

XXIX

“Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
 With all the speed ye may ;
 I, with two more to help me,

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Will hold the foe in play.
 In yon strait path a thousand
 May well be stopped by three.
 Now who will stand on either hand,
 And keep the bridge with me ?”

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XXX

Then out spake Spurius Lartius ;
 A Ramnian⁴¹ proud was he :
 “Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
 And keep the bridge with thee.”
 And out spake strong Herminius ;
 Of Titian blood was he :
 “I will abide on thy left side,
 And keep the bridge with thee.”

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XXXI

“Horatius,” quoth the Consul,
 “As thou sayest, so let it be,”
 And straight against that great array
 Forth went the dauntless Three.
 For Romans in Rome’s quarrel
 Spared neither land nor gold,
 Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
 In the brave days of old.⁴²

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⁴¹ **Ramnian.** The Ramnes were one of the three tribes of which the Roman people were mainly comprised; the Tities were a second of these tribes; Horatius himself belonged to the Luceres, the third tribe, so that in the defence of the bridge all three tribes were represented.

⁴² The story is supposed to be told by one of the plebeians, or common people in Rome, about 120 years after the event took place.