

XVIII

I wis,²⁸ in all the Senate,
 There was no heart so bold,
 But sore it ached, and fast it beat, 140
 When that ill news was told.
 Forthwith up rose the Consul,²⁹
 Up rose the Fathers all ;
 In haste they girded up their gowns,
 And hied them to the wall. 145

XIX

They held a council standing
 Before the River-Gate³⁰ ;
 Short time was there, ye well may guess,
 For musing or debate.
 O'er spake the Consul roundly : 150
 "The bridge³¹ must straight go down ;
 For, since Janiculum is lost,
 Naught else can save the town."

XX

Just then a scout came flying,
 All wild with haste and fear ; 155
 "To arms ! to arms ! Sir Consul :
 Lars Porsena is here."
 On the low hills to westward
 The Consul fixed his eye,
 And saw the swarthy storm of dust 160
 Rise fast along the sky.

²⁸ I wis. See H. S. Grammar, p. 176.

²⁹ Consul. After the expulsion of the Tarquin kings, Rome was governed by two chief magistrates, known as consuls.

³⁰ the River-Gate. The gate facing the Janiculum hill.

³¹ bridge. The Sublician bridge, which connected Rome with Janiculum.