

BUTLER SAMUEL

THE AUTHORESS OF
THE ODYSSEY

Samuel Butler

The Authoress of the Odyssey

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Samuel Butler

The Authoress of the Odyssey / Where and when she wrote, who she was, the use she made / of the Iliad, and how the poem grew under her hands

PREFACE

The following work consists in some measure of matter already published in England and Italy during the last six years. The original publications were in the *Athenæum*, Jan. 30 and Feb. 20, 1892, and in the *Eagle* for the Lent Term, 1892, and for the October Term, 1892. Both these last two articles were re-published by Messrs. Metcalfe & Co. of Cambridge, with prefaces, in the second case of considerable length. I have also drawn from sundry letters and articles that appeared in *Il Lambruschini*, a journal published at Trapani and edited by Prof. Giacalone-Patti, in 1892 and succeeding years, as also from two articles that appeared in the *Rassegna della Letteratura Siciliana*, published at Acireale in the autumn of 1893 and of 1894, and from some articles published in the *Italian Gazette* (then edited by Miss Helen Zimmern) in the spring of 1895.

Each of the publications above referred to contained some matter which did not appear in the others, and by the help of local students in Sicily, among whom I would name the late Signor E. Biaggini of Trapani, Signor Sugameli of Trapani, and Cavaliere Professore Ingroia of Calatafimi, I have been able to correct some errors and become possessed of new matter bearing on my subject. I have now entirely re-cast and re-stated the whole argument, adding much that has not appeared hitherto, and dealing for the first time fully with the question of the writer's sex.

No reply appeared to either of my letters to the *Athenæum* nor to my Italian pamphlets. It is idle to suppose that the leading Iliadic and Odyssean scholars in England and the continent do not know what I have said. I have taken ample care that they should be informed concerning it. It is equally idle to suppose that not one of them should have brought forward a serious argument against me, if there were any such argument to bring. Had they brought one it must have reached me, and I should have welcomed it with great pleasure; for, as I have said in my concluding Chapter, I do not care whether the *Odyssey* was written by man or by woman, nor yet where the poet or poetess lived who wrote it; all I care about is the knowing as much as I can about the poem; and I believe that scholars both in England and on the continent would have helped me to fuller understanding if they had seen their way to doing so.

A new edition, for example, of Professor Jebb's *Introduction to Homer* was published some six weeks after the first and more important of my letters to the *Athenæum* had appeared. It was advertised as "this day" in the *Athenæum* of March 12, 1892; so that if Professor Jebb had wished to say anything against what had appeared in the *Athenæum*, he had ample time to do so by way of postscript. I know very well what I should have thought it incumbent upon me to do had I been in his place, and found his silence more eloquent on my behalf than any words would have been which he is at all likely to have written, or, I may add, to write.

I repeat that nothing deserving serious answer has reached me from any source during the six years, or so, that my Odyssean theories have been before the public. The principal notices of them that have appeared so far will be found in the *Spectator*, April 23, 1892; the *Cambridge Observer*, May

31, 1892; the *Classical Review* for November, 1892, June, 1893, and February, 1895, and *Longman's Magazine* (see *At the Sign of the Ship*) for June, 1892.

My frontispiece is taken by the kind permission of the Messrs. Alinari of Florence, from their photograph of a work in the museum at Cortona called *La Musa Polinnia*. It is on slate and burnt, is a little more than half life size, and is believed to be Greek, presumably of about the Christian era, but no more precise date can be assigned to it. I was assured at Cortona that it was found by a man who was ploughing his field, and who happened to be a baker. The size being suitable he used it for some time as a door for his oven, whence it was happily rescued and placed in the museum where it now rests.

As regards the Greek text from which I have taken my abridged translation, I have borne in mind throughout the admirable canons laid down by Mr. Gladstone in his *Studies in Homer*, Oxford University Press, 1858, Vol. I., p. 43. He holds: —

1. That we should adopt the text itself as the basis of all Homeric enquiry, and not any preconceived theory nor any arbitrary standard of criticism, referable to any particular periods, schools, or persons.

2. That as we proceed in any work of construction drawn from the text, we should avoid the temptation to solve difficulties that lie in our way by denouncing particular portions of it as corrupt or interpolated; should never set it aside except on the closest examination of the particular passage questioned; should use sparingly the liberty of even arraying presumptions against it; and should always let the reader understand both when and why it is questioned.

The only emendation I have ventured to make in the text is to read Νηρίτω instead of Νηίω in i. 186 and ὑπονηρίτου for ὑπονηίου in iii. 81. A more speculative emendation in iv. 606, 607 I forbear even to suggest. I know of none others that I have any wish to make. As for interpolations I have called attention to three or four which I believe to have been made at a later period by the writer herself, but have seen no passage which I have been tempted to regard as the work of another hand.

I have followed Mr. Gladstone, Lord Derby, Colonel Mure, and I may add the late Professor Kennedy and the Rev. Richard Shilleto, men who taught me what little Greek I know, in retaining the usual Latin renderings of Greek proper names. What was good enough for the scholars whom I have named is good enough for me, and I should think also for the greater number of my readers. The public whom I am addressing know the *Odyssey* chiefly through Pope's translation, and will not, I believe, take kindly to Odysseus for Ulysses, Aias for Ajax, and Polydeukes for Pollux. Neither do I think that Hekabe will supersede Hecuba, till is out of date.

"What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?"

I infer that the authorities of the British Museum are with me in this matter, for on looking out Odysseus in the catalogue of the library I find "See Ulysses."

Moreover the authors of this new nomenclature are not consistent. Why not call Penelope Penelopeia? She is never called anything else in the *Odyssey*. Why not Achilleus? Why not Bellerophontes? Why Hades, when Ἅιδης has no aspirate? Why Helios instead of Eëlios? Why insist on Achaians and Aitolians, but never on Aithiopians? Why not Athenæans rather than Athenians? Why not Apollon? Why not either Odusseus, or else Odysseys? and why not call him Oduseus or Odysseys whenever the *Odyssey* does so?

Admitting that the Greek names for gods and heroes may one day become as familiar as the Latin ones, they have not become so yet, nor shall I believe that they have done so, till I have seen Odysseus supplant Ulysses on railway engines, steam tugs, and boats or ships. Jove, Mercury, Minerva, Juno, and Venus convey a sufficiently accurate idea to people who would have no ready

made idea in connection with Zeus, Hermes, Athene, Here, and Aphrodite. The personalities of the Latin gods do not differ so much from those of the Greek, as, for example, the Athene of the *Iliad* does from the Athene of the *Odyssey*. The personality of every god varies more or less with that of every writer, and what little difference may exist between Greek and Roman ideas of Jove, Juno, &c., is not sufficient to warrant the disturbance of a nomenclature that has long since taken an established place in literature.

Furthermore, the people who are most shocked by the use of Latin names for Greek gods and heroes, and who most insist on the many small innovations which any one who opens a volume of the *Classical Review* may discover for himself, are the very ones who have done most to foist Wolf and German criticism upon us, and who are most tainted with that affectation of higher critical taste and insight, which men of the world distrust, and which has brought the word "academic" into use as expressive of everything which sensible people will avoid. I dare not, therefore, follow these men till time has shown whether they are faddists or no. Nevertheless, if I find the opinion of those whom I respect goes against me in this matter, I shall adopt the Greek names in any new edition of my book that may be asked for. I need hardly say that I have consulted many excellent scholars as to which course I should take, and have found them generally, though not always, approve of my keeping to the names with which Pope and others have already familiarised the public.

Since Chapter XIV. was beyond reach of modification, I have asked the authorities of the British Museum to accept a copy of the *Odyssey* with all the Iliadic passages underlined and referred to in M.S. I have every reason to believe that this will very shortly be indexed under my name, and (I regret to say) also under that of Homer. It is my intention within the next few weeks to offer the Museum an *Iliad* with all passages borrowed by the writer of the *Odyssey* underlined – reference being given to the Odyssean passage in which they occur.

Lastly, I would express my great obligations to my friend Mr. H. Festing Jones, who in two successive years has verified all topographical details on the ground itself, and to whom I have referred throughout my work whenever I have been in doubt or difficulty.

September 27th, 1897.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

It may be said that we owe this book, *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, to Charles Lamb. Butler, in his early days, had read all the usual English classics that young people read—Dickens, Tennyson, Thackeray, Scott, Lamb, and so on; as he grew older, however, he became more absorbed in his own work and had no time for general reading. When people allege want of time as an excuse for not doing something, they are usually trying to conceal their laziness. But laziness was not the reason why Butler refused to read books except for the purpose of whatever he was writing. It was that he was a martyr to self-indulgence, and the sin that did most easily beset him was over-work. He was St. Anthony, and the world of books was his desert, full of charming appearances assumed by demons who were bent on luring him to perdition. His refusal was not the cry of the slothful: "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep"; it was the "Get thee behind me, Satan!" of one who is seeking salvation. For he knew his weakness and that temptation comes in such unexpected shapes that the only way of escape is by perpetual watching and praying lest we fall. So he watched and prayed, and kept his powder dry by minding his own business. The Devil, however, was on the watch also and had an inspiration; he baited his subtle hook with a combination fly composed partly of the gentle Elia and partly of the Rev. Canon Ainger. He knew that Butler, if he approached either of these authors, would do so without suspicion, because he had looked over his victim's shoulder one morning in the Reading Room of the British Museum while he was making this note:

"Charles Lamb was like Mr. Darwin, 'a master of happy simplicity.' Sometimes, of course, he says very good things, at any rate some very good things have been ascribed to him; but more commonly he is forced, faint, full of false sentiment and prolix. I believe that he and his sister hated one another, as only very near relations can hate. He made capital out of his supposed admirable treatment of her. Aunt Sarah likes him, so do most old maids who were told what they ought to like about 55 years ago, but I never find men whom I think well of admire him. As for Ainger's *Life*, well, my sisters like it."

We need not agree, and I personally disagree, with Butler's view of the relations between Charles and Mary Lamb, for it seems to me that it is not supported by the Letters of Lamb. I do not suppose, however, that Butler intended his words to be taken very seriously; nor are they intended to be taken as direct abuse of Lamb. They are addressed rather to Lamb's admirers, and are conceived in the spirit of the Athenian, whose reason for helping to ostracise Aristides was that he was so bored by hearing him perpetually called "the Just." They are Butler's way of saying: "Don't you go and suppose that I should ever have anything to do with self-sacrifice and devotion." And yet his own life shows that he was himself capable of both; but, like many Englishmen, he was shy of displaying emotion or of admitting that he experienced it. When we remember that he had not read the Letters we can understand his being put off Lamb first by the Essays, and then by the admirers – Aunt Sarah, the old maids, and Canon Ainger. We must also remember that Canon Ainger used to go and stay down at Shrewsbury with a clergyman who, among other dissipations which he organised for his guest, took him to tea with Butler's sisters, where he played on their old piano which had been chosen by Mendelssohn. Nevertheless it might have been better for Butler if he had not made the note, for retribution followed.

In June, 1886, while we were completing the words and music of our cantata *Narcissus*, which was published in 1888, Butler wrote to Miss Butler:

"The successor of *Narcissus* is to be called Ulysses; and is this time a serious work dealing with the wanderings of the real Ulysses, and treating the subject much as Hercules or Semele was treated by Handel. We think we could get some sailor

choruses, and some Circe and pig choruses, and the sirens, and then Penelope and her loom all afford scope. I made up my mind about it when I read Charles Lamb's translation of parts of the 'Odyssey' in Ainger's book, but please don't say anything about it." (*Memoir*, II, 38.)

The serpent was lurking within the leaves of Ainger's book, and Butler was beguiled. The idea of using the story of the "Odyssey" for the words of an oratorio led him on to re-reading the poem in the original; but he could not make much progress just then because after his father's death, in December, 1886, he came into possession of all his grandfather's papers, and succumbed to the temptation of reading them and of writing Dr. Butler's life. When he did settle down to the poem it fascinated him, and there followed the further irresistible temptation of translating it. His grandfather's life still kept him so fully occupied that he did not reach Book ix till 1891; and then, as he writes in Chapter i of *The Authoress of the Odyssey*: "It was not till I got to Circe that it flashed upon me that I was reading the work not of an old man but of a young woman." And on a letter of 9th August, 1891, which I sent to him at Chiavenna, he made this note:

"It was during the few days that I was at Chiavenna (at the Hotel Grotta Crimee) that I hit upon the female authorship of the 'Odyssey.' I did not find out its having been written at Trapani till 1892."

Between 1892, when he made this discovery, and 1902, when he died, Butler published the *Life and Letters of Dr. Samuel Butler, Erewhon Revisited*, and a new and revised edition of *Erewhon*. These three books were the working off of material which was already in his mind, but everything else published during the last decade of his life grew directly out of the "Odyssey." There was a pamphlet entitled *The Humour of Homer* (1892), which was first delivered as a lecture at the Working Men's College; there were two other pamphlets which appeared in a Sicilian magazine (1893 and 1894), one of these being translated into English and published in 1893; there were articles about his Odyssean theories in *The Italian Gazette*, then under the editorship of Miss Helen Zimmern, published in Florence. In 1897 came *The Authoress of the Odyssey*; in 1898, *The Iliad Rendered into English Prose*; in 1899, *Shakespeare's Sonnets Reconsidered*; and in 1900, *The Odyssey Rendered into English Prose*. Besides these publications there were letters and articles about the "Odyssey" in the *Athenæum*, the *Eagle* and *Il Lambruschini*, a journal published at Trapani in Sicily.

The translation of the "Iliad" became a necessity when once that of the "Odyssey" had been undertaken, and the book about the Sonnets was also a consequence of the "Odyssey," for his interest in the problem of the Sonnets, the work of the greatest poet of modern times, was aroused by his interest in the problem of the "Odyssey," one of the two great poems of antiquity. Besides all this he was engaged upon the words and music of *Ulysses*, in making journeys to Sicily to pick up more facts about the topography of Scheria, and in making a journey to Greece and the Troad to investigate the geography of the "Iliad." Thus it may be said that the last ten years of his life were overshadowed by the "Odyssey," which dominated his thoughts-and not only his thoughts, his letters were full of it and it was difficult to get him to talk of anything else. I have little doubt that this perpetual preoccupation-I may even say obsession-tended to shorten his life.

None of the eminent classical scholars paid any attention to Butler's views on the "Odyssey," or if any did they did not say so in public, and he resented their neglect. He was not looking for praise; as Sir William Phipson Beale, one of his oldest friends, said to me very acutely: "People misunderstood Butler; he did not want praise, he wanted sympathy." It is true as he records in *The Authoress* (p. 269), that "one of our most accomplished living scholars" – I do not know who he was, though I no doubt heard at the time-chided him and accused him of being ruthless. "I confess," said the scholar, "I do not give much heed to the details on which you lay so much stress; I read the poem not to theorise about it but to revel in its amazing beauty." This can hardly be called sympathy. Butler comments upon it thus:

"It would shock me to think that I have done anything to impair the sense of that beauty which I trust I share in even measure with himself; but surely if the 'Odyssey' has charmed us as a man's work, its charm and its wonder are infinitely increased when we see it as a woman's."

Still there were some competent judges who approved. The late Lord Grimthorpe interested himself in the problem, accepted Butler's views, and gave him valuable suggestions about the description in the poem of the hanging of those maidservants in Ithaca who had disgraced themselves. Mr. Justice Wills also expressed agreement, but he did it in a letter to me after Butler's death. These names are mentioned in the Memoir, and there is another name which ought to have appeared there, but I overlooked the note at the right moment.

Butler delivered at the Fabian Society a lecture entitled, "Was the 'Odyssey' written by a Woman?" At the close of the lecture Mr. Bernard Shaw got up and said that when he had first heard of the title he supposed it was some fad or fancy of Butler's, but that on turning to the "Odyssey" to see what could have induced him to take it up he had not read a hundred lines before he found himself saying: "Why, of course it was!" And he spoke so strongly that people who had only laughed all though the lecture began to think there might be something in it after all.

These, however, were not the eminent Homeric scholars to whom Butler looked for sympathy. He was disappointed by the silence of the orthodox, and it was here that Charles Lamb got in his revenge, for the situation never would have arisen if it had not been for that fatal reading of "Charles Lamb's translation of parts of the 'Odyssey' in Ainger's book."

When Keats first looked into Chapman's Homer the result was the famous sonnet. When Lamb did the same thing the result was "a juvenile book, *The Adventures of Ulysses*." He wrote to Manning, 26th February, 1808:

"It is done out of the 'Odyssey,' not from the Greek (I would not mislead you), nor yet from Pope's 'Odyssey,' but from an older translation of one Chapman. The Shakespeare Tales suggested the doing of it."

I suppose that by "Ainger's book" Butler means Charles Lamb in the "English Men of Letters Series," edited by John Morley and published by Macmillan in 1878; at least I do not find any other book by Ainger about Lamb which contains any mention of *The Adventures of Ulysses* between that date and the date of Butler's letter to his sister in 1886. If I remember right Butler saw "Ainger's book" at Shrewsbury when he was staying with his sisters, and I like to think that it was a copy given to them by the author. But I doubt whether he can have done more than look into it; if he had read it with attention he would scarcely have spoken of Lamb's work as translation. I imagine that he listlessly took the book up off the drawing-room table, and, happening to open it at page 68, saw that Lamb had written *The Adventures of Ulysses*; this would be enough to suggest the story of the "Odyssey" to him, and he must have missed or forgotten Ainger's statement that Lamb said to Bernard Barton: "Chapman is divine and my abridgement has not quite emptied him of his divinity." What concerns us now, however, is to note the result on Butler, which was that he embarked upon all this apparently fruitless labour. It is interesting to note also that as Lamb, by writing the *Tales from Shakespeare*, had been led to the "Odyssey," so Butler, by choosing Ulysses as the hero of our oratorio, was led, in a contrary direction, to the Sonnets.

We must now come nearer to modern times. *The Authoress of the Odyssey* appeared in 1897, and Butler's Translation in 1900—that is about twenty years ago; during which period, sympathy or no sympathy, the books must have had a good many readers, perhaps among the general public rather than among classical scholars, for now, in 1921, the stock is exhausted and new editions of both are wanted. They have been reset entirely, misprints and obvious mistakes have been corrected, the index has been revised, and there are a few minor typographical changes; but nothing has been done which could be called editing, bringing up to date, adding supplementary matter, dissenting or recording

dissent from any of the author's views. The size of the original page has been reduced so as to make the books uniform with Butler's other works; and, fortunately, it has generally been possible, by using a smaller type, to get the same number of words into each page, so that the pagination is scarcely altered and the references remain good. Except for the alterations about to be noted (in respect of *The Authoress*), the books are faithful reprints of the original editions.

(a) About three lines have been interpolated on page 207 which upsets the pagination until page 209. The interpolation, which is taken from a note by Butler in his copy of the work, is to the effect that the authoress, in Book vii, line 137, almost calls her countrymen scoundrels by saying that they made their final drink-offerings not to Jove but to Mercury, the god of thieves. On this passage there is a note in the Translation saying that the poet here intends hidden malice; but, except for this interpolation, attention does not appear to be called to the malice anywhere else in *The Authoress*.

(b) The note on page 214 is so printed that the pagination is upset for one page.

(c) The illustration of the coin which shows the design of the brooch of Ulysses is now given on a separate page, whereas formerly it was in the text, therefore the pagination is thrown out from page 227 until the end of the chapter, page 231. Doubt has recently been cast upon the accuracy of the statement on pp. 226-7, that this coin certainly belongs to the Eryx and Segesta group.

(d) Some of the headlines have been shortened because of the reduction in the size of the page, and here advantage has been taken of various corrections of and additions to the headlines and shoulder-notes made by Butler in his own copies of the two books.

(e) For the most part each of the illustrations now occupies a page, whereas in the original editions they generally appeared two on one page. It has been necessary to reduce the plan of the House of Ulysses.

On page 31 this note occurs: "Scheria means Jutland-a piece of land jutting out into the sea." Butler afterwards found that Jutland means the land of the Jutes, and has nothing to do with jutting. A note to this effect is in *The Notebooks of Samuel Butler*, p. 350.

On page 153 Butler says: "No great poet would compare his hero to a paunch full of blood and fat cooking before the fire (xx, 24-28)." This passage is not given in the abridged "Story of the Odyssey" at the beginning of the book, but in Butler's Translation it occurs in these words:

"Thus he chided with his heart, and checked it into endurance, but he tossed about as one who turns a paunch full of blood and fat in front of a hot fire, doing it first on one side then on the other, that he may get it cooked as soon as possible; even so did he turn himself about from side to side, thinking all the time how, single-handed as he was, he should contrive to kill so large a body of men as the wicked suitors."

It looks as though in the interval between the publication of *The Authoress* (1897) and of the Translation (1900) Butler had changed his mind; for in the first case the comparison is between Ulysses and a paunch full, etc., and in the second it is between Ulysses and a man who turns a paunch full, etc. The second comparison is perhaps one which a great poet might make.

In seeing the works through the press I have had the invaluable assistance of Mr. A. T. Bartholomew of the University Library, Cambridge, and of Mr. Donald S. Robertson, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. To both these friends I give my most cordial thanks for the care and skill exercised by them. Mr. Robertson has found time for the labour of checking and correcting all the quotations from and references to the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," and I believe that it could not have been better performed. It was, I know, a pleasure for him; and it would have been a pleasure also for Butler if he could have known that his work was being shepherded by the son of his old friend, Mr. H. R. Robertson, who more than a half a century ago was a fellow-student with him at Cary's School of Art in Streatham Street, Bloomsbury.

HENRY FESTING JONES.

120 Maida Vale, W.9.
4th December, 1921.

CHAPTER I

IMPORTANCE OF THE ENQUIRY – THE STEPS WHEREBY I WAS LED TO MY CONCLUSIONS – THE MULTITUDE OF EARLY GREEK POETESSES REMOVES ANY *À PRIORI* DIFFICULTY – THE MUSES AND MINERVA AS HEADS OF LITERATURE – MAN, RATHER THAN WOMAN, THE INTERLOPER

If the questions whether the *Odyssey* was written by a man or a woman, and whether or no it is of exclusively Sicilian origin, were pregnant with no larger issues than the determination of the sex and abode of the writer, it might be enough merely to suggest the answers and refer the reader to the work itself. Obviously, however, they have an important bearing on the whole Homeric controversy; for if we find a woman's hand omnipresent throughout the *Odyssey*, and if we also find so large a number of local details, taken so exclusively and so faithfully from a single Sicilian town as to warrant the belief that the writer must have lived and written there, the presumption seems irresistible that the poem was written by a single person. For there can hardly have been more than one woman in the same place able to write such – and such homogeneous – poetry as we find throughout the *Odyssey*.

Many questions will become thus simplified. Among others we can limit the date of the poem to the lifetime of a single person, and if we find, as I believe we shall, that this person in all probability flourished, roughly between 1050 and 1000 B.C., if, moreover, we can show, as we assuredly can, that she had the *Iliad* before her much as we have it now, quoting, consciously or unconsciously, as freely from the most suspected parts as from those that are admittedly Homer's, we shall have done much towards settling the question whether the *Iliad* also is by one hand or by many.

Not that this question ought to want much settling. The theory that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written each of them by various hands, and pieced together in various centuries by various editors, is not one which it is easy to treat respectfully. It does not rest on the well established case of any other poem so constructed; literature furnishes us with no poem whose genesis is known to have been such as that which we are asked to foist upon the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The theory is founded on a supposition as to the date when writing became possible, which has long since been shown to be untenable; not only does it rest on no external evidence, but it flies in the face of what little external evidence we have. Based on a base that has been cut from under it, it has been sustained by arguments which have never succeeded in leading two scholars to the same conclusions, and which are of that character which will lead any one to any conclusion however preposterous, which he may have made up his mind to consider himself as having established. A writer in the *Spectator* of Jan. 2, 1892, whose name I do not know, concluded an article by saying,

That the finest poem of the world was created out of the contributions of a multitude of poets revolts all our literary instincts.

Of course it does, but the Wolfian heresy, more or less modified, is still so generally accepted both on the continent and in England that it will not be easy to exterminate it.

Easy or no this is a task well worth attempting, for Wolf's theory has been pregnant of harm in more ways than are immediately apparent. Who would have thought of attacking Shakspeare's existence – for if Shakspeare did not write his plays he is no longer Shakspeare – unless men's minds had been unsettled by Wolf's virtual denial of Homer's? Who would have reascribed picture after picture in half the galleries of Europe, often wantonly, and sometimes in defiance of the clearest evidence, if the unsettling of questions concerning authorship had not been found to be an easy road

to reputation as a critic? Nor does there appear to be any end to it, for each succeeding generation seems bent on trying to surpass the recklessness of its predecessor.

And more than this, the following pages will read a lesson of another kind, which I will leave the reader to guess at, to men whom I will not name, but some of whom he may perhaps know, for there are many of them. Indeed I have sometimes thought that the sharpness of this lesson may be a more useful service than either the establishment of the points which I have set myself to prove, or the dispelling of the nightmares of Homeric extravagance which German professors have evolved out of their own inner consciousness.

Such language may be held to come ill from one who is setting himself to maintain two such seeming paradoxes as the feminine authorship, and Sicilian origin, of the *Odyssey*. One such shock would be bad enough, but two, and each so far-reaching, are intolerable. I feel this, and am oppressed by it. When I look back on the record of Iliadic and Odyssean controversy for nearly 2500 years, and reflect that it is, I may say, dead against me; when I reflect also upon the complexity of academic interests, not to mention the commercial interests vested in well-known school books and so-called education – how can I be other than dismayed at the magnitude, presumption, and indeed utter hopelessness, of the task I have undertaken?

How can I expect Homeric scholars to tolerate theories so subversive of all that most of them have been insisting on for so many years? It is a matter of Homeric (for my theory affects Iliadic questions nearly as much as it does the *Odyssey*) life and death for them or for myself. If I am right they have invested their reputation for sagacity in a worthless stock. What becomes, for example, of a great part of Professor Jebb's well-known *Introduction to Homer* – to quote his shorter title – if the *Odyssey* was written all of it at Trapani, all of it by one hand, and that hand a woman's? Either my own work is rubbish, in which case it should not be hard to prove it so without using discourteous language, or not a little of theirs is not worth the paper on which it is written. They will be more than human, therefore, if they do not handle me somewhat roughly.

As for the *Odyssey* having been written by a woman, they will tell me that I have not even established a *primâ facie* case for my opinion. Of course I have not. It was Bentley who did this, when he said that the *Iliad* was written for men, and the *Odyssey* for women.¹ The history of literature furnishes us with no case in which a man has written a great masterpiece for women rather than men. If an anonymous book strikes so able a critic as having been written for women, a *primâ facie* case is established for thinking that it was probably written by a woman. I deny, however, that the *Odyssey* was written for women; it was written for any one who would listen to it. What Bentley meant was that in the *Odyssey* things were looked at from a woman's point of view rather than a man's, and in uttering this obvious truth, I repeat, he established once for all a strong *primâ facie* case for thinking that it was written by a woman.

If my opponents can fasten a cavil on to the ninth part of a line of my argument, they will take no heed of, and make no reference to, the eight parts on which they dared not fasten a misrepresentation however gross. They will declare it fatal to my theory that there were no Greek-speaking people at Trapani when the *Odyssey* was written. Having fished up this assertion from the depths of their ignorance of what Thucydides, let alone Virgil, has told us, – or if they set these writers on one side, out of their still profounder ignorance of what there was or was not at Trapani in the eleventh century before Christ – they will refuse to look at the internal evidence furnished by the *Odyssey* itself. They will ignore the fact that Thucydides tells us that "Phocians of those from Troy," which as I will show (see Chapter XII.) can only mean Phocæans, settled at Mount Eryx, and ask me how I can place Phocæans on Mount Eryx when Thucydides says it was Phocians who settled there? They will ignore the fact that even though Thucydides had said "Phocians" without qualifying his words by adding

¹ See *Introduction to the Iliad and the Odyssey*, by R. C. Jebb, 1888, p. 106.

"of those from Troy," or "of the Trojan branch," he still places Greek-speaking people within five miles of Trapani.

As for the points of correspondence between both Ithaca and Scheria, and Trapani, they will remind me that Captain Fluelen found resemblances between Monmouth and Macedon, as also Bernardino Caimi did between Jerusalem and Varallo-Sesia; they will say that if mere topographical resemblances are to be considered, the Channel Islands are far more like the Ionian group as described in the *Odyssey* than those off Trapani are, while Balaclava presents us with the whole Scherian combination so far more plausibly than Trapani as to leave no doubt which site should be preferred. I have not looked at the map of Balaclava to see whether this is so or no, nor yet at other equally promising sites which have been offered me, but am limiting myself to giving examples of criticisms which have been repeatedly passed upon my theory during the last six years, and which I do not doubt will be repeatedly passed upon it in the future.

On the other hand I may comfort myself by reflecting that however much I may deserve stoning there is no one who can stone me with a clear conscience. Those who hold, as most people now do, that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* belong to ages separated from one another by some generations, must be haunted by the reflection that though the diversity of authorship was prominently insisted on by many people more than two thousand years ago, not a single Homeric student from those days to the end of the last century could be brought to acknowledge what we now deem self-evident. Professor Jebb, writing of Bentley,² says

He had not felt what is now so generally admitted, that the *Odyssey* bears the marks of a later time than the *Iliad*.

How came so great a man as Bentley not to see what is so obvious? Truly, as has been said by Mr. Gladstone, if Homer is old, the systematic and comprehensive study of him is still young.³

I shall not argue the question whether the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are by the same person, inasmuch as if I convince the reader that the *Odyssey* was written by a woman and in Sicily, it will go without saying that it was not written by Homer; for there can be no doubt about the sex of the writer of the *Iliad*. The same canons which will compel us to ascribe the *Odyssey* to a woman forbid any other conclusion than that the *Iliad* was written by a man. I shall therefore proceed at once to the question whether the *Odyssey* was written by a man or by a woman.

It is an old saying that no man can do better for another than he can for himself, I may perhaps therefore best succeed in convincing the reader if I retrace the steps by which I arrived at the conclusions I ask him to adopt.

I was led to take up the *Odyssey* by having written the libretto and much of the music for a secular oratorio, *Ulysses*, on which my friend Mr. H. Festing Jones and I had been for some time engaged. Having reached this point it occurred to me that I had better after all see what the *Odyssey* said, and finding no readable prose translation, was driven to the original, to which I had not given so much as a thought for some five and thirty years.

The Greek being easy, I had little difficulty in understanding what I read, and I had the great advantage of coming to the poem with fresh eyes. Also, I read it all through from end to end, as I have since many times done.

Fascinated, however, as I at once was by its amazing interest and beauty, I had an ever-present sense of a something wrong, of a something that was eluding me, and of a riddle which I could not read. The more I reflected upon the words, so luminous and so transparent, the more I felt a darkness behind them, that I must pierce before I could see the heart of the writer – and this was what I wanted; for art is only interesting in so far as it reveals an artist.

² Bentley, Macmillan, 1892, p. 148.

³ Homer, Macmillan, 1878, p. 2.

In the hope of getting to understand the poem better I set about translating it into plain prose, with the same benevolent leaning, say, towards Tottenham Court Road, that Messrs. Butcher and Lang have shewn towards Wardour Street. I admit, however, that Wardour Street English has something to say for itself. The "Ancient Mariner," for example, would have lost a good deal if it had been called "The Old Sailor," but on the whole I take it that a tale so absolutely without any taint of affectation as the *Odyssey* will speed best being unaffectedly told.

When I came to the Phæacian episode I felt sure that here at any rate the writer was drawing from life, and that Nausicaa, Queen Arete, and Alcinous were real people more or less travestied, and on turning to Colonel Mure's work⁴ I saw that he was of the same opinion. Nevertheless I found myself continually aghast at the manner in which men were made to speak and act – especially, for example, during the games in honour of *Ulysses* described in Book viii. Colonel Mure says (p. 407) that "the women engross the chief part of the small stock of common sense allotted to the community." So they do, but it never occurred to me to ask myself whether men commonly write brilliant books in which the women are made more sensible than the men. Still dominated by the idea that the writer was a man, I conjectured that he might be some bard, perhaps blind, who lived among the servants much as the chaplain in a great house a couple of hundred years ago among ourselves. Such a bard, even though not blind, would only see great people from a distance, and would not mix with them intimately enough to know how they would speak and act among themselves. It never even crossed my mind that it might have been the commentators who were blind, and that they might have thus come to think that the poet must have been blind too.

The view that the writer might have lived more in the steward's room than with the great people of the house served (I say it with shame) to quiet me for a time, but by and by it struck me that though the men often both said and did things that no man would say or do, the women were always ladies when the writer chose to make them so. How could it be that a servant's hall bard should so often go hopelessly wrong with his men, and yet be so exquisitely right with every single one of his women? But still I did not catch it. It was not till I got to Circe that it flashed upon me that I was reading the work, not of an old man, but of a young woman – and of one who knew not much more about what men can and cannot do than I had found her know about the milking of ewes in the cave of Polyphemus.

The more I think of it the more I wonder at my own stupidity, for I remember that when I was a boy at school I used to say the *Odyssey* was the *Iliad's* wife, and that it was written by a clergyman. But however this may be, as soon as the idea that the writer was a woman – and a young one – presented itself to me, I felt that here was the reading of the riddle that had so long baffled me. I tried to divest myself of it, but it would not go; as long as I kept to it, everything cohered and was in its right place, and when I set it aside all was wrong again; I did not seek my conclusion; I did not even know it by sight so as to look for it; it accosted me, introduced itself as my conclusion, and vowed that it would never leave me; whereon, being struck with its appearance, I let it stay with me on probation for a week or two during which I was charmed with the propriety of all it said or did, and then bade it take rank with the convictions to which I was most firmly wedded; but I need hardly say that it was a long time before I came to see that the poem was all of it written at Trapani, and that the writer had introduced herself into her work under the name of Nausicaa.

I will deal with these points later, but would point out that the moment we refuse to attribute the *Odyssey* to the writer of the *Iliad* (whom we should alone call Homer) it becomes an anonymous work; and the first thing that a critic will set himself to do when he considers an anonymous work is to determine the sex of the writer. This, even when women are posing as men, is seldom difficult – indeed it is done almost invariably with success as often as an anonymous work is published – and when any one writes with the frankness and spontaneity which are such an irresistible charm in the

⁴ *Language and Literature of Ancient Greece*, Longman, 1850, Vol. I, p. 404.

Odyssey, it is not only not difficult but exceedingly easy; difficulty will only arise, if the critic is, as we have all been in this case, dominated by a deeply-rooted preconceived opinion, and if also there is some strong *à priori* improbability in the supposition that the writer was a woman.

It may be urged that it is extremely improbable that any woman in any age should write such a masterpiece as the *Odyssey*. But so it also is that any man should do so. In all the many hundreds of years since the *Odyssey* was written, no man has been able to write another that will compare with it. It was extremely improbable that the son of a Stratford wool-stapler should write *Hamlet*, or that a Bedfordshire tinker should produce such a masterpiece as *Pilgrim's Progress*. Phenomenal works imply a phenomenal workman, but there are phenomenal women as well as phenomenal men, and though there is much in the *Iliad* which no woman, however phenomenal, can be supposed at all likely to have written, there is not a line in the *Odyssey* which a woman might not perfectly well write, and there is much beauty which a man would be almost certain to neglect. Moreover there are many mistakes in the *Odyssey* which a young woman might easily make, but which a man could hardly fall into – for example, making the wind whistle over waves at the end of Book ii., thinking that a lamb could live on two pulls a day at a ewe that was already milked (ix. 244, 245, and 308, 309), believing a ship to have a rudder at both ends (ix. 483, 540), thinking that dry and well-seasoned timber can be cut from a growing tree (v. 240), making a hawk while still on the wing tear its prey – a thing that no hawk can do (xv. 527).

I see that Messrs. Butcher and Lang omit ix. 483 in which the rudder is placed in the bows of a ship, but it is found in the text, and is the last kind of statement a copyist would be inclined to intercalate. Yet I could have found it in my heart to conceive the text in fault, had I not also found the writer explaining in Book v. 255 that Ulysses gave his raft a rudder "in order that he might be able to steer it." People whose ideas about rudders have become well defined will let the fact that a ship is steered by means of its rudder go without saying. Furthermore, not only does she explain that Ulysses would want a rudder to steer with, but later on (line 270) she tells us that he actually did use the rudder when he had made it, and, moreover, that he used it *τεχνηέντως*, or skilfully.

Young women know that a horse goes before a cart, and being told that the rudder guides the ship, are apt – and I have more than once found them do so – to believe that it goes in front of the ship. Probably the writer of the *Odyssey* forgot for the moment at which end the rudder should be. She thought it all over yesterday, and was not going to think it all over again to-day, so she put the rudder at both ends, intending to remove it from the one that should prove to be the wrong one; later on she forgot, or did not think it worth while to trouble about so small a detail.

So with Calypso's axe (v. 234-36). No one who was used to handling an axe would describe it so fully and tell us that it "suited Ulysses' hands," and was furnished with a handle. I have heard say that a celebrated female authoress was discovered to be a woman by her having spoken of a two-foot *ruler* instead of a two-foot *rule*, but over minuteness of description is deeper and stronger evidence of unfamiliarity than mistaken nomenclature is.

Such mistakes and self-betrayals as those above pointed out enhance rather than impair the charm of the *Odyssey*. Granted that the *Odyssey* is inferior to the *Iliad* in strength, robustness, and wealth of poetic imagery, I cannot think that it is inferior in its power of fascinating the reader. Indeed, if I had to sacrifice one or the other, I can hardly doubt that I should let the *Iliad* go rather than the *Odyssey* – just as if I had to sacrifice either Mont Blanc or Monte Rosa, I should sacrifice Mont Blanc, though I know it to be in many respects the grander mountain of the two.⁵

It should go, however, without saying that much which is charming in a woman's work would be ridiculous in a man's, and this is eminently exemplified in the *Odyssey*. If a woman wrote it, it is as lovely as the frontispiece of this volume, and becomes, if less vigorous, yet assuredly more wonderful than the *Iliad*; if, on the other hand, it is by a man, the half Bayeux tapestry, half Botticelli's Venus

⁵ Shakespeare, of course, is the whole chain of the Alps, comprising both Mont Blanc and Monte Rosa.

rising from the sea, or Primavera, feeling with which it impresses us gives place to astonishment how any man could have written it. What is a right manner for a woman is a wrong one for a man, and *vice versa*. Jane Austen's young men, for example, are seldom very interesting, but it is only those who are blind to the exquisite truth and delicacy of Jane Austen's work who will feel any wish to complain of her for not understanding young men as well as she did young women.

The writer of a *Times* leading article (Feb. 4th, 1897) says:

The sex difference is the profoundest and most far-reaching that exists among human beings... Women may or may not be the equals of men in intelligence;... but women in the mass will act after the manner of women, which is not and never can be the manner of men.

And as they will act, so will they write. This, however, does not make their work any the less charming when it is good of its kind; on the contrary, it makes it more so.

Dismissing, therefore, the difficulty of supposing that any woman could write so wonderful a poem as the *Odyssey*, is there any *à priori* obstacle to our thinking that such a woman may have existed, say, B.C. 1000? I know of none. Greek literature does not begin to dawn upon us till about 600 B.C. Earlier than this date we have hardly anything except the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and that charming writer Hesiod. When, however, we come to the earliest historic literature we find that famous poetesses abounded.

Those who turn to the article "Sappho" in Smith's *Dictionary of Classical Biography* will find Gorgo and Andromeda mentioned as her rivals. Among her fellows were Anactoria of Miletus, Gongyle of Colophon, Eunice of Salamis, Gyrinna, Atthis, and Mnasicida, "Those," says the writer, "who attained the highest celebrity for their works were Damophyllia the Pamphylian, and Erinna of Telos." This last-named poetess wrote a long poem upon the distaff, which was considered equal to Homer himself – the *Odyssey* being probably intended.

Again, there was Baucis, who wrote Erinna's Epitaph. Turning to Müller's work upon the Dorians, I find reference made to the amatory poetesses of Lesbos. He tells us also of Corinna, who is said to have competed successfully with Pindar, and Myrto, who certainly competed with him, but with what success we know not. Again, there was Diotima the Arcadian; and looking through Bergk's *Poetæ Lyrici Græci* I find other names of women, fragments of whose works have reached us through quotation by extant writers. Among the Hebrews there were Miriam, Deborah, and Hannah, all of them believed to be centuries older than the *Odyssey*.

If, then, poetesses were as abundant as we know them to have been in the earliest known ages of Greek literature over a wide area in Greece, Asia Minor, and the islands of the Ægæan, there is no ground for refusing to admit the possibility that a Greek poetess lived in Sicily B.C. 1000, especially when we know from Thucydides that the particular part of Sicily where I suppose her to have lived was colonised from the North West corner of Asia Minor centuries before the close of the Homeric age. The civilisation depicted in the *Odyssey* is as advanced as any that is likely to have existed in Mitylene or Melos 600 – 500 B.C., while in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* the status of women is represented as being much what it is at the present, and as incomparably higher than it was in the Athenian civilisation with which we are best acquainted. To imagine a great Greek poetess at Athens in the age of Pericles would be to violate probability, but I might almost say in an age when women were as free as they are represented to us in the *Odyssey* it is a violation of probability to suppose that there were no poetesses.

We have no reason to think that men found the use of their tongue sooner than women did; why then should we suppose that women lagged behind men when the use of the pen had become familiar? If a woman could work pictures with her needle as Helen did,⁶ and as the wife of William the Conqueror did in a very similar civilisation, she could write stories with her pen if she had a mind to do so.

⁶ *Iliad*, III. 126.

The fact that the recognised heads of literature in the Homeric age were the nine Muses – for it is always these or "The Muse" that is involved, and never Apollo or Minerva – throws back the suggestion of female authorship to a very remote period, when, to be an author at all, was to be a poet, for prose writing is a comparatively late development. Both *Iliad* and *Odyssey* begin with an invocation addressed to a woman, who, as the head of literature, must be supposed to have been an authoress, though none of her works have come down to us. In an age, moreover, when men were chiefly occupied either with fighting or hunting, the arts of peace, and among them all kinds of literary accomplishment, would be more naturally left to women. If the truth were known, we might very likely find that it was man rather than woman who has been the interloper in the domain of literature. Nausicaa was more probably a survival than an interloper, but most probably of all she was in the height of the fashion.

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF THE ODYSSEY

It will help the reader to follow the arguments by which I shall sustain the female authorship of the *Odyssey*, the fact of its being written at Trapani on the west coast of Sicily, and its development in the hands of the writer, if I lay before him an abridgement of the complete translation that I have made, but not yet published. If space permitted I should print my translation in full, but this is obviously impossible, for what I give here is only about a fourth of the whole poem. I have, therefore, selected those parts that throw most light upon the subjects above referred to, with just so much connecting matter as may serve to make the whole readable and intelligible. I am aware that the beauty of the poem is thus fatally marred, for it is often the loveliest passages that serve my purpose least. The abridgement, therefore, that I here give is not to be regarded otherwise than as the key-sketch which we so often see under an engraving of a picture that contains many portraits. It is intended not as a work of art, but as an elucidatory diagram.

As regards its closeness to the text, the references to the poem which will be found at the beginning of each paragraph will show where the abridgement has been greatest, and will also enable the reader to verify the fidelity of the rendering either with the Greek or with Messrs. Butcher and Lang's translation. I affirm with confidence that if the reader is good enough to thus verify any passages that may strike him as impossibly modern, he will find that I have adhered as severely to the intention of the original as it was possible for me to do while telling the story in my own words and abridging it.

One of my critics, a very friendly one, has told me that I have "distorted the simplicity of the *Odyssey* in order to put it in a ludicrous light." I do not think this. I have revealed, but I have not distorted. I should be shocked to believe for one moment that I had done so. True, I have nothing extenuated, but neither have I set down aught in malice. Where the writer is trying to make us believe impossibilities, I have shown that she is doing so, and have also shown why she wanted us to believe them; but until a single passage is pointed out to me in which I have altered the intention of the original, I shall continue to hold that the conception of the poem which I lay before the reader in the following pages is a juster one than any that, so far as I know, has been made public hitherto; and, moreover, that it makes both the work and the writer a hundred times more interesting than any other conception can do.

I preface my abridgement with a plan of Ulysses' house, so far as I have been able to make it out from the poem. The reader will find that he understands the story much better if he will study the plan of the house here given with some attention.

I have read what Prof. Jebb has written on this subject,⁷ as also Mr. Andrew Lang's Note 18 at the end of Messrs. Butcher and Lang's translation of the *Odyssey*. I have also read Mr. Arthur Platt's article on the slaying of the suitors,⁸ and find myself in far closer agreement with Mr. Lang than with either of the other writers whom I have named. The only points on which I differ from Mr. Lang are in respect of the inner court, which he sees as a roofed hall, but which I hold to have been open to the sky, except the covered cloister or μέγαρον σκιάεντα, an arrangement which is still very common in Sicilian houses, especially at Trapani and Palermo. I also differ from him in so far as I see no reason to think that the "stone pavement" was raised, and as believing the ὀροσθύρα to have been at the top of Telemachus's tower, and called "in the wall" because the tower abutted on the wall. These are details: substantially my view of the action and scene during the killing of the suitors agrees with Mr.

⁷ *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. VII. 170-88, and *Introduction to Homer*, 3rd edit. 1888, pp. 57-62, and Appendix, Note 1.

⁸ *Journal of Philology*, Vol. XXIV. p. 39, &c.

Lang's. I will not give the reasons which compel me to differ from Prof. Jebb and Mr. Platt, but will leave my plan of the house and the abridged translation to the judgement of the reader.

A was the body of the house, containing the women's apartments and other rooms. It had an upper story, in which was Penelope's room overlooking the court where the suitors passed the greater part of their time.

It also contained the store-room, which seems to have been placed at the far end of the house, perhaps in a basement. The store-room could be reached by a passage from a doorway *A'*, and also by back-passages from a side-entrance *A''*, which I suppose to have been the back door of the house. The women's apartments opened on to the passage leading from *A'* to the store-room.

B and *B'* were the Megaron or Megara, that is to say inner court, of which *B'* was a covered cloister with a roof supported by bearing-posts with cross-beams and rafters. The open part of the court had no flooring but the natural soil. Animals seem to have been flayed and dressed here, for Medon, who was certainly in the inner court while the suitors were being killed, concealed himself under a freshly-flayed ox (or heifer's) hide (xxii. 363).

B' was called the μέγαρα σκίοεντα or "shaded" part of the court, to distinguish it from that which was open to the sun. The end nearest the house was paved with stone, while that nearest the outer court (and probably the other two sides) were floored with ash. The part of the cloister that was paved with stone does not appear to have been raised above the level of the rest; at one end of the stone pavement there was a door *a*, opening on to a narrow passage; this door, though mentioned immediately after the ὀρσοθύρα or trap door (xxii. 126), which we shall come to presently, has no connection with it. About the middle of the pavement, during the trial of the axes, there was a seat *b*, from which Ulysses shot through the axes, and from which he sprang when he began to shoot the suitors; against one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloister, there was *c*, a spear-stand.

All the four sides of the cloisters were filled with small tables at which the suitors dined. A man could hold one of these tables before him as a shield (xxii. 74, 75).

In the cloisters there were also *d*, an open hearth or fire-place in the wall at right angles to the one which abutted on the house. So, at least, I read τοίχου τοῦ ἑτέρου (xxiii. 90).

e, the table at which the wine was mixed in the mixing-bowl – as well, of course, as the other tables above mentioned.

f, a door leading into *g*, the tower in which Telemachus used to sleep [translating ἄγχι παρ' ὀρσοθύρην (xxii. 333) not "near the ὀρσοθύρα," but "near towards the ὀρσοθύρα"].

At the top of this tower there was a trap-door *g'* (ὀρσοθύρα), through which it was possible to get out on to the roof of the tower and raise an alarm, but which afforded neither ingress nor egress.

C was the outer court or αὐλή, approached by *C'*, the main entrance, or πρῶται θύραι, a covered gateway with a room over it. This covered gateway was the αἰθούση ἐρίδουπος, or reverberating portico which we meet with in other Odyssean houses, and are so familiar with in Italian and Sicilian houses at the present day. It was surrounded by *C''*, covered sheds or barns in which carts, farm implements, and probably some farm produce would be stored. It contained *h*, the prodomus, or vestibule in front of the inner court, into which the visitor would pass through *i*, the πρόθυρον or inner gateway (the word, πρόθυρον, however, is used also for the outer gateway), and *k*, the tholus or vaulted room, about the exact position of which all we know is that it is described in xxii. 459, 460, as close up against the wall of the outer court. I suspect, but cannot prove it, that this was the room in which Ulysses built his bed (xxiii. 181-204).

D was the τυκτὸν δάπεδον or level ground in front of Ulysses' house, on which the suitors amused themselves playing at quoits and aiming a spear at a mark (iv. 625, 627).

The only part of the foregoing plan and explanatory notes that forces the text is in respect of the main gateway, which I place too far from the mouth of the λάυρα for one man to be able to keep out all who would bring help to the suitors; but considering how much other impossibility we have

to accept, I think this may be allowed to go with the rest. A young woman, such as I suppose the writer of the *Odyssey* to have been, would not stick at such a trifle as shifting the gates a little nearer the *λαύρα* if it suited her purpose.

In passing, I may say that Agamemnon appears to have been killed (*Od.* iv. 530, 531) in much such a cloistered court as above supposed for the house of Ulysses. A banquet seems to have been prepared in the cloister on one side the court, while men were ambuscaded in the one on the opposite side.

Lastly, for what it may be worth. I would remind the reader that there is not a hint of windows in the part of Ulysses' house frequented by the suitors.

THE STORY OF THE ODYSSEY

BOOK I

The council of the gods – Telemachus and the suitors in the house of Ulysses.

Tell me, oh Muse, of that ingenious hero who met with many adventures while trying to bring his men home after the Sack of Troy. He failed in this, for the men perished through their own sheer folly in eating the cattle of the Sun, and he himself, though he was longing to get back to his wife, was now languishing in a lonely island, the abode of the nymph Calypso. Calypso wanted him to marry her, and kept him with her for many years, till at last all the gods took pity upon him except Neptune, whose son Polyphemus he had blinded.

Now it so fell out that Neptune had gone to pay a visit 21 to the Ethiopians, who lie in two halves, one half looking on to the Atlantic and the other on to the Indian Ocean. The other gods, therefore, held a council, and Jove made them a speech about the folly of Ægisthus in 35 wooing Clytemnestra and murdering Agamemnon: finally, yielding to Minerva, he consented that Ulysses should return to Ithaca.

"In that case," said Minerva, "we should send Mercury to 8 °Calypso to tell her what, we have settled. I will also go to Ithaca and embolden Ulysses' son Telemachus to dismiss the suitors of his mother Penelope, who are ruining him by their extravagance. Furthermore, I will send him to Sparta and Pylos to seek news of his father, for this will get him a good name."

The goddess then winged her way to the gates of Ulysses' 96 house, disguised as an old family friend, and found the suitors playing draughts in front of the house and lording it in great style. Telemachus, seeing her standing at the gate, went up to her, led her within, placed her spear in the spear-stand against a strong bearing-post, brought her a seat, and set refreshments before her.

Meanwhile the suitors came trooping into the sheltered 114 cloisters that ran round the inner court; here, according to their wont, they feasted: and when they had done eating they compelled Phemius, a famous bard, to sing to them. On this Telemachus began talking quietly to Minerva: he told her how his father's return seemed now quite hopeless, and concluded by asking her name and country.

Minerva said she was Mentès, chief of the Taphians, and 178 was on her way to Temesa⁹ with a cargo of iron, which she should exchange for copper. She told Telemachus that her ship was lying outside the town, under Mt. 186 Neritum,¹⁰ in the harbour that was called Rheithron.¹¹ "Go," she added, "and ask old Laertes, who I hear is now 189 living but poorly in the country and never comes into the town; he will tell you that I am an old friend of your father's."

She then said, "But who are all these people whom I 224 see behaving so atrociously about your house? What is it all about? Their conduct is enough to disgust any right-minded person."

"They are my mother's suitors," answered Telemachus, and 230 come from the neighbouring islands of Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus, as well as from Ithaca itself. My mother does not say she will not marry again and cannot bring her courtship to an end. So they are ruining me."

Minerva was very indignant, and advised him to fit out 252 a ship and go to Pylos and Sparta, seeking news of his father. "If," she said, "you hear of his being alive, you can put up with all this

⁹ Temesa was on the West side of the toe of Italy and was once famous for its copper mines, which, however, were worked out in Strabo's time. See *Smith's Dictionary of Ancient Geography*.

¹⁰ Heading Νηρίτω instead of Νηίω, cf. Book xiii. 96, &c., and 351, where the same harbour is obviously intended.

¹¹ i. e. "flowing," or with a current in it.

extravagance for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand you hear of his death, return at once, send your mother to her father's, 276 and by fair means or foul kill the suitors."

Telemachus thanked her for her advice, promised to take 306 it, and pressed her to prolong her visit. She explained that she could not possibly do so, and then flew off into the air, like an eagle.

Phemius was still singing: he had chosen for his subject 325 the disastrous return of the Achæans from Troy. Penelope could hear him from her room upstairs, and came down into the presence of the suitors holding a veil before her face, and waited upon by two of her handmaids, one of whom stood on either side of her. She stood by one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloisters, and bade Phemius change his theme, which she found too painful as reminding her of her lost husband.

Telemachus reasoned with her, and ended by desiring her 345 to go upstairs again. "Go back," he said, "within the house and see to your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for speech is man's matter, and mine above all others, for it is I who am master here."

On this Penelope went back, with her women, wondering 360 into the house, and as soon as she was gone Telemachus challenged the suitors to meet him next day in full assembly, that he might formally and publicly warn them to leave his house.

Antinous and Eurymachus, their two leaders, both 383 rejoined; but presently night fell, and the whole body of suitors left the house for their own several abodes. When they were gone, his old nurse Euryclea conducted Telemachus by torch light to his bedroom, in a lofty tower, which overlooked the outer courtyard and could be seen from far and near.

Euryclea had been bought by Laertes when she was quite 430 young; he had given the worth of twenty oxen for her, and she was made as much of in the house as his own wife was, but he did not take her to his bed, for he respected his wife's displeasure. The good old woman showed Telemachus to his room, and waited while he undressed. She took his shirt from him, folded it carefully up, and hung it on a peg by his bed side. This done, she left him to dream all night of his intended voyage.

BOOK II

Assembly of the people of Ithaca – Telemachus starts for Pylos.

Next morning, as soon as he was up and dressed, Telemachus sent the criers round the town to call the people in assembly. When they came together he told them of his misfortune in the death of his father, and of the still greater one that the suitors were making havoc of his estate. "If anybody," he concluded, "is to eat me out of house and home I had rather you did it yourselves; for you are men of substance, so that if I sued you household by household I should recover from you; whereas there is nothing to be got by suing a number of young men who have no means of their own." 85

To this Antinous rejoined that it was Penelope's own fault. She had been encouraging the suitors all the time by sending flattering messages to every single one of them. He explained how for nearly four years she had tricked them about the web, which she said was to be a pall for Laertes. "The answer, therefore," said he, "that we make you is this: 'Send your mother away, and let her marry the man of her own and of her father's choice;' for we shall not go till she has married some one or other of us."

Telemachus answered that he could not force his mother to leave against her will. If he did so he should have to refund to his grandfather Icarius the dowry that Ulysses had received on marrying Penelope, and this would bear hardly on him. Besides it would not be a creditable thing to do.

On this Jove sent two eagles from the top of a high mountain,¹² who flew and flew in their own lordly flight till they reached the assembly, over which they screamed and fought, glaring death into the faces of those who were below. The people wondered what it might all mean, till the old Soothsayer Halitherses told them that it foreshadowed the immediate return of Ulysses to take his revenge upon the suitors.

Eurymachus made him an angry answer. "As long," he concluded, "as Penelope delays her choice, we can marry no one else, and shall continue to waste Telemachus's estate."

Telemachus replied that there was nothing more to be said, and asked the suitors to let him have a ship with a crew of twenty men, that he might follow the advice given him by Minerva.

Mentor now upbraided his countrymen for standing idly by when they could easily coerce the suitors into good behaviour, and after a few insolent words from Leocritus the meeting dispersed. The suitors then returned to the house of Ulysses.

But Telemachus went away all alone by the sea side to pray. He washed his hands in the grey waves, and implored Minerva to assist him; whereon the goddess came up to him in the form of Mentor. She discoursed to him about his conduct generally, and wound up by saying that she would not only find him a ship, but would come with him herself. He was therefore to go home and get the necessary provisions ready.

He did as she directed him and went home, where, after an angry scene with the suitors, in which he again published his intention of going on his voyage, he went down into the store room and told Euryclea to get the provisions ready; at the same time he made her take a solemn oath of secrecy for ten or twelve days, so as not to alarm Penelope. Meanwhile Minerva, still disguised as Mentor, borrowed a ship from a neighbour. Noëmon, and at nightfall, after the suitors had left as usual, she and Telemachus with his crew of twenty volunteers got the provisions on board and set sail, with a fair wind that whistled over the waters.

¹² The mountain is singular, as though it were an isolated mountain rather than a range that was in the mind of the writer. It is also singular, not plural, in the parallel cases of xv. 175 and xix. 538.

BOOK III

Telemachus at the house of Nestor.

They reached Pylos on the following morning, and found Nestor, his sons, and all the Pylians celebrating the feast of Neptune. They were cordially received, especially by Nestor's son Pisistratus, and were at once invited to join the festivities. After dinner Nestor asked them who they were, and Telemachus, emboldened by Minerva, explained that they came from Ithaca under Neritum,¹³ and that he was seeking news of the death of his father Ulysses.

When he heard this, Nestor told him all about his own 102 adventures on his way home from Troy, but could give him no news of Ulysses. He touched, however, on the murder of Agamemnon by Ægisthus, and the revenge taken by Orestes.¹⁴

Telemachus said he wished he might be able to take a like 201 revenge on the suitors of his mother, who were ruining him; "but this," he exclaimed, "could not happen, not even if the gods wished it. It is too much even to think of."

Minerva reproved him sharply. "The hand of heaven," she 229 said, "can reach far when it has a mind to save a man." Telemachus then changed the conversation, and asked Nestor how Ægisthus managed to kill Agamemnon, who was so much the better man of the two. What was Menelaus doing?

"Menelaus," answered Nestor, "had not yet returned 253 from his long wanderings. As for Clytemnestra, she was 266 naturally of a good disposition, but was beguiled by Ægisthus, who reigned seven years in Mycene after he had killed Agamemnon. In the eighth year, however, Orestes came from Athens and killed him, and on the very day when 311 Orestes was celebrating the funeral feast of Ægisthus and Clytemnestra, Menelaus returned. Go then to Sparta, and see if he can tell you anything."

By this time the sun had set, and Minerva proposed 329 that she and Telemachus should return to their ship, but Nestor would not hear of their doing so. Minerva therefore consented that Telemachus should stay on shore, and explained that she could not remain with him inasmuch as she must start on the following morning for the Cauconians, to recover a large debt that had been long owing to her.

Having said this, to the astonishment of all present she 371 flew away in the form of an eagle. Whereon Nestor grasped Telemachus's hand and said he could see that he must be a very important person. He also at once vowed to gild the horns of a heifer and sacrifice her to the goddess. He then took Telemachus home with him and lodged him in his own house.

Next day Nestor fulfilled his vow; the heifer was brought 404 in from the plains, her horns were gilded, and Nestor's wife Eurydice and her daughters shouted with delight at seeing her killed.

After the banquet that ensued Nestor sent Telemachus 477 and his son Pisistratus off in a chariot and pair for Lacedæmon, which they reached on the following morning, after passing a night in the house of Diocles at Pheræ.

¹³ Reading ὑπονηρίτου for ὑπονηρίου, cf. i. 186 and also xiii. 351.

¹⁴ The reader will note that the fact of Orestes having also killed his mother is not expressly stated here, nor in any of the three other passages in which the revenge taken by Orestes is referred to – doubtless as being too horrible. The other passages are *Od.* i. 40 and 299 (not given in this summary), and xi. 408, &c.

BOOK IV

Telemachus at the house of Menelaus – The suitors resolve to lie in wait for him as he returns, and murder him.

When the two young men reached Lacedæmon they drove straight to Menelaus's house [and found him celebrating the double marriage of his daughter Hermione and his son Megapenthes.]¹⁵

Menelaus (after a little demur on the part of his *major domo* 22 Eteoneus, for which he was severely reprimanded by his master) entertained his guests very hospitably, and overhearing Telemachus call his friend's attention to the splendour of the house, he explained to them how much toil and sorrow he had endured, especially through the murder of his brother Agamemnon, the plundering of his house by Paris when he carried off Helen, and the death of so many of his brave comrades at Troy. "There is one man, however," he added, "of whom I cannot even think without loathing both food and sleep. I mean Ulysses."

When Telemachus heard his father thus mentioned he could 112 not restrain his tears, and while Menelaus was in doubt what to say or not say, Helen came down (dinner being now half through) with her three attendant maidens, Adraste, Alcippe, and Phylo, who set a seat for her and brought her her famous work box which ran on wheels, that she might begin to spin.

"And who pray," said she to her husband, "may these two 138 gentlemen be who are honouring us with their presence? Shall I guess right or wrong, but I really must say what I think. I never saw such a likeness – neither in man nor woman. This young man can only be Telemachus, whom Ulysses left behind him a baby in arms when he set out for Troy."

"I too," answered Menelaus, "have observed the likeness. 147 It is unmistakeable."

On this Pisistratus explained that they were quite right, 155 whereon Menelaus told him all he had meant doing for Ulysses, and this was so affecting that all the four who were at table burst into tears. After a little while Pisistratus complimented Menelaus on his great sagacity (of which indeed his father Nestor had often told him), and said that he did not like weeping when he was getting his dinner; he therefore proposed that the remainder of their lamentation should be deferred until next morning. Menelaus assented to this, and dinner was allowed to 220 proceed. Helen mixed some Nepenthe with the wine, and cheerfulness was thus restored.

Helen then told how she had met Ulysses when he entered 235 Troy as a spy, and explained that by that time she was already anxious to return home, and was lamenting the cruel calamity which Venus had inflicted on her 261 in separating her from her little girl and from her husband, who was really not deficient either in person or understanding.

Menelaus capped her story with an account of the 265 adventures of the Achæans inside the wooden horse. "Do you not remember," said he, "how you walked all round it when we were inside, and patted it? You had Deiphobus with you, and you kept on calling out our names and 279 mimicking our wives, till Minerva came and took you away. It was Ulysses' presence of mind that then saved us."

When he had told this, Telemachus said it was time to go 290 to rest, so he and Pisistratus were shown to their room in the vestibule, while Menelaus and Helen retired to the interior of the house.¹⁶

When morning came Telemachus told Menelaus about the 306 suitors, and asked for any information he could give him concerning the death of his father. Menelaus was greatly shocked, but could only tell him what he had heard from Proteus. He said that as he was coming from Egypt he had

¹⁵ For fuller translation and explanation why I have bracketed the passage, see [Chapter VI](#).

¹⁶ It is curious that the sleeping arrangements made by Helen for Telemachus and Pisistratus, as also those made for Ulysses by Queen Arete (vii. 336, &c.), though taken almost verbatim from those made by Achilles for Priam and Idicus (*Il.* xxiv. 643-47 and 673-76), should do so well for a building of such a different character as the house of Menelaus must have been from the quarters of Achilles before Troy.

been detained some weeks through, the displeasure of the gods, in the island of Pharos, where he and his men would have been starved but for the assistance given him by a goddess Idothea, daughter to Proteus, who taught him how to ensnare her father, and compel him to say why heaven was detaining him.

"Idothea," said Menelaus, "disguised me and my three 410 chosen comrades as seals; to this end she had brought four fresh-flayed seal-skins, under which she hid us. The strong smell of these skins was most distressing to us – Who would go to bed with a sea monster if he could help it? but Idothea put some ambrosia under each man's 443 nostrils, and this afforded us great relief. Other seals (Halsoydne's chickens as they call them) now kept coming up by hundreds, and lay down to bask upon the beach.

"Towards noon Proteus himself came up. First he counted 450 all his seals to see that he had the right number, and he counted us in with the others; when he had so done he lay down in the midst of them, as a shepherd with his sheep, and as soon as he was asleep we pounced upon him and gripped him tight; at one moment he became a lion, the next he was running water, and then again he was a tree; but we never loosed hold, and in the end he grew weary, and told us what we would know.

"He told me also of the fate of Ajax, son of Oïleus, and 499 of my brother Agamemnon. Lastly he told me about Ulysses, who he said was in the island of the nymph Calypso, unable to get away inasmuch as he had neither ship nor crew.

"Then he disappeared under the sea, and I, after 570 appeasing heaven's anger as he had instructed me, returned quickly and safely to my own country."

Having finished his story Menelaus pressed Telemachus 587 to remain with him some ten or twelve days longer, and promised to give him a chariot and a pair of horses as a keepsake, but Telemachus said that he could not stay. "I could listen to you," said he, "for a whole twelve months, and never once think about my home and my parents; but my men, whom I have left at Pylos, are already impatient for me to return. As for any present you may make me, let it be a piece of plate. I cannot take horses to Ithaca; it contains no plains nor meadow lands, and is more fit for breeding goats than horses. None of our islands are suited for chariot races, and Ithaca least among them all."

Menelaus smiled, and said he could see that Telemachus 600 came of good family. He had a piece of plate, of very great value, which was just the thing, and Telemachus should have it.

[Guests now kept coming to the king's house, bringing 621 both wine and sheep, and their wives had put them up a provision of bread. Thus, then, did they set about cooking their dinner in the courts.]¹⁷

Meanwhile, the suitors in Ithaca were playing at quoits, 625 aiming spears at a mark, and behaving with all their old insolence on the level ground in front of Ulysses' house. While they were thus engaged Noëmon came up and asked Antinous if he could say when Telemachus was likely to be back from Pylos, for he wanted his ship. On this everything came out, and the suitors, who had no idea that Telemachus had really gone (for they thought he was only away on one of his farms in Ithaca), were very angry. They therefore determined to lie in wait for him on his return, and made ready to start.

Medon, a servant, overheard their plot, and told all to 675 Penelope, who, like the suitors, learned for the first time that her son had left home and gone to Pylos. She bitterly upbraided her women for not having given her a call out of her bed when Telemachus was leaving, for she said she was sure they knew all about it. Presently, however, on being calmed by Euryclea, she went upstairs and offered sacrifice to Minerva. After a time she fell into a deep slumber, during which she was comforted by a vision of her sister Ipthime, which Minerva had sent to her bedside.

When night fell the suitors set sail, intending to 842 way-lay Telemachus in the Strait between Same and Ithaca.

¹⁷ For explanation why I bracket this passage see [Chapter VI](#).

BOOK V

Ulysses in the island of Calypso – He leaves the island on a raft, and after great suffering reaches the land of the Phæacians.

The gods now held a second council, at which Minerva and Jove both spoke.

When Jove had done speaking he sent Mercury to Calypso to tell that Ulysses was to return home, reaching the land of the Phæacians in twenty days. The Phæacians would load him with presents and send him on to Ithaca.

Mercury, therefore, flew over the sea like a cormorant⁴³ that fishes every hole and corner of the deep. In the course of time he reached Calypso's cave and told his story. Calypso was very angry, but seeing there was no help for it promised obedience. As soon as Mercury was gone she went to look for Ulysses, whom she found weeping as usual and looking out ever sadly upon the sea; she told him to build himself a raft and sail home upon it, but Ulysses was deeply suspicious and would not be reassured till she had sworn a very solemn oath that she meant him no harm, and was advising him in all good faith.

The pair then returned to Calypso's cave. "I cannot understand," she said, "why you will not stay quietly here with me, instead of all the time thinking about this wife of yours. I cannot believe that I am any worse looking than she is. If you only knew how much hardship²⁰⁶ you will have to undergo before you get back, you would stay where you are and let me make you immortal."

"Do not be angry with me," answered Ulysses, "you are²¹⁵ infinitely better looking than Penelope. You are a goddess, and she is but a mortal woman. There can be no comparison. Nevertheless, come what may, I have a craving to get back to my own home."

The next four days were spent in making the raft. Calypso²²⁸ lent him her axe and auger and shewed him where the trees grew which would be driest and whose timber would be the²⁴⁰ best seasoned, and Ulysses cut them down. He made the raft about as broad in the beam as people generally make a good big ship, and he gave it a rudder – that he might²⁵⁵ be able to steer it.

Calypso then washed him, gave him clean clothes, and he²⁶⁴ set out, steering his ship skilfully by means of the²⁷⁰ rudder. He steered towards the Great Bear, which is also called the Wain, keeping it on his left hand, for so Calypso had advised him.

All went well with him for seventeen days, and on the²⁷⁸ eighteenth he caught sight of the faint outlines of the Phæacian coast lying long and low upon the horizon.

Here, however, Neptune, who was on his way home from the²⁸² Ethiopians, caught sight of him and saw the march that the other gods had stolen upon him during his absence. He therefore stirred the sea round with his trident, and raised a frightful hurricane, so that Ulysses could see nothing more, everything being dark as night; presently²⁹⁴ he was washed overboard, but managed to regain his raft.

He was giving himself up for lost when Ino, also named³³³ Leucothea, took pity on him and flew on to his raft like a sea gull; she reassured him and gave him her veil, at the same time telling him to throw it back into the sea as soon as he reached land, and to turn his face away from the sea as he did so.

The storm still raged, and the raft went to pieces under³⁵¹ its fury, whereon Ulysses bound Ino's veil under his arms and began to swim. Neptune on seeing this was satisfied and went away.

As soon as he was gone Minerva calmed all the winds³⁶⁹ except the North, which blew strong for two days and two nights, so that Ulysses was carried to the South again. On the morning of the third day he saw land quite close, but was nearly dashed to pieces against the rocks on trying to leave the water. At last he found the mouth of⁴⁵¹ a river, who, in answer to Ulysses's prayer, stayed his flow, so that Ulysses was able to swim inland and get on shore.

Nearly dead with exhaustion and in great doubt what to do, he first threw Ino's veil into the salt waters of the river, and then took shelter on the rising ground, inland. Here he covered himself with a thick bed of leaves and fell fast asleep.

BOOK VI

The meeting between Ulysses and Nausicaa.

While Ulysses was thus slumbering, Minerva went to the land of the Phæacians, on which Ulysses had been cast.

Now the Phæacians used to live in Hypereia near the 4 lawless Cyclopes, who were stronger than they were and plundered them; so their king Nausithous removed them to Scheria,¹⁸ where they were secure. Nausithous was now dead, and his son Alcinous was reigning.

Alcinous had an only daughter, Nausicaa, who was in her 15 bedroom fast asleep. Minerva went to her bedside and appeared to her in a dream, having assumed the form of one Captain Dymas's daughter, who was a bosom friend of Nausicaa's. She reminded her of her approaching marriage (for which, however, the bridegroom had not yet been decided upon), and upbraided her for not making due preparation by the washing of her own and of the family linen. She proposed, therefore, that on the following morning Nausicaa should take all the unwashed clothes to the washing cisterns, and said that she would come and help her: the cisterns being some distance from the town, she advised Nausicaa to ask her father to let her have a waggon and mules.

Nausicaa, on waking, told her father and mother about 50 her dream, "Papa, dear,"¹⁹ said she, "could you manage to let me have a good big waggon? I want to take all our dirty clothes to the river and wash them. You are the chief man here, so it is only proper that you should have 60 a clean shirt when you attend meetings of the council. Moreover you have five sons, two of them married, while the other three are good looking young bachelors; you know they always like to have clean linen when they go out to a dance."

Her father promised her all she wanted. The waggon 71 was made ready, her mother put her up a basket of provisions, and Nausicaa drove her maids to the bank of the river, where were the cisterns, through which there flowed enough clear water to wash clothes however dirty they might be. They washed their clothes in the pits by treading upon them, laid them out to dry upon the sea-beach, had their dinner as the clothes were drying, and then began to play at ball while Nausicaa sang to them.

In the course of time, when they were thinking about 110 starting home, Minerva woke Ulysses, who was in the wood just above them. He sat up, heard the voices and laughter of the women, and wondered where he was.

He resolved on going to see, but remembering that he had 127 no clothes on, he held a bough of olive before him, and then, all grim, naked, and unkempt as he was, he came out and drew near to the women, who all of them ran away along the beach and the points that jutted into the sea. Nausicaa, however, stood firm, and Ulysses set himself to consider whether he should go boldly up to her and embrace her knees, or speak to her from a respectful distance.

On the whole he concluded that this would be the most 145 prudent course; and having adopted it, he began by asking Nausicaa to inform him whether she was a goddess or no. If she was a goddess, it was obvious from her beauty that she could only be Diana. If on the other hand she was a mortal, how happy would he be whose proposals in the way of settlements had seemed most advantageous, and who should take her to his own home. Finally he asked her to be kind enough to give him any old wrapper which she might have brought with her to wrap the clothes in, and to show him the way to the town.

¹⁸ Scheria means "Jutland" – a piece of land jutting out into the sea.

¹⁹ Gr. *πάππα φίλ'*, line 57.

Nausicaa replied that he seemed really to be a very 186 sensible person, but that people must put up with their luck whatever it might happen to be. She then explained that he had come to the land of the Phæacians, and promised to conduct him to their city.

Having so said, she told her maids not to be such 198 cowards. "The man," she said, "is quite harmless; we live away from all neighbours on a land's end, with the sea roaring on either side of us, and no one can hurt us. See to this poor fellow, therefore, and give him something to eat."

When they heard this the maids came back and gave 211 Ulysses a shirt and cloak; they also gave him a bottle of oil and told him to go and wash in the river, but he said, "I will not wash myself while you keep standing there. I cannot bring myself to strip before a number of good-looking young women." So they went and told their mistress.

When Ulysses had done washing, Minerva made him look much 224 grander and more imposing, and gave him a thick head of hair which flowed down in hyacinthine curls about his shoulders, Nausicaa was very much struck with the change in his appearance. "At first," she said, "I thought him quite plain, but now he is of godlike beauty. I wish I might have such a man as that for my husband, if he would only stay here. But never mind this; girls, give him something to eat and drink."

The maids then set meat and drink before Ulysses, who was 247 ravenously hungry. While he was eating, Nausicaa got the clothes folded up and put on to the cart; after which she gave him his instructions. "Follow after the cart," she said, "along with the maids, till you get near the houses. As for the town, you will find it lying between two good harbours, and approached by a narrow neck of 263 land, on either side of which you will see the ships drawn up – for every man has a place where he can let his boat lie. You will also see the walls, and the temple of Neptune standing in the middle of the paved market-place, with the ship-brokers' shops all round it.

"When you get near the town drop behind, for the people 273 here are very ill-natured, and they would talk about me. They would say, 'Who is this fine looking stranger that is going about with Nausicaa? Where did she find him? I suppose she is going to marry him. Is he a sailor whom she has picked up from some foreign vessel, or has a god come down from heaven in answer to her prayers and he is going to marry her? It would be a good thing if she would go and find a husband somewhere else, for she will have nothing to say to any of the many excellent Phæacians who are in love with her.' This is what people would say, and I could not blame them, for I should be scandalised myself if I saw any girl going about with a stranger, while her father and mother were yet alive, without being married to him in the face of all the world.

"Do then as I say. When you come to the grove of Minerva 289 a little outside the town, wait till you think I and the maids must have got home. Then come after us, ask which is Alcinous's house, and when you reach it go straight through the outer and inner courts till you come to my mother. You will see her sitting with her back to a bearing-post, and spinning her purple yarn by the fire. My father will be sitting close by her; never mind about him, but go and embrace my mother's knees for if she looks favourably on your suit, you will probably get what you want."

Nausicaa then drove on, and as the sun was about setting 316 they came to the grove of Minerva, where Ulysses sat down and waited. He prayed Minerva to assist him, and she heard his prayer, but she would not manifest herself to him, for she did not want to offend her uncle Neptune.

BOOK VII

The splendours of the house of King Alcinous – Queen Arete wants to know where Ulysses got his shirt and cloak, for she knows them as her own work – Ulysses explains.

When Nausicaa reached home her brothers attended to the waggon and mules, and her waiting-woman Eurymedusa lit the fire and brought her supper for her into her own room.

Presently Ulysses considered it safe to come on, and 14 entered the town enveloped in a thick mist which Minerva shed round him for his protection from any rudeness that the Phæacians might offer him. She also met him outside the town disguised as a little girl carrying a pitcher.

Ulysses saw her in spite of the mist, and asked her 21 to show him the way to the house of Alcinous; this, she said, she could easily do, and when they reached the house she told Ulysses all about the king's family history, and advised him how he should behave himself.

"Be bold," she said; "boldness always tells, no matter 50 where a man comes from. First find the mistress of the house. She is of the same family as her husband, and her descent is in this wise. Eurymedon was king of the giants, but he and his people were overthrown, and he lost his own life. His youngest daughter was Peribœa, a woman of surpassing beauty, who gave birth by Neptune to Nausithous, king of the Phæacians. He had two sons, 62 Rhexenor and Alcinous; Rhexenor died young, leaving an only daughter, Arete, whom her uncle Alcinous married, and whom he honours as no other woman in the whole world is honoured by her husband. All her family and all her neighbours adore her as a friend and peacemaker, for she is a thoroughly good woman. If you can gain her good offices all will go well with you."

Minerva then left him and went to Marathon and Athens, 78 where she visited the house of Erechtheus, but Ulysses went on to the house of Alcinous, and he pondered much as he paused awhile before he reached the threshold of bronze, for the splendour of the palace was like that of the sun and moon. The walls on either side were of bronze from end to end, and the cornice was of blue enamel. The doors were of gold and hung on pillars of silver that rose from a floor of bronze, while the lintel was of silver and the hook of the door was of gold.

On either side there were gold and silver mastiffs which 91 Vulcan with his consummate skill had fashioned expressly to keep watch over the palace of King Alcinous, so they were immortal and could never grow old. Seats were ranged here and there all along the wall, from one end to the other, with coverings of fine woven work, which the women of the house had made. Here the chief persons of the Phæacians used to sit and eat and drink, for there was abundance at all seasons; and there were golden figures of young men with lighted torches in their hands, raised on pedestals to give light to them that sat at meat.

There are fifty women servants in the house, some of 103 whom are always grinding rich yellow grain at the mill, while others work at the loom and sit and spin, and their shuttles go backwards and forwards like the fluttering of aspen leaves, while the linen is so closely woven that it will turn oil. As the Phæacians are the best sailors in the world, so their women excel all others in weaving, for Minerva has taught them all manner of useful arts, and they are very intelligent.

Outside the gate of the outer court there is a large garden²⁰ of about four acres, with a wall all round it. It is full of beautiful trees – pears, pomegranates, and the most delicious apples. There are luscious figs also, and olives in full growth. The fruits never rot nor fail all the year round, neither winter nor summer, for the air is so soft that a new crop ripens before the old has dropped. Pear grows on pear, apple on apple, and fig on fig, and so also with the grapes, for there is an excellent

²⁰ Penelope and Calypso also had gardens: so had Laertes (xxiv. 217). I remember no allusion to them in the *Iliad*.

vineyard; on the level ground of a part of this, the grapes are being made into raisins; on another part they are being gathered; some are being trodden in the wine-tubs; others, further on, have shed their blossom and are beginning to show fruit; others, again, are just changing colour. In the furthest part of the ground there are beautifully arranged beds of flowers that are in bloom all the year round. Two streams go through it, the one turned in ducts throughout the whole garden, while the other is carried under the ground of the outer court to the house itself, and the townspeople drew water from it. Such, then, were the splendours with which heaven had endowed the house of King Alcinous.

So here Ulysses stood for a while and looked about 133 him, but when he had looked long enough he crossed the threshold and went within the precincts of the house. He passed through the crowd of guests who were nightly visitors at the table of King Alcinous, and who were then making their usual drink offering to Mercury before 137 going for the night. He was still shrouded in the mist of invisibility with which Minerva had invested him, and going up to Arete he embraced her knees, whereon he suddenly became visible. Every one was greatly surprised at seeing a man there, but Ulysses paid no attention to this, and at once implored the queen's assistance; he then sat down among the ashes on the hearth.

Alcinous did not know what to do or say, nor yet did any 154 one else till one of the guests Echeus told him it was not creditable to him that a suppliant should be left thus grovelling among the ashes. Alcinous ought to give him a seat and set food before him. This was accordingly done, and after Ulysses had finished eating Alcinous made a speech, in which he proposed that they should have a great banquet next day in their guest's honour, and then provide him an escort to take him to his own home. This was agreed to, and after a while the other guests went home to bed.

When they were gone Ulysses was left alone with Alcinous 230 and Arete sitting over the fire, while the servants were taking the things away after supper. Then Arete said, "Stranger, before we go any further there is a question I should like to put to you. Who are you? and who gave you those clothes?" for she recognised the shirt and cloak Ulysses was wearing as her own work, and that of her maids.

Ulysses did not give his name, but told her how he had 240 come from Calypso's island, and been wrecked on the Phæacian coast. "Next day," he said, "I fell in with your daughter, who treated me with much greater kindness than one could have expected from so young a person – for young people are apt to be thoughtless. It was she who gave me the clothes."

Alcinous then said he wished the stranger would stay with 308 them for good and all and marry Nausicaa. They would not, however, press this, and if he insisted on going they would send him, no matter where. "Even though it be further than Eubœa, which they say is further off than any other place, we will send you, and you shall be taken so easily that you may sleep the whole way if you like." 318

To this Ulysses only replied by praying that the king 329 might be as good as his word. A bed was then made for him in the gate-house and they all retired for the night.

BOOK VIII

The Phæacian games and banquet in honour of Ulysses.

When morning came Alcinous called an assembly of the Phæacian, and Minerva went about urging every one to come and see the wonderful stranger. She also gave Ulysses a more imposing presence that he might impress the people favourably. When the Phæacians were assembled Alcinous said: —

"I do not know who this stranger is, nor where he comes 28 from; but he wants us to send him to his own home, and no guest of mine was ever yet able to complain that I did not send him home quickly enough. Let us therefore fit out a new ship with a crew of fifty-two men, and send him. The crew shall come to my house and I will find them in food which they can cook for themselves. The aldermen and councillors shall be feasted inside the house. I can take no denial, and we will have Demodocus to sing to us."

The ship and crew were immediately found, and the sailors 46 with all the male part of the population swarmed to the house of Alcinous till the yards and barns and buildings were crowded. The king provided them with twelve sheep, eight pigs and two bullocks, which they killed and cooked.

The leading men of the town went inside the inner 62 courtyard; Pontonous, the *major domo*, conducted the blind bard Demodocus to a seat which he set near one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloisters, hung his lyre on a peg over his head, and shewed him how to feel for it with his hands. He also set a table close by him with refreshments on it, to which he could help himself whenever he liked.

As soon as the guests had done eating Demodocus began 72 to sing the quarrel between Ulysses and Achilles before Troy, a lay which at the time was famous. This so affected Ulysses that he kept on weeping as long as the bard sang, and though he was able to conceal his tears from the company generally, Alcinous perceived his distress, and proposed that they should all now adjourn to the athletic sports – which were to consist mainly of boxing, wrestling, jumping, and foot racing.

Demodocus, therefore, hung the lyre on its peg and 105 was led out to the place where the sports were to be held. The whole town flocked to see them. Clytoneüs won the foot race, Euryalus took the prize for wrestling, Amphialus was the best jumper, and Alcinous' son Laodamas the best boxer.

Laodamas and Euryalus then proposed that Ulysses should 131 enter himself for one of the prizes. Ulysses replied that he was a stranger and a suppliant; moreover, he had lately gone through great hardships, and would rather be excused.

Euryalus on this insulted Ulysses, and said that he 138 supposed he was some grasping merchant who thought of nothing but his freights. "You have none of the look," said he, "of an athlete about you."

Ulysses was furious, and told Euryalus that he was a 164 goodlooking young fool. He then took up a disc far heavier than those which the Phæacians were in the habit of throwing.²¹ The disc made a hurtling sound as it passed through the air, and easily surpassed any throw that had been made yet. Thus encouraged he made another long and very angry speech, in which he said he would compete with any Phæacian in any contest they chose to name, except in running, for he was still so much pulled down that he thought they might beat him here. "Also," he said, "I will not compete in anything with Laodamas. He is my host's son, and it is a most unwise thing for a guest to challenge any member of his host's family. A man must be an idiot to think of such a thing."

²¹ It is a little odd that this disc should have been brought, considering that none such were used by the Phæacians. We must suppose that Minerva put it in along with the others, and then shed a thick darkness over it, which prevented the attendants from noticing it.

"Sir," said Alcinous, "I understand that you are 236 displeased at some remarks that have fallen from one of our athletes, who has thrown doubt upon your prowess in a way that no gentleman would do. I hear that you have also given us a general challenge. I should explain that we are not famous for our skill in boxing or wrestling, but are singularly fleet runners and bold mariners. We are also much given to song and dance, and we like warm baths and frequent changes of linen. So now come forward some of you who are the nimblest dancers, and show the stranger how much we surpass other nations in all graceful accomplishments. Let some one also bring Demodocus's lyre from my house where he has left it."

The lyre was immediately brought, the dancers began to 256 dance, and Ulysses admired the merry twinkling of their feet.

While they were dancing Demodocus sang the intrigue 266 between Mars and Venus in the house of Vulcan, and told how Vulcan took the pair prisoners. All the gods came to see them; but the goddesses were modest and would not 324 come.

Alcinous then made Halius and Laodamas have a game at 370 ball, after which Ulysses expressed the utmost admiration of their skill. Charmed with the compliment Ulysses had paid his sons, the king said that the twelve aldermen (with himself, which would make thirteen) must at once give Ulysses a shirt and cloak and a talent of gold, so that he might eat his supper with a light heart. As for Euryalus, he must not only make a present, but apologise as well, for he had been rude.

Euryalus admitted his fault, and gave Ulysses his sword 398 with its scabbard, which was of new ivory. He said Ulysses would find it worth a great deal of money to him.

Ulysses thanked him, wished him all manner of good 412 fortune, and said he hoped Euryalus would not feel the want of the sword which he had just given him along with his apology.

Night was now falling, they therefore adjourned to the 417 house of Alcinous. Here the presents began to arrive, whereon the king desired Arete to find Ulysses a chest in which to stow them, and to put a shirt and clean cloak in it as his own contribution; he also declared his intention of giving him a gold cup.²² Meanwhile, he said that Ulysses had better have a warm bath.

The bath was made ready. Arete packed all the gold and 423 presents which the Phæacian aldermen had sent, as also the shirt and tunic from Alcinous. Arete told Ulysses to see to the fastening, lest some one should rob him while he was asleep on the ship; Ulysses therefore fastened the 445 lid on to the chest with a knot which Circe had taught him. He then went into the bath room – very gladly, for he had not had a bath since he left Calypso, who as long as he was with her had taken as good care of him as though he had been a god.

As he came from the bath room Nausicaa was standing by 457 one of the bearing-posts that supported the roof of the cloisters and bade him farewell, reminding him at the same time that it was she who had been the saving of him – a fact which Ulysses in a few words gracefully acknowledged.

He then took his seat at table, and after dinner, at his 469 request, Demodocus sang the Sack of Troy and the Sally of the Achæans from the Wooden Horse. This again so affected him that he could not restrain his tears, which, however, Alcinous again alone perceived.

The king, therefore, made a speech in which he said 536 that the stranger ought to tell them his name. He must have one, for people always gave their children names as soon as they were born. He need not be uneasy about his escort. All he had to do was to say where he wanted to go, and the Phæacian ships were so clever that they would take him there of their own accord. Nevertheless he remembered hearing his father Nausithous say, that one day Neptune would be angry with the Phæacians for giving people escorts so readily, and had said he would wreck one of their ships as it was returning, and would also bury their city under a high mountain.

²² Alcinous never seems to have got beyond saying that he was going to give the cup; he never gives it, nor yet the talent – the familiar *ὡς εἰπὼν ἐν χερσὶ τίθει κ.τ.λ.* is noticeably absent. He found the chest, and he took a great deal of pains about stowing the presents in the ship that was to take Ulysses to Ithaca (see xiii. 18, &c.), but here his contributions seem to have ended.

BOOK IX

The voyages of Ulysses – The Cicons, Lotus eaters, and the Cyclops Polyphemus.

Then Ulysses rose. "King Alcinous," said he, "you ask my name and I will tell you. I am Ulysses, and dwell in Ithaca, an island which contains a high mountain called Neritum. In its neighbourhood there are other islands near to one another, Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus. It lies on the horizon all highest up in the sea towards the 25 West, while the other islands lie away from it to the East. This is the island which I would reach, for however fine a house a man may have in a land where his parents are not, there will still be nothing sweeter to him than his home and his own father and mother.

"I will now tell you of my adventures. On leaving Troy 37 we first made a descent on the land of the Cicons, and sacked their city but were eventually beaten off, though we took our booty with us.

"Thence we sailed South with a strong North wind behind 62 us, till we reached the island of Cythera, where we were driven off our course by a continuance of North wind which prevented my doubling Cape Malea.

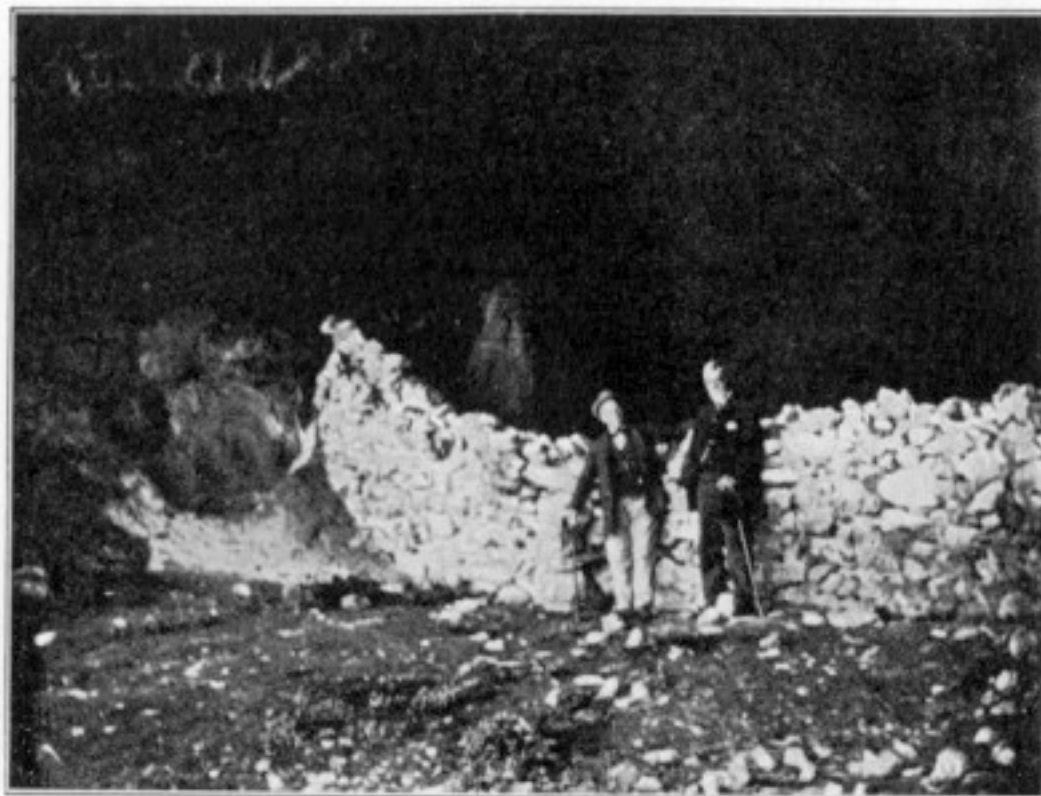
"Nine days was I driven by foul winds, and on the tenth 82 we reached the land of the Lotus eaters, where the people were good to my men but gave them to eat of the lotus, which made them lose all desire to return home, so that I had a great work to get those who had tasted it on board again.

"Thence we were carried further, till we came to the land 105 of the savage Cyclopes. Off their coast, but not very far, there is a wooded island abounding with wild goats. It is untrodden by the foot of man; even the huntsmen, who as a general rule will suffer any hardship in forest 120 or on mountain top, never go there; it is neither tilled nor fed down, but remains year after year uninhabited save by goats only. For the Cyclopes have no ships, and cannot therefore go from place to place as those who have ships can do. If they had ships they would have colonised the island, for it is not at all a bad one and would bring forth all things in their season. There is meadow land, well watered and of good quality, that stretches down to the water's edge. Grapes would do wonderfully well there; it contains good arable land, which would yield heavy crops, for the soil is rich; moreover it has a convenient port – into which some god must have taken us, for the night was so dark that we could see nothing. There was a thick darkness all round the ships, neither was there any moon, for the sky was covered with clouds. No one could see the island, nor yet waves breaking upon the shore till we found ourselves in the harbour. Here, then, we moored our ships and camped down upon the beach.



THE CAVE OF POLYPHEMUS

The Cave of Polyphemus.



SIG. SUGAMELI AND THE AUTHOR, IN THE CAVE OF POLYPHEMUS

Sig. Sugameli and the Author, in the Cave of Polyphemus.

"When morning came we hunted the wild goats, of which we 152 killed over a hundred,²³ and all day long to the going down of the sun we feasted on them and the store of wine we had taken from the Cicons. We kept looking also on the land of the Cyclopes over against us, which was so near that we could see the smoke of their stubble fires, and almost fancy we heard the bleating of their sheep and goats.

"We camped a second night upon the beach, and at day 169 break, having called a council, I said I would take my own ship and reconnoitre the country, but would leave the other ships at the island. Thereon I started, but when we got near the main land we saw a great cave in the cliff, not far from the sea, and there were large sheep yards in front of it. On landing I chose twelve men and went inland, taking with me a goat skin full of a very wondrous wine that Maron, priest of Apollo, had given me when I spared his life and that of his family at the time that we were sacking the city of the Cicons. The rest of my crew were to wait my return by the sea side.

"We soon reached the cave, and finding that the owner was 216 not at home we examined all that it contained; we saw vessels brimful of whey, and racks loaded with cheeses: the yards also were full of lambs and kids. My men implored me to let them steal some cheeses, drive off some of the lambs and kids, and sail away, but I would not, for I hoped the owner might give me something.

"We lit a fire in the cave, sacrificed some of the 233 cheeses to the gods, and ate others ourselves, waiting till the owner should return. When he came we found him to be a huge monster, more like a peak standing out against the sky on some high mountain than a human being. He brought in with him a great bundle of firewood, which he flung down upon the floor with such a noise that we were scared and hid ourselves. He drove all his female goats and ewes into the cave, but left the males outside; and then he closed the door with a huge stone which not even two and twenty waggons could carry. He milked his 245 goats and ewes all orderly, and gave each one her own young [for these had been left in the yards all day]; then he drank some of the milk, and put part by for his supper. Presently he lit his fire and caught sight of us, whereon he asked us who we were.

"I told him we were on our way home from Troy, and begged 256 him in heaven's name to do us no hurt; but as soon as I had answered his question he gripped up two of my men, dashed them on the ground, and ate them raw, blood, bones, and bowels, like a savage lion of the wilderness. Then he lay down on the ground of the cave and went to sleep: on which I should have crept up to him and plunged my sword into his heart while he was sleeping had I not known that if I did we should never be able to shift the stone. So we waited till dawn should come.

"When day broke the monster again lit his fire, milked 307 his ewes all orderly, and gave each one her own young. Then he gripped up two more of my men, and as soon as he had eaten them he rolled the stone from the mouth of the cave, drove out his sheep, and put the stone back again. He had, however, left a large and long piece of olive wood in the cave, and when he had gone I and my men sharpened this at one end, and hid it in the sheep dung of which there was much in the cave. In the evening he returned, milked his ewes, and ate two more men; whereon I went up to him with the skin of wondrous wine that Maron had given me and gave him a bowl full of it. He asked for another, and then another, so I gave them to him, and he was so much delighted that he enquired my name and I said it was Noman.

"The wine now began to take effect, and in a short time 371 he fell dead drunk upon the ground. Then my men and I put the sharp end of the piece of olive wood in the fire till it was well burning, and drove it into the wretch's eye, turning it round and round as though it were an auger. After a

²³ Dwellers on the East coast of Sicily believe the island here referred to to be Acitrezza, between Acireale and Catania. I have been all over it and do not believe that it contains more than two acres of land on which any goat could ever have fed. The idea that the writer of the *Odyssey* would make Ulysses and his large body of men spend half a day in killing over a hundred goats on such a site need not be discussed seriously, I shall therefore pass it over without notice when I come to discuss the voyage of Ulysses. That it should be so confidently believed to be the island off the land of the Cyclopes serves as a warning to myself, inasmuch as it shows how easily people can bring themselves to accept any site for any scene if they make up their minds to do so.

while he plucked it out, flung it from him, and began crying to his neighbours for help. When they came, they said, 'What ails you? Who is harming you?' and he answered, 'No man is harming me.' They then said that he must be ill, and had better pray to his father Neptune; so they went away, and I laughed at the success of my stratagem.

"Then I hid my men by binding them under the sheep's 424 bellies. The Cyclops, whose name was Polyphemus, groped his way to the stone, rolled it away, and sat at the mouth of the cave feeling the sheep's backs as they went out; but the men were under their bellies so he did not find one of them. Nor yet did he discover me, for I was ensconced in the thick belly-fleece of a ram which by some chance he had brought in with the ewes. But he was near finding me, for the ram went last, and he kept it for a while and talked to it.

"When we were outside, I dropped from under the ram and 462 unbound my companions. We drove the ewes down to my ship, got them on board, and rowed out to sea. When we were a little way out I jeered at the Cyclops, whereon he tore up a great rock and hurled it after us; it fell in front of the ship and all but hit the rudder; the wash, moreover, that it made nearly carried us back to the 483 land, but I kept the ship off it with a pole.

"When we had got about twice as far off as we were 491 before, I was for speaking to the Cyclops again, and though my men tried to stay me, I shouted out to him 'Cyclops, if you would know who it is that has blinded you, learn that it is I, Ulysses, son of Laertes, who live in Ithaca.'

"'Alas,' he cried in answer, 'then the old prophecy about 506 me is coming true. I knew that I was to lose my sight by the hand of Ulysses, but I was looking for some man of great stature and noble mien, whereas he has proved to be a mere whippersnapper. Come here, then, Ulysses that I may offer you gifts of hospitality and pray my father Neptune, who shall heal my eye, to escort you safely home.

"'I wish,' said I, 'that I could be as sure of killing 521 you body and soul as I am that not even Neptune will be able to cure your eye.'

"Then he prayed to Neptune saying 'Hear me Neptune, if 526 I am indeed your son, and vouchsafe me that Ulysses son of Laertes may never reach his home. Still, if he must do so, and get back to his friends, let him lose all his men, and though he get home after all, let it be late, on another man's ship, and let him find trouble in his house.'

"So saying he tore up a still larger rock and flung it 527 this time a little behind the ship, but so close that it all but hit the rudder: the wash, however, that it made carried us forward to the island from which we had set out.

"There we feasted on the sheep that we had taken, and 556 mourned the loss of our comrades whom Polyphemus had eaten.

BOOK X

Æolus – the Læstrygonians – Circe.

"So we sailed on and reached the island where dwells Æolus with his wife and family of six sons and six daughters, who live together amid great and continuous plenty. I staid with him a whole month, and when I would go, he tied all the winds up (for he was their keeper) in a leather sack, which he gave me; but he left the West wind free, for this was the one I wanted.

"Nine days did we sail, and on the tenth we could see our 28 native land with the stubble fires burning thereon. I had never let the rudder out of my hands till then, but being now close in shore I fell asleep. My men, thinking I had treasure in the sack, opened it to see, on which the winds came howling out and took us straight back to the Æolian island. So I went to the house of Æolus and prayed him to help me, but he said, 'Get you gone, abhorred of heaven: him whom heaven hates will I in no wise help.' So I went full sadly away.

"Six days thence did we sail onward, worn out in body 77 and mind, and on the seventh we reached the stronghold of king Lamus, the Læstrygonian city Telepylus, where the shepherd who drives his flock into the town salutes another who is driving them out, and the other returns his salute. A man in that country could earn double wages if he could do without sleep, for they work much the same by night as they do by day. Here we landed, and I climbed a high rock to look round, but could see no signs of men or beast, save only smoke rising from the ground.

"Then I sent two of my crew with an attendant, to see 100 what manner of men the people might be, and they met a young woman who was coming down to fetch water from the spring Artacia, whence the people drew their water. This young woman took my men to the house of her father Antiphates, whereon they discovered the people to be giants and ogres like Polyphemus. One of my men was gripped up and eaten, but the other two escaped and reached the ships. The Læstrygonians raised a hue and cry after them, and rushing to the harbour, within which all my ships were moored except my own, they dashed my whole fleet in pieces with the rocks that they threw. I and my own ship alone escaped them, for we were outside, and I bade the men row for their lives.

"On and on did we sail, till we reached the island of 133 Circe, where heaven guided us into a harbour. Here I again climbed a rock and could see the smoke from Circe's house rising out of a thick wood; I then went back to the ship, and while on my way had the good fortune to kill a noble stag, which gave us a supply of meat on which we feasted all the rest of the day. Next morning I held a council and told my men of the smoke that I had seen.

"Eurylochus and twenty-two men then went inland to 210 reconnoitre, and found Circe's house made of squared stones and standing on high ground in the middle of the forest. This forest was full of wild beasts, poor dazed creatures whom Circe had bewitched, but they fawned upon my men and did not harm them. When the men got to the door of her house they could hear her singing inside most beautifully, so they called her down, and when she came she asked them in, gave them a drugged drink, and then turned them into pigs – all except Eurylochus who had remained outside.

"Eurylochus made all haste back to tell me, and I started 244 for Circe's house. When I was in the wood where the wild beasts were, Mercury met me and gave me an herb called 277 Moly, which would protect me from Circe's spells; he also 305 told me how I should treat her. Then I went to her house, and called her to come down.

"She asked me in, and tried to bewitch me as she had the 312 others, but the herb which Mercury had given me protected me; so I rushed at her with my drawn sword. When she saw this, she said she knew I must be Ulysses, and that I must marry her at once. But I said, 'Circe, you have just turned my men into pigs, and have done your best to bewitch me into the bargain; how can you

expect me to be friendly with you? Still, if you will swear to take no unfair advantage of me, I will consent.' So she swore, and I consented at once.

"Then she set the four maid servants of her house to wash 348 me and feast me, but I was still moody and would not eat till Circe removed her spells from off my men, and brought them back safe and sound in human form. When she had done this she bade me go back to my ship and bring the rest of my men – which I presently did, and we staid with her for a whole twelve months, feasting continually and drinking an untold quantity of wine. At last, however, my men said that if I meant going home at all it was time I began to think of starting.

"That night, therefore, when I was in bed with Circe, 480 I told her how my men were murmuring, and asked her to let me go. This she said she would do; but I must first go down into the house of Hades, and consult the blind Theban prophet Tiresias. And she directed me what I should do.

"On the following morning I told my men, and we began 551 to get ready; but we had an accident before we started, for there was a foolish and not very valiant young man in my ship named Elpenor, who had got drunk and had gone on to the roof of Circe's house to sleep off his liquor in the cool. The bustle my men made woke him, and in his flurry he forgot all about coming down by the staircase, and fell right off the roof; whereby he broke his neck and was killed. We started, however, all the same, and Circe brought us a lamb and a black sheep to offer to the Shades below. She passed in and out among us, but we could not see her; who, indeed, can see the gods, when they are in no mind to be seen?

BOOK XI

Ulysses in the house of Hades.

"When we were at the water side we got the lamb and the ewe on board and put out to sea, running all that day before a fair wind which Circe had sent us, and at nightfall entering the deep waters of the river Oceanus. Here is the land of the Cimmerians, who dwell in darkness which the sun's rays never pierce; we therefore made our ships fast to the shore and came out of her, going along the beach till we reached the place of which Circe had told us.

"Perimedes and Eurylochus then held the victims, while 23 I followed the instructions of Circe and slaughtered them, letting their blood flow into a trench which I had dug for it. On this, the ghosts came up in crowds from Erebus, brides, young bachelors, old men, maids who had been crossed in love, and warriors with their armour still smirched with blood. They cried with a strange screaming sound that made me turn pale with fear, but I would let none of them taste of the blood till Tiresias should have come and answered my questions.

"The first ghost I saw was that of Elpenor whose body was 51 still lying unburied at Circe's house. Then I said, 'How now, Elpenor? you have got here sooner by land than I have done by water.' The poor fellow told me how he had forgotten about the stairs, and begged me to give him all due rites when I returned to Circe's island – which I promised faithfully that I would do.

"Then I saw the ghost of my mother Anticlea, but in all 81 sadness I would not let her taste of the blood till Tiresias should have come and answered my questions.

"Presently Tiresias came with his golden sceptre in his 90 hand, bade me let him taste of the blood, and asked me why I had come.

"I told him I would learn how I was to get home to 97 Ithaca, and he said I should have much difficulty; 'Still,' he continued, 'you will reach your home if you can restrain your men when you come to the Thrinacian island, where you will find the cattle of the Sun. If you leave these unharmed, after much trouble you will yet reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, you will lose your men, and though you may get home after all, it will be late, [on another man's ship,²⁴ and you will find your 115 house full of riotous men who are wasting your substance and wooing your wife.

"When you have got back you will indeed kill these men 118 either by treachery or in fair fight, and you must then take an oar, which you must carry till you have reached a people who know nothing about the sea and do not mix salt with their bread. These people have never heard of ships, nor of oars that are the wings with which ships fly; I will tell you how you may know them; you will meet a man by the way who will ask you whether it is a winnowing shovel that you have got upon your shoulder; when you hear this you must fix your oar in the ground, and offer sacrifice to Neptune, a ram, a bull and a boar; then go home again, and offer hecatombs to the gods that dwell in heaven.²⁵ As for your own end, death shall come to you very gently from the sea, and shall take you when you are full of years and peace of mind, and your people shall bless you.'] 137

"Having thus said he went back within the house of Hades. 150 Then I let my mother's ghost draw near and taste of the blood, whereon she knew me, and asked me what it was that had brought me though still alive into the abode of death. So I told her, and asked her how she had come by her end. 'Tell me, also,' I continued, 'about my father, and the son whom I left behind me. Is my property still safe in their hands, or does another hold it who thinks that I shall not return? Of what mind, again, is my wife? 177 Does she still live with her son and keep watch over his estate, or is she already married to the best man among the Achæans?'

²⁴ See [Chapter xv](#). for reasons why I have bracketed lines 115 – 137.

²⁵ Ulysses was to appease Neptune's anger by going as a missionary to preach his name among a people that did not know him.

"Your wife," answered my mother, 'is still at home, 180 but she spends her life in tears both night and day. Telemachus holds your estate, and sees much company, for he is a magistrate and all men invite him. Your father lives a poor hard life in the country and never goes near the town. As for me, I died of nothing but sheer grief on your account. And now, return to the upper world as fast as you can, that you may tell all that you have seen to your wife.'

"Then Proserpine sent up the ghosts of the wives and 225 daughters of great kings and heroes of old time, and I made each of them tell me about herself. There were Tyro, Antiope, Alcmena, Epicaste the mother of Ædipus, Chloris, Leda, Iphimedeia, Phædra, Procris, Ariadne, and hateful Eriphyle; with all these did I discourse, nor can I tell you with how many more noble women, for it is now late, and time to go to rest."

Here Ulysses ceased, and from one end of the covered 333 cloisters to the other his listeners sat entranced with the charm of his story.

Then Arete said, "What think you of this man now, 336 Phæacians, both as regards his personal appearance and his abilities? True he is my guest, but his presence is an honour to you all. Be not niggardly, therefore, in the presents that you will make him, for heaven has endowed you all with great abundance." Alcinous also spoke urging Ulysses to tell still more of his adventures, and to say whether he met any of the heroes who had fought together with him at Troy. Thus pressed Ulysses resumed his story.

"When Proserpine," said he, "had dismissed the female 385 ghosts, the ghost of Agamemnon drew near, surrounded by those of the men who had fallen with him in the house of Ægisthus. He was weeping bitterly, and I asked him how he met his end; whereon he detailed to me the treachery of Clytemnestra, which he said threw disgrace upon all women even on the good ones. 'Be sure,' he continued, 'that you 433 never be too open with your wife; tell her a part only, and keep the rest to yourself. Not that you need have any fear about Penelope for she is an admirable woman. You will meet your son, too, who by this time must be a 449 grown man. Nevertheless, do not let people know when you are coming home, but steal a march upon them. And now give me what news you can about my son Orestes.' To which I answered that I could tell him nothing.

"While we were thus holding sad talk with one another, 465 the ghost of Achilles came up and asked me for news of his father Peleus, and of his son. I said I could tell him nothing about Peleus, but his son Neoptolemus was with me in the wooden horse, and though all the others were trembling in every limb and wiping the tears from their cheeks, Neoptolemus did not even turn pale, nor shed a single tear. Whereon Achilles strode away over a meadow full of asphodel, exulting in the prowess of his son.

"Other ghosts then came up and spoke with me but that of 541 Ajax alone held aloof, for he was still brooding over the armour of Achilles which had been awarded to me and not to him. I spoke to him but he would not answer; nevertheless I should have gone on talking to him till he did, had I not been anxious to see yet other ghosts.

"I saw Minos with his golden sceptre passing sentence on 568 the dead; Orion also, driving before him over a meadow full of asphodel the ghosts of the wild beasts whom he had slain upon the mountains. I saw Tityus with the vulture ever digging its beak into his liver, Tantalus also, in a lake whose waters reached his neck but fled him when he would drink, and Sisyphus rolling his mighty stone uphill till the sweat ran off him and the steam rose from him.

"Then I saw mighty Hercules. The ghosts were screaming 601 round him like scared birds, flying all whithers. He looked black as night with his bare bow in his hand and his arrow on the string, glaring round as though ever on the point of taking aim. About his breast there was a wondrous golden belt marvellously enriched with bears, wild boars, and lions with gleaming eyes; there were also war, battle, and death.

"And I should have seen yet others of the great dead had 630 not the ghosts come about me in so many thousands that I feared Proserpine might send up the Gorgon's head. I therefore bade my

men make all speed back to their ship; so they hastened on board and we rowed out on to the waters of Oceanus, where before long we fell in with a fair wind.

BOOK XII

The Sirens – Scylla and Charybdis – the cattle of the Sun.

"As soon as we were clear of the river Oceanus, we got out into the open and reached the Ææan island, where there is dawn and sunrise. There we landed, camped down upon the beach, and waited till morning came. At daybreak I sent my men to fetch the body of Elpenor, which we burned and buried. We built a barrow over him, and in it we fixed the oar with which he had been used to row.

"When Circe heard that we had returned, she came down 16 with her maids, bringing bread and wine. 'To-day,' she said, 'eat and drink, and to-morrow go on your way.'

"We agreed to this, and feasted the live-long day to the 23 going down of the sun, but at nightfall Circe took me aside, and told me of the voyage that was before us. 'You will first,' said she, 'come to the island of the two Sirens, who sit in a field of flowers, and warble all who draw near them to death with the sweetness of their song. Dead men's bones are lying strewn all round them; still, if you would hear them, you can stop your men's ears with wax and bid them bind you to a cross-plank on the mast.

"As regards the next point that you will reach I can 55 give you no definite instructions as to which of two courses you must take. You must do the best you can. I can only put the alternatives before you. I refer to the cliffs which the gods call "the wanderers," and which close in on anything that would pass through them – even upon the doves that are bringing ambrosia to Father Jove. The sea moreover is strewn with wreckage from ships which the waves and hurricanes of fire have destroyed.

"Of the two rocks,²⁶ the one rises in a peak to 73 heaven, and is overhung at all times with a dark cloud that never leaves it. It looks towards the West, and there is a cave in it, higher than an arrow can reach. In this sits Scylla yelping with a squeaky voice like that of a young hound, but she is an awful monster with six long necks and six heads with three rows of teeth in each; whenever a ship passes, she springs out and snatches up a man in each mouth.

"The other rock is lower, but they are so close that 101 you can shoot an arrow from the one to the other. [On it there is a fig-tree in full leaf].²⁷ Underneath it 103 is the terrible whirlpool of Charybdis, which sucks the water down and vomits it out again three times a day. If you are there when she is sucking, not even Neptune can save you; so hug the Scylla side, for you had better lose six men than your whole crew.

"You will then arrive at the Thrinacian island, where 127 you will see the cattle of the Sun (and also his sheep) in charge of the two nymphs Lampetie and Phaëthusa. If 132 you leave these flocks unharmed, after much trouble you will yet reach Ithaca; but if you harm them, you will lose your men, and though you may get home after all, it will be late.'

"Here she ended, and at break of day we set out, with a 142 fair wind which Circe sent us. I then told my men about the two Sirens, but had hardly done so before we were at the island itself, whereon it fell a dead calm. I kneaded wax and stopped the men's ears; they bound me to a cross-plank on the mast; I heard the Sirens sing, and when I struggled to free myself they bound me still tighter. So we passed the island by.

"Shortly after this I saw smoke and a great wave ahead, 201 and heard a dull thumping sound. The sea was in an uproar, and my men were so frightened that they loosed hold of their oars, till I put heart into them, bade them row their hardest, and told the steersman to hug the Scylla side. But I said nothing about Scylla, though I kept straining my eyes all over her rock to see if I could espy her.

"So there we were, with Scylla on the one hand and dread 234 Charybdis on the other. We could see the sea seething as in a cauldron, and the black ooze at the bottom with a wall of whirling

²⁶ The want of coherence here is obvious, but as it is repeated when Ulysses ought to come to the wandering cliffs (which he never does) it must be referred to a *lacuna* not in the text, but in the writer's sources of information – of which she seems fully aware.

²⁷ I suppose this line to have been added when lines 426 – 446 of this book were added.

waters careering round it. While my men were pale with fear at this awful sight, Scylla shot out her long necks and swooped down on six of them. I could see their poor hands and feet struggling in the air as she bore them aloft, and hear them call out my name in one last despairing cry. This was the most horrid sight that I saw in all my voyages.

"Having passed the cliffs,²⁸ and Scylla and Charybdis, 260 we came to the Thrinacian island, and from my ship I could hear the cattle lowing, and the sheep bleating. Then, remembering the warning that Tiresias and Circe had given me, I bade my men give the island a wide berth. But Eurylochus was insolent, and sowed disaffection among them, so that I was forced to yield and let them land for the night, after making them swear most solemnly that they would do the cattle no harm. We camped, therefore, on the beach near a stream.

"But in the third watch of the night there came up a 312 great gale, and in the morning we drew our ship ashore and left her in a large cave wherein the sea nymphs meet and hold their dances. I then called my men together, and again warned them.

"It blew a gale from the South for a whole month, except 325 when the wind shifted to the East, and there was no other wind save only South and East. As long as the corn and wine which Circe had given us held out, my men kept their word, but after a time they began to feel the pangs of hunger, and I went apart to pray heaven to take compassion upon us. I washed my hands and prayed, and when I had done so, I fell asleep.

"Meanwhile Eurylochus set my men on to disobey me, and 339 they drove in some of the cattle and killed them. When I woke, and had got nearly back to the ship, I began to smell roast meat and knew full well what had happened.

"The nymph Lampetie went immediately and told the Sun 374 what my men had done. He was furious, and threatened Jove that if he was not revenged he would never shine in heaven again but would go down and give his light among the dead. 'All day long,' said he, 'whether I was going up heaven or down, there was nothing I so dearly loved to look upon as those cattle.'

"Jove told him he would wreck our ship as soon as it was 385 well away from land, and the Sun said no more. I know all this because Calypso told me, and she had it from Mercury.

"My men feasted six days – alarmed by the most awful 397 prodigies; for the skins of the cattle kept walking about, and the joints of meat lowed while they were being roasted. On the seventh day the wind dropped and we got away from the island, but as soon as we were out of sight of land a sudden squall sprang up, during which Jove struck our ship with his thunderbolts and broke it up. All my men were drowned, and so too should I have been, had I not made myself a raft by lashing the mast (which I found floating about) and the ship's keel together.

["The wind, which during the squall came from the West, 426 now changed to the South, and blew all night, so that by morning I was back between Scylla and Charybdis again. My raft got carried down the whirlpool, but I clung on to the boughs of the fig tree, for a weary weary while, during which I felt as impatient as a magistrate who is detained in court by troublesome cases when he wants to get home to dinner. But in the course of time my raft worked its way out again, and when it was underneath me I dropped on to it and was carried out of the pool. Happily for me Jove did not let Scylla see me.]"²⁹

²⁸ The wandering cliffs are certainly intended, for when Ulysses is recapitulating his adventures in Book xxiii. he expressly mentions having reached the *πλαγκτὰς πέτρας*, just after the Sirens, and before Scylla and Charybdis (xxiii. 327). The writer is determined to have them in her story however little she may know about them.

²⁹ I incline to think that these lines are an after thought, added by the writer herself.

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