

HORATIUS

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And heavy with his armour,
And spent with changing blows :
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

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"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus,
"Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town!"—
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
"And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before."

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And now he feels the bottom;
Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the fathers,
To press his gory hands;
And now with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the river-gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

Then follows an account of the rewards which a grateful people bestowed upon the hero. The minstrel thus concludes the legend:—

When the good-man mends his armour,
And trims his helmet's plume;
When the good-wife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom;
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

MACAULAY.