

IX

There be thirty chosen prophets,
 The wisest of the land,
 Who alway by Lars Porsena
 Both morn and evening stand :
 Evening and morn the Thirty
 Have turned the verses o'er,
 Traced from the right¹⁶ on linen white
 By mighty seers of yore.

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X

And with one voice the Thirty
 Have their glad answer given :
 "Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena ;
 Go forth, beloved of Heaven :
 Go, and return in glory
 To Clusium's royal dome ;
 And hang round Nurscia's¹⁷ altars
 The golden shields¹⁸ of Rome."

75

80

XI

And now hath every city
 Sent up her tale¹⁹ of men :
 The foot are fourscore thousand,
 The horse are thousands ten.
 Before the gates of Sutrium²⁰
 Is met the great array.
 A proud man was Lars Porsena
 Upon the trysting day.

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¹⁶ Written from right to left.

¹⁷ Nurscia. The Etruscan goddess of fortune.

¹⁸ golden shields. Twelve golden shields kept in the temple of Vesta, and believed by the Romans to be bound up with the safety of their city. See notes on pp. 68 and 71.

¹⁹ tale. (A. S. *talian*, "to reckon".) number.

²⁰ Sutrium. Sutri, a city about thirty miles from Rome.