



# **The Authoress of the Odyssey (Bristol Phoenix Press - Ignibus Paperbacks)**

*Samuel Butler*

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Samuel Butler, scholar, painter, pioneer photographer, and novelist (including 'Erewhon' and 'The Way of All Flesh'), was one of the less orthodox of Victorian intellectual provocateurs, who confronted powerful orthodoxies such as the Church, the academic establishment, and scientific Darwinism. During the last decade of his productive life (he died in 1902), his main concern became the 'Homeric question'. In his youth, he had been a classical scholar at St John's College, Cambridge; but 'The Authoress of the Odyssey' [1897] is unlike any work of mainstream Victorian classics. His theory - that the Odyssey was written by a woman and (even more startlingly) by one who configured herself in the epic as the Phaeacian princess, Nausicaa - set him on collision course with all the 'orthodoxies' of the stuffy, patriarchal establishment of 'Oxbridge' scholarship. His exposition hesitates (brilliantly, or accidentally?) in the grey area between closely reasoned argument, eccentric tomfoolery and knowing pole

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