



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

THE ODYSSEY
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

Rev. Alfred J. Church

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

The Odyssey for Boys and Girls

ALFRED J. CHURCH



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THE CYCLOPS

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 Ismārus. 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 Ismārus.

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 Ismārus 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."



ULYSSES GIVING WINE TO POLYPHEMUS

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.

OF THE HOME OF THE WINDS AND OF CIRCE

*T*he 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 Circé, 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 Circé 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 Circe’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 Circe’s palace, and called to her. And when Circe 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 Circe 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 Circe 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,



ULYSSES AT THE TABLE OF CIRCE

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 Circé 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 Circé 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 Circé herself felt a little pity.

After this they all went into the palace, and ate and drank. And when they had finished their meal, Circé 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 Circé. 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 Circé: "It is time for us to go home. Pray do what you can to help us on our way." Circé said: "I would not keep a guest against his will."

So they made their ship ready, and Circé 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 Circé 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.