THE CHILDREN'S HOMER

THE ADVENTURES OF ODYSSEUS AND THE TALE OF TROY
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The Adventures of Odysseus and the Tale of Troy

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ALADDIN PAPERBACKS
CONTENTS

PART I
How Telemachus the son of Odysseus was moved to go on a voyage in search of his father and how he heard from Menelaus and Helen the tale of Troy . 3 .

PART II
How Odysseus left Calypso's island and came to the land of the Phaeacians; how he told he fared with the Cyclôpes and went past terrible Scylla and Charybdis and came to the island of Thrinacia where his men slaughtered the cattle of the sun: how he was given a ship by the Phaeacians and came to his own land; how he overthrew the wooers who wasted his substance and came to reign again as king of Ithaka . 124 .
THIS is the story of Odysseus, the most renowned of all the heroes the Greek poets have told us of — of Odysseus, his wars and wanderings. And this story of Odysseus begins with his son, the youth who was called Telemachus.

It was when Telemachus was a child of a month old that a messenger came from Agamemnon, the Great King, bidding Odysseus betake himself to the war against Troy that the Kings and Princes of Greece were about to wage. The wise Odysseus, foreseeing the disasters that would befall all that entered that war, was loth to go. And so when Agamemnon's messenger came to the island of Ithaka where he was King, Odysseus pretended to be mad. And that the messenger, Palamedes, might believe he was mad indeed, he did a thing that no man ever saw being done before — he took an ass and an ox and yoked them together to the same plough and began to plough a field. And when he had ploughed a furrow he sowed it, not with seeds that would grow, but with salt. When Palamedes saw
crowd would not come. There were many in the court outside and Telemachus would not have his guest disturbed by questions or clamors. A handmaid brought water for the washing of his hands, and poured it over them from a golden ewer into a silver basin. A polished table was left at his side. Then the housedame brought wheaten bread and many dainties. Other servants set down dishes of meat with golden cups, and afterwards the maids came into the hall and filled up the cups with wine.

But the servants who waited on Telemachus and his guest were disturbed by the crowd of men who now came into the hall. They seated themselves at tables and shouted out their orders. Great dishes of meat were brought to them and bowls of wine, and the men ate and drank and talked loudly to each other and did not refrain even from staring at the stranger who sat with Telemachus.

"Is there a wedding-feast in the house?" the stranger asked, "or do the men of your clan meet here to drink with each other?"

A flush of shame came to the face of Telemachus. "There is no wedding-feast here," he said, "nor do the men of our clan meet here to drink with each other. Listen to me, my guest. Because you look so wise and because you seem so friendly to my father's name I will tell you who these men are and why they trouble this house."

Thereupon Telemachus told the stranger how his father had not returned from the war of Troy although it was now ten years since the City was taken by those with whom he went. "Alas," Telemachus said, "he must have died on
his way back to us, and I must think that his bones lie under some nameless strait or channel of the ocean. Would he had died in the fight at Troy! Then the Kings and Princes would have made him a burial mound worthy of his name and his deeds. His memory would have been reverenced amongst men, and I, his son, would have a name, and would not be imposed upon by such men as you see here — men who are feasting and giving orders in my father’s house and wasting the substance that he gathered.”

“How come they to be here?” asked the stranger.

Telemachus told him about this also. When seven years had gone by from the fall of Troy and still Odysseus did not return there were those who thought he was dead and would never be seen more in the land of Ithaka. Then many of the young lords of the land wanted Penelope, Telemachus’ mother, to marry one of them. They came to the house to woo her for marriage. But she, mourning for the absence of Odysseus and ever hoping that he would return, would give no answer to them. For three years now they were coming to the house of Odysseus to woo the wife whom he had left behind him. “They want to put my lady-mother between two dread difficulties,” said Telemachus, “either to promise to wed one of them or to see the substance of our house wasted by them. Here they come and eat the bread of our fields, and slay the beasts of our flocks and herds, and drink the wine that in the old days my father laid up, and weary our servants with their orders.”

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TRAVEL BACK TO A MYTHICAL TIME when Achilles, aided by the gods, waged war against the Trojans. And join Odysseus on his journey through murky waters, facing obstacles like the terrifying Scylla and whirring Charybdis, the beautiful enchantress Circe, and the land of the raging Cyclôpes.

Using narrative threads from *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Padraic Colum weaves a stunning adventure with all the drama and power that Homer intended.

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