

# AT DUTY'S CALL





KING'S NORTON AND  
NORTHFIELD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

**PRESENTED TO**

*Harold Weston*

a Scholar in the *Liverton Rd Infants*

School, as a Reward for Regular Attendance,  
Progress and Good Conduct during the year  
ended 31st July, 1910.

Signed *A. L. Yardley*  
Head Teacher.

JOHN F. MOORE,  
Secretary.

# AT DUTY'S CALL

HISTORICAL TALES



FOR LITTLE FOLK

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## Black Agnes of Dunbar

WHEN King Robert Bruce of Scotland died he left his son David, then only a child of six, as heir to the throne. But Edward III of England wanted a member of the Scottish royal family, named Baliol, to be crowned, because he was the friend of the English and had promised to rule Scotland under Edward's command. However, the Scotch people were loyal to little King David, and they determined not to allow Baliol to take the crown away from him. This led to a great war in Scotland, during which the English fought upon the side of Baliol. While the country was in this sad state of bloodshed and strife, the Earl of Salisbury, at the head

## BLACK AGNES OF DUNBAR

of a strong army of English soldiers, laid siege to the Castle of Dunbar. The castle was the property of Patrick, Earl of March, who was a stanch defender of the Bruces.

At that time Earl Patrick was among the loyal leaders in the Highland wilds, and only his wife, the Countess Agnes, with a band of faithful servants, were inside the building. Because she had black hair, dark eyes, and a dark complexion, the Countess was known as "Black Agnes of Dunbar". The Earl of Salisbury expected that the sight of his powerful army would strike fear in the lady's heart and she would at once surrender. But he was much mistaken, for, far from showing any fright, "Black Agnes" sent him a haughty message saying that she defied him to do his worst, for nothing would ever make her give up the castle to the English.

Thus the memorable siege opened, and the showers of darts and stones from the enemy's lines were fully returned by the Countess's trusty retainers. The brave lady herself often appeared upon the battlements, walking calmly amid her attendants, and when the huge stones from the besiegers' catapults struck the stout walls, she directed her handmaidens, who also displayed great bravery, to wipe off the dust with their handkerchiefs, to show how little she cared, or minded the attacks.

At that time there was a great wooden machine used in warfare, which was like a strong shed mounted upon wheels. This was taken up against the walls of a besieged place and filled with men, who, while thus protected beneath



THE COUNTESS APPEARS ON THE BATTLEMENTS

## BLACK AGNES OF DUNBAR

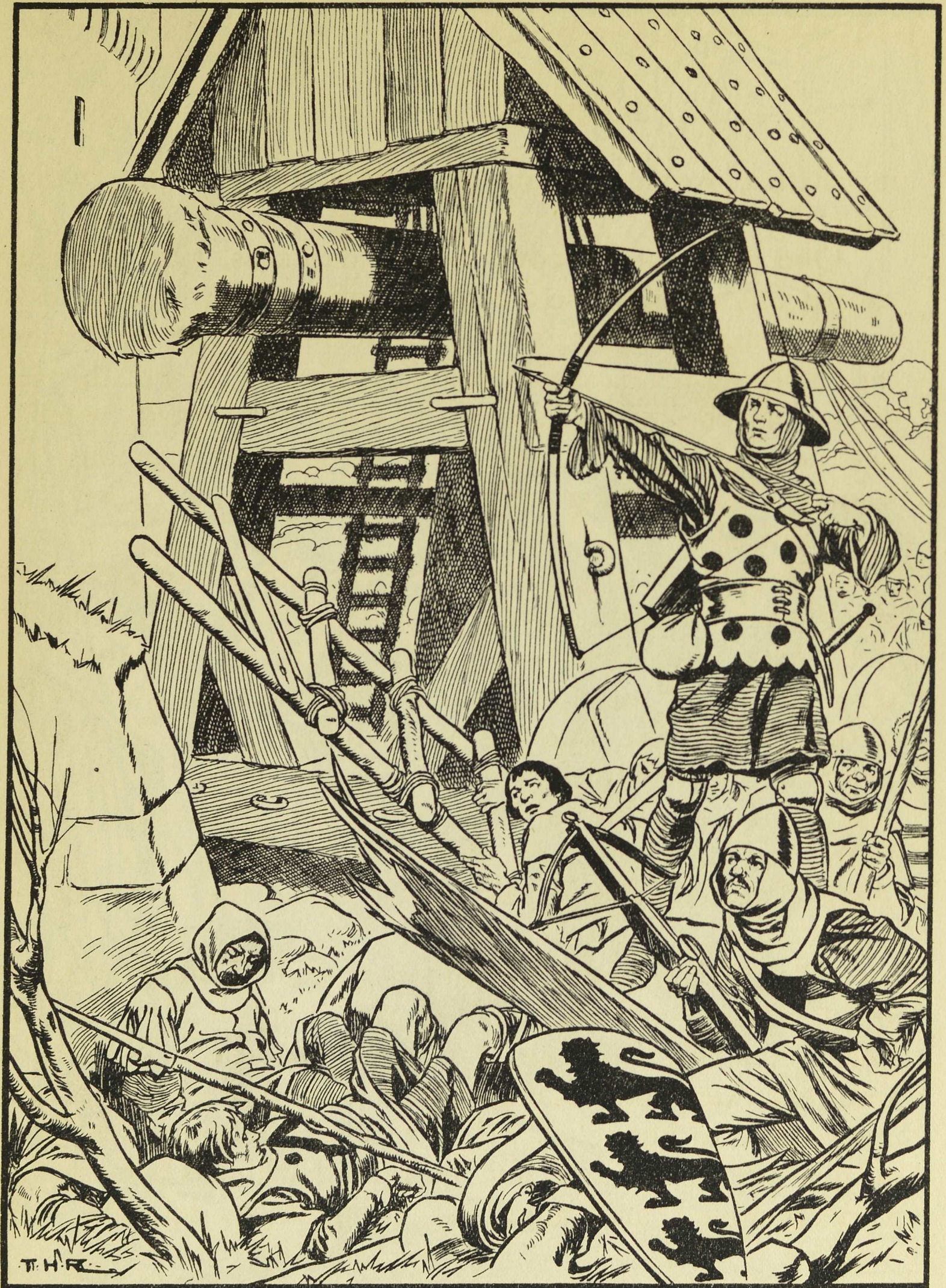
its shelter, would attempt to loosen the building with a battering-ram.

One night, under cover of the darkness, Earl Salisbury caused one of these destructive engines to be brought close to the outer defences of the Castle of Dunbar, and when the morning came those within the walls heard the dull strokes of the heavy ram at its slow but certain work of destruction. The Countess then appeared among her soldiers, and waving her hand towards the enemy, she cried out, "Beware!"

Hardly had she spoken when an immense stone was slung over the battlements by a crane, and, being quickly freed from the chain which held it, dropped right down upon the roof of the shed which covered the English soldiers who were working the battering-ram. The whole machine was completely shattered, and most of the men inside were crushed to death, while the remainder crawled forth and fled towards their camp. Thus did "Black Agnes" defeat the Earl's attack upon the walls of her castle.

For five long months, with her small band of retainers, the Countess continued to defy the English army, and by her unflinching courage she saved the castle of Dunbar until Sir Alexander Ramsay, with a band of gallant Scotchmen, came to her relief. The Earl of Salisbury was forced to give up his attempt, and he retired with his army feeling very humbled and angry at being thus defeated by a woman.





THE BATTERING-RAM



THE PRINCESS IS AROUSED

## Victoria the Good

ONE summer day in June, at two o'clock in the morning, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Lord Chamberlain of England left Windsor Castle and drove in all haste in a post chaise to Kensington Palace. They had just left the deathbed of King William IV, and were upon their way to inform the young Princess Victoria, only daughter of the Duke of Kent, the king's brother, that she was now Queen of these realms. They arrived at the Palace at five o'clock, and found the entire household fast asleep. After some difficulty they managed to arouse the servants, by one of whom they sent a message to the Duchess of Kent, saying they wished to see the Princess. After some delay, the attendant returned to tell them that Her Royal Highness was in such a sweet sleep she could not be disturbed. To this the Lord Chamberlain replied: "We have come on business of State to the Queen, and even her sleep must give way to that."

So the Duchess went to arouse her young daughter, telling her she must get up to receive the two gentlemen. Victoria at once did so, and after hastily putting on her dressing gown and slippers, and with her long hair falling down her back, she went into the room where her distinguished visitors awaited her. The Lord Chamberlain, touched at the sight of the young girl, called at such a tender age to so great a destiny, at once knelt down and presented to her a paper announcing the death of her uncle, King William, and her own accession to the throne;

## VICTORIA THE GOOD

while the Archbishop said he had come by the desire of her aunt, Queen Adelaide, who thought she would like to hear that the King's death had been a very peaceful one.

Although the young Queen was but eighteen years of age, and was quite unused to the ways of the world, having been brought up very quietly and strictly by her mother, she heard the great news with perfect calmness and dignity, though with tears in her eyes; for she had loved her uncle. When, a few hours later, she received the homage of those gentlemen who formed what is called the Privy Council, to the number of about a hundred, and before whom she read her speech as Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, she did both in such an extremely pleasing manner and with such a quiet dignity that all present were astonished and delighted.

The young Queen ended her first speech in council with these memorable words: "I shall steadily protect the rights, and promote, to the utmost of my power, the happiness and welfare of all classes of my subjects." That she faithfully kept her promise the story of her long and glorious reign proves, for all through her life did Queen Victoria gain the love and respect of her subjects, and when at last she died, worn out by her ceaseless labours and the weight of years, no sovereign was more deeply and truly mourned than she. She will ever be enshrined in the hearts of the British people as "Victoria the Good".



GOD SAVE THE QUEEN!

## Giotto the great Painter

THE celebrated painter, Giotto Bondone, was born in Vespignano, a little village not far from the beautiful city of Florence, in Italy. His father was a small farmer, and when Giotto was about ten years old he put him to mind a flock of sheep. The little fellow was extremely fond of drawing, and would amuse himself by tracing various objects upon the stones, the earth, or the sand. One day a well-known artist, called Cimabue, happened to pass by the young shepherd, who was just then engaged upon drawing one of the sheep from life, with a sharp stone on a smooth piece of rock. Cimabue stopped to look at the picture, and, struck with astonishment at the wonderful talent displayed by the lad, he asked him if he would go home with him to be trained as an artist. Giotto replied that he would do so willingly if his father consented to allow him to go. Cimabue therefore went to Bondone, who readily consented to his distinguished visitor's request. Cimabue then took the little herdsman to Florence and there instructed him in the art of painting. Very soon Giotto became as clever an artist as his master. He showed great genius in his manner of drawing from nature, and was a marvellous portrait painter. One day during his master's absence he painted a fly upon the nose of the figure on which Cimabue was employed, and did it so naturally that when the master returned he believed it to be real. Many such amusing stories are told of this famous artist, who was not only a great painter, but a sculptor, architect, and poet as well.



CIMABUE AND GIOTTO



## The Firing of the Magazine at Delhi

NOT very many years ago, during the reign of the great and good Queen Victoria, a terrible mutiny took place in India. The Sepoys rose up against the British, and in many places all the white people were killed. The gunpowder, arms, and stores which the British government had provided for the use of the army, were kept in a great magazine in the city of Delhi. The Sepoys surrounded this place, for they knew that if they could get possession of the powder and arms, they would soon be able to beat the few British troops. But in the magazine were a few British soldiers, and these



## THE FIRING OF THE MAGAZINE AT DELHI

brave men made up their minds, that, even if it cost them their lives, the building should never fall into the hands of the mutineers.

Lieutenant Willoughby, who was in command, knew that it was impossible to defend the place against such numbers, so he laid a train of gunpowder down to the magazine, and just as the Sepoys began to swarm over the walls this trail was fired. There followed a mighty roar, and the great magazine exploded. Hundreds of Sepoys were blown to pieces, and most of the brave Britons, including Lieutenant Willoughby, laid down their lives for their country. In fact only three or four succeeded in escaping.





THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MAGAZINE AT DELHI

## Sir Isaac Newton

SIR ISAAC NEWTON was a very learned, clever master of natural science, to whom we owe many wonderful inventions and discoveries. When quite a small boy he found his greatest pleasure in making little toy machines, such as a windmill, a water-clock, and a carriage which could be sent along with a handle worked by the person who sat inside. These toys were perfect little models, and the machinery in them was most skilfully put together.

Upon the windmill being placed outside a high window, the wind would catch its sails and send them round, thus setting the machinery in motion, much to the joy of the young engineer and the admiration of his friends. The water-clock was formed out of a wooden box, and the hands were made to move by a piece of wood which was caused to rise and fall by the action of dropping water. It was supplied with the necessary quantity of water every morning, and kept perfect time for many years.

Besides these mechanical toys Newton made some wonderful kites, which flew better and higher than any others, and were the delight of his schoolfellows. He also greatly pleased his small girl friends by making beautiful little tables, cupboards, and various pieces of furniture for their dolls' houses.

One of the most important discoveries of Sir Isaac was that of "universal gravitation". Gravitation is a wonderful power in nature by which all things are drawn towards each other. Thus the earth attracts the sun, and the sun the earth, which causes the earth to revolve round

## SIR ISAAC NEWTON

the sun. It is this mighty force which keeps the whole world in its beautiful order, and makes everything stand firmly upon the ground, because it is held there by the same marvellous attraction. The idea first came into Sir Isaac Newton's mind when he was sitting in his garden and saw an apple fall from a tree. He began to wonder why everything that falls descends at once to the earth, and after many years of careful study he found out that the reason was because it is drawn down by this power of gravitation. So, through the genius of this great man, we are enabled more clearly to understand the marvellous works of the Almighty Creator of all things.



## Peter the Dutch Boy

PETER, the Dutch boy, lived with his parents in their little cottage home in Holland. Peter's father laboured all day long at the sluices. Sluices are sliding gates for regulating the flow of water, and in Holland they are attached to the great dykes which the Dutch people have built to keep the sea from flooding their land. A large part of the country has been gained from the sea in this way by their perseverance. Peter knew well what it would mean if the sea forced its way through the dykes, for it was his father's business to keep them firm and strong, and so prevent the waters rushing in and destroying the surrounding villages.

One day he was sent upon an errand, and on his way home he stopped to gather some flowers by the side of a dyke. As he did so he heard a trickling sound amid the noise of the waves. Then suddenly his face grew pale, for stealing through the bank was a slender stream of water. It was a leak in the dyke! No larger than his own hand, but he knew that the strength of the sea could make the smallest leak grow to a flood in a single night. Without a moment's hesitation the boy knelt down and pressed his hand over the tiny hole, forcing back the water with all his might, while he called loudly for help. But no one heard his cries, as hour after hour he bravely knelt at his post. Early the next morning he was found, almost fainting with exhaustion, but still with his hand held firmly against the leak. Thus by his wonderful pluck the brave boy saved his country.



A LITTLE HERO



WALLACE DIRECTING HIS SOLDIERS

## William Wallace at the Bridge of Kildean

WHEN Edward I reigned over England there was sad trouble between the English and Scotch, as King Edward wanted the Scottish King to be his vassal. At this he became very angry, and refused Edward's demands. This led to a war, in which the English were victorious. The Scottish King was unthroned, and the Earl of Surrey was made Guardian of Scotland.

At that time there lived a brave Scotchman named William Wallace, who determined to free his beloved country. So he roused the Scotch people to revolt against their English rulers. Then King Edward sent a large army into Scotland. Wallace, with a force of forty thousand men, waited to meet them at a place on the river Forth, near Stirling, called the Bridge of Kildean, which was so narrow that only two men could cross it abreast.

Wallace posted his men amid some small hills just near, and waited calmly. Two by two the English soldiers under the command of the Earl of Surrey marched over the bridge, and meanwhile the Scottish army never stirred till five thousand Englishmen had crossed. Then suddenly Wallace cried, "Forward, one part, to the bridge, and see that no more English cross, while the rest follow me to the five thousand who have come over, and let not one of them be left alive!"

His orders were obeyed, in the sight of the remainder of the English army, who stood upon the other side of the bridge powerless to help their comrades.



## The Maid of Saragossa

**M**ANY years ago the great Emperor of the French, Napoleon Bonaparte, got the Spanish royal family into his power, and then kept them prisoners and gave the kingdom to his brother Joseph. This roused the Spanish people to great anger, and they rose up against the Emperor.

One of the French generals with a large army laid siege to the town of Saragossa. The army had with them a large number of shells. The people of Saragossa did all they could to protect their city and themselves from these awful bombs. They placed beams slanting against the houses as shelters, and filled sacks with earth, which they piled up before the gates of the city. The worst attack was at the gate called Portillo. There the sandbags were constantly destroyed by the fire, and the Spaniards had to pile up others in their place amid the shower of shot from the enemy's guns. So terrible was the destruction that at one moment every man of the defenders lay dead. Others hesitated to take their places, knowing that almost certain death awaited them.

Just then a young woman, named Agostina came up with water for the wounded, and seeing how things were, she declared she would take the place of the dead gunner. Her bravery inspired the Spaniards with fresh courage, and they succeeded in keeping the French at bay.

Agostina was afterwards known as "The Maid of Saragossa", and as a reward for her heroism she was given a little shield of honour and was allowed the pay of an artilleryman for the rest of her life.



THE MAID OF SARAGOSSA

## The Siege of Troy

**M**ANY hundreds of years ago there lived a very beautiful queen named Helen, who was the wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta. She was so lovely that she was called the fairest woman in the world.

A certain handsome young prince, called Paris, who was son of the King of Troy, once went upon a visit to Menelaus, and fell so deeply in love with the beautiful Helen that he ran away with her. Then Menelaus collected a large army and pursued him to Troy. When they reached the city gates they demanded that Helen should be restored to her husband, and that Paris should be punished. The Trojans told them that the queen was not in Troy, but they refused to allow Menelaus to enter the town and see for himself. The Spartan King did not believe what they said, so he surrounded the city and tried to take it by force. Again and again they were driven back by the Trojans, and again and again they returned to the attack, until the siege had lasted ten long years.

When at last the Greeks had almost given up the attempt in despair, they succeeded by means of a trick. They built a large horse of wood, large enough to hold a number of men, and placed it outside Troy city. Then some of the bravest Spartan warriors got inside this immense wooden animal, while the rest of the army pretended to sail away in their ships. By means of these concealed soldiers they managed to take the city of Troy after such a long siege.



THE GREEKS OUTSIDE TROY

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