

which gathered in the great Bay of Lemnos three thousand years ago, and landed on the southern shore of the Hellespont to lay siege to the citadel of Troy. The history of a small and most tragic portion of their ten years' warfare is found in the verses of Homer. Imbedded in this wonderful narrative there are matters of interest to students of primitive religion, mythology, folk-lore, ethnology, geography, primitive civilization, and to doctors also. Many details are given of combats, of the weapons used, of the wounds inflicted, of the primitive means employed to cure them, and of a great epidemic, and mention is made of the doctors in the Greek host.

It may perhaps be of some interest if I try to gather these scattered references together into what might be called a medical history of the Trojan War, and tell you what little there is known of Asklepios, whose badge and sign all Army Doctors wear.

It does not fall within my province to discuss what hints there are in the pages of Homer as to the causes or the progress of the Trojan War. It is probable that, like many a subsequent one, it arose primarily from economic grounds. Troy lay near the mouth of the Dardanelles, was a great trade centre, and formed a barrier to any easterly Greek expansion. The abduction of Helen was a matter of secondary importance. The Greeks landed at the mouth of the Scamander, opposite Cape Helles, and constructed an entrenched camp. Lemnos serving them as a base from which provisions were brought. They never succeeded in actually surrounding Troy. Even in the tenth year of the war its allies could enter from the east. The fighting took place in the broad river valley which lay between the citadel of Troy and the Greek camp. The warriors were armed with spears and swords, bows and arrows, and carried long oval shields, and the chieftains probably had defensive armour. The chieftains of either side fought in the forefront of the battle, coming forward from the crowd of fighting men to throw spears or to engage in duels.

In this fighting spear wounds were by far the commonest. As might be expected, most of those in the head and body were immediately fatal. Thus Odysseus killed Demokoon by a spear which struck him in the temple, and the bronze point pierced through to the other temple and darkness covered his eyes. A spear might rebound from a helmet, in some cases causing concussion, or might pierce it. Thus "Diomedes threw a spear at Hector, but the bronze (spear-point) rebounded from the bronze (helmet) nor reached the flesh, for his three-layered helmet protected him. Hector ran back, fell on his knee leaning with heavy hand on the ground and black night covered his eyes, and after a brief space regained consciousness." Pandaros, the great archer, was killed