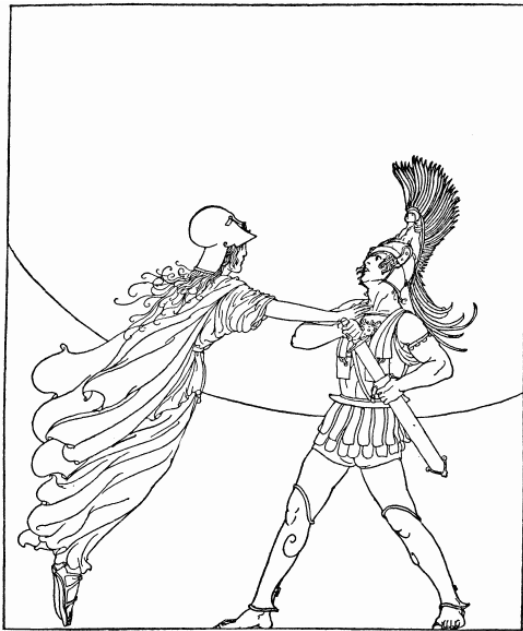


who had made a vow not to refrain from war until they had taken King Priam's famous city.'

XI

Achilles became the most renowned of all the heroes who strove against Troy in the years the fighting went on. Before the sight of him, clad in the flashing armour that was the gift of Zeus and standing in the chariot drawn by the immortal horses, the Trojan ranks would break and the Trojan men would flee back to the gate of their city. And many lesser cities and towns around Troy did the host with the help of Achilles take.

'Now because of two maidens taken captive from some of these cities a quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon grew up. One of the maidens was called Chryseis and the other Briseis. Chryseis was given to Agamemnon and Briseis to Achilles.



'The father of Chryseis was a priest of Apollo, and when the maiden, his daughter, was not given back to him, he went and prayed the god to avenge him on the host. Apollo listened to his

prayer, and straightway the god left his mountain peak with his bow of silver in his hands. He stood behind the ships and shot his arrows into the host. Terrible was the clanging of his silver bow. He smote the beasts of the camp first, the dogs and the mules and the horses, and then he smote the men, and those whom his arrows smote were stricken by the plague.

'The warriors began to die, and every day more perished by the plague than were killed by the spears and swords and arrows of the Trojans. Now a council was summoned and the chiefs debated what was to be done to save the host. At the council there was a soothsayer named Kalchas; he stood up and declared that he knew the cause of the plague, and he knew too how the remainder of the host might be saved from it.

'It was because of the anger of Apollo, Kalchas said; and that anger could only be averted by Agamemnon sending back to his father, the priest of Apollo, the maiden Chryseis.

'Then was Agamemnon wroth exceedingly. "Thou seer of things evil," said he to Kalchas, "never didst thou see aught of good for me or mine. The maiden given to me, Chryseis, I greatly prize. Yet rather than my folk should perish I shall let her be taken from me. But this let you all of the council know: some other prize must be given to me that the whole host may know that Agamemnon is not slighted."

'Then said Achilles: "Agamemnon, of all Kings you are the most covetous. The best of us toil and battle that you may come and take what part of the spoil may please you. Be covetous no more. Let this maiden go back to her father and afterwards we will give you some other prize."

'Said Agamemnon: "The council here must bind itself to give me recompense."

"Still you speak of recompense, Agamemnon," answered Achilles. "No one gains more than you gain. I had no quarrel with the men of Troy, and yet I have come here, and my hands bear the brunt of the war."

"You who are captains must give me a recompense," said Agamemnon, "or else I shall go to the tent of Achilles and take away the maiden given to him, Briseis of the Fair Cheeks."