

when the army was drawn up in battle array, Hector, the eldest son of Priam, and therefore leader of his army, stepping forward, proposed that the prolonged quarrel should be definitely settled by a single combat between Paris and Menelaus.

Agamemnon
misled.

“Hector then stood forth and said:
‘Hearken, ye Trojans and ye nobly-armed
Achaïans, to what Paris says by me.
He bids the Trojans and the Greeks lay down
Their shining arms upon the teeming earth,
And he and Menelaus, loved of Mars,
Will strive in single combat, on the ground
Between the hosts, for Helen and her wealth;
And he who shall o’ercome, and prove himself
The better warrior, to his home shall bear
The treasure and the woman, while the rest
Shall frame a solemn covenant of peace.’”

HOMER (Bryant’s tr.).

This proposal having been received favorably, Menelaus and Paris soon engaged in a duel, which was witnessed by both armies, by Helen and Priam from the Trojan walls, and by the everlasting gods from the wooded heights of Mount Ida; but in the very midst of the fight, Venus, seeing her favorite about to succumb, suddenly snatched him away from the battlefield, and bore him unseen to his chamber, where he was joined by Helen, who bitterly reproached him for his cowardly flight.

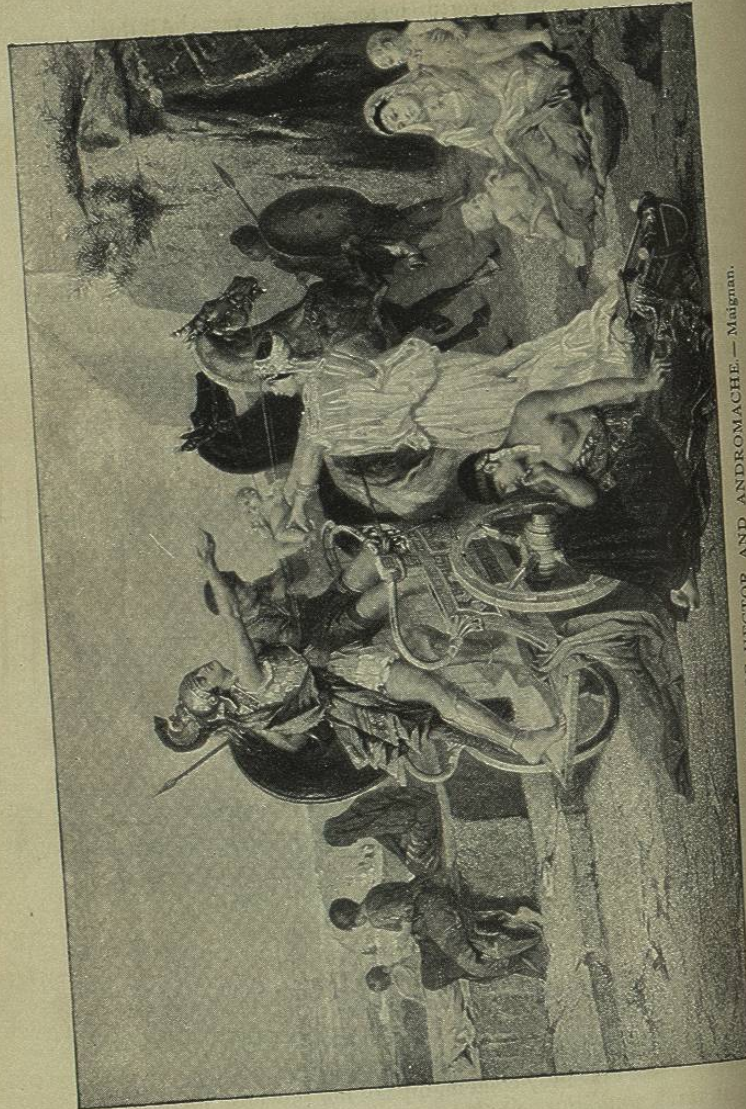
Indignant at this interference on Venus’ part, the gods decreed that the war should be renewed; and Minerva, assuming the form of a Trojan warrior, aimed an arrow at Menelaus, who was vainly seeking his vanished opponent. This act of treachery was the signal for a general call to arms and a renewal of hostilities. Countless deeds of valor were now performed by the heroes on both sides, and also by the gods, who mingled in the ranks and even fought against each other, until recalled by Jupiter, and forbidden to fight any more.

For a little while fortune seemed to favor the Greeks; and Hector, hastening back to Troy, bade his mother go to the temple with all her women, and endeavor by her prayers and gifts to propitiate Minerva and obtain her aid. Then he hastened off in search of his wife Andromache and little son Astyanax, whom he wished to embrace once more before rushing out to battle and possible death.

He found his palace deserted, and, upon questioning the women, heard that his wife had gone to the Scaean Gate, where he now drove as fast as his noble steeds could drag him. There, at the gate, took place the parting scene, which has deservedly been called the most pathetic in all the Iliad, in which Andromache vainly tried to detain her husband within the walls, while Hector gently reproved her, and demonstrated that his duty called him out upon the field of battle, where he must hold his own if he would not see the city taken, the Trojans slain, and the women, including his mother and beloved Andromache, borne away into bitter captivity.

“Andromache
Pressed to his side meanwhile, and, all in tears,
Clung to his hand, and, thus beginning, said:—
‘Too brave! thy valor yet will cause thy death.
Thou hast no pity on thy tender child,
Nor me, unhappy one, who soon must be
Thy widow. All the Greeks will rush on thee
To take thy life. A happier lot were mine,
If I must lose thee, to go down to earth,
For I shall have no hope when thou art gone,—
Nothing but sorrow. Father have I none,
And no dear mother.

Hector, thou
Art father and dear mother now to me,
And brother and my youthful spouse besides.
In pity keep within the fortress here,
Nor make thy child an orphan nor thy wife
A widow.’



PARTING OF HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE. — Mûller.

Then answered Hector, great in war: 'All this I bear in mind, dear wife; but I should stand Ashamed before the men and long-robed dames Of Troy, were I to keep aloof and shun The conflict, coward-like.' "

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Then he stretched out his arms for his infant son, who, however, shrank back affrighted at the sight of his brilliant helmet and nodding plumes, and would not go to him until he had set the gleaming headdress aside. After a passionate prayer for his little heir's future welfare, Hector gave the child back to Andromache, and, with a last farewell embrace, sprang into his chariot and drove away.

"Sorrow not thus, beloved one, for me. No living man can send me to the shades Before my time; no man of woman born, Coward or brave, can shun his destiny. But go thou home, and tend thy labors there, — The web, the distaff, — and command thy maids To speed the work. The cares of war pertain To all men born in Troy, and most to me.' "

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Paris, ashamed now of his former flight, soon joined his brother upon the battlefield, and together they performed many deeds of valor. The time had now come when Jupiter Greeks repelled. was about to redeem the promise given to Thetis, for little by little the Greeks were forced to yield before the might of the Trojans, who, stimulated by their partial success, and fired by Hector's example, performed miracles of valor, and finally drove their assailants into their intrenchments.

Death and defeat now dogged the very footsteps of the Greek forces, who were driven, inch by inch, away from the walls, ever nearer the place where their vessels rode at anchor. They now ardently longed for the assistance of Achilles, whose mere presence, in days gone by, had filled the Trojan hearts with terror;

but the hero, although Briseis had been returned unmolested, paid no heed to their entreaties for aid, and remained a sullen and indifferent spectator of their flight, while the Trojans began to set fire to some of the vessels of their fleet.

“The goddess-born Achilles, swift of foot,
Beside his ships still brooded o'er his wrath,
Nor came to counsel with the illustrious chiefs,
Nor to the war, but suffered idleness
To eat his heart away; for well he loved
Clamor and combat.”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Discouraged by all these reverses, in spite of their brave resistance, the Greeks, in despair, concluded that the gods had entirely forsaken them, and beat a hasty and ignominious retreat to the shore, closely followed by the enemy, who uttered loud cries of triumph.

Patroclus, Achilles' intimate friend, then hastened to the hero's side to inform him of his comrades' flight, and implore him once more to rescue them from inevitable death. But Patroclus dons Achilles' armor. Achilles, summoning all his pride to his assistance, did not waver in his resolve. Suddenly Patroclus remembered that the mere sight of Achilles' armor might suffice to arrest the enemy's advance and produce a diversion in favor of the Greeks: so he asked permission to wear it and lead the Myrmidons, Achilles' trusty followers, into the fray.

“Send me at least into the war,
And let me lead thy Myrmidons, that thus
The Greeks may have some gleam of hope. And give
The armor from thy shoulders. I will wear
Thy mail, and then the Trojans, at the sight,
May think I am Achilles, and may pause
From fighting, and the warlike sons of Greece,
Tired as they are, may breathe once more, and gain
A respite from the conflict.”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Achilles had sworn, it is true, not to return to the scene of strife, but was quite willing to lend men and arms, if they might be of any use, and immediately placed them at his friend's disposal. Hastily Patroclus donned the glittering armor, called aloud to the Myrmidons to follow his lead, and rushed forth to encounter the enemy.

The Trojans paused in dismay, thinking Achilles had come, and were about to take flight, when all at once they discovered the fraud. With renewed courage, they opposed the Greek onslaught. Many heroes bit the dust in Death of Patroclus. this encounter, among others Sarpedon, the son of Jupiter and Europa (p. 45),— whose remains were borne away from the battlefield by the twin divinities Sleep and Death,— ere Hector, son of Priam, and chief among the Trojan warriors, challenged Patroclus to single combat. Needless to say, the two closed in deadly battle, and fought with equal valor, until Patroclus, already exhausted by his previous efforts, and betrayed by the gods, finally succumbed.

“The hero fell
With clashing mail, and all the Greeks beheld
His fall with grief.”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

With a loud cry of victory, Hector wrenched the armor off the mangled corpse, and quickly withdrew to array himself in the brilliant spoils. The tidings of Patroclus' fall spread rapidly all through the Grecian camp, and reached Achilles, who wept aloud when he heard that his beloved friend, who had left him but a short time before full of life and energy, was now no more. So noisily did the hero mourn his loss, that Thetis, in the quiet ocean depths, heard his groans, and rushed to his side to ascertain their cause.

Into his mother's sympathetic ear Achilles poured the whole story of his grief and loss, while she gently strove Achilles' grief. to turn his thoughts aside from the sad event, and arouse an interest for some pursuit less dangerous than

war. All her efforts were vain, however; for Achilles' soul thirsted for revenge, and he repeatedly swore he would go forth and slay his friend's murderer.

"No wish
Have I to live, or to concern myself
In men's affairs, save this: that Hector first,
Pierced by my spear, shall yield his life, and pay
The debt of vengeance for Patroclus slain."

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

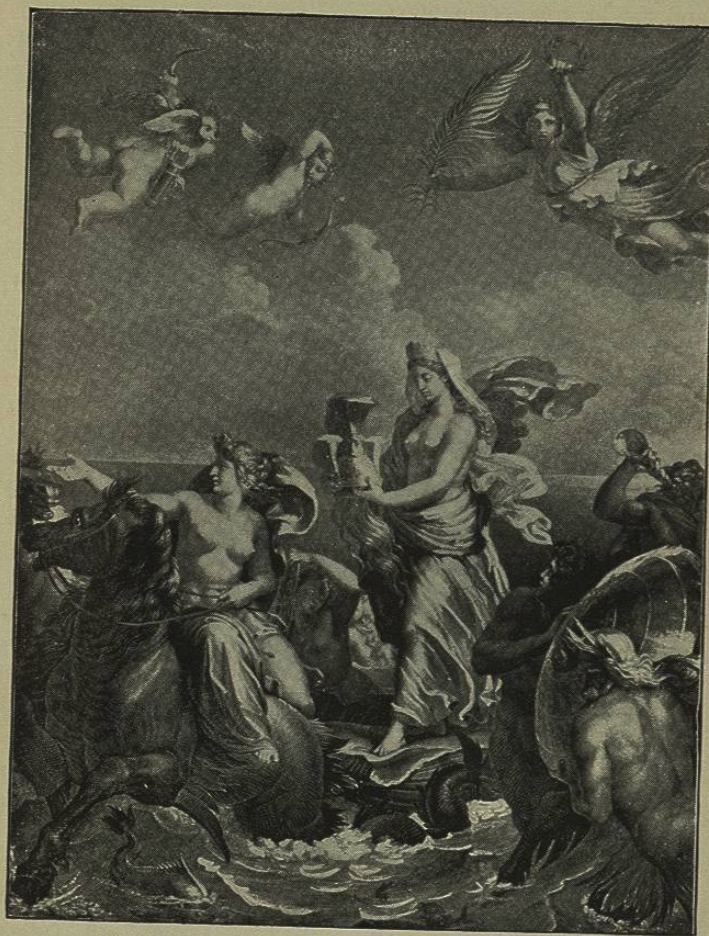
Then, in sudden dread lest Hector should fall by another's hand, or withdraw from the battlefield and thus escape his vengeance, Achilles would have rushed from his tent unarmed; but his mother prevailed upon him to wait until the morrow, when she promised to bring him a full suit of armor from Vulcan's own hand. Rapidly Thetis then traversed the wide space which separates the coast of Asia Minor from Mount Ætna, where Vulcan labored at his forge.

"She found him there
Sweating and toiling, and with busy hand
Plying the bellows."

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Arrived before him, she breathlessly made known her errand, and the god promised that the arms should be ready within the given time, and immediately set to work to fashion them. By his skillful hands the marvelous weapons were forged; and when the first streak of light appeared above the horizon, he consigned them to Thetis, who hastened back to her son's tent, where she found him still bewailing the loss of Patroclus.

During Thetis' absence, messengers had come to Achilles' tent to warn him that Patroclus' body was still in the enemy's hands, and to implore him to come and rescue the precious corpse. Mindful of his promise to his mother, Achilles still refused to fight, but, springing upon the rampart, uttered his mighty war-cry, the sound of which filled the enemy's hearts with terror, and made



THETIS BEARING THE ARMOR OF ACHILLES.—Gérard. (327)

them yield to the well-directed onslaught of Ajax and Diomedes, who finally succeeded in recovering the body, which they then reverently bore to Achilles' tent.

To console Achilles for his friend's death, Thetis exhibited the glorious armor she had just obtained, helped him put it on, and then bade him go forth and conquer.

“Leave we the dead, my son, since it hath pleased
The gods that he should fall; and now receive
This sumptuous armor, forged by Vulcan's hand,
Beautiful, such as no man ever wore.”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Thus armed, mounted in his chariot drawn by his favorite steeds, and driven by his faithful charioteer Automedon, Achilles went forth to battle, and finally seeing Hector, whom alone he wished to meet, he rushed upon him with a hoarse cry of rage. The Trojan hero, at the mere sight of the deadly hatred which shone in Achilles' eyes, turned to flee. Achilles pursued him, and taunted him with his cowardice, until Hector turned and fought with all the courage and recklessness of despair.

Their blows fell like hail, a cloud of dust enveloped their struggling forms, and the anxious witnesses only heard the dull thud of the blows and the metallic clash of the weapons. Suddenly there came a loud cry, then all was still; and when the dust-cloud had blown away, the Trojans from the ramparts, where they had waited in agony for the issue of the fight, beheld Achilles tear the armor from their champion's body, bind the corpse to his chariot, and drive nine times round the city walls, Hector's princely head dragging in the dust. Priam, Hecuba, and Andromache, Hector's beautiful young wife, tearfully watched this ignominious treatment, and finally saw Achilles drive off to the spot where Patroclus' funeral pile was laid, and there abandon the corpse.

Achilles then returned to his tent, where for a long time he

continued to mourn his friend's untimely end, refusing to be comforted.

The gods, from their celestial abode, had also witnessed this heartrending scene, and now Jupiter sent Iris to Thetis, and bade her hasten down to Achilles and command him to restore Hector's body to his mourning family. He also directed Mercury to lead Priam, unseen, into Achilles' tent, to claim and bear away his son's desecrated corpse. Thetis, seeking Achilles in his tent, announced the will of Jove:—

“I am come
A messenger from Jove, who bids me say
The immortals are offended, and himself
The most, that thou shouldst in thy spite detain
The corse of Hector at the beaked ships,
Refusing its release. Comply thou, then,
And take the ransom and restore the dead.”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Mercury acquitted himself with his usual dispatch, and soon guided Priam in safety through the Grecian camp to Achilles' tent, where the aged king fell at the hero's feet, humbly pleading for his son's body, and proffering a princely ransom in exchange.

Achilles, no longer able to refuse this entreaty, and touched by a father's tears, consigned Hector's corpse to the old man's care, and promised an armistice of fourteen days, that the funeral rites in both camps might be celebrated with all due pomp and solemnity; and with the burial of Hector the Iliad comes to a close.

At the end of the truce the hostilities were renewed, and the Trojans were reinforced by the arrival of Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, who, with a chosen troop of warrior maidens, came to offer her aid. The brave queen afforded them, however, only temporary relief, as she was slain by Achilles in their very first encounter.

He, too, however, was doomed to die “in the flower of his youth and beauty,” and the Fates had almost finished spinning

his thread of life. In an early skirmish, while in close pursuit of the Trojans, Thetis' son had once caught sight of Polyxena, daughter of Priam, and had been deeply smitten by her girlish charms. He now vainly tried to make peace between the conflicting nations, hoping that, were the war but ended, he might obtain her hand in marriage.

His efforts to make peace failed; but at last he prevailed upon Priam to celebrate his betrothal with Polyxena, with the stipulation that the marriage would take place as soon as the war was over. The betrothal ceremony was held without the city gates; and Achilles was just about to part from his blushing betrothed, when Paris, ever treacherous, stole behind him and shot a poisoned arrow into his vulnerable heel, thus slaying the hero who had caused so many brave warriors to bite the dust.

“Thus great Achilles, who had shown his zeal
In healing wounds, died of a wounded heel.”

O. W. HOLMES.

His armor — the glorious armor forged by Vulcan — was hotly contested for by Ulysses and Ajax. The former finally obtained the coveted weapons; and Ajax' grief at their loss was so intense, that he became insane, and killed himself in a fit of frenzy, while Polyxena, inconsolable at her betrothed's death, committed suicide on the magnificent tomb erected over his remains on the Trojan plain.

The oracles, silent so long, now announced that Troy could never be taken without the poisoned arrows of Hercules, then in the keeping of Philoctetes (p. 238). This hero had started with the expedition, but had been put ashore on the Island of Lemnos on account of a wound in his foot, which had become so offensive that none of the ship's company could endure his presence on board.

Ten long years had already elapsed since then, and, although a party of Greeks immediately set out in search of him, they had

but little hope of finding him alive. They nevertheless wended their way to the cave where they had deposited him, where, to their unbounded surprise, they still found him. The wound had not healed, but he had managed to exist by killing such game as came within reach of his hand.

“Exposed to the inclement skies,
Deserted and forlorn he lies;
No friend or fellow-mourner there,
To soothe his sorrows, and divide his care;
Or seek the healing plant, of power to 'suage
His aching wound, and mitigate its rage.”

SOPHOCLES (Franklin's tr.).

Incensed by the Greeks' former cruel desertion, no entreaty could now induce Philoctetes to accompany the messengers to Troy, until Hercules appeared to him in a dream, and bade him go without delay, for there he would find Machaon (p. 64), Æsculapius' son, who was to heal his wound.

The dream was realized. Philoctetes, whole once more, joined the Greek host, and caused great dismay in the enemy's ranks with his poisoned arrows. One of his deadly missiles even struck Paris, and, as the poison entered his veins, it caused him grievous suffering. Paris then remembered that his first love, CEnone, who knew all remedies and the best modes of applying them, had once told him to send for her should he ever be wounded. He therefore sent for CEnone; but she, justly offended by the base desertion and long neglect of her lover, refused her aid, and let him die in torture. When he was dead, CEnone repented of this decision; and when the flames of his funeral pyre rose around him, she rushed into their midst, and was burned to death on his corpse.

“But when she gain'd the broader vale and saw
The ring of faces reddened by the flames
Infolding that dark body which had lain
Of old in her embrace, paused — and then ask'd
Falteringly, ‘Who lies on yonder pyre?’

But every man was mute for reverence.
Then moving quickly forward till the heat
Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice
Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon the pyre?'
Whereon their oldest and their boldest said,
'He, whom thou would'st not heal!' and all at once
The morning light of happy marriage broke,
Thro' all the clouded years of widowhood,
And muffling up her comely head, and crying
'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral pile,
And mixt herself with *him* and past in fire."

TENNYSON.

Two of Priam's sons had already expired, and yet Troy had not fallen into the hands of the Greeks, who now heard another prophecy, to the effect that Troy could never be taken as long as the Palladium — a sacred statue of Minerva, said to have fallen from heaven — remained within its walls (p. 60). So Ulysses and Diomedes in disguise effected an entrance into the city one night, and after many difficulties succeeded in escaping with the precious image.

Men and chiefs, impatient of further delay, now joyfully hailed Ulysses' proposal to take the city by stratagem. They therefore secretly built a colossal wooden horse, within whose hollow sides a number of brave warriors might lie concealed. The main army feigned weariness of the endless enterprise, and embarked, leaving the horse as a pretended offering to Neptune; while Sinon, a shrewd slave, remained to persuade the Trojans to drag the horse within their gates and keep him there, a lasting monument of their hard-won triumph.

To the unbounded joy of the long-besieged Trojans, the Greek fleet then sailed away, until the Island of Tenedos hid the ships from view. All the inhabitants of Troy poured out of the city to view the wooden horse, and question Sinon, who pretended to have great cause of complaint against the Greeks, and strongly advised them to secure their last offering to Neptune.

The Trojans hailed this idea with rapture; but Laocoon, Neptune's priest, implored them to leave the horse alone, lest they should bring untold evil upon their heads.

"'Wretched countrymen,' he cries,
'What monstrous madness blinds your eyes?'"

Perchance — who knows? — these planks of deal
A Grecian ambuscade conceal,
Or 'tis a pile to o'erlook the town,
And pour from high invaders down,
Or fraud lurks somewhere to destroy:
Mistrust, mistrust it, men of Troy!"

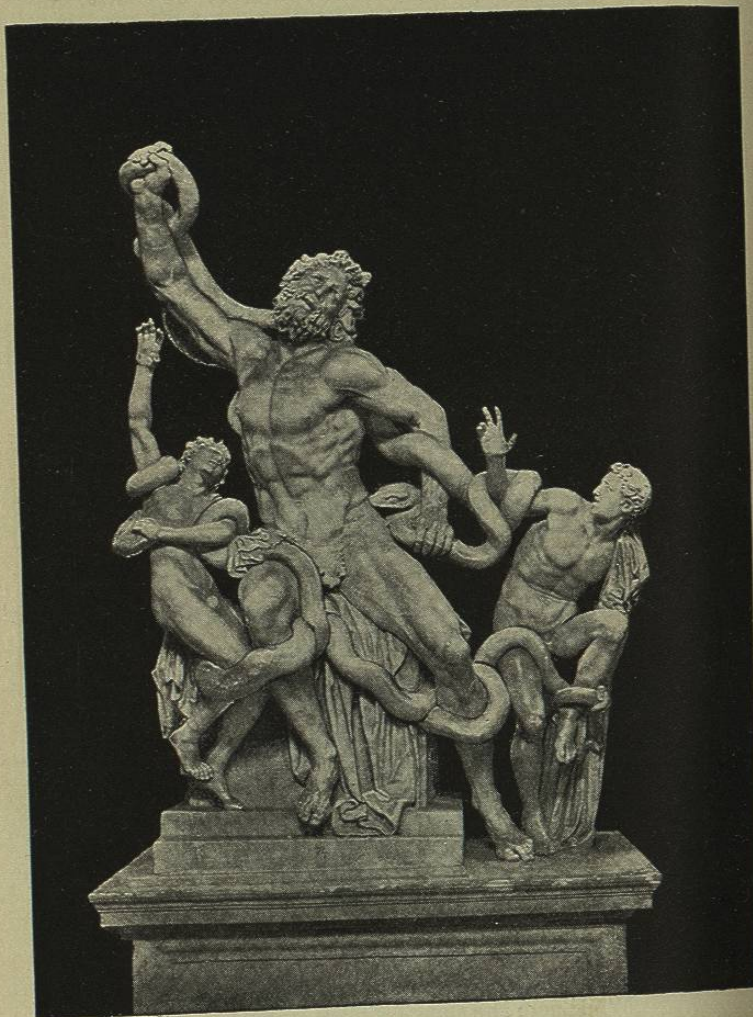
VIRGIL (Conington's tr.).

Deaf to all warnings and entreaties, they dragged the colossal image into the very heart of their city, tearing down a portion of their ramparts to allow its passage, while Laocoon hastened down to the shore to offer sacrifice to the gods. As he stood there by the improvised altar, with one of his sons on either side to assist him in his office, two huge serpents came out of the sea, coiled themselves around him and his sons, and crushed and bit them to death.

Death of
Laocoon.

"Unswerving they
Toward Laocoon hold their way;
First round his two young sons they wreathe,
And grind their limbs with savage teeth:
Then, as with arms he comes to aid,
The wretched father they invade
And twine in giant folds: twice round
His stalwart waist their spires are wound,
Twice round his neck, while over all
Their heads and crests tower high and tall.
He strains his strength their knots to tear,
While gore and slime his fillets smear,
And to the unregardful skies
Sends up his agonizing cries."

VIRGIL (Conington's tr.).



(334)

LAOCOON.
(Vatican, Rome.)

The awestruck witnesses of this terrible scene, of course, declared that the gods resented his interference concerning the wooden horse, and had justly punished the sacrilegious hand which had dared strike it with a spear, merely to demonstrate, that, being hollow, it might contain an armed band. Ever since then, Laocöon and his sons' struggle with the serpents has been a favorite subject for poets and artists.

In the mean while, the Greeks had been hiding behind Tenedos; but when night came on, they returned to the site of their ten-years' encampment, and were let into the city by Sinon, who also released their companions from their prison within the wooden horse. Although taken by surprise, the city guards made desperate attempts to repel the Greeks; but it was now too late, for the enemy had already broken into houses and palaces, and were killing, pillaging, and burning all in their way.

Fall of Troy.

“The melancholy years,
The miserable melancholy years,
Crept onward till the midnight terror came,
And by the glare of burning streets I saw
Palace and temple reel in ruin and fall,
And the long-baffled legions, bursting in
Through gate and bastion, blunted sword and spear
With unresisted slaughter.”

LEWIS MORRIS.

The royal family, even, was not exempt from the general massacre; and the aged Priam, who lived to see his last son perish before his eyes, finally found relief in death.

Their object accomplished, the Greeks immediately sailed for home, their vessels heavily laden with plunder and slaves. But the homeward journey was not as joyful as might have been expected; and many, after escaping from the enemy's hands, perished in the waves, or found death lying in wait for them by their own fireside.

Return of the Greeks.

Menelaus, with his wife Helen, who, in spite of the added ten

years, retained all her youthful beauty, were detained in Egypt by contrary winds, sent to punish them for omitting the usual sacrifice to the gods. He at last consulted Proteus, who revealed how the wrath of the gods could best be allayed, and how favorable winds could be secured to waft him home.

As for Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks, he returned to Argos only to be murdered by his wife Clytæmnestra and her paramour Ægisthus.

“ ‘ Ægisthus, bent upon my death,
Plotted against me with my guilty wife,
And bade me to his house, and slew me there,
Even at the banquet.’ ”

HOMER (Bryant's tr.).

Then, mortally afraid lest Orestes, Agamemnon's son, should avenge his father's death, Ægisthus prepared to slay him too; but Electra, the boy's sister, discovering this intention, helped him to escape, and placed him under the fatherly protection of Strophius, King of Phocis, whose son, Pylades, became his inseparable friend. In fact, their devotion to each other was so great, that it has become proverbial in every tongue.

Electra had not forgotten her father's base murder, although years had elapsed since it occurred; and when Orestes had attained manhood, she bade him come and punish those who had committed the crime. Orestes came, slew Ægisthus and Clytæmnestra, and then, terrified at what he had done, took flight, but only to be pursued by the Furies and Nemesis, goddess of revenge, sent by the gods to punish him for taking justice into his own hands.

Arrived at Delphi, Orestes consulted the oracle, and learned that his crime would be forgiven if he brought a statue of Diana in Tauris back to Greece. The young prince hastened thither, accompanied by the ever-faithful Pylades, who never left his side; and there, in a temple, he found his long-lost sister Iphigenia, who helped him obtain the image he sought, and accompanied him back to his native land, where Nemesis left him forever.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ADVENTURES OF ULYSSES.

THE Greek chiefs, on their return from Troy, were, as we have seen, all more or less visited by the wrath of the gods; but none of them endured as many hardships as Ulysses (Odysseus), King of Ithaca, the hero of Homer's world-renowned epic the *Odyssey*. During ten long years he roamed the seas, driven away from his native land by adverse winds, sailing about from place to place, losing his ships and companions, until at last the gods allowed him to return home. His marvelous adventures and numerous mishaps during these ten years form the theme of the *Odyssey*, which is about as follows.

After leaving Troy in ruins, Ulysses embarked with his men and spoils, and, favored by a good wind, soon came within sight of Ismarus, the home of the worthy and wealthy Ciconians. To increase the riches he was carrying home, he proposed to his army to land and storm the city, — a proposal which was enthusiastically received and immediately carried out.

Siege of
Ismarus.

But when the men collected near the fleet, instead of embarking as Ulysses urged them to do, they began to drink the rich wine, to roast oxen whole, and to indulge in games and revelry. While they were thus employed and entirely off their guard, the neighbors and allies of the Ciconians came upon them unawares, and put many to death.

The Greeks, although taken by surprise, fought bravely; but it was only when the sun was fast sinking, that they finally embarked, and left the fatal Ciconian shores.