

**HOMER.
THE ODYSSEY**

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Homer. The Odyssey by W. Lucas Collins & Homer

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W. LUCAS COLLINS & HOMER

**HOMER.
THE ODYSSEY**

H O M E R

T H E O D Y S S E Y

BY THE

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It has been thought desirable in these pages to use the Latin names of the Homeric deities and heroes, as more familiar to English ears. As, however, most modern translators have followed Homer's Greek nomenclature, it may be convenient here to give both.

Zeus	=	Jupiter.
Herè	=	Juno.
Arēs	=	Mars.
Poseidōn	=	Neptune.
Pallas Athenè	=	Minerva.
Aphroditè	=	Venus.
Hephaistos	=	Vulcan.
Hermes	=	Mercury.
Artemis	=	Diana.
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Olyseus	=	Ulysses.
Aias	=	Ajax.

The passages quoted, unless otherwise specified, are from the admirable translation of Mr Worsley.

INTRODUCTION.

THE poem of the *Odyssey* is treated in these pages as the work of a single author, and that author the same as the composer of the *Iliad*. It would be manifestly out of place, in a volume which does not profess to be written for critical scholars, to discuss a question on which they are so far from being agreed. But it may be satisfactory to assure the reader who has neither leisure nor inclination to enter into the controversy, that in accepting, as we do, the *Odyssey* as from the same "Homer" to whom we owe the Tale of Troy, he may fortify himself by the authority of many accomplished scholars who have carefully examined the question. Though none of the incidents related in the *Iliad* are distinctly referred to in the *Odyssey*—a point strongly urged by those who would assign the poems to different authors—and therefore the one cannot fairly be regarded as a sequel to the other, yet there is no important discrepancy, either in the facts previously assumed, or in the treatment of such characters as appear upon the scene in both.

The character of the two poems is, indeed, essentially different. The *Iliad* is a tale of the camp and the battle-field: the *Odyssey* combines the romance of travel with that of domestic life. The key-note of the *Iliad* is glory: that of the *Odyssey* is rest. This was amongst the reasons which led one of the earliest of Homer's critics to the conclusion that the *Odyssey* was the work of his old age. In both poems the interest lies in the situations and the descriptions, rather than in what we moderns call the "plot." This latter is not a main consideration with the poet, and he has no hesitation in disclosing his catastrophe beforehand. The interest, so far as this point is concerned, is also weakened for the modern reader by the intervention throughout of supernatural agents, who, at the most critical turns of the story, throw their irresistible weight into the scale. Yet, in spite of this, the interest of the *Odyssey* is intensely human. Greek mythology and Oriental romance are large ingredients in the poem, but its men and women are drawn by a master's hand from the actual life; and, since in the two thousand years between our own and Homer's day nothing has changed so little as human nature, therefore very much of it is still a story of to-day.

The poem before us is the tale of the wanderings and adventures of Odysseus—or Ulysses, as the softer tongue of the Latins preferred to call him—on his way home from the siege of Troy to his island-kingdom of Ithaca. The name Odysseus has been variously interpreted. Homer himself, who should be the best authority, tells us that it was given to him by his grandfather Autoly-

cus to signify "the child of hate." Others have interpreted it to mean "suffering;" and some ingenious scholars see in it only the ancient form of a familiar sobriquet by which the hero was known, "the little one," or "the dwarf,"—a conjecture which derives some support from the fact that the Tyrrhenians knew him under that designation. It may be remembered that in the *Iliad* he is described as bearing no comparison in stature with the stalwart forms of Agamemnon and Menelaus; and it is implied in the description that there was some want of proportion in his figure, since he appeared nobler than Menelaus when both sat down. But in the *Odyssey* itself there appears no reference to any natural defect of any kind. His character in this poem corresponds perfectly with that which is disclosed in the *Iliad*. There, he is the leading spirit of the Greeks when in council. Scarcely second to Achilles or Diomed in personal prowess, his advice and opinion are listened to with as much respect as those of the veteran Nestor. In the *Iliad*, too, he is, as he is called in the present poem, "the man of many devices." His accomplishments cover a larger field than those of any other hero. Achilles only can beat him in speed of foot; he is as good an archer as Ajax Oileus or Teucer; he throws Ajax the Great in the wrestling-match, in spite of his superior strength, by a happy use of science, and divides with him the prize of victory. To him, as the worthiest successor of Achilles—on the testimony of the Trojan prisoners, who declared that he had wrought them most harm of any—the armour of that great hero was awarded at his death. He is not tragic enough to