GREAT BOOKS

Siege of Troy Recounted in Homer's Story

By ELIZABETH C. JAMES

THE story of "The Iliad" by Homer takes place during the Trojan war and relates the wrath of Achilles, greatest of warriors.

It is now the ninth year of siege when Homer begins his epic and the Greeks are encamped on the shores of Asia Minor, besieging Troy. They are dejected as the poem begins, for their hero will not fight. The mighty Achilles sulks in his tent.

Elizabeth James

Agememnon, commander of Greek forces, had demanded a slave girl who had previously been awarded to Achilles as part of the spoils of battle. Thus unjustly treated by his commander, Achilles retired to his tents with his followers and refused to fight.

During the days of this quarrel, conversations among the men relate previous happenings.

Helen, most beautiful woman of history, was wooed by every prince of Greece. To protect the fortunate winner, all these chieftains swore to defend Helen, should the necessity ever arise. She finally chose Menelaus to be her husband. Sometime after this, Paris of Troy, a handsome youth, came to visit at the palace of Menelaus. When he returned, he took Helen back to Troy with him. Thus all Greek chieftains were called upon to fulfill their vows and go to reclaim Helen.

Pretends to Be Mad.

Ulysses, happily married, did not wish to go on such a quest. He pretended madness, and plowed the fields, sowing salt.

When the boats were ready to sail for Troy, the winds stopped. An oracle explained that a maiden of royal birth must be sacrificed. So, Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, was made a human propitiation to the god of winds.

Nine years of encampment then followed with neither side gaining much advantage. Meanwhile within the walls of Troy, Helen's great beauty had so completely captured the Trojan people that they fought madly to keep her within their city.

TRADITIONAL POET

The Iliad and the Odyssey were recited or performed every four years at Athens during the classical period. Homer is the traditional poet of these two poems; he has no existence apart from his poetry. The facts of his life are traditional or are surmised from his writings.

As far back as the classical period in Greece, Homer was an ancient poet. The classical Greeks made translations of his work, they wrote lives of Homer, they taught his poems and made analyses of his work. The language which he used in the original poems was ancient to the classical Greeks.

Hector Challenges.

Then occurred the incident of the slave girl and Achilles' wrath. Hector, the greatest warrior of Troy, came forth and issued a challenge for individual combat. But no one answered. Achilles was the only man to fight this Trojan warrior, and Achilles would not fight. Then Patroclus, dear friend of Achilles, borrowed the armor of Achilles and went forth to uphold the fair name of Greece.

From his tents Achilles saw his friend die. With a roar he rushed into the battle, but he had no armor. He would recover Patroclus' body for burial. The sound of his voice was enough; the Trojans were back inside the wall.

Achilles must have new armor. His goddess mother came and offered to have a suit forged in the fires of Vulcan.

Achilles Fights Hector

Clad in his new armor, Achilles sought Hector for combat. The mighty warriors were evenly matched. Around they circled, each seeking an opening in the other's guard. Time passed, yet they fought furiously, neither gaining advantage over the other. A goddess favoring Achilles flew down from Olympus and clouded the eyes of Hector, so that Achilles succeeded in smiting him a powerful stroke with his sword. Hector lay in the dust, his plumes and fine clothing despoiled. A wail went up from the tops of the walls of Troy as Achilles fastened thongs in the heels of Hector and tied him to his chariot, then drove madly round the walls of Troy.

Late at night there came a visitor to the tents of Achilles, it was Priam, aged king of Troy and father of Hector. Weeping, he pleaded for the body of his son, he recounted the glory of Hector and with tears of love he proved that Hector was too noble to be forced to wander forever through the shades for lack of proper burial. Achilles heard his prayer with compassion and gave to him the body of his son.

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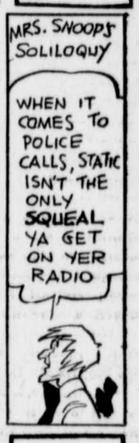

POP— Financial Advice

By J. MILLAR WATT

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THE WORLD AT ITS WORST By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

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WHILE THE WAITER WAITS

The Embarrassed One.—You've saved my life with the five-spot. I'll owe you an eternal debt of gratitude.

The Generous One.—I don't care how long you owe me your gratitude, but as to the five simoleons—that's another matter.

Repudiated Theory

"So you deny that a chimpanzee was your ancestor?"

"So far as I am personally concerned," answered Senator Sorghum, "I do. No creature that couldn't talk could possibly have been the ancestor of a politician in my state."

Trio Cheerio

"Hello! Hello! Hello! This is Smith, Smith and Smith lawyers."

"Oh, yes! Good morning, good morning, good morning.—Boy's Life.

Homebody

Newly-Arrived Convict—Lissen, chum, can't I open this cell window?

Guard—Naw. That's barred.

Curse of Progress