

The Apple of Discord

Once, Zeus fell in love with Thetis, a beautiful sea-goddess who lived in the coral caves of the ocean. His mind was inflamed by her loveliness, and he wooed her incessantly even though Poseidon became his bitter rival, and even though Hera harassed him and Thetis herself resisted his advances.

One day, however, he suddenly broke off his courtship, for Themis, the mother of Prometheus, had warned him, "If the sea-goddess gives birth to a son, he will surely be greater than his father!"

That was enough for Zeus, and his hopes for a marriage with Thetis vanished. "So this was the marriage-match the fire-stealer knew of!" he said to himself. It was a close call, and for a while longer he would be able to avoid the fate of Cronus and Uranus.

When Thetis married, Zeus made sure that her husband was a mortal man. He was Peleus, a stalwart warrior, one of those who had voyaged with Jason in his quest of the Golden Fleece. But his son was to be far greater than he, just as Themis had foretold, for the child to whom Thetis gave birth was Achilles, who was destined to be the finest warrior of all time.

The wedding of Peleus and Thetis was attended by all the Olympians, and afterwards the gods enjoyed a great feast. Hephaestus went hobbling amongst them, ladling nectar and ambrosia from his serving-bowl, and Apollo raised his golden voice in song—though he could hardly be heard above the chatter of the goddesses.

Eris, the twin sister of Ares, had not been invited to this banquet—and with good reason, for her name means Discord. Nevertheless, she came. Suddenly flinging open the door, she rolled into the midst of the gathering a golden apple, and, with a screech of laughter, vanished. Inscribed on the apple were the words, "For the Fairest".

Zeus stepped forward to pick up the apple, and you may imagine his consternation when he read the inscribed words. As the husband of Hera, he felt obliged to award it to her, the Queen of Olympus. But how would proud Athena feel about such a choice? And who would be more likely to complain than Aphrodite, who was the goddess of beauty?

Zeus decided to stay out of harm's way. He ordered Hermes to conduct the three goddesses to Mount Ida, near Troy, where the

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THE WRATH OF ACHILLES

It was the Mycenaean who won the Trojan War. But within a century of their victory they were themselves defeated by the Dorians, who spread destruction across all of Greece. A large group of Mycenaean seem to have crossed the Aegean Sea during this period and settled in eastern Asia Minor, and with them came the minstrels who had sung the stories of their wars.

Centuries passed and styles of warfare changed. The hurling of boulders and spears became obsolete, and soldiers wielding swords now attacked in orderly ranks. The Mycenaean weapons had been made of bronze; but the Dorians were formed of iron; the bulky body-shields of the type worn by Ajax were replaced by round shields like Hector's. Burial gave way to cremation. But the minstrels continued to sing poems in which the old ways were described, though with these they combined passages dealing with later practices. Then, around the eighth century B.C., a great poet emerged who drew upon the songs of centuries to produce two poems called the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. His name was Homer.

The *Iliad* describes only the tenth year of the Trojan War, up to the funeral of Hector. And, because of its detailed treatment of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, it bears the subtitle, "The Wrath of Achilles". The voyage of Odysseus, described in the next chapter, is the subject of the *Odyssey*.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are epics—long poems describing the adventures of heroes. The legend of Gilgamesh was the first of the great epics, but in vividness of detail and clarity of organization. Homer's epics far surpassed their Babylonian model. Indeed, they have never been equalled in magnificence. For the young Greek warrior these epics were an education in heroism, for they gave him communion with men who displayed true nobility.

matter would be decided by a beauty contest. The judge was to be Paris, son of King Priam of Troy. Paris was of all men the most handsome — and thus well qualified to judge the beauty of women.

Soon Paris, who was tending the herds on the mountain slopes, saw Hermes approaching with the three beautiful Immortals, and he shrank back in fear and amazement. Then Hermes handed him the apple and the young prince read the inscription.

Hera was the first to step forward. She turned slowly so that Paris could fully appreciate her tall, regal beauty, and addressed him: "Obviously, the apple is meant for me. And for you I intend great power. Choose me, and you shall be ruler of all Asia."

Athena, wearing her helmet of gleaming bronze, was the next to approach Paris. "What power is there", she asked, "but that of the mind? If I am chosen, I will give you supreme wisdom."

And, finally, Aphrodite stood before him. She paused for a moment before speaking, a radiant smile upon her face, and then whispered, "If you give me the apple, I will win for you the loveliest of mortal women."

Aphrodite held out her shapely hand and, dazed by her beauty, Paris dropped the apple into her palm. Hera and Athena glared angrily at them, then strode away. Discord had begun among the gods.

Helen

The most beautiful woman in the world was Helen of Sparta. There was only one difficulty in Aphrodite's plans — Helen was already married.

The selection of a husband for Helen had been a problem, for every prince in Greece had hoped to have the loveliest of women for his wife. Even at the age of twelve she had been extraordinarily beautiful and at that time the great Theseus had tried, without success, to claim her as his bride. When she came of age the danger still remained that her rejected suitors might unite to do violence to the fortunate man chosen to be her husband. Therefore, each of her suitors was required to swear an oath to bring to punishment anyone who tried to steal Helen away from her husband.

Helen could have chosen one of the heroes as her husband: the mighty warrior Diomedes, who was desperately in love with her; the brave but foolhardy Ajax, a giant among men; the cleverest of all men, Odysseus; and the man who was to become the greatest

hero of them all, Achilles. But her decision fell to red-haired Menelaus, who was the richest of her suitors.

Now Aphrodite had the task of making Helen available for Paris. Her first step was to have him come to Sparta, where he was welcomed heartily by Menelaus, the Spartan king, and his lovely wife. But so taken was Helen with the strength and beauty of the Trojan's presence, that she could say almost nothing. Aphrodite now employed all her wiles to assist Paris in winning Helen's heart.

For a time, Paris merely gazed in rapture on her perfect face, but gradually he grew bolder. Lifting her goblet to his lips, he drank from the side that her lips had touched. And then he traced on the table before her very eyes the words "I love you."

Menelaus suspected nothing and, after a few days, he departed on a hunting trip, asking Helen to entertain their guest in his absence. The power of Aphrodite was irresistible. As soon as Menelaus had left, Paris and Helen, deliriously in love, stole away to Troy.

Upon his return, Menelaus was told of his wife's elopement. Enraged, he declared that the Trojan's act was an insult to all Greece and demanded that the severest punishment be exacted. Troy must be attacked!

Those who had been the suitors of Helen were now summoned to fulfill their oaths. Many were reluctant to do so, but eventually a thousand ships were manned, which sailed first to an assembly place at Aulis.

The commander-in-chief of the Greek forces was Agamemnon, the brother of Menelaus, who had married Helen's sister, Clytemnestra. Nobody knew then that Clytemnestra, like her beautiful sister, would some day betray her husband, or that Agamemnon would, in time, suffer even greater misfortune than had Menelaus.

The Youth of Achilles

By the time the Greeks had gathered to sail for Troy, Achilles had already grown to manhood. His teacher, the wise centaur, Chiron, had raised him on a diet of wild honey, the entrails of lions, and the marrow of fawns, a diet that gave the boy such speed that he was able to outrun stags.

His mother, Thetis, had taken great pains with his upbringing. She had even sought to make him immortal. When Achilles was only a baby, she carried him down to Tartarus and, holding him by

one heel, dipped him head first into the River Styx. Wherever he had been touched by those terrible waters, he thereby became immune from harm.

Now, learning that the Greeks were anxious to have her son recruited for their war-force, Thetis dressed him as a girl and sent him to a palace where many young girls lived.

The Greeks delegated the wily Odysseus to seek out Achilles. Disguised as a pedlar, he came one day to the palace and unrolled his pack. As he displayed his goods, the girls gathered around, giving cries of pleasure as each trinket was revealed. One of them, a rather large girl, seemed to take little interest, however, and stood back as the others reached out to claim the rings, bracelets, and jewels that caught their fancy. Then Odysseus drew forth a jewelled sword. The one who had taken no notice now sprang forward, grasped the sword, and swung it in the air. Achilles had been exposed.

The Quarrel

With Achilles added to their ranks, the Greeks set sail for Troy. The prows of a thousand ships sliced across the Aegean, and at length the Greeks landed on the shores of the plain where stood the citadel of Troy.

But their hopes for an early victory were soon dashed, for the Trojans refused to come out and engage in decisive combat with them. And, since the Greeks had no siege weapons, a blockade of the Trojan citadel was the best they could do. The Trojans were not suffering, however. Water was in good supply, and by making quick raids on the enemy's positions they were able to break the blockade and bring in food. It was a stalemate — a stalemate that was to endure for nine long years.

The Greeks replenished their supplies by taking town after town in the vicinity. On one of these raids, Achilles captured a beautiful maiden, Chryseis, whom he presented to Agamemnon as a gift. Chryseis's father came to the Greek camp, pleading for her release, but the commander-in-chief angrily sent him away. But the father of Chryseis was one of Apollo's priests, and the archer-god was not long in answering his servant's plea for vengeance.

Apollo began to rain fiery arrows upon the Greek camp. Day and night, the twang of his silver bow could be heard, and fires burned continually to consume the dead.

Soon, Agamemnon was persuaded to send Chryseis back to her father. What he demanded was almost enough to guarantee defeat for the Greeks. He resolved to take another maiden, Briseis, to replace the girl he had given up.

Briseis belonged to Achilles, however, and when Achilles learned of Agamemnon's intention, he was ready to draw his sword and run him through. Only the intervention of Athena prevented him from doing so. Instead, he snarled at his leader: "Dog-faced, do-hearted drunkard! You will regret this! The time will come when Greeks will fall by the hundreds to man-slaying Hector. Try to stop him then, for I will not!"

And so Achilles withdrew from the warfare. Agamemnon would indeed have reason to regret his move. Achilles, in the sporadic fighting of the first nine years, had proven himself the most valiant of the Greeks. Now there would be no one to match the magnificent Trojan — Hector, son of Priam.

When the soldiers had taken Briseis away, Achilles was plunged into misery. Thetis heard him, and rushed to his side. "Mother," he exclaimed, "you are loved by Zeus. Go to him now, clasp his knees, and implore him to side with the Trojans. Let the Greeks be slaughtered. Let them be flung back to the ships! Then their commander will know what a fool he has been to have offended me."

Paris and Menelaus

Thetis did her son's bidding, and within moments she had arrived at Zeus's side. When she spoke, the great god bowed his immortal head in agreement. After considering how best he might carry out her wishes, he decided to mislead Agamemnon in a dream.

"Call your troops to arms, advance, and take the city of your enemies!" Agamemnon was told. "Troy is yours!"

The next day Agamemnon, inspired by this false promise, led forth his gleaming forces. The Trojans, having learned that the mightiest of the Greeks was sulking in his tent, then streamed out onto the plain as well, ready at last for combat.

It seemed that Zeus's plan would go into operation immediately, but, just as the armies were about to clash, Paris stepped forth from the ranks and challenged any of the Greeks to fight him man to man. Menelaus, the husband of Helen, strode forward.

When Paris saw that his worst enemy had taken up his challenge, he lost heart and jumped back into the ranks. But Hector cast

scornful words in his brother's face, and Paris, fighting back his cowardice, put on his armour. A truce was declared and it was decided that the possession of Helen would be decided by the duel.

On a measured piece of ground, Helen's two lovers took up their positions. Paris was the first to hurl his spear - it failed to pierce Menelaus's stout shield. But Paris was not so lucky, for Menelaus's spear crashed through the Trojan's round shield and tore into the side of his tunic, just grazing the flesh. In a flash, the red-haired Greek seized the horse-hair plume of Paris's helmet, and began to haul his choking victim towards the Greek lines.

Aphrodite had not forgotten Paris and the golden apple, however. She had been looking on, and now, with one deft movement, she severed the chin strap of Paris's helmet. Menelaus fell over backwards, clutching an empty helmet in his hands. Recovering himself quickly, he made another rush at Paris - but his foe had disappeared! Aphrodite had carried her favorite off and deposited him in Helen's perfumed bed-chamber.

Diomedes

Aphrodite was by no means the only Olympian to interfere on the battlefield, for Athena had not forgotten the beauty contest either. The proud goddess was all for having the Greeks slaughter the Trojans, and she chose mighty Diomedes as her great champion.

First, Athena arranged to have the Trojans break the truce, by inspiring one of them to shoot an arrow at Menelaus. The shaft wounded him but slightly, for Athena had deflected it, but Diomedes was not long in exacting revenge - his spear, guided by Athena, killed the villain instantly.

Now the armies finally swept into battle, their glistening helmets like the crests of ocean waves hurtling down upon the beach. And raging everywhere was the wild Diomedes - like a lion among cattle, he slashed at the men of Troy.

Aphrodite was soon forced to make another appearance, for Aeneas, who was her son, was wounded by Diomedes. As Aeneas bestrode the body of a slain friend, protecting it against any seeking to strip it of its armour, Diomedes lifted an enormous rock and sent it crashing down on Aeneas's hip. He fell to his knees and lost consciousness. Diomedes would have finished him off had not Aphrodite descended to shield him with her lovely arms.

Diomedes, however, cared not that a goddess sought to protect

one of his targets. He loosed a spear at her. The point went home, and wounded that exquisite flesh. The blood of the gods flowed, and Aphrodite fled, screaming.

Apollo, he whose priest the Greeks had offended, replaced the love-goddess. But even he could inspire no fear in Diomedes' heart. Four times he threw himself against Apollo's shield, struggling to get at Aeneas. Finally, the archer-god shouted at him in his rage, "Do not think, Diomedes, to be the equal of the gods!" At these words, Diomedes stepped back, and Apollo was able to carry off Aeneas's wounded body.

Next to oppose Diomedes was Ares, the god of war himself. Diomedes was dismayed, but Athena cried out, "Do not fear this madman! Strike him down!" Then she leapt into Diomedes' chariot and drove the horses directly at Ares. Spattered with gore, the war-god let fly a spear, but Athena deflected it out of the way. Then Diomedes sent his spear whistling towards him, which Athena guided straight into his belly. Bellowing as loudly as ten thousand soldiers, Ares flew up to Zeus like a whirlwind.

Hector and Andromache

While Diomedes was thus occupied on the battlefield, striking out at men and gods, great Hector was in Troy hunting for Paris. He found him in Helen's room, inspecting his armour and weapons.

"Why do you sulk here," said Hector, "when men are giving up their lives for your rash deed?"

Helen joined in: "How I wish that I had a better man than this one. He cares not that everyone holds him in contempt."

"Just get him out on the battlefield again," said Hector, "before the Greeks put the torch to our city!"

Hector left the unhappy pair and went to see his wife, Andromache, once more, before returning to the battle. She saw him approach and ran to meet him, followed by a nurse carrying their baby son.

As tears rose to her eyes, Andromache put her hand in his. "Hector," she said, "do not join in the battle today. Stay with me here behind the walls. You know that my father and my seven brothers are all dead, slain by terrible Achilles. I have no mother. You, Hector, are father and mother and brother to me. Do not leave me!"

"I cannot hide myself like a coward," Hector replied. "Always

I have trained myself to fight in the front ranks, to find glory for my father and myself. Andromache, I know that Troy will fall! But far better to die than to hear your cries as they drag you off to captivity."

Hector reached out to embrace his child. But the boy, frightened by the great bronze helmet and the horse-hair crest nodding above it, shrank back to his nurse's breast. His father and mother laughed at the sight. Then Hector removed his glittering helmet; he kissed his son, and tossed him in his arms. "O Zeus," he cried. "Let this boy some day rule Troy! May it be said of him, 'He was greater than his father.'"

He handed the child to his wife. When he saw Andromache smiling through her tears, he caressed her tenderly and said, "You must not be troubled about me. Hades will not claim me before my time. But do not hope to escape the workings of Fate. Go home now while I return to the battlefield."

The Retreat to the Ships

The first day of battle ended, and Zeus had not yet carried out the requests of Thetis. The Greeks had not been pushed back to their ships; instead, it was the Trojans who had been sent reeling. But now Zeus took control and addressed the Olympian gods. "None of you must help either the Trojans or the Greeks!" he boomed. "I have my plans, and no one is to interfere with them!" With that, he dashed off to Mount Ida, which overlooked the Trojan plain.

Zeus surveyed the battlefield, considering how he might conduct the fighting with the greatest amount of bloodshed. He decided to give the Greeks the advantage for a while longer, before throwing them back to the shore. He therefore sent Hector this message: "Agamemnon will be allowed to advance in the morning. But keep an eye on him, for as soon as he is struck by a spear you are to attack."

So the next day, when Agamemnon led his forces onto the battlefield, the Trojans immediately fell back before the Greek assault. The Greeks swept across the field like a wind-driven forest fire, and by noon the Trojans had been forced back half-way across the plain, intent only on finding refuge behind the city walls.

Then it was Hector's turn. Seeing a spear strike Agamemnon's forearm and pass right through it, he shouted: "Attack now, you Trojans! Look! We have hit their leader, and now Zeus will give

us the victory!" Then, like a sudden squall, he fell upon the Greeks.

Within minutes, the Greeks began to give way. But Diomedes was not to be shaken; instead, he raised his spear and flung it at the oncoming Hector. Fortunately for Hector, his helmet was thick! He heard the loud clang as bronze met bronze, and his senses were momentarily dazed.

But Diomedes was not able to press his advantage further. Paris, who had finally reappeared on the battlefield, now drew his bow and sent an arrow into Diomedes' foot. The mighty Greek stumbled painfully to his chariot and drove off to the Greek encampment.

Odysseus was the next to be wounded. A spear tore through his flank, and so serious was the gash that the Trojans would have finished him off promptly had not Menelaus and Ajax come to his aid. As Ajax held up his towering shield for protection, Menelaus led Odysseus to his chariot, and to safety. Like a stubborn donkey tormented by boys, Ajax held his ground for a time; then he too fell back, and the rout was complete.

The retreating Greeks were forced to take refuge behind the wall they had built around their camp and ships, and here an even more furious battle took place. A blizzard of stones hissed over the battlefield in both directions as the Trojans tried to strike down the wall's defenders and the Greeks pelted the bronze-shielded attackers.

It was Hector who finally crashed through the Greek fortifications. He lifted a great rock — which two men living today could scarcely have budged — and heaved it at the gate. Its impact snapped the hinges, and the rock dropped within. Hector followed. Like a great boulder thundering down a hill through clumps of trees, he bounded and smashed through the Greeks until he reached their ships.

Hera's Scheme

Hera looked down from Olympus and saw the Greeks, her favorites, in flight. And on Mount Ida's peak she saw Zeus, happily contemplating the battlefield.

"How can I distract him from his plans?" she pondered. "I shall steal Aphrodite's girdle, for that is the secret of her charms. Then I will present myself to Zeus. When he sees me I will seem so

irresistible that he will take me in his arms. The minute he does, I'll put him to sleep."

And that is exactly what happened. Immediately, the tide of battle turned. Hector, in his headlong rush to the ships, had just sent a spear into Ajax's breast-armor. But now the huge Greek, uninjured, hurled a boulder at Hector, which caught him at the base of the neck. Like a lightning-struck oak, Hector crashed to the ground and night fell on his eyes.

Now the Greeks took heart and hurled a volley of javelins, as Hector's lieutenants hastened to bear their great leader to safety. Ajax, amazingly fast despite his size, led his men forward, and the Trojans began to give way. As spear after spear tore into Trojan flesh, the Greeks took the offensive again.

Hector was brought to a river, and here his men tried to revive him by pouring water over him. He came to, sat up, and vomited blood, but again the blackness covered his eyes. Without their leader, the Trojans were in peril.

On Mount Ida, meanwhile, Zeus was awakening from his slumber. Suddenly, he sprang to his feet and stared at the battlefield. The Trojans were in flight! "Hera!" he bellowed. "Have you forgotten how I strung you from heaven with anvils at your heels?" Then he turned to the battlefield to exert his will. At once, Hector regained consciousness.

The Trojan leader stood up, power flowed back into his limbs, and he quickly set about regrouping his forces. When the Greeks saw this, they cried, "Hector has come back to life! This is the work of Zeus!" It was too much for them. Like a herd of cows stampeded by wild beasts, they turned and fled to their ships.

Ajax at the Ships

The Greeks scrambled up to the sterns of their warships. Here they snatched up the long bronze-tipped poles used in sea-fights and turned to face the surging Trojans. They jabbed and slashed at their attackers, while from deck to deck, like a skilled rider on horseback, Ajax ran to rally the Greeks.

"Have no fear", he roared, "but of dishonour! If you yield, you lose both life and honour!" In his hands was a great pike, thirty-three feet in length, which he swept back and forth, cutting huge swaths from the massed attackers.

But now Hector, like a wave whipped by a raging wind, was

flung against the ships by Zeus. Undaunted by Ajax's resounding shouts, he made for the very ship that the Greek was defending. He clasped its stern, and yelled, "Bring fire! Zeus gives us the victory!"

Ajax was under relentless attack. The arrows clanged against his helmet, his breath came in gasps, the sweat streamed over his aching hands, but still he swung his massive pike. Then Hector ended that. With one swipe of his sword he sheared the pole's bronze point clean off. At this, even Ajax shuddered and drew back. The Trojans threw torches into the ship and immediately it was ablaze.

It was a great triumph for the Trojans - but their last, for Zeus's obligations to Achilles and Thetis had now been fulfilled.

Patroclus

Patroclus, Achilles' closest friend, had been growing anxious about the Trojan onrush. "Agamemnon, Diomedes, Odysseus - three of our bravest warriors - are wounded," he moaned. "And the Greeks have been pushed back to the ships, while we have been sulking in our tents. If you will not fight, Achilles, lend me your armour and chariot, and I will lead our men into the battle. When the Trojans see me coming, they will think it is you and they will fall back."

But it was only when he saw the flames from the burning ships that Achilles became alarmed. "Go, Patroclus!" he cried. "They have set fire to the ships; we must save our means of retreat! Take my armour, while I wake the men."

So Patroclus, clad in Achilles' magnificent bronze and riding in a chariot drawn by the two matchless horses of Achilles, led the troops to battle. At the sight of this fresh battalion, seemingly led by the greatest of Greeks, the Trojans wavered, then turned and fled.

Even Hector could not arrest their retreat, for the apparent arrival of Achilles on the battlefield was enough to kindle panic in Trojan hearts. Across the Greek wall they streamed in headlong flight, hotly pursued by Patroclus, who shouted his war-cry as he hurled spears into their midst.

It was Hector that Patroclus sought. But only when the Trojans had been driven all the way to the gates of Troy did the two come face to face. Then Hector turned and instructed his charioteer to

drive his horses straight at Patroclus. When the bold Greek saw them thundering down upon him, he leapt from his chariot, picked up a jagged stone, and threw it full force at Hector's driver. It shattered the fellow's forehead and he tumbled lifeless to the ground.

At once, several Trojans attempted to draw the man's body out of the way; but into their midst charged Patroclus, shouting fiercely. Three times he rushed in and three times he took a heavy toll. A fourth time he attacked, but with fatal results.

Apollo, hidden in a mist, came up behind Patroclus and, with one stroke of his hand, felled him. His helmet clattered to the ground, his shield fell from his shoulders, and his spear shattered. Patroclus was defenceless. Hector did not miss his chance, and drove his spear through Patroclus's belly.

Patroclus's soul took flight to the house of Hades, and from the corpse Hector stripped the armour of Achilles. He intended to strike off Patroclus's head, but the sudden advance of Ajax altered his plans. Clutching the prized armour, Hector stole from the scene.

Peace with Agamemnon

"Patroclus is dead!" cried the messenger, when he reached Achilles' tent. "Patroclus is dead!"

A black cloud of despair fell on Achilles. Great handfuls of dirt he took, and poured them on his head, and soiled his face. He sank to the ground, and tore at his hair. Such was his misery, as he groaned aloud his grief, that those around him feared that he would take a sword and cut his throat.

Thetis, hearing the outcries of her son, rose from the silver sea cave where she lived, and shortly appeared at his side. "Weep not, my son," she said. "Zeus has fulfilled your wish; through want of you, the Greeks have lost heavily!"

"Patroclus is dead," moaned Achilles. "What is life to me now? It is nothing - unless I kill Hector, who slew him!"

Thetis wept aloud. "Kill Hector," she said, "and you kill yourself! Soon after Hector's death, your own must come!"

"Then, if this be my fate," cried Achilles, "let me die!"

"If that be your intent," Thetis sighed, "I cannot hinder you. But your armour rests in Hector's hands. Tomorrow I will return with a new set of armour, forged by Hephaestus." With that, she left him.

The day, so disastrous to the Greeks, was ending. But before night fell the Trojans received an inkling of their doom, for suddenly, on the Greek wall, they saw a blazing figure, even brighter than the golden sunset. It was Achilles, whom Athena had filled with a godlike glow.

Then to the Trojan's ears came the sound of his voice, raised like a trumpet in a mighty battle cry. The Trojans were terrified. Their horses, scenting disaster, reared up and turned about. A second ringing shout Achilles gave, and a third. Though a bloody fight had been raging over the body of Patroclus, the Greeks now saw all opposition vanish, and they drew it away at last.

As Patroclus's torn body was borne back to the Greek camp, Achilles saw it and wept bitterly. All night the Greeks mourned for Patroclus, but Achilles vowed that his funeral would not be held until Hector had been slain.

On the morrow, the Greeks limped to an assembly, and there Achilles rose to speak. "Agamemnon," he said, "because of that girl, we have been enemies. But who has profited by our feud? Only Hector, and the Trojans! My anger with you is at an end. Now, if you will call us to battle, I will do my utmost."

The Greeks shouted their approval and Agamemnon rose to reply. "I, too, dispel my anger. Curse the day it began! Arm yourself, Achilles, and lead the army to battle."

And what armour Achilles donned! His eyes took fire as he looked upon the marvellous gear that his mother had brought him from Hephaestus's forge. Gnashing his teeth, he clasped the greaves around his legs, the cuirass about his breast, and the silver-hilted sword on his shoulder. Then he lifted up the thick shield, gleaming like the moon, and the golden-plumed helmet. Achilles tested the suppleness of his armour, and it seemed to lift him like wings. Finally, he took up his father's spear - strong, heavy and long.

Like snow-flakes before a driving storm, the Greeks swept onto the battlefield. The Trojans too poured into the plain, until it was filled with horses and men. A great battle was in the offing, but with Achilles again in the Greek ranks there could be no doubt of the issue.

The Fight with Hector

Achilles attacked the Trojans, and his spears went everywhere - into the breasts, the bowels, the brains of the Trojans. He hunted

his victims like a fiend, striking them down until the earth was darkened with their blood. Like oxen trampling barley on the threshing-floor, the horses of Achilles trampled upon dead men and cast-off shields. On drove Achilles, spattering his invincible hands with gore.

High on the walls of Troy, old King Priam saw Achilles impelling the Trojans to retreat. With a cry of alarm he called to the watchmen below: "Hold open the gates until our men have entered, and then shut them fast." Soon, like trembling deer, the Trojans were crowding into the city.

Suddenly, Priam cried aloud. Hector, intent on battle with Achilles, had taken a stand before the gates. "Hector!" he cried. "My son! Do not meet this demon alone! He is stronger than you, and he will destroy you! Come inside the walls and live to be our protector!"

But Hector stood his ground. Like a mountain snake glaring at a man approaching his den, he waited, coiled for the attack. On came Achilles, his bronze armour shining like the sun, his terrible spear poised over the right shoulder. It was too much, even for Hector. He trembled and began to fall back.

But, like a hawk, Achilles was after him. It was a nightmare chase — though they exerted themselves to the breaking point, the distance between them did not change. Around the walls of Troy they ran, three times.

It was only with the assistance of Apollo that Hector had been able to keep ahead of his pursuer, however, and now Apollo deserted him. At the command of Zeus, Hermes took up the golden scales of destiny. In one balance he placed the life of Achilles, in the other that of Hector. Down came the beam, down to Hades — on the side of Hector!

Now Hector came to a halt, and turned to face Achilles. "I will fight now," he said. "If I win, I shall do no outrage to your body and I ask that you do the same."

"No bargains!" said Achilles. "You will pay for your slaughter to the full!" He cast his spear. Hector crouched, and it flew over him; then he too swung his spear up to his shoulder and hurled it. Into the centre of Achilles' shield it smashed — and was deflected away.

Both had thrown their only spears, but Achilles had his again, for Athena had retrieved it. Now Hector drew his sword and swept down on Achilles. He waited, scrutinizing his attacker, and then he flung his spear.

Achilles aimed at one small target. In that armour, he knew, there was but one opening, and the point of his spear found it. It tore into the flesh of Hector's neck.

Down came the mighty Trojan into the dust, and Achilles shouted in triumph. "Fool! When you were stripping Patroclus you thought yourself safe. Now, while we are holding his funeral rites, the dogs and vultures will maul you!"

"I beseech you", whispered Hector, "to take a ransom for my body. My father and mother will pay you abundantly."

"No ransom, be it twenty times your worth," snarled Achilles, "will keep the scavengers from your flesh."

"Think what you are saying," said dying Hector, "lest I bring upon you the wrath of the gods." And his soul left his body and flew down to the house of Hades, bewailing its fate.

"Die!" said Achilles. He pulled the bloody armour from the corpse. The other Greeks gathered round, and were at once struck by the beauty of Hector's body.

But now Achilles performed a hideous deed. Hector's mother, when she saw it, tore her hair and cried aloud, and Priam, moaning piteously, had to be prevented from rushing through the gates at Achilles. Andromache, when she saw this dismal thing, fell back gasping and the world went black before her eyes.

Achilles had slit the tendons of Hector's feet from heel to ankle, and bound them with leather straps to his chariot. Then he had driven across the plain, leaving Hector's head to drag in the dust.

Priam

On a great funeral pyre, the corpse of Patroclus was cremated. But the wrongs done to Hector's body endured. Day after day, Achilles dragged it around Patroclus's tomb. When the gods saw this, they were filled with anger; even Zeus was wrathful. Thus, they inspired King Priam to an act of great courage.

Priam had a cart loaded with the finest treasures of Troy, and set out with it for the Greek camp. Hermes aided him, causing the Greek sentries to drowse, and throwing open the gates. Then Priam entered the tent of Achilles.

Achilles was struck with amazement. The father of Hector knelt before him, clasped his knees, and kissed his hands. "Think, Achilles," said Priam, "of your own father. He is my age, but he still has this hope — that his son will some day return from battle.

I have no such hope. Accept the ransom I have brought, and give me the body of my son. See, Achilles, what I do! I kiss the hands of my son's slayer!"

Achilles was filled with admiration for Priam's courage. Taking the old man's arm, he raised him up gently. Then he fulfilled his request. As the ransom was taken from Priam's wagon, Achilles directed his servants to wash and anoint the body of Hector. Despite the treatment it had received, the flesh was still unmarred, for Apollo had protected it.

So Priam returned with the body of his son. In the light of dawn, the people of Troy saw his approach and they thronged to meet him outside the gate. Wailing a dirge, the procession wound through the streets of Troy. For nine days the mourners, assured of safety by Achilles, went outside the city gates to gather great quantities of wood for the funeral pyre. On the tenth it was set ablaze, and the body of Hector was consumed.

The Death of Achilles

The battle of Troy continued. From the north came Amazons to reinforce the hard-pressed Trojans. But, when Achilles slew their queen, their fighting spirit evaporated. Then Ethiopians arrived from the south. Achilles triumphed over their leader also, and the enemy turned in retreat. As Achilles led the exultant Greeks onwards, he boasted that even the gods of Olympus were powerless against his onrushes.

It was just at this moment that the gods struck him down. Apollo appeared to Paris, who was shooting random arrows into the attacking Greeks. "Why waste your shafts on ordinary warriors?" he said. "Direct your aim at Achilles, and gain vengeance for the death of Hector!" Paris shot, and Apollo guided the arrow into Achilles' heel.

Achilles crumbled to the ground, for the wound was fatal. Despite his mother's precautions, Achilles had not been made immortal. Where the water of the River Styx had touched him, he was indeed invulnerable. But there was one place against which the waters had not washed, for Thetis had held the infant by the heel.

When the Trojans and their allies saw the fall of Achilles, they swept back into battle, intent on making off with the corpse. But they were not to succeed. Odysseus, like a lioness defending her cubs against marauding hunters, fended off their attacks, while Ajax strode away with Achilles' body upon his shoulder.

So yet another funeral pyre was erected, and on its summit were placed the remains of the greatest of heroes. The torch was applied and the fire roared through the logs. And, when the flames had died, only a handful of ashes remained.

