

**THE ADVENTURES
OF ULYSSES THE
WANDERER**

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The Adventures of Ulysses the Wanderer by C. Ranger-Gull

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C. RANGER-GULL

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OF ULYSSES THE
WANDERER**



HE STARED STEADILY AT THEM WITH HIS SINGLE EYE
FOR A FULL MINUTE.

Page 32.

Frontispiece.

THE
ADVENTURES OF ULYSSES

THE WANDERER

An Old Story Retold by

C. RANGER-GULL

AUTHOR OF

"THE HYPOCRITE," "FROM THE BOOK BEAUTIFUL,"

"BACK TO LILAC LAND," ETC.

Illustrated

by

W. G. MEIN

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FOREWORD

SEVEN fair and illustrious cities of the dim, ancient world, Argos, Athenæ, Chios, Colophon, Salamis, Rhodos, Smyrna, fought a war of words over HOMER'S birthplace.

Each claimed the honour.

And if, indeed, such an accident of chance confers an honour upon a town, then the birthplace of the Greatest Poet of all time should be a place of pilgrimage.

For, among the weavers of Epos, Drama, and Romance, he who was called Melesegenes is first of all and wears an imperishable crown.

For 3000 years his fame has streamed down the ages.

The world has changed. Great empires have risen, flowered and passed. Christianity came, flooding mankind with light, at a time when, though Homer was a dim tradition, his work was a living force in the world. When Christ was born, Homer was dead 900 years.

A man with such immensity of glory ceases to be a man. He becomes a Force.

Of the two imperishable monuments Homer has left us, the decision of critical scholarship has placed the Iliad first. It has been said that the Iliad is like the midday, the Odyssey like the

setting sun. Both are of equal splendour, though the latter has lost its noonday heat.

But I would take that adroit simile and draw another meaning from it.

When deferred, expected night at last approaches, when the sun paints the weary west with fairy pictures of glowing seas, of golden islands hanging in the sky, of lonely magic waterways unsailed by mortal keels; then, indeed, there comes into the heart and brain another warmth,—the mysterious quickening of Romance.

For I think that the ringing sound of arms, the vibrant thriddings of bows, the clash of heroes, are far less wonderful than the long, lonely wanderings of Ulysses.

Through all the Odyssey the winds are blowing, the seas moaning, and the estranged sad spectres of the night flit noiselessly across the printed page.

Through new lands, among new peoples—friends and foes—touching at green islands set like emeralds in wine-coloured seas, the immortal mariner moves to the music of his creator's verse. The Siren's voices, the Fairy's enchanted wine, the Twin Monsters of the Strait pass and are forgotten.

His wife's tears bid him ever towards home.

I sometimes have wondered if Vergil thought of Ulysses when he made his own lesser wanderer say:—

*"Per varios casus per tot discrimina rerum,
Tendimus in Latium, sedes ubi fata quietas
Ostendunt."*

And now, since we are to have, on that so magical a stage, a concrete picture: since we are to take away another storied memory from beneath the copper dome, I feel that the story of Ulysses may once more be told in English.

A fine poet, a great player, are to give us an Ulysses who must perforce be not only full of the spirit of his own age of myth, but instinct with the spirit of this.

That is as inevitable as it is interesting.

The "Gentle Elia" (how one wishes one could find a better name for him—but custom makes cowards of us all) has written his own version of the Odyssey. I cannot emulate that. But I think I can at least be useful.

There are three stages of knowing Homer: the time when one dog's ears and dogrells him at school, the time when one loves him, a literary love! at Oxford, and the time when the va et vient of life in great capitals wakes the dormant Ulysses in the heart of every artist, and he begins to understand.

*"The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset —"*

C. RANGER-GULL.