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A Complete Novel

By **HENRY KUTTNER**

CITADEL OF SCIENCE

By **ARTHUR J. BURKS**

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Title: The Greeks had a War for it

Date of first publication: 1941

Author: Henry Kuttner (as Kelvin Kent) (1914-1958)

Date first posted: Sep. 9, 2021

Date last updated: Sep. 9, 2021

Faded Page eBook #20210916

This eBook was produced by: Alex White & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

THE GREEKS HAD A WAR FOR IT

By

Henry Kuttner

Writing under the pseudonym Kelvin Kent

Author of "Man About Time," "Science Is Golden," etc.

Featuring Pete Manx, Year-Leaper!

First published *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, January 1941.

*Pete Manx Rides Again When Three-Score Men in a Trojan Horse Wage a Blitzkrieg
for a Blonde!*



Pete Manx

Dr. Horatio Mayhem and Professor Belleigh Aker stared around the sumptuous office in astonishment. They saw overstuffed furniture, soft carpets, a desk. On the desk was a pair of feet, behind which grinned the shrewd features of Pete Manx, Time Traveler Extraordinary.

“Get a load,” Manx advised, “of the ad in this ayem’s *Times*.” He indicated a folded newspaper. Smugly, he brushed invisible dust off his mauve tie, adjusted his checkered coat, and tipped his gleaming derby to a rakish angle.

The two professorial heads dipped as if attached to the same drive shaft. The advertisement, inserted by Historical Research, Inc., Peter Manx, Pres., solicited clients interested in the same—novelists, motion picture people, students, or what have you. The Past was an open book, the ad maintained. Any question about any era would be answered accurately and in detail by Manx’s organization, via the famous Time-chair, for a nominal consideration.

“What on earth,” breathed Mayhem in awe, “does this mean?”

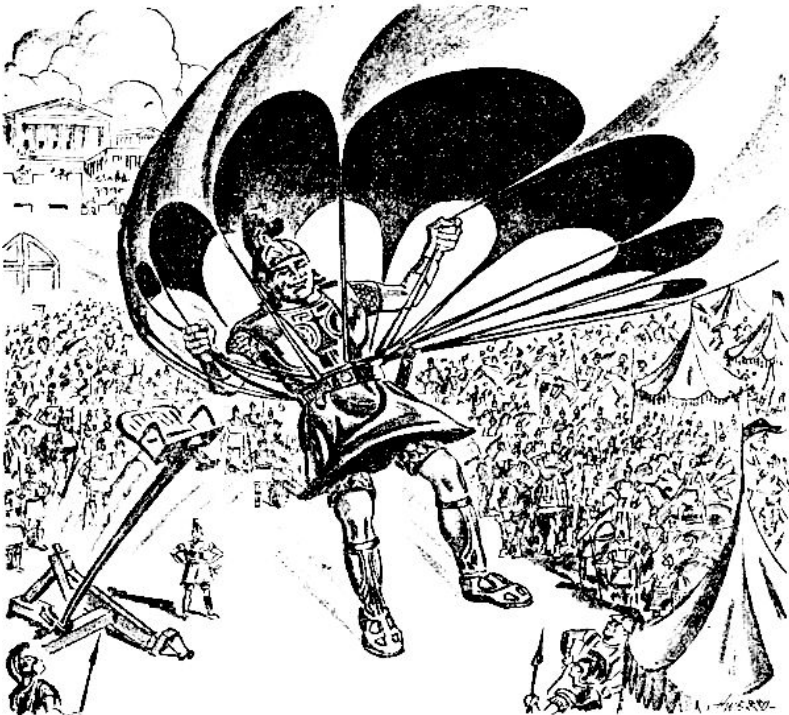
Pete smirked.

“It’s a cinch, Doc. You been strapped for dough for them experiments of yours, so I fixed it how we can make plenty. Let’s say a guy wants to know somethin’ about the Past. Well, all he has to do is tell us when it happened an’ we go back in person an’ find out about it—right on the spot! In your Time-chair, see?”

Aker laughed, a hollow, scornful laugh. “That, my good man, is ridiculous. No one would believe you.”

Pete looked complacent.

“No? Well, I already got a customer lined up. He phoned in, an’ I told him how we work. He’s interested, an’ he’ll be here in about five minutes. Wants to find out about them old Greeks. I been readin’ up.” He displayed a book, “The Life of the Ancient Grecians.” “In the back room I got a duplicate of the Time-chair pretty well set up. They know me pretty well around your lab at Plymouth U. So I had a coupla workmen look the thing over an’ make a copy. The final delicate adjustments’ll be up to you, of course.”



Pete soared through the air with the greatest of breeze

Mayhem was dubious.

“But I have no desire to commercialize my invention. I am a pure scientist—”

“You mean you’re a poor scientist. Stick with me, kid, an’ you’ll wear diamonds. No more pesterin’ your department head for dough.” He glanced shrewdly at Professor Aker.

Surprisingly, Aker agreed with Pete.

“Manx—er—has something there,” he said warmly. “Your experiments have been running us into debt lately, Dr. Mayhem. What with our endowment income shrinking yearly, and philanthropists becoming an extinct species, it might be wise to capitalize on your achievement.”

A timid knock sounded on the door. The visitor proved to be an emaciated, long-haired man of indeterminate age, with spectacles and unpressed clothes. He had the sad expression of a bloodhound. Vaguely he announced himself as calling in response to the ad in the morning paper.

“I am Henry Larose,” he said gloomily.

Mayhem and Aker looked interested. Larose was a famous historical novelist, with one best seller and three motion pictures to his credit.

“The situation is simple,” sighed Larose lugubriously. “I am doing a fictionized treatment of the life of Helen of Troy and the Trojan War.” He shook his head in sorrowful contemplation. “There are difficulties. Source material is a hopeless confusion of fact and legend—a mess of stuff about gods always interfering. I don’t know why I bother . . . However, Mr. Manx claims to be able to return to this era. If so, perhaps you could learn what really went on at the fall of Troy. Separate history from myth. I can scarcely believe such a thing possible, but—”

Mayhem swelled indignantly.

“Sir! We are not fakers! Our representative, Mr. Manx, can go anywhere in history I choose to send him. The sense of progressive Time is an artificial thing, self-imposed by humans to bring order and regulation to their affairs. Actually, all Time is coexistent, a sort of cosmic circle bounding the Central Time Consciousness. We release the mind into the Central Consciousness where, under the influence of a sort of psychic centrifuge, it is whirled out again into the mind of a person in any age we select. History is like the rim of a wheel, with Time the hub—”

“Oh, dear,” murmured Larose wearily.

The didactic Mayhem could not be stopped so easily.

“This is not an abnormal thing, but rather the fruition of what all human minds strive to do daily. Man constantly contemplates the future, or reminisces of the past. Unconsciously his Time sense tries to break the barriers holding him to the present moment. With my Time-chair, we give impetus to this struggle for psychic Time-freedom—”

“I have heard,” interposed Larose mournfully, “of the Time-chair.”

Mayhem swelled, beaming.

“Ah, then you know what we can do?”

“Scientific journals mention your work cautiously. Word-of-mouth rumors are getting around. You can’t hide a Time-chair.” Larose spoke cheerlessly. “You will probably be a famous man soon, Doctor. O, fame.” He buried his head in his hands.

Mayhem almost purred with content. Pete interposed.

“So let’s can th’ gab, fellas,” he snapped. “The guy wants us to take a gander at the Trojan War. What’s holdin’ us back?” Then he remembered. “Oh, yeah. The fee. Ancient Greece

bein' a long ways back, it'll cost you five hundred smackers, Mr. Larose."

The novelist promptly counted out the required sum. In melancholy tones, he said, "An eye-witness account of the siege of Troy would be worth twice that much. But how can I assure myself that I won't be the victim of a fraud?"

Pete blushed, admitting honestly to himself that there might be some cause for doubt. He knew his capabilities. On the midway, or at a sideshow, or from door-to-door, Manx was a supreme, fast-talking salesman. But his talent did not extend to inducing the upper classes to invest in intangibles. As he pondered, the sound of tinkering came from the back room where Mayhem was already absorbed in putting the finishing touches to the new Time-chair.

Fortunately, Professor Aker came to the rescue.

"As chairman of the physics department at Plymouth University, I think I may claim an unimpeachable character," he declared impressively. "I have been associated with Time-traveling in the past, and frankly, the idea of seeing Helen of Troy intrigues me. If it would reassure you, Mr. Larose, I would take the trip with Manx myself."

Larose laid down the five hundred without further ado. Manx pocketed it, then glowered at Aker.

"But remember, guy, no monkey business. Ye're just goin' back to see what happens. No mixin' into things an' gettin' in trouble, see?"

Aker smiled haughtily.

"You need not fear. I intend to play the role of innocent bystander, strictly. *I* have never tried to change the course of history," he ended pointedly.

"Okay, okay. Skip it. Let's go." Pete led the way into the back room, to find Mayhem had already finished the few remaining hookups. The Time-chair, constructed unusually wide so as to seat two persons, was ready. Without further argument Manx and Aker seated themselves side by side, while Mayhem adjusted the electrodes around head and wrists of the travelers.

"A month back there should be enough, shouldn't it?" suggested Dr. Mayhem. A month was agreeable.

Dynamos whined, arcs arced, converters converted, and transformers transformed. Mayhem threw the famous switch that had caused more than one upheaval in the days of yore.

Larose, in Pete's line of vision, began to show some signs of animation. He jiggled, then wobbled; his outlines began to blur and fade. There was a sickening sensation, a cosmic wrenching—

"Are you ill, Captain?"

Pete opened his eyes upon a wide plain bathed in blinding sunshine. The plain heaved once uncertainly, then settled back. Blinking, Pete shaded his eyes from the hot sun till the momentary dizziness passed. Then he turned to the man beside him.

The latter was a middle-aged, hard-bitten warrior. He was dressed, as was Pete, in helmet, cuirass, and greaves to protect the legs below the knees. Both wore short swords. Judging from the wealth of insignia on his uniform, the tough-looking battler must be none other than Agamemnon, himself, commander-in-chief of the Greek army.

"What did you say?" asked Pete, and shrank in terror at his own voice. It was tremendous, a roar that would have filled the Coliseum, or would have leveled the very walls of a lesser structure.

The battle-scarred veteran smiled admiringly.

“You are in fine voice today, Captain Stentor. I merely asked if you were ill. You staggered, and the sun has been hot—”

Pete was quick on the up-take. Already he began to get the picture. He had returned to the glory that was Greece in the mind of the famous Captain Stentor, who reputedly had been able to command ten thousand troops by just the sound of his mighty voice. Also, Pete recalled reading, Stentor had been respected because he was apparently able to commune at will with the gods.

Pete’s chest thrust out. At last! In other eras he had been a lowly thief, a slave, a bum. But now he had inherited a position worthy of his mettle.

“Just watch my smoke!” he muttered to himself.

Pete gazed about the Plains of Ilium proudly. There was a military encampment stretched out almost endlessly, tens of thousands of tents, chariots, soldiers, and their accoutrements. Weapons flashed distantly as raiding parties sallied out to scour the countryside for food. A hundred thousand Greeks, reflected Pete, and not a single restaurant. He smiled.

Remembering his companion’s question, Pete seized upon the suggestion.

“Yes, Agamemnon, I have had a touch of the sun.” It afforded a ready-made alibi in case he had to ask any awkward questions, such as:

“Er—this is the siege of Troy, ain’t it?”

The Greek looked strangely at Pete.

“Indeed it is, Captain. Yonder lies Troy.”

Pete looked, saw in the distance a moderate-sized fort. It seemed not more than a few acres in area, surprisingly small to have withstood the siege of thousands of determined Achaeans for so long. Still, Pete shrugged, it was none of his business. He was there to observe, to get the story and see the climax of this great spectacle, the fall of Troy. He started toward the army encampment, when a sudden thought smote him disturbingly.

“Say! How long has this war been goin’ on, anyhow?”

“Why, for nine years, as the captain well knows. Has the sun-god Helios stolen your memory?”

“Nine years!” Pete groaned. The Trojan War had lasted ten years. Dr. Mayhem, uncertain of his calculations with the substitute Time-chair, had missed his mark a trifle. In order to get what Larose wanted, Pete would have to hang around for months dressed in this umpire’s get-up. And that was out of the question. Why, he’d miss the World Series.

Desperately in search of counsel, Pete glanced about.

“Aker!” he let loose with his foghorn voice. “Professor Aker! Are you anywhere around?”

There was a great stirring among the nearby Greek soldiers, with puzzled smiles and ribald jokes directed at Captain Stentor’s shout. But no one answered. Evidently Aker was not in the immediate vicinity. Or perhaps, Pete snickered, he had returned in the mind of one of the mongrel hounds which slunk scavenging about the camp.

At any rate, the decision was strictly up to Pete. He communed briefly with himself. Though he had vowed not to become involved, nevertheless the circumstances obviously called for action. Yes, Pete was forced in the name of business ethics to deal himself a hand in the Trojan War, and wind it up before his month was out.

Happily—for Pete was one of those individuals cursed with an incurable itch to meddle in other’s affairs—he strode to the center of the camp and jumped up on a chariot wheel.

“My-y-y friends!” he bellowed tremendously, threatening to blast away the tents on the wings of his wind. “Come one! Come all! Gather ’round, folks! It’s th’ gr-r-reatest show on

earth!”

In short order he had a military audience of fifty thousand curious Greeks.

“Men!” Pete roared with his magnificent tool for propaganda. “We been fightin’ this war for nine years an’ nothin’s happened decisive yet. Am I right?”

There was a murmur of agreement. Pete pointed dramatically toward the walls of Troy.

“Nine years, and yonder still stands the insolent aggressor, barring the path to our manifest destiny. The Trojans refuse to face things realistically, to acknowledge that the world has to be remade to conform with the rights of us Greeks, the superior race. We must have living space!” Pete winced inwardly at the hollow illogic of these catch phrases. Still, he had a legitimate reason for this rabble-rousing.

“Within those walls suffers an oppressed minority,” Pete thundered. The kidnaped Helen, he figured, was certainly a minority. “It is our duty to free that minority and—uh—establish a new economic order!” What was this nonsense? However, it was no less effective in 1194 B.C. than it was to prove some thirty-one centuries later. “We must be prepared to make every sacrifice in a final assault to annihilate the enemy. Are you ready?”

“Yea, yea! Hear, hear!”

A few minutes of this had the Greeks thoroughly aroused. They understood nothing, but they were mad at somebody. “Last night,” Pete announced, “I was visited by the—er—gods. By revelation was given me the means whereby we may accomplish the destruction of our enemies. Secret weapons will devastate them. . . .”

Eventually, Pete tired of his oratory and stepped down with a promise of quick victory. Agamemnon awaited him, looking puzzled.

“I do not understand, Captain Stentor, this sudden desire of yours for quickly ending the war. We are enjoying ourselves now. Few on either side are suffering injuries, which is well since we do not hate the enemy particularly. Another year will see the starving Trojans forced to surrender.”

“Blockade!” snorted Pete. “That’s no good these days. What we need is Blitzkrieg, not Sitzkrieg!”

Agamemnon shook his head, mystified.

“Your words are strange. But if it is immediate victory you wish, why not give our plan of
__”

Pete brushed aside the impending suggestion.

“Look, Aggie. I got something you never heard of. Tanks! We’ll take Troy by storm.”

“Tanks?”

“Sure. You’ll see. All I need is a bunch of chariots and some skilled workmen. Armorers.”

Agamemnon agreed in puzzlement. By nightfall the materials and workmen would be ready. Pete Stentor retired to his tent, took up papyrus and quill, and commenced to draw designs for his new engine of warfare.

“Blitzkrieg ba-by,” he hummed as he worked. “You’re my little bombshell-l-l of lo-o-ove!”

The Stentor Tank was simplicity itself. Two chariots were lined up rear to rear, joined by two ten-foot shafts. Then light armor covered sides and top, with apertures through which to shoot. Completely protected, in between the shafts, would be a horse. He wouldn’t be able to move such weight very rapidly, but then, the idea of the tank wasn’t speed, anyhow. The entire contraption would carry three archers and ammunition.

Once the specifications were standardized, production moved apace. In four days' time, the Stentorian motorized armored division was ready to move. The attack was launched one morning with dozens of the fantastic-looking tanks rumbling laboriously across the plains of Ilium toward the thus far impregnable walls of Troy.

"They'll move right up under the fort," Pete explained his strategy to Agamemnon, "without danger, and pick off the defenders as fast as they pop their heads above the walls. That way we'll establish fire superiority. Then the infantry can move in at their leisure and bust down the gates. Simple, hey?"

Agamemnon was not enthusiastic. He was a military reactionary.

"If the plan succeeds," he admitted reluctantly, "it will revolutionize warfare."

The tank brigade rolled into position and arrows began to hiss. The Trojans quickly learned they could do little with the attackers, except by occasional lucky shots through the loopholes. In short order they ducked down behind the walls' protection.

"See?" boasted Pete. "Now for the final—er . . ."

Strange things were happening outside the ancient walls of Troy. A hand, holding a pot, reached over the parapet and spilled some liquid upon one of the tanks.

"Boiling water!" guessed Pete, scoffing. "They can't hurt us!"

A second hand lifted into view carrying a lighted torch. This was cast upon the saturated tank. The latter immediately burst into a low, flickering blue flame. The horse, beginning to cook, began to engage in some mad gyrations. The tank charged forward, then backed and twirled around in a sprightly dance. Shortly the hastily-constructed contraption fell apart with a bang. Three men and a horse ran madly away from that place, with an occasional Trojan shaft delicately pinking their *derrières*.

Other potfuls of fluid cascaded upon the assaulting tanks; well-aimed torches followed. One by one Pete's panzer division units began to sizzle, going into marvelous contortions. Like a nest of weird eggs, the flimsy machines broke open to hatch out panic-stricken horses and Greeks. The attack turned into a complete rout.

From the officers' vantage point, Agamemnon and Pete watched the debacle. The former concealed a faint smile.

"The art of war, it appears, is not so easily revolutionized, Captain Stentor."

Amazed by the turn of events, Pete began to have a horrible suspicion. How could the Trojans have known of a defense against tank warfare that wasn't developed till the Spanish Revolution of 1936? And how could they develop incendiary fluid? Could it be— It must be! Professor Aker had returned in the mind of a Trojan! Pete fumed.

"I been double-crossed, that's what!" he blustered. "The idea was okay, but I've been knifed by a Fifth Columnist, that's what!"

Angrily Pete rigged up a flag of truce and, under it, drove his two-horsed chariot up to the walls of Troy. Again his terrific artillery rolled out.

"Aker! I know you're in there! Come out and meet me like a man!"

Presently a young man appeared atop the parapet. He was tall and curly-haired and very handsome. He grinned down at Pete. "Ah, Manx, I believe? What beautiful irony that you, a side-show barker, should have such a magnificent voice—centuries too soon!"

"Never mind the cracks. D'you know this war's due to drag on for months yet unless we finish it off quick? History says so."

"I am well founded in Greek history."

“Well, then, what’s the idea obstructin’ me? Y’oughta *help* me end the siege so’s we can earn Larose’s money without havin’ to come back again. You don’t wanta hang around here for months, do ya?”

The handsome Trojan grinned wider.

“As a matter of fact, Manx, I do. . . . By the by, how did you like my incendiary fluid? I distilled alcohol from wine and—”

“You do wanta stay here!” roared Pete. “Why?”

“That is very simple. I have returned to this glorious era in the mind of a well-respected young man named Paris.”

“Paris! Why, you’re the guy that snatched Helen!”

“Exactly, my boy. And I may say that Helen is not only very charming, but very much in love with Paris. I am having—er—the time of my life. Wow! I’ve no desire to see this war come to a sudden end.”

Pete spluttered indignantly.

“That’s treason! Surrender, or I’ll liquidate the whole works!”

“Pooh. As a man of science, I have the advantage in war as well as in peaceful pursuits. Do your worst, Manx. Ha, ha! . . . And now I must hasten to my fair Helen’s arms. *Au ’voir!*”

Pete seethed at this insolent treachery.

“So it’s war, hey?” he blazed. “Okay, I’ll wage you a war. Scientific war!” He lashed his horses to a gallop as he rode his careening chariot back to the Greek lines.

Once there, he went into executive session with Agamemnon, claiming the entire Greek nation had been insulted. Once again Agamemnon tried to suggest some plan, but was overruled by Pete.

“What we need is silk, lots of it. Can you manage that, Aggie?”

“Yes, but I think our idea about—”

“Forget it, kid. Rustle me tons of silk cloth an’ send in them builders of mine in a coupla hours. I’ll have another diagram for ’em.”

The incongruity of a mere captain ordering about the commander-in-chief did not occur to Pete. He was too deeply immersed in his plans to teach Aker a severe lesson for having broken his promise not to interfere. Though the catapult was not invented till about 400 B.C., Pete could not wait. He decided to invent the thing himself, from his memory of the excellent diagrams in the encyclopedia he had once peddled from door to door.

After starting the workmen on the construction of the massive but simple catapult, Pete himself got bone needles and thread and began working on a huge sheet of silk, attaching a crude harness to it. When the two new weapons were done, Pete, with courage he never knew he had owned, made a personal demonstration.

Rallying the army around to witness the latest revelation of the gods, he exhorted them boomingly. “Hermes, the winged god, came to me in a dream and bade me organize a corps of parachute troops. It will be new to you, but there’s nothing to fear. Behold!”

Pete gathered the parachute loosely in his arms after strapping the harness on, then took his place in the seat of the catapult. A signal to the operator, and—*zun-n-ng!* Captain Stentor, feeling compressed to about half his normal length, sailed head foremost with the greatest of ease.

Thirty feet into the air he flew in a breathless rush, and almost two hundred feet horizontally. At the height of his flight he cast the parachute folds violently from him. It

billowed out satisfyingly, caught Pete's falling body with a jerk. He came down with a slamming jolt, but entirely uninjured.

Agamemnon and the Achaean soldiers were completely dumfounded. Some were frightened, likening Pete to the gods. But most became quite excited over the prospect of flying in the Stentorian manner.

Pete explained his proposed strategy.

"We'll rig up maybe half a dozen catapults on wheels, an' make a flock of parachutes. Then one night we'll roll the catapults up close to Troy—far enough back so's we can't be seen in the darkness, but close enough to shoot our troops over the walls into the fort. Twenty or thirty brave comrades oughta be plenty. They'll parachute into Troy an' open the gates for the rest of the boys. See?"

The Greek camp was wild about the idea, with volunteers by the hundreds offering to act as parachuters. Pete chose small, light men for obvious reasons, then set his workmen on the tasks of building catapults and sewing parachutes and harnesses. Captain Stentor was but definitely a big shot now, with his special pipeline to Olympus.

Within a week all was ready for the assault at the dark of the moon. Six catapults were rolled into position with the secrecy of a herd of marching elephants, and the foolhardy parachute company lined up for execution. Presently six *zun-n-ngs* sounded in the night; six dim flowers blossomed in the blackness high above Troy as the practiced catapulters swayed down toward the earth.

But before Pete could express satisfaction, a strange phenomenon occurred. A flaming streak shot into the air, then another, and still others. The fiery bolts struck the billowing parachutes, which caught fire. Quickly the frantic parachutists came down in flames, their only thought to free themselves from the devilish contraptions that threatened to burn them alive. A crimson glow lit up the interior of Troy, as if a furnace had been opened to the sky.

"Fire arrows," muttered Pete hopelessly. "Injun stuff! Well, that beats me. Darned if I know what to try next."

The abortive parachute-troop attack having been countermanded by Captain Stentor, the fires within Troy quickly died out. Then the mocking voice of Paris rang out over the black Plains of Ilium.

"Try again, Manx! You are very amusing, my boy. It might make you feel better to learn that none of your parachutists were injured, save for minor burns. But by all means think up another trick. Only don't reveal your hand by practicing your new stunt in full view of Troy. It makes our defense too easy!" There was a professorial snicker, then silence save for muted sounds of revelry within the fortress.

Pete seethed with frustration, then gave way to despondency. It seemed he was doomed to stay here till the war dragged to its legitimate close. He looked up suddenly.

"Huh? Did you say somethin'?"

It was Agamemnon, urging Stentor now to consider that scheme they intended to try some time ago.

"Your own god-like weapons were ingenious, Captain Stentor, but perhaps the gods, having given us the weapons, also gave the proper defense to the Trojans so as not to show favoritism. But my plan can be known to no one, not even the gods. Hence, Troy cannot withstand the strategy."

"Okay. So what's the gag?"

“We shall build a mighty wooden horse, fill it with brave warriors, and leave it before the gates of Troy. Then the army shall withdraw from sight. When the Trojans, overcome with curiosity at our gift, drag it inside the fort, at night our men will steal forth to open the gates for the army!” Agamemnon smiled grimly.

Pete groaned.

“The Trojan horse! That tomato is old as the hills! Why—” He paused as realization dawned that here was the original occasion upon which the wooden horse made its mark in history. Yet, irony of ironies, Aker, now carousing with Helen no doubt, would never fall for that trick. “Nope, ’sno use. That guy Paris is wise to the horse business.”

Agamemnon frowned.

“Your words are strange, Captain Stentor. How could that dog Paris possibly know of what is in my mind only?”

Pete opened his mouth, then shut it again. He couldn’t possibly explain the situation.

“Lemme think this over, Aggie,” he said, stalling.

History, Pete knew, recorded the success of the Trojan horse. So perhaps they should go through with it. Yet it was only too obvious that history was going to need some assistance. Aker would know what was inside the horse. The question was: what would he do about it? Pete put himself in Aker’s shoes. No doubt, as Paris, he was the toast of Troy right now because of his military successes. Probably pretty cocky.

When Aker saw the wooden horse, instead of ignoring it, he would in all likelihood drag it right inside and proceed to annihilate the luckless Greeks in an effort to impress himself further upon the populace. How would he liquidate the Greeks? Well, he had been having good luck with fire so far; probably he would give the Trojan horse the hotfoot.

Pete pondered, and finally an idea blossomed in his fertile brain, came to fruition.

“Aggie,” he declared, “the plan is not so bad, after all. But it wouldn’t hurt to have an official okay. So I’ll make a trip to the Delphic Oracle an’ get the lowdown. Meantime, you go ahead and build the horse. By the time you’ve finished, I’ll be back with a message from the Oracle. Okay, kid?”

Agamemnon nodded vigorously, having made some sense out of the strange jargon. The old warrior felt he had a good scheme, and he was just superstitious enough to want a favorable opinion by the Oracle before going ahead.

“Our stores are at your disposal, Captain Stentor,” he said affably.

“Well, I won’t need much. A ship and crew to take me to Delphi—”

“A penteconter will be ready in the morning.”

“And I’ll need a lot of containers—you know, jars, clay bottles, and so on.

“They shall be placed aboard the ship.”

“And a bicycle pump.”

“Bicycle pump!” Agamemnon drew back in alarm at this strange syllabic outburst.

Pete covered up hurriedly. Evidently they didn’t have bicycles or pumps in these days. “Er—something the gods mentioned to me. I’ll have them artisans of yours help me fix it up. Okay?”

The bewildered Agamemnon agreed and withdrew, thankfully, to his tent. He was secretly glad to be rid of the dynamic genius of Captain Stentor, even for only a few days.

With help, Pete quickly built his crude pump. The main cylinder was made from a hollowed-out young tree resembling a willow, about an inch in diameter. A plunger was easily

carved and greased so as to be airtight. At the lower end a flap-valve, made of reinforced leather, was installed. Just above this, a smaller tube of hollow wood was joined to the cylinder, also with its flap-valve.

It worked perfectly. Raising the plunger filled the pump with air. Pushing down forced the valve shut and made the air escape through the smaller tube into the bottle or other container prepared to receive it. Quite satisfied, Pete boarded the fifty-oared craft and set sail for Delphi, some two hundred miles away, in a straight line, on the Corinthian Gulf.

Pete discovered the Delphic Oracle to be guarded by a Pythian priestess and several prophets, who had quite a racket interpreting the hissings and rumblings that went on inside the famous cave. For a nominal fee, a layman could enter and ask his questions in person. But invariably he came out staggering dizzily, and had to cough up another fee to have the priest explain what went on.

Pete grinned at this brazen trimming of the suckers. He tossed a coin to the chief prophet, chewed the sacred bay, and drank from the spring Cassotis. Then he entered the cavern dragging a huge sack behind him. This was filled with narrow-necked bottles and gourd-shaped pottery.

The cave narrowed down quickly to a series of fissures at the rear, from which came a noticeable draft. Pete took several whiffs from one of these, and the world began to spin. He backed away nodding. His memory had served him well. Not long before this adventure commenced, away ahead in 1940, Pete had read a newspaper article about the Delphic Oracle. It had explained that the Oracle's cave was filled with carbon dioxide, and other gases in small proportions, coming from fissures leading deep into the earth. Petitioners to the Oracle, entering the cave, became so drugged by the gas that they envisioned all sorts of weird things. Hence the reputation of the Oracle.

Wasting no time, Pete inserted one end of his pump into the gas vent and smaller tube into the slender mouth of one of his clay bottles. Then he began to pump the container full of compressed carbon dioxide to the bursting point. After each container had been filled and stoppered, Pete repaired to the cavern mouth for fresh air before resuming his labors. Eventually all his pots and bottles were full, and he made his way out of the cave again.

The watchful chief prophet accosted him on the way out, demanding suspiciously to know what Pete had within his big sack. Pete looked about mysteriously, and then whispered in awed tones:

"I've captured the Delphic Oracle! I'm taking it home with me! With its wisdom, I'll have all the answers right at hand when my wife asks those embarrassing questions about the night before!"

The prophet, horrified, demanded that Pete disgorge the Oracle at once, if not sooner. Pete took one of his jars, held it up to the prophet's face, and opened it suddenly. A burst of gas momentarily overcame the holy one. He reeled dizzily, and was a very easy mark indeed for Pete's nimble fingers. When Captain Stentor departed, his purse jingled merrily. He had never had any scruples against beating a racketeer at his own game.

Back on the Plains of Ilium, all was in readiness. A tremendous wooden Seabiscuit had been constructed behind the hills out of sight of Troy. It would easily hold dozens of the daring Achaeans who were volunteering to be included in the suicide party.

Pete's return from Delphi was eagerly acclaimed, and when he said the Oracle had given him the green light, there was great rejoicing. Pete, of course, insisted on leading the daring raid. His insistence that the Oracle had given him some inside tips on how to conduct the campaign insured him the high position. So sixty Greeks and dozens of Pete's mysterious crocks and bottles were stowed inside the horse.

Pete gave last-minute instructions. Then, at nightfall, the horse was towed to its position before the gates of Troy, and the remainder of the Greek army feigned withdrawal. The die was cast. The wooden Seabiscuit faced the barrier with jockey Manx up.

Came the dawn, and three-score cramped Greeks began to perspire in the stifling confines of the wooden horse. Hours passed, broken by periodic noises outside as the curious Trojans tried to dope out this crazy maneuver. Pete began to have doubts. Had he misjudged Aker's psychology? Would he suddenly turn cautious and leave the Achaeans and their horse just sitting there on the Plains of Ilium, feeling silly?

Suddenly the mighty contrivance jerked forward. Again it moved, spasmodically, as the Trojans heaved on the lines. Soon it was inside the fort, judging by the altered character of the surrounding noises. Then, just as Pete had counted on, Paris' taunting voice called out.

"Ah, there, Manx! Are you inside with your playmates? Tut, tut, my boy. How simple-minded you are not to have realized that I would know all about the wooden horse. Dear, dear, I'm afraid there will soon be a hot time in the old town!"

There was a thud against the flank of the horse, a wisp of smoke. Pete grinned. Another fire-arrow. He opened the trapdoor nearest the burning arrow, popped his head out and grinned fiercely. A great yell arose, jeering at the Greeks.

"Fire will avail you naught, men of Troy! Hephaestus, god of fire, has taught me to conquer it! Watch, Aker! How's this for science?"

He thrust out an arm carrying one of his gourd-shaped containers, and unstopped it. Carefully he turned it upside down above the merrily burning spot on the wooden horse. Nothing, apparently, came out. But the flames snuffed to oblivion in a twinkling. The heavy carbon dioxide gas, of course, was death to fire.

The Trojans fell back in superstitious awe at this manifestation of deific power. Paris' angry voice exhorted them, and more fire-arrows plunked into the wooden horse. As each one drove home, another trapdoor opened, another bottle was thrust out, and another flame was quenched invisibly.

In short order the Trojans were filled with panic and began to scatter fearfully. At that instant Pete rallied his men, and the Greeks poured out of the mighty horse toward the now poorly defended gates of Troy. Just as Pete turned to fight a rear guard action and protect the men assaulting the gates, his eye fell upon the tall and handsome Paris standing in a nearby doorway, his face black with rage. Beside him was a buxom blonde, definitely of the Mae West type, whose lusciousness would have upset male metabolism in any era. Helen, no doubt, of Troy!

The war, the Time-chair, everything momentarily faded from Pete's consciousness, and he could scarcely find it in himself to blame Aker. Twenty-eight hundred years before Christopher Marlowe set the words on paper, Pete Manx cried out:

“Is this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss—”

Wham! Helen of Troy leveled on the impudent conqueror with a left hook to the cheek.
The world heaved and spun . . .

Clunk! Pete sat up shaking his head dizzily. He was in the back room of Historical Research, Inc., sharing the oversized Time-chair with an equally dazed Professor Aker.

“Ya-ah, smarty pants,” gibed Pete. “I licked you anyhow, didn’t I?”

“Zeus, what a woman!” Aker murmured dreamily. “I—”

“Was the trip successful? Did you see the fall of Troy?” It was Henry Larose, accompanied by Dr. Mayhem. He displayed genuine eagerness.

Pete automatically made a slicing gesture of reassurance. “Of course we got back there. Me an’ the prof seen the whole thing. It was like this—”

He stopped short, turned to look at Aker. The latter registered appalled embarrassment. They communed silently for a moment, then simultaneously shook their heads. No, it was no earthly use to tell Henry Larose what really went on before the fall of Troy. They would not be believed. Outraged historians would give them the lie.

Pete sighed, shrugged, and dug deep for five hundred dollars. These he returned to the bewildered Larose.

“Sorry, mister. I guess the new Time-chair was set up in too much of a hurry. It—er—didn’t work just right. Sorry.”

Larose pocketed the money and drifted out in a miasma of despair.

Dr. Mayhem grinned with sardonic knowingness.

“Got things all messed up back there, I’ll bet. What happened?”

“This here traitor—” Pete began.

Aker interrupted. “This meddler as usual tried to arrange things to suit himself—”

Exeunt all, arguing.

[The end of *The Greeks had a War for it* by Henry Kuttner (as Kelvin Kent)]