

Stories from The Iliad

CLASSIC LIT FOR YOUNG READERS

TOLD BY JEANIE LANG

Stories from
The Iliad

Retold by Jeanie Lang

Libraries of Hope

Stories from the Iliad
Classic Literature for Young Readers

Copyright © 2022 by Libraries of Hope, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission of the publisher. International rights and foreign translations available only through permission of the publisher.

Cover Image: Image from *Stories from the Iliad* by Jeanie Lang, illustrated by W. Heath Robinson (1907).

Lang, Jeanie. (1907). *Stories from the Iliad*. London: T.C. & E.C. Jack.

Libraries of Hope, Inc.
Appomattox, Virginia 24522

Website: www.librariesofhope.com
Email: librariesofhope@gmail.com

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

About This Book.....3
What Led to the Siege of Troy.....5
Achilles & Agamemnon Fell Out.....12
The Council 26
Fight Between Paris and Menelaus 40
How Menelaus was Wounded; and the Brave Deeds of Diomedes 54
Hector and Andromache 72
The Fight Between Hector and Ajax...81
The Burning of the Dead; and the Battle of the Plain 88
The Message to Achilles 102
The White Horses of Rhesus 111
The Fighting on the Plain 125
How Patroclus Fought and Died.....132
The Rousing of Achilles.....142

Stories from
The Iliad
Or The Siege of Troy

Told to the Children by
JEANIE LANG

With Pictures by
W. HEATH ROBINSON

About This Book

For two Greek boys have I made this little book, which tells them in English some of the stories that they soon will read for themselves in the tongue of their forefathers.

But the stories are not only for boys whose fatherland lies near the sunny sea through which ships, red-prowed and black, fared in the long-ago days.

Of such great deeds, by such brave men, do they tell, that they must make the hearts of all English boys, and of boys of every nation under the sun, grow big within them.

And when, in the gallant-sounding music of the Greek tongue in which the tales first were told, these boys read the story of the Siege of Troy, they must

surely long to fight as fought the Greeks in days of old, and long to be heroes such as those who fought and who died without fear for the land that they loved.

JEANIE LANG.

The Story of What Led to the Siege of Troy

In the deep forest that clothes Mount Ida, not far from the strong city of Troy, Paris, son of King Priam, watched his father's flocks by night.

Suddenly through the dim woods he saw a light, as if the golden sun and silver moon shone both together.

And, lo! in the radiance of this light there stood before him the three fairest of the goddesses—queenly Hera, wise Athene, and lovely Aphrodite.

Like music stealing through the trees came the soft voice of Hera:

'Of all mortal men art thou the most beautiful, Paris, and to thee do we come for judgment. Tell us which of us is the fairest of all, and to that one whom thou

so deemest, give this golden apple.'

So spake Hera, and placed in the hand of Paris an apple of purest gold.

Again she spake: 'If to me, Hera, queen of goddesses, and wife of mighty Zeus, king of all the gods, thou dost grant the prize of loveliness, power immeasurable shall be thine. King shalt thou be of the lands where the grey dawn rises, and king even to where the red sun goes down. A hundred peoples shall call thee lord.'

She was silent, and the voice of Athene, fair and pure as a silver moonbeam, broke the stillness of the starless night.

'To me award the prize,' she said, 'and wise as the gods shalt thou be. With me as thy friend and guide, all things will be possible to thee.'

Last of all, standing in a rosy light, as of the dawning sunlight in the spring,

spoke Aphrodite.

'What are Power and Wisdom, fair Paris?' she pled. 'Wisdom and Power bring no joy at last. I will give thee Love, and for thy wife thou shalt have the fairest woman in all the world.'

And Paris, the melody of her voice still in his ears, as he gazed spellbound on her face of wondrous beauty, handed to Aphrodite the golden prize.

So was it that the wrath of the gods came upon Paris, son of Priam. For Hera and Athene, filled with rage, vowed to be revenged upon Paris and all his race, and made all the gods pledge themselves to aid them in their vengeance.

Across far seas sailed Paris, with Aphrodite as his guide, to Sparta, where Menelaus was king.

A brave king was Menelaus, and happily he lived in his kingdom with Helen, his queen, fairest of all women. One child

they had, a little maid, Hermione.

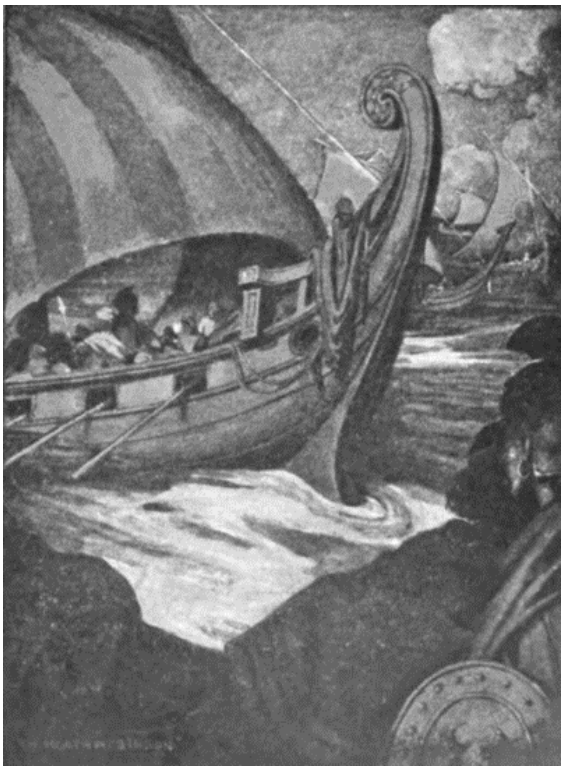
When to Sparta there came Paris, with eyes blue as the sea, and hair that gleamed like gold on his purple robe, gallant and brave, and more beautiful than any mortal man, glad was the welcome that he had from Menelaus.

And when Paris gazed on Helen's face, he knew that in all the world there was no woman half so fair as the wife of Menelaus.

Then did Aphrodite cast her magic upon Helen.

No longer did she love her husband, nor did she remember little Hermione, her own dear child.

When Paris spoke to her words of love, and begged her to flee with him, and to be his wife, she knew only that she loved Paris more than all else. Gladly she went with him, and in his red-prowed ship together they sailed across the green



Many were the heroes who sailed
away from Greece

waves to Troyland, where Mount Ida showed her snowy crown high above the forests.

An angry man was Menelaus when he found that Paris had stolen from him the fair wife who was to him as his own heart.

To his elder brother Agamemnon, overlord of all the Greeks, he went and told his grievous tale.

And from far and wide did the Greek hosts gather, until a hundred thousand men and eleven hundred fourscore and six ships were ready to cross the seas to Troyland.

Many were the heroes who sailed away from Greece to punish Paris and his kin, and to bring back fair Helen to her own land.

Few there were who came home, for ten long years of woe and of spilling of blood came to the men of Greece and of

Troy from the fatal beauty of Helen the queen.

CHAPTER I
How Achilles and Agamemnon Fell Out

Before the walls of Troy the Greeks set their camp, and day by day and night by night did they besiege it.

One day would the Greeks win the fight, and the next day the Trojans would be victors in the battle.

And so passed nine long years away. To the city of Chryse one day went part of the Greek host, sacked it, and brought back to their camp rich spoils and many prisoners.

Among the prisoners was a beautiful maiden, Chryseïs, daughter of the old priest of the Temple of Apollo. Her did Agamemnon choose as his part of the spoil, to be his slave.

From Chryse, seeking his daughter, came the old priest. With him he brought a rich ransom to buy the freedom of Chryseïs, and in his hands he bore a golden staff wrapped round with the garland worn by Apollo, to show that the god whose priest he was, was with him in craving a boon from Agamemnon, overlord of the Greeks.

'Take this ransom, I pray you, and set ye my dear child free,' pled Chryses, 'and the gods will grant you to lay waste the city of Troy, and to fare happily homeward.'

Then the Greeks gladly agreed that Chryseïs should go home with her father, and that the goodly ransom should be theirs. But Agamemnon, in great wrath, drove the old man away.

'Let me not find thee, old man, lingering here beside the ships, lest the golden staff and garland of the god help

thee naught!' he cried. 'Your daughter shall grow old as my slave, and never more return to thy land. Get ye gone!'

Silently along the shore of the sounding sea walked Chryses the priest.

Alone he knelt down and prayed to Apollo, his god.

'Hear me, god of the silver bow!' he cried. 'If I have built thee a temple that is fair in thine eyes, and have offered unto thee there the flesh of bulls and goats, hear me! Let the Greeks be paid by thine arrows for my tears!'

High up amongst the peaks of Olympus Apollo heard the prayer of his priest, and great anger filled his heart.

As dark night falls upon the earth, so did the god come to where Agamemnon and his armies lay. A little apart from the ships he sat down, and drew back with a dreadful clang the string of his silver bow.

Mules and dogs fell at first before his

arrows of death. Then he smote men.

For nine days did the Greeks fall dead at the will of the avenging god. For nine days did the black smoke from the funeral pyres of the Greek warriors roll out to sea.

On the tenth day Achilles, son of a mortal warrior and a goddess, fleetest of foot and bravest of all Greek heroes, called an assembly of the Greeks.

'War and pestilence ravage us,' he said. 'Surely it is time to inquire of a priest or soothsayer why it is that Apollo is so wroth.'

Then Chalcas, wisest of soothsayers, arose and spoke.

'These woes have come upon us,' said he, 'for the wrong that Agamemnon hath done to Chryses, priest of Apollo. With his arrows of pestilence Apollo will not cease to slay until we have given the bright-eyed Chryseïs back to her father,



Achilles, fleetest of foot, and
bravest of all Greek heroes

unbought and unransomed, and have taken a hundred beasts and offered them up at Chryse as a sacrifice to the angry god.'

So spake Chalcas, and sate him down.

There uprose then from his seat the great Agamemnon, black anger in his heart, and with eyes flashing fire.

'Ill prophet art thou indeed, Chalcas!' he cried. 'Naught but evil hast thou ever foretold to me! I would not take a goodly ransom for Chryseïs, because I love her even more than I love my own wedded wife. Yet will I give her back, rather than that my people should perish. But another prize must I have! Why should I alone, of all the Greeks, have my prize taken from me? It is not seemly that it should be so.'

'Nay, nay! most noble Agamemnon,' said Achilles. 'Too greedy art thou for gain. We have no common store of

treasure with which to repay thee for that thou hast lost. What spoil we got from the cities we have taken hath already been divided. Nay, give back Chryseïs to her father, and when next we sack a city, thine shall be the richest spoil of all.'

'Dost seek to cheat me, Achilles?' answered the angry Agamemnon. 'Wouldst thou rob me of my prize and give me naught instead? If thou wilt not give me the reward my honour seeks, then will I seize it for myself—be it thine, or that of Odysseus, or the spoil of any other; wroth will be he to whomsoever I come. But of this hereafter. Now let us launch a black ship on the sea, and in it embark Chryseïs of the fair cheeks, and with her send an offering of beasts, that Apollo the Far-Darter may have his sacrifice.'

Then Achilles, with black brows, looked at Agamemnon.

'Shameless art thou!' he cried,

'shameless and crafty. For thy sake and that of Menelaus thy brother left I my home and fared across the seas to fight in Troyland. And now thou, dog-face! dost threaten to steal from me the spoil that I have won for myself by weary toil and by hard fighting. Home will I go, for I have no mind to fight for one who is greedy for riches and wealth, and cares not if I am dishonoured.'

'Flee, then, if thou wilt,' answered Agamemnon. 'Others I have as brave as thee, and ready to do me honour. Most hateful art thou to me, Achilles. Ever thou lovest strife and wars and fightings. I care not for thee and thy wrath; and this I tell thee: to thy hut I myself will go and take from thee Briseis, fairest of all thy slaves, that thou may'st know that I, Agamemnon, am thy lord and ruler.'

Mad with anger was Achilles at these words. His hand gripped his sword, and

he would have slain Agamemnon, had not the goddess Athene stayed his hand.

'Why art thou come hither?' angrily asked Achilles, as he looked round and beheld the goddess at his side. 'Art thou come to see the insolence of Agamemnon? Yea, I tell thee, through pride shall he lose his life.'

Gently then did Athene speak to him.

'To stay thine anger I came from far Olympus,' said she. 'Goodly gifts shall come to thee hereafter, Achilles. Only stay thine hand and listen to me.'

Then said Achilles:

'Goddess, a man must needs listen to thee and do thy bidding, for the man who obeys the immortal gods will also be heard of them.'

Therewith did he grip his sword by its silver hilt and thrust it back into its sheath; yet again he spoke in wrath to Agamemnon.

'Thou with face of a dog and heart of a deer,' he said, 'never hast thou fought as men should fight for the spoil! Rather dost thou seize the booty for which thy men have risked their lives. Surely these thy warriors are weaklings, else this should have been thy last wrong. But this I swear by my sceptre which was once a tree, but never more shall put forth leaf or twig; as surely as that sceptre shall never again be green, so surely shall the Greeks one day long for Achilles when they fall in heaps dying before the man-slaying Hector. Then shalt thou tear thy heart for anger, for that thou didst not honour the bravest of thy warriors.'

So spake Achilles, and dashed on earth his sceptre, studded with golden nails, while near him sat Agamemnon, in furious anger.

With gentle words then spoke Nestor, an old warrior of a hundred years

and more, longing to make peace.

But of peace Agamemnon and Achilles would have none.

'Ye may take back my slave, the fair Briseis,' said Achilles. 'The Greeks gave her to me; let the Greeks take her from me again. Yet that moment that thou dost dare to lay hand on aught else of mine, thy dark blood shall gush about my spear.'

Then was the assembly at an end, and on a fleet ship Chryseïs of the fair cheeks was placed, and with her were sent a hundred beasts for a sacrifice to Apollo. With them went Odysseus and a goodly company, and they sailed across the sea to Chryse, to bring back to Chryses the priest his fair daughter, and to offer a worthy sacrifice to the angry god.

Then did Agamemnon call his heralds to him.

'Go ye to the tent of Achilles,' said he, 'and bring me Briseis, his fair slave.'

Unwillingly they walked along the beach to where the tent of Achilles was pitched. By it he sat, and well, and with a heavy heart, he knew when he saw them what their errand was.

'Welcome, ye heralds,' he said. 'Ye are not guilty in my sight. Guilty only is Agamemnon who sent you to rob me of the fair Briseis. Lead her away, yet be witnesses that when Agamemnon hath sore need of me to save his host from shameful wreck, no help from me shall he have.'

Unwillingly Briseis was led away, and Achilles watched her go.

Then sitting alone on the beach of the grey sea, Achilles wept.

With eager gaze his eyes swept across the waste of water, and holding out his hands in supplication he cried to his

mother, Thetis the silver-footed, daughter of the King of the Sea.

Like a mist Thetis rose from the depths of the green sea-waves, and came to her sorrowing son.

Gently she stroked his hand, and spoke to him soothing words.

'Why dost thou weep, my child?' she said. 'Tell me all the sorrow that is in thy heart.'

To his goddess-mother Achilles told the tale of the grievous dishonour that Agamemnon had done to him, and for rage and for grief Thetis wept with her son.

'Short is to be thy life, my son,' she said. 'Would that I had never borne thee, rather than that it should also be full of grief.'

Then did she leave him, but at dawn next day she rose from the sea and mounted up to Olympus.

'Father Zeus,' she said to the king of the gods, 'if ever I have given thee aid amid gods or men, fulfil now my desire. Do honour to my son, whose life on earth is to be so short. Grant victory to the Trojans while Achilles does not draw his sword. Grant that at last the Greeks may do honour to him to whom Agamemnon hath brought such bitter shame.'

Then did Zeus bow his head and grant her prayer.

And Thetis the silver-footed darted like a diving bird down from Olympus, and cleft the green waves as she went back to her father in his kingdom under the sea.

CHAPTER II
The Council

That night both gods and men slept long; only Zeus, king of the gods, lay wakeful, pondering in his heart how best he might do honour to Achilles. 'I shall send a Dream to beguile Agamemnon,' at length he resolved.

Then did he call to a Dream, for by Dreams the gods sent their messages to mortal men.

'Go now, thou evil Dream,' said Zeus, 'go to where Agamemnon sleeps in his tent near to his fleet ships, and tell him every word as I shall tell it thee. Bid him call to arms with speed his warriors, for now he shall take the strong city of Troy.'

To the tent of Agamemnon sped the Dream. Taking the form of the old

warrior who had striven to make peace between Agamemnon and Achilles, the Dream stooped over the sleeping warrior, and thus to him it spoke:

'Sleepest thou, Agamemnon? Ill fits it for the overlord of so mighty a host to sleep all through the night. From Zeus I come, and to thee he sends this message: Call to arms with speed thy warriors, Agamemnon, for now shalt thou take the strong city of Troy.'

Off then sped the Dream, winging its way like a strip of grey mist aloft to Mount Olympus.

Then Agamemnon awoke from sleep, and the voice of the Dream still rang in his ears.

Speedily he arose from his bed, donned his fair tunic, cast around him his great cloak, and bound his sandals on his feet. Then over his shoulder he cast his silver-studded sword, and with the

sceptre of his house, token of his overlordship, in his hand, he went down to where the Greek ships lay, and called a council together.

To his lords he told what had befallen him as they slept.

'Call to arms!' had been the message from Zeus. 'Call to arms! for victory shall be thine.'

Then said the old warrior in whose likeness the Dream had come:

'My friends, had any other told us this dream we might deem it false; but to our overlord the Dream hath come. Let us then call our men to arms.'

So did all the lords follow his counsel, and quickly did the Greeks obey their summons. Like bees that pour from out their nests in some hollow rock, and fly to where the spring flowers grow most sweet, even so did the warriors pour forth from their ships and their huts by the sea.

Loudly they shouted as they came, till all the earth echoed. Nine heralds sought to quiet them, but it was long before they would cease their noise, and sit silent to listen to the voice of Agamemnon their lord.

Then did Agamemnon prove his people. 'Ill hath Zeus dealt with us, my friends,' he said. 'To us he promised ere we sailed hither that victory should be ours. But nine years have passed away, and our ships' timbers have rotted, and the rigging is worn. In our halls our wives and children still sit awaiting us, yet are we no nearer victory than we were on the day that we came hither. Come then, let us flee with our ships to our dear native land, for never shall Troy be ours.'

So spake Agamemnon, and stirred the hearts of all that had not heard his secret council.

As the high sea-waves are swayed by

the winds that rush upon them from the east and from the south, even so the Greek host was swayed. And even as the west wind sweeps over a cornfield and all the ears bow down before the blast, so were the warriors stirred.

Shouting, they hastened down to their ships. And the dust rose up in clouds from under their hurrying feet.

Quickly did they prepare their ships, and gladly did they make them ready to sail homeward across the bright salt sea.

Then would the Greeks have returned, even though fate willed it not. But Hera spoke to Athene.

'Shall we indeed allow the Greeks thus to flee homeward?' she cried. 'Shame it will be to us if Helen is left in Troy, and Paris goes unpunished. Haste, then, and with thy gentle words hold back the men from setting forth in their ships for their own homeland.'

Down from the peaks of Olympus darted the bright-eyed Athene, down to where the dark ships were being dragged to the launching ways.

By his ship stood Odysseus of the many devices, and heavy of heart was he.

As one who speaks aloud the thoughts of another, so then to Odysseus spake the fair goddess who was ever his guide.

'Will ye indeed fling yourselves upon your ships and flee homeward to your own land?' she said. 'Will brave Odysseus leave Helen, for whose sake so many Greeks have died, to be the boast of the men of Troy? Hasten, then, and suffer not the Greeks to drag their ships down to the sea.'

At the sound of the voice of Athene, Odysseus cast away his mantle and ran to meet Agamemnon. From him he received the sceptre of overlordship, and

bearing it he went among the ships.

Whenever he saw a chief, he would say to him with gentle words:

'Good sir, it fits thee ill to be a coward. Stay, now, for thou knowest not what is the will of Agamemnon. He is only making trial of thee. Hold back then thy people, and anger him not.'

But when Odysseus met a common man hasting to the ships, with his sceptre he smote him, saying:

'Sit still, sir, and listen to the words of thy betters. No warrior art thou, but a weakling. One king only hath Zeus given to us. Hearken then to the will of Agamemnon!'

Thus did Odysseus rule the people, driving them back from the ships to where sat Agamemnon.

And the noise they made in returning was as the noise of mighty waves of the sea, when they crash upon the beach

and drive their roaring echoes far abroad.

Silence came upon them as they sate themselves down before Agamemnon and their lords. Upon all but one did silence fall. Thersites, bandy-legged, round-shouldered, lame of one foot, with ugly head covered with scanty stubble, most ill-favoured of all men in the host, would not hold his peace.

Shrilly he poured his upbraidings upon Agamemnon.

'What lackest thou now?' he cried. 'Surely thy huts are full of the spoils we have brought to thee each time we have taken a town. What more dost thou want? Soft fools, women, not men, are ye Greeks, else would ye return home now with the ships, and leave this fellow here in Troyland gorging himself on the spoils for which he himself hath never fought. To brave Achilles hath he done dishonour, a far better man than he!'

Straight to the side of Thersites came the goodly Odysseus.

'Hold thy peace,' he sternly said. 'Plainly I tell thee that if ever again I find thee raving as thou hast raved now, I myself will strip off thy mantle and tunic, with shameful blows beat thee out of the assembly, and send thee back weeping to the ships.'

So spake Odysseus, and with his sceptre smote Thersites on his back and shoulders. And Thersites bowed down, and big tears fell from his eyes, and a bloody weal from the golden sceptre stood up from his back. Amazed he sat down, and in pain and amazement he wiped away a tear. The others, though they were sorry, laughed at his bewilderment.

'Many are the good deeds of Odysseus,' said they, 'but never did he do a better deed than when he stopped the

tongue of this prating railer.'

Then spake Odysseus, sceptre in hand.

'Surely it is the wish of the Greeks to make thee the most despised of all kings, great Agamemnon,' he said, 'for like young children or mourning women do they wail that they must go home. Nine years have we stayed in this land, and small wonder is it that we long for our homes again. Yet shameful would it be to wait so long and to return with empty hands. Be of good heart, my friends, and wait a little, for surely Troy shall be ours. Do ye forget, on the day that we set sail for Troyland, the mighty portent that we saw? As we offered sacrifices to the gods beneath a fair plane-tree whence flowed clear water, a snake, blood-red on the back and dreadful to look upon, glided from beneath the altar and darted to the tree. On the tree's topmost bough was a

sparrow's nest, and in it eight tender nestlings, over which the mother-bird spread her wings. Pitifully did the little ones cheep as the snake swallowed them all, and pitifully cried the mother as she fluttered over her nestlings. But of her, too, did the snake lay hold, coiling himself round her and crushing her life out. Then did the god who sent this sign show us that a sign from the gods in truth it was, for he turned the snake into stone. And Chalcas, our soothsayer, told us then the meaning of the sign. "Nine years," said he—for nine birds did the snake slay—"shall ye fight in Troyland, but in the tenth year the city shall fall before you." So then, let us abide here, until we have taken the great city!'

When Odysseus had ceased to speak, the Greeks shouted aloud, until the ships echoed the praises of the goodly Odysseus.

Then said Agamemnon:

'Go now, all of you, and eat, that ye may be ready for battle. Let each man sharpen well his spear and see to his shield, and see to it that the horses are well fed and the chariots prepared. And whomsoever I see minded to stay far away from the fight, beside the ships here by the sea, for him shall there be no hope hereafter, but he shall be food for dogs and for birds of prey.'

And when Agamemnon had spoken, the shouts of the Greeks were as the thunder of mighty breakers on a reef when the winds blow high.

Quickly then they scattered, and kindled fires, and made their evening meal, and offered sacrifices to the gods, praying for escape from death in the coming battle.

To Zeus did Agamemnon offer his sacrifice, and to the mighty god he

prayed:

'Great Zeus, god of the storm-cloud, let not the sun set nor the darkness fall until I have laid low the palaces of Troy and burned down its walls with fire.'

So he prayed, but as yet Zeus heeded not his prayer. Then did the Greeks gather themselves together to battle, and amongst them went the bright-eyed Athene, urging on each one, and rousing in each man's heart the joy of strength and of battle.

As the red and golden blaze of a fire that devours a mighty forest is seen from afar, so was seen from afar the dazzling gleam of their bronze armour as they marched.

Like wild geese and cranes and swans that in long-drawn strings fly tirelessly onward, so poured they forth, while the earth echoed terribly under the tread of men and horses.

As flies that swarm in the spring when the herdsmen's milk-pails are full, so did the Greeks throng to battle, unnumbered as the leaves and the flowers upon which they trod in the flowery plain by the banks of the river Scamander.

CHAPTER III
The Fight Between Paris and Menelaus

To meet the great Greek host came the men of Troy. With loud shouting and clamour they came, noisy as the flocks of cranes that fly to far-off seas before the coming of winter and sudden rain.

But in silence marched the Greeks, shoulder to shoulder, their hearts full of courage.

Like the mist that rolls from the crest of the mountains until no man can see in front of him further than the cast of a stone, so did the dust rise in clouds under the tread of the warriors' feet as they marched across the plain.

Front to front did the two armies stand at last, and from the Trojan ranks

strode forth Paris the godlike, he who robbed Menelaus of her who was to him most dear.

From the shoulders of Paris swung a panther's skin. He bore a curved bow and sword, and, brandishing two bronze-headed spears, he challenged all the chieftains of the Greek host to fight him, man to man, in mortal fight.

As a hungry lion rejoices to see a great-horned stag coming to be his prey, even so did Menelaus rejoice when he saw Paris, the golden-haired and blue-eyed, stride proudly forth.

Straightway, in his armour, did Menelaus leap from his chariot to the ground.

But when Paris saw him to whom he had done so sore a wrong, his heart was smitten.

As a man who, in a mountain glen, suddenly sees a deadly snake and shrinks

away from it with shaking limbs, even so did Paris shrink back amongst his comrades.

Scornfully did Hector his brother behold him.

'Fair in face thou art!' said Hector, 'but shamed I am by thee! I ween these long-haired Greeks make sport of us because we have for champion one whose face and form are beautiful, but in whose heart is neither strength nor courage. Art thou a coward? and yet thou daredst to sail across the sea and steal from her husband the fair woman who hath brought us so much harm. Thou shalt see what sort of warrior is he whose lovely wife thou hast taken. Thy harp and thy golden locks and fair face, and all the graces given to thee by Aphrodite, shall count for little when thou liest in the dust! Cowards must we Trojans be, else thou hadst been stoned to death ere this, for

all the evil thou hast wrought.'

Then answered Paris:

'No word hast thou said that I do not deserve, brave Hector. Yet scorn not the gifts of golden Aphrodite, for by his own desire can no man win the love and beauty that the goddess gives. But let me now do battle with Menelaus. Make the Trojans and the men of Greece sit down, while Menelaus and I fight for Helen. Let him who is conqueror have her and all that is hers for his own, and let the others take an oath of friendship so that the Greeks may depart in peace to their own land, and in peace the Trojans dwell in Troy.'

Greatly did Hector rejoice at his brother's word. His spear grasped by the middle, he went through the Trojan ranks and bid the warriors hold back.

But as he went, the Greeks shot arrows at brave Hector and cast stones.

'Hold! hold! ye Greeks,' called Agamemnon. 'Hector of the glancing helm hath somewhat to say to us.'

In silence, then, the two armies stood, while Hector told them the words of Paris his brother.

When they had heard him, Menelaus spoke.

'Many ills have ye endured,' he said, 'for my sake and because of the sins of Paris. Yet now, I think, the end of this long war hath come. Let us fight, then, and death and fate shall decide which of us shall die. Let us offer sacrifice now to Zeus, and call hither Priam, King of Troy. I fear for the faith of his sons, Paris and Hector, but Priam is an old man and will not break faith.'

Then were the Greeks and the Trojans glad. They came down from their chariots, and took off their arms, and laid them on the ground, while heralds went

to tell Priam and to fetch lambs and a ram for the sacrifice.

While they went, Hera sent to Troy Iris, her messenger, in the guise of the fairest daughter of Priam.

To the hall where Helen sat came lovely Iris. And there she found Helen, fairest of women, her white arms swiftly moving back and forward as she wove a great purple web of double wool, and wrought thereon pictures of many battles of the Greeks and the men of Troy.

'Come hither, dear lady,' said Iris, 'and see a wondrous thing. For they that so fiercely fought with each other, now sit in silence. The battle is stayed; they lean upon their shields, and their tall spears are thrust in the earth by their sides. But for thee are Menelaus and Paris now going to fight, and thou shalt be the wife of the conqueror.'

So spake lovely Iris, and into the



Into the sleeping heart of Helen
there came remembrance

sleeping heart of Helen there came remembrance, and a hungry longing for her old home, and for Menelaus, and her father and mother, and for little Hermione, her child.

The tears rolled down her cheeks, but quickly she hid her face with a veil of fair linen, and hastened out, with her two handmaidens, to the place where the two armies lay.

At the Skaian gates sat Priam and other old warriors.

As Helen, in her fair white robes, drew near, the old men marvelled at her loveliness.

'Small wonder is it,' said they, 'that Trojans and Greeks should suffer hardships and lay down their lives for one so beautiful. Yet well would it be for her to sail away upon the Greek ships rather than stay here to bring trouble upon us now, and upon our children hereafter.'

Then Priam called to Helen:

'Come hither, dear child, and sit beside me, that thou may'st see the man who once was thy husband, and thy kinsmen, and thy friends. No blame do I give to thee for all our woes, but only to the gods who have chosen thee to be the cause of all this bloodshed.'

Then did Priam ask her the names of the mighty heroes who stood by their spears in the Grecian ranks, and Helen, making answer to him, said:

'Dear father of Paris, my lord, would that I had died ere I left my own land and my little child, and all those that I loved, and followed thy son hither. Agamemnon, a goodly king and a mighty spearsman, is the Greek warrior whose name thou dost ask. Brother of him who was my husband is he. Ah! shameless me, who did leave mine own.'

Of Odysseus also, and of many

another warrior of great stature and brave looks, did Priam make inquiry. And Helen told him all she knew, while tears of longing stood in her eyes.

'My two brethren, Castor, tamer of horses, and Polydeuces, the skilful boxer, I do not see,' she said; 'mayhap they have not crossed the sea.' For she knew not that her two brothers lay dead in her own beautiful land.

Then was the sacrifice to Zeus offered, and the vows made between Agamemnon and Priam, King of Troy.

When the sacrifice and vows were accomplished, Priam in haste mounted his chariot and drove away.

'Verily will I return to windy Ilios,' said the old man, 'for I cannot bear to watch the fight between Menelaus and my own dear son. But only Zeus and the gods know which one of them is to fall.'

Then Hector and Odysseus marked

out a space for the fight, and into a bronze helmet Hector placed two pebbles and shook them in the helmet, looking behind him. And the pebble of Paris leapt out the first, so that to him fell the lot to cast first his spear of bronze.

Then did Paris arm himself. Greaves of beauteous fashioning he placed upon his legs, and fastened them with silver ankle-clasps. Over his shoulders he put his silver-studded sword of bronze and his great shield. On his head he placed a helmet with nodding crest of horse-hair, and in his hand he grasped his strong spear. In like manner did Menelaus arm himself.

One moment did they stand face to face, wrath and hatred in their hearts, their spears gripped firm in their hands.

Then did Paris hurl his spear and smite the shield of Menelaus. But the shield was strong and the spear could not

pierce it.

His hand lifted up for the cast, Menelaus looked upwards and called to Zeus.

'Grant me revenge, great Zeus!' he cried. 'On him that hath done me grievous wrong, grant me vengeance, so that all men hereafter may shudder to wrong one who hath treated him as his honoured guest.'

Then hurled he his mighty spear. Through the bright shield it went, and through the shining breastplate, tearing the tunic of Paris on his thigh. But Paris swerved aside, and so escaped death.

Then Menelaus drew his silver-studded sword and drove it crashing down upon the helmet of Paris. But in four pieces was the sword shattered, and fell from the hand of Menelaus.

'Surely art thou the most cruel of all the gods, Zeus!' angrily he cried. 'My spear is cast in vain, and my sword

shattered, and my vengeance is still to come!'

So saying, he leapt upon Paris. By the crest on his helmet he seized him, and, swinging him round, he dragged him towards the Greek host. The embroidered strap beneath the helmet of Paris strangled him, and so he would have shamefully died, had not Aphrodite marked his plight. Swiftly did she burst the leather strap, and the helmet was left empty in the grasp of Menelaus.

Casting the empty helmet, with a swing, to his comrades, Menelaus sprang back, ready, with another spear, to slay his enemy.

But Aphrodite snatched Paris up, and in thick mist she hid him, and bore him away to his own home. Like a wild beast Menelaus strode through the host, searching for him. But no Trojan would have hidden him, for with a bitter hatred

did the men of Troy hate Paris, most beautiful of mortal men.

Then said Agamemnon:

'Hearken to me, ye Trojans. Now hath Menelaus gained the victory. Give us back Helen, and all that is hers, and pay me the recompense that ye owe me for all the evil days that are gone.'

So spake he, and glad were the shouts of the Greeks as they heard the words of their king.

CHAPTER IV
How Menelaus was Wounded; and the Brave Deeds of Diomedes

While Menelaus made search for Paris, Hera and Athene plotted together, wrathfully planning how best to bring harm upon Paris and the men of Troy.

No wish had they that the grievous war should be ended, and Paris, whom they hated, allowed to go unpunished.

Like a shooting-star that flashes through the sky, even so did Athene haste down to the earth from Olympus.

In the guise of a man she sought Pandarus, a gallant warrior and a mighty archer.

'Hearken to me, wise Pandarus,' said the goddess. 'Shoot now a swift arrow at Menelaus, that thou may'st slay him. So

shalt thou win fame and glory before all the Trojans, and gain from Paris kingly gifts.'

And to her words foolish Pandarus lent willing ears.

He unsheathed his polished bow, made from the horn of a wild ibex that he himself had shot in the mountains. Sixteen palms long were its horns, and these a skilled workman had polished well and joined cunningly together, and tipped with gold. Well did Pandarus string his bow, and from his quiver he chose an arrow, sharp and new. Then did he pull back the bowstring to his breast until the great bow was bent into a round. The horn twanged and the bowstring sang, and the keen arrow sped fiercely on its way. Straight to the heart of Menelaus would it have sped, but Athene made it glance aside, so that it smote against the golden buckles of the

belt of his breastplate. Yet even then did it graze his flesh, and the black blood gushed forth from the wound.

When Agamemnon saw the blood flowing, sorely grieved was he.

But Menelaus said:

'Be of good courage. The wound is not deep, for my glistering belt in front and my kirtle of mail beneath stayed the deadly arrow.'

Then did they send for a skilled physician. And he, when he was come, drew forth the arrow, and sucked the blood and spread healing drugs upon the wound.

While the physician tended Menelaus, throughout the Greek host went Agamemnon.

'To arms!' he said to his men. 'The men of Troy have broken the oath of peace that they took, and for us it is to punish them. No helper of liars is Zeus,

and so shall they fall before us and their flesh be given to the vultures for their food!'

All those of his men that he found preparing eagerly for the battle, he praised. But to those that he found shrinking from battle he gave angry words, whether they were common soldiers or great chiefs.

To Diomedes he came at last.

'Dost thou hold back from battle, Diomedes?' he cried. 'Such was not thy father's way. Ever in battle was he the first. But his son is not a fighter such as he, though in speech he may be more skilled.'

No answer did Diomedes make, for he reverenced Agamemnon the king.

But a comrade who stood by him cried out in anger at the injustice of his words.

'Falsely dost thou speak, Agamem-

non!' he said. 'Better men than our fathers are we! Did we not, with fewer men and against a stronger wall, take the great city of Thebes which they strove to take in vain!'

But brave Diomedes sternly rebuked him. 'Be silent, brother,' he said, 'for right and just it is that Agamemnon should urge his warriors on to the fight. His will be the glory if we overcome the men of Troy and take their city, and his will be the great sorrow if by the Trojans we Greeks are laid low. Come! let us to arms!'

From his chariot Diomedes leapt to the ground, and his armour clanged as he moved.

And as the great sea-billows raise their heads before the driving of the gale, and crash themselves in fury against the shore, casting afar their briny spray and foam, even as mightily did the Greeks

move onward to battle. Horse after horse, and man after man, went as the waves of the sea.

But like bleating sheep were the Trojans as they awaited the coming of their foes.

And amongst the men of Troy fought Mars, god of war, and for the Greeks fought Athene, and with her were Terror and Rout, and Strife that never wearies.

So did the armies meet. Like wolves they fought. Man lashed at man; with blood the earth grew red, and the clamour of their fighting was as the noise of the meeting of the mountain streams when they rush in furious spate into the valleys in the winter floods.

Like trees that the woodmen cut and send crashing to the ground, so fell first one hero, then another. First fell a man of Troy, then a Greek. On that day many a Trojan and many a Greek side by side

in the dust lay dead.

Now was it that to Diomedes Athene came and gave fresh strength and courage. From his helmet she made a light to shine, burning brightly as a star in summer.

Amongst the Trojans were two brothers, rich and noble, and well-skilled warriors.

One of them from their chariot cast his spear at Diomedes, who was on foot, but missed his aim. And Diomedes then cast his spear and smote his enemy in the breast, so that from his chariot he fell dead on the ground, while his brother fled, lest he, too, should be slain. He left his beautiful chariot behind, and Diomedes drove away the horses and gave them to his men to keep for him.

And Athene, watching the fray, took the god Mars by the hand and led him aside.

'Let us leave the Greeks and Trojans to fight,' said she, 'and let Zeus give the victory to whom he will.'

Then did Mars sit him down by the river Scamander, and again Greeks and Trojans fought without aid from the gods.

Like heroes they fought. Like heroes they slew and died. But none fought as did Diomedes. Like a winter torrent in full flood did he charge across the plain, driving all before him.

But when Pandarus the archer saw him coming against him in triumph, he bent his bow and drove an arrow in haste to meet him. And in one moment the corslet of Diomedes was dabbled with blood.

Then loudly shouted Pandarus:

'Bestir you, brave Trojans! The best man of the Greeks is wounded, and soon shall he die from the arrow that I sped

against him!'

So boasted Pandarus, but Diomedes leapt down from his chariot, and to his charioteer he spoke:

'Haste thee, and draw from my shoulder this bitter arrow.'

Speedily the charioteer drew the arrow forth, and from the wound the blood spurted upward.

Then cried Diomedes:

'Hear me, Athene! If ever thou didst stand by my father in heat of battle, stand now by me. Bring me within a spear's thrust of this man who hath wounded me, and grant that I may slay him.'

So he prayed, and Athene heard him.

'Be of good courage, Diomedes,' she said. 'Thy prayer is granted. But if thou shouldst meet any of the gods in battle, smite none of them save golden Aphrodite.'

Then did Diomedes turn back to the

battle, and threefold courage came upon him, so that he fought as fights an angry lion.

Ten warriors, brave and gallant, fell before him, and the horses of these he took and gave to his men to drive to the ships.

Then said Aeneas, captain of the Trojan host, son of a mortal warrior and of the goddess Aphrodite:

'Where are thy bows and arrows, Pandarus? Canst thou not slay this man who makes havoc of the host?'

'Methinks this man is Diomedes,' answered Pandarus. 'Already have I smitten him, but without avail. Surely he is no man, but a wrathful god. Behind me in my own dear land left I eleven fair chariots, each with its yoke of horses, for I feared that my good horses might not find fodder in the camp. So now have I no chariot but only my bow, and now is

my bow of no help to me, for Menelaus and Diomedes have I smitten, yet they have not died.'

Then said Aeneas:

'Talk not thus, but mount in my chariot and take the reins and whip, and I myself will stand upon the car and fight with Diomedes.'

'Nay,' said Pandarus, 'take thou thyself the reins. Should thy horses be driven by one they know not, and hear a strange voice from him who drives them, mad might they go with fear. So drive thine own horses, Aeneas, and with my spear will I go against Diomedes.'

In the chariot then mounted Aeneas and Pandarus, and swiftly galloped the horses against Diomedes. His charioteer saw them coming and to Diomedes he said:

'Pandarus and Aeneas come against us, Diomedes—mighty warriors both.

Let us haste back to our chariot.'

'Speak not of flight!' answered Diomedes. 'It is not in my blood to skulk or cower down. As for these, both shall not escape me. But if Athene grant that I slay them both, then stay my chariot where it is, binding the reins to the chariot rim, and leap upon the horses of Aeneas and drive them forth into the host of the Greeks. For truly there are no better horses under the sun than these horses of Aeneas.'

When Pandarus and Aeneas drew near, fiercely Pandarus hurled his bronze-shod spear. Through the shield of Diomedes it passed, and reached his breastplate.

'Thou art hit in the loin!' cried Pandarus; 'now, methinks, thou soon shalt die.'

But Diomedes, unafraid, replied:

'Nay! thou hast missed and not hit.'

With that he hurled his spear. Through the nose and teeth and tongue of Pandarus it passed, and from the chariot he fell, his gleaming armour clanging on the ground. And it was from a dead man that the horses swerved aside.

Then Aeneas leapt from his chariot and stood astride the lifeless body, like a lion at bay, fearful lest the Greeks should take from him the body of his friend.

In his hand Diomedes seized a mighty stone, and with it smote Aeneas on the thigh, crushing the bone, and tearing the skin. On his knees fell the great Aeneas, and soon must he have perished, but Aphrodite saw the peril of her son and wound her white arms about him, and would have borne him safely away. But Diomedes, leaping in his chariot, pursued her, and with his spear he wounded her sorely on the wrist. With a great cry

Aphrodite let fall her son, but another of the gods was near and bore him away in the covering of a cloud.

'Away with thee, Aphrodite!' called Diomedes. 'It is surely enough for thee to beguile feeble women and to keep away from battle!'

Then upon Aeneas he leapt, not knowing that it was a god whose arms held him. Three times did he seek fiercely to slay Aeneas, and three times did the god beat him back.

'Thou warrest with the gods! Have a care, Diomedes!' shouted the god in a terrible voice, and Diomedes for a little shrank back.

Then truly did the gods come to war against Greeks and Trojans, for Mars and Athene and Hera in fury fought amongst the hosts.

'Shame on ye! men of Greece,' cried Athene. 'While noble Achilles went

forth to war, the Trojans dared scarcely pass without their gates, but now they bring their fighting close to the ships on the beach!' So she roused the Greeks to further fury.

To Diomedes then she went. Him she found beside his chariot, wiping away the blood from the wound dealt him by Pandarus.

'An unworthy son of thy brave father art thou, Diomedes,' she said. 'Alone would thy father fight; but though I stand by thy side to guard thee, either weariness or fear hath taken hold on thee.'

'I have no fear, neither am I weary,' answered Diomedes, 'but thou hast told me to smite none of the gods save Aphrodite, and now see I the god Mars leading the men of Troy. So have I stayed my hand and called back my men from the battle.'

Then answered bright-eyed Athene:



Mars, like a thunder-cloud, swept
upwards through the sky to Olympus

'Diomedes, joy of mine heart, fear not Mars nor any other of the gods, for I am thy helper. Go now, guide thy chariot against Mars and smite him hand to hand. This day did he promise me to fight for the Greeks, and now he fights against them.'

So saying, she made the charioteer of Diomedes give her his place, and herself, with whip and reins, did she guide the fiery horses.

And Mars, seeing the chariot of Diomedes draw near, leaving many dead behind him, eagerly came to meet it. With furious thrust did he drive his spear at Diomedes, but Athene seized it in her hand and turned it aside. Then did Diomedes thrust at Mars with his spear of bronze, and it Athene guided so that it pierced the thigh of the god of war. Loud as nine thousand or ten thousand warriors cry in battle, did Mars bellow

with rage and pain, and like a thunder-cloud he swept upwards through the sky to Olympus.

And still the fight went on, and sorrow came to many from the slaying of that day.

CHAPTER V
Hector and Andromache

From where the battle still raged went Hector, son of Priam. At the oak tree by the gates of Troy there came running to meet him wives and daughters of those who fought. For eagerly did they long for tidings of many a warrior who now lay dead on the field.

When he reached the beautiful, many-pillared palace of his father, his mother came to meet him.

His hand she took in hers, and gently spoke she to him.

'Art thou wearied that thou hast left the battle, Hector, my son?' she said. 'Let me bring thee wine that thou may'st be refreshed and yet gain strength.'

'Bring me no wine, dear mother,' said

Hector, 'lest it take from me the strength and courage that I have. Rather go thou to the temple of Athene and offer her sacrifices, beseeching that she will have mercy on Troy and on the wives of the Trojans and their little children. So may she hold back Diomedes the destroyer. I go to Paris—would that he were dead!'

And the mother of Hector straightway, with other old women, the mothers of heroes, offered sacrifices and prayers to Athene. But Athene paid no heed.

To the palace of Paris, his mighty bronze spear in his hand, then strode Hector.

Paris, the golden-haired, sat in a room with Helen, idly handling his shining shield and breastplate and curved bow.

In bitter scorn spoke Hector to his brother.

'Our people die in battle for thy

sake!' he cried, 'while here thou sittest idle. Up then, ere the enemies that thou hast made for us burn our city to the ground!'

And Paris answered:

'Justly dost thou chide me, Hector. Even now hath Helen urged me to play the man and go back to battle. Only let me put on my armour, and soon will I overtake thee.'

Never a word did Hector answer him.

But to Hector did Helen then speak.

'Brother Hector,' she said, 'unworthy am I to be sister of thine. Would that I had died on the day I was born, or would that the gods who have brought me this evil had given me for a husband one who was shamed by reproach and who feared dishonour. Rest thee here, my brother, who hast suffered so much for the sake of wretched me and for the sin of Paris. Well I know that for us cometh punish-

ment of which men will sing in the far-off years that are yet to come.'

'Of thy love, ask me not to stay, Helen,' answered Hector. 'For to help the men of Troy is my whole heart set, and they are now in want of me. But rouse this fellow, and make him hasten after me. I go now to see my dear wife and my babe, for I know not whether I shall return to them again.'

In his own house Hector found not his fair wife Andromache, nor their little babe.

'Whither went thy mistress?' he asked in eagerness of the serving-women.

'Truly, my lord,' answered one, 'tidings came to us that the Trojans were sorely pressed and that with the Greeks was the victory. So then did Andromache, like one frenzied, hasten with her child and his nurse to the walls that she might see somewhat of what befell.

There, on the tower, she stands now, weeping and wailing.'

Back through the streets by which he had come then hastened Hector. And as he drew near the gates, Andromache, who had spied him from afar, ran to meet him.

As, hand clasped in hand, Andromache and Hector stood, Hector looked silently at the beautiful babe in his nurse's arms, and smiled.

Astyanax, 'The City King,' those of Troy called the child, because it was Hector his father who saved the city.

Then said Andromache:

'Dear lord, thy courage will bring thee death. Hast thou no pity for this babe nor for thy wife, who so soon shall be thy widow? Better would it be for me to die if to thee death should come. For if I lose thee, then sorrow must for evermore be mine. No father nor mother

have I, and on one day were my seven brothers slain. Father and mother and brother art thou to me, Hector, and my dear loved husband as well. Have pity now, and stay with thy wife and thy little child.'

'All these things know I well, my wife,' answered Hector, 'but black shame would be mine were I to shrink like a coward from battle. Ever it hath been mine to be where the fight was fiercest, and to win glory for my father's name, and for my own. But soon will that glory be gone, for my heart doth tell me that Troy must fall. Yet for the sorrows of the Trojans, and of my own father and mother and brethren, and of the many heroes that must perish, grieve I less bitterly than for the anguish that must come upon thee on that day when thou no longer hast a husband to fight for thee and a Greek leads thee away a prisoner.

May the earth be heaped up high above me ere I hear thy crying, Andromache!'

So spake Hector, and stretched out his arms to take his boy.

But from his father's bronze helmet with its fiercely nodding plume of horse-hair the babe shrank back in terror and hid his face in his nurse's breast. Then did the little City King's father and his sweet mother laugh aloud, and on the ground Hector laid his helmet, and taking his little son in his arms he kissed him and gently dandled him. And as he did so, thus Hector prayed to Zeus and all the gods:

'O Zeus and all ye gods, grant that my son may be a brave warrior and a great king in Troyland. Let men say of him when he returns from battle, "Far greater is he than his father," and may he gladden his mother's heart.'

Then did Hector lay his babe in

Andromache's arms, and she held him to her bosom, smiling through her tears.

Full of love and pity and tenderness was the heart of Hector, and gently he caressed her and said:

'Dear one, I pray thee be not of over-sorrowful heart. No man shall slay me ere the time appointed for my death hath come. Go home and busy thyself with loom and distaff and see to the work of thy maidens. But war is for us men, and of all those who dwell in Troyland, most of all for me.'

So spake Hector, and on his head again he placed his crested helmet. And his wife went home, many times looking back to watch him she loved going forth to battle, with her eyes half blinded by her tears.

Not far behind Hector followed Paris, his armour glittering like the sun, and with a laugh on the face that was

more full of beauty than that of any other man on earth. Like a noble charger that has broken its bonds and gallops exultingly across the plain, so did Paris stride onward.

'I fear I have delayed thee,' he said to his brother when he overtook him.

'No man can speak lightly of thy courage,' answered Hector, 'only thou hast brought shame on thyself by holding back from battle. But now let us go forward, and may the gods give the Greeks into our hands.'

So went Hector and Paris together into battle, and many a Greek fell before them on that day.

CHAPTER VI
The Fight Between Hector and Ajax

From Olympus did Athene mark with angry heart how Greek after Greek fell dead before the spears of Hector and of Paris.

Then did she plot with Apollo, her brother, how best she might discomfit these men of Troy.

And into the heart of Hector did they put the wish to make the Trojans and the Greeks cease from battle, while he challenged the bravest Greek of the host to meet him, man to man, in deadly combat.

Then did Hector and Agamemnon make the fighting cease, and with gladness did Hector call upon the Greeks to

send forth their bravest champion that he might fight with him, hand to hand.

'If I be slain,' said Hector, 'then let the victor despoil me of my armour, but give back my body to my home. And if I slay him who fights with me, then shall his armour be mine. But his body the Greeks shall have, that they may build for him a tomb in their own land, near the sea, so that in the days to come men may look at it as they sail past in their ships and say, "This is the tomb of a man that died in days of old, a champion whom Hector slew."'

Silent stood the Greeks before him. For they feared to meet him hand to hand, and were ashamed to show their fear.

Then up sprang Menelaus, and with scorn of the others he donned his armour.

'Shame on ye all!' he cried. 'I myself

will fight with Hector, and the gods will slay that man whom they will to die.'

But Agamemnon would not have it that his brother should fight.

'This is madness, Menelaus,' he said. 'Draw back, though it pains thee, for even Achilles did dread to meet this man in battle, and how much more mighty is Achilles than thou.'

Then rose up nine chiefs of the Greeks, all ready to fight with Hector, and lots were cast to see which of these, the most valiant of the host, should meet with the champion of the men of Troy.

To Ajax the giant-like did the lot fall, and glad was the heart of the hero that so it should be.

In his shining bronze armour did Ajax array him, and as he strode forward with a smile on his stern face and his long spear brandished in his hand, he looked as looks Mars the terrible when he goes

forth to battle.

The Trojans trembled at the sight, and the heart of Hector beat faster, as the giant, with his great bronze shield, came towards him with mighty strides.

'Achilles, the lion-hearted, sitteth by his ships, yet shalt thou be shown, Hector, that the Greeks have other warriors in their ranks,' cried Ajax. 'But thou shalt begin the battle.'

'Am I a woman or a feeble boy who knows naught of fighting, Ajax?' answered Hector. 'Well do I know the rules of the great game of war. But I have no mind to smite thee by cunning. Openly shall I smite thee, if I smite at all.'

Thereat he hurled at Ajax his bronze-shod spear. But on his mighty shield of sevenfold hide, bronze-covered, Ajax caught the blow, and only six folds of the shield were pierced.

Then did Ajax the giant hurt his

spear, and it passed through Hector's bright shield and his corslet, and rent the doublet on his thigh. But Hector swerved aside and so escaped death. Then did each grip a fresh spear, and, like angry lions, did they rush each at the other. Again did Hector smite the shield of Ajax with his spear, but the spear point was bent back and unpierced was the shield. And Ajax, with a mighty drive, sent his spear through the shield of Hector, and the point pierced his neck, so that the dark blood gushed forth. But even then Hector ceased not to fight. From the ground he seized up a great jagged stone and hurled it against the shield of Ajax, until the bronze rang again. A stone, greater by far, did Ajax then hurl, and the shield of Hector was crushed inwards, and Hector was borne backwards, and fell, and had been slain, had not Apollo, with invisible hands,

raised him up. Their swords they drew then, and would have fought on, had not heralds rushed between them and with their staves held them apart.

'Fight no more, dear sons,' said the herald of Troy. 'Well do we see that ye both are brave warriors, and well-beloved of Zeus. But night falleth, and bids you cease the combat.'

Said Ajax:

'For Hector it is to speak, for he challenged the bravest of the Greeks to battle. As he wills, so shall I do.'

'The gods have given thee stature and might and wisdom, Ajax,' said Hector, 'and surely there is no greater fighter among the Greeks than thou. Night falleth, so let us cease from battle, and hereafter will we fight again, and the gods shall grant one of us the victory. But now let us exchange gifts, that Greeks and Trojans may say, "In fierce strife did

Ajax and Hector meet, but in friendship they parted."'

So spoke Hector, and gave to Ajax his silver-studded sword, with scabbard and sword-belt; and to him did Ajax give his belt bright with purple.

So parted the two heroes, and greatly did the men of Troy and of Greece rejoice at the safe return of their champions.

CHAPTER VII
The Burning of the Dead; and the Battle of the Plain

With feasting did the Greeks do honour to Ajax, and when the feast was ended, Nestor, the oldest and the most wise of the warriors, gave counsel that at daybreak on the morrow they should gather the bodies of their dead and burn them on a great pyre.

But while the Greek chiefs in peace took council together, they of Troy with fierce and angry words disputed at a gate of their city.

Said one:

'How can we hope to prosper in the fight when our oath is broken? Let us then give back to the Greeks fair Helen and all her wealth.'

But Paris, in wrath, made reply:

'Mad indeed thou art if thou dost think I will do as thou sayest! The wealth of Helen will I return with a willing heart, and to it add more wealth of mine own. But Helen my wife will I give back never!'

At dawn on the morrow did the Trojan heralds come to the camp of Agamemnon and gave to him the message.

'Thus saith Priam of Troy and all his nobles, The wealth that Helen brought with her to Troy will Paris return, and more besides of his own, but the beautiful wife of Menelaus he saith he will not give. But grant to us a truce until we have buried our dead, and then again will we fight until the gods grant us victory.'

Then said Diomedes:

'Let us take none of the treasures of Helen nor of Paris, neither Helen herself for well we know that the days of Troy

are already numbered.'

In applause of the words of Diomedes the Greek host shouted, and Agamemnon said to the heralds:

'Thou hearest the answer of the Greeks. Yet we grant ye the truce, that ye may bury your dead.'

The sun was rising from the sea and chasing grey darkness from the fields of Troyland when on the morrow Greeks and Trojans met in peace, and tenderly, and with hot tears falling, carried away the bodies of the fallen and buried them in mighty pyres.

A deep ditch and a high wall did the Greeks also make for themselves. And at nightfall they feasted, and when some ships from Lemnos came to the harbour, well laden with wine, they bought a goodly supply. Some of them paid the men of Lemnos with bronze, and some with iron, some with hides and kine, and

some with prisoners.

All night long they feasted, and in Troy also did the Trojans feast. But in Olympus did Zeus angrily plan the overthrow of the men who seemed to fear him not, and the noise of his thunderings filled the feasters with dread of what was to come.

On the next day, when golden dawn was spreading over the earth, Zeus held a council of the gods, and with a fearful doom did he threaten the god or goddess who should dare to aid either Greek or Trojan.

'We bow to thy will, great father Zeus,' Athene made answer. 'Yet let us, I pray thee, give counsel to the Greeks that they may not all perish before the mightiness of thine anger.'

'So be it,' answered Zeus, smiling upon her, for dear to the king of the gods was Athene, his beautiful daughter.

Then did Zeus, in his armour of gold, mount upon his car. His fleet-footed horses, bronze-shod, had flowing tails of gold, and them he lashed with his golden whip so that like lightning they flashed across space, between earth and the starry heavens. High up on Mount Ida did he rein them in, and in thick mist upon the mountain-top he sat him down and watched the Greeks and Trojans, as though they were his playthings, fighting far below on the plain.

Early that day did the two hosts meet, and soon was the morning air filled with the cries of pain and of rage, of defeat, and of victory, and the fair earth was streaming with the blood of men, dead and dying.

When midday came, Zeus stretched out from his throne on the mountain his golden scales, and in them laid two weights of death, one for the Greeks and

the other for the men of Troy. And the scale of the Greeks sank down low, and as it sank, Zeus sent down a blazing lightning flash so that the two armies saw the great god and his scales, and fear seized upon the Greeks.

The mightiest Greek no longer kept his courage. Only Nestor, oldest of the warriors, still had a dauntless heart. With an arrow from his bow had Paris slain one of the horses in Nestor's chariot, but from his chariot did the old man leap down and with his sword fiercely hewed at the traces. But as he still hewed, through the throng Hector furiously drove his chariot. Then had Nestor indeed perished, but that Diomedes marked what would befall.

With a great shout did he call to Odysseus:

'Whither fleest thou, like a coward, Odysseus? Stand thy ground till we have

saved the old man from his mighty foe!'

So spake he, but Odysseus heard him not, and hastened onward.

Alone then did Diomedes take his stand by the side of Nestor.

'Younger warriors than myself beset thee hard!' said Diomedes. 'Thou art feeble, thy charioteer is a weakling, and thy horses slow. Quickly mount my car, and see what are the paces of my horses that I took from Aeneas. Straight against Hector shall we guide them, that he may know the power of the spear of Diomedes.'

On the chariot of Diomedes did old Nestor then mount; in his hands he took the reins, and he lashed the horses. In furious gallop they came to meet Hector, and Diomedes hurled his spear. But the spear passed Hector, and in the breast of his brave charioteer was it buried, so that he fell to the ground and there he died.

Upon the men of Troy might defeat then have come, but in his hands Zeus took a thunderbolt, and right in front of the horses of Diomedes it burst in awful flames, making the horses in desperate panic rear backwards.

'Zeus himself fighteth against thee, Diomedes!' cried Nestor. 'Let us flee, for no man is so great in might that he can fight against the will of Zeus.'

'Thou speakest truth, old man,' said Diomedes, 'yet sore grief it is to my heart to think that some day the boast of Hector may be, "To his ships fled Diomedes, driven before me." May the earth swallow me up on that day!'

'Hector may call thee coward,' said Nestor, 'yet no son of Troy will believe him, nor any of the widows of these men whom thou hast slain.'

Then did Nestor wheel the horses and flee, while thick the spears and darts

from the Trojan host followed him.

And above the din of battle rose the voice of Hector:

'Behold the hero of the Greeks! Hero no longer art thou! Begone, feeble girl! poor puppet!'

Furiously did Diomedes listen to his taunts, and fain would he have turned back and tried to slay him. But three times did Zeus send peals of his thunder rolling down from the mountain-top, and to the Trojans was it a sign of victory, and fear did it send into the hearts of the Greeks.

Then did Hector call on his men to be of good courage, for with them fought Zeus, the Thunderer. And to his horses he called:

'On, now, Bayard, and Whitefoot, and Flame of Fire, and Brilliant! Forget not how Andromache hath cared for and tended you! Make haste that we may

seize from old Nestor his shield of gold, and strip Diomedes of his gorgeous breastplate!'

Onward, then, dashed his chariot, while the Trojans followed him, driving the Greeks in headlong flight before them. Soon had the Greek ships been burned and the long war ended, had not Hera put it into the heart of Agamemnon to arouse the Greeks and force them on to battle.

'Shame on you, ye Greeks!' he cried. 'What hath come of all your boasting?' Then did he pray to Zeus that even now he would grant the victory to the Greeks.

And his prayer was heard by Zeus, who sent a portent in answer. For there came, winging through the sky, an eagle with a young fawn in its talons. By the altar of Zeus did the eagle drop the fawn, and the Greeks took the sign to mean the favour of Zeus, and afresh they went to

battle.

Then did gallant warrior slay warrior as brave as himself, and hero fall before hero.

Teucer, a mighty archer, sheltering under the great shield of Ajax, sent one arrow speeding after another, and each arrow brought death. But against Hector in vain did he drive his shafts, slaying, each time he drew his bow, one standing near the man whose life he longed to take.

One arrow smote the charioteer of Hector in the breast, and from the chariot did he fall dead. Full of rage and grief was Hector, and from the car he leapt, with terrible shout, and, with a jagged stone in his hand, rushed at Teucer. Even at that moment had Teucer pulled his bowstring to let an arrow fly, but on the collar bone Hector smote him. His bowstring snapped, his

arm grew numb, the bow fell from his hand, and on his knees he sank. But swiftly did Ajax stand astride him, and with his shield he sheltered him until two of his comrades bore him, groaning in grievous pain, to the ships.

Once again did Zeus put courage in the men of Troy so that they drove the Greeks in rout before them.

Then did Hera and Athene mark their plight, and pity them, and would have come down from Olympus to their aid, had not Zeus sent stern warning to them of the doom that should be theirs were they to go against his bidding.

'On the morrow,' said he, 'more evil things shall thine eyes behold, for Hector will not cease to slay until that day when fleet-footed Achilles be roused to come and fight for the Greeks where Patroclus the brave lies dead. Such is the doom of heaven.'

Then did black night fall, and while the Trojans chafed at the darkness, the Greeks rejoiced that rest had come to them at length.

Leaning on his bronze-pointed spear, Hector spoke to the Trojans.

'Hearken to me!' he said. 'This day I thought to destroy the Greeks and all their hosts and return to our own windy Troy, but Night hath come too soon. To Night, then, must we yield, so let us take food, and give fodder to our horses. All night long let us burn fires lest in the darkness the Greeks strive to make for the sea. And let the heralds proclaim that boys and old men must guard the battlements of Troy, and each woman burn a great fire in her house lest the Greeks send an ambush to enter the city while we men are here. At dawn will we fight by the ships, and we shall see whether Diomedes will drive me back from

the shore to the walls of Troy, or if with my spear I shall lay him low.'

So spake Hector, and the Trojans shouted aloud.

They unyoked their horses, and gave them fodder, and from the city they brought food for the fires.

All night they sat by the battlefield, high hopes in their hearts, and their watch-fires burning. As when the moon shines clear on a windless night, and all the crags and glens and mountain-tops stand sharply out, and wide and boundless is the sky, and all the stars are seen; even so many were the lights of the watch-fires that gleamed in the plain before Troy. A thousand fires did burn there, and in the red glow of each blazing fire sat fifty men. Beside the chariots stood the horses champing barley and spelt, waiting for the coming of dawn.

CHAPTER VIII
The Message to Achilles

While the Trojans sat by their watch-fires, sorely troubled were the hearts of the Greeks and of Agamemnon their overlord.

Hurriedly did Agamemnon send his heralds to call an assembly, bidding each man separately and with no loud shouting.

Sorrowfully did they sit them down; and when Agamemnon rose up to speak, the bitter tears ran down his face as flows the wan water of a mountain stream down the dark gulleys where the sunbeams never play.

'My friends,' he said, 'leaders and captains of the Greeks, hard of heart is Zeus, and ill hath he dealt with me.

Victory did he promise, but shame hath he brought. Nothing now is left for us but to flee with our ships to our own land, for never shall Troy be ours.'

So spake he, and long did the Greek warriors sit in silent grief.

Then spoke Diomedes:

'A coward hast thou called me, Agamemnon; whether I am a coward the Greeks, young and old, know well. To thee hath Zeus given power above all other men, but courage, which is the highest power of all, hath he kept from thee. Thinkest thou that we Greeks are cowards and weaklings such as thou? If it is thy will to flee, flee then! Thy ships wait for thee by the sea. But as for us, here will we stay till Troy lies in ruins before us. And if it even be the will of every Greek here to flee with thee, here still will I and my friend Sthenelus abide and fight until Troy is ours. The gods

sent us hither! To us will the gods give the victory!'

Then spoke old Nestor:

'Mighty in battle art thou, Diomedes, and well hast thou spoken. But thou art yet young—full well mightest thou be my youngest son. So let all who hear, yea, even Agamemnon, hearken to my words and not gainsay me, who am so old a man. For without clan, without laws, without a home must be he who loveth strife. Hasten then, and let us all take food, and see that the sentinels be watchful along the deep trench without the wall. For to us this night cometh victory or death.'

Then did Agamemnon speedily have a feast prepared, and when the feast was ended, Nestor again uprose and spoke.

'King over all nations hath Zeus made thee, great Agamemnon,' he said. 'Therefore is it thy part to listen to all the

counsel that is given to thee that may aid thee to govern thy folk. Right heartily did I try to prevent thee from taking fair Briseis from the tent of Achilles on that day when thou didst anger the bravest of all warriors. Let us now try if we may not persuade him by gifts of friendship and with kindly words to come back and fight for Greece once again.'

Then answered Agamemnon:

'Yea, truly, a fool was I in that I gave way to my wrath. But gladly will I now make amends to Achilles, the beloved of Zeus. Rich and goodly gifts will I send to him; priceless gifts of gold, horses of wondrous speed, and seven fair slaves skilled in needle-work. Fair Briseis, also, shall again be his, and if he will come to our aid and Troy is ours, the richest of all the spoils shall be the spoils of Achilles. One of my daughters shall he have for his wife, and lands and cities and a people to

rule as king shall be my gift to him.'

Speedily then did they choose messengers to go with the gifts to Achilles.

And the messengers were Phœnix, a warrior dear to Zeus, and giant Ajax, and Odysseus of the many Devices. Two heralds went with them that they might tell Achilles of the noble Greeks who came to seek for his aid.

Along the shore of the sounding sea they went, making prayer to Zeus that he would grant them success in what they sought.

When they came to the ships and huts of Achilles they found him sitting with a lyre in his hand. Of beautiful workmanship it was, with a silver cross-bar upon it, and as the hands of Achilles drew from it wondrous melody, he sang of the glorious deeds of the heroes of old.

Beside him sat Patroclus, listening silently to the song of the friend that he

loved.

Then did Odysseus step forward, and Achilles, amazed, sprang to his feet, his lyre in his hand, and Patroclus also arose.

'Welcome ye are,' said Achilles; 'truly ye are friends that are come. Even in my anger are ye the dearest of all the Greeks to me.'

Then he led them forward and made them sit on seats covered with lordly purple.

To Patroclus he said:

'Bring forth the biggest bowl and the finest of my wines, for I have no dearer friends than those who are here with me now.'

So did Achilles have a rich feast of precious wines and of dainties of all sorts made ready for those who brought him the message of Agamemnon the king.

And when the feast was ended, Odysseus did tell him of the dire woes of

the Greeks and of the royal gifts of Agamemnon, and of the pleadings of the Greeks and of their overlord, that their hero, Achilles, would come and fight for them once again.

Then did Achilles make answer:

'Hateful to me as are the gates of death, O great Odysseus, is the man who hideth in his heart one thing and sayeth another. So will I speak to thee as seemeth me best. Hard have I laboured, fiercely have I fought for Agamemnon, yet what is my gain after it all? Hateful to me are the gifts of Agamemnon. Wealth and power can be mine without aid from him, yet know I well, for my mother, Thetis the silver-footed, hath told me, that death swiftly draweth nigh. Let the Greeks seek help elsewhere, for fierce is my anger, and no help shall ye gain from me.'

Then said Ajax:

'Let us go hence, Odysseus. Our embassy is vain. Yet evil though the news we carry with speed must we bear it back to the Greek host. Merciless art thou, Achilles! Anger hath made thee set at naught thy comrades' love and the love of thine own dear land.'

And to Ajax did Achilles make answer:

'Take ye, then, my message, brave Ajax! Tell Agamemnon that until the day that the men of Troy come even to my ships and my huts and smirch them with fire, no finger will I raise for Greece. But on that day, then, surely, will the power of the Trojans be stayed.'

Then did Odysseus and Ajax and the others return in sorrow to the host of the Greeks, and gave to them the message of Achilles.

In silence did the warriors listen.

Then said Diomedes:

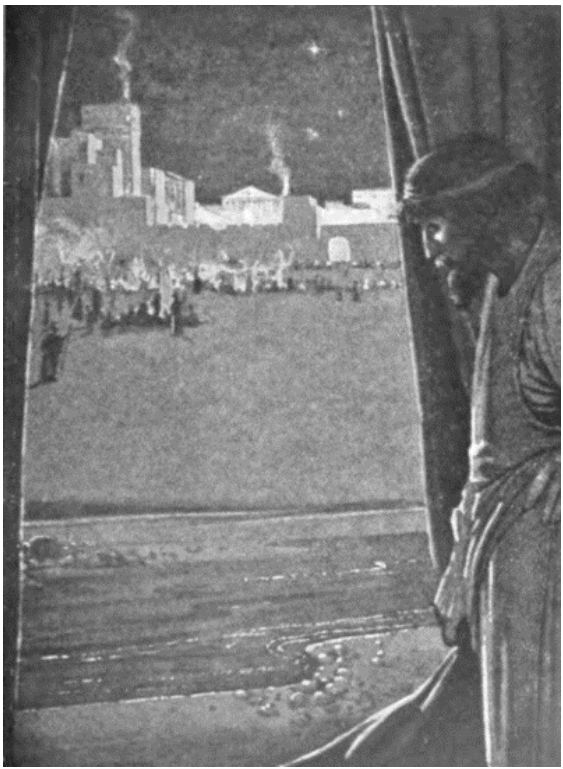
'Achilles, then, must bide his time. When his heart is aroused again within him, he will fight. But let us now take meat and drink and sleep, and when rosy-fingered Dawn doth come, strength shall be ours for the battle, and with courage shall we fight for the cause of Agamemnon our king!'

CHAPTER IX
The White Horses of Rhesus

Sound was the sleep of the Greek chiefs that night, but Agamemnon the king slept not. From his enemies' camp came the sound of pipe and flute and laughter of men, as the Trojans feasted and made merry in the red light of their camp-fires. As he looked seawards at the ships of the sleeping Greeks, his heart was heavy within him and he groaned aloud.

On his feet he bound his sandals, over his shoulders did he throw his great mantle of a tawny lion's skin, and, grasping his spear, he went forth into the night to take counsel of wise Nestor.

Neither to Menelaus came there sleep, for his heart was full of fear lest



Agamemnon heard the sound of pipe
and flute and laughter of men as the
Trojans feasted and made merry

harm should come to the Greeks who had crossed the wide seas to fight for his sake in Troyland.

On his head he placed his bronze helmet, across his broad shoulders he threw a leopard skin, and, spear in hand, went to seek his brother.

Down by the ships he found him, putting his armour on.

'Why dost thou arm thyself, dear brother?' he asked. 'Wilt thou send forth one of our comrades to spy on the Trojans? I fear me no man of ours is of courage enough to go alone in the night and do so brave a deed.'

Then did Agamemnon bid his brother go and awake the lords of his host and call a council together, while he himself went to rouse Nestor, the oldest of all the warriors.

And as they passed through the host they found the sentinels sitting wide

awake with their arms, like dogs that watch by a lonely sheepfold amongst the hills and listen to the cries of the savage wild beasts that come towards them through the woods.

Gladly did old Nestor see them.

'Even so keep watch, dear children,' he said, 'lest we allow our enemies to triumph over us.'

Out in the open field, beyond the deep trench which they had dug, the chiefs of the Greeks sat themselves down in council.

To them, then, spake Nestor.

'O friends,' said he, 'is there among you a man with heart so fearless that all alone he will go into the camp of the Trojans this night and there learn what are their plans for battle? If such an one there be, and he return to us scathless, great will be his fame among all men, and great the rewards that he wins.'

Then said Diomedes of the loud war-cry:

'With willing heart will I go, Nestor: yet if another man will come with me, more comfort and courage will be ours.'

Many there were who asked with eagerness to be that one who should go with Diomedes. But Agamemnon spoke.

'Diomedes, joy of mine heart, verily shalt thou choose thine own comrade,' he said.

And Diomedes made answer:

'If indeed I may choose, then shall I choose Odysseus, for with him as comrade we might pass through raging flames and yet return in safety.'

'Praise me not overmuch, Diomedes,' said Odysseus, 'but let us be going. The night wanes, the stars have gone onward, and the dawn is near.'

Then did they don their armour, and set forth, like two lions seeking their

prey, treading underfoot the men who lay still and dead in their blood. And through the dark night they heard the shrill cry of a heron, and knew it for an omen sent by the gods, a promise to them of victory.

In the Trojan camp was a council also held. And brave Hector offered great rewards to the man who would go in the darkness to where the Greek ships lay and find out how it fared with the men of Agamemnon, and what plans were theirs.

And Dolon, the swift-runner and ill-favoured man, but one who owned great riches of gold and bronze, stood up and said:

'To the swift-sailing ships will I go as thy spy. But for reward must I have the horses and bronze chariots of Achilles.'

'No other man of the Trojans shall mount these horses,' swore Hector.

Then Dolon took his bow, on his shoulders cast a great wolf-skin, on his head drew his helmet of ferret-skin, and with his sharp javelin in his hand, went forth towards the seashore.

In the darkness Odysseus heard his stealthy footsteps.

'Lo, here is some man, Diomedes,' he said; 'I know not whether he be a spy or a plunderer of the dead. But let him pass, and then will we rush on him and take him.'

Turning from the path, they lay down amongst the dead bodies on the plain, still and silent as those they lay beside.

But when Dolon had gone a little way, they ran after him, and Dolon, when he heard them, stopped, thinking they were messengers from Hector, coming to bid him return. Less than a spear's-throw from him were they when he knew

them for foemen and fled before them.

But as two fierce hounds pursue a hare or a doe, so did Odysseus and Diomedes hunt Dolon. They had well-nigh reached the trench where the sentinels were placed when Diomedes called aloud:

'Halt! or my spear shall pin thee dead to the ground!'

Thereat he hurled his spear, but not with the wish to smite Dolon. Over his right shoulder it flew, burying its sharp point in the ground in front of him. Green with fear, and with chattering teeth, Dolon stopped, and Odysseus and Diomedes panting, came up to him, and laid hold of him.

'Take me alive!' said Dolon, weeping, 'and a mighty ransom of gold and bronze and iron shall be yours if ye but spare my life.'

'Fear not,' said Odysseus, 'but tell us

truly why thou comest thus at dead of night into the camp of thine enemies.'

Then did Dolon, the coward, tremblingly tell his tale, and reveal to Odysseus and Diomedes all that Hector had bidden him do. At their bidding, too, he told them how all the Trojan forces lay, and how best they could win into the camp.

'At the farthest point from the men of Troy are encamped the Thracians,' he said. 'Rhesus is their king, and fit for a god is his golden armour and his chariot of gold and silver. His, too, are the fairest horses mine eyes have seen, of great strength and height, whiter than snow, and swift as the wind.'

Eagerly did Odysseus and Diomedes listen. But when he had ended and begged them to take him a prisoner to the ships, or to let him go free, grimly did Diomedes look at him.

'Good is thy news, Dolon,' he said,

'yet nevermore shalt thou have a chance of playing the spy, or of fighting against the men of Greece.'

With that he raised his mighty sword, and ere Dolon could beg for mercy he smote him on the neck. Cleanly was his head shorn off, and it rolled in the dust at the feet of Diomedes. His casque of ferret-skin, and the grey wolf-skin, and javelin and bow did Odysseus and Diomedes then take from him and held them aloft, an offering to Athene. They placed them on a tamarisk bush, raising on it a mark of long reeds and branches of tamarisk, lest they might miss the place as they returned again ere dawn.

Across the plain did they hasten then, until they came to the camp of the Thracians. Deep was the sleep of the warriors who lay, each with his arms beside him, and his two horses standing near at hand. And in the midst of them

lay Rhesus the king, his great white horses tethered to his chariot of silver and gold.

'Lo, here is the man, and here are the horses of which Dolon gave us tidings,' said Odysseus.

And thereupon did the slaying begin.

Like a lion that rends a flock of sheep without a shepherd, even so did Diomedes slay the men of Thrace. On this side and on that he slew, till the earth grew red with blood, and terrible was the groaning of the dying men. Twelve men did he slay, and as he slew them, Odysseus dragged them to the side that a way might be left clear for the white horses of Rhesus. For he feared that panic might seize them were they to step in the darkness upon the dead men.

The thirteenth man was King Rhesus himself. An evil dream made him draw his breath hard and quick, but ere he

could awake from sleep the sword of Diomedes took his life away. Then did Odysseus drive the horses out of the camp, smiting them with his bow, for he had no whip, and driving them onwards.

To Diomedes he whistled, for a sign that he should cease from slaying and follow him and their lordly spoil. Still did Diomedes linger, pondering whether he should drag the chariot with him, or slay yet more of the Thracians. And as he pondered, Athene came to him.

'Return to the ships, Diomedes,' she said, 'lest another of the gods arouse the Trojans, and in flight thou art driven before them.'

Even then, indeed, was Apollo arousing one of the kinsmen of Rhesus, who with great lament saw the dead and dying men and knew that the horses of the king had been stolen away.

But swiftly did Diomedes and

Odysseus spring on the backs of the white horses, and swift as the snowy foam on the crests of storm-driven waves did they dash through the darkness back to the ships.

When they came to the tamarisk bush, where they had left the bloody spoils of Dolon, Diomedes leapt to the ground, seized them and placed them in the hands of Odysseus, and again mounted, and, lashing the horses, dashed furiously onward.

The clang of the hoofs of the galloping horses struck first upon the ears of old Nestor, and quickly did he and other lords of the Greeks go to meet Diomedes and Odysseus.

Then did the two heroes rein in their horses and lightly spring to the ground, and with hand-clasping and glad words were they welcomed by their comrades.

And when he had told the tale of the

slaying of the men of Thrace and the taking of the horses of Rhesus, Odysseus, laughing, drove the white steeds through the trench and stabled them beside the other horses of Diomedes.

Then did he and Diomedes plunge into the sea and wash the sweat and dust from off their limbs in the cold waves. Glad were their hearts when they sat down to sup and poured forth an offering of honey-sweet wine to Athene; but in the camp of the Trojans were there shame and lamenting for the deeds that had been wrought in the third watch of the night.

CHAPTER X
The Fighting on the Plain

The night passed, and grey dawn saw a mighty fight begin.

Fiercely did the battle wax and wane, and valiant deeds were done that day.

Mightily fought Agamemnon, but against him fought the gods, and when the sun blazed forth at noon, he and many another Greek warrior, grievously wounded, were forced to leave the field.

An arrow, from the bow of Paris, smote Machaon, skilled physician of the Greeks, and fear seized them lest he who healed their wounds might himself perish.

Into his chariot did old Nestor take Machaon, and right willingly his horses galloped back to their stables by the

shore.

By the stern of his ship stood Achilles, watching the battle from afar, and his dear friend and comrade, Patroclus, he sent speeding to the tent of Nestor for tidings of the battle and to ask the name of the wounded warrior.

Scornfully spake Nestor:

'What matters it to Achilles which of the sons of Greece lie wounded? Many chiefs of the Greeks have shed their blood this day, yet Achilles heedeth not. Hast thou forgotten, Patroclus, that day when thy father didst speak to thee of thyself and of Achilles? "Of nobler birth than thou is Achilles," he said, "and in might much greater. Yet he is younger than thou, so see that thou counsel him gently and wisely when there is need, and he will obey thee." Even now, Patroclus, thou mightest persuade Achilles to go forth to battle. But if he will not go, then

let him lend thee his armour so that the men of Troy may flee before thee, thinking that Achilles goeth forth to war once more.'

So did Nestor rouse the heart of Patroclus, and swiftly Patroclus returned to the ship of Achilles.

Fiercer and ever more fierce grew the battle as the hours went by. Up to the walls that the Greeks had built did the Trojans press their furious way. Up the battlements, spear in hand, they swarmed, nor heeded the storm of stones that crashed down upon them from above.

In front of the gates lay a stone so huge that two strong men could not together have lifted it and placed it on a wagon. With one hand did mighty Hector, legs wide apart, hurl it against the great double gates. Before it, hinges burst, bars smashed, and the gates

crashed backwards. Then in leapt Hector, his eyes flashing fire. None but the gods could have withstood him, and on his heels came the men of Troy. Before them they swept the Greek host to their ships.

But down by the sea fought Ajax, and round him the Greeks took their stand. Mighty was the wall of living men that sought to die for their honour and for their own dear land.

Yet, like a great rock that the fierce floods of winter tear from a mountain-side, and that crashes through the forests and thunders down the valleys, destroying as it goes, so did Hector press onward. Behind him in heaps lay the slain, the moans of the dying mingled with the din of battle, and the dark night of death blinded the eyes of many a mighty chief.

'Thinkest thou to spoil our ships!' called Ajax to Hector. 'To the gods, and

not to the men of Troy do we owe our evil plight. Yet ere long will Troy fall before us, and thou thyself wilt pray to Zeus to make thy steeds fleet as falcons as they bear thee in shameful plight back to thy city, across the plain.'

To Ajax did Hector make answer:

'Blundering boaster art thou! Woe cometh this day to the Greeks! And thou, Ajax, if thou hast courage to meet my spear, shalt be food for the birds and the dogs.'

In his tent the heart of Agamemnon sank within him, and those beside him did he counsel that they should drag their ships down to the sea and swiftly sail away.

'There is no shame in fleeing from ruin,' said he.

But Odysseus and Diomedes replied with angry scorn to the coward words of their overlord.

'Let us go down to the battle, wounded though we be,' said Diomedes.

So they set forth, and with them went Agamemnon, and through the long day did that mortal fight go on. Now would the Trojans triumph, and again to the men of Greece would come the victory.

At last, before a huge stone, hurled by Ajax, did Hector fall. Like a mighty oak smitten by lightning he fell, and the Trojans bore him away, the black blood gushing from his mouth.

Then pressed the men of Greece the more. Back from the ships they drove the men of Troy.

But to Hector where he lay a-dying came Apollo, and into his fainting body and heart he breathed fresh strength and courage.

With strength as the strength of ten Hector once again faced the foe, and

before him the Greeks fell back in dismay.

Patroclus in his tent, tending the wounds of a friend, marked how the Greeks fell back, and he groaned aloud.

'To Achilles must I hasten,' he said. 'Who knows but that the time has come when I may arouse him to join in the battle.'

CHAPTER XI
How Patroclus Fought and Died

While round the dark ships of Greece the fierce fight raged, Achilles, from afar, listened unmoved to the din of battle, and watched with stony eyes the men of Greece as they fell and died on the reddened ground.

To him came Patroclus.

'Why dost thou weep, Patroclus?' asked Achilles. 'Like a fond little maid art thou that runs by her mother's side, plucking at her gown, hindering her as she walks, and with tearful eyes looking up at her until the mother lifts her in her arms. Like her, Patroclus, dost thou softly weep.'

Then Patroclus, heavily groaning, made answer:

'Among the ships lie the bravest and

best of the men of Greece, sore wounded or dead. Pitiless art thou, Achilles, pitiless and unforgiving. Yet if thou dost still hold back from the battle, give me, I pray thee, thine armour, and send me forth in thy stead. Perchance the Trojans may take me for the mighty Achilles, and even now the victory be ours.'

Then said Achilles, and heavy was his heart within him:

'These Greeks took from me my well-won prize, Patroclus. Yet let the past be past; no man may keep his anger for ever. I have said that until the men of Troy come to burn my own ships I will hold me back from the battle. But take you my armour; lead my men in the fight, and drive from the ships the men of Troy. But to others leave it to chase them across the plain.'

Even as Achilles spoke, the strength of mighty Ajax had come to an end, and

with furious rush did the Trojans board the ships. In their hands they bore blazing torches, and up to the sky rushed the fiercely roaring flames.

Then cried Achilles, smiting his thighs:

'Haste thee, Patroclus! They burn the ships! Arm thyself speedily, and I will call my men!'

Corslet and shield and helmet did Patroclus swiftly don, and girded on the silver-studded sword and took two strong lances in his hand.

In the chariot of Achilles he mounted, and Automedon, best and bravest of charioteers, took the reins.

Swift as the wild west wind were Bayard and Piebald, the two horses of Achilles, and in the side harness was Pedasus, a horse only less swift than they.

Gladly did the men of Achilles meet his call to arms, for fierce as wolves were

they.

'Many times hast thou blamed me,' cried Achilles, 'because in my wrath I kept ye back from battle. Here for ye now is a mighty fight, such as ye love.'

To battle they went, and while Patroclus led them forth, Achilles in his tent offered up an offering to Zeus.

Like wasps that pour forth from their nests by the wayside to sting the boys who have stoned them, so now did the Greeks swarm from their ships.

Before the sword of Patroclus fell a mighty warrior, and when the men of Troy saw the shining armour of Achilles in his own chariot their hearts sank within them.

Out of the ships were they driven, the fire was quenched, and back to the trench rolled the tide of battle. In the trench writhed many a horse and many a man in dying agonies. But clear across it

leaped the horses of Achilles, and close to the walls of Troy did Patroclus drive brave Hector before him.

His chariot then he turned, and headed off the fleeing Trojans, driving them down to the ships. Before the furious rush of his swift steeds, other horses were borne off their feet, other chariots cast in ruins on the ground, and men crushed to death under his wheels. Chief after chief did Patroclus slay. A mighty destroyer was he that day.

One only of the chiefs of Troy kept his courage before the destroyer who wore the shining arms of Achilles.

'Shame on ye!' cried Sarpedon to his men, 'whither do ye flee? I myself will fight this man who deals death and destruction to the Trojan host.'

From their chariots leaped Sarpedon and Patroclus.

With the first cast of his spear

Patroclus missed Sarpedon, but slew his charioteer. Then did Sarpedon cast, and his spear whizzed past Patroclus, and smote the good horse Pedasus. With a dreadful scream Pedasus fell, kicking and struggling, in the dust. This way and that did the other two horses plunge and rear, until the yoke creaked and the reins became entangled. But the charioteer leaped down, with his sword slashed clear the traces from Pedasus, and the horses righted themselves.

Once again did Sarpedon cast his spear, and the point flew over the left shoulder of Patroclus. But Patroclus missed not. Through the heart of Sarpedon sped the fiercely hurled spear, and like a slim tree before the axe of the woodcutter he fell, his dying hands clutching at the bloody dust.

Furious was the combat then over the body of Sarpedon. One brave warrior

after another did Patroclus lay dead.

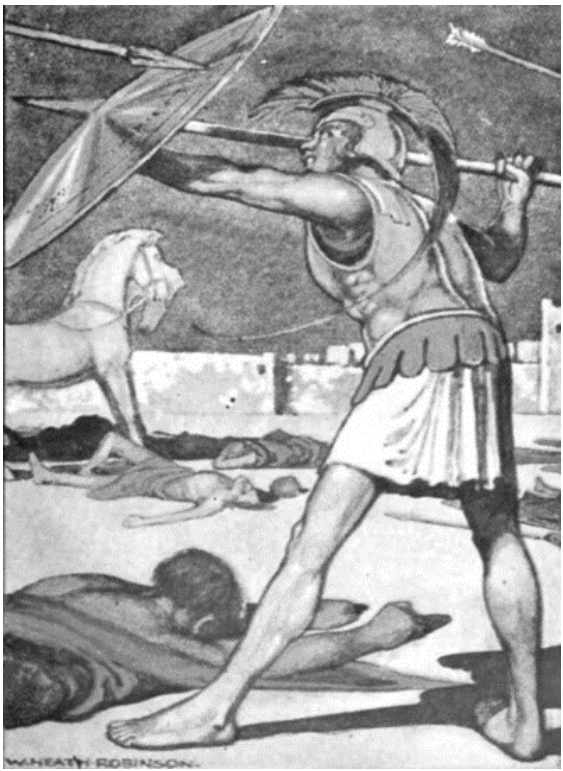
And more terrible still was the fight because in the ranks of the men of Troy there fought now, in all-devouring wrath, the god Apollo.

Nine men, good warriors all, did Patroclus slay; then, waxing bolder, he tried to climb the very walls of Troy.

Three times did Apollo thrust him back, and when, a fourth time, he attacked, the god cried aloud to him in anger, warning him not to dare so much.

Against Patroclus did Hector then drive his war-horses, but Patroclus, leaping from his chariot, hurled at Hector a jagged stone. In the eyes it smote the charioteer of Hector, and the slain man dropped to the ground.

'How nimble a man is this!' jeered Patroclus. 'How lightly he diveth! Were this the sea, how good an oyster-seeker would this fellow be!'



The point of the spear flew over
the left shoulder of Patroclus

Then from his chariot leaped Hector and met Patroclus, and the noise of the battle was as the noise of a mighty gale in the forest when great trees fall crashing to the ground.

When the sun went down, victory was with the Greeks. Three mighty charges did Patroclus make, and each time he slew nine men. But when, a fourth time, he charged, Apollo met him. In thick mist he met him, and Patroclus knew not that he fought with a god. With a fierce downstroke from behind, Apollo smote his broad shoulders, and from off his head the helmet of Achilles fell with a clang, rattling under the hoofs of the horses. Before the smiting of the god, Patroclus stood stricken, stupid and amazed. Shattered in his hands was the spear of Achilles, and his mighty shield clanged on the ground.

Ere he could know who was the

smiter, a Trojan ally drove a spear between his shoulders, and Patroclus, sore wounded, fell back.

Marking his dismay, Hector pressed forward, and clean through his body drove his bronze spear. With a crash Patroclus fell.

'Thou that didst boast that thou wouldst sack my town, here shall vultures devour thee!' cried Hector.

And in a faint voice Patroclus made answer:

'Not to thee do I owe my doom, great Hector. Twenty such as thou would I have fought and conquered, but the gods have slain me. Yet verily I tell thee that thou thyself hast not long to live. Even now doth Death stand beside thee!'

As he spoke, the shadow of Death fell upon Patroclus. No more in his ears roared the din of battle; still and silent for ever he lay.

CHAPTER XII
The Rousing of Achilles

Fierce had been the fight before Patroclus died. More fiercely yet it raged when he lay dead.

From his body did Hector take the arms of Achilles, and the dead Patroclus would the Trojans fain have dragged to their city, there to bring shame to him and to all the Greek host.

But for him fought the Greeks, until the earth was wet with blood and the very skies echoed the clang of battle.

To Achilles came Antilochos, a messenger fleet of foot.

'Fallen is Patroclus!' he cried, 'and around his naked body do they fight, for his armour is held by Hector.'

Then did Achilles moan aloud. On

the ground he lay, and in his hair he poured black ashes. And the sound of his terrible lament was heard by his mother, Thetis, the goddess, as she sat in her palace down under the depths of the green sea.

Up from under the waves swiftly came she to Achilles, and tenderly did she listen while he poured forth to her the tale of the death of his dear comrade.

Then said Thetis:

'Not long, methinks, shall Hector glory in the armour that was thine, for Death presseth hard upon him. Go not forth to battle, my son, until I return, bearing with me new and fair armour for thee.'

But when Thetis had departed, to Achilles in his sorrow came Iris, fair messenger of the gods.

'Unto windy Ilios will the Trojans drag the body of Patroclus unless thou

comest now. Thou needst not fight, Achilles, only show thyself to the men of Troy, for sore is the need of Patroclus thy friend.'

Then, all unarmed, did Achilles go forth, and stood beside the trench. With a mighty voice he shouted, and at the sound of his voice terror fell upon the Trojans. Backward in flight they went, and from among the dead did the Greeks draw the body of Patroclus, and hot were the tears that Achilles shed for the friend whom he had sent forth to battle.

All that night, in the house of the Immortals, resounded the clang of hammer on anvil as Hephaistus, the lame god, fashioned new arms for Achilles.

Bronze and silver and gold he threw in his fire, and golden handmaidens helped their master to wield the great bellows and to send on the crucibles blasts that made the ruddy flames dance.



The making of the arms of Achilles

No fairer shield was ever borne by man than that which Hephaistus made for Achilles. For him also he wrought a corslet brighter than a flame of fire, and a helmet with a golden crest.

And in the morning light did Thetis dart down from snowy Olympus, bearing in her arms the splendid gift of a god.

Glad was Achilles as he put on the armour, and terrible was his war-cry as he roused the Greek warriors. No man, however sore his wounds, held back when the voice of Achilles called him to the fight once again. Wounded was Agamemnon, overlord of the Greeks, but forth also came he. And there, while the sun rose on many a warrior who would fight no more, did Achilles and Agamemnon speak as friends once again, their long strife ended.

Hungry for war, with Achilles as their leader, did the Greeks then meet the

Trojans on the plain. And as a fierce fire rages through the forest, its flames driven by the wind, so did Achilles in his wrath drive through the host of Troy.

Down to the Scamander he drove the fleeing Trojans, and the water reddened with blood, as he smote and spared not.

Merciless was Achilles; pitilessly did he exult as one brave man after another was sent by him to dye red the swift flood of the Scamander.

At length, at his lack of mercy, did even the river grow wrathful.

'Choked is my stream with dead men!' it cried, 'and still thou slayest!'

But when Achilles heeded not, in fierce flood the river uprose against him, sweeping the slain before it, and in furious spate seeking to destroy Achilles. But as its waves smote against his shield, Achilles grasped a tall elm, and uproot-

ing it, cast it into the river to dam the torrent. For the moment only was the angry river stayed. In fear did Achilles flee across the plain, but with a mighty roar it pursued him, and caught him.

To the gods then cried Achilles, and to his aid came Athene, and close to the walls of Troy again did Achilles chase the Trojan men.

From the city walls old Priam saw the dreadful things Achilles wrought.

And when, his armour blazing like the brightest stars of the sky, he drew near, and Hector would have gone to meet him, in grief did Priam cry to his dearly-loved son:

'Hector, beloved son, I pray thee go not alone to meet this man; mightier far than thou is he.'

But all eager for the fight was Hector. Of all the men of Troy he alone still stood unafraid. Then did the mother of

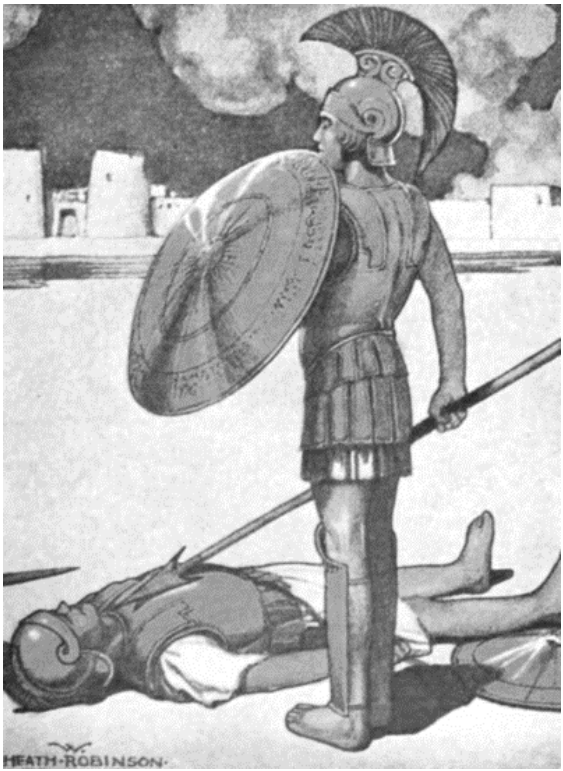
Hector beseech him to hold back from what must surely mean death. Yet Hector held not back, but on his shining shield leaned against a tower, awaiting the coming of the great destroyer.

And at last they met, face to face, spear to spear. As a shooting-star in the darkness so flashed the spear of Achilles as he hurled it home to pierce the neck of Hector. Gods and men had deserted Hector, and alone before the walls of Troy he fell and died.

Thus ended the fight.

For twelve days did the Greek host rejoice, and all through the days Hector's body lay unburied. For at the heels of swift horses had the Greeks dragged him to the ships, while from the battlements his mother and his wife Andromache watched, wailing in agony, with hearts that broke.

Then at length went old Priam to



The shadow of death
came down upon Hector

the camp of the Greeks. And before Achilles he fell, beseeching him to have mercy and to give him back the body of his son.

So was the heart of Achilles moved, and the body of Hector ransomed; and with wailing of women did the people of Troy welcome home their hero.

Over him lamented his old mother, for of all her sons was he to her most dear, and over him wept, with burning tears, his wife Andromache.

And to his bier came Helen, and with breaking heart did she sob forth her sorrow.

'Dearest of my brothers,' she said, 'from thee have I heard neither reproach nor evil word. With kind words and gentle heart hast thou ever stood by me. Lost, lost is my one true friend. No more in Troyland is any left to pity me.'

On lofty funeral pyre then laid they

the dead Hector, and when the flames had consumed his body his comrades placed his white bones in a golden urn, and over it with great stones did they raise a mighty mound that all might see where he rested.

Yet still was the warfare between Greeks and Trojans not ended.

To Achilles death came in a shaft from the bow of Paris. By a poisoned arrow driven at venture and at dark midnight from the bow of an outcast leper was fair Paris slain. While winter snow lay white on Ida, in Helen's arms did his life ebb away.

Then came there a day when the Greeks burned their camp and sailed homeward across the grey water.

Behind them they left a mighty horse of wood, and the men of Troy came and drew it into the city as trophy and sign of victory over those who had made it. But

inside the horse were hidden many of the bravest warriors of Greece, and at night, when the Trojans feasted, the Greeks came out of their hiding-place and threw open the gates.

And up from the sea came the Greek host, and in fire and in blood fell the city of Troy.

Yet did not Helen perish. Back to his own kingdom by the sea Menelaus took her, to reign, in peace, a queen, she who had brought grief and death to so many, and to the city of Troy unutterable woe.