ICARUS AND DAEDALUS (Myth)

by: Josephine Preston Peabody (1874-1922)


Among all those mortals who grew so wise that they learned the secrets of the gods, none was more cunning than Daedalus.

He once built, for King Minos of Crete, a wonderful Labyrinth of winding ways so cunningly tangled up and twisted around that, once inside, you could never find your way out again without a magic clue. But the king's favor veered with the wind, and one day he had his master architect imprisoned in a tower. Daedalus managed to escape from his cell; but it seemed impossible to leave the island, since every ship that came or went was well guarded by order of the king.

At length, watching the sea-gulls in the air,--the only creatures that were sure of liberty,--he thought of a plan for himself and his young son Icarus, who was captive with him.

Little by little, he gathered a store of feathers great and small. He fastened these together with thread, moulded them in with wax, and so fashioned two great wings like those of a bird. When they were done, Daedalus fitted them to his own shoulders, and after one or two efforts, he found that by waving his arms he could winnow the air and cleave it, as a swimmer does the sea. He held himself aloft, wavered this way and that with the wind, and at last, like a great fledgling, he learned to fly.

Without delay, he fell to work on a pair of wings for the boy Icarus, and taught him carefully how to use them, bidding him beware of rash adventures among the stars. "Remember," said the father, "never to fly very low or very high, for the fogs about the earth would weigh you down, but the blaze of the sun will surely melt your feathers apart if you go too near."

For Icarus, these cautions went in at one ear and out by the other. Who could remember to be careful when he was to fly for the first time? Are birds careful? Not they! And not an idea remained in the boy's head but the one joy of escape.

The day came, and the fair wind that was to set them free. The father bird put on his wings, and, while the light urged them to be gone, he waited to see that all was well with Icarus, for the two could not fly hand in hand. Up they rose, the boy after his father. The hateful ground of Crete sank beneath them; and the country folk, who caught a glimpse of them when they were high above the tree-tops, took it for a vision of the gods,--Apollo, perhaps, with Cupid after him.

At first there was a terror in the joy. The wide vacancy of the air dazed them,--a glance downward made their brains reel. But when a great wind filled their wings, and Icarus felt himself sustained, like a halcyon-bird in the hollow of a wave, like a child uplifted by his mother, he forgot everything in the world but joy. He forgot Crete and the other islands that he had passed over: he saw but vaguely that winged thing in the distance before him that was his father Daedalus. He longed for one draught of flight to quench the thirst of his captivity: he stretched out his arms to the sky and made towards the highest heavens.

Alas for him! Warmer and warmer grew the air. Those arms, that had seemed to uphold him, relaxed. His wings wavered, drooped. He fluttered his young hands vainly,--he was falling.--and in that terror
he remembered. The heat of the sun had melted the wax from his wings; the feathers were falling, one by one, like snowflakes; and there was none to help.

He fell like a leaf tossed down the wind, down, down, with one cry that overtook Daedalus far away. When he returned, and sought high and low for the poor boy, he saw nothing but the bird-like feathers afloat on the water, and he knew that Icarus was drowned.

The nearest island he named Icaria, in memory of the child; but he, in heavy grief, went to the temple of Apollo in Sicily, and there hung up his wings as an offering. Never again did he attempt to fly.

“The Ballad of Davy Crockett” (Legend)

Born on a mountain top in Tennessee
Greenest state in the Land of the Free
Raised in the woods so's he knew every tree
Kilt him a b'ar when he was only three.
Davy, Davy Crockett, King of the wild frontier!

In eighteen thirteen the Creeks uprose
Addin' redskin arrows to the country's woes
Now, Injun fightin' is somethin' he knows
So he shoulders his rifle an' off he goes.
Davy, Davy Crockett, The man who don't know fear!

Off through the woods he's a marchin' along
Makin' up yarns an' a singin' a song
Itchin' for fightin' and rightin' a wrong
He's ringy as a b'ar and twice as strong.
Davy, Davy Crockett, The buckskin buccaneer!

Andy Jackson is our general's name
His reg'lar soldiers we'll put to shame
Them redskin varmints us volunteers'll tame
'Cause we got the guns with the sure-fire aim.
Davy, Davy Crockett, The champion of us all!

He give his word and he give his hand
That his Injun friends could keep their land
And the rest of his life he took the stand
That justice was due every redskin band.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Holdin' his promise dear!

Home fer the winter with his family,
Happy as squirrels in the ol' gum tree,
Bein' the father he wanted to be,
Close to his boys as the pod and the pea.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Holdin' his young 'uns dear!

Headed back to war from the ol' home place
But Red Stick was leadin' a merry chase
Fightin' and burnin' at a devil's pace
South to the swamps on the Florida Trace.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Trackin' the redskins down!

Now he'd lost his love an' his grief was gall
In his heart he wanted to leave it all
And lose himself in the forests tall
But he answered instead his country's call.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Beginnin' his campaign!

Fought single-handed through the Injun War
Till the Creeks was whipped an' peace was in store
And while he was handlin' this risky chore
Made hisself a legend for evermore.
Davy, Davy Crockett, King of the wild frontier!

Needin' his help they didn't vote blind
They put in Davy 'cause he was their kind
Sent up to Nashville the best they could find
A fightin' Spirit and a thinkin' mind.
Davy, Davy Crockett, The man who don't know fear!

They put in Davy 'cause he was their kind
Sent up to Nashville the best they could find
A fightin' Spirit and a thinkin' mind.
Davy, Davy Crockett, The man who don't know fear!

The votes were counted and he won hands down
So they sent him off to Washin' ton town
With his best dress suit still his buckskins brown
A livin' legend of growin' reknown.
Davy, Davy Crockett, The Canebrake Congressman!

The votes were counted and he won hands down
So they sent him off to Washin' ton town
With his best dress suit still his buckskins brown
A livin' legend of growin' reknown.
Davy, Davy Crockett, The Canebrake Congressman!

He went off to Congress and served a spell
Fixin' up the Gover'ment and laws as well
Took over Washin' ton so we heared tell
And patched up the crack in the Liberty Bell.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Seein' his duty clear!

He went off to Congress and served a spell
Fixin' up the Gover'ment and laws as well
Took over Washin' ton so we heared tell
And patched up the crack in the Liberty Bell.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Seein' his duty clear!

He knew when he spoke he sounded the knell
Of his hopes for White House and fame as well
But he spoke out strong so hist'ry books tell
And patched up the crack In the liberty Bell.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Seein' his duty clear!

He knew when he spoke he sounded the knell
Of his hopes for White House and fame as well
But he spoke out strong so hist'ry books tell
And patched up the crack In the liberty Bell.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Seein' his duty clear!

When he come home his politickin' done
The western march had just begun
So he packed his gear and his trusty gun
And lit out grinnin' to follow the sun.
Davy, Davy Crockett, Leadin' the pioneer!

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Davy, Davy Crockett, Leadin' the pioneer!

Davy, Davy Crockett, The man who don't know fear!

Davy, Davy Crockett, Leadin' the pioneer!

His land is biggest and his land is best
From grassy plains to the mountain crest
He's ahead of us all meetin' the test
Followin' his legend into the West.
Davy Davy Crockett, King of the wild frontier!

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“The Ant and the Grasshopper” (Fable)

In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and moiling in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you to do the same."

"Why bother about winter?" said the Grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present." But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the Grasshopper knew:

It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.