; for have I not mastered the wildest horses of the desert, and have I not driven the winning chariot in the Corinthian races? By long years of patient training I have fitted myself for this task."

Through all the rest of the night Helios pleaded with the young man, but in vain: Phaëthon would not listen to any refusal. "This favor I will have or none," said he. "I will drive the sun-car through the heavens to-morrow, and all men shall know that I am the son and heir of Helios."

At length Aurora, in her yellow morning robes, knocked at the door, and Helios knew that no more time could be spent in vain entreaties.

"Ah, my son!" he said, "you know not what you have asked. Yet since I have made the vow I will not refuse you. May the immortals have you in their keeping, and ward all danger from you!"

Then the four horses were led out and harnessed to the car, and Helios sadly gave the reins into Phaëthon's hands.

"Thy folly will doubtless bring its own punishment, my son," he said; and, hiding his face in his long cloak, he wept.

But the young man leaped quickly into the car, and cried out, as his father had been wont to cry: "On, Eös! On, Æthon, Brontë, Sterope! On, ye children of the morning! Awaken the world with your brightness, and carry beauty and gladness into every corner of the earth. Sterope, Brontë, Æthon, Eös, on with you!"