







PUTTING TROY IN A SACK

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PUTTING TROY IN A SACK

A CANDID AND CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT
OF THE EVENTS OF THE TROJAN WAR
IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN DISCOVERY

BY
artland
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PUBLISHED BY
THE EX-STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION
OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
AUSTIN, TEXAS
1916

PS 3523
A613P8

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31
\$5.00
VAIL-BALLOU COMPANY
BINGHAMTON AND NEW YORK

DEC 19 1916

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THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED
TO
DOCTORS WILLIAM J. BATTLE and EDWIN W. FAY,
PROFESSORS OF GREEK AND LATIN, RESPECTIVELY,
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

PREFACE

If ever the King of France rode up or down a hill in view of loyal and admiring subjects, the discriminating onlooker gazed less intently upon the graceful curves of His Majesty's coach than upon the royal form of the King himself. The mere statement of this axiomatic truth should silence at the outset any captious critic who may be disposed to search for flaws in the limping lines of my epic. It is not as a poet I crave favor. There is little likelihood the lines themselves will ever get far on the road to fame, though they proceed in the main with the requisite number of feet. The verses are merely the vehicle selected to bring to notice the profundity of my research and scholarship. You may regard them lightly, good reader, but bear in mind the more important matter that within them reposes my kingly mentality. With this explanation, I indulge the hope that you may retain your proverbial gentleness even when scanning the concluding episode of the wild horse.

If you will take the trouble in your study of this history to investigate as collateral reading the works of Messrs. Homer and Virgil, you will observe at once that I have included in my account many details omitted by my predecessors. My spirit of literary

generosity impels me to state that they, too, perhaps, knew of them, and that they purposely left them out of their writings in the fear that such startling revelations would be received in their day with popular unbelief. I feel confident they went quite as far in their disclosures as the civilization of their period warranted, but I have equal assurance they cherished the fond hope that in the fulness of time some well-informed author would manifest sufficient boldness to bring to light their pardonable sins of omission. In consideration of the years of research I have devoted to this undertaking, I think it no shocking presumption to give to the world each important hiatus in their portrayals.

The Author.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In amplification of the simple words of dedication, I desire to make grateful acknowledgment to Dr. William J. Battle and Dr. Edwin W. Fay for valuable aid rendered in the preparation of this work. Even a cursory reading of any part of it will convince the most skeptical that assistance was forthcoming from some source. I am anxious, therefore, that Dr. Battle and Dr. Fay be given their meed of recognition.

It is true the doctors have not always agreed in the interpretation of some of the passages, but it must be remembered that one of them regards the matter from the Grecian point of view and the other from the Roman. However, in a desire to see justice done and the facts set forth, they have maintained throughout the struggle a becoming neutrality in spite of their predilections. Their chief concern has been for an accurate portrayal in English of all the beauty of the original texts. They have been equally fulsome in their praise of my presentation in general, but at times have entertained differences of opinion as to the use of certain words and expressions. For instance, in the installment which depicts "The Slowness of the Fleet," you will note that Ajax opens the canto with the idiom "Gee whiz!" One

of the learned doctors insisted at this point that the more accurate translation was "Golly!" Furthermore, it must be conceded there was merit in his contention and, likely, I should have employed the term but for the fact that it did not fit in metrically with the versification of that chapter.

One of the most cogent criticisms offered by the distinguished gentlemen was that in places I had followed the original texts even too closely. For example, in the installment entitled "A New Departure," the manuscript as first prepared by me included this passage:

The scion of Thetis inspected his face,
Inscribing his name in a suitable place,
And gave a prescription that fitted his case.

Dr. Fay was eager for a freer translation and, yielding to his judgment, I have made these lines to appear in the final version thus:

The brave son of Thetis examined his frame,
And then took his picture and, also, his name,
And gave him some dope and a bill for the same.

The reader will readily detect the touch of dignity that is added to the passage by comparison of it as originally written and as improved under the friendly criticism and kindly suggestions of Dr. Fay.

One part of the same canto was made vastly better, also, by the careful editing of Dr. Battle. My version showed this line:

Then Calchas, a venerable sage and soothsayer.

Dr. Battle insisted upon an alliterative and less ver-

bose expression and, through his cautious guidance, the line was changed to read in this manner:

Then Calchas, a crabbed old cuss with the colic.

I confess that the picture of Calchas thus presented is much more vivid.

The doctors have been hampered somewhat in their participation in the undertaking by frequent interruptions from subordinate teachers in the schools of Latin and Greek who have offered suggestions constantly in the vain hope that the adoption of some of them might enable these inferiors to share in the fame of the composition. Had the doctors been able to give their undivided attention to the matter, the final phraseology might have been even better, if possible. At all times, however, I have had access to the findings of Dr. Battle's geographical research of the region covered and to the enlightenment of the whole of Dr. Fay's excavations. I have found their data quite correct.

These eminent co-workers have commended me for amplifying the original texts at critical points and presenting the history with the emendations of modern discovery. Many of the details of the fray have thus been made public for the first time, and the revelations of new sources, not readily accessible to the average reader, have been brought to light. Likely a graduate degree would have been awarded me for this masterpiece but for the fact that Dr. Battle and Dr. Fay each contended I had majored in his particular school and each desired the honor of

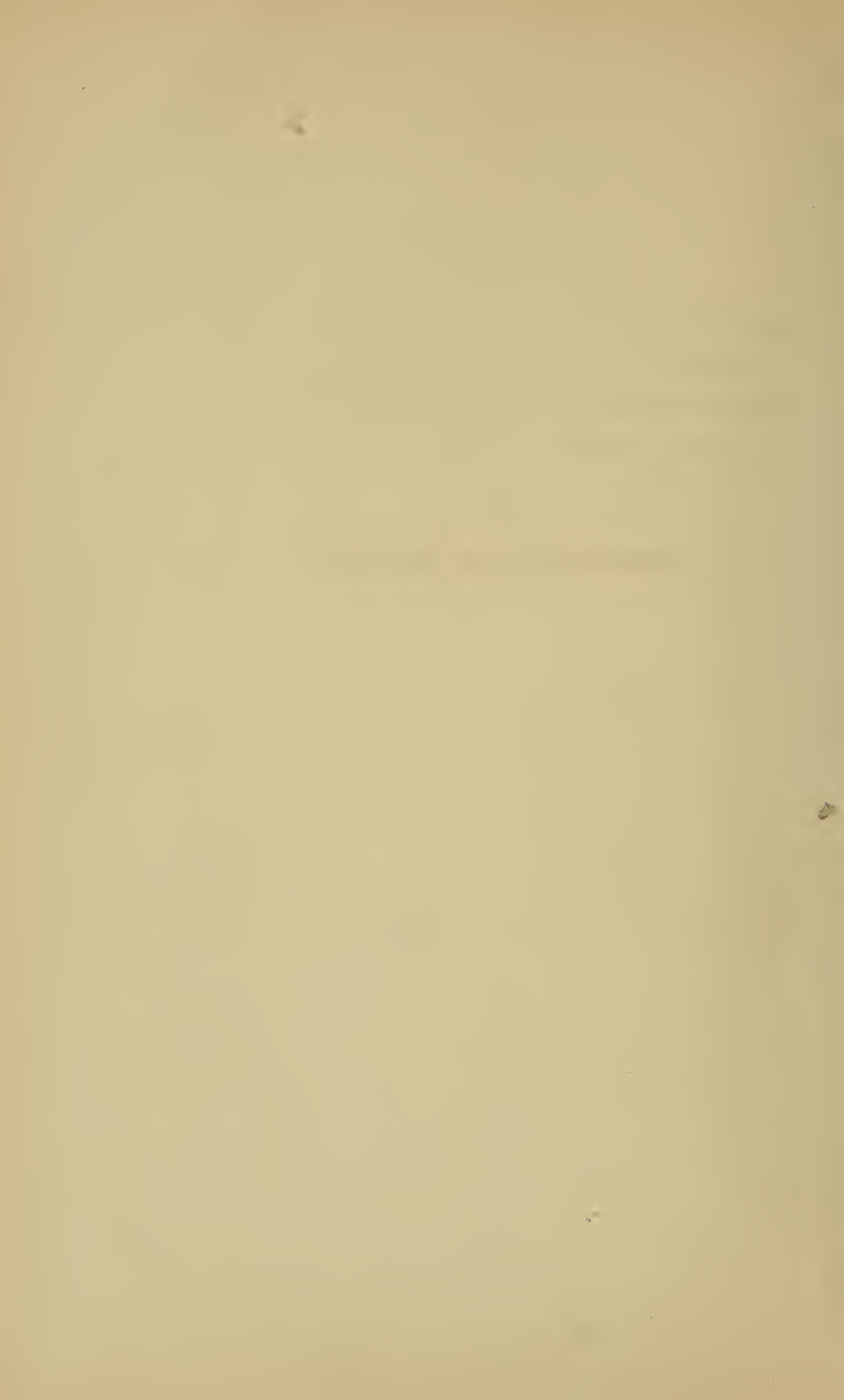
conferring it. In a spirit of laudable self-sacrifice, I magnanimously decided to forego the distinction in order that no unpleasantness might arise between two of my friends who have given me so many helpful hints. A feeling of gratitude has prompted me to dedicate the book to them. I consider the work a tribute to their genius and, after pondering the matter a long, long time, am willing for the world at large to know that they are the Bacon back of the lines.

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I

INTRODUCTORY APOLOGY

I

INTRODUCTORY APOLOGY

WHEN I was a slight little strip of a boy,
Not over-abundant in avoirdupois,
I learned the remarkable story of Troy,—
A tale of much weight and of vim beyond measure,
But not the Troy weight of the jeweler's treasure,
For this is a story of war and it calls
For no sort of scales but the scaling of walls.
The story is told of a far distant time,
With the scene of the fighting a far distant clime,
When Grecians and Trojans were both in their prime
And, vying in battles and dire bloody work,
Surpassed in their carnage the terrible Turk.
The tale is of days when the knights died for glory
And fairly exulted in wars that were gory
And not wordy wars, like the Whig and the Tory.
The men were all mighty and mighty their deeds,
And daring the heroes and dashing their steeds
In this ancient war,— till a steed made of wood
Accomplished a feat which the Greeks never could
And broke through the walls of the Trojan defense.
Read Homer and Virgil,— it's really immense!

But Virgil's Æneid and Homer's rare tomes
Are found in but few of our latter day homes,
For Homer and Virgil long since passed away;
And, though it is true they were good in their day
And gave an authentic account of the fray,
This Virgil wrote Latin, and Homer could speak
In only one tongue, which to us is all Greek
And dead as the Hector whose story we seek.
And Homer, besides, was as blind as a bat
And, of course, it is likely, remembering that,
That over his views you would hardly enthuse.
So these are the reasons I tackle the Muse
And summon the goddess of song to draw near
And lend me the rhymes that will tickle your ear.
So sing, gentle goddess, your mellowest tones!
Attend on my task while I rattle the bones
Of bold Agamemnon, and also the chap,
The brave son of Thetis — (who started the scrap
By having a wedding, a popular way
Of starting a scrap in that dim, distant day),
The valiant Achilles, who boarded the ship
For Ilium bound, quite prepared for the trip
By a plunge in the Styx as a quarantine dip
To shield him from harm from the Trojans he'd meet
And to ward from his weapons all chance of defeat,
Provided his heels never turned in retreat.
They were capital fellows and, needless to say,
Their names both began with a capital A;
And brave were their comrades and brave were their
foes,
As fearless a phalanx as history knows.

So sing, gentle goddess, with all of your might!
Sing, sing of this rollicking, roistering fight!
Sing, sing of their glory from morning till night!
And warble, ye Furies, your furious strain
While I tell the old story all over again!

II

ONE PARIS CAUGHT BY THREE OF A
KIND



II

ONE PARIS CAUGHT BY THREE OF A KIND

BACK in the days when gods were young
And goddesses were younger,
Their heavenly hearts were not immune
From amatory hunger.

And Cupid, when he chanced to peep
Through their celestial portals,
Would often find them making love
Like ordinary mortals.

Once Thetis with Peleus he saw
And straightway took an arrow,
Which from his bow struck Thetis' beau
And pierced him to the marrow.

Then, as they sauntered arm in arm
Beside a heavenly river,
Her quivering heart was also pierced
From Daniel Cupid's quiver.

She looked upon their bleeding wounds;
And, since the vision shocked her,
Peleus called in their many friends
And then called in the doctor.

But Doctor Æsculapius,
Though greatly in a pother,
Declared the only thing to take
Was each to take the other.

And so, they married then and there
With all the gods assembled;
Peleus had won her trembling heart
While both his knees had trembled.

And on that happy wedding day
The gods were all delighted
Excepting Eris, who had been
For some cause uninvited.

But, though for such a social slight
She felt by no means pleasant,
She condescended quite enough
To send a pretty present.

Into their midst she deftly threw
A lovely golden apple,
And for it all the dames, like Eve,
Began to fuss and grapple.

For on this pretty golden fruit
Engraved in script the rarest
Three simple words were found to be,
And they were "For the fairest."

"Of course, this prize is meant for me!"
Exclaimed the haughty Juno.
But thereupon Minerva said,
"That shows the little you know;

"For I'm the fairest of the fair!
Let some one choose between us!"
"Although you both are fairly fair,
I'm fairer still," said Venus.

And then the three began to fume
And fuss and fret and foment,
'Twas clear the rivalry could not
Be settled in a moment.

Then "Go to Paris," Zeus remarked,
(Not meaning France's city)
"For he is quite a connoisseur
At telling who is pretty."

Therefore, to quiet their complaints,
They sought the shepherd Paris
And bade him on Mount Ida's height
Decide who was the fairest.

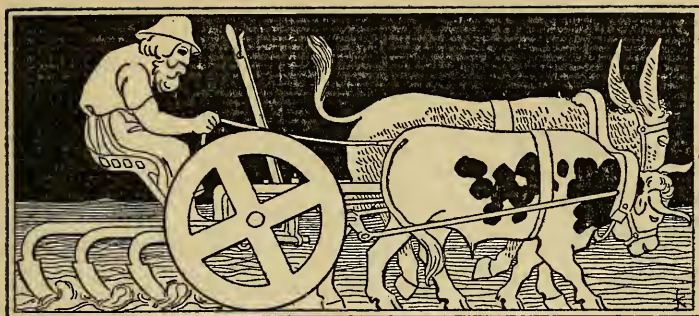
Said Juno, "I will give you power
To choose for me, and riches."
Minerva promised fame in war
And some new fighting breeches.

Then Venus said, "We three have come
That you for charms may weigh us;
If I'm your choice, expect from me
The wife of Menelaus;

"And Helen is as fair a lass
As ever put a gem on."
To Venus he the apple gave
And gave the rest a lemon.

III

THE OPENING OF THE SACK



III

THE OPENING OF THE SACK

IN early days when dates were not,—
At least, the dates have been forgot,—
King Menelaus had a guest, a handsome
Trojan shepherd,
Who kept him guessing, for they say
He stole his wife and ran away
From spot to spot from day to day,
And Spartan spotters in dismay
Gave up all hope to bring to bay
This young romantic leopard
Who changed his spots and spoiled the plan
To overtake the maid and man.

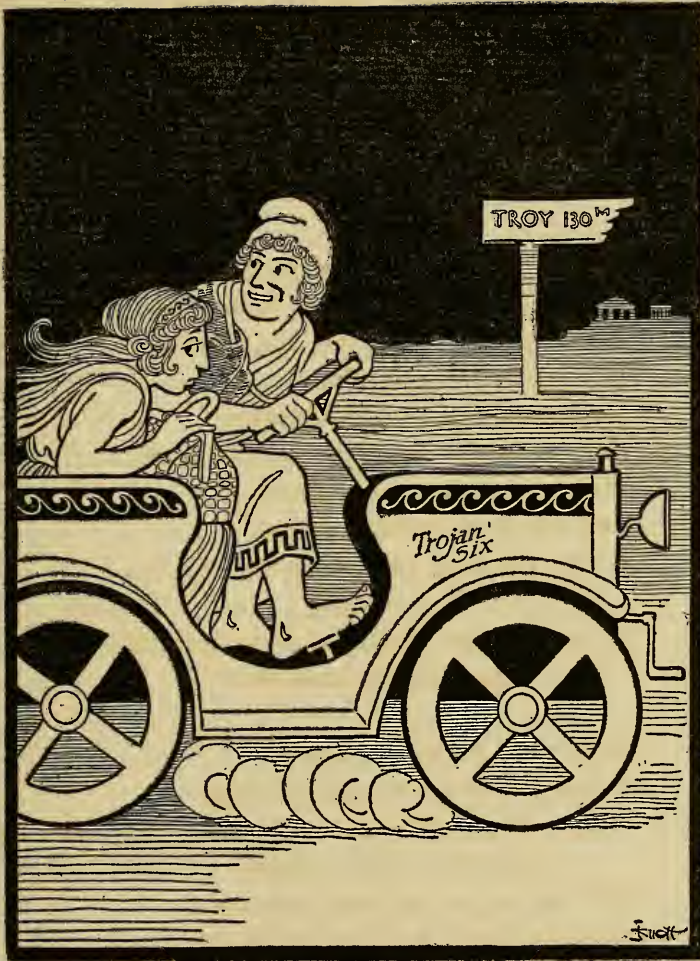
For Menelaus, like a goose,
Went hunting with Idomeneus,
The King of Crete,— a wild goose chase,—
and left the game behind him
Which handsome Paris hunted most.

PUTTING TROY IN A SACK

And, when the king had cleared the coast,
He started hunting with the boast
That he would teach his roving host
To leave a sportsman at his post
 And wander off to find him
Some smaller game. "And so," said he,
"I'll teach the king to hunt for me."

When Menelaus journeyed back
Where first his judgment jumped the track
 And viewed the wreck his dulness wrought by
 being too confiding,
He cursed the bold Idomeneus
And let his heathen tongue run loose
With every manner of abuse
And Greek profanity profuse
A Grecian king could fitly use
 In such a fit of chiding.
"I've had one chase," he then declared,
"But for another I'm prepared!"

He hunted Agamemnon out,
A brother who was big and stout,
 And filled his ears with tales and tears of
 Helen's wicked cunning;
How he by her had been betrayed,
A self-declared grass-widow maid
Who, with his goods, was lost or strayed
Or stolen by that Trojan blade
Who at his hostelry had stayed
 While wild boars he was running.



STOLE HIS WIFE AND RAN AWAY

“But this wild boar,” said he, “by gum,
I’ll run from now till kingdom come!”

But Aggie said: “Cheer up, old sport.
She really is not quite the sort

Of damsel who is worthy of such grieving and
lamenting.

But, if on war your mind is bent
And you can’t straighten your intent,
I’ll lend you funds at ten per cent
To help you get an armament;

But, lest this sum be rashly spent
In vengeance unrelenting,

Let’s go tell Nestor of your plight,—
Your purse and nest both empty quite.”

Old Nestor said: “Get all the Greeks
And mend your boats and stop the leaks,

And then put on a special sail while all the
trade winds favor,

And drive your wares to Priam’s shore.
Though it may take ten years or more,—
What matter if it take a score?

Three days of grace or, maybe, four? —
Be ready for the sea before

You pose as her life-saver
Who left your home for sunny Troy
To be with Mr. Priam’s boy.”

And then the brothers in a trice
Both took their leave, and his advice,

And bounded off to shout throughout the
 boundaries of Sparta
 With much ado and lusty lung
 The song the hoary sage had sung;
 And beckoned Greeks, both old and young,
 Whom Helen formerly had stung,—
 The beaux she long ago had strung,—
 To string their bows to part her
 From that young rake who, with a smile,
 Had turned her head to Paris' style.

For they had sworn in days of yore
 They'd lose their heads for good before
 They'd let a wrong go unavenged for Helen's
 chosen suitor.

They'd lost their heads in times gone by
 On her account; and, with a sigh,
 They now went forth, prepared to die
 And watch their bleeding hearts run dry,
 This mischief-maker to defy
 That off to Troy did scoot her.
 For they would brave all Trojan thumps
 To teach that dame their hearts were trumps.

But bold Ulysses then renigged.
 Achilles, too, was somewhat twigged
 To have a binding pledge like that before his
 vision flaunted.
 Ulysses had a brand new wife
 He loved so much a brand new knife
 Could not have cut his love; and life

Away from her in war and strife
Where killing Grecian chiefs was rife
Was not the life he wanted.
He much preferred domestic war
To that which he was summoned for.

He deftly yoked an ox and ass,
And to the heavy Johnson grass
He led his team, and thus did seem to have a
stroke of madness.

In furrowed field with furrowed brow
He wildly started in to plow,
And drove his donkey and his cow.
But Palamedes mused: "Somehow
That he is mad, I can't allow;"
And proved his motive badness.
For when Ulysses' babe he dropped
Before the plow, Ulysses stopped.

When thus exposed, he said, "I'll clap
Achilles in some subtle trap,
For he is posing at the court as Lycomedes'
daughter
To dodge this scrap." And off he popped
Robed as a merchant, and he stopped
Quite near Achilles, and he propped
His peddler's pack, and maidens hopped
To view his gems; but when he dropped
A weapon made for slaughter,
Achilles cried, "By me that's bought!"
But he replied, "My boy, you're caught!"

This cause without a murmur won,
Achilles called each Myrmidon

Who followed him and bade him get his fighting tackle ready.

Pat Roclus, too, he did persuade
To buckle on his trusty blade.

Then down to Aulis they essayed,
In all their scrapping togs arrayed,
And there prepared to bring the maid

So handsome and so heady
By martial arms and war's alarms
Again to Menelaus' arms.

At Aulis rode a thousand ships,
Cheered by two hundred thousand lips
Of warriors bold who braved the cold and
longed the day of sailing;

Who there expressed as their belief
That Agamemnon should be chief
In capturing the Trojan thief
And all the herds of Trojan beef
He had corralled for his relief.

And, with no thought of failing,
They sacrificed a score of sheep
And then steered forth into the deep.

IV

THE SLOWNESS OF THE FLEET

IV

THE SLOWNESS OF THE FLEET

“**G**EE whiz!” shouted Ajax, who stood near
the wheel
Of the big pilot vessel well drenched by the
rain

And peered through the darkness. “By ganny, I feel
We’re a little bit off in our bearings again.
To one who has traveled the sea it is plain,
I maintain,
The furrow is crookéd we’ve plowed on the main.

“I know that those lights that appear there ahead
Are not the street torches of beautiful Troy.
It’s bound to be some other city instead,
For I was at Ilium when I was a boy.”
He gazed and reached down, while he shivered and
shook,
Roused the cook,
Who was sleeping close by, and desired him to look.

The cook blinked his eyes and then leered at the
lights
And lazily proffered the cheerless remark,
“I am always confused when I see things of nights;
I am not a night owl and not used to the dark.”

“ Then call Agamemnon! ” Ajax blurted out,
“ For I doubt
If we all know exactly just what we’re about.”

Agamemnon was angry but drowsily slunk
To the deck to inquire of the captain *pro tem*
The meaning of calling a man from his bunk
At the good sleeping hour of 3:30 a. m.
But then, when the glare of the lights caught his eyes,
In surprise
He cried out, “ At last, we’re beneath Trojan skies! ”

They reasoned about it, but Aggie was firm
And said: “ Those are beacons of Troy without
fail.

So let every soldier start serving his term
Of chasing these Trojans o’er mountain and vale.”
And when the command through the galleys had
gone,

They drew on
Their heaviest armor and landed at dawn.

But scarce had they started to ravage the land
And learn the extent of its foraging store,
When Telephus rose with a myriad band
And drove them all back to the ocean once more.
In great consternation they buttoned their coats
And, like goats,
Went running and swimming to get to their boats.

They staggered aboard from a perilous death;
They fell on the decks in the uttermost woe;

They grabbed for the railings, they gasped for their
breath

While Ajax was muttering, "I told you so!
For this is the land where the Mysians dwell,
And as well
Might a warrior fare in the ovens of Hell!"

But to stifle a quarrel, a shudder and groan
Came issuing forth from the piloting ship,
Where Pat Roclus lay with a bad collar bone
And a merciless gash in the side of his hip.
And they all stood aghast at the terrible truth
While the youth
Implored the soothsayer say something forsooth.

Now it happened Achilles had studied of yore
From one Mr. Chiron, a sage of renown,
The marvelous wisdom of medical lore,
And pat as an Irishman had the thing down.
So he said to the druggist, "Go bring on the hop
From your shop
Some Red Cross relief if it's just a cough drop."

And soon he disclosed such miraculous art
With powder and poultice, with potion and pill,
That young Mr. Roclus bounced up with a start
And danced the mazurka and polka at will.
And he romped with such ease in each hop he essayed
That a maid
Would have envied the gusto and grace he displayed.

But bold Agamemnon was sullen and sore
In spite of the cheers that emerged from their
throats;
And he changed the procedure with violent roar
From "On with the dance!" into "Off with the
boats!"
"Let us turn," he exclaimed, "and return on the
main,
For it's plain
We had better go back and start over again."

So they set sail at once and were soon under way,
Obeying the bull of their governing sire,
With a tinge of defeat and a tear for delay,
For Helen had kindled their Hellenic ire.
And home from a cruise which their cares did in-
crease,
For release
They hopped from the frying pan back into Greece.

V

THE ILLS OF ILIUM

V

THE ILLS OF ILIUM

YOUNG PARIS, because of a dream of his
mother,
Had always been hidden in some way or
other,—

For reasons it's hardly worth while now to mention,
Except it was feared as a bone of contention
This very acceptable, innocent boy
Might turn out to be the undoing of Troy.

An old sage had said it and, strange though it be,
The people all drank in that day of sage tea.
So they placed him with sheep to look after the
flocks,—

Where he grew up with beauty and long flowing
locks.

(For one who from sheep often sheared his bags full
Would naturally have an abundance of wool.)

Now he dwelt in obscurity, so the books say,
In a perfectly peaceful and pastoral way.
And he married a sweet little nymph of a wife,
CEnone by name, and the joy of his life;
Contented to live and to hoard up his goods
With his dear little mate like the babes in the woods.

But learning one day some funereal games
Were pending in Troy for the men and the dames,
He wandered away from his sylvan retreat
And entered the town for a chance to compete.
He took every prize from his princely young brothers
And mildly suggested to them there were others
With some little knowledge of this game and that,—
From throwing the discus to town-ball and cat.
And, knowing him not as a kinsman of theirs,
They were ready to scrap like a couple of bears,
When their sister Cassandra stepped in to remark,
(For up to this time they were all in the dark)
“Why, this is a child of our good papa Priam,
Entitled to just as much honor as I am.
This lad I can tell by the shade of his hair is
Our long lost companion and good brother Paris.”
So they kissed and made up and averted the fray
And sent for CEnone to come right away;
And they all lived as happy as birds in a cage,
Forgetting the ominous words of the sage.

You detect now, of course, if you've read of the tomes
One Conan Doyle wrote of his friend Sherlock
Holmes,

That much of this happened some years in advance
Of the time when Minerva had proffered the pants
And Paris had chosen a different prize
At a figure exactly the fair Helen's size.
And it's proper to add — (and I'm fond of addition)—
When Paris set out on a bold Grecian mission
His sister Cassandra was there to advise

That he be not deceived by the Grecian maids' eyes.
"And if one of them smile," she entreated, "don't
cop her;

The very best thing you can do is to drop her.
Those far away maids with the far away look
Are not of our class and don't know how to cook. †
Remember you now have a wife to support
And superfluous courting may lead you to court."
(The tongue of Cassandra was famed far and near
For saying things people regretted to hear.)
But, alas, we have seen how a lass won his heart,—
A very intense, indispensable part
Of himself; and when time came to leave,— well, in
fact,
He just had to bring her to come home intact.

When Paris returned with foreboding and fear,
With a misgiving heart and a live souvenir,
He knew that the lies he had told theretofore
Were calling in mass for a lively encore.
And long he debated just how to express
Some plausible ground for his baggage excess;
Some likely excuse that would probably go
For coming back home with a woman in tow.
But Paris was artful and Paris was apt
And not a young fox to be easily trapped;
So when he confronted his kith and his kin
He made up his story and waded right in.
He told of his trip with the vigor and vim
The family needed if it would trip him,

And stated just how he had met with the maid
On some barren island, alone and afraid,
Where no vegetation was e'er known to be
Until he discovered his family tree
Included her, too, for her kindred and kind
Had sprung from a similar ancestral line.
Then young Deiphobus and Hector did sip
A welcoming kiss from the fair Helen's lip;
And father and mother each gave her embrace
While Paris looked on with a radiant face.
And even Cassandra, though loath to believe,
Some fond osculation did give and receive.
But young Mrs. Paris did not much incline
To those doubt-dealing words, "She's a cousin of
mine."

King Priam just then was a very old head
Who always thought twice,— often three times in-
stead;
For his noodle was gray and was known far and wide
For a whole lot of gray that it harbored inside.
(It was one you would readily choose in a group
As a noodle that seldom would get in the soup.)
And the more he reflected the less he could see
That Helen was what she purported to be,
And the more he suspected his son was no saint,
But a lad with heart trouble or kindred complaint.
For everywhere Helen would chance to appear
It was fifty to one that young Paris was near,
And he seemed to regard it a thing to be proved
That she as a cousin was not far removed.

Now Priam observed her both morning and night
(In a manner, of course, that was proper and right)
And he came to conclude that this maiden so meek
By talent and training was totally Greek.
So the notion of Priam was nipped in the bud
That she was a daughter of one of his blood,
For he thought from the things that he heard and he
saw
She was very much more like a daughter-in-law.

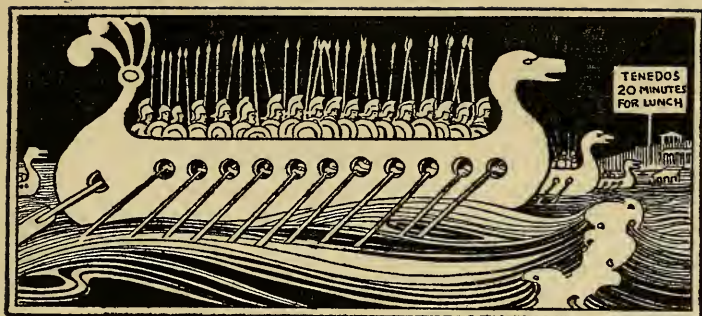
The king's meditation afforded no ease
But stung at his pride like a thousand of bees;
And his solemn reflection the hope did destroy
That Helen would prove no reflection on Troy.
He sadly recalled with an infinite dread
What the seer had seen and the sayer had said,
And he sorely regretted, alas and alack,
That Paris was one who had really "come back."
He called for his counsellors, distant and near,
He called for his court and he called for his beer
And everything else that would likely assist
And would probably be on a king's calling list.
He called upon Glaucus and Sarpedon, too,
Æneas and every one else that he knew,
On Hector and young Deiphobus, his sons,
His petted and pampered and favorite ones,—
For all of his boys he had wisely brought up
For combat or caucus since Hec was a pup.

To them he unfolded the terrible tale
And the vision of war that he saw through the veil

Which Paris had wrapped round the course of events
To lead them astray with his sham and pretense.
He bade them assemble their militant stores
And lay a few mines on the outlying shores;
He bade them prepare with their guns and their
sabers
And get upon peaceable terms with their neighbors;
He bade them do this and he bade them do that;
He bade them have everything perfectly pat;
And when he was sure they would do the thing right
He left off his bidding and bade them good-night.

VI

A NEW DEPARTURE



VI

A NEW DEPARTURE

WHEN first on the ocean the Grecians put
out
And foolishly fell on the Mysian route,
They were put out the more and were wholly at sea,
For the Mysians met them with rapture and glee
And altered their route by omitting the e.

I have told this before,
But I tell it once more
To preface this part, as you'll presently see.

Now it happened,— a fact I record at this juncture,—
That Telephus then got a terrible puncture.
(Though tireless was he in the thick of the fight.)
He really was in a most pitiful plight,
Losing heart in the day, losing sleep in the night.

In fact, I may say
In an accurate way
From a study of records and books of that day,

He suffered much pain from his feet to his jaws
In his whole constitution and kingly by-laws.
(The chieftain whose spear had inflicted the blow
That put him in peril and pestered him so
Was valiant Achilles, as most of you know.)
So he went to the oracle,— that was the fad,—
And recounted the aches and the anguish he had
And disclosed how a chief of the visiting clan
Had made out of him a most painstaking man.

The oracle bathed in the Castalian Spring
And sat on her tripod and started to sing,
Which was quite the approved and the popular
thing.

She quaffed from her cup

A most liberal sup

And with sulphurous vapors essayed to smoke up
Until she was properly steamed and incensed
To tell of the course of the coming events.
And thus fumigated, befitting her station,
She gave out her final and firm affirmation
With very sane words and correct sanitation,
And said of the wound, if he could not endure it,
The gent who had caused it could readily cure it.

And so, for a trip

He packed up his grip

And hurried aboard his imperial ship
And came to Achilles and opened his case
With a hope in his heart and a tear on his face
And a bandage or two on the troublesome place.

The brave son of Thetis examined his frame
And then took his picture and, also, his name,
And gave him some dope and a bill for the same.

In less than a week

He was chubby and sleek

And waxing as fat as a corpulent freak.

And when he was thus undeniably healed,
The valiant Achilles implored and appealed
That as an expression of thanks and of joy
He'd act as their pilot in sailing to Troy
To take away Helen from King Priam's boy.

"For he," said Achilles, "has stolen the queen
On whom Menelaus asserts a prior lien;
And we have all sworn to recover the loss
And transport her home, where alone with her boss
As a bird in the hand she can gather no moss."
And when bold Ulysses requested it, too,
He finally yielded to pilot them through,
Which, likely as not, was the wise thing to do.

Now big Agamemnon went out for a lark
On the day that the ships were supposed to embark
And didn't come back until way after dark.

It was really a pity,

And very unpretty

On one who was truly the pride of the city.
(I wish I could alter this part of my ditty.)

And, which was still worse,

He brought down a curse

On all of his mates by his manners perverse.

For while in the throes of the ill-advised jag
That caused their departure to falter and flag,
He gave a stag party and slaughtered a stag
That some heathen goddess had raised as a pet
And wasn't quite ready to sacrifice yet.

The goddess thereby

Wore a lachrymose eye

And pined for the hind with a pitiful cry,
Now heaving a brick, now heaving a sigh
At bold Agamemnon who caused it to die.

Though thoroughly ruffled, she called for a calm
On all of the sea as a sort of a balm
For her sorrowing soul, for while it was still
The Greeks were dependent on her solemn will
With never a zephyr their canvas to fill.
"And now," murmured she, "if the council and court
Are bent upon drinking, I'll keep them in port."

No sign of a breeze on the sea or the land,
No kind of a wave but a wave of the hand
Appeared to encourage the bellicose band;
And there they remained in the surf and the sand,—
A very sad state, as you all understand.

In these dire conditions,

Their big politicians

Were called to discourse on their lofty ambitions,
For no other course that they happened to know
Could offer such wind or such vigorous blow.
But even this plan was predestined to fail
And leave in repose every indolent sail.

Then Calchas, a crabbed old cuss with the colic,
Stepped in to opine that the case was symbolic
And meant that the goddess would furnish no breeze
Until they got down on their penitent knees
And sought her displeasure to quell and appease
By making amends for the ill-fated slaughter
And offering up Agamemnon's young daughter.

But Aggie demurred

And warmly averred

That such a design should be dropped or deferred;
Of such a proceeding he never had heard
And didn't believe one had ever occurred.
But when they had voted, he found in a jiffy
He'd have to surrender his dear little Iffy,—
For that was the name that he called her for short,
But he called them some names of a different sort.
He yielded, at length,—not a bountiful yield,—
And Iffy was called from her work in the field
And bound hand and foot with a sob and a sigh
And put on the altar like one bound to die.

But, maybe, you've read in the works of one Schiller
In spite of this flurry they never did kill her,
For just when the knife was approaching her face,
(I don't mean she ate with a knife) in her place
The goddess provided a beautiful deer
And kept her away from a taste of the bier,—
A worthy performance to chronicle here.
The goddess enveloped the maid in a cloud
And bore her aloft from the wondering crowd

To serve in her temple, and then she let out
The winds that the Greeks were so anxious about.

With Telephus stationed in state at the helm
They slid o'er the sea like a slippery elm,
While King Menelaus with ardent emotion
Was singing " My bonnie lies over the ocean."

And over the main

Again and again

Their voices rolled out as they joined the refrain,
For each of them felt it was perfectly clear
His beautiful bonnie would lie anywhere.

At length, to the gaze of the carolling crew
The island of Tenedos popped into view,—
A very attractive and pleasant retreat
Where they stopped on their way twenty minutes to
eat.

They scampered ashore with a good appetite
Intent to indulge in a nourishing bite,
But one Philoctetes a bite did procure
Like Bosco and Esau are paid to endure.
A snake gave it to him,— which leads me to think
He left off his eating for something to drink,
For often a man with a thirsting to slake
In quenching his craving encounters a snake.

This man was an archer, the best of the crew,
A broad-minded man but an arrow-man, too,

Who, like the most popular girl that you know,
On every occasion was blessed with a bow.
I shouldn't record it unless it were so.

He started to prance
In a serpentine dance,—

While all his associates eyed him askance,—
And grabbed at his foot, his calamitous member,
And grew quite as cold as the last of December.
The doctor, the proper demands to enforce,
Took note of his trouble,— a footnote, of course,—
Reminding Achilles how proud he should feel
It wasn't his foot or his vulnerable heel.

They patiently carried the patient aboard
And gave him whatever the ships could afford
To lighten his gloom and diminish his fear
And put in repair his impaired running gear.

They opened a jug
Of the juice of the bug

And placed to his face a most bountiful mug
To warm his emotions and make him feel snug.

He did very well,
I am happy to tell,

Until a most vile, disagreeable smell
Came issuing forth from his snake-bitten toes
That wasn't at all like the attar of rose,—
In fact, 'twas offensive to every one's nose.
(The subject is one that I care not to treat,—
I don't wish to hamper my verse with bad feet,—
And etiquette makes it a topic of doubt,
But it's all in the tale, so I can't leave it out.

It's a matter I trust you'll be lenient about.)
They journeyed to Lesbos and there made him land
And left him alone on the beach and the sand
In very bad odor with all of the band.

VII
THE SHORE LINES
(A Littoral Version)

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THE SHORE LINES

(A Littoral Version)

I NEVER shall forget the day
The Greeks arrived at Troy,
And what the classics have to say
About their pride and joy;
The ardor and alacrity
Of all that happy band
To cease the seeing of the sea
And land upon the land.

How Agamemnon would not brook
Postponement of the sack,
But bade them listen, stop and look
And get upon the track
Of every Trojan in those parts
Of mountains, hills and plains,
And with their arrows and their darts
Inflict their shooting pains.

How Hector met them at the coasts
When first they did appear
And said: "We do not come as hosts,
Though hosts of us are here.

We really have no appetite
For such excursion trips,
But do not fear your barque or bite
Or catalogue of ships.

“ Although you will not find,” said he,
“ A welcome on our mat,
We humbly trust your company
Will not stand back at that.
For when our javelins and spears
Have chased you to your boats,
They will for welcome, like your jeers,
Be sticking in your throats.”

“ We’ll put you on a show or two! ”
Came back the Grecian goad.
“ Then we will wait,” said Hec, “ to view
The animals unload.”
And so, ’twas clear, while quibbling thus,
That something would be doing,
And even silent Telephus
Could tell a fuss was brewing.

Now some old witch had said of yore
So all the Greeks could get it,
The first to put his foot ashore
Would not live to regret it. —
And when Protesilaus brave
Stepped on the land to try it,
He fell into a hero’s grave
And left a widow by it.

(This tragic incident, alas,
It grieves me to insert;
'Twas, like the stylish demi tasse,
Beyond the man's dessert.) —
But Mercury his soul did pack
To realms of high renown,
For Mercury had quite a knack
Of going up and down.

The Greeks beheld with tearful eyes
Their patriot distressed,
And praised his valor to the skies
Where he had gone to rest.
And that the world at large might know
The merit of his capers,
They cabled back a page or so
To all the Grecian papers.

Inspired by his demise,
They all were pining for
A chance to star and advertise
The theater of war.
And when upon the stage they drew
In bellicose array,
The Trojans, mindful of their cue,
Took steps to get away.

The Grecians they could not withstand
With all their kin and kith;
And since the Greeks were not a band
That they had standing with,

They let discretion be their guide
And beat a sure retreat,
While all the Grecians viewed with pride
The quickness of their feat.

Within their walls they then retired
Like prisoners in the pen,—
Except no one of them desired
To be without again.
For there they felt each troubled heart
Could know a sweet repose
While fate, alert to take their part,
Made faces at their foes.

The Greeks, Achilles in the lead,
Essayed to storm the town;
The men of Troy with skill and speed
Serenely mowed them down.
The ardor of the sacking crew
Had this defeat to dim it;
And every mother's scrapper knew
The fight would go the limit.

Then Aggie bade them bring their boats
More near the battlements,
Erect their huts and dig their moats
And keep their zeal in tents.
"Because I recognize at once,"
Said he, "it now appears
This war will last for months and months
And years and years and years."

Between the foes a mighty plain
Was plainly to be seen,—
Of brownish hue in winter's reign
And in the summer green.
And thereupon the soldiers bold
Did constantly compete
Throughout the frosty winters' cold
And balmy summers' heat.

Thus playing hot and cold, their strife
Continued to abide,
With naught to change the course of life,
Except for them that died.
For often on the battleground
They fought and ran away.
And then, to prove the adage sound,
They fought another day.

(It now behooves me to digress
And let you know about
A gossipy unpleasantness
That made some Greeks fall out.
But, while you feast upon it, still
You'll bear in mind, perhaps,
The rank and file with dogged will
Are busy with the scraps.)

VIII
A DISCORD IN ASIA MINOR

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A DISCORD IN ASIA MINOR

WHEN the Grecians had conquered the
 neighboring towns
 And had made up a list of the loot,
They could boast every trophy from sandals to
 crowns,

 And some other good booty to boot.
It is said they had more than a whole racket store
 In the number and kinds of the things,—
Quite enough to inspire any poetic liar
 Or awaken the goddess who sings.

O, in fact, I may say that it seemed such a prize,
 Such a treasure of comfort and cheer,
It was poetic salve in the blind Homer's eyes
 And he opened the Iliad here.
And his pupils dilate, I am happy to state,
 When they scan through his epic complete,
And they forge far ahead of the average biped
 As they measure each line with six feet.

Now the Grecians regarded this plunder with pride
 And with boasting, bravado and brag,
And they firmly decided whate'er should betide
 They would firmly be tied to the swag.

Of the odds and the ends they declared dividends,
And the ratio to each mother's son
Of the silver and gold, when the lot was all told,
Was the ominous sixteen to one.

Achilles clandestinely picked out a maid
Who was known as Briseis by name;
And Aggie accepted Chryseis in trade
For a partial release of his claim.
(These names, by the way, are not easy to say
And may hinder the flow of my song;
But they're plain as can be if you'll accent the e
And will make them three syllables long.)

This damsel Chryseis was blessed with a dad
Who was christened Chryses at his birth,
And he brought on some crises exceedingly bad
And most woefully lacking in mirth.
As a sober old priest he had risen like yeast
As a man who was worthy to follow,
And his form was as grand as the eye could demand,
For he served at the shrine of Apollo.

For a sail on the sea to the camp of the Greeks
He embarked to entreat for his daughter,
With his haversack loaded with liver and leeks
And some Apollo-naris for water.
And the onions he took were not only to cook
But with teardrops his eyes to bedim,



HE OPENED THE ILIAD HERE

For he fully believed, since the Greeks were well-greaved,

They would look for some grieving in him.

In a trice and a jiffy he sought Aggie out
And he started right in to implore
He would give up the maid he was crazy about
From the place that she had in his store.

“For we need her,” he cried, “at our own fireside;
And I’ve brought you a ransom of worth.”
But Aggie in glee bade him take to the sea,—
Or, in other words, get off the earth.

“I shall never comply with your doleful demand,”
Shouted Aggie, “so hike to your ship
And peddle your woes in your own native land
If your ticket includes the round trip.”
Then the priest grew so sore I’m afraid that he
swore,—

Though his calling and craft taught him better,—
And he urged that a thief could be made of a chief
By the simple exchange of a letter.

But alas and alack,—and, perhaps, well-a-day,—
For the priest was denuded of hope;
And he bowed to Apollo in direful dismay
And devoutly inquired for the dope.
And Apollo gave heed to his minister’s need
By releasing a dreadful disease
Which afflicted the Greeks for a couple of weeks
While the Trojans continued at ease.

The commanders all looked with the gravest distrust
On the plague, and they sought to undo it,
For a thousand good soldiers were biting the dust
And returning unduly unto it.
And the companies, too, of the insurance crew,
As the Grecians grew fewer and fewer,
Would solicit no risk while the dying was brisk
But discreetly declined to insure.

Then Achilles opined they were pining because
Agamemnon had slighted the priest
And had sent him away with derisive guffaws
And behavior befitting a beast.
So he summoned the troops in appropriate groups
And unfolded the cause of the curse
Till the infantry swore, "We are sickly and sore
But there's something on foot even worse."

He recited with feeling the lay of the land.
(And they say his reciting was fine.
He could tell of the deck where the boy took his stand
And of Bingen that lay on the Rhine.)
And when Calchas concurred in each eloquent word
They approved with such lusty "Amen"
That Achilles with zest proudly poked out his chest
And recited it over again.

Then they called Aggie up and they called Aggie
down,
And Achilles began to express

How the cheek of the chief was the talk of the town
In a very unwelcome address.

He implored and he prayed he would give up the
maid

To return to her own native coast
Since the soldiers in mass on account of the lass
Seemed predestined to give up the ghost.

Now the cup of the anger of Aggie was full
As he heard the complaints of the men.
He was mad as a hornet or mad as a bull
Or as mad as an old setting hen.
And he flashed out his ire like a volcanic fire
In a manner so shockingly bad
That the medical crew said no tonics they knew
Could relieve the eruptions he had.

In a violent temper he vented his spleen
And berated his censors at will,—
For he lived in a day when the doctors were green
And the spleen had a mission to fill.
In impetuous rage upon Calchas, the sage,
He bespoke maledictions galore,
For he harbored a grudge at this self-christened judge
Who had sentenced his daughter before.

But he saved up the sauciest things he could say
To bestow on Achilles for spite.
And he spoke them in such an opprobrious way
That Achilles was ready to fight.

And they squabbled and swore in such verbal uproar,—

Like the rabble in dissolute brawls,—
That the army stood mute at the awful dispute
And the Trojans peeped over the walls.

But, at length, Agamemnon allowed their demand,
And they all were in glee till he said:
“I will discard the queen that I hold in my hand
And will draw for another instead.
As a maiden in lieu Miss Briseis will do,
And with her I'll be wholly content;
So Chryseis may flee from her sojourn with me
And may go where Eurydice went.”

Then Briseis wept tears that were bitter as gall
And Achilles grew crabbed and sour,—
For they did not incline to the verdict at all,
Though to change it was out of their power.
So the maid said good-bye with a watery eye
While Achilles was bursting with grief;
But their tragical woe was a comical show
To the satisfied gaze of the chief.

“I can ne'er be resigned,” said Achilles, in scorn,
“To the judgment of such a gossoon;
But I can be resigned until Gabriel's horn
From your horse and your foot and dragoon.
So you'll strike from your list, I most firmly insist,
Both myself and my Myrmidons brave;

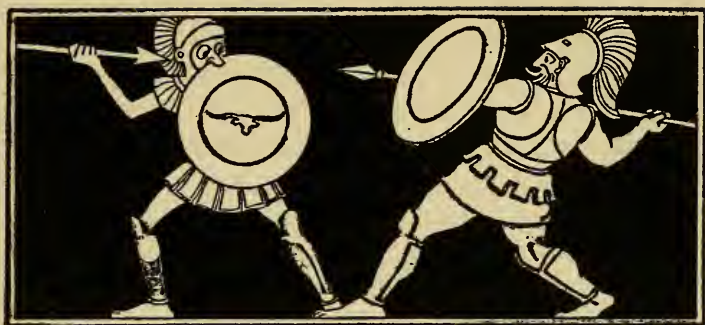
For we'll laugh at your woe when you run from the
foe
And will scatter no blooms on your grave."

Then he wandered away, but he left with the band
All the horns a dilemma provides,—
Not the kind that's adapted to music's demand,
And his brass didn't suit them, besides.
While they rattled and swore, he repaired to the shore
Where he sought his emotion to smother
By reducing his grief with the cheering relief
Of a long distance call for his mother.

IX

A COMBATIVE TURN

(From the Scrap Books of Virgil and Homer)



IX

A COMBATIVE TURN

(From the Scrap Books of Virgil and Homer)

COME list, come list, come list to me! —
An overture from which you'll see
We've reached a place where sense insists
That we devote some space to lists.
Not Liszt, the music man of fame
(I make no play upon the name),
Not lists of gifts or laundry duds,
Subscription lists or family bloods,
But lists whose crimson fields of shame
As lists of casualty became,
Where foe met foe and didn't speak,—
(Perhaps the Trojans knew no Greek
Or Grecians didn't understand
The jabber of the Trojan band);
Where men of mettle went to tilt
And drove their metal to the hilt

In any unprotected place
Between the waist line and the face;
Where rivals raged like bulls and bears
And stocks of steel were doubtful shares
And holdings of uncertain luck
By which a fellow might get stuck;
Where each contender sought to joust
Just like Mephisto after Faust
With all the scenery complete
And Helen playing Marguerite.

Now to resume our mournful lay
Just where this preface led astray,
We find Achilles on the beach
When Aggie picked his precious peach,
A peach to gladden any man
But not the proper sort to can.
(The kind, in fact, we only see
Upon a graceful family tree.)
With head agog and heart astew,
He looked aloft intent to view
The Irish stars he liked the best,—
O’Ryan sloping to the West,
And near at hand in radiant show
Night-blooming Sirius aglow.
But clouds obscured the cheering sight,—
And then, besides, ’twas hardly night,
And heavenly stars have not the way
Of shining at a matinée.
He cast his eyes upon the ground
But there no consolation found,

So out he leered upon the sea
To seek a balm of mirth and glee.
He there beheld to check his wrath
His mother coming from the bath,—
For Thetis through a family fault
Took everything that came with salt.
(Perhaps the reader will not fail
To sprinkle some upon this tale.)

The mother looked upon the youth
And soon discerned the tragic truth
Depicted in his face and form
Betokening the inward storm.
Besides, Achilles told her much
That made his feelings wear a crutch.
“Sit steady in the boat,” she cried,
“And do not rock from side to side.
Your policy to dodge the scraps
Is one too valuable to lapse
Till each of these deriding scamps
Upon your life a premium stamps.
On me for aid you may depend
To see this matter to the end,
For I will pray fire-darting Zeus
With his renowned electric juice
To make a lightning change for you
Upon the general Grecian view.”
With these remarks she went below,
Much like a submarine would go,
And he perceived with knowing eyes
That much beneath the surface lies.

A Trojan spy quite near the Greek
Was boldly playing hide and seek
When brave Achilles heard the way
His mother's wit would save the day.
By winding paths with much dispatch,
Through many a thorn- and briar-patch,
The spy returned with notes complete,
And countless splinters in his feet,
To let the Trojan leaders know
Achilles' troupe had quit the show
And in engagements then devised
Would not appear as advertised.
The Trojans gave a shout of joy
That jarred the Grecian *hoi polloi*,
And notified the fruitful spy
He was the apple of their eye.
They then discreetly sallied out
To put the sacking crew to rout
With bugle and with blunderbuss
And other means of fight and fuss.

The Grecians ran with main and might
And broke some records in their flight,
While Hector's band upon their tracks
Made live pin-cushions of their backs.
With many a hack they drove them on
Until their power to charge was gone
And all the Greeks had run away
In wild confusion and dismay.
Bold Agamemnon bore a scratch
Inflicted in the running match,

And brave Achilles, quite content,
Refused to lend him liniment.
Then Hector sent a verbal fire
To further stimulate his ire
And said his Greeks he ought to use
For restaurants or shining shoes
Since they had clearly learned to fight
From correspondence schools at night.
(From all of which you will deduce
That Thetis had a pull with Zeus.)

Within the shelter of his ships
Bold Agamemnon bit his lips
And all his warriors bemeaned
That Hector had them quarantined.
"You fight," said he, "just like the men
Who like to hear the count of ten
While grovelling upon the floor
Which they have painted with their gore.
If you would square yourselves with me,
Avert this harsh catastrophe."
Then Nestor said: "Send back the maid
Who erstwhile with Achilles stayed,
And give him, too, to stop the strife
Your blushing daughter for a wife,
With seven towns to make him glad,—
As many homes as Homer had.
All other aid you summon is
As lemon-aid compared with his."
Then, loath to do it, Aggie said:
"Although I'd rather see him dead,

It seems the only ray of hope,
So hasten to him with the dope.
To take this pill I will agree
Lest all the Trojans pillage me."

When Aggie gave his sad assent,
A suitable committee went,—
Ulysses, Ajax, Phœnix, three
Well versed in notes of harmony,—
To bear the gifts and compliments
Which Aggie sent in penitence.
Achilles was a settled guy
Most difficult to mollify,—
Not one to soften or retreat
Like butter melting in the heat.
He listened to the pleading notes
The trio warbled from their throats,
But not a tone could they emit
Which served to change his tune a bit.
"I am determined," he opined,
"To keep my present state of mind.
You're barking up an empty tree
If you would make your game of me."
Then, like the noted King of France,
The trio down the hill did prance,
Gift-bearing Greeks who could not bribe
This fellow-member of their tribe.
They sauntered up to Aggie's court
With their unfavorable report
And begged their findings be perused
And their committee then excused.

The Trojans now came out for fair,
With pennants floating in the air,
The Grecian colors to pursue
And change them into black and blue,—
While Jove in jovial delight
Looked on with favor at the fight,
And all the other gods took part
To help the cause they had at heart.
The Trojans hurried to the ships
And took some kerosene and chips
To kindle both the Grecian ire
And one consuming Trojan fire
Which would the fleeing foe avail
To undertake a fire sail.
By such a sortie sorely shamed
The Grecian soldiers were inflamed,
And Ajax shouted to the foe
Advising Hector where to go.
But Hector looked him in the face
And hurled his lance with skill and grace
And struck him near the boiling point
And nearly knocked him out of joint.

When Ajax rallied from the harm
He limbered up his pitching arm
And picked a stone from out the dirt
As large as decks an actor's shirt.
With speed he tossed the sphere to Hec
And caught him full upon the neck
And sent him sprawling to the earth
Despite his boasted upper birth.

(How strange a chief who stood so pat
Should fall for such a thing as that!)
His comrades hastened to his side
And proper remedies applied,
Advising in his next outburst
He heed the maxim, "Safety first."
Then up he bounded from the ground
And started on another round,
Now striking left, now striking right
Till striking Greeks refused to fight.

Pat Roclus from a vantage spot
Observed that things were getting hot,
And off he skipped to Nestor's tent
To tell of their predicament.
The hoary Nestor wisely spoke
With eyelids moistened by the smoke
Emerging from the burning ships,
And burning words escaped his lips:
"Seek out Achilles and procure
At once his present temperature.
Of all beneath the Grecian rule
It seems that he alone is cool.
Invite him back into the fray
With promises of extra pay
To save us from the Trojan guns
Together with his Myrmidons."

Then Pat proceeded to the place
Where bold Achilles hid his face

From Agamemnon's slings and slurs
And curious photographers.
He found Achilles disinclined
To modify his frame of mind
Or buckle on his fighting clothes
In their receiving line to pose.
"Go tell them, Pat," said he, in hate,
"Their invitation comes too late.
I'll neither go nor send regrets
To parties in their social sets.
Though vivisection is so base,
I'm for it in the present case;
And ere I'd help relieve their fears
I'd see them cut to souvenirs."
(He mixed his rhetoric, of course,
But wouldn't mix with Aggie's force.)

Just then as flames went leaping high
From Grecian galleys standing by,
Achilles thought about his flame,—
Briseis was the maiden's name.
"Perhaps," mused he, "this damsel fair
Is languishing in anguish there
In pain too great to be endured,—
And, like the vessels, uninsured."
He then relented just a bit,
But good Pat Roclus noticed it
And said: "O, come on, be a sport!
I'll take your soldiers to report
If you prefer to stay and rest.
Just have your suit of armor pressed

And let me wear it to the fray.
It ought to fit me, anyway.
And they will think that I am you,
And I will show a thing or two
To let them know I'm up to snuff
At pulling off this fighting stuff.
Come on, I say, and show you're game,
And you will see that I'm the same."

Achilles thought a time or two
And pondered what he ought to do.
Then out he spoke,— (in fact, they say
He was outspoken, anyway).
"My Myrmidons," said he, "as such
Are fighting none and eating much
And putting me to great expense
And bringing nothing in as rents.
On this account you may proceed
To have their service for their feed
In sewing up the Trojan sack,—
But don't forget to bring them back."
He summoned then the Myrmidons
And bade them clean their swords and guns
And follow where Pat Roclus led
And do whatever Patrick said.

Into the scrap all span and spick,
To thin it out where it was thick,
They hurried on in armored suits,
With Patrick in Achilles' boots.

The Greeks beheld with rare delight
The band returning to the fight,
And gave them greeting in a shout
That turned their voices inside out.
The Trojans took a look at Pat
And, like a mouse would dodge a cat,
They scampered back through brakes and bogs
In terror from Achilles' togs.
The ones who went to burn the boats
Would not take time to get their coats,
But fled in fear with speed and skill
Like bob-sleds sliding down a hill.
The Grecians quenched the flames in haste
And after fleeing Trojans raced,
Who ran as fast to reach the gates
As most successful candidates.
But Sarpedon in valor tried
To stay his hosts and stem the tide,
And threw a spear into the flock
That missed young Pat a city block.
Pat Roclus then let loose a lance
That struck the seat of Sarpy's pants,—
(Which means,— the joke is old in part,—
It hit him square upon the heart).
Then Sarpedon gave up the strife,
Laid down his weapons and his life
And from his work of war retired
Since his subscription had expired.

Pat Roclus then began to strut
And yelled, "Ha! Ha! I've killed the mut!"

But pride, like summer, you recall,
Is likely to precede a fall.
When Sarpy, like a falling star,
Went down with glory and a jar,
Brave Hector bubbled o'er with grief
And wept into his handkerchief.
Said he: "I'll teach this roustabout,
Who knocked my worthy chieftain out,
That he must straightway meet his fate
In scrapping me, a heavyweight."
He bade his chauffeur fill his car
With oil and gas and tools of war
And drive him out upon the field
Where Patrick stood with spear and shield.
(His car had not consumed his hoard;
He bought one that he could — afford.)

Pat Roclus aimed a heavy stone
At Hector's massive collar bone
Which missed the gallant Trojan peer
But made him drop his charioteer.
Then Hector screamed with scornful cry:
"Come one, come all, your rocks may fly,
But you will learn when in my reach
Some other pebbles deck the beach!"
"Indeed!" quoth Patrick, in a huff.
"You've met a guy to call your bluff.
Prepare yourself, for I shall knock
Your trunk from underneath your block!"
Then foe to foe and face to face
They battled all about the place,

Each keen to offer tit for tat
And lay his adversary flat.

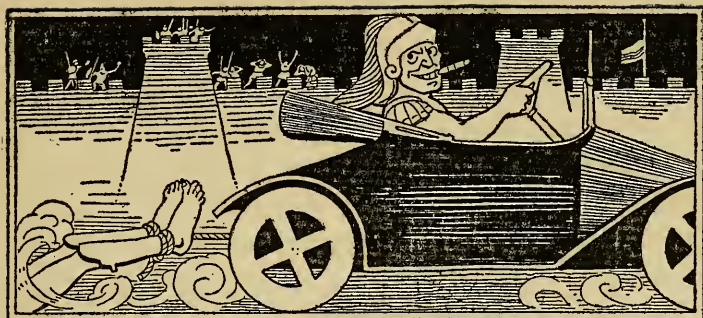
At last, Hec got the upper hand
And brought his rival to the land,
Remarking as he dealt the blow,
"You've struck your match and out you go."
Poor Pat fell prostrate with a thud
And bathed the battlefield in blood,—
And Harvard clansmen all agree
It was a crimson victory.
But Patrick spent his final breath,
His ruling passion strong in death,
To taunt his foe with warnings grim
About the fate awaiting him.
Said he: "I'm gone past hope of cures,
But, Mr. Hector, you'll get yours.
Achilles, when he hears my doom,
Will promptly offer Hec a tomb."
Unheeding, Hector stripped the lad
Of all the armament he had,
And said: "I'll keep Achilles' suit
And wear it in my next dispute.
You will not grieve in such a state
To lose so much of surplus weight."

Another controversy then
Arose among the fighting men,—
A *habeas corpus* sort of spat
To get the custody of Pat.

The Greeks maintained the Trojans had
Improperly purloined the lad
With force and arms and other ways,
Or *vi et armis*, —classic phrase.
The controversy grew so great
There was no chance to arbitrate;
And Jove, to end the martial sport,
Assumed the functions of a court.
He turned a damper on the broil
By yielding Patrick's mortal coil
Unto the Greeks; and with a scoff
The testy Trojans shuffled off.

X

A RETURN ENGAGEMENT



X

A RETURN ENGAGEMENT

WHEN Achilles was told of his follower's
fate,
It is needless to say that his sorrow was
great;
And he wept like a willow
All over his pillow
And buried his head like a wild armadillo
Beneath all the sheets that he had on his bed
And the blankets and quilts that were over them
spread.
He could not have mourned more if his debtors were
dead.
But his couch lacked the solace he sought for relief,
Which was, namely, a comfort to cover his grief.
All alone with his woes
He could find no repose,
While a pain in his heart held him fast in its throes
And a counterpane surged from his head to his toes.

A hard state to govern, as any one knows.

He called out for Pat

In the pitch of B flat,

(An appropriate pitch, we must all admit that,)

And he cried to his spirit: "Wherever you mix
With the stacks of good men who have crossed o'er
the Styx,

Be assured by the vow

That I register now,

I shall fall upon Hec like a thousand of bricks

With a dazzling array of entirely new tricks.

Though my armor he dons, he will tire of the suit

Like a lad who essays his initial cheroot

And then throws it aside,—with some more things
to boot.

Take comfort, good Pat, though no comfort have I.

We shall meet once again in the sweet by and by.

And a decent interment I'll see that you get,

But the hatchet I'll keep above ground a while yet."

Now the fond, doting mother, good Madam Peleus,

Reflected on methods designed to reduce

The weight of the woe of her overwrought son,

And finally hit on a suitable one.

With her purse in her mit

And with money in it,

She strolled to the town to go shopping a bit

In search of a suit and in search of a fit,—

Not a counter fit, though, of the hand-me-down class,

But a tailor-made garment which none could surpass,

With the coat made of steel and the trousers of brass.

She sought out the pride
Of the whole countryside,

One Mr. Hephæstus, renowned far and wide,
Who delivered his goods to the cream of the gods
And was reckoned the readiest tailor by odds.
He was really the first who could vulcanize clothes
To be proof from the helmet clear down to the hose
From a hard rain of bullets from inclement foes.
There was quite a demand for such vestments as
those.

Now Thetis herself was a part of the cream
Of the stylish four hundred and social régime,
And she lauded the tailor with praises enough
To tickle his pride with her lavish cream puff.

“You are splendid,” said she,
“If you leave it to me;

Just as clever, in fact, as you're cracked up to be;
And the person to whom such an order belongs.
So I want you to go for it hammer and tongs.”
She then took the trouble to tell him at length
The sort of a suit in the style and the strength
She wanted to buy for her languishing lad,
Since Patrick had worn out the best one he had

And had not worn it back,
But, alas and alack,

Had yielded it up at the point of attack.

“Very well,” said Hephæstus, who beamed with de-
light,

“I will drink me some coffee and sit up tonight
And will finish the suit by the first streak of light.



THINGS HAVE ADVANCED ON ACCOUNT OF THE WAR

But the price will be great I'll be asking you for,
Since things have advanced on account of the war."

When the suit was delivered next morning at dawn,
Achilles arose and at once tried it on,
And said he was glad that the other was gone;

 Since this was the best

 He had ever possessed,

And was thicker in spots that protected the chest.

He could wear it, in fact, without need of a vest.

And the cost was so great and so tickled him, too,

That he left the price tag in conspicuous view.

Besides, it betokened the garment was new.

 And his gleeful uplift

 On account of the gift

Made him harbor no thought of the horrible rift

That had kept him and Aggie in cavil and strife

In a scratch-as-scratch-can sort of cat-and-dog life.

He sought Aggie out for a chance to enlist,

And presented his hand in the place of his fist,

With a penitent plea to be pardoned and kissed.

 With a sob and a sigh

 And a pitiful cry,

Poor Aggie at once sprang a leak in each eye

That watered the blooms that were stamped on his
shirt

Till they wilted and ran like the troops that desert.

He was weeping for joy,—which, of course, didn't
hurt.

(His eyes as a rule were as dry as the sand
 Of the mighty Sahara or arid Soudan
 Or a book in a tongue that we don't understand.)
 So behind all his wailing the sun was ablaze;
 And the tear-clouds dispersed with their lachrymose
 haze

When he welcomed Achilles & Company back
 As the choicest persimmons contained in the sack.
 (A figure of speech which the classics all lack.)

 He gave him a bow,
 A salaam and kotow,—

In fact, he did every salute he knew how,—
 And bragged on the suit which Hephæstus had made
 As the best piece of work he had ever displayed,—
 Of value to wear or to sell or to trade.
 Then Achilles in turn complimented his chief
 As a balm for his soul and for mental relief,
 And the two of them speedily conquered their grief.

When the stock of their mutual praise had run out
 And more serious things could be studied about,
 Achilles remarked: "I am off to the fray,
 So I hasten to bid you a hearty good-day.
 For I am the devil that Hec has to pay."

 Then he wandered afield
 With his spear and his shield,

And with neither his purpose nor weapons concealed.
 And the blood in the veins of the Trojans congealed
 In a feverish fear
 Of the new fighting gear
 As with proper precaution they ran to the rear.

On a postman, perhaps, such a fine coat of mail
Would have been much admired in minutest detail
As a trapping which all men of letters could wear
With appropriate pride and a satisfied air.
But the Trojans in horror took one single stare
And then took a full flight and departed from there.
A retiring propensity all seemed to share.

When Apollo observed how Achilles was diked
In a coating of steel that was skilfully spiked,
He shouted to Hector: "Although you stood Pat,
You had better beware of a garment like that.
Fight shy of Achilles and linger aloof
Unless you can puncture his vulnerable hoof."

Then Hec in a trice
Took Apollo's advice,—

It was not necessary to caution him twice,—
But the boastful Æneas, stuck-up as of yore,
Took a terrible chance to get stuck up some more
When he hurled a big boulder without yelling
"Fore!"

And, as likely as not,
Would have died on the spot
With the sword of Achilles releasing his gore,
Had it not been for Neptune, who kept him intact
With a cloud for a curtain that ended the act.

When the mist cleared away
Later on in the day
And Achilles could see to proceed on his way,
He discerned that the Trojans were heeding the calls

Of their good trainer Priam, who coached from the
walls

In an effort to tell how a goal from the field
Could be made through the gates that were standing
unsealed.

So they poured into town with the wanton delight
That the cowboys display on a Saturday night,
And they fastened the portals to shield them from
harm,

And they set with precision the burglar alarm.

It is sad to relate

(But a fact I must state)

That young Hector alone did not enter the gate,—
Though he'd learned long before not to stay out too
late.

It was either imprudence or else it was fate.

His father implored

With his words underscored

He would flee from a station so rash and untoward.
But the neck of young Hec was as stiff as a gourd.

And he said in reply:

“I am ready to die

If the time is at hand for a final good-bye;
But Achilles will find his investment of tin
Is a dangerous thing to array himself in,
And that I am prepared with a suitable ruse
Since I have a can opener ready to use.”

The words of Apollo were gone from his ear
And his wits were as dull as the butt of his spear.

They say a wise man often alters his mind,—
In which respect Hector was one of that kind;
For as soon as Achilles came up where he stood,
He straightway departed from that neighborhood.
He ran just as fast as he possibly could.
With Achilles in chase like a threatening fate,
He circled the walls at a terrible rate,
While his father kept yelling, "Duck in at a gate!"
But he couldn't duck in, I am sorry to state,
For he saw every time he looked back on his rounds
That steel was advancing by leaps and by bounds
On the back of Achilles, a regular bull,
With whom Hector had no particular pull.
The onrushing Greek was entirely too near
For Hec to attempt to butt in anywhere,
 And the fatal mishap
 Of a rush for a gap
Would have brought to the Trojan an eternal nap.
So he wisely began an additional lap.

At last, in exhaustion and all out of breath,
He felt that his lot was no better than death,—
For death is a state in which breath is all gone,
And the stock had run out that he'd been running on.
 So he gave up the chase
 And selected a place
Where he thought he could fall full of glory and
 grace,
Like a king that succumbs to the drop of an ace.
But the drop he foresaw was a hard one to face.

Then Achilles came up
Like a prize-winning pup
At a kennel display to be given the cup,
And poor Hector looked on
As if life were in pawn
And his ticket forgotten or otherwise gone.
(An account, I am sure, which is not overdrawn.)

“Bah! Bah!” shouted Hector, his courage to keep,
But his voice was as weak as the bleat of a sheep;
And as weak was the thrust that he made with his
spear,
Which bounced like a ball from the Greek’s fighting
gear.

Then Achilles, enraged, hurled a weapon at Hec,
Who got it, the classics relate, in the neck
And whirled thrice around
In amazement profound
At his three reel performance and fell to the ground.
“I feared,” murmured he, “that I could not endure
A match of this sort, and I’ll soon be dead sure,
And here on the plain
I will lie with the slain,
For the Greek has struck me in a serious vein.”
He begged that his body be spared to his wife
That she might look upon him as natural as life,
But Achilles refused in indignant disdain
And declared she would never behold him again.
(You may here shed a tear at this sorrowful strain.)

In a mock show of grief at the fate of his foe,
Achilles in triumph took Hector in tow

By binding his feet,— (an effect, if you please,
He had learned long before from the crafty Chinese.
But he practiced a different method, it seems,
For he fastened a cable to Hector's extremes,
And the end of the cord not affixed to the feet
He attached to his car at the back of his seat).
Then he drove through the hollows and over the
heights

For a spin round the city to take in the sights,
While Hector was trailing o'er hill and ravine
And absorbing the shocks like a threshing machine.
On the top of the walls all the Trojans dismayed
Were bemoaning their lot as they viewed the parade,
While the taunting Achilles continued to chide
That Hector was drifting along with the tied.
And he shouted to Priam in gusto and glee:
"Your son is a traitor! He's following me!
And when you dissever your gold from your dross,
You can count upon him as a total dead loss!"

I am glad that the classics permit me to say:
At last, when the conquering Greek rode away,
The pitiful strains
Of the Trojan refrains

Inclined him to part with the battered remains;
That he came to his tent with a tinge of remorse;
That King Priam was sent to recover the corpse;
That Achilles in penitence gave up the lad
And the means of identification he had,—
Because it was difficult after the drag
To recognize Hector except by a tag.

XI
DISCARDING A QUEEN

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DISCARDING A QUEEN

WHEN Hector was duly examined
And the Trojans perceived he had
passed,
They were much at a loss for a suitable boss
Who could handle his rôle in the cast.
For they liked not the capers of Paris
Nor the didos Æneas displayed,
And they felt that the van was no place for a man
Who would bring them amiss with a maid.

But there came to them Penthesilea,
A queen in descent and design.
And history teaches she filled up the breaches
Which Hector had left in the line.
For she came with a chorus of cohorts
To banish their useless regrets
And supply their demand with the beautiful band
Of her militant maid suffragettes.

They were known as the Amazon damsels,—
 Though not from Brazil, I may say,
Nor the regions about the big River of Doubt,
 But from over the Caucasus way.
They were martial, magnificent maidens
 Who would scrap at the drop of a hat,
And could fight, when they'd choose, anything except
 booze,—
 And perhaps just a little of that.

With the Trojan array to escort them,
 In couples they marched to the front
With the finish and skill of a featurng drill
 In a musical comedy stunt.
And they hopped,— but without hesitation,—
 When they came to the scene of the meet,
In the thick of the fray and went waltzing away
 With their quota of arms and of feet.

But the Greeks set them dancing in earnest
 In a difficult get-away glide.
For the Greeks were adepts at some holds and some
 steps
 That the Amazons never had tried.
And the maidens, alas, chicken-hearted,
 Departed, aghast and afraid,
While their queen held her place with a scowl on
 her face
 And her beautiful hair in a braid.



THE AMAZON DAMSELS

Then she challenged Achilles to combat
In a reckless flirtation with fate,—
Though her hope of success in a duel was less
Than the chance that she stood in debate.
But the ways of a prude and of prudence
Were methods unknown to her art;
And a thrust of cold steel was the only appeal
That Achilles could make to her heart.

He endeavored to turn and dissuade her
And diminish her ardor for war,
But a tussle with him with her bustle and vim
Was the thing she was hankering for.
And the sequel is one of some sorrow,
For the queen went away to her rest,—
Though the Greek was unwilling to make such a
killing
And the Amazon died by request.

XII

THE CALL OF THE CHIEF OPERATOR

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THE CALL OF THE CHIEF OPERATOR

ACHILLES,—it grieves me to have to re-
late,—
Kept raising the Trojan mortality rate
By lowering leaders as fast as they came
And helping them down from the ladder of fame.
One Memnon, the next one in order to go,
Gave Charon a record of three in a row
Who had crossed o'er the river and gone to the dogs
Which stood upon guard in the Stygian bogs.

The Trojans reflected and pondered and mused
On the heroes Achilles had killed and contused,—
For each of their stars he had met with his blade
And had put out his light and reduced him to shade.
And they sought to devise a contrivance or craft
That would place him in passage aboard Charon's
raft,
But no hope could they find to deprive him of breath
Unless he should chance to be tickled to death.

But all that goes up is predestined to fall,
 And the lane is a long one that turns not at all;
 And the fate of the Greek took a turn to reveal
 The place on his foot where a wound wouldn't heal.
 (You mothers, who follow in his mother's path,
 Be careful in giving your babies a bath:
 To ward off a foothold of tragedy dread,
 You should start at the heels and wash up toward
 the head.)

The same heartless Paris who started the fray
 By stealing a heart in a clandestine way,
 Brought about with an arrow the Greek's over-
 throw,—
 But he didn't shoot this one from Dan Cupid's bow.
 The death-dealing dart he selected to spend
 Bore a poisonous tip on the business end;
 And with cunning and caution he aimed at his goal,—
 Not the heart of the Greek but his vulnerable sole.

With regard to the scene of this matter one finds
 Some different views in the classical lines,—
 A perfectly natural fact, it appears,
 Since the classical writers looked on through their
 tears.

One author avers he was seeking to wed
 A daughter of Priam; another has said
 He was leading a charge; but each one of them shows
 He was hit in the heel and then turned up his toes.

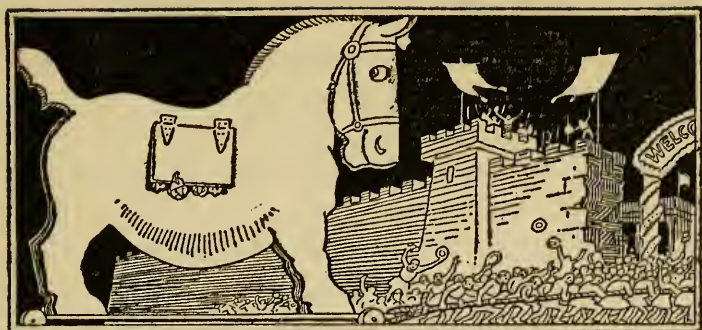
The missile of Paris went straight to its mark,
And Achilles prepared for a leap in the dark,—
For he questioned in vain in his grief and despair
If there happened to be a chiropodist there.
And footsore and weary and boiling with wrath,
He cursed him who thus put a thorn in his path
And exclaimed in the anger and anguish he felt,
“Foul fiend! You have struck me far under the
belt!”

Then the hand of the hero, alack and alas,
Grew deplorably weak as he whispered, “I pass.”
And he went from the game like a loser who recks
Of the chances he takes, and he cashed in his checks.
Then the Greeks laid him out on a funeral pyre
With appropriate rites and a burning desire
To display their distress at the terrible stroke
That was bearing their conqueror upward in smoke.

For rest to his spirit to shadeland returned,
For peace to his ashes so notably earned,
The Greeks looked aloft with importunate cry
And, like unto us, bade the hero good-bye.
Farewell to Achilles, the best of his clan,
With the head of a god and the heel of a man!
Farewell to the pride of the Grecian array,
A demigod soul on a footing of clay!

XIII

A KINGDOM FOR A HORSE



XIII

A KINGDOM FOR A HORSE

THE Grecians, alert for a leader of note,
Resolved to award by resort to a vote
The helmet and hosiery, trousers and coat
Which the valiant Achilles had cased himself in,—
Ere an amorous suit he had placed himself in
When young Paris took steps the engagement to
break

By reducing the steps that Achilles could take.
(This sentence is long and, accordingly, weak;
But a longer one still was pronounced on the Greek.)

When election day came, as election days do,
The names that appeared on the ballots were two:
Ulysses the one and the other Ajax.
And many a Greek gave his big battle axe
In exchange for the use of a valid poll tax,—
An early example the records afford
Of a time when the pen had the edge on the sword.

When the votes had been counted, Ulysses, they say,
Had all of the happy returns of the day
By a margin so great that the rivalling Greek
Sought to drown his despair in the depths of Salt
Creek.

But the saline solution was powerless quite
To keep up his heart in his pitiful plight,
And he took an excursion to Lethe instead
(Which means that he went to abide with the dead)
While Mr. Ulysses remained overhead
In the coveted garb of Achilles arrayed,
And so had the better of him by a shade.

One Helenus, gifted in prophecy's arts,
A son of King Priam and lad of some parts,
Who, like to his sister Cassandra in sleight,
Could see things in daytime as well as at night,
Was captured one day by a Hellenic gin
Just after Ulysses was duly sworn in.

This lad was coerced by some third degree stuff
To practice his prophetic vision enough
To reveal what the Trojans were thinking about
And to tell of three strikes that would put them all
out.

(A base, bald attempt to accomplish their rout.)
The first one was simple: Achilles' young kid
Should fight in their ranks,— and, accordingly, did;
The second more serious: some one should get
The arrows belonging to Heracles' set.

This curious kit Philoctetes of yore
Had kept in his own miscellaneous store
(We have spoken of him and his missiles before)
When alone on a desolate isle he was put
With an ache in his heart and a pain in his foot.

In an effort to set Philoctetes at ease
From his cardiac pangs and his pedal disease,
And to win back the arrows by methods like these,
Ulysses then sailed with a competent leech
And a comrade or two and a memorized speech.
And his words were so smooth and the doctor so wise
That the archer, aquiver, with blood in his eyes
As he found himself whole in his hoof and his heart,
Agreed to assist with each coveted dart.
He would be at the finish though barred at the start.

Exhibiting class in belligerent stunts,
The archer proceeded to Paris at once
And opened his heart (that of Paris, I mean)
With a dart that was dipped in a dire Paris green.
For he bent both his bow and his energy, too,
In removing the cause, as the good doctors do,
By providing a speedy approach unto death
For the brave son of Priam that quite took his breath.

The other condition which Helenus set,
The third and the last and the hardest one yet,
Was the theft of the trophy of Ilium's joy,
The famous Palladium, honored in Troy,

In which all the hopes of the Trojans were put,
As a negro relies on a charmed rabbit's foot.

But the mighty Ulysses at once started out
With some self-given wounds and a mendicant's pout,
And paraded the city to look all about
For this image of Pallas-Athene in wood
That stood very high in that whole neighborhood.
(I'd tell you the height of the thing if I could.)
His beggar's disguise was so very complete
That he passed without question the crowds on the
street,
And he garnered the coppers they dropped in his cup
And avoided the coppers the city dressed up.

With the nation at war and with Paris at peace,
The thoughts of fair Helen were turning to Greece,—
Though, very soon after her mate's overthrow,
At the altar with young Deiphobus in tow,
For an exchange of vows she had tranquilly stood
And had cut out the weeds of her brief widowhood.

She was strolling the street in a swaggering show
And displaying the duds of her latest trousseau
When she met with Ulysses and pierced his disguise
And unfolded the truth that he sought with his lies.
She was turning to Greece, quite a natural fault,—
But not in the way Mrs. Lot turned to salt,—
And she lent him a hand in the promising hunt,—
For bestowing her hand was her favorite stunt.

And soon, as no doubt you infer was the case,
Pretty Pallas-Athene was off of her base
And eloping, alas, in a Grecian's embrace.

With the stubborn conditions which Helenus set
Thus so bravely essayed and successfully met,
The Greeks had a sculptor to build them a steed,
A wooden but wonderful charger indeed.
There was never another, in fact, of its breed.
It was very spectacular, very immense,—
It bespoke for its maker a lot of horse-sense,—
Very spacious within, very specious without,—
A hobby, in short, to be happy about.

When the creature was finished and ready to ride,
A band of Greek soldiers was hustled inside,—
And, if you believe this miraculous tale,
You should not question Jonah's sojourn in the
whale,—

An old *casus belli* where doubters prevail.
Then the Greeks sailed away with a horselaugh or
two
At the fate of their foes that was sure to ensue
When they captured the nag, for 'twas easier far
Thus to horsewhip the Trojans than beat them in
war.

Then forth from the gates with a song and a shout
Came the forces of Ilium sallying out;
And they gazed at their booty with pleasure and
pride,

But entirely forgot to inspect the inside.
And they called it a dream,— they were quite un-
aware

It was very much more like a noxious nightmare,—
And they wanted to take it at once through the wall
And construct for its comfort an elegant stall.

But a priest of Apollo and two of his sons
Arose to proclaim it more direful than guns,
And averred that to them it was plain as could be
It was horseplay in quite an unusual degree.
But the Trojans regarded each word that they spoke
As a sort of horse-chestnut attempt at a joke.
And, besides, to discredit the warnings they hurled,
Some snakes came and ushered them out of the
world.

One Sinon (Ulysses had left him behind
In some stocks and some bonds for the Trojans to
find)
Was a crafty old Greek who, in lines of deceit,
Had a line on the Trojans that couldn't be beat.
(I must mention it here to make my lines complete.)
With some sobs in his voice and some tears on his
cheeks,
He appeared as a captive escaped from the Greeks,
And announced to his foes, though he hailed them
as friends,
That his stocks and his bonds were without divi-
dends

And were really a burden and drag on his hands
And afforded no interest to meet his demands.
They were fetters imposed by the base Grecian
bands.

It is likely this Greek was the first to give breath
To that famous petition for freedom or death;
And he vowed, if his chains they would properly
loose,
He would tell all about this perplexing *cayuse*.
For he boldly declared he had worked as a lad
In a livery stable and made it his fad
To observe every trait that a horse ever had,
And insisted concerning this newfangled nag
He could straightway deliver the cat from the bag
And explain in a jiffy its wherefores and whys
With the ease of a pugilist dotting some eyes.

When freed from his shackles, this Grecian, forsooth,
Started stretching his limbs and then stretching the
truth.
For he looked at the steed and with absolute ease
Very blandly affirmed it was built to appease
The affront to Minerva, whose rage was aglow
That her statue no longer was *in statu quo*.
(A term of the law which you probably know.)
Old Calchas, said he, had suggested the steed,
And the Greeks framed it up and sailed homeward
to plead
With the oracle there to tell how to proceed,—

With the comforting thought that the horse was so
tall
That the Trojan array could not use it at all
Since it couldn't be put through a gate in their wall.

No sooner had Sinon delivered his speech
Than the Trojans began on a big mural breach,
With a firm resolution their work to pursue
Until the horse trade was completely put through.
(Though Cassandra declared that it never would do.)
So they battered away with their shivering shocks
And they knocked out a hole for a couple of blocks,—
An extravagant waste of some excellent rocks,—
And they pulled at the steed with victorious mien,
But it balked like an auto without gasoline.
Then they twisted its tail and they offered it hay,
But it couldn't be started in any such way;
So they ordered some rollers to fix to its feet,
And they shod it all round with this clever conceit,
And they ushered it in without hindrance or drag,
With some wheels in their heads and some more on
the nag.

With the beast now at bay,— so they reasoned, at
least,—
Though I can't say that bay was the shade of the
beast,—
They began a carousal and grew quite as drunk
As a pipe-hitting Chink on a snooze in his bunk.
And they gave way to dreams of a fanciful sort,
Like the same kind of Chink in his smoking resort,

And they slumbered at ease in ecstatic delight
Till they soon were as still as the dead of the night.

A prearranged signal then summoned the fleet,
Which had anchored at sea in a cozy retreat.
And while it sailed back without tinge of remorse
Old Sinon unbuttoned the side of the horse.
And out stepped the Jonahs the truth to unfold
That the city should fall as the gods had foretold,—
For the soldiers possessed, beyond shadow of doubt,
Inside information that hadn't leaked out.

The horse and the city had come to a hitch,
With the Trojan defenders asleep at the switch.
And with portals ajar and the army ashore,
The Grecians proceeded as never before
To paint the town red with the enemy's gore.
And the Trojans, astounded, were taken aback
As they opened their eyes and a counter attack,
While the Grecians continued to sew up the sack.

And now comes the truth that distresses me most:
King Priam, alas, and his militant host
Surrendered their treasures and gave up the ghost.
They were out of the running and left at their post.
Æneas alone made a bold get away,
With his father atop of his shoulders, they say.
But I find little balm for the general scrape
In the fact that these citizens made their escape.
Let us cover the scene with a mantle of crêpe.

Fair Helen, of course, since the Trojans were dead,
Attended her Hellenic husband instead.
And he welcomed her back with obliging good-will,
For in spite of her faults he was loving her still.
Then the bands of the Grecians were hurried aboard,
And the swag and the booty were suitably stored,
And the vessels set sail o'er the shimmering foam.
The performance was over, and so they went home.

The Finish

FRITZ GARLAND LANHAM

FRITZ GARLAND LANHAM *

To Alcalde Editor Fritz, a Line or so of Praise that Fits.

Alas, alas, our Fritz, he quits a place devoid of perquisites,
But one well suited to his wits.
His time now goes on legal writs, on getting clients out
through slits,
On rending statutes into splits.
No Texas Ex, I know, admits he's glad to see the end of
Fritz,
But sadly, hopelessly submits.
O what a Sin he now commits if from this mag he wholly flits,
And nothing further here emits!
How we shall miss his merry skits, his puns, his jokes, his
frequent hits,
That shook our ribs almost to bits!!!

NOT very far from the ruddy banks of the Brazos, within drinking distance of the health-renewing waters of the Crazy Well, situate on both sides of the T. & P. between Aledo on the east and Millsap on the west, the discerning geographer finds the notable city of Weatherford, which was once a commercial metropolis that attracted buyers from distant Frogtown and Desdemona, but which now has its trade area a little reduced towards the east by the united competition of Fort Worth and Dallas. In spite of these envious

* Reprinted from the November, 1916, University of Texas *Alcalde*, upon the retirement of Mr. Lanham as Editor-in-Chief.

oriental municipalities, Weatherford continues to flourish amid her post oaks and watermelons, amid her black and red haws, which compete with each other in delighting the palate of mankind. All who are familiar with the history of Parker County, and their name is legion, know that Weatherford is its county seat, whereat in times past events not unimportant in the history of civilization have taken place. There, a few decades ago, Charlie S. Potts and Eddie T. Miller and Johnnie A. Lomax dabbled their toes in its sands and their brains in its collegiate fountains of learning. There, in much more ancient times, the unjustly treated author of these historic lines was, *vi et armis*, put out of Cleveland College of which previously he had been the pride and ornament because he had paid his board several months in advance and because he had gallantly refused to "tell on" a couple of mischievous young culprits who had sprinkled a few quarts of sulphur match heads over the floor of a Sunday school, which, as a consequence, on the following Sabbath, had more the smell of the brimstone lake than the odor of sanctity. Adjacent thereto, at a time so remote that chronologers are quarrelling over the matter, was born a certain T. U. Taylor, one of the hoohooiest of our hoohoos.

Were Baedeker correctly informed concerning these sundry other events of great or equal merit, Weatherford would long ago have been twice starred à la Yosemite, Yellowstone and Niagara. Did Baedeker know that Fritz G. Lanham had selected Weatherford as his birthplace, triple stars would henceforth

decorate the town in all future guide books whatsoever. The birthplace of Homer is unfortunately unknown, seven cities contending acrimoniously for the honor. Happy Weatherford, which claims without denial the natal cradle of the immortal author of *The Sack of Troy*. Thrice happy Oyster Hill, about whose feet the infant Fritz must first have discerned the vague outlines of that vast sack into which he has dumped Fay and Helen, and Battle and Cassandra. Blessed among fountains is the Eddleman Pool, whose cretaceous waters and Pactolinian sands have laved the limbs of him who in after life was to become the first editor of the *Alcalde* and the author of a book destined to become more famous than the *Batrachomyomachia*.

Fritz was an infant prodigy. At Weatherford College he shone beside boys ten years his seniors, winning prizes from them while he was still in the Little Lord Fauntleroy knee-breeches stage. He and Ed Miller sharpened their wits on each other while youthful classmates. But the Phaino Literary Society was where he first became a maker of puns which later he put in such prodigious numbers into the "Baker of Buns," one of his *magna opera*. The etymologist will note also the connection between *phaino*, I shine, *phaneros*, open and manifest, and *phanari*, a lighthouse. It is manifest that Fritz was predestined to shine openly in this world, but whether Mrs. Fritz was predestined to a life of light house-keeping (not lighthouse keeping) is still a matter of dispute. According to Fritz, she is, unless he quits

monkeying with Troy and the *Alcalde* and devotes the major portion of his energies to practicing law.

After learning all there was at Weatherford, Fritz imitated the Saners and hied himself to Vanderbilt, from where, discovering the error of his ways, he turned after one year to Texas, which henceforth absorbed his attention and his puns. While here he disturbed, but did not surprise, Mrs. Kirby by falling in love. A single look at Mrs. Fritz will tell you why this happened better than any clumsy words. Of course, the looks that Fritz turned in her direction were neither single nor singular. There were millions of them, a plural number if there ever was one. I suppose Fritz would say that he singled her out not to remain single. For which reason he was selected in 1908 to talk about Mrs. Kirby and her girls. Upon that occasion he criticised Mrs. Kirby for always preferring charges against those who preferred her charges, and for her opposition to the Romance languages. But he complimented her for her superiority to Sherlock Holmes, who only solves cases, while she prevents them from arising.

After writing the "Baker of Buns" and attaining, together with his brother Frank, unprecedented fame as a collegiate actor, Fritz essayed to tread before the footlights, and toured the country with I don't know how many chorus girls. He won success, but as no one egged him to stay on the stage he soon retired to the more congenial atmosphere of a law office. Frank also gave up the feathers of the theatre for the tar of a plutocratic paving company. Frank is trying to

flatten out the streets at so much per square yard, while Fritz is trying to flatten out the opposing bar at so much per client. This is not the first time that law and engineering have robbed art of some luscious devotees.

Generous in his desires to help others, sweet-spirited in all things, cherishing no mean ambitions, desiring worldly goods much less than the approval of right thinking people, Fritz lives at Weatherford in the old home of his father, Governor Lanham, from which he has not been lured by the efforts of friends who have asked him to go to Forth Worth or Dallas and win the larger financial rewards of a city. But to remain faithful to the family roof tree is a pretty good sort of Bushido, to my way of thinking.

If you don't esteem and admire and love Fritz Lanham one of two causes is operating: either you do not know him well, or you are out of joint with your better self. In the first case, you should journey to Weatherford or an alumni reunion and get to know Fritz better; in the second case, you should send for a doctor and get your insides looked into. If you are all right all the way through, you can't help loving Fritz.

The *Alcalde* Staff Peregrimiser.

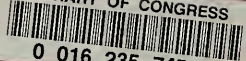








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