The Odyssey
for Boys and Girls

Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

Chapter 1

The Cyclops

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A great many years ago there was a very famous siege of a city called Troy. The eldest son of the king who reigned in this city carried off the wife of one of the Greek kings, and with her a great quantity of gold and silver. She was the most beautiful woman in the world, and all the princes of Greece had come to her father's court wishing to marry her. Her father had made them all swear, that if any one should steal her away from the man whom she would choose for her husband, they would help him to get her back. This promise they had now to keep. So they all went to besiege Troy, each taking a number of his subjects with him. On the other hand, the Trojans were helped by many of the nations that lived near them. The siege lasted for a long time, but in the tenth year the city was taken. Then the Greeks began to think about going home. The story that you are now going to hear is about one of these Greek princes, Ulysses by name, who was the King of Ithaca. (This was an island on the west coast of Greece, and you can find it now marked on the map.) Ulysses was, according to one story, very unwilling to go. He had married, you see, a very good and beautiful wife, and had a little son. So he pretended to be mad, and took a plough down to the sea-shore and began to plough the sand. But some one took his little son and laid him in front of the plough. And when Ulysses stopped lest he should hurt him, people said: "This man is not really mad." So he had to go. And this is the story of how, at last, he came back.

When Troy had been taken, Ulysses and his men set sail for his home, the Island of Ithaca. He had twelve ships with him, and fifty men or thereabouts in each ship. The first place they came to was a city called Ismarus. This they took and plundered. Ulysses said to his men: "Let us sail away with what we have got." They would not listen to him, but sat on the sea-shore, and feasted, for they had found plenty of wine in the city, and many sheep and oxen in the fields round it. Meanwhile the people who had escaped out of the city fetched their countrymen who dwelt in the mountains, and brought an army to fight with the Greeks. The battle began early in the morning of the next day, and lasted nearly till sunset. At first the Greeks had the better of it, but in the afternoon the people of the country prevailed, and drove them to their ships. Very glad were they to get away; but when they came to count, they found that they had lost six men out of each ship.

After this a great storm fell upon the ships, and carried them far to the south, past the very island to which they were bound. It was very hard on Ulysses. He was close to his home, if he

could only have stopped; but he could not, and though he saw it again soon after, it was ten years before he reached it, having gone through many adventures in the meantime.

The first of these was in the country of the Cyclopes or Round-eyed People. Late on a certain day Ulysses came with his ships to an island, and found in it a beautiful harbour, with a stream falling into it, and a flat beach on which to draw up the ships. That night he and his men slept by the ships, and the next day they made a great feast. The island was full of wild goats. These the men hunted and killed, using their spears and bows. They had been on shipboard for many days, and had had but little food. Now they had plenty, eight goats to every ship, and nine for the ship of Ulysses, because he was the chief. So they ate till they were satisfied, and drank wine which they had carried away from Ismarus.

Now there was another island about a mile away, and they could see that it was larger, and it seemed as if there might be people living in it. The island where they were was not inhabited. So on the second morning Ulysses said to his men: "Stay here, my dear friends; I with my own ship and my own company will go to yonder island, and find out who dwells there, whether they are good people or no." So he and his men took their ship, and rowed over to the other island. Then Ulysses took twelve men, the bravest that there were in the ship, and went to search out the country. He took with him a goat-skin of wine, very strong and sweet, which the priest of Apollo at Ismarus had given him for saving him and his house and family, when the city was taken. There never was a more precious wine; one measure of it could be mixed with twenty measures of water, and the smell of it was wondrously sweet. Also he took with him some parched corn, for he felt in his heart that he might need some food.

After a while they came to a cave which seemed to be the dwelling of some rich and skilful shepherd. Inside there were pens for the young sheep and the young goats, and baskets full of cheeses, and milk-pans ranged against the walls. Then Ulysses' men said to him: "Let us go away before the master comes back. We can take some of the cheeses, and some of the kids and lambs." But Ulysses would not listen to them. He wanted to see what kind of man this shepherd might be, and he hoped to get something from him.

In the evening the Cyclops, the Round-eye, came home. He was a great giant, with one big eye in the middle of his forehead, and an eyebrow above it. He bore on his shoulder a huge bundle of pine logs for his fire. This he threw down outside the cave with a great crash, and drove the flocks inside, and then closed up the mouth with a big rock so big that twenty waggons could not carry it. After this he milked the ewes and the she-goats. Half the milk he curdled for cheese, and half he set aside for his own supper. This done, he threw some logs on the fire, which burnt up with a great flame, showing the Greeks, who had fled into the depths

of the cave, when they saw the giant come in.

"Who are you?" said the giant, "traders or pirates?"

"We are no pirates, mighty sir," said Ulysses, "but Greeks sailing home from Troy, where we have been fighting for Agamemnon, the great king, whose fame is spread abroad from one end of heaven to the other. And we beg you to show hospitality to us, for the gods love them who are hospitable."

"Nay," said the giant, "talk not to me about the gods. We care not for them, for we are better and stronger than they. But tell me, where have you left your ship?"

But Ulysses saw what he was thinking of when he asked about the ship, namely, that he meant to break it up so as to leave them no hope of getting away. So he said, "Oh, sir, we have no ship; that which we had was driven by the wind upon a rock and broken, and we whom you see here are all that escaped from the wreck."

The giant said nothing, but without more ado caught up two of the men, as a man might catch up two puppies, and dashed them on the ground, and tore them limb from limb, and devoured them, with huge draughts of milk between, leaving not a morsel, not even the bones. And when he had filled himself with this horrible food and with the milk of the flocks, he lay down among his sheep, and slept.

Then Ulysses thought: "Shall I slay this monster as he sleeps, for I do not doubt that with my good sword I can pierce him to the heart. But no; if I do this, then shall I and my comrades here perish miserably, for who shall be able to roll away the great rock that is laid against the mouth of the cave?"

So he waited till the morning, very sad at heart. And when the giant awoke, he milked his flocks, and afterward seized two of the men, and devoured them as before. This done, he went forth to the pastures, his flocks following him, but first he put the rock on the mouth of the cave, just as a man shuts down the lid of his quiver.

All day Ulysses thought how he might save himself and his companions, and the end of his thinking was this. There was a great pole in the cave, the trunk of an olive tree, green wood which the giant was going to use as a staff for walking when it should have been dried by the smoke. Ulysses cut off this a piece some six feet long, and his companions hardened it in the fire, and hid it away. In the evening the giant came back and did as before, seizing two of the prisoners and devouring them. When he had finished his meal, Ulysses came to him with the skin of wine in his hand and said, "Drink, Cyclops, now that you have supped. Drink this wine, and see what good things we had in our ship. But no one will bring the like to you in your

island here if you are so cruel to strangers."

The Cyclops took the skin and drank, and was mightily pleased with the wine.

"Give me more," he said, "and tell me your name, and I will give you a gift such as a host should. Truly this is a fine drink, like, I take it, to that which the gods have in heaven."

Then Ulysses said: "My name is No Man. And now give me your gift."

And the giant said: "My gift is this: you shall be eaten last." And as he said this, he fell back in a drunken sleep.

Then Ulysses said to his companions, "Be brave, my friends, for the time is come for us to be delivered from this prison."

So they put the stake into the fire, and kept it there till it was ready, green as it was, to burst into flame. Then they thrust it into his eye, for, as has been told, he had but one, and Ulysses leant with all his force upon the stake, and turned it about, just as a man turns a drill about when he would make a hole in a ship timber. And the wood hissed in the eye as the red-hot iron hisses in the water when a smith would temper it to make a sword.

Then the giant leapt up, and tore away the stake, and cried out so loudly that the Round-eyed people in the island came to see what had happened.

"What ails you," they asked, "that you make so great an uproar, waking us all out of our sleep? Is any one stealing your sheep, or seeking to hurt you?"

And the giant bellowed, "No Man is hurting me."

"Well," said the Round-eyed people, "if no man is hurting you, then it must be the gods that do it, and we cannot help you against them."

But Ulysses laughed when he thought how he had beguiled them by his name. But he was still in doubt how he and his companions should escape, for the giant sat in the mouth of the cave, and felt to see whether the men were trying to get out among the sheep. And Ulysses, after long thinking, made a plan by which he and his companions might escape. By great good luck the giant had driven the rams into the cave, for he commonly left them outside. These rams were very big and strong, and Ulysses took six of the biggest, and tied the six men that were left out of the twelve underneath their bellies with osier twigs. And on each side of the six rams to which a man was tied, he put another ram. So he himself was left, for there was no one who could do the same for him. Yet this also he managed. There was a very big ram, much bigger than all the others, and to this he clung, grasping the fleece with both his hands. So, when the morning came, the flocks went out of the cave as they were wont, and the giant felt

them as they passed by him, and did not perceive the men. And when he felt the biggest ram, he said—

"How is this? You are not used to lag behind; you are always the first to run to the pasture in the morning and to come back to the fold at night. Perhaps you are troubled about thy master's eye which this villain No Man has destroyed. First he overcame me with wine, and then he put out my eye. Oh! that you could speak and tell me where he is. I would dash out his brains upon the ground." And then he let the big ram go.

When they were out of the giant's reach, Ulysses let go his hold of the ram, and loosed his companions, and they all made as much haste as they could to get to the place where they had left their ship, looking back to see whether the giant was following them. The crew at the ship were very glad to see them, but wondered that there should be only six. Ulysses made signs to them to say nothing, for he was afraid that the giant might know where they were if he heard their voices. So they all got on board and rowed with all their might. But when they were a hundred yards from the shore, Ulysses stood up in the ship and shouted: "You are an evil beast, Cyclops, to devour strangers in your cave, and are rightly served in losing your eye. May the gods make you suffer worse things than this!"

The Cyclops, when he heard Ulysses speak, broke off the top of a rock and threw it to the place from which the voice seemed to come. The rock fell just in front of the ship, and the wave which it made washed it back to the shore. But Ulysses caught up a long pole and pushed the ship off, and he nodded with his head, being afraid to speak, to his companions to row with all their might. So they rowed; and when they were twice as far off as before, Ulysses stood up again in the ship, as if he were going to speak again. And his comrades begged him to be silent.

"Do not make the giant angry," they said; "we were almost lost just now when the wave washed us back to the shore. The monster throws a mighty bolt, and throws it far."

But Ulysses would not listen, but cried out: "Hear, Cyclops, if any man ask you who put out your eye, say that it was Ulysses of Ithaca."

Then the giant took up another great rock and threw it. This time it almost touched the end of the rudder, but missed by a hand's breadth. This time, therefore, the wave helped them on. So big was it that it carried the ship to the other shore.

Now Ulysses had not forgotten to carry off sheep from the island for his companions. These he divided among the crews of all the ships. The great ram he had for his own share. So that day the whole company feasted, and they lay down on the sea-shore and slept.

Chapter 2

Of the Home of the Winds and of Circe

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The next day Ulysses and his companions set sail. After a while they came to the floating island where the King of the Winds had his home. Ulysses told the king all his story, how he had fought against Troy, and what had happened to him afterwards. For a whole month the king made him welcome, and when he wished to go home, he did what he could to help him. He took the hide of an ox, very thick and strong, and put in it all the winds that would hinder him in getting to his home, and fastened it to the deck of his ship. Then he made a gentle wind blow from the west. For nine days it blew, till the ships were very near to the island of Ithaca—so near that they could see the lights on the cliffs. But just before dawn on the tenth day, Ulysses, who had kept awake all the time, for he would not let any one else take the rudder, fell asleep. And the crew of his ship said to each other: "See that great bag of ox hide. It must have something very precious inside it—silver and gold and jewels. Why should the chief have all these good things to himself?" So they cut the bag open, and all the winds rushed out and blew the ship away from Ithaca. Ulysses woke up at the noise, and at first thought that he would throw himself into the sea and die. Then he said to himself, "No! it is better to live," and he covered his face and lay still, without saying a word to his men. And the ships were driven back to the island of the King of the Winds.

Ulysses went to the king's palace with one of his companions, and sat down outside the door. The king came out to see him, and said, "How is this? Why did you not get to your home?" Ulysses said, "I fell asleep, and my men opened the bag. I pray you to help me again." "Nay," answered the king, "it is of no use to help the man whom the gods hate. Go away!"

So Ulysses and his men launched their ships again and rowed for six days and nights. On the seventh day they came to a certain city named Lamos, a country where the night is as light as the day. Here there was a fine harbour, with a very narrow mouth, and high rocks all round it, so that it was always calm. It seemed so pleasant a place that all the ships were taken inside by their crews, only Ulysses thought it safer to keep his ship outside. He sent two of his men to see the king of the place. These met a very tall and strong girl as they went, and asked her the way to the palace. She told them—and, indeed, she was the king's daughter. So they knocked at the door; but when it was opened, and they saw the queen, they were terribly frightened, for she was as big as a mountain, and dreadful to look at. They ran away, but the queen called to her husband the king, and the king shouted to the people of the city. They were cannibals all of

them, and when they saw the ships they threw great rocks at them and broke them in pieces; and when the men tried to swim to shore, they speared them as if they had been fishes, and devoured them. So all the ships inside the harbour were destroyed; only the ship of Ulysses was left. He cut the cable with his sword, and cried to his men to row away with all their might, and so they escaped. But Ulysses had now only one ship left with its crew out of the twelve which he had at first.

After a while they came to a strange island, and drew up their ship upon the beach, and sat beside it weeping and lamenting, for now there were but some thirty or so left out of six hundred. This they did for two days. On the third day Ulysses took his spear and sword, and climbed up a hill that was near, to see what kind of a place they had come to. From the top of the hill he saw a great wood, and a smoke rising up out of the midst of it, showing that there was a house there. Then he thought to himself: "I will go back to the ship, and when we have dined, some of us will go and see who lives in the island." But as he went towards the shore, he saw a great stag coming down to a spring to drink, and it crossed the path almost in front of him. Then he threw his spear at the beast, and killed it; and he tied its feet together, and put it on his neck, and carried it leaning on his spear, for, indeed, it was a very heavy load for a man to bear. When he came to the ship, he threw down the stag on the shore, and the men looked up, and were glad to see the great beast. So they feasted on deer's flesh and wine, and Ulysses put off the searching of the island till the next day.

In the morning he told them what he had seen, but the searching of the island did not please, for they thought of what they had suffered already. Then Ulysses said: "We shall divide the crew into two companies; one shall be mine, and of the other Eurylochus shall be chief; and we will cast lots to see who shall search the island." So they cast lots, and the lot of Eurylochus came out first. So he went, and twenty men or so with him, and in the middle of the wood they found an open space, and in the space a palace, and all about it wolves and lions were wandering. The men were very much afraid of the beasts, but they did them no harm. Only they got up on their hind legs and fawned on them, as dogs fawn upon their master, hoping to get some scraps of food from him. And they heard the voice of some one who sat inside the palace and sang as she worked a loom, and a very sweet voice it was. Then said one of the men: "Let us call to this singer, and see whether she is a woman or a goddess." So they called, and a certain Circ , who was said to be a daughter of the Sun, came out, and asked them to go in. This they did, and also they drank out of a cup which she gave them. A cup of wine it seemed to be, mixed with barley-meal and honey, but she had put in it some strange drug, which makes a man forget all that he loves. And when they had drunk, lo! they were turned into pigs. They had snouts and bristles, and they grunted like pigs, but they had the hearts of

men. And Circ shut them in sties, and gave them acorns and beech-mast to eat.

But Eurylochus had stayed outside when the others went in, and he ran back to the ship and told Ulysses what had happened. Then Ulysses armed himself, and said: "I will go and save these men." Nor would he listen when the others begged him not to go. "Thou wilt not do them any good," they said, "but wilt perish thyself." "Nay," he answered; "stay here if you will, and eat and drink; but I must go and rescue my men, for I am their chief."

So he went; and when he came near to the house, he saw a very beautiful youth, who had a golden stick in his hand. The youth said: "Ulysses, art thou come to rescue thy comrades? That thou canst not do. Thou wilt rather perish thyself. But stay; you are one that fears the gods, therefore they will help you. I will give you such a drug as shall make all Circ 's drugs of no power. Drink the cup that she gives you, but first put into it this drug." So he showed Ulysses a certain herb which had a black root and a flower as white as milk. It was called Moly.

So Ulysses took the herb moly in his hand, and went and stood in the porch of Circ 's palace, and called to her. And when Circ heard him she opened the door, and said, "Come in." Then he went in, and she made him sit on a great chair of carved oak, and gave him wine to drink in a gold cup. But she had mixed a deadly drug in the wine. So Ulysses took up the cup and drank, but before he drank he put the moly into it. Then Circ struck him with her wand, and said, "Go now to the sty, and lie there with thy fellows." But Ulysses drew his sword, and rushed at her, as if he would have killed her. She caught him by the knees and prayed him not to hurt her. And she said: "How is this, that my drugs do thee no harm? I did not think that there was any man on earth who could do so. Surely thou must be Ulysses, for Hermes told me that he would come to this island when he was on his way back to his home from Troy. Come now, let us be friends." But Ulysses said: "How can we be friends when thou hast turned my companions into swine? And now I am afraid that thou wilt do me some great harm if thou canst take me unawares. Swear to me then, by a great oath, that thou wilt not hurt me." So Circ sware.

Then her handmaids, very lovely women born in the springs and streams and woods, prepared a feast. One set purple rugs on the chairs, and another set silver tables by the chairs, and others put on the tables baskets of gold. Also they made ready a bath of hot water for Ulysses, and put some wonderful thing into the water, so that when he had bathed he did not feel tired any more. Then one of the women, who was the housekeeper, and whom they all obeyed, brought Ulysses some very fine wheaten bread, and set many dainty dishes on the tables. Then Circ said: "Eat and drink, Ulysses." But he sat and ate and drank nothing. "How is

this?" she said. "Dost thou think that I will harm thee? Did I not swear a great oath that I would not?" And Ulysses said: "How can I eat and drink when my companions have been changed into brute beasts?"

Then Circ arose from her chair, and took her wand in her hand, and went to the sties where she had put the men that had been turned into swine. And she opened the doors of the sties, and rubbed a wonderful drug on each beast as he came out. And, lo! in a moment the bristles fell from their bodies, and they became men again, only they looked to be younger and more handsome than they were before. And when they saw their chief, they clung to him, weeping for joy. Even Circ herself felt a little pity.

After this they all went into the palace, and ate and drank. And when they had finished their meal, Circ said to Ulysses: "Go now to thy ship, and put away all the goods that are in it and all the tackle in the caves that are on the sea-shore, and then come back here, and bring the rest of your comrades with you."

So Ulysses went. And when his companions saw him, they were very glad, for they had thought that he was lost. They were as glad as calves which have been penned in the yard all day when their mothers come back from the fields in the evening. But when Ulysses said to them: "Come back with me to the great house in the wood," Eurylochus said to them, "Don't go, my friends; if you do, you will be turned into lions or bears or pigs, and will be kept shut up for the rest of your lives. This foolhardy Ulysses is always leading us into trouble. Was it not he who took us to the cave of the Cyclops?" Ulysses was very angry when he heard this, and was ready to kill the man. But the others stopped him from doing it. "We will go with you," they said, "and if this man is afraid, let him stay by the ship." So they went with Ulysses, and Eurylochus himself, when he saw them go, went with them.

For a whole year Ulysses and his companions stayed with Circ . She feasted them royally, and they were well content to be her guests. But at the end of the year the men said to their chief: "Should we not be thinking of going home?" And he knew that they were right. So he said to Circ : "It is time for us to go home. Pray do what you can to help us on our way." Circ said: "I would not keep a guest against his will."

So they made their ship ready, and Circ and her handmaids brought down to the shore flesh and bread and wine in plenty, and they stored them away as provision for their voyage, and then they departed. But first Circ told Ulysses what things would happen to them by the way, and what he and his companions ought to do, and what they ought to avoid, if they wished to get safely home.

Chapter 3

Of the Sirens and Other Wonders

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The first place they came to was the Island of Sirens. The Sirens were women of the sea, such as mermaids are, who sang so sweetly, and with such lovely voices, that no one who heard them could pass on his way, but was forced to go to them. But when he came near the Sirens flew upon him and tore him to pieces, and devoured him. So they sat there on their island, with the bones of dead men all round them, and sang. Now Circ had warned Ulysses about these dreadful creatures, and told him what he ought to do. So he closed the ears of his companions with wax so tightly that they could hear nothing. As for himself, he made his men tie him with ropes to the mast of the ship. "And see," he said, "that you don't loose me, however much I may beg and pray." As soon as the ship came near to the island the wind ceased to blow, and there was a great calm, and the men took down the sails, and put out their oars, and began to row. Then the Sirens saw the ship, and began to sing. And Ulysses, where he stood bound to the mast, heard them. And when he understood what they said he forgot all his prudence, for they promised just the thing that he wanted. For he was a man who never could know enough, he thought, about other countries and the people who dwelt in them, what they think and how they spend their days. And the Sirens said that they could tell him all this. Then he made signs with his head to his men, for his hands and feet were bound, that they should loose him. But they remembered what he had told them, and rowed on. And two of them even put new bonds upon him lest he should break the old ones. So they got safely past the Island of the Sirens.

And now Ulysses had to choose between two ways. One of them was through the Wandering Rocks. Circ had told him of these; that they were rocks which floated about in the sea, and that when any ship came near them they moved very fast through the water, and caught the ship between them and broke it up. So fast did they move that they caught even the birds as they flew. And Circ told him that only one ship had ever escaped them, and that this was the Argo , when the heroes went in it to fetch back the Golden Fleece. "This," said Circ , "was by the special favour of the gods, and because there were many children of the gods among the crew." So Ulysses thought it better not to try that way, though the other way was dreadful also.

After a while they saw what looked like smoke going up from the sea, and heard a great roar of the waves dashing upon the rocks, for they were coming near to another dangerous

place which Circ had warned them about. This was a narrow place between the mainland and an island. On the one side there was a cave, in which there dwelt a terrible monster, Scylla by name, and on the other side there was a dreadful whirlpool. If a ship ever got into that, it was sucked down to the bottom of the sea and never came up again. Now, Circ had told Ulysses all about this place, and had told him what he should do. "It will be better," she had said, "to go near Scylla than to go near Charybdis; one or other of these two thou must do, for there is no room in the middle. It is true that Scylla will pounce down upon your ship when it comes within her reach, and will take out of it six men, one for each of the six heads which she has. But if you go too near to Charybdis then will your whole ship be swallowed up; and it is better to lose six men than that all should be drowned." And when Ulysses had said, "May I not take shield and spear and fight with this monster?" Circ had answered, "Thou art wonderfully bold; thou wouldst fight with the gods themselves. But be sure that thou canst not fight with Scylla; she is too strong for any man. And while you linger she will take six other men. No: fly from the place as fast as you can." So had Circ spoken to Ulysses, and he remembered what she had said; but he did not tell it to his companions, lest they should lose heart.

So now he bade the steersman steer the ship as near as he could to that side of the strait on which was Scylla's cave. Nevertheless, they went very close to the whirlpool. And a wonderful sight it was, for at one time you could see to the very bottom of the sea, and at another the water seemed to boil up almost to the top of the cliffs. Now, Ulysses had said nothing to his men about the monster on the other side, for he was afraid that if they knew about her they would not go on with their voyage. So they all stood and watched the whirlpool, and while they were doing this there came down upon the ship Scylla's dreadful hands, and caught up six of the crew, the bravest and strongest of them all. Ulysses heard them cry to him to help them, but he could do nothing to help them. And this, he used to say afterwards, was the very saddest thing that happened to him in all his troubles.

After this the ship came to the Island of the Three Capes, which is now called Sicily. And while they were still a long way off, Ulysses heard the bleating of sheep and the lowing of cattle. As soon as he heard these sounds he remembered what Circ had told him about the last of the dangers which he and his companions would meet on their way home. What Circ had said was this: "You will come, last of all, to a beautiful island, where the Sun keeps his herds and flocks. There are seven herds of cattle and fifty in each, and seven flocks of sheep of fifty also; and each has a nymph to look after it. Now, I advise you to sail by this island without landing. If you do, you will get safe home; but if you land, perhaps your men will kill some of the Sun's cattle and sheep for food. And if they do this, something dreadful is sure to happen to them." So Ulysses said to his men: "Listen to me. Circ told me that this island was a very

dangerous place, and that we had better sail by it without landing, and that if we did we should get safe home. Think, now, how many of our companions have been lost, and that we only remain. Take my advice, I pray you, for some of us at least will be saved." But Eurylochus said: "Truly, Ulysses, you seem to be made of iron, for you are never tired, and now you would have us pass by this beautiful island without landing, though we have been working for days and nights without rest. And, besides, it is not safe to sail at night. Perhaps some storm will fall upon us, or a strong wind will spring up from the south or west, as it often does in these parts, and break our ship to pieces. No; let us stay for the night, and sleep on land, and to-morrow we will sail again on the sea till we get to our home." And all the others agreed with what he said. Then Ulysses knew that he was going to suffer some terrible thing. And he said: "You are many and I am one; so I cannot stop you from doing what you will. But swear all of you an oath, that if you find here any flock of sheep or herd of cattle, you will not touch them; no, however hungry you may be, but that you will be content with the food that Circ gave us."

So they all swore an oath that they would not touch sheep or cattle. Then they moored the ship in a creek, where there were little streams falling into the sea. And they took their meal upon the shore. After the meal they mourned for their companions whom Scylla had carried off from the ship, and when they had done this, they slept.

The next morning Ulysses told them again that they must not touch the sheep or cattle, but must be content with the food that they had. And he told them also the reason: "These creatures," he said, "belong to the Sun, and the Sun is a mighty god, and he sees everything that men do over all the earth."

But now the wind blew from the south for a whole month, day after day, except some days when it blew from the east. Now, neither the south wind nor the east wind was good for their voyage, so that they could not help staying on the island. As long as any of the food that Circ had given them remained, they were content. And when this was eaten up they wandered about the island, searching for food. They snared birds and caught fishes, but they never had enough, and their hunger was very hard to bear. And Ulysses prayed to the gods that they would help him, but it seemed that they took no heed of him.

At last Eurylochus said to his companions: "Listen, my friends, to me, for we are all in a very evil case. Death is a dreadful thing, but nothing is so dreadful as to die of hunger, and this we are likely to do. Let us take some of these oxen and make a sacrifice to the gods, and when we have given them their portion we will eat the rest ourselves. And after the sacrifice we will pray to them that they will send us a favourable wind. Also we will promise to build a great and fair temple to the Sun when we get to our home. And if the Sun is angry on account of the

oxen, and is minded to sink our ship, let it be so; it is better to be drowned than to die of hunger."

To this they all agreed; and Eurylochus drove some of the fattest of the kine down to the shore, and the men killed them, and made sacrifice according to custom. They had no meal to sprinkle over the flesh, so they used leaves instead; and they had no wine, so they used water. And when they had done this, and were now beginning their feast, Ulysses, who had been asleep, awoke, and he smelt the smell of roast flesh, and knew that his companions had broken their oath, and had killed some of the beasts of the Sun.

In the meantime, two of the nymphs that kept the cattle had flown up to the sky, and had told the Sun what had been done. And when the Sun heard it, he was very angry, and said to the other gods: "See now what these wicked companions of Ulysses have done. They have killed the cattle which it is my delight to see, both when I climb up the sky and when I come down from it. Now, if they are not punished for this evil deed, I will not shine any more upon the earth, but will give my light to the place of darkness that is underneath it." And the king of the gods answered, "Shine, O Sun, upon the earth as thou art wont to do. I will break the ship of these sinners with my thunderbolt while they are sailing on the sea."

Ulysses was very angry with his companions, and rebuked them for their folly, and because they had broken their oath. But he could not undo what had been done, for the kine were dead. And the men were greatly frightened by what they saw and heard; for the skins of the cattle that had been killed crept along the ground, and the flesh bellowed on the spits as if the beasts had been still alive. Nevertheless they did not leave off feasting on them. For six days they feasted, and on the seventh day they set sail.

For a time all seemed to go well, for the wind blew as they desired. But when they were now out of sight of land, suddenly all the sky was covered with a dark cloud, and a great wind came down upon the ship, and snapped the shrouds on either side of the mast. Then the mast fell backwards and broke the skull of the man that held the rudder and steered the ship, so that he fell into the sea. Next there came down a great thunderbolt from the sky, and the ship was filled with fire and smoke from one end of it to the other. And all the men were blown out of the ship, some on one side and some on the other. Only Ulysses was left. He stayed on the ship till the ribs were broken away from the keel by the waves. And when only the mast and the keel were left together, Ulysses bound himself by a thong of leather to them, and sat on them, and was driven by the wind over the waves. All night long was he driven, and when the day dawned he came to the passage where there was Scylla's cave on one side and the great whirlpool on the other. Now, there was a fig-tree that grew at the top of the cliff that was above

the whirlpool. Circ had told Ulysses of this same tree, for she knew all things, and Ulysses remembered her words; and when the keel and the mast were carried up to the top, he caught hold of the branches. But he found that he could not climb any higher, so he waited till the keel and the mast should come again, for they had been swallowed up. For four hours or so he waited, and when he saw them again, he loosed his hold on the fig-tree, and caught hold of them, and sat upon them as he had done before. Now after the water had risen to the top, there was calm for a little time before it began to sink again, and Ulysses paddled with his hands as hard as he could, and so got away. By good luck Scylla did not see him, for if she had, he would most certainly have perished.

For eight days and nights Ulysses was carried by the winds and waves over the sea, and on the ninth day he came to a beautiful island where there dwelt a goddess, by name Calypso. There he lived for seven long years. Long they seemed, for though he had all that a man could wish for, yet he would gladly have gone home. "Oh!" he would say to himself, "if I could but see the smoke rising up from the chimneys of my own home!" But the island was far away in the midst of the sea, and no ship came near to it. So he could do nothing but wait.

Chapter 4

Of What Happened in Ithaca

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

Now we must leave Ulysses in the island of Calypso, and see what was gong on at his home in Ithaca. You have been already told that before he went to Troy he had married a wife, Penelop by name, and had a son who was called Telemachus. When this son was still only a baby, Ulysses had to go to Troy with the other chiefs of the Greeks to fight with the Trojans. And now nearly twenty years had passed, and he had not come home: and no one knew what had become of him. What had happened to the other chiefs every one knew. Some had died during the siege, and others had perished on the way home, and the leader of them all had come back and been wickedly killed by his wife, and another had had to fly from his home and build a city in a distant country, and others had got back safely, sooner or later; but Ulysses was still absent, and, as has been said, no one knew where he was, or whether he was alive or dead. But it seemed most likely that he was dead. It is no wonder, then, that many of the young men among the nobles of Ithaca, and of the islands round about, came and tried to persuade his wife Penelop to marry again. "It is of no use," they said, "for you to wait any longer for your husband. By this time he must be dead. And you ought to have some one to look after your property and your kingdom, for your son is too young to do this properly."

Now Penelop believed in her heart that her husband was alive, and that he would come back; but she knew that hardly any one else believed it. And she felt very helpless. The people of Ithaca thought that she ought to marry again. They were very badly governed when there was no king. Even if the man whom she chose—for, of course, her husband would be king—was not very good, this would be better than to have a whole crowd of men coming day after day to the palace, eating and drinking and gambling, and wasting the king's goods. So she tried to gain time. She thought to herself: "If I can put off these people"—suitors they were called—"for a while, perhaps my husband will come back in the meanwhile." So she said to them: "You know that my husband's father is an old man, and that it would be a great disgrace to me if he were to die and there were no proper grave clothes to bury him in; for you know that he has been a king, and should be buried with honour. Let me weave a shroud for him, and when this is finished, then I will choose one from among you to be my husband." The Suitors were glad to hear this, for they said to themselves: "This weaving cannot take a very long time; and when it is finished, then one of us, at least, will get what he wants." So they waited, but somehow the weaving was not finished. The truth was that the queen undid every night what

she had done in the day. How long this would have gone on no one knows, but at last one of the women that waited on the queen told the secret to a friend of hers among the Suitors. That night three or four of them were taken by the woman to the queen's own room, and found her undoing what she had done in the day. So the queen could not put the Suitors off any longer in this way; the shroud was finished, and she did not know what to do.

Now there was one among the gods and goddesses who more than all the others cared for Ulysses. This was Athen , the goddess of Wisdom, and she loved Ulysses because he was so wise. And Athen thought to herself: "Now there are two things to be done: we must bring Ulysses back to his home; he has been away for twenty years, and that is enough, and too much. And we must not let Telemachus, his son, sit still any longer and do nothing, as if he did not care at all what has happened to his father, and whether he is alive or dead. It would be a bad thing if Ulysses were to come home and find out that Telemachus had never taken any pains to look for him or ask about him. For Telemachus is now a young man, and able to think and act." And Athen , being wise, saw that this was the first thing to do, for nothing could be worse than that, for any reason, father and son should not be good friends. And the way in which she stirred up Telemachus was this.

One day he sat among the Suitors, who were feasting and playing draughts in his father's house. Every day did they come thither, and they made a sad waste of the things which belonged to Ulysses. The sheep and oxen and swine were killed for their meat, and they drank the wines from his cellars. And Telemachus could do nothing, for he was but one against many. As he sat very sad at heart, there came a stranger to the door. Now this stranger was Athen , who had come down to the earth and taken a man's shape. When Telemachus saw him, he got up from his place and brought him in, and commanded his servants to set food and drink before him.

When he had ended his meal, Telemachus asked him his business. The stranger said: "I am Mentes; I am king of the Taphians, and I am on my way to Cyprus with a cargo of iron, which I am going to exchange for copper. And I have come wishing to see your father, for I knew him and his father also. But now they tell me that he is not here. Something has hindered him from coming home, for I am sure that he is alive. But who are these? what are they doing here? Is this a wedding feast? A wise man would not like to see such doings in his house."

And Telemachus answered: "Oh, sir, while my father was yet alive, this house was rich and prosperous. But now that he is gone, things go very ill with me. It had been far better if he had fallen in battle fighting against the Trojans, but now the sea has swallowed him up. And these men are the princes of Ithaca and of the islands round about, and they come, they say,

seeking my mother in marriage. She will neither say Yes nor No to them. Meanwhile they sit and waste my substance."

Then said Mentes: "It is indeed time that Ulysses should come back and put an end to such doings. But it is time also that you should do something for yourself. Now listen to me. First call the people of Ithaca to an Assembly. It is well to have the people on your side. Then bid the Suitors depart, each man to his house. And if your mother be minded to take another husband, let her go back to her father's house, and let her own people make ready a wedding feast and other things such as a daughter should have. When these things are done, make ready a ship with twenty oars, and go inquire after your father; perhaps some man may have seen him or heard of him; perhaps the gods themselves will give you an answer if you ask them. Go first to Pylos, where the old man Nestor lives. After that go to Sparta, and see King Menela s, for he was the last of all the Greeks to get back to his home. And if you should find out that your father is dead, then raise a mound for him, and give him such honours as are due to the dead. And if these Suitors still trouble you, then devise some way of slaying them. It is time for you to behave yourself as a man."

Telemachus said: "You speak to me as a father might speak to his son, nor will I ever forget what you have said. But come now, stay awhile, that I may give you some goodly gift such as a friend should give to a friend."

"Nay," said Mentes, "I cannot stay. Keep your gift, I pray you, till I come again."

So he rose from his seat, and went out at the door. And lo! of a sudden he seemed to change his shape. It was as if he were changed into a sea-eagle. And Telemachus knew that this stranger was not Mentes, but the goddess Athen . And he went back to the hall of the palace, where a minstrel, Phemius by name, was telling the tale of how the Greeks came back from Troy, and of the many things which they suffered because they had sinned against the gods. And lo! in the midst of his telling, Penelop came down from the upper chamber where she sat, having two handmaids with her. She stood in the door of the hall, having drawn her veil over her face, and said to the minstrel: "Phemius, you know many tales about the deeds of gods and men. Tell one of these, and let the guests hear it while they drink their wine. But tell this tale no more, for it breaks my heart to hear it. Surely I am the most unhappy of women, for of all the chiefs that went to Troy, and never came back to their homes, my husband was the most famous."

Then said Telemachus: "Mother, why do you forbid the minstrel to make us glad in the way that he thinks best? Why do you forbid him to sing of the coming back of the Greeks? 'Tis a new tale, and men always like to hear that which is new. Go back, then, to your chamber, and

mind the business of the house, and see that your maids do their work, their spinning and the like. But here I am master."

And Penelop went back to her chamber without answering a word, for never had Telemachus spoken in such a way before. But she wept for Ulysses her husband, till sleep came down upon her eyes.

And when she was gone, Telemachus said to the Suitors: "Let us now feast and be merry, and let there be no quarrelling among us. And let us listen to the minstrel's tale. What could we do better, for his voice is as the voice of a god. But mark this. To-morrow we will have an Assembly of the people, and there I will declare my purpose. And my purpose is this—that you go away from this place, and eat and drink in your own homes at your own cost."

And they were astonished at his boldness, just as his mother had been astonished, for he had never so spoken before. And one of them, whose name was Antino s, said: "Surely it is some god that makes you speak so boldly. I hope that you will never be king here in Ithaca, though it is but right that you should have that which belonged to your father."

Telemachus said: "I know that it is a good thing to be a king, for a king has riches and honour. But there are many here in Ithaca, young men and old, who may have the kingdom now that Ulysses is dead. Only this I know, that I will be master in my own house."

Then stood up another of the Suitors, and said: "It is for the gods to settle who shall be king in Ithaca; but that you ought to be master in your own house, and keep your own goods, no man will deny. But tell me, who was this stranger that came just now to the palace? Did he bring news of your father, or did he come on business of his own? Why did he not stay to greet us? He was no common man, I take it."

Telemachus answered: "As for tidings of my father, I do not make any count of them, whoever it is that brings them; Ulysses will come back no more. And as for the soothsayers whom my mother loves to entertain, that find out for her what has befallen her husband, I think nothing of them. They are makers of lies. As for this stranger about whom you ask: he was Mentes, king of the Taphians." So he said, but he knew in his heart that the stranger was Athen
.

Then the Suitors feasted, and made merry with singing and dancing, till the night was far spent; and they went each man to his own home to sleep. But Telemachus went to his chamber, and Eurycleia, who had been his nurse when he was but a baby, led the way, holding a torch in either hand, to light him. And when he came to the chamber, he took off his doublet and gave it to the nurse, and she folded it and smoothed it, and hung it on a pin. This done, she went out

and pushed to the door and made it fast. But Telemachus lay long awake, thinking of the journey which he was about to take.

Chapter 5

How Telemachus Went to Look for His Father

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

The next day, as soon as it was light, Telemachus sent the officers to call the people to the Assembly. And when the people heard the call, they came quickly, for such a thing had not happened now for many years. And, when they were all gathered together, Telemachus himself went, holding a spear in his hand, and with two dogs at his heels. And when he sat down in his father's place all who were there wondered to see him, for he looked not like the boy but like a man.

The first that stood up in the Assembly was a certain old man, Aegyptus by name—very old he was, so that he was almost bent double, and he was very wise. He had four sons, but one was dead, for he had gone with Ulysses to Troy, and had died, with the rest of Ulysses' companions, on his way back, as has been told. Another son was one of the Suitors; and two were with their father, working on the farm. Aegyptus said: "Listen to me, men of Ithaca! who has called us together to-day? Is it Telemachus who has done this? If it is he, what does he want? Has he heard anything of his father, and of the men who went with him to fight against Troy?"

Then Telemachus stood up in his place and said: "Men of Ithaca, I am in great trouble. First, I fear that my father is dead, and you, who all loved him, feel for me. And then there have come men from all the islands round about, making suit to my mother, and while they wait they devour my substance. But my mother will not listen to any one of them, for she still believes that her husband will come back. Yes; they waste all that I have, and I cannot hinder them from doing it."

And he dashed his spear on the ground, and sat down weeping. Then one of the Suitors, Antino□s by name, stood up and said: "Telemachus, do not blame us, but blame your mother. Surely there never was so crafty a woman." And he told the people the story of the web, how she wove it by day and unwove it by night. "Do not let her put us off any longer. Make her choose one of us and marry him. But till you do this, we will not leave your house."

Then said Telemachus: "How could I do this to my own mother? It would be against my duty as a son. And besides, I should have to pay a great sum of money to her father, all the dowry that she brought with her. No; I cannot do this thing."

And when he had ended his speech there happened a strange thing. Two eagles were seen high up in the air, which flew along till they came to the place where the Assembly was. Then they fought together, and tore from each other many feathers.

Then said a certain man who knew what such things meant: "Beware, ye Suitors; great trouble is coming to you and to others. As for Ulysses, he said that he should come back to Ithaca in the twentieth year after his going, and that, I verily believe, he will do."

Then Telemachus spake again: "Give me a ship with twenty rowers, and I will go to the mainland, to certain kings who went to Troy with my father, as Nestor and Menela□s. And if I hear that he is dead, I will come back, and make a great mound for him that will keep his name in remembrance, and I will also make my mother choose another husband."

Then stood up one Mentor, whom Ulysses had made steward of his house when he went away, and said: "I am ashamed of this people of Ithaca. There is not one of them who remembers Ulysses, and yet he was as gentle as a father with them. Let no king henceforth be gentle and kind. Let him rather be a hard man and unrighteous, for then his people will remember him. See, now, these Suitors, how they are bent on doing evil. Well, I will not hinder them. They will have to suffer for what they do. But the people I blame. See, now, how they sit without saying a word, when they ought to cry shame upon the Suitors; and yet they are many in number and the Suitors are few."

Then stood up one of the Suitors, and said: "Surely, Mentor, your wits are wandering, when you bid the people put us down by force. They could not do it. And if Ulysses himself came back, he could not do it. He would come to a bad end if he fought with us, for we are many in number. And as for the ship and the twenty rowers that Telemachus asks for, let Mentor find them for him. As for me, I do not think that he will be able to do it."

Then the Assembly was dismissed. And Telemachus went down to the sea-shore; and after he had washed his hands in the sea, he prayed to Athen□, saying: "Hear me, O goddess, thou didst bid me yesterday take a ship and rowers and ask about my father—yes, it was thou, though it seemed as if King Mentes was speaking to me—but the Suitors hinder me, and the people will not help. I pray thee, therefore, to put it into my heart what I should do."

And while he was yet speaking, Athen□ stood before him, and she had taken the shape of Mentor the steward. She said: "Be brave; you have spirit and wit; and are, I take it, a true son of your father and mother. Go now on this journey, for I trust that it will turn out to your profit. As for the Suitors, take no thought about them; they speak folly, and do not know the doom that is coming upon them. Make ready provisions for a journey, wine and meat; meanwhile I will collect men who will offer of their own free will to go with you, and I will also find a ship,

the best in all Ithaca."

So Telemachus went back to the palace, and he found the Suitors flaying goats and singeing swine for their dinner. And Antino□s caught him by the hand, and said: "Come now, Telemachus; eat and drink with us, and we will find a ship and rowers for you, that you may be able to go whither you will, and ask after your father." But Telemachus said: "Do you think that I will eat and drink with you, who are wasting my substance in this shameful fashion? Be sure that I will have my revenge on you. And if you will not let me have a ship of my own, then I will sail in another man's." And another of the Suitors said: "What now will Telemachus do? Will he get men from Pylos, where old Nestor lives, or from Sparta, where King Menela□s is, to fight against us? Or, maybe, he will put poison in our wine, and so destroy us."

And another said: "What if he should perish himself as his father has perished? It would be a great business dividing his property. As for his house, we would give it to his mother and the man whom she may choose for her husband?"

So they made sport of him. But he went to the store-room of the palace, where there were laid up casks of old wine, and olive oil, and clothing, and plates of gold and silver and copper. All these things were in the charge of his nurse Eurycleia. Telemachus said to her: "Look out for me twelve jars of wine, not the best, but the second best, and twenty measures of barley meal. I will come for them to-night when my mother is asleep, for I am going to Pylos and to Sparta, to see whether I can hear anything about my father."

But the old woman cried out: "Oh, my son, why will you travel abroad, you an only son? Your father has perished; will you perish also? These wicked men, the Suitors, will plot against you and kill you. Surely it would be better to sit quietly at home."

Telemachus said: "Mother, I must go, for it is the gods that bid me. Swear now that you will say nothing to my mother about it for ten or twelve days, unless, indeed, she should ask you about me: then you must say for what I am gone."

So the old woman sware that she would say nothing. And Telemachus went among the Suitors, and behaved as if he had nothing on his mind. Meanwhile Athen□, in Mentor's shape, had got a crew of sailors together, persuading them to go as no man could have persuaded them. And she borrowed a ship, for no man could refuse to lend her what she asked for. And lest the Suitors should come to know of what was going on, she caused a deep sleep to fall upon them. They slept each man in his chair. And then she came to the palace, and she still had the shape of Mentor, and called Telemachus out, saying to him, "The rowers are ready: let us go."

So the two went down to the shore, and found the ship, and the ship's crew ready to go on board. And Telemachus said: "Come now, my friends, to my room at the palace, for there I have stored away the meat and the drink that we want for the voyage. One woman only knows about the matter; not my mother, nor any of her maids, but only my old nurse."

So they went up to the palace, and carried all the provisions themselves to the shore, and stowed it away in the ship. And Telemachus went on board, and sat down on the stern, and Mentor, that was really Athen□, sat down by him. And he told the sailors to make ready to start.

First, they pushed off the ship from the shore. Then they raised the mast, which was made of a pine tree, and lay along the deck in a kind of crutch that was made for it. A hole was ready in which to put the end. So the men raised it, and made it fast with ropes on both sides. And they hauled up the sail with ropes made of ox hide. And the wind filled the sail, and the ship went quickly through the water, the sea bubbling and foaming about it as it went, and Telemachus poured wine out of a bowl, praying to the god of the sea, and to Zeus that he might have a prosperous voyage. So all the night the ship sped along till the dawn began to show in the east.

Chapter 6

How Telemachus Saw Nestor

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

At sunrise the ship came to Pylos, which was on the west coast of the Island of Pelops. Here Nestor was king. He was the oldest man in the world. He had ruled over three generations of men, that is, for ninety years and more, and he was still hearty and strong. Now it so happened that on this day the people were offering a sacrifice to the god of the sea, whose name was Poseidon. There were nine companies of men, and in each there were five hundred, and each five hundred sacrificed nine bulls. They had finished the sacrifice, and were beginning the feast, for there was always a feast after the sacrifice, when Telemachus and his men moored the ship on the shore and landed. Then said Athen to the young man: "Go, and speak to the old King Nestor. There is no need for you to be ashamed. You have come to get news of your father, if such can be got. Go boldly, therefore, and ask him if he can tell you anything."

But Telemachus said: "How can I speak to him, for I am young and ignorant?"

"Nay," said the goddess, "think of something yourself, and the gods will put what may be wanting into your mouth."

So she led the way, being, as before in the shape of Mentor, to where Nestor sat with his sons and a great company about him, ready to begin the feast. And when the men of Pylos saw the strangers they shook their hands, and made them sit down on soft fleeces of wool that had been laid down on the shore for seats. And Nestor's youngest son brought them some of the best of the flesh, and wine in a golden cup. The cup he gave first to Mentor, judging him to be the elder of the two, saying to him: "Pray now to the god of the sea, and pour out some of the wine as an offering, and when you have done so, give the cup to your friend, that he may do the same."

So Mentor took the cup and prayed to the god of the sea, saying: "Give renown to Nestor and his sons, and make such a return to the men of Pylos as is their due for this great sacrifice, and grant to us that we may accomplish that for which we have come hither."

And when he had said these words he poured out some of the wine on the sand. Then he passed the cup to Telemachus, and he also said the same words and poured out some of the wine.

When they had eaten and drunk as much as they desired, Nestor said to them: "Strangers, who are you, and what is your business? Are you traders that sail over the seas to buy and sell in foreign lands, or are you pirates?"

Telemachus answered, Athen putting into his heart what he should say: "We come from Ithaca, and we are neither traders nor pirates. I seek for news of my father, who in time past fought by your side, and helped you to take the city of Troy. Now we know about all the other chiefs who fought against Troy, how some came back safe to their homes, and some perished. But of Ulysses, my father, no man knows anything, whether he be alive or dead. For this reason I am come to you. It may be that you saw his death with your own eyes, or that you have heard of it from another that saw it. Speak no smooth words, I pray you, for pity's sake, but tell me plainly what you have seen or heard."

Nestor answered: "Ah me! you bring back to my mind old things, old troubles that we bore when we fought against the great city of Priam. There the best of us were slain. There lies the mighty Ajax—Ajax of the great shield which no one but he could carry. There also lies Achilles, the greatest of all the Greeks. No one was so swift of foot as he, and he had a spear which no one but he could throw. There, also, lies my own dear son, Antilochus. But who could tell the tale of all that we suffered? For nine years we fought against the city, and your father was always the wisest of us; no man gave such counsel as did he, and truly you are like him; when you speak I seem to be hearing him. But now I will tell you what I know. When at last, in the tenth year, Troy was taken, then there came fresh trouble upon us. For there were some who were not just or prudent, and they made the gods angry by their evil doings. First, there was a quarrel between Agamemnon and his brother Menela s. Menela s was for going back home without delay, but Agamemnon thought that the Greeks should stay awhile and make a great sacrifice to Athen , for he feared that she was angry with the people. So they called the people to an Assembly, and there was much talking and disputing, some crying out one thing and some another. The next day I and the others that held with Menela s launched our ships, and put into them all our goods, and all the spoil that we had taken out of Troy, and so set sail. With us there was one half of the people, and the other half stayed behind with King Agamemnon. But when we had gone but a little there was another division, for your father, Ulysses, went back to Troy, and others went with him. But I knew in my heart that the gods were angry with us, for it was they who had caused this strife and division among us. So I went on my way; so did the brave Diomed, and so did Menela s; straight across the sea we sailed. And on the fourth day Diomed came safely to his city of Argos, and I went on to my own city of Pylos here, and reached it without suffering loss or harm. You see, therefore, that I cannot speak of my own knowledge as to what happened to other chiefs. But I will tell you all the

news that I have heard here since then. The people of Achilles came safe to their home, his son leading them, and Philoctetes came safe, and Agamemnon came safe—but, alas! a wicked woman slew him. But as for Ulysses, I have told you all I know."

Then said Telemachus: "Tell me now about Menela s. Did he also come safely to his home?"

Nestor answered: "Yes, he, too, came safely, but after a long time. He and I sailed together across the sea, and came without loss to a certain cape which is near to the city of Athens. There his pilot died, and he could not but stay awhile, though he greatly wished to get home, for the man was dear to him, and he must needs give him an honourable burial. But when he had done this and had set sail again, a great storm arose, and his fleet was divided. Some of the ships were driven ashore at the Island of Crete and were wrecked, the men barely escaping with their lives. As for Menela s, he was driven eastward by the wind to Egypt, he and five ships with him—five ships out of sixty, you must know, for he had sixty ships when he came to Troy. For seven years he wandered about in those parts, and in the beginning of the eighth year he came back, bringing much gold and other precious things with him in his ship. And now, my son, my advice to you is this: do not wander about looking for your father. You will only waste your goods by so doing. But go to Menela s, where he lives in his own city of Sparta, and ask him to tell whether he has seen or heard anything about your father. You see that he has but lately come back after many wanderings, and if there is anything to be heard about your father, it has doubtless come to his ears. You can go in your ship, if you will. But there are many miles between Sparta and the sea, so that you would do better to go in a chariot. This I will provide for you, and horses to draw it, and one of my sons to be your guide."

By this time it was near to sunset, and Mentor said to Telemachus: "Come now, let us go back to our ship that we may sleep there." But Nestor, when he heard this, said: "Not so, my friends; the gods forbid that you should sleep in your ship when my house is near at hand. I am no needy man who cannot find rugs and mats and clothing enough for my guests that they may lie soft and warm. No, no! I have enough of these. Never shall the son of my old friend Ulysses sleep on the deck of his ship while I have my hall, or while my son after me shall have a hall in which to shelter him."

Then Mentor spoke: "This is well said, my father. Telemachus shall sleep in your house, and I will go back to the ship and cheer the men, for they will wish to know how their young master has fared. Besides, I have business on hand which I must do a debt, among other things, which I must needs collect, for it is large and has been a long time owing."

When he had finished speaking, the man Mentor, for such they thought him to be, was changed into the shape of an eagle of the sea in the sight of all the company, and they were astonished to see it. And old Nestor took Telemachus by the hand and said: "Truly you are no weakling, for I see that young as you are the gods have a favour for you. This is none other than Athen□; she was always helping your father when he was at Troy."

Then the old man led the company to his house, and bade them sit down. And he mixed for them a bowl of old wine. The wine was eleven years old, and he shredded on it goats' milk cheese, and sprinkled also barley meal, and when they had drunk as much as they desired, they lay down to sleep. Telemachus slept on a bed beneath the gallery of the house, and Nestor's youngest son slept on a bed close by; to take care that he should not suffer any harm.

The next day, as soon as it was light, Nestor rose and called his sons. One he sent to fetch a heifer from the plain, and another he told to go to the ship and bring all the crew up to the palace, leaving two only to take care of it. And a third fetched the goldsmith that he might gild the horns of the heifer. Meanwhile the maids made everything ready for a feast. So Nestor sacrificed the heifer, and the company feasted on the flesh. As for Telemachus, he sat by Nestor's side, and he had put on a handsome tunic and a mantle over the tunic, which Nestor's youngest daughter had made ready for him.

When they had finished their meal, Nestor said: "Harness the horses to the chariot, and let Telemachus start on his journey."

So they harnessed the horses, and the housekeeper put food and wine, such as princes eat and drink, into the chariot, and Nestor's youngest son took the reins in his hand, and Telemachus rode with him. That day they travelled as far as the town of Pherae. There they stopped for the night with the king of the place. And the next day they came to Sparta, where Menela s lived.

Chapter 7

How Telemachus Came to Sparta

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

It happened that on the very day when Telemachus and Nestor's son came to Sparta, King Menela□s had a double wedding in his house. His daughter Hermion□ was married to the son of Achilles, and he had found a wife in one of the noble families of the country for his son, whose name was Megapenthes. So when the two young men drove the chariot up to the door of the palace, the king's steward was a little vexed, and he said to himself: "We have quite enough to do already, and here are two strangers whom we shall have to entertain." So he went to the king and said: "Here are two strangers at the door. Shall we keep them here, or shall we send them on to another house?"

Menela□s was very angry, and answered: "What? shall we, who have been guests in so many houses, turn away guests from our door? Not so; unharness their horses, and bid them sit down and eat."

So the steward gave orders to the grooms that they should unharness the horses, and take them to the stables, and give them corn to eat. And to the young men he said: "Will you please to get down from your chariot and come in?" So the two got down, and he led them into the king's hall. A wonderful place it was, as bright as if the sun or the moon was shining in it. And when they had looked about them, the steward took them to the baths, which were of polished marble. And when they had bathed they came back to the hall, and the king himself told them to sit down by him. So they sat down, and first a maid brought silver basins, and poured water into them from a golden jug, that they might wash their hands. After this the old housekeeper came and put a polished table before them, and on the table she set dainty dishes and plates and golden bowls of wine and cups. And the king told a servant to bring a chine of beef, which was his own portion, and bade them eat. When they had had enough, Telemachus said to his friend: "See the gold and the silver and the amber and the ivory. This must be as fine as the hall of the gods."

This he said with his face close to his friend's ear, but the king heard it, and said: "Nay, my son, nothing upon earth can be compared with the hall of the gods; and, it may be, there are other men who have things as fine as these. Yet fine they are; I have wandered far to get them. But alas! while I was getting them, my own dear brother was wickedly slain in his own home. I would give them all if he were alive again, he and other good friends of mine. Many are gone; but there is none whom I miss more than Ulysses. And no man knows whether he is alive or

dead." And when Telemachus heard his father's name, he held up his cloak before his eyes and wept. Menela□s saw him, and knew who he was, for, indeed, as has been said, he was very like his father. Then he thought to himself, "Shall I speak to him about his father, or shall I wait till he speaks himself?"

Just then Helen herself came into the hall, and three maids with her. One set a couch for her to sit on, and another spread a carpet for her feet, and the third had a basket of purple wool for her to spin. And she had a distaff of gold in her hands. When she saw the strangers she said:—

"Who are these, Menela□s? Never have I seen any one so like to Ulysses as is this young man. Surely this must be Telemachus, whom he left a baby in his home when he went to Troy."

And the king said: "It is true, lady. These are the hands and feet of Ulysses; and he has the same look in his eyes, and his hair is of the same colour."

Then all shed tears; Helen and the king and Telemachus, and also Nestor's son. How could he help it when his friends were so sad? And, besides, he thought how his own dear brother had gone to Troy and had never come back. But he was the first to stop his tears, for he said to the king: "Is it well to weep in this way while we sit at meat? There is a time to mourn for the dead, to weep and to crop close the hair; but there is also a time to rejoice."

"You are right," said the king. "You are the wise son of a wise father. Yes, we will weep no more. As for Telemachus, he and I have much to say to each other. Let that be to-morrow; but now we will eat and drink."

Then the fair Helen took a certain medicine, and mixed it in the wine that they were about to drink. It was an herb, and it grew in the land of Egypt, and the wife of the king of Egypt had given it her. It was called Painless , and it was a wonderful medicine; for if any one drank the wine in which it was mixed, he could feel no pain or grief—no, not though his father and mother should die, or his son or his brother should be killed before his eyes. So they sat and drank wine and talked together. And one of the matters about which they talked was the wisdom of Ulysses. Then Helen told this story:—

"While the Greeks were besieging the city of Troy, Ulysses disguised himself as a beggar man and came to the gate of the city, and desired to speak with some of the chief men. It could be seen that he had many weals and bruises upon his body, as if he had been cruelly beaten; and, indeed, he had beaten himself. So they brought him to me, knowing that he was a Greek. And when I saw him I knew who he was, and I asked him many questions. Very cunningly did

he answer them. But I promised him that I would not make him known. So he sent about the city, and found out many things that the Greeks desired to know. Also he killed some of the Trojans stealthily. Other women in Troy mourned and lamented, but I was glad; for I desired to go again to my home."

Then Menela□s said: "You speak truly, lady. Ulysses is indeed the wisest of men. I have travelled over many lands, but never have I seen any one who could be matched with him. Well do I remember how, when I and other chiefs of the Greeks were hidden in the Wooden Horse, you came with one of the princes of Troy and walked round the horse. Some one of the gods who loved the Trojans had put it into your heart to do this. Three times you walked round, and you called to each of us by name, and when you called you imitated the voice of the man's wife. And so well you did it that we could not believe but that our wives were truly calling to us. Then Diomed would have answered, and I too, but Ulysses would not let us speak, for he knew what it really was. Thus he saved the Greeks that day."

Then Telemachus said: "Yet all his wisdom has not kept him from perishing."

After that they went to their beds and slept.

Chapter 8

Menelaus's Story

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

The next day Menela s said to Telemachus: "Tell me now on what business you have come. Is it on some affair of your own, or is it something that concerns the State?"

Telemachus answered: "I have come to see whether you can tell me anything about my father. No one knows whether he is alive or dead. And I am in great trouble at home, because certain nobles of Ithaca and of the islands round about would have my mother choose a husband from among them, and meanwhile they devour my substance."

Menela s said: "They will certainly be punished for their wrong-doing. So a hind lays her young in a lion's den, but when the lion comes back, he slays both her and her fawn. So will Ulysses slay these Suitors, for he will most certainly come back. But now I will tell you all that I know. In my travels I went to the land of Egypt, and when I wished to sail homeward, I could not, for the winds were against me. There is an island opposite the mouth of the Nile, which is the great river of Egypt. There I stayed, not of my own choice, for twenty days, till all our food was eaten up. Truly we had all perished, I and my men, but that one of the goddesses of the sea had pity on us. She was the daughter of a sea god, and one day as I sat alone, for my men were wandering about fishing with hooks for anything that they might catch, she stood by me and said: 'Surely this is a foolish thing that you do, sitting here till you and your men die of hunger.' I answered: 'I know not who you are, but I will tell you the truth. It is not of my own choice that I stay; the winds are against me, and I cannot go. Tell me, now, whether I have offended the gods, and tell me also how I can return to my home.' Then she said: 'I cannot tell you these things, but there is one who can, and that is my father Proteus. He comes here with the sea-beasts which he herds. But you must lay hold on him, for he will not tell you these things except by force.' Then I asked her to tell me how this could be done. Then she said: 'The old man comes here at noon to a certain cave that there is by the sea, and he brings his sea-beasts with him. Then he lies down in the cave to sleep, and the beasts lie all round him. That is the time for you to lay hold of him. Choose now out of your men the three that are bravest and strongest, and I will take them and you at daybreak and hide you in the cave. The old man will come at noon. First, he will count the beasts, as a shepherd counts his sheep, and then he will lie down to sleep in the middle of them. Then you must rush upon him, and lay your hands upon him and hold him fast. Remember that he will take all kind of shapes, beasts and creeping things, and water and fire. But when he shall come back to his proper shape, then let him go,

and ask him what you want to know, and he will tell you.' When the goddess had said this, she dived into the sea. So I chose three of my men, the bravest and the strongest that there were, and we waited at the place where the goddess had spoken to me. Just before dawn she came out of the sea, bringing four skins of sea-beasts with her. And she took us into the cave, and dug out hiding places for us in the sand, and wrapped the skin of a sea-beast about each of us, and made us lie down in the places which she had dug out. She wrapped the skins about us in order that the old man might take us for sea-beasts. Now the beasts had been just killed, and the smell of them was such as could scarcely be borne; so she took portions of ambrosia, which is the food of the gods, and very sweet smelling. She put a portion under the nose of each one of us, and so we were able to endure the smell of the beasts. So we waited all the morning. At noon the old man came from the sea, and the beasts came with him, and went into the cave and lay down on the sand. And the old man went along the line, and counted the beasts, counting us with the rest, and he did not perceive our device. This done, he lay down to sleep in the midst of the herd. Then we rushed upon him, and held him fast. He took many shapes, a lion, and a snake, and a panther, and a wild boar, yes, and running water, and a tree covered with flowers. All the while we held him fast. But when he was come back to his proper shape, we let him go. Then he said: 'Who told you how to beguile me?' To this I made no answer, for why should I make mischief between him and his daughter? But I said: 'Tell me now the things that I desire to know. I am kept fast in this island; tell me how I can escape.' He said: 'You are kept here by the gods; if you had done proper sacrifice to them before you set sail, you had been near to your home by this time. But now go back to Egypt, and do sacrifices, as is proper, and the gods will give you your desire.' It troubled me to hear this, for I desired to go homeward and not back to Egypt. But I said: 'There is yet another thing which I would hear. Tell me about the chiefs whom Nestor and I left behind us in Troy; have they returned safely to their homes or no?' The old man said: 'Why did you ask this question, for the answer will make you sorry? Two only of the chiefs perished. Ajax the Lesser was shipwrecked. He had offended Athen , and she brake his ship with a thunderbolt. And yet he might have escaped with his life, for the gods of the sea helped him so that he got to the rocks. But he boasted foolishly that he had saved himself in spite of the gods; and when the god of the sea heard this, he was angry, and smote the rock on which Ajax sat, so that it was broken into two pieces, and Ajax fell into the sea, and was drowned. And the other chief who perished was thy own brother Agamemnon. He came safely indeed to his own land; but there Aegisthus wickedly killed him.' Then I said: 'There is yet one chief of whom I wish to hear something.' But before I could tell his name, the old man said: 'I know of whom you are speaking. It is Ulysses of Ithaca. Him I saw in the island of Calypso. He was weeping, because Calypso keeps him there against his will, and he has no companions and no ship.' And when he had said this he plunged into the sea. Then I

went back to Egypt, and offered sacrifice to the gods, and so came safely home, for the gods gave me a favourable wind. And now, my son, tarry with me as long as you will. And when you wish to depart, I will give you a chariot and horses, and also a goodly cup."

But Telemachus said: "Keep me not, for I would go home as soon as may be. But as for the horses I thank you, but I desire them not. Here you have corn, land, and pasture, but we have none such in Ithaca. There is no feeding land save for goats; and yet I love it."

Menela s answered: "You speak well and warily, as becomes your father's son. I will therefore change the gift. You shall have the finest cup that I have in my house, the one that the king of Sidon gave me. It is of silver, but the rim is finished with gold."

Then Telemachus departed and went to his ship where it lay at Pylos. And the crew came from Nestor's palace, when they heard of his return, and in due course they started for their home. Now Antino s had taken a ship with twenty men, and lay in wait in the Strait between Ithaca and Sam . But Telemachus was warned by Athen that he should go home by another way, and this he did, and so escaped the danger.

Chapter 9

How Ulysses Came to the Phaeacians

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

Now the time was come when Ulysses was to be set free from his prison in Calypso's island. Athen said in the council of the gods: "It seems to me that a good king is not in the least better off than a bad one. Look at Ulysses; he was as a father to his people, and see how he is shut up in Calypso's island. For seven years and more he has been there."

Then said Zeus to Hermes, who was the messenger of the gods: "Go now to Calypso in her island, and tell her that it is my will that Ulysses should go back to his own country."

So Hermes tied his golden sandals on his feet, and took his wand in his hand, and flew from Olympus to Calypso's island, and to the cave in which she dwelt. It was a very fair place. All about the mouth of the cave there was a vine with clusters of purple grapes; and round about the cave there was a wood of alder-trees, and poplars, and cypresses, in which many birds used to roost; also there were four fountains from which four streams of the clearest water that could be flowed down through meadows of parsley and violets. In the cave itself there was burning a fire of sweet-smelling woods. Calypso sat at her loom, and sang in a very lovely voice. Hermes looked about on the vine, and the grove, and the fountains, and the meadows, and thought to himself that it was a lovely place. Then he went into the cave, and when Calypso saw him she knew who he was, and why he had come. Nevertheless she pretended not to know. "You are welcome, Hermes," she said, "and all the more because you have never been here to see me before. Now you must tell me why you have come; but first, come, eat and drink."

So she set a table before him, and on the table she put ambrosia, which is the food of the gods; and she mixed a bowl of nectar for him, for this is what the gods drink. And when he had eaten and drunk enough, he said to Calypso: "You ask me why I have come; so I will tell you. Zeus bade me come, and we must all do what Zeus tells us. You have a man in your island here—yes, and have had him for seven years and more, and he is very unhappy, because he wishes to go home. He fought against Troy for nine years and more, and in the tenth year he set out to return. But many misfortunes happened to him, and he lost all his companions, and somehow he was brought to this island. Now send him back to his home as quickly as you can, for this is his fate that he should live the rest of his life among his friends."

This was just what Calypso expected to hear; but she was very angry and said: "Did I not save this man's life when Zeus broke his ship with a thunderbolt, and he was carried by the waves to this island? Yes, if Zeus so wishes, he shall go, but I cannot send him, for I have no ship and no rowers."

And Hermes said: "Send him nevertheless, lest Zeus should be angry with you." And when he had said this he spread his wings, for he had wings on his shoulders and on his feet, and flew away.

Then Calypso went down to the sea-shore—for it was there that Ulysses used to sit looking at the waves, and longing to go over them that he might see his own dear country again. There she found him weeping and lamenting, for he was weary of his life. And she stood by him and said: "Weep no more. You shall have your wish: I will do what I can to help you on your way home. Take an axe and cut down trees and make a raft, tying the beams together with ropes, and putting planks on them for a deck. And I will give you bread, and water, and wine; yes, and clothes too, that you may go to your own country, if you will have it so." Ulysses said: "What is this plan of yours? Shall I go on a raft across the great sea which the ships with oars and sail can hardly pass? Now swear by the great oath which the gods dare not break, that you mean to do me no harm." Calypso smiled, and said: "These are strange words. Why should I do you harm? But if you will so have it, then I will swear by the great oath of the gods that I have no thought of doing you harm."

The next day Calypso gave him an axe, and took him to a part of the island where there were trees fit for making the raft—alder, and poplar, and pine. Twenty of these he cut down, and he hewed them to one shape. And the goddess gave him a tool by which he bored holes in the logs, so that he could fasten them together; also he cut planks for a deck, and for the sides. He made a mast, too, and a rudder by which to steer the raft; also he made a bulwark of skin which was to keep out the waves. The sails Calypso wove, and Ulysses fitted them with ropes. Last of all, he pushed the raft down to the sea with levers. All these things were finished by the end of the fourth day, and on the fifth day he departed. But first Calypso gave him a store of food, and water, and wine, and also clothes. And being a goddess and able to do such things, she sent a fair wind blowing behind him. So he set his sails, and went gladly on his way. In the day time he steered by the sun, and in the night by the stars, for Calypso had said to him: "Keep the Great Bear always on your left." So he sailed for seventeen days, and during this time he never slept. On the eighteenth day he saw the island of the Phaeacians.

Now the god of the sea was very angry with Ulysses, because he had blinded the Cyclops, who was his son. It so happened that he had been for many days feasting with the Ethiopians,

and was coming back to Olympus, where the gods dwell, on this very day. And when he saw Ulysses on his left, he said to himself: "Truly this is a new thing. Here is Ulysses close to the island of the Phaeacians; if once he gets there he will soon be at home. But I will give him some trouble yet."

Then he took his trident, which he carried in his hand—it was a great fork with three prongs—and struck the sea with it, and immediately the waves rose high all round the raft, and he made the winds blow. Ulysses was much troubled and frightened, for a man who does not feel fear in battle may feel it in a storm. He said to himself: "I would that I had been killed on that day when we fought with the Trojans for the dead body of Achilles. Then I should have been buried with honour by my own people; but now I shall perish miserably." While he was speaking thus to himself a great wave struck the raft, and made him leave hold of the rudder, and tossed him far away into the sea. Deep did he sink into the water, and hard was it for him to rise again to the top, for the fine clothes which Calypso had given him were very heavy, and dragged him down. But at last he rose, and spat the salt water out of his mouth and sprang at the raft, for he was a brave man, and never lost heart, and caught it, and clambered on to it and sat on it.

While he was being carried hither and thither by the waves, a goddess of the sea saw him and pitied him, for she had once been a woman, and very unhappy. She rose out of the sea in the shape of a gull, and perched upon the raft, and said to him: "Why does the god of the sea hate you so, unlucky man? He would willingly drown you, but it shall not be. Take off these heavy clothes that you are wearing, and put this veil under you"—and she gave him a veil—"and so swim to the island that you see yonder. And when you have got to the shore, throw the veil into the sea, and mind that you do not look behind you when you throw it." And when she had said this, she plunged into the sea.

But Ulysses thought to himself: "Is this a snare for my life, or is it a help? I will wait awhile. The land I see, but it is a long way off, and it would be hard to swim so far. As long as the raft shall hold together I will stay upon it; but if the waves break it, then I will swim; and, indeed, there will be nothing else for me to do. Maybe the veil will help me."

While he was speaking there came another great wave against the raft and broke it up altogether; but Ulysses kept hold of one of the planks of which it was made with his arms and legs, and got astride of it. Then he stripped off the clothes that Calypso had given him, and jumped into the sea with the veil under him, and spread out his hands to swim. And the god of the sea laughed when he saw him, and said: "Swim away; you will have trouble enough before you get safely home." But the goddess Athen did not forget him. She stopped the other winds

from blowing, but left the north wind, for that would keep him on his way. And so he swam for two days and two nights. On the third day there was a calm, though there was still a great swell in the sea, as there always is when the wind has been high. And Ulysses saw the land from the top of a great wave, and it was close at hand. Very glad was he to see it, as glad as children to see their father when he has been ill a long time and is now well again. But when he looked again he saw that there was no place where he could land, for the cliffs rose straight out of the sea, and the waves dashed high against them. And Ulysses thought: "Now what shall I do? I see the land, indeed, but I cannot set my foot upon it. If I swim to it, then a wave may dash me on the rocks and kill me. And if I swim along the shore till I find a place where I may land, then some monster of the sea may lay hold of me."

But while he was thinking, a great wave caught him and carried him on towards the cliffs. He caught hold of a jutting rock that was there, and clung to it with all his might till the wave had spent its force, so that he was not dashed against the face of the cliff. Nevertheless, when the water flowed back, he could not keep his hold on the rock, but was carried out to the deep. After this he swam along outside the breakers looking for a place where it was calm, or for a harbour, if such there might be. At last he came to where a river ran into the sea. The place was free from rocks, and sheltered from the winds, and Ulysses felt the stream of the river, for it was fresh, in the salt water of the river. And he prayed to the god of the river, saying: "Hear me, O king, and help, for I am flying from the anger of the god of the sea." And the river god heard him, and stayed his stream, and made the water smooth before him. So, at last, he won his way to land. His knees were bent under him, and he could not lift his arms, and the salt water ran out of his mouth and his nose. He was breathless and speechless, very near, indeed, to death. But, after a while, he came to himself. Then he loosed the veil from under him, and threw it into the stream of the river, and did not look behind him when he threw it.

This done, he lay down on the rushes by the river side. And first he kissed the earth, so glad was he to feel it again under him; yet he doubted what he should do. If he slept there by the river, the dew and the heat might kill him, for it was cold in the morning; and if he went into the wood and lay down there to sleep, then some wild beast might devour him. It seemed better to go to the wood. So he went. And in the wood he found two olive trees growing together. So thickly did they grow that neither wind, nor sun, nor rain made its way through the shade. Ulysses crept underneath them, and found a great quantity of dead leaves, enough to shelter a man, or even two men. Right glad was Ulysses to see the place, and he crept under the trees and covered himself with leaves; and sleep came down upon him, and he forgot all his troubles.

Chapter 10

Nausicaa

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

While Ulysses was still asleep, Athen thought how she might make friends for him in this new country to which he had come. So she went to the palace of the king of the country, and to that room of the palace in which the king's daughter slept. This daughter was called Nausicaa, and she was as beautiful a girl as there was in the whole world. And Athen made Nausicaa dream a dream, and the dream was this. She thought that a very dear friend of hers, a girl of the same age, daughter of a famous sailor called Dymas, stood by her bed-side and spoke to her. And what the girl seemed to say in the dream was this:—

"Nausicaa, how is it that your good mother has such a careless child? All your clothes lie unwashed, and this though your wedding day will soon be here, when you must have clean clothing for yourself and for your bridesmaids. The bride who is prepared with these things is well spoken of by everybody. As soon as it is morning, rise from your bed and go and wash the clothes, and I will come with you to help you. But first go to the king, your father, and ask him to give you a waggon and mules to draw it, that you may take the clothes to the washing places near the sea."

When Nausicaa woke in the morning, she remembered her dream, and all the words that her friend had said came back to her. So she went to look for her father and mother. Her mother she found spinning with her maids; the yarn that they were spinning was dyed with a lovely purple, of the colour of the sea. And her mother said that the clothes certainly should be washed. Then Nausicaa went to look for her father. Him she found, just as he was going to hold a council with his chiefs. She said to him: "Father, let me have the waggon with the mules, that I may take the clothes to the river to wash them. You like to have clean robes when you go to the council, and there are my five brothers, too, who like to be nicely dressed for the dance."

But she said nothing about her wedding day, for she was a little shy. But her father knew what she was thinking about, and said:

"Dear child, I don't grudge you the mules, nor the waggon, nor anything else. The men shall get them ready for you."

So he called to his men, and they made the waggon ready, and harnessed the mules. And Nausicaa brought down the clothes that had to be washed from her chamber, and put them in

the waggon. And her mother filled a basket with good things for her daughter and her maids to eat, and she gave them a skin bottle of wine, and a flask of olive oil, to be used after they had bathed. So Nausicaa and her maids got into the waggon, and she took the reins in her hands, and touched the mules with her whip. The mules started off at a trot, and did not halt till they reached the places by the river where the clothes were to be washed.

The girls undid the harness from the mules, and let them feed on the sweet clover that grew by the river side. And they took the clothes from the waggon, and put them into trenches that had been dug out for washing places. If they had tried to wash them in the river itself, they would have been carried away by the stream. The trenches were filled with water, but it was quite still. So they laid the clothes in them, and trod on them and washed them till all were quite clean. Then they took them out of the trenches, and laid them to dry on the shingle by the sea. After this they all bathed in the sea, and anointed themselves with the olive oil. Then they sat down to eat and drink by the river side. And when they had had enough, they got up to have a game at ball. As they played, they sang, and Nausicaa led the singing. They were tall and beautiful, all of them, but the princess was taller than all the others.

So when they had ended their play, and had taken up the dry clothes from the shingle where they had been laid, and had folded them up, and put them in the waggon, and were about to harness the mules, this thing happened. Athen put it into the mind of the princess to take up the ball, and throw it for sport to one of the maids, though, as has been said, the play was ended. So wide did she throw it that it fell into the river, and all the maids cried out, fearing that it might be lost. So loudly did they cry, that they woke Ulysses. And he said to himself: "What land is this to which I have come? I wonder whether the people who live in it are savage or kind to strangers? And what was this cry that I heard? It sounded to me like the voice of nymphs." Then he looked out from the place where he was lying, and saw the princess and her maids. They were not far from him, for they had come down to the river to look for the ball. So he broke a bough full of leaves from off a tree which stood by, and twisted it round his middle, and came out of his hiding place, and went towards the maids. They were very much afraid when they saw him, and ran away; and indeed he looked very wild and fierce. But Nausicaa did not run, but stood where she was. Then Ulysses said to himself: "Shall I go up to her and clasp her knees?" (This was what people used to do in those days, when they wanted to ask a great favour.) "But perhaps this will make her angry. Would it not be better to stand where I am, and speak?"

This he did, saying: "O queen, I beg you to be kind to me. Maybe you are a goddess. But if you are a woman, then your father is a happy man, and happy your brothers, and happiest of all he who is to be your husband. Never did I see man or woman so fair. You are like a young

palm-tree that I once saw springing up by a temple in the island of Delos. Have pity on me, for I have been cast up here by the sea, and have nothing. Give me something to put on—a wrapper of linen, maybe, and show me the way to the city."

Nausicaa said: "You do not look like a bad or foolish man; as for the sad plight in which you are, the gods give good luck to some, and bad luck to others. You shall have clothing and food, and everything that you need. And I will take you to the city, for I am daughter to the king of this country. And the name of the country, if you wish to know it, is the Island of Phaeacia."

Then the princess turned to the maids, and said: "Why do you run away when you see a man? No one comes here to do us harm, for the gods love us and take care of us. And besides, we live in an island, and so are safe. But if some one upon whom trouble has fallen comes here, we ought to help him. Give this man, therefore, food and drink, and let him wash in the river in some place that is out of the wind."

So the maids led him down to the river, and gave him clothes: a tunic to wear next to his skin, and a cloak to put over the tunic. Also they gave him a flask of olive oil, to use after he had his bath. Then they left him to himself, and he bathed in the river, and washed the salt from his skin, and out of his hair, and rubbed the oil on his body, and put on the tunic and the cloak. And Athen made him look taller and fairer than he was, and caused the hair to grow thicker and darker on his head. So he sat down on the sea-shore, and waited. And when the princess saw him, she said: "Surely it is the gods who have brought this man here. When I saw him first, I thought that he was not uncomely, but now he seems more like a god than a man. I should be well contented to have such a man for my husband, and perhaps he may be willing to stay in this country." Then she turned to the maids, and said: "Give the stranger food and drink." So they gave him, and he ate ravenously, for he had had a long fast, for it was now the third day since the raft had been broken by the sea, and all the store of food and drink which Calypso had given him had been lost.

Then Nausicaa told the maids to harness the mules, and she said to Ulysses: "Come stranger, with me, and I will take you to my father's house. But now listen, and do as I shall tell you; as long as we are in the country, follow with the maids, and keep close to the waggon. But when we come to the city, then drop behind. This is how you will know the place. There is a narrow passage leading to the city gate, and on each side of the passage there is a harbour. Then you will see a grove of poplar trees, and a spring in the midst of the grove, with grass round it. Stay there till I shall have had time to reach my father's house. Now the reason why I would have you do so is this. I do not wish the common people to gossip about me. If they

were to see you following close after the chariot, one of them might say: 'Who is this tall and handsome stranger that comes with Nausicaa? Will he be her husband? Is he a god come down from heaven, or is he a man from some place over the sea? The princess is too proud, it seems, to marry one of us.' I would not have such words spoken about me. Stay, then, in the grove till you think that I have got to my home. Then come out, and pass through the gate, and ask for the king's palace. Any one, even a child, can tell you the way, for there is not another house in the city like it. And when you have come to it, pass quickly through the hall to the place where my mother sits. It is on one side of the hearth, and my father's is on the other. Do not speak to him, but lay hold of my mother's knees, and beg of her that she will send you safely home."

Then she touched the mules with the whip, and they set off. But the princess was careful not to drive so fast but that Ulysses and the maids could easily keep up with the waggon. And when the sun was about to set, they came to the city, and Ulysses stayed behind the grove, but Nausicaa with the maids went on to the palace. When she came thither, her brothers unyoked the mules from the waggon and carried the linen into the house, and she went to her room, where her maid lit a fire for her and prepared a meal.

Chapter 11

Alcinous

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

After a while Ulysses rose to go into the city, and Athen spread a mist about him so that the passers-by might not see him as he went. Also she took upon her the shape of a young girl who was carrying a pitcher, and met him.

Ulysses asked her: "My child, can you tell me where King Alcino s lives? I am a stranger here."

She answered: "I will show you his abode; it is close to the home of my father." So she led the way, and Ulysses followed her. Much did he wonder, as he went, at all he saw—the harbour, and the ships, and the place of assembly, and the walls, till they came to the palace. Athen said: "This is the king's house." Further, she said—and now Ulysses knew that it was Athen and not a girl that was speaking—"Go in, fear nothing; the fearless man always fares best. And look first for the queen. Her name is Aret . Never was there a wife more loved by her husband, or a queen more honoured by her people. Be sure that if she favours you, you have come to the end of your troubles, and will see your dear land of Ithaca again."

When she had said this, Athen vanished out of sight, and Ulysses went into the palace. A wonderful place it was, as bright as if the sun had been shining in it. The walls were of brass, and the doors were of gold, and the posts on which the doors were hung were of silver, and along the sides of the hall were golden chairs on which the chiefs were used to sit when they were invited to a feast. By each seat was the golden statue of a man, holding a torch in his hand, so that the hall might be lighted when it was night. There were fifty maid-servants in the house; half of them were grinding corn, and half of them were weaving robes. All round the house were beautiful gardens, full of fig-trees and apples, and pears, and pomegranates, and olives. They never are harmed by frost or by drought, and there is never a time when some fruit is not ripe. Also there was a vineyard, and this bore grapes all the year round. Some of them were hanging dried in the sun, and some were being gathered, and some were just turning red. Also there were beds of beautiful flowers, and in the middle were two fountains which never grew dry.

Ulysses could not help looking for a short time at all these wonderful and beautiful things. There were many people in the hall, but no one saw him, for, as we know, there was a mist all around him which hid him from them. So he went on to where the queen was sitting, and knelt

down before her, and put his hands on her knees. And as he did this, the mist cleared away from round him, and all the people in the hall saw him quite plainly.

He said: "O queen, I beg a favour of you. I pray you, and your husband, and your children to help me. Send me to my home, for I know that you help strangers to travel across the sea."

And when he had said this, he sat down among the ashes on the hearth. Then said one of the nobles that were in the hall—he was the very oldest man that there was in all the land: "King Alcino s, do not let this stranger sit there among the ashes. Tell him to sit upon a chair, and give him something to eat and drink."

Then the king told his eldest son to take the stranger by the hand and raise him up, and make him sit down on his own seat. This the young man did. And a servant brought a basin and poured water over Ulysses' hands, and the housekeeper brought him something to eat and to drink. The king said: "This man begs a favour of us, that we may take him to his home. To-morrow we will have an Assembly, and will consider how we may best do this. And now you can go all of you to your homes." But before they went, Ulysses said: "I could tell you, my friends, of many troubles that I have suffered. But first I must eat and drink; that a man must do, however unhappy he may be. I will say only this, when you come together to-morrow, do your best to help me in this matter. I should be content to die if I could only see my home again."

This they all promised to do, and so departed.

When Ulysses was left alone, the queen looked at him somewhat more closely, and she saw that the clothes which he wore had been made by herself and her maids, and she said: "From what country have you come, and who gave you these clothes?"

Then Ulysses told her how he had travelled many miles across the sea on the raft, and how the raft had been broken, and how he had got to the shore after swimming for two days and two nights and more, and how Nausicaa had found him, and had had pity on him, and brought him to the city. The queen said: "I blame my daughter that she did not bring you with her. That was what she should have done." "Nay, lady," said Ulysses, "she would have brought me, but I would not come, for I did not like that the girl should be blamed."

Then said the king: "Eat and drink in peace, stranger. We will do what you wish, and take you to your home. There are no men in all the world who can row better than the Phaeacian youths. You will lie down to sleep, and before you wake they will have carried you to your own country. They can go to the farthest part of the world, and can come back the same day, and not be tired."

Ulysses was glad to hear what the king said, and he prayed in his heart: "May the king do what he promises, and may I come in peace to my own land."

Then the queen told the maids to make a bed ready for the stranger. And they went with torches in their hands and made it ready, and came again and said to Ulysses: "Stranger, your bed is ready." So he followed them. Right glad was he to sleep after all that he had suffered.

Chapter 12

Ulysses Among the Phaeacians

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

The next day the Assembly of the people was held. Many came to it, so that the king's hall was filled from one end to the other. For Athen had taken upon her the shape of the king's herald, and gone through the city, saying: "Come, captains and counsellors of the Phaeacians, and hear about this stranger who has lately come to the king's palace." So they came, and they marvelled much when they saw Ulysses, for Athen had made him fairer and fatter and stronger.

The king rose in his place, and said: "This stranger has come to my hall. I do not know who he is, or whence he comes, whether from the east or the west. And he begs us to convey him safely to his home. Now this, as you know, is a thing that we have been used from old time to do for strangers. Go, then, and choose out a ship. Let it be new—one that never has been on the sea before. And pick out fifty and two rowers. Let them be the best and strongest that there are in the country. When you have done this, come to my hall and feast. And let the minstrel come also, for the gods have given him the gift of song, and there is nothing better than song to make glad the hearts of men." So the chiefs of the people went and did as the king commanded. They chose a ship, and they chose rowers, and moored the ship by the shore. This done, they went back to the king's hall. And he had bidden his servants prepare a great feast for them, eight swine and twelve sheep and two oxen.

And when the people were ready to begin, there came two servants of the king leading the singer by the hand, for he was blind. They made him sit down in a silver chair in the middle of the hall; they hung his harp on a rail that there was above his head where he could easily reach it. And by his side they put a table, and on the table a basket full of good things, and a cup of wine so that he might drink when he pleased.

Then the people began to eat and drink, and when they had had enough, the singer sang. And what he sang was this: how there had been a fierce quarrel at a great sacrifice between Achilles, who was the bravest man among the Greeks, and Ulysses, who was the wisest, and how Agamemnon was glad to see it, because a prophet had told him that when wisdom and valour should fall out the end of Troy would soon come. As he sang, Ulysses held his cloak before his face to hide his tears, for he was ashamed that the people should see them. When the song was at an end, he wiped them away, and sat like the others; but when the chief called out that it should be sung again, for indeed it pleased them much, then he wept again. But the king

was the only man to see it.

After this the king said: "Now, let us go and have games as is our custom, boxing and wrestling and running, so that this stranger may see what we can do." The best of the boxers was the king's eldest son, and he said to Ulysses: "Stranger, why do you sit there so sad and silent? Why do you not try your skill in some game?"

Ulysses answered: "I am in no mind for sport and games. I can think of nothing but how I can get back to my home."

Then another of the young men, who had won the prize for wrestling, said: "Well, stranger, you have not the look of one who is skilful in boxing and wrestling. I should say that you were one who travels about to buy and sell."

Then Ulysses was angry, and said: "That is a foolish speech. Some men have good looks, and some can speak wisely. I find no fault with your looks, but your words are idle. I know these games right well, and in old time was skilful in them, but I have suffered much, both in war and in many journeys over land and sea. Yet I will show you what I can do."

And he took up a quoit, heavier than any of those which the Phaeacians had used, and sent it with a whirl through the air. And one of the company—so it seemed, but it was really Athen in the shape of a man—marked the place where it fell, and said: "Stranger, even a blind man could see that there is no one here to match you in strength."

Ulysses was glad to hear these words, for he thought: "Now I have a friend here;" and he said aloud: "Now let any one match this throw. Ay, and if any one will box with me, or wrestle with me, let him stand up. I will even run a race, though in this I can hardly be the winner, so much have I suffered on the sea."

Then said the king: "Stranger, you speak well: we Phaeacians are not good at boxing and wrestling. Swift of foot we are, and we love feasts and dances, and music and gay clothing. Of these things no man knows more than do we."

This the king said, wishing to make peace. Also he said: "Now let each one of the princes give to this stranger two coats, an inner and an outer, and a talent of gold. And let the prince whose words made him angry, give a double gift."

To this they all agreed; and the prince who had given him offence gave him also a sword, which had a silver hilt and an ivory scabbard. And as he gave it, he said: "Father, I wish you well; if there was any offence in my words, let the winds carry it away. The gods grant that you may see again your wife, and your friends, and your own country!"

And Ulysses answered: "And I also wish you well! May you live happily, and never miss this handsome sword which you have given me!"

Then the other princes gave him their gifts. And the king said to the queen: "Now let them fetch a chest, the best you have, and do you put in it two coats, an outer and an inner. And I will give this stranger a beautiful cup of gold that is my own. So will he remember me all the days of his life, when he sits at the feast and drinks out of the cup."

So they brought a chest from the queen's chamber, and all the gifts that the princes had given to Ulysses were put in it, and she herself with her own hands put in it the outer coat and the inner. And when the chest was filled with these things, she said to Ulysses: "Now look to the lid, and fasten it so that no man may rob you as you sleep, while the ship takes you back to your native country."

So Ulysses fixed the lid, tying it with a very cunning knot that Circ had taught him. After this he went to the bath. And as he came from the bath, Nausicaa met him, and wondered to see how handsome he was, and she said: "Farewell, stranger. When you come to your own country, think of me, for indeed you owe me your life."

And Ulysses said: "Surely, Nausicaa; I will honour you as I would honour one of the goddesses, all the days of my life, for indeed I owe you my life."

Then he went into the hall, and sat down by the side of the king, and there came in a steward leading the blind singer by the hand. Now there had been set before Ulysses the chine of a wild boar, for this is the dish which was served to a guest whom his host wished to honour above all others. And he took his knife, and cut from it a great helping, and said to a servant: "Now carry this to the singer, for there is no one whom men should more honour than him who sings of the great deeds of famous men." So the servant bore the dish to the singer, and laid it upon his knees. After a while, when the company had had enough of meat and drink, Ulysses said to the singer: "You sing right well of the toil and trouble which the Greeks had before the great city of Troy. Truly you could not have done this thing better if you had been there yourself. Come now, sing to us of the Wooden Horse which was made after the device of Epeius, but it was Athen who put it into his heart. Tell us also how Ulysses contrived that it should be dragged up into the very citadel of Troy, after he had first hidden inside it the bravest of the Greek chiefs. Sing us now this song, and I shall know that the gods themselves have taught you."

Then the minstrel sang how the Wooden Horse was made, and how Ulysses, with certain of the bravest of the Greek chiefs, hid themselves within, and how the rest of the forces pretended to depart, burning their camp, and sailing away in their ships, but they did not sail

farther than to a certain island that there was close by. Also he told how the people of Troy dragged the horse within the walls of the city into the public square where they used to meet and hold their Assembly; also how the people sat round it, and the chief men among them gave their advice what should be done with this strange thing. Some said: "Let us cleave it open, and see what there may be inside." Others said: "Let us take it to the brow of the hill and cast it down;" but some advised that it should be left where it was, as a thank-offering to the gods who had delivered the city from their enemies. And this counsel prevailed, for it was the doom of the city that it should be taken by means of the Wooden Horse.

So he sang, and the heart of Ulysses was melted within him as he listened, and the tears ran down his cheeks. But only the king perceived. And the king said to the singer: "Cease now from your singing, for ever since you began, this stranger has not ceased to shed tears: we are come together to make merry and to rejoice, and to give gifts to this stranger, and to send him to his home." Then he turned to Ulysses, and said: "Tell us now your name, O stranger: tell us also from what land you come, for if our ships are to take you to your home, they must know what course to take that they may carry you thither. For, indeed, our ships are not as the ships of other men. They have no need of rudders or steersmen, but they know of themselves which way they should go. Tell us therefore your name, and the name of the land from which you come. I did perceive that you wept when you heard the fate of Troy. Had you, perchance, kinsman, or brother, or friend among those who perished at Troy?" Then said Ulysses: "O king, what shall I tell you first, and what last, for I have endured many things. But first I will tell you my name. Know, then, that I am ULYSSES, King of Ithaca." And afterwards he told them the story of all that he had suffered from the day that he had sailed away from Troy down to his coming to the island of Calypso.

Chapter 13

Ithaca

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

When Ulysses had finished his story, the king and all his people sat for a time saying nothing. After a while, the king said: "Ulysses, you shall have your wish; we will carry you to your home. This we will do to-morrow, for now it is time for bed." Then he turned to the princes and said: "This guest of ours is a brave man, and has suffered much; let us give him a special gift to show that we honour him. He has a chest full of clothes and gold already; and now let us give him kettles and bowls to use in his home. These you may bring to-morrow, and now you can go to your homes."

The next day the princes brought the kettles and bowls, and the king stowed them away with his own hands under the benches of the ship. When this was finished they all went to the palace, and sat down to a great feast. But Ulysses kept watching the sun, wishing that the day was finished, so much did he want to see his home again.

At last he stood up and said: "O king, you and your people have been very kind to me; and now send me home, I beg you. Let us have the parting cup, and then let me go." So the king told his squire to mix the cup. And the squire mixed it, and served it out. And all the people in the hall drank, and as they drank they prayed that the stranger might have a happy return to his home. And when the cup was given to Ulysses, he stood up and put it into the hand of the queen, and said: "O queen, farewell; I pray that you may be happy with your husband, and your children, and your people." And when he had said this, he turned and left the palace. The king sent his squire to show him the way to the ship; also some of the women who waited on the queen carried food and wine, and a rug on which he might sleep in the ship. The chest, with the clothes and the gold, was taken down also and put into the ship.

Then the rowers made all things ready. They put the rug in the hinder part of the vessel, and Ulysses climbed into the ship, and lay down upon it. Then the men unfastened the ropes which made the ship fast to the shore, and took their places on the benches, and began to row. As soon as ever they touched the water with their oars, Ulysses fell into a deep sleep. And the men rowed, and the ship sprang forward more quickly than a chariot with four horses travels over the plain. A hawk could not fly through the air more swiftly.

When the morning star rose in the sky, the ship came to Ithaca. Now there was a harbour in the island which the rowers knew very well. It was sheltered from the waves, and at the head

of it was a great olive tree, and near the olive tree a cave. Here the men ran the ship ashore, and they took up Ulysses in his rug, for he was still fast asleep, and laid him down under the olive tree, and by his side they put all his provisions. After this, they got into their ship again, and started for home.

After a while Ulysses woke up from his sleep. Now Athen had spread a great mist over all the place, and Ulysses did not know where he was, so different did it look from what it really was. And he cried out: "Where am I? What shall I do? Where shall I put these goods of mine? Surely these Phaeacians have not done what they promised, but have taken me to a strange land. But first let me see whether they have left me the things which belonged to me." So he counted the clothes, and the gold, and the kettles, and found that nothing was missing. Still he was in great trouble, for he did not know where he was. While he walked to and fro, Athen met him. She had taken the shape of a handsome young shepherd. When Ulysses saw her, he was glad, though, indeed, he did not know that it was the goddess, not a shepherd, that he saw. He said: "Friend, you are the first man that I have seen in this country. Tell me where I am, and help me. Is this an island, or is it part of the mainland?"

Athen said: "You must have come from a very far country not to know this place, for, indeed, it is a country which most men know. This is the island of Ithaca, a good land, though it is not a good place for horses. Yet it is fertile, and gives good pasture for sheep and goats, and the vineyards bear good wine." Ulysses was very glad to hear this, still he thought it better not to let the stranger know who he really was. So he made up this story: "I come from the island of Crete. I got into trouble, for I killed the king's son, who would have robbed me of some of my goods. Then I made a bargain with certain Phoenicians that they should take me and my goods either to Pylos or to Elis. This they would have done but for the contrary winds which drove them to this place. So they put me out of the ship while I slept, and my possessions with me."

When Ulysses had finished his story, Athen changed her shape again, becoming like a woman fair and tall. And she laughed, and said: "O Ulysses, he would be a cunning man who could cheat you. Here you are in your own country again, and you are still making up these tales about yourself. Well, you are the wisest among mortals, and I am Athen , the goddess of Wisdom. I have always been used to stand by you and help you. And so I will do hereafter. First let us hide these goods of yours. Afterwards we will consider what should best be done. But you must be silent, telling no one who you are. So shall you come at last to your own again."

Ulysses answered: "O goddess, it is hard for any man to know you, for you take many shapes. You were always good to me when we were fighting against Troy, and you helped me the other day when I was among the Phaeacians. But now tell me truly: What is this place? You say that it is Ithaca, but it seems to me a strange country."

Then Athen scattered the mist so that Ulysses could see the place as it really was, and he knew it to be Ithaca, and he kneeled down, and kissed the ground, for he was very thankful in his heart.

And Athen said: "Now let us hide away your goods in the cave." So Ulysses took the clothes, and the gold, and all his other possessions, and stored them away in the cave, and Athen rolled a great stone to the mouth of the cave to keep them safe.

After this Athen asked him how he meant to get possession of his kingdom again. She told him how that there was a great crowd of princes from Ithaca and the islands round about, who had come hoping to marry Penelop , and how they sat day after day in his palace and wasted his substance. "And how," said she, "will you, being one man, prevail over them who are so many?" "If you will stand by me, and help me," said he, "I will fight against a hundred, ay, and against three hundred."

Then said Athen : "I will so change you that no man shall know you. I will make the skin of your face and hands withered and cold, and take the colour out of your hair, and make your eyes dull. The Suitors will think nothing of you, and even your wife and your son will not know you. Now go to the house of Eumaeus, who looks after the swine, for he is faithful to you; I will go to Sparta and fetch home your son Telemachus, for he is gone there seeking news of you."

Ulysses said: "Why did he go when you knew all and might have told him? Is he also to suffer what I have suffered?" "Nay," answered Athen , "it was only right that he should bestir himself, looking for his father. Be contented; all will be well."

So she touched him with her rod. And when she touched him, his skin withered, like the skin of an old man, and his hair lost its colour, and his eyes grew dim. And his clothes also looked torn and dirty. Also the goddess gave him a stag's skin, very shabby, with the hair worn from it. And she put a staff in his hand, and a battered wallet, such as beggars carry, which was fastened to his shoulders by a rope.

Chapter 14

Eumaeus

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

When Ulysses went away from Ithaca to fight against the Trojans, he left in charge of the swine a certain man, whose name was Eumaeus. He was a slave, but nevertheless he was a king's son, and this was how he came to be a slave. His father was king of a certain island, and he had in his household a Phoenician woman, and this woman was nurse to his son. She had been stolen away from her home by some people from Taphos—the Taphians were great stealers of men—and sold to the king. When the child was some five or six years old, there came a Phoenician ship to the island, with rings and bracelets and other fine things which women love, and the Phoenician woman, because they were from the same country, made friends with them and told her story. They said to her that they knew her father and mother, and that they were rich people, and promised, if she would come with them, to take her to her old home. Then the woman said that she would come with them. And that she might pay them for her passage, and also have something for herself, she took the little boy, the king's son, with her. Also she carried away three gold cups that were in the house. So the Phoenicians sailed away with the woman and the child. On the sixth day she died, and they threw her body overboard, and carried the child to Ithaca, where they sold him to the father of Ulysses.

And now Ulysses went to the place where this Eumaeus lived and kept the swine. There were twelve sties round a very big courtyard, and in each sty fifty swine. Also, to keep away thieves, he had four watchdogs, very large and fierce. The swineherd was in his house, making a pair of sandals; he had three men who were looking after the swine in the fields, for though he was a slave, he had other men under him; a fourth was driving a fat hog to the city, which was to be killed and cooked for the Suitors. When Ulysses came into the courtyard the four dogs ran at him. So he dropped his staff, and sat down on the ground, for dogs, they say, will not bite a man that is sitting. Yet they might have hurt him, for they were very fierce, but Eumaeus heard their barking, and came out of his house, and drove away the dogs with stones. Then he said to Ulysses: "Old man, the dogs had nearly killed you. That would have been a great grief to me, and I have grief enough already. My lord has gone away, and no one knows where he is; perhaps he is wandering about without food to eat, and others all the time are eating the fat beasts that belong to him. But come into my house, old man, and tell me your story."

So Ulysses went into the house, and the swineherd made him sit down on his own bed. There was a heap of brushwood, with the skin of a wild goat spread over it. Ulysses was glad to find him so kind, and said: "Now may the gods reward you for your kindness to a stranger!"

The swineherd answered: "It would be a wicked thing not to be kind to a stranger. But I have little to give. If my master had stayed at home, I should be better off. He would have given me a house and land and a wife. Good masters, and indeed Ulysses was a good master, give such gifts to servants who serve them well. And I have served him well. Once there was not a man in all these islands who had better flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and droves of swine than he; but of late years there has been a great waste in his house, for the princes of the island assemble in his house and eat and drink, yes, and waste in a most shameful way."

Then he went out and took a small pig from one of the sties, and prepared a meal for the stranger, and mixed wine for him in a cup made of ivywood. And Ulysses sat, and ate and drank. Not a word did he say, for he was busy thinking how he might punish the Suitors who were wasting his goods in this way.

At last he said: "Friend, who was this master of yours, who you say has been absent from his home so long? Perhaps I may have seen him, for I have wandered over many lands, and have seen and known many men."

Then said Eumaeus: "This is what all the travellers say, but we hear no truth from them. There is not a vagabond-fellow comes here but our queen must see him, and ask him questions about her husband, weeping all the while. And you, I dare say, for a cloak or a tunic, would tell a wonderful story of your own."

Then said the false beggar: "Listen to me: I tell you that Ulysses will return; yes, he will come before the next new moon. And you shall give me a gift such as men give to those who bring them good news. You shall give me a coat and a cloak. But, till my words are found to come true, I will take nothing from you. I hate the man who tells lies because he is poor: I would sooner die than do such a thing myself."

The swineherd answered: "Old man, you will never get the coat and the cloak from me. But don't talk about these things any more. It breaks my heart to think of my dear master. And now I am in trouble about my young master, his son. For he has gone to some strange places, hoping to get news about his father. Surely he has lost his wits to do such a thing. For the Suitors, I hear, lie in wait for him to kill him as he comes back. And so all my master's house will perish. But let these things be. Tell me now, old man, who you are, and from what country you come."

Ulysses said: "It would take a long time to tell you all my story. We might sit here, and eat and drink for a whole year, while I told you of all my adventures. But something you shall hear.

"I am a man of Crete, and my father's name was Castor. He had other sons, whose mother was a free woman; but my mother was a slave. While he lived he treated me just as he did my brothers, but when he died they gave me a very small share of his goods, and took away my home from me. Nevertheless, I did well for myself, for I was brave, and my neighbors thought well of me, so that I married a rich wife. There was not a man in the country who was fonder of fighting than I was—yes, even of taking part in an ambush, a thing which tries a man's courage more than anything else. Nine times did I go with my ship—for I had a ship and a crew of my own—on various adventures. The tenth time I went with the king of Crete to fight against the city of Troy. And when we had taken the city, I came back to the country with the king. For a month I stopped at home. And then I went to Egypt; and this time I had nine ships, for there were many who were willing to go with me. We had a fair wind, and got to our journey's end in four days. But then my men did much mischief to the people of the land, laying waste their fields, and carrying away their wives and children. And when I wished to stop them, they would not listen to me. Then the Egyptians gathered an army and came upon us. They killed many, and they took the rest prisoners. But I ran up to the king of Egypt, where he sat in his chariot, and begged him to have mercy on me. And he listened to me. So kind was he that I stayed with him for seven years, and became a rich man. Would that I had been content! But in the eighth year a Phoenician merchant came to the place, and promised me riches without end if I would go with him. So I gathered all that I had together, and went with him. For a year I stayed with him. Then he put me in his ship, meaning to take me to Africa, and to sell me there for a slave. But the ship was wrecked on the way, and I was the only one on board that was not drowned. I caught hold of the mast, and floated on it for nine days; and on the tenth I came to the country of King Pheidon. And there I heard tell of Ulysses; for the king was keeping his goods for him while he was on a journey to inquire of an oracle. From this place I took my passage in a merchant ship, but the sailors planned to sell me for a slave. So they bound me, and put me in the hold of the ship. But one day, when they were having their supper on shore, I loosed myself from my bonds, and leapt into the sea, and, swimming to land, so escaped."

Ulysses, we see, had always a tale ready. The swineherd said: "Your story makes me feel for you, for, indeed, you must have suffered much. But I don't believe what you tell me about my master, King Ulysses. All the strangers that come to this place have something to say about him; for they know that it is what we want to hear. I live here alone, and take care of the swine. But every now and then the queen sends for me, saying that some one has come bringing news

of the king. So I go, and I find the man, with a crowd of people round him asking him questions. Some of them really wish that the king would come home, but there are many who hope that he has perished, because they sit here idle and waste his goods. But I am not one of those who ask questions; I never have done it since a certain Aetolian cheated me with the story that he told. He had killed a man, he said, and had been obliged to leave his home, and I treated him kindly, and gave him the best that I had. And the fellow told me that he had seen my master with the king of Crete, and that he was then busy mending his ships, which had been damaged by a storm. He would come back, the fellow said, at the beginning of summer, or, at the latest, at harvest time, and would bring great riches with him. So, old man, do not try to please me with idle tales about Ulysses. I pity you, and try to help you because you are poor, but I wish to hear no lies about my master."

"Well," said Ulysses, "you are very slow to believe. But now listen to me; if your master comes back, as I say he will, then you shall give me a coat and a cloak. And if he does not come back, then your men may throw me down from a rock into the sea, as a warning to others that they should not tell false tales."

The swineherd said: "This is idle talk. What good would it do me to kill you? What would people say of me, if I took a stranger into my home, and then slew him? How should I ever pray to the gods again, if I had done such a thing? But enough of this. It is supper time, and I wish that my men had come back that we might sup together."

While he was speaking the men came back. And the swineherd said to them: "Fetch a fat pig from the sty, for I have a stranger here, and I should like to give him a good meal."

So they fetched a five-year-old hog, and they dressed the meat for their supper. And the swineherd gave to Ulysses the chine, for this was the best portion.

Now it was a very cold night, and it rained without ceasing, for the wind was blowing from the west, and this commonly brings rain in those parts. And after supper Ulysses thought he would try his host, to see what he would do; so he told this story:—

"A certain night when we were fighting against Troy, we laid our ambush near the city. Menela□s and Ulysses and I were the leaders of it. We sat hidden in the reeds, and the night was cold, so that the snow lay upon our shields. Now all the others had their cloaks, but I had left mine in my tent. When the night was three parts spent, I said to Ulysses, who lay close by me: 'Here I am—I, without a cloak. I a leader, to perish of cold!' Now Ulysses was always ready, knowing what to do. 'Hush!' he said, 'lest some one should hear you.' Then he said to the others: 'I have had a dream, which makes me sure that we are in danger. We are a long way from the ships, and these are too far off us. Let some one run to King Agamemnon, and ask

him to send us more men.' Then Thuas stood up, and said, 'I will run and tell him,' and he threw off his cloak, and ran. And I took the cloak, and slept warmly in it."

The swineherd said: "Old man, that is a good tale. And to-night, too, you shall have a cloak to keep you from the cold. But to-morrow you must put on your old rags again!" And he gave him his own cloak.

Chapter 15

Ulysses and His Son

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

The next day, while the swineherd was making the breakfast ready, Ulysses heard a step outside, and because the dogs did not bark, he said: "Friend, here comes some one whom you know, for the dogs do not bark." And while he was still speaking, Telemachus stood in the doorway. It should be told that he had landed from his ship at the nearest place that there was to the swineherd's cottage, for he knew that he was a good man and true.

When the swineherd saw Telemachus, he dropped the bowl that he had in his hand, for he was mixing some wine with hot water for him and his guest to drink with their breakfast, and ran to him, and kissed his head, and his eyes, and his hands. As a father kisses an only son who comes back to him after being away for ten years, so did the swineherd kiss Telemachus. The beggar, for such Ulysses seemed to be, rose from his place, and would have given it to the young man. But Telemachus would not take it. So they three sat down, and ate and drank. And when they had finished, the young man said to the swineherd: "Who is this?" The swineherd answered: "He is a stranger, who has asked me for help. But now I pass him over to you, for you are my master, and I am your servant."

"Nay," said Telemachus, "this cannot be. You call me master; but am I master in my own house? Do not the Suitors devour it? Does not even my mother doubt whether she will not forget the great Ulysses who is her husband, and follow one of these men? I will give this stranger food and clothes and a sword; but I will not take him into my house, for the Suitors are there, and they are haughty and insolent."

Ulysses heard the two talking, and he said: "But why do you bear with these men? Do the people hate you, that you cannot punish these insolent fellows as they deserve? Have you no kinsman to help you? I would sooner die than see such shameful things done in my house."

Telemachus answered: "My people do not hate me, but they are very slow to help. As for kinsmen, I have none. For my grandfather, Laertes, was an only son, and so was my father Ulysses, and I myself have neither brother nor sister. So I have no one to stand by me, and these wicked men spoil my goods, with none to stop them, ay, and they even seek to kill me."

Then he said to the swineherd: "Go to my mother the queen, and tell her that I have come back safe. But see that no one hears you; and I will stay here till you return."

So the swineherd departed. And when he was gone, there came the goddess Athen□, and she had the likeness of a tall and fair woman. Telemachus did not see her, for it is not every one who can see the gods; but Ulysses saw her, and the dogs saw her, and whimpered for fear. She made a sign to Ulysses, and he went out of the house. Then she said: "Do not hide yourself from your son; tell him who you are, and plan with him how you may slay the Suitors. And remember that I am with you to help you."

Then she touched him with her golden wand. And all at once he had a new tunic and a new coat. Also he became taller and more handsome, and his cheeks grew rounder, and his hair and his beard grew darker. Having done this, she went away, and Ulysses went again into the cottage. Much did Telemachus marvel to see him, and he cried:—

"Stranger, you are not the same that you were but a few moments ago. You have different clothes, and the colour of your skin is changed. Can it be that you are a god and not a man?"

"I am no god," said Ulysses; "I am your father, the father for whom you have been looking."

But Telemachus could not believe what he said. "You cannot be my father," he answered. "No man could do what you have done, making yourself old and young as you please, and changing your clothes this way. Just now you were a shabby beggar, and now you are as one of the gods in heaven."

Ulysses answered: "Ay, but it is in very truth your father who has come back to his home after twenty years. As for what you so wonder at, it is Athen□'s work; it is she who makes me at one time like an old beggar in shabby clothes, and at another like a young prince, richly clad."

When he had said this he sat down, and Telemachus threw his arms round his father's neck and shed many tears. After a while Telemachus said to his father: "Tell me now, father, how you came back."

Ulysses said: "The Phaeacians brought me in a ship, and set me down on the shore of this island, and they brought many things with me, handsome presents that were made to me. These have I hidden in a cave. But now let us plan how we may slay these Suitors. Tell me how many there are of them. Should we make war upon them ourselves, or shall we get others to help us?"

Telemachus said: "My father, you are, I know, a great warrior, but this thing we cannot do. These men are not ten, or twice ten, but more than a hundred. And they have a herald and a minstrel, and certain attendants."

Then said Ulysses: "To-morrow you must go to the palace, and take your place among the Suitors, and I will come like to a shabby beggar. If they behave themselves badly to me, endure it. Their time is nearly come; they shall soon be punished as they deserve. Be prudent, therefore. Also, when I give you a sign, then take away all the arms that hang in the hall, and stow them away in your chamber. And if any man ask you why you do this, say that they want cleaning, for the smoke has soiled them, and they are not such as Ulysses left them when he went away to Troy. And you might say also that it is not well to have weapons in a hall where men are used to feast, for the very sight of the steel makes men ready to quarrel. But keep two swords and two spears close at hand. These will be for you and me. And mind that you tell no one that I have come back—not my father, nor the swineherd, no, nor Penelop herself."

While they were still talking, the swineherd came back from the city. But before he came into the house, Athen changed Ulysses back again into the shape of the old beggar man, for it was not well that he should know the truth until everything was ready.

Telemachus said to him: "Have you brought back any news from the city? Have the Suitors who went out in a ship to kill me come back, or are they still watching for me?"

The swineherd said: "I cannot tell you this for a certainty. I thought it better to ask no questions in the city. But I saw a ship coming into the harbour, and I saw a number of men in it who had shields and spears. It may be that these were the Suitors, but I am not sure."

Then Telemachus looked at Ulysses, but he was careful not to meet the eye of the swineherd.

Chapter 16

Of the Dog Argus and Other Things

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

The next day Telemachus said to the swineherd: "I will go to the city, for my mother will not be easy till she sees my face. You will take the stranger with you that he may beg of any that may have a mind to give."

"Yes," said Ulysses, "that is what I desire. If a man must beg, 'tis better to beg in the city than in the country. And do you go first; I will follow a little later, when it will be warmer, for now I shall feel cold under these rags."

So Telemachus went on to the city, and very glad were his mother and the nurse to see him. He looked after certain business that he had to do, but all the time he had one thought always in his mind, how he and his father might kill the Suitors.

About noon the swineherd and Ulysses came to the city. Now just outside the wall there was a fountain, and there the two came across a certain Melanthius, who looked after the goats. When he saw the swineherd and his companion, he said: "Why do you bring beggars to the city? we have enough of them already." And he came up and kicked Ulysses on the thigh, thinking to push him over. But Ulysses stood firm. For a while he thought to himself: "Shall I knock out this fellow's brains with my club?" But he thought it better to endure. So the two went on to the palace. Now at the door of the courtyard there lay a dog, Argus by name, which had belonged to Ulysses in old time. He had reared him from a puppy, feeding him with his own hand; but before the dog had come to his full growth, his master had gone away to fight against Troy. While Argus was strong, men had used him in their hunting, when they went out to kill roe-deer and wild goats and hares. But now he was old no one looked after him, and he lay on a dunghill, and the lice swarmed on him. When he saw his old master, he knew him at once, and wagged his tail and drooped his ears, for he was too weak to get up from the place where he lay.

When Ulysses saw him, the tears came into his eyes, and he said to the swineherd: "Now this is strange, Eumaeus, that so good a dog, for I see that he is of a good breed, should lie here upon a dunghill."

The swineherd answered: "He belongs to a master who died far away from his home. Once upon a time there was no dog more swift or more strong; but his master is dead, and the careless women take no count of him. When the master is away, the slaves neglect their work.

Surely it is true that a slave is but half a man." While the two were talking together, the dog Argus died. He had waited twenty years for his master to come back, and he saw him at last.

Then the swineherd and the beggar went into the hall where the Suitors sat at their meal. When Telemachus saw them, he took bread and meat, as much as he could hold in his two hands, and bade a servant carry them to the beggar. Also, he bade the man tell him that he could go round among the Suitors and ask alms of them. So Ulysses went, stretching out his hand as beggars do. Some of the Suitors gave, for they saw that he was tall and strong, for all that he looked old and shabby. But when he came to Antino□s, and had told him his story, how he had been rich in old days, and had had ships of his own, and how he had gone to Egypt and had been sold as a slave to Cyprus, the young man mocked him, saying: "Get away with your tales, or you will find that Ithaca is a worse place for you than Egypt or Cyprus."

Ulysses said to him: "You have a fair face but an evil heart. You sit here at another man's feast, and yet will give me nothing."

Then Antino□s caught up the footstool that was under his feet, and struck Ulysses with it. It was a hard blow, but he stood as firm as a rock. He said nothing, but he was very angry in his heart. Then he went and sat down at the door of the hall. And he said to those who sat in the hall: "Hear, all ye Suitors of the queen! Antino□s has struck me because I am poor. May the curse of the hungry fall upon him, and bring him to destruction before he come to his marriage day."

But Antino□s cried: "Sit still, stranger, and eat what you have got in silence, or I will bid the young men drag you from the house, ay, and tear your flesh off your bones."

But even the Suitors blamed him: "You did ill to strike the stranger; there is a curse on those that do such things. Do you not know that sometimes the gods put on the shape of poor men, and visit the dwellings of men to see whether they are good or bad?" But Antino□s did not care what others thought about him, so full of naughtiness was his heart. As for Telemachus, he was full of anger to see his father so treated. But he kept it to himself; he did not shed a tear, no, nor speak a word; but he thought of the time when the Suitors should suffer for all their ill-doings. But Penelop , when she heard of it, prayed that the gods might strike the wicked man. "They are all enemies," she said to the dame that kept the house, "but this Antino□s is the worst of all." Then she said to the swineherd: "Bring this stranger to me; I should like to talk with him. Perhaps he has heard something of Ulysses, or even has seen him, for I hear that he has wandered far."

The swineherd answered: "Be sure, my queen, that this man will charm you with his talk. I kept him in my house for three days, and he never stopped talking of what he had seen and of

his adventures. He charms those that listen to him, as a man that sings beautiful songs charms them. And, indeed, he does say that he has heard of Ulysses, that he has gathered much wealth, and that he is on his way home."

When Penelop heard this, she was still more eager to talk with the stranger. "Call him," she said, "and bring him here to me at once. O that Ulysses would come back, and punish these wicked men for all the evil that they have done! Tell the stranger that if I find he tells me truth, I will give him a new coat and cloak."

Then the swineherd said to Ulysses: "The queen wants to speak to you, and ask you what you have heard about her husband. And if she finds that you have told her the truth, she will give you a new coat and cloak; yes, and give you leave to beg anywhere you please about the island."

Now Ulysses did not think that it was quite time to let his wife know who he was, and he was afraid that if he went to talk to her she would find it out. So he pretended to be afraid of the Suitors, and said to the swineherd: "I would gladly tell the queen all that I know about her husband; but I am afraid of the wicked young men, of whom there are so many. Even now, when that man struck me, and that for nothing, there was no one to stop him. Telemachus himself would not, or could not. Tell the queen, therefore, that I am afraid to come now, but that if she will wait till the evening, then I will come."

Then the swineherd went to the queen to give her this message. And when she saw that the beggar was not with him she said: "How is this that you have not brought him? Is he ashamed to come? The beggar who is ashamed does not know his trade."

The swineherd answered: "Not so, lady, but he is afraid of those haughty and violent young men; and, indeed, he is right. So he would have you wait till the evening before he comes, and then you can speak with him alone. It will be better so."

The queen said: "The stranger is wise, and it shall be as he says. Truly, these men are more insolent than any others in the world."

Then the swineherd went close up to Telemachus and whispered to him: "I am going back to the farm, to look after things there. Take care of yourself and the stranger. There are many here who are ready to do you harm. May the gods bring them to confusion!"

Telemachus answered: "Go, father, as you say, and come again to-morrow, and bring with you beasts for sacrifice."

So the swineherd went away, and the Suitors made merry in the hall with dancing and singing.

Chapter 17

Of the Beggar Irus and Other Things

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

This same afternoon there came a beggar from the town, whom the young men called Irus, because he carried messages for them, giving him this name because it is Iris who takes the messages of the gods. This fellow was very stout and tall, and a mighty man to eat and drink, but he was a coward. When he saw Ulysses sitting at the door of the palace, he said: "Old man, get away from that place, or I will drag you from it. The young men would like me to do so now, but I think it a shame to strike an old man."

Ulysses said: "There is room here for you and me; get what you can, I do not grudge it you; but you do not make me angry, lest I should hurt you."

But Irus thought to himself: "Here is a man whom I can easily get the better of;" and he said: "Get away from your place, or else fight with me."

Antino s heard what he said, and he called to the Suitors and said: "Here is good sport, the best that I have ever seen in this place. These two beggars are going to fight. Come, my friends, and let us make a match between them."

Then the young men got up from their seats to join in the sport. And Antino s said: "Here are two haunches of goats—we should have had them for supper. Now if these two beggars will fight, we will give the conqueror one of the haunches for his own supper, and he shall eat it with us, and he shall always have a place kept for him."

Ulysses said: "It is a hard thing for an old man to fight with a young one. Still I am ready. Only you must all swear that you will not give me a foul blow while I am fighting with this fellow."

Telemachus said: "That shall be so, old man;" and all the Suitors agreed. Then Ulysses made himself ready to fight. And when the Suitors saw his thighs, how strong and thick they were, and how broad his shoulders, and what mighty arms he had, they said to each other: "This is a strong fellow; there will be little left of Irus when the fight is over." As for Irus, when he saw the old beggar stripped, he was terribly afraid, and would have slunk away, but the young men would not suffer it. Antino s said: "How is this, Irus? Are you afraid of that old beggar? If you play the coward, you shall be put into a ship, and taken to King Echetus, who will cut off your ears and your nose, and give them to his dogs."

So the two men stood up to fight. And Ulysses thought to himself: "Shall I kill this fellow with a blow, or shall I be content with knocking him down?" And this last seemed the better thing to do. First Irus struck Ulysses, but did not hurt him with his blow; then Ulysses struck Irus, and the blow was on the man's jaw-bone. And Irus fell to the ground, and the blood poured out of his mouth. Then Ulysses dragged him out of the hall, and propped him against the wall of the courtyard, and put a staff in his hand and said: "Sit there, and keep away dogs and swine from coming in at the door; but do not try to lord it over men, no, not even over strangers and beggars, lest some worse thing should happen to you."

Then Antino s gave Ulysses the goat's haunch, and another of the Suitors, whose name was Amphinomus, took two loaves from the table, and gave them to him. Also he gave him a cup of wine, and himself drank his health, saying: "Good luck to you, father, hereafter, for now you seem to have fallen on evil days."

And Ulysses had a liking for the young man, knowing that he was better than his fellows, and he tried to give him a warning. So he said: "You have some wisdom, and your father, I know, is a wise man. Now listen to me: there is nothing in the world so foolish as man. When he is prosperous, he thinks that no evil will come near him; but when the gods send evil, then he can do nothing to help himself. Look at me; once I was prosperous, and I trusted in myself and in my kinsfolk, and see what I am now! Trust not in robbery and wrong, for the gods will punish such things sooner or later. You and your fellows here are doing wrong to one who is absent. But he will come back some day and slay his enemies. Fly, therefore, while there is time, and be not here to meet him when he comes."

So Ulysses spoke, meaning to be kind to the man. And the man felt in his heart that these words were true; nevertheless he went on in the same way, for his doom was upon him that he should die. And now Athen put it into the heart of Penelop that she should show herself to the Suitors, and this the goddess did for this reason. First, that the hearts of the young men should be still more lifted up in them with pride and folly, and next that they should be moved to give gifts to the queen, as will be seen; and, thirdly, that the queen might be more honored by her husband and her son. So Penelop said to the old woman that waited on her: "I have a desire now for the first time to show myself to the Suitors, though they are quite as hateful to me as before. Also, I would say a word to my son, lest he should have too much to do with these wicked men, and that they should do him some harm."

The old woman said: "This is well thought, lady. Go and show yourself to the Suitors, and speak to your son, but first wash and anoint your face. Do not let the tears be seen on your cheeks: it is not well to be always grieving."

But the queen said: "Do not talk to me about washing and anointing my face. What do I care how I look, now that my husband is gone? But tell two of my maids to come with me, for I would not go among these men alone."

So the old woman went to tell the maids. But Athen would not let the queen have her own way in this matter. So she caused a deep sleep to fall upon her, and while she slept, she made her more beautiful and taller than she was before.

When the queen awoke, she said to herself: "O that I might die without pain, just as now I have fallen asleep. For what good is my life to me, now that my husband is gone?"

Then she got up from her bed, and washed her face, and went down to the hall, and stood in the door, with a maid standing on either side of her. Never was there a more beautiful woman, and every one of the Suitors prayed in his heart that he might have her for his wife.

First she spoke to her son: "Telemachus, when you were a child, you had a ready wit; but now that you are grown up, though you are such to look at as a king's son should be, tall and fair, yet your thoughts seem to go astray. What is this that has now been done in this house—this ill-treating a stranger? It would be a shame to us for ever, if he should be hurt."

Telemachus answered: "You do well to be angry, my mother. Nevertheless, I am not to blame; I cannot have all things as I would wish them to be, for others are stronger than I am, and will have their way. But as for this fight between the stranger and Irus, it did not end as the Suitors would have had it. The stranger had the better of him, and Irus now sits by the gate, wagging his head, and cannot raise himself on to his feet, for the stranger has taken all the strength out of him. I wish in my heart that all the Suitors were in as evil case as he."

Then said one of the Suitors to Penelop : "O queen, if all the Greeks could behold you, there would be such a crowd in this hall to-morrow as never was seen, so fair are you above all the women in the land."

Penelop said: "Do not talk to me of beauty; my beauty departed when my lord, Ulysses, went to Troy. If only he would return! Then it would be well with me. I remember how, when he departed, he took me by the hand, and said: 'O lady, not all the Greeks that go this day to Troy will come back, for the men of Troy, they say, are great spearmen, and skilled in shooting with the bow, and good drivers of chariots. And so I know not whether I shall come back to my home or perish there before the walls of the city. Do thou, therefore, care for my father and for my mother while I am away; care for them as you do now, and even more. And bring up our son, Telemachus. And when he is a bearded man, then, if I am dead, marry whom you will.' So my husband spoke. And now the time is come. For he is dead, for it is ten years since Troy was

taken, and yet he has not come back; and Telemachus is grown to be a man; and I am constrained to make another marriage, although I am unhappy. And I have yet another trouble. My Suitors are not as the Suitors of other women. For the custom is that when a man would woo a lady, he brings sheep and oxen and makes a feast for his kindred and friends, but these men devour my substance, and make no payment for it."

So spoke the queen; and Ulysses was glad to see how she beguiled the men, drawing gifts from them, while she hated them in her heart.

Then said Antino s: "Lady, we will give you gifts, nor will you do well to refuse them. But know this, that we will not depart from this place till you have chosen one of us for your husband."

To this all the Suitors agreed. And every man sent his squire to fetch his gift. Antino s gave an embroidered robe, very handsome, with twelve brooches and twelve clasps of gold on it. Another gave a chain of curious work, with beads of amber; a third a pair of ear-rings; and yet another a very precious jewel. Every one gave a gift. So the queen went back to her chamber.

Then said one of the Suitors to his fellows, scoffing at the stranger: "See now our good luck in that the gods have sent this man to us. How does the light of the torches flash on his bald head!" And he turned to Ulysses, and said: "Stranger, will you serve me as a hired servant at my farm among the hills? Your wages will be sure, and you shall work, gathering stones, and building walls, and planting trees. And you shall have clothes, and shoes for your feet, and bread to eat. But you do not care, I take it, to work in the fields; you like better to beg your bread and to do no work."

Ulysses answered: "Young man, I would gladly try my strength against yours. We two might each take a scythe in his hand and mow grass when the days grow long in the spring, fasting meanwhile. Or we might plough against each other, driving teams of oxen in a field of four acres. Then you should see whether I could plough a clean and straight furrow. Or if Zeus should order, would that you and I might stand together in the front rank! You think overmuch of yourself; but, verily, if Ulysses should come back, this door would not be wide enough for you and your fellows to escape."

The man was very angry to hear such words. "Old man," he cried, "you had better not say such things, lest I do you a mischief. Has the wine stolen away your wits, or is it your way to prate in this idle fashion, or are you puffed up by having got the better of Irus the beggar?"

And he caught up a footstool, and threw it at Ulysses, but Ulysses stooped down and escaped it. But the footstool struck a young man who was carrying round the wine, and hurt his hand so grievously that he fell back, and lay on the floor groaning.

Then said one of the Suitors to his neighbour: "I wish this fellow would go away. Ever since he came hither there has been strife and quarrelling in the place. Now we shall have no more pleasure in the feast." But Telemachus said: "It is plain that you have had meat and drink enough. Now let us all go to rest." And they agreed and went away.

Chapter 18

How Ulysses Was Made Known

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

Ulysses said to his son: "Now is the time to do the thing of which I spoke to you, that you should take away the swords and spears from the hall, and lay them up in the armoury."

So Telemachus said to the nurse: "Now shut up the maids in their rooms till I have taken away the arms from the hall and put them in the armoury. They are foul with the smoke, and it is time that they should be cleaned."

The nurse said: "I wish that all your father's goods were as well looked after. But who shall carry a light for you, if you will have none of the maids?"

Telemachus answered: "This stranger shall do it. He has eaten my bread, and he should do some work for it."

So the nurse shut up the maids in their rooms, and Ulysses and his son set themselves to carry the arms, the spears and swords and shields, from the hall to the armoury. Nor did they need any one to light them, for Athen went before them, holding a golden lamp in her hand. No one saw her or the lamp, but the light they saw. And Telemachus said: "This is a strange thing, father; the walls and the beams and the pillars are bright as with fire."

Now Ulysses knew that this was Athen 's doing, and he said: "Say nothing, nor ask any question about it."

And when they had finished the carrying of the arms, Ulysses said to the young man: "Go now to your room and sleep; I wish to talk to your mother."

So Telemachus went to his room and lay down to sleep, and Ulysses sat in the hall alone, thinking how he should slay the Suitors. After a while, Penelop came down and sat by the fire. Her chair was made of silver and ivory. The maids also came down and cleared away the dishes and the cups, and put fresh logs upon the fire. Then the queen said: "Bring another chair, and a cushion, that this stranger may sit down and tell me his story." So they brought a chair and a cushion, and Ulysses sat down. Then said the queen: "Stranger, tell me who you are. What was your father's name, and from what country do you come?" Ulysses answered: "Lady, ask me what you will, but not my name or my country. To think of these brings tears to my eyes; and I would not that any one should see me weeping. They will say, 'This is a foolish fellow, or he has let the wine steal away his senses.' "

The queen said: "I too have had many sorrows and have shed many tears since the day when my husband left me, going with the Greeks to fight against the men of Troy. And now I know not what to do for the troubles that are come upon me. For the princes of this island of Ithaca, and of the other islands round about, come hither, asking me to marry. And they sit here day after day, and devour my lord's substance. And I do not know how to escape them. For three years, indeed, I put them off, for I said that I could not marry till I had woven a shroud for the old man, my husband's father. And I worked at the weaving of this in the day, and at night I undid the weaving. But one of the maids told the thing to the Suitors, and I could not help finishing the work. And now I know not what to do, for my father and mother are urgent with me that I should marry, and my son sees all his substance eaten up before his eyes, which these Suitors eat and drink in his house. Then tell me, stranger, of what race you are, for you did not come from a rock or an oak tree, as the old fables have it."

Ulysses said: "Lady, if you will know these things, I will tell you, though it grieves me to the heart. I come from a certain island that is called Crete. It is a fair land, and rich, with many people in it, and ninety cities. I was the younger son of the king, and when my father died, then my elder brother became king in his place. And when the Greeks went against the city of Troy, my brother went with them. Some ten days after he had departed there came a stranger, who said that he was Ulysses, and that he, too, was sailing for Troy, and that the winds had carried him out of his course. And he asked for my brother, who, he said, was his friend. So I gave food and wine to him and to his people. Twelve days did they stay, for the wind blew from the north and hindered their sailing; but on the thirteenth day it blew from the south, and they departed."

When the queen heard this, she was much moved, and shed many tears. Ulysses pitied her when he saw her weep, but his own eyes were dry, as hard as if they had been of horn or iron. Then Penelop said: "Stranger, let me ask you one question, that I may be sure that this man was in very truth my husband. Tell me now what were the clothes that he wore, and whether he had any companion with him."

Now this was a hard question, for twenty years had passed since these things happened, and a man might well have forgotten what clothes a stranger had worn. And even Ulysses himself might not bear them in mind, for women remember such things more readily than do men.

The beggar said: "I remember that he had a cloak, sea-purple in colour, made of wool, and double. And I remember also that it was clasped with a brooch of gold, and that the brooch was of this pattern—a dog holding a fawn. Wonderfully wrought it was, so eager to lay hold was

the dog, and so did the fawn struggle to be free. And his coat was white and smooth. But whether he had brought these things from his home, I know not. Many men gave him gifts. I myself gave him a sword and a coat. and he had a comrade with him, a herald, older than he, with curly hair and dark skin."

When Penelop heard this, she wept aloud, for she remembered every one of these things, and knew that the beggar had indeed seen her husband. "You tell a true story, old man," she said. "These clothes that you speak of Ulysses had; I folded them with my own hands, and put them away in his baggage. They were what he would wear at feasts and the like; others he had for travelling. And the brooch with the dog and the fawn I gave him. But, alas! I shall never see him any more."

"Say not so, dear lady," said the beggar. "Do not think of Ulysses as if he were dead; he will surely come again. And, indeed, he is not far away. He is with King Pheidon, and will soon be coming back, and will bring much treasure with him, enough to make this house rich for many generations. King Pheidon showed me these things. Ulysses himself I did not see, for he had gone to inquire of the god at Dodona, where there is the sacred oak, and the god answers by the voice of the doves that roost in its branches. He went to ask—so the king told me—whether he should come back openly or secretly. But be sure, lady, that he will come, and before this month is out."

Penelop said: "May your words be found true, old man. If these things come to pass, you shall have gifts in plenty; you shall not want any more, as long as you live. But I have many doubts. But now the maids shall make a bed for you with a mattress and blankets, so that you may sleep warmly till the morning. And they shall wash your feet."

But Ulysses said: "I thank you, lady; but I will not have my bed made with blankets and mattress. I do not care for these things. Since I left the land of Crete, I have not used them. Nor do I care for the bath. Nevertheless, if there is some old woman among your servants, some one whom you trust, she shall wash my feet, if you will."

Penelop said: "Such an old woman there is in the house. She nursed my husband, and cared for him, and carried him in her arms, ever since he was born. She is weak with old age; still she will wash your feet."

So the queen called the nurse, and said to her: "Come, nurse, wash this stranger's feet. He is one that knows your master Ulysses."

The nurse, when she heard this queen so speak, put her hands before her face, and wept. And she said to the stranger: "Willingly will I do this, both for the queen's sake and for yours,

if you bring news of my dear master. Yes, and because you are like him. Many strangers have come hither, but never saw I one that was so like Ulysses."

Ulysses said: "Say you so? 'Tis what others have said before, that Ulysses and I were much alike."

So the nurse made ready the bath; and Ulysses turned away from the fire, and sat looking into the darkness, for he feared lest when the old woman should take his leg in her hands she should find a great scar that there was on it. Now the story of how the scar came about is this:—

When Ulysses was a lad of some eighteen years, he went to Parnassus to see his mother's father, Autolycus. It was this man who had given him his name, for when he was newly born the nurse had laid him on his grandfather's knee, saying: "Give this child a name." And Autolycus had said: "Let his name be Ulysses, and when he is grown up, let him come to me, and I will give him a gift that will be worth having." So Ulysses went to see his grandfather, and he and his grandmother and their sons were very glad to see him, and they made a great feast for him. The next day they all went hunting, and Ulysses went with them. They climbed up the side of the mountain Parnassus, and the time was about sunrise. The beaters came to a glade in the forest, and the dogs went before, following a scent on which they had come, and with them came Ulysses and his uncles, the sons of Autolycus. And the dogs brought them to the lair of a wild boar. A very thick place it was, so covered that neither sun nor rain could come through, and there was a great quantity of dead leaves in it. When the boar, which was a very great beast, was roused by the baying of the dogs and by the trampling of the hunters' feet, he sprang up from his lair, and his hair bristled on his back, and his eyes shone with a very fierce light. Now Ulysses was not used to hunting of this sort, for there were no wild boars in Ithaca, and, maybe, he did not know how great was the danger. But he was a very brave lad, and very eager for praise, and he rushed in before the rest of the company, holding his spear in his hand, for he greatly wished to be the one who should kill the beast. But the boar was too quick for him, for it charged him, thrusting aside the spear, and made a great wound in his leg, just above the knee, striking him with his tusk sideways. But the bone was not touched. Nor did Ulysses fail, though, indeed, he was greatly hurt; for he stabbed the boar in the shoulder, running the spear into the beast's breast, and it fell dead on the ground. Then his uncles bound up the wound, staying the blood with such things as were used for that purpose, and also singing a song of healing. So they went back to the house; and they kept the lad till the wound was healed, and they sent him away with many splendid gifts. But the scar of the wound was left.

When the nurse felt the scar, she knew that the stranger was Ulysses, and she said: "O Ulysses, O my child, to think that I knew you not." And she looked towards the queen, as meaning to tell her what she had found. But Ulysses laid his hand upon her mouth, and said in a whisper: "Mother, would you be my death? I am come back after these twenty years, but no one must know till I have got all things ready."

Then the old woman held her peace. After this Penelop talked with him again. Many things she said to him, and among them was a dream that she had dreamt. "I thought," she said, "that I saw a flock of geese in the palace, and that an eagle came into the hall and killed them all, and that I heard a voice saying: 'These geese are the Suitors, and the eagle is your husband.' " "That," said the stranger, "is a good dream." After this she said: "To-morrow I must make my choice among the Suitors, and I have promised to bring out the great bow that was Ulysses', and he that shall draw the bow most easily, and best shoot an arrow at the mark, he shall be my husband."

"That, too, is well," answered Ulysses. "Let this trial of the bow be made at once. Truly, before one of these men shall bend the bow, Ulysses shall come back and shoot at a certain mark."

Chapter 19

The Trial of the Bow

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

Ulysses lay down to sleep in the gallery of the hall. He lay with the undressed hide of a bull under him, and he took to cover him fleeces of sheep that had been killed for sacrifice and feast. Also the dame that kept the house laid a mantle over him. But he could not sleep, for he was thinking about many things, chiefly how he, being one, with but some two or three to help him, could slay all the company of Suitors.

While he turned from side to side thinking over those things, Athen came and stood over his head in the likeness of a woman, and said to him: "Why do you not sleep? Here you are in your own home, and you find that your wife is true to you, and that your son is just such as you could wish. What troubles you?"

Ulysses answered: "These things that you say, O goddess! are true. But I think how I, being one against many, shall be able to slay the Suitors. This troubles me; and this also, how, if I slay them, shall I escape the avengers of blood?"

The goddess answered: "Truly, your faith is weak. Should you not trust in the gods, for they are stronger than men? The gods are on your side; I am with you, and will keep you to the end. And now sleep, for to wake all night is vexation of spirit."

So she poured sleep on eyes, and left him.

When he awoke up in the morning, he took up the fleeces which had covered him, and laid them on a seat in the hall, and the bull's hide on which he had slept he carried outside. And as he stood, he looked up to the sky and said: "O Zeus, send me now a sign, if indeed, in bringing me back to my country, thou meanest to do me good?"

And even while he was speaking there came thunder from the sky, and Ulysses was glad to hear it. Also there came another sign to him, and this was a word which was spoken by a woman at the mill. Twelve women there were who ground corn for the palace, wheat and barley. Eleven of them were sleeping, for they had finished their task; but this one was weaker than the rest, and had not finished her part, but still was grinding. And when she heard the thunder, she cried: "O Zeus, may this be a sign of good to me! may it mean that I shall never grind wheat and barley any more for the Suitors!"

And now Telemachus came down from the room where he slept, and said to the nurse: "Did you give to our guest food and drink and bedding as was fitting?"

Then nurse said: "The man ate and drank as much as he would, but a mattress and rugs he would not have. He slept on a bull's hide, and had the fleeces of sheep to cover him. But he had also a mantle over him."

After this the swineherd came, driving three fat hogs for the day's feast. He said to Ulysses: "Stranger, how have these young men behaved to you?"

Ulysses said: "May the gods deal with them as they have dealt with me!"

And after the swineherd came Melanthius the goatherd, bringing goats for the day's feast. When he saw Ulysses, he spoke roughly to him: "Old man, are you still plaguing us with your begging? We shall not part, I take it, till we have made trial of each other with our fists. Your begging is past bearing. Are there not other feasts to which you can go?"

Last came the neatherd, whose name was Philaetius, and he was driving a barren heifer; and this also, besides the pigs and the goats, was for the feast. He said to Ulysses: "Friend, I hope that you may have better luck in the time to come; for now I see that you have many troubles. Maybe Ulysses is wandering about, clothed in rags as you are and begging his bread. I weep to think of it. Ay, it may be that he is dead. That would be a great grief. Long ago he set me to take care of his cattle, and they have increased under my hand, yet it vexes me to see how these strangers are ever devouring them in his own home. Long ago I would have fled to some other place, for the thing is past bearing, but that I hope that Ulysses will yet come again to his own."

Ulysses said to him: "Philaetius, I see that you are a good man. Now listen to what I say: I swear that this day, while you are still here, Ulysses will come home. You shall see it with your eyes—yes, and the end of the Suitors also." And now the Suitors came and sat down, as they were wont, to their morning meal. And the servants took to Ulysses a full share of meat and drink, for this was what Telemachus had bidden them do. When Ctesippus saw this—he was one who cared neither for gods nor men—he said: "Is this fellow to fare as well as we fare? See now what gift I will give him!" And he took the foot of a bullock out of a basket, and threw it at Ulysses. But he moved his head to the left, and the foot flew by, and made a mark on the wall.

When Telemachus saw this, he cried: " 'Tis well for you, Ctesippus, that you did not hit the stranger. Truly, if you had hit him, I had pierced you through with my spear, and your father would have had to make ready your burying, not your wedding."

"That is well said," cried another of the Suitors; " 'tis a shame to do wrong either to Telemachus, or to his guest. Nevertheless, he must bid his mother choose out from among us the man whom she will marry, so that we may not waste our time any more."

Telemachus answered: "My mother may marry whom she will; but never will I force her to leave this house."

When he said this the Suitors laughed, but their laughter was not as of men that were glad. And there came a darkness over the place, so that one of the men cried: "It is this stranger that brings bad luck with him. Let us send him away, for the hall seems to grow dark while he is here."

By this time Penelop had taken down the great bow of Ulysses from the peg on which it hung, and she drew it out of the case in which it was kept, and laid it across her knees and wept over it. Then, after a while, she rose, and carried it to the hall, where the Suitors sat feasting. With the bow she brought also the quiver full of arrows, and, standing by the pillar that stood under the dome, she said:—

"You, who come here day after day, and devour my substance, pretending that you wish to marry me, see here; look at this bow and these arrows; they belong to the great Ulysses, and with these I will try you. Whoso among you that shall most easily bend this bow with his hands, and shall shoot best at the mark which my son shall set up, him will I take for my husband; him will I follow, leaving this house, which I shall never see again except in my dreams."

Then Telemachus set the mark. And when he had set it, he made as if he would have drawn the bow himself; and this he would have done, for he was strong and worthy of his father; but Ulysses signed to him that he should not do it. So he said: "I am too young, and have not grown to my full strength; you that are older than I should try first."

Then a certain priest who was among the Suitors, Leiodes by name, made trial of the bow. He was the best among them, and did not like their ways; but for all that he stayed with them. He took the bow, and tried to bend it, wearying himself with it, making his hands sore, for they were soft and not used to work. At last he said: "I cannot bend the bow; and I fear that it will bring grief and pain to many this day."

But Antino s cried: "Why do you say such words?" And he bade the goatherd fetch a roll of fat from the kitchen, that they might make the string soft with it. And the Suitors rubbed the fat upon it, trying to soften it. But they could not bend it; they tried all of them, but it was in vain, till only two were left, Antino s and Eurymachus, who were indeed the strongest of them

all.

While the Suitors were trying the bow, Ulysses went out into the court, and spoke to the swineherd, and the man who herded the cattle, taking them by themselves, and said to them: "What would you do if Ulysses were to come back to his home? Would you fight for him, or for the Suitors?"

They both answered with one voice: "We would fight for him."

Then said Ulysses: "Look now at me: I am Ulysses, and I have come back after twenty years. You are glad in your hearts to see me; but I know not whether there is any one else besides you who is glad. Come now, be brave men to-day and help me, and I will reward you; you shall have wives and lands and houses, and you shall lie near me, and Telemachus shall take you for comrades and brothers. And if you want a sign that I am indeed Ulysses, look at this scar; this is the wound which the wild boar made on the day when I went hunting with my grandfather."

The men wept for joy to hear this; and they kissed Ulysses, and he kissed them. Then he said to the swineherd: "When the Suitors have tried the bow, bring it to me. Also bid the women keep within doors, and not move out if they hear the noise of battle." To the herdsman of the cattle he said: "Lock the doors of the hall, and fasten them with a rope."

Then he went back to the hall. Eurymachus had the bow in his hand, and was warming it at the fire. Then he tried to draw it, but could not. And he groaned aloud, saying: "Woe is me! I am grieved not for the loss of this marriage, for there are other women in Greece who may be wooed, but because we are all weaker than the great Ulysses. This is, indeed, a shameful thing." But Antino s said: "Do not lose heart. This day is holy to the god of Archers, and it does not please him that we are about this business. We will try again to-morrow, and first we will sacrifice to the god."

They were all pleased to hear these words, hoping that they might yet be able to draw the bow. But Ulysses said: "Let me try it; I should like to know whether I have still the strength which I had when I was young."

The Suitors were very angry that the stranger should dare to think of such a thing; but Penelop said that the man should try the bow, and that she would give him great gifts if he could bend it. Then said Telemachus: "Mother, this bow is mine, and I will give it or refuse it, as I shall see fit. And if it pleases me that this stranger shall try it, then it shall be so, and no man shall say nay. But now do you and your maids go to your rooms; these things are for men to settle."

This he said because he knew what would soon happen in the hall, and he would not have her there. She wondered to hear him speak with such authority, but she made no answer to him, and she went out of the hall, taking her maids with her.

Then Telemachus gave the bow to the swineherd, and bade him take it to Ulysses. The Suitors were angry, and would have stopped him, but Telemachus said: "Take it; it is mine to give or to refuse," and the swineherd took it to Ulysses. And when he had done this, he went to the nurse, and bade her keep the women within doors whatever they might hear.

Then Ulysses took the bow in his hand, and felt it to see whether it had suffered any hurt; and the Suitors laughed to see him do it. And when he found that it was without a flaw, then he bent it, and strung it, and he twanged the string, and the tone of it was shrill and sweet as the cry of a swallow. After this he took an arrow from the quiver, and laid the notch upon the string, and drew the bow to the full, still sitting in his place. And the arrow went straight to the mark. Then he said to Telemachus: "Come, stand by me; there is yet another feast to be kept before the sun goes down." And the young man stood by his side, armed with a spear.

Chapter 20

The Slaying of the Suitors

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

Ulysses cried aloud: "This work is done; and now I will try at another mark." As he spoke, he aimed his arrow at Antino s. The man was raising a cup to his lips. There was not a thought of danger in his mind: who could have dreamt that any man, though he were ever so strong and brave, should dare such a thing, being but one against many? The head of the arrow passed through the neck of Antino s; and the blood gushed out of his nostrils, and he fell, overturning the table that was near him. All the Suitors, when they saw him fall, leapt from their seats, but when they looked, all the arms had been taken down from the walls. For a moment they doubted whether the stranger had killed the man by chance or on purpose; but Ulysses cried out: "I am Ulysses! Dogs, you thought that I should never come back. Therefore you have devoured my goods, and made suit to my wife, though I was yet living, and have had no fear of god or of man before your eyes. And now a sudden destruction has come upon you all."

When they heard these words, the Suitors trembled for fear. There was only one man among them who could so much as speak. This was Eurymachus. He said: "If you are indeed Ulysses of Ithaca, you speak the truth. We have done great wrong to you. But the man who was most to blame lies dead here. It was Antino s who was the chief of your enemies. What he desired was not merely marriage with your wife, but to destroy your house, and to be king of Ithaca. But we will pay you back twenty times for all that we have taken of yours."

Ulysses said: "Talk not of paying back. You shall die this day, all of you."

Eurymachus said: "This man will not stay his hand, but will kill us all with his arrows. Let us make a rush for the door, and we will raise a cry in the city, and this archer will soon have shot his last."

As he spoke, he rushed on with two-edged knife in his hand; but Ulysses shot an arrow at him as he came, and he fell forward dead. And Telemachus slew another with his spear; but he could not draw out the spear from the wound, lest the enemy should take him at a disadvantage as he stooped.

Now it was plain that when Ulysses should have shot away all his arrows, the Suitors would have the better of them. So Telemachus ran to the armoury, and fetched down four helmets, and four shields, and eight spears. With these he armed himself and the two

servants—that is, the swineherd and the herdman of the cattle. Now while Ulysses had yet arrows in his quiver, the Suitors held back, for the three bravest of them had been slain, and they had neither armour nor weapon. But the goatherd saw their need, and he crept secretly up to the armoury and brought down thence twelve helmets and shields and as many spears. When Ulysses saw this, he cried to Telemachus: "There is treachery, my son. Have the women done this thing, or is it the goatherd?" Telemachus answered: "It is my fault, father. I left the door of the armoury open." While some of the Suitors were arming themselves, the goatherd went again to the armoury, but the swineherd and his companion followed him, and caught him as he was taking arms, and bound him with a rope. As soon as they had done this, they hastened back to the hall and stood by the side of Ulysses. Then a certain Agela s said to the other Suitors: "Friends, we can overcome these four if we join together. Let six of us throw our spears all at once." This they did, but the spears went wide of the mark. But the spears of the four went not wide, for each slew his man, and this they did again and again. On the other hand, both Telemachus and the swineherd were wounded, but not to their great hurt. The swineherd slew Ctesippus, and as he smote him, he cried: "Take that for the ox-foot which you gave to our guest." And all the courage that was in the Suitors left them, and they were as a flock of birds which is scattered and torn by eagles.

Leiodes, the priest, prayed Ulysses that he would spare him, saying that he had done no wrong, but had only served at the altar. But Ulysses answered: "It is enough that you have served at the altar of these wicked men, and that you have made suit to my wife." And he slew him without mercy. But the minstrel and the herald he spared. "Go," said he, "and sit by the altar." So they went and sat by the altar, fearing lest they also should be slain.

So the Suitors were slain, every one of them. And Ulysses bade the women come and wash the hall and the tables with water and smoke them with sulphur. And he said to the nurse: "Go now, and tell the queen that her husband has come back."

Chapter 21

At Last

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

The nurse went to the queen's bed-room with the good news. She ran with all the speed that she could, even stumbling in her haste. She found the queen asleep, for she had been awake for a long time, and was weary. And now the nurse stood by her head, and said: "Awake, dear child, and see what you have longed to see for so many years. Ulysses has come back, and has slain the wicked men who troubled you."

But Penelop answered: "Surely, dear nurse, the gods have taken away your senses. Why do you mock me, waking me out of the sweetest sleep that I have ever had since the day when Ulysses sailed away to Troy? Go to the other women, and leave me. If one of them had done this to me, I would have punished her, but you I cannot harm."

The nurse answered: "I do not mock you, dear child. It is indeed true that Ulysses is here. The stranger with whom you talked is he. Your son knew it, but hid the matter that the Suitors should be taken unawares."

Then Penelop was glad, and fell upon the old woman's neck, saying: "Tell me now the truth. Has he indeed come back? And how did he, being but one, contrive to slay so many?"

"That," said the nurse, "I do not know. We women sat together amazed, hearing the groaning of men that were being slain. Then some one fetched us, and I found Ulysses standing among the dead, and these lay piled one on the other. Truly you would have rejoiced to see him, so like was he to a lion, stained as he was with blood and the labour of the fight. And now the women here are washing the hall, and cleansing it with sulphur. But come; now is the end of all your grief, for the husband whom you so longed to see has come back."

But Penelop began again to doubt. "Dear nurse," she said, "be not too sure. Great, indeed, would be my joy if I could see him. But this cannot be he; it is some god who has taken the shape of a man that he may punish the Suitors for the wrong that they have done."

Then said the nurse: "What is this that you say? That your husband cannot have come back, when he is already in the house? Truly you are slow to believe. Now hear this proof, a thing that I saw with my own eyes. It is the scar of the wound that a wild boar gave him, when he was yet a lad. I saw it when I washed his feet, and I would have told it to you, but he put his hand on my mouth and would not suffer me to speak, for so he thought it best."

Penelop said: "I am in great doubt. Nevertheless, I will go into the hall and see the dead Suitors, and the man, whoever he be, that has slain them."

So she dressed herself and went down, and sat in a dark part of the hall, while Ulysses stood by the pillar, waiting till his wife should speak to him. But she was in great doubt. Sometimes she seemed to know him, and sometimes not, for he was still in his rags, not having suffered the women to give him new clothes.

Telemachus said: "Mother, you are indeed an evil mother, for you sit away from my father, and will not speak to him. Surely your heart must be harder than a stone."

Ulysses answered: "Let be, Telemachus; your mother will know the truth in good time. But now let us hide this slaughter for a while, lest the friends of these dead men come against us. Let there be music and dancing in the hall. Men will say, 'This is for the wedding of the queen.' "

So the minstrel played and the women danced. Then Ulysses went to the bath, and washed himself, and put on new clothes, and came back to the hall; also Athen made him fairer and younger, such as he was when he left his home to go to Troy. And he stood by his wife, and said: "Surely, O lady, the gods have made you harder of heart than all other women. Would any other wife have kept away from her husband, when he came back after twenty years?"

But Penelop still doubted. Then Ulysses said: "Hear now, Penelop , and know that it is indeed your husband whom you see. I will tell you a thing that you will remember. There was an olive there in the inner court of this house, which had a trunk of about the bigness of a pillar. Round this I built a room, and I roofed it over, and put doors upon it. Then I lopped all the boughs of the olive, and made the tree into a bedpost. And I joined the bedstead on to this post, and adorned it with gold, and silver, and ivory. Also I fastened it together with a band of leather which had been dyed with purple: whether the bedstead is still in its place, or whether some one has moved it—but it was not an easy thing to move—I do not know, but this was as it used to be in old time."

Then Penelop knew that he was indeed her husband; and she ran to him, and kissed him, saying: "Pardon me, my lord, that I was so slow to know you; I was afraid, for men have many ways of deceiving, lest some one should come, saying falsely that he was my husband. But now I know that in truth you are he and not another."

So they wept over each other, and kissed each other. Thus did Ulysses come home at last after twenty years.

Chapter 22

Of Laertes

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

The next day Ulysses said to his wife: "You and I have suffered many things for many years. You wearied for my coming back, and feared that I might be dead, and I was kept from coming. And now we are together again, but there are some things still to be done. I see that the Suitors have wasted my flocks and herds, devouring them at their feasts. My loss I must make up. Some I will take from other lands, where my enemies live, and some shall be paid back to me by the fathers of the men who have robbed me. But now I will go and see my old father, who is very sad, I know, thinking that I shall never return. And there is another thing of which I must speak. The people of Ithaca will soon hear how the Suitors have been slain, and there will be great anger in their hearts, for some of them had sons and brothers among the men who are dead. Do you, therefore, and your maids keep close to your own rooms. Do not look out, nor ask for news. Only wait till I shall set everything right."

Then Ulysses put on his armour, and took his spear and his sword. His son, and the swineherd, and the keeper of the cattle did the same; and the four went to the place where the old man Laertes lived, Ulysses leading the way. It was a farm which the old king had cleared, breaking up the moorland, and cutting down the forest, and was now rich and fertile. Round the old man's cottage were huts in which his slaves lived, and in the cottage itself was an old woman of Sicily, who looked after him very faithfully and lovingly.

Ulysses said to his son and to the two herds: "Go into the house, and make ready a meal for mid-day, killing one of the pigs. I will find the old man, my father, where he is at work on the farm, and will see whether he knows me or not." So he put off his armour, and laid down his spear and sword, and went to the vineyard, for he thought he should find the old man there. Now all the men that worked on the farm had gone on an errand to fetch stones for building up the gaps in the vineyard wall. So the old man was left alone. Ulysses saw him as he stood hoeing round the stock of a vine. He had on a coat that was soiled with earth, and patched and shabby. He wore also leggings of leather that the briars and thorns should not hurt him, and hedger's gloves on his hands, and a goatskin cap on his head.

And when Ulysses saw the old man, his father, how feeble he was, and bowed with years, and sad, he stood still under a pear tree that there was in the place, and his eyes were blinded with tears. He doubted for a while whether he should go up to the old man and throw his arms round him, and kiss him, and tell him who he was, and how he had come back, or whether he

should try him, and see whether or no he knew him. And this seemed to be the better of the two. So he came near him as he stood hoeing the ground by the vine-stock, and said; "Sir, you know well how to work an orchard or a vineyard; all is going well here. 'Tis plain to me that there is neither seedling, nor fig tree, nor vine, nor olive, nor pear, nor plot of herbs in the garden that you have not cared for. But there is no one, I see, to care for you, to look after your old age, or to see that you are decently clad. You are no idle servant that your master should neglect you; and, indeed, I take it that you are not a servant at all. You have not the look of such, but you are tall and shaped like a king. Such a one as you should have good food, and the bath when he will, and a soft bed. Tell me, now, whose servant are you? Whose is this orchard that you are working? But first tell me, is this truly the land of Ithaca? I asked this of a man that I met on the way, and the churl seemed tongue-tied, for he did not answer me a word. And another question I would willingly have asked him, but that he did not even stay to hear it. And this question was about a certain friend of mine in old days, for I desired to know whether he was alive or dead. And now, old sir, let me ask this same question of you. Years ago there came to my house a certain man, and was my guest. I loved him much—never has there been one of all the strangers that I have seen whom I loved so well. This man said that he was born in Ithaca, and he said also that his father's name was Laertes, and that he was king of Ithaca. Many days did I keep him in my house, and when he went away, I gave him splendid gifts—several talents of gold, and a great silver bowl, worked with flowers, and twelve cloaks, and as many coats."

When the old man heard this, he wept aloud: "It is so, stranger; you have come to the land of Ithaca. But, alas! it is in the hands of evil men. If you had found him of whom you speak, even my son, then truly we would have given you gifts such as you gave to him, and requited your kindness as was fitting. But tell me this: how many years have passed since you took my son into your house?—for, indeed, it was my son who was your guest. Alas! he has had evil fortune. He has died far from his friends and his country, for either the fish of the sea have devoured him or the ravens have pecked out his eyes, or the wild beasts have torn him; but his wife, the faithful Penelop□, did not close his eyes, nor weep over his body. Tell me this, and tell me also who you are, and from what country you have come, and who was your father, and whether you travelled hither in a ship of your own, or were brought in the ship of another?"

Then Ulysses answered, telling this tale, for a tale he always had ready for those that asked him: "I come from the land of Sicily, and I was carried hither by a storm. And as for the time of your son's coming to my house, know that it was four years ago. We thought that he would have good luck when he went, for all the signs were good, and I was glad that it should be so, and sent him on his way with good cheer and with great gifts."

When he heard these words, the old man Laertes was overborne with grief, and he stooped down and caught up the dust from the ground, and poured it on his white head, sitting and groaning the while. And when Ulysses saw this, his heart yearned towards the old man, and there was a stinging pain of tears in his nostrils, so that he could no more refrain. And he fell on the old man's neck, and held him close, and kissed him, saying: "My father, my father, look at me, for I am your long-lost son. I have come back at last after twenty years. And I have slain the Suitors in my hall, paying them back in full for all the wrong that they have done."

But Laertes stared at him, doubting whether the thing was indeed true, and said: "If you are indeed my son Ulysses, come back after all these years, show me some proof that may make me sure."

Then Ulysses answered: "Look now at this scar which the wild boar made when I went hunting with my mother's father long ago on the mountain of Parnassus. That is proof enough; but I will give you yet another, for I will tell you of the trees which you gave me many years ago in this orchard. I was a little lad, running after you, and you gave me ten apple trees and thirteen pears, and forty fig trees, and fifty rows of vine. And these I remember grew ripe at different times."

When the old man heard these words, his knees failed under him for very joy, and he threw his arms about his son, and his son clasped him close. But when his spirit revived in him, he said: "This is well that the Suitors have suffered for their evil deeds. Truly there are gods in heaven, but I fear greatly that the men of Ithaca and from the islands round about should gather an army, and come against us, for these men had kindred among them."

Ulysses answered: "Fear not, I will see to this. But now come to the house, for there a meal has been made ready for us."

So they went to the house. And the old man went to the bath and was anointed with oil, and was vested in a fine cloak. Athen also—for she was near at hand—made him broader and taller, so that his son wondered to see him, and cried: "Surely one of the gods that live for ever has done this thing for you."

After this they sat down to the meal; but before they began, came the old steward, Dolius by name, coming back from his work, and his tall sons with him. And when they saw Ulysses, they wondered who he might be; but Ulysses cried from his place: "Sit down, father, and eat; and you, my men, wonder no more. Here is the meal ready for you, and we would not begin till you had come."

Then Dolius came near, and caught his master's hand, and kissed it at the wrist and said: "Oh, my dearest lad, so you have come back at last to them who longed for you so sorely! Welcome to you! The gods themselves have sent you home; may they give you blessings without end. Does the queen know of your coming, or shall we send a messenger to tell her?"

Ulysses answered: "She knows it; but think not of other things. Let us eat and drink."

So they ate and drank, and were of good cheer.

Chapter 23

How There Was Peace Between Ulysses and His People

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls — Homer, retold by Alfred J. Church

Now all this time there went the news through the town how the Suitors had been killed. And the people came from all parts to the king's palace, crying and mourning; and they took up the dead bodies and carried them away and buried them. And the bodies of them that came from the islands round about, they gave to the fishermen that they might carry them each to his home. And when they had done this, they gathered together in the great square of the town till it was filled from one end to the other.

Then stood Eupeithes, who was father to Antino s, the man who was first killed by Ulysses, and said: "Friends, this man has done great evil to this land and this people. He took away with him many brave men in his ships when he went to Troy; twelve ships he took, and there were fifty men in each. All these he has lost; not one will you ever see again. But he himself has come back. Now, therefore, let us take vengeance on him, and on them that have joined themselves to him, before they flee to some other land. It will be a shame to us for ever and ever, if we sit still and suffer the men who have murdered our sons and our brothers to go free. For myself, I would rather die than suffer such disgrace. Let us go, therefore, before they take ship and escape."

Then Medon the herald stood up in the Assembly, and Phemius the singer with him, and said: "Listen now to me, men of Ithaca: all that Ulysses did to the Suitors, he did by the will of the gods. I myself saw one of them stand by his side—he seemed like to Mentor, but I know that he was a god—and he cheered him on and helped him as he fought, and he turned aside the spears of the Suitors."

Then a certain prophet stood up, a wise man, who knew all things that had been, and all that were yet to come to pass, and he said: "Listen to me, men of Ithaca, these dreadful things are the harvest, but you sowed the seed. For when the wise Mentor told you what you should do, that you should keep your sons back from doing this evil, you would not hear him. You suffered them to waste your king's wealth, and to make suit to his wife, laughing in their hearts, and thinking that he would never come back. See now the end. Listen, therefore, to me. Do not go against this man, lest you also should perish."

So the wise man spoke, and some listened to him, but more than half sprang to their feet, and shouted for the battle. So they armed themselves for the fight, and followed Eupeithes.

Meanwhile Athen in heaven said to Zeus, her father: "What is thy will, my father? Must there be still more of war and of the shedding of blood? or wilt thou command that there be peace between Ulysses and his people?"

And Zeus answered: "My daughter, order it as thou wilt. It has been of thy doing that Ulysses has taken vengeance on the Suitors; now see that there be peace between him and his people. Let them forget that their sons and brothers have been slain; and that they be the more ready to forget, see that they have plenty and prosperity in their land."

Then Athen sped down from heaven to earth, that she might bring these things to pass.

Meanwhile they that sat in the house of Laertes had finished their meal, and Ulysses said: "Let some one go out and see what has been done, lest these people come upon us before we are ready." So one of the sons of Dolius went out, and lo! the crowd of armed men was hard at hand, and he cried out to Ulysses: "They are coming. Let us arm."

So they arose and armed themselves. Twelve they were in all—Ulysses and his son, and the swineherd and the herd serving at the table; and Dolius with his six sons, and old Laertes. And Athen came in the shape of Mentor.

Ulysses said to his son: "My son, now you take your place for the first time in the line of battle. Bear yourself therefore worthily, and shame not your father and your father's father."

And Telemachus said, and when he spoke the light of battle was in his eye: "My father, you shall see what is in the heart of your son; never will I shame my father and my father's father."

Then the old man cried aloud in his joy: "Now I thank the gods that I have lived to see this day, for my son and my son's son contend who shall bear himself more bravely in the battle."

Then Athen said to the old man Laertes: "And pray to the father of the gods and men that he may strengthen your arm, and be you the first to cast your spear."

So the old man prayed; and then he cast his spear; at Eupeithes, the leader of the rebels, he cast it, and smote him on the helmet and broke through the brass, and pierced his brain. Heavily did he fall to the ground, and his armour rang about him. After this Ulysses and his son charged at the rebels, and Athen also lifted up her voice; and the others fled for fear of the heroes and of the voice. And as Ulysses would have followed them, Zeus cast down a thunderbolt from heaven, and it fell at the feet of Athen . And when Athen saw it she cried: "Hold your hand, lest you move the anger of Father Zeus."

So she came forward, having the shape and voice of Mentor, and she spoke to the people, and bade them remember how Ulysses and his father before had been good kings, and how the Suitors had behaved very badly, and had suffered as they deserved. "And now," she said, "he is willing to forget all that is past, and to rule over you as a just man should. Make your peace with him." And she herself inclined their hearts to do this thing. So Ulysses and his people were made friends again.