

A STAR BOOK

THE GLORIOUS ADVENTURE

By

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TO ROMANCE



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To

The Real Heroes of This Story

NELL AND WESLEY HALLIBURTON

My long enduring, ever courageous, infinitely patient
parents

As one that for a weary space has lain
Lulled by the song of Circe and her wine
In gardens near the pale of Proserpine,
Where that Aeaeon isle forgets the main,
And only the low lutes of love complain,
And only shadows of wan lovers pine,
As such an one were glad to know the brine
Salt on his lips, and the large air again,
So gladly, from the songs of modern speech
Men turn, and see the stars, and feel the free
Shrill wind beyond the close of heavy flowers,
And through the music of the languid hours
They hear like Ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey.

A. L.

From *The Odyssey of Homer*, translated by S. H. Butcher and A. Lang; reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Macmillan Company.

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THE GLORIOUS ADVENTURE

CHAPTER I

THE GLORIOUS ADVENTURE

"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 . . . till I die . . .
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

"To STRIVE—to seek—to find—and not to yield" caught my fancy as I sat before the fire with a volume of Tennyson's poems opened to "Ulysses." What a fine refreshing purpose,—“sail beyond the sunset till I die.” This clear call to leave behind the outworn, too familiar life and seek a newer world found a responsive chord in my own restlessness. I thought to myself: Of all the great figures in history, did not this royal vagabond who spent his days in finding the extraordinary, in meeting new experience, in knowing every thrill and beauty and danger the world could offer—did he not have the fullest, the richest, the most enviable life of any man who ever

lived? When the fates had spun his thread of destiny to a close, how unregretfully he must have faced the end! How proudly he could have said:

*"I die content. All times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known; cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all."*

And more. He had ruled his island kingdom of Ithaca in his youth; for ten years he had battled on the ringing plains of windy Troy; he had sailed the oceans with his ships, tasted of the lotus fruit, struggled with the cannibal Cyclops, dwelt with Æolus, the king of the winds, heard the singing of the Sirens. He had braved the monstrous Scylla to escape the whirlpools of Charybdis; he had even descended into hell, before the intervention of the gods brought him back home to his faithful wife—and Ithaca.

As I thought of all this stirring drama, my own life, imprisoned by apartment walls, surrounded by self-satisfied people, caught in the ruts of convention and responsibility, seemed drab. In my own way I too had been a wanderer. I had tasted the drug of

romantic travel, and I could not rest from it. I had seen the sun rise over the Alps from the summit of the Matterhorn; I had tramped the Pyrenees, and basked in the warmth of Andalusia; I had watched the moon sail across the sky as I sat enthroned upon a fortress gun at the supreme summit of Gibraltar. I had swum the starlit Nile, and from the apex of the Great Pyramid waited for dawn to break. I had loved a pale Kashmiri maiden beside the Shalimar. From the high passes of the Himalayas I had seen the roof of the world lifting up the heavens with pillars of gleaming ice. The tropics I had known, and the northern blizzards; and I had learned to love the poetry and the majesty of the ocean from the fo'castles of a dozen ships. I had "enjoy'd greatly, suffer'd greatly, both with those that loved me, and alone; on shore, and when . . . the rainy Hyades vext the dim sea."

And now this slippered ease before the hearth—how barren and profitless it seemed. How dull it was "to pause, to make an end, to rust unburnished." I rose from my deep chair and moved restlessly to the window. The ships and the gulls were sailing down the Hudson and out to sea; and I envied every sailor that would wave farewell to the sky-line of New York, and turn his salt-stung face to some strange enchanted land beyond the far horizon. Suddenly I became bored and impatient with everything I had

and was: bored with people, bored with knowledge I realized I didn't want knowledge. I only wanted my senses to be passionately alive, and my imagination fearlessly far-reaching. And instead, I felt I was sinking into a slough of banality. Adventure! Adventure! *That* was the escape; *that* was the remedy. I knew there was no turning back once one had broken from the nest of colorless security, and spread one's own young wings, and visited the tall strange tree-tops across the valley that had always been beckoning.

I had once spread my wings,—and now that I had returned to my nest again, I was dissatisfied. I had security, and I did not want it; I had comfort, and I did not enjoy it. I wanted only to sail beyond the sunset. I wanted to follow Ulysses' example and fill life once more to overflowing. Ulysses' example,—and then the idea flashed through my brain: Ulysses' very *trail*, his *battle-fields*, his *dramatic wanderings*,—why not follow these too!

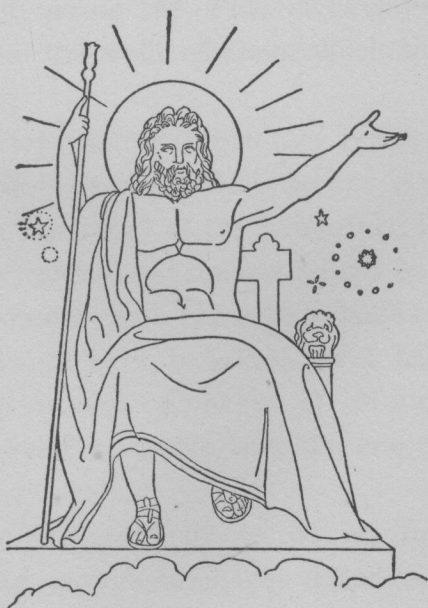
My sudden enthusiasm for this glorious idea swept away all practical obstacles. No matter if no one knew exactly where the Sirens were,—I'd find them; or if scholars disagreed about the Cyclops' cave—it must be *somewhere*. I'd go to Ulysses' own island of Ithaca and embark for the walls of Troy; I'd visit Æolus and his cages of the winds; I'd brave the enchantments of the dreaded Circe; I'd swim from

Scylla to Charybdis and taste the lotus in the lotus land.

As I stood looking out upon the teeming Hudson, the whole smoldering idea caught fire: I must climb Mount Olympus to call upon the gods;—Delphi, to consult the oracle;—and Parnassus, to invoke Apollo;—Athens,—and the Hellespont,—and the classic isles of Greece. Homer would be my guide; the *Odyssey* my book. What matter if Greece were a barren waste—it would not be for me; or Troy a grass-grown mound of earth—I could see its lofty gates and its towers gleaming in the sun. Wherever Ulysses went, there I would go; across whatever sea he sailed, there would I follow. Why wait to embark? Below my window lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail; there gloom the dark broad seas. Come—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 . . . till I die . . .
To strive—to seek—to find—and not to yield.”

THRONE OF GOD



CHAPTER II

THRONE OF GOD

CRASH! The lightning in a rage split the writhing firmament from Thessaly to the Cyclades in one blazing, blinding glare. Streaks of fire burst into the inky darkness, inflaming the abyss about me and lashing at the clouds that hurtled past. The far-darting thunder, peal upon peal, roamed the Ægean Sea, plunged across the Vale of Tempe, and echoing back from the walls of Ossa, shook the granite rocks I sat on.

The wrath of Jupiter had burst upon me. Hidden by the seething darkness he charged across the sky, for I had violated the sanctuary of the immortals; in his wrath he flung the lightning at my head, for I had challenged his omnipotence; with his thunderbolts he sought to hurl me bodily back to earth, for I had dared to climb the utmost pinnacle of Mount Olympus and seat myself upon the very Throne of God.

Midnight was a strange hour to be on top Olympus. It was bad enough insolently dislodging

Jupiter by day from his own castle, but to cling tenaciously to it all night as well was nothing short of sacrilege. Small wonder he assaulted me so savagely. But how could I retreat! I was trapped ten thousand feet high, on top a towering rock chimney up the precipitous walls of which I had laboriously climbed that afternoon, clinging fearfully to the little crevices that allowed one to ascend only an inch at a time. It would have been suicidal, now that night had come, and the rain, and the clouds, and the lightning, to try to climb down. No, by all the gods, I would not, could not, move.

It was consoling, however, to know that if I were annihilated by outraged Jupiter, I would not suffer alone, for Roderic Crane, my American companion, and little Lazarus, a heroic half-grown shepherd boy who alone of all our retinue dared climb the final peak with us, stood defiantly by my side.

By desperate effort I was able to find amid all this darkness some small gleam of consolation. My position corresponded to that of a journalist whose house was wrecked over his head by an earthquake,—discomforting, yes, but magnificent copy. Roused by “the surge and thunder of the *Odyssey*,” I had embarked resolutely upon Ulysses’ trail in hope of finding some of the glorious adventure he had found so plentifully three thousand years ago. And here, at the very outset, was a reception to Greece, romantic

and tempestuous beyond my most extravagant hopes. I felt that if this midnight battle with the gods was a sample of the adventure in store for me, Ulysses' shade would soon be looking on from Hades with envious eyes.

Even before leaving far-away New York, Roderic and I had chosen the pinnacle of Olympus for our first great goal. The ascent of this immortal altar was to be a pilgrimage in quest of atmosphere and stage-setting, and of proper adjustment to the spirit of our expedition. We had been born and bred in a nominally Christian civilization where any heathen belief in the efficacy of the ancient Greek divinities was looked upon as a bit out of style. But if we were going to revive the classic days of Homer and relive the life of Ulysses, I felt it imperative (despite Roderic's skepticism) to try to resurrect this fine old fashion in religious faiths; I felt we should get acquainted with Zeus* and Athena, with Hermes and Neptune, who had been to blame for all the good and all the harm that came to our hero. So we hastened eastward to find and climb this deity-crowned Olympus, "where the dwelling of the gods standeth fast forever."

Our approach was from Salonica. On a hilltop

*No attempt has been made to be consistently Greek or consistently Latin in the terminology of the classic gods. Sometimes I speak of "Zeus," sometimes of "Jupiter." Generally I have tried to choose the more familiar term.

behind this ancient city, we had looked southward and first seen the most celebrated mountain in the world. My pulse increased at the very sight of it—Olympus—the far-off, unapproachable capital of classic Greek mythology, and Greek art and culture and life itself. To honor the gods of Olympus the sublime temples of Greece rose in marble majesty; in the image of Olympian gods the hands of Phidias and Praxiteles gave posterity such sculpture that each poor fragment is enthroned by modern art, and guarded as a priceless possession. In the shadow of Olympus, Homer sang the greatest poetry ever sung before or since, and in the name of Mount Olympus the most happy and sin-free religion the world has ever known bloomed for centuries.

And yet I had always felt that Olympus, like the other beautiful legends of ancient Greece, was only a myth, a vague representation of divinity and immortality, which no longer really existed in this iconoclastic age.

The view from Salonica disillusioned me, for now a massive, purple, peak-ridged mountain loomed in the distance, a ten-thousand-foot mountain touched with snow and diademed in clouds; and that mountain, as firm, as real, as tangible as the earth, was Olympus, the golden throne of Zeus.

I was delighted to find it so beautiful. We saw it first at twilight, when obscurity had invaded the

slopes, and the shadows were deepening in the gorges. But far above, its pinnacle still shone into the night, soaring toward the heavens, slowly—like a prayer.

For a long while Rod and I sat quietly, watching the picture fade. Then, without any warning, my companion asked me if I thought he would be alluring to Venus if we ever *did* get to the top.

“Yes, Rod,” I replied a bit acidly, starting homeward as a gesture of remonstrance against his lack of reverence for poetic moments. “With your mustache and line of negro stories I’m sure you’ll prove irresistible. Just the same, I want you to promise me you won’t start any scandal with a goddess right at the beginning of our trip. Things are going to be complicated enough as it is.”

Next day, scorning to waste another hour on crass material matters like equipment and provisions and directions, we hurried off to visit the gods, and at Larissa in Thessaly, on the opposite side of the mountain from Salonica, made ready for the grand assault.

The mayor, acting under official orders, much to our disgust attached a young army of gendarmerie to our train “to protect you from the bandits,” whereas, next to the gods there was nothing in the vicinity we wanted to meet quite so much as these notorious Olympus bandits who have terrorized the district for generations. The idea of being romantically held up