

# Golden Deeds

## Picture Stories from History Retold for Little Folk



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## How Horatius Kept the Bridge

More than two thousand years ago Rome was ruled over by some kings called the Tarquins. As they were wicked men, the Roman people rose up against them, and drove them out of the city. The banished kings then went to Tuscany, where Lars Porsena took up their cause, and gathering an army together, went to help them force an entrance into Rome again.



**HORATIUS AT THE BRIDGE**

The city could only be entered by crossing the river Tiber, and there was but one wooden bridge over which the army could pass. Then the leader of the Romans, who was called the Consul, cried out to his followers to destroy the bridge.

"But," he added sadly, "I fear they will be upon us before we have time to hew it down."

At this a Roman called Horatius came forward and offered to stand at the farther end of the bridge, to keep the Tuscans at bay while it was being destroyed.

"The pathway is so narrow," said he, "that if two others will help me, we can stop the whole army from advancing. So who will keep the bridge with me?"

Two other brave Romans, called Spurius Lartius and Titus Herminius, at once answered the call of their comrade, and these three gallant men went to defend the passage, while the rest hastened to destroy the bridge.

When the Tuscans saw the three men standing ready to meet the whole army, they laughed aloud in scorn. But their laughter was soon changed to wrath and despair, as one after the other they and their chiefs were quickly laid low at the feet of the dauntless Romans.

Meanwhile the supports of the bridge were destroyed. The Consul shouted to the three heroes to hasten across before the ruin fell into the water beneath. Lartius and Herminius just succeeded in getting safely to the farther bank, but Horatius remained facing the foe until the last beam fell. Then with a cry he leapt into the foaming stream, and although badly wounded and heavy with his armour, he managed to rejoin his comrades on dry land, to the joy of the whole city. During his gallant fight, a dart from an enemy's arrow had put out one eye, and because of this he was given the surname of Cocles, which means one-eyed.

## William Tell

When the Emperor Albert ruled over Germany, he wished to govern the people of Switzerland in such a way that their independent spirit would be broken. To bring about this end he appointed a governor, who treated the Swiss unjustly and cruelly.

The name of this man was Gessler, and in order to test the people's obedience, he placed his hat upon a pole in the market square of one of the principal towns, and commanded that all who passed it should bow down before it in token of respect. A certain brave Swiss, named William Tell, having refused to obey such an absurd order, was at once arrested and taken before Gessler. The tyrant, who knew him to be a clever archer, said that his life would be spared only on the condition that he should with an arrow hit an apple placed upon the head of his only son. Tell's eye was true, so he consented to the horrible proposal.

An apple having been placed upon the head of his little son, he took his bow and quiver, and prepared to take aim. A moment later the apple, split in two halves, fell to the ground.

Gessler, who was enraged at Tell's success, noticed that he carried another arrow under his cloak.

"What have you a second arrow for?" he demanded.

"If I had killed my boy," replied the bold Swiss, "the second arrow was for you."

The angry governor had him thrown into prison, but Tell escaped, and revenged himself by killing the tyrant.



**TELL'S SON AND THE APPLE**



# Catherine Douglas

When King James came to the throne of Scotland, the whole country was in a state of rebellion.

The King tried to restore order, but the wicked nobles hated him, and plotted together to take his life.

It was Christmas, and King James, with his Queen Joan and a party of faithful friends, was celebrating the season at an old monastery in Perth. The day had passed merrily, and the royal couple prepared to retire.

Suddenly the clang of arms was heard. The ladies rushed to secure the door of the room, but alas! the bolts and bars had gone, and only the empty staples remained. Meanwhile King James seized the tongs, and tearing up a board in the floor, let himself down into a vault below. But before there was time to replace the board, the murderers came rushing along. Then Catherine Douglas, one of the Queen's ladies, flew to the door and thrust her arm through the empty staples, thus gaining time to allow her sovereign to escape. The brave arm was but a frail bar, and was soon broken, and the traitors burst into the room, to find no sign of King James.



**FOR THE KING!**

Unfortunately the King was unable to get out of the vault. The ladies then made ropes of the sheets, and tried to pull him up, but the noise was heard by the ruffians. They again rushed into the room and the unfortunate monarch was most cruelly murdered.

Although Catherine's brave deed was not rewarded by the salvation of her King's life, yet it was an act of self-sacrifice which places her among the ranks of true heroines.

## Casabianca

The Battle of the Nile was a great battle fought at sea between the British and French in the year 1798. The famous admiral, Lord Nelson, was in command of the British fleet, and he won a most glorious victory in which only four French ships escaped.



**CASABIANCA ON THE BURNING SHIP**

Towards the close of the battle the French Admiral's flagship, *L'Orient*, caught fire, and blazed up with terrible brightness. Lord Nelson immediately gave orders that the British boats should be put off to save as many as possible of the poor sailors on the burning vessel.

When the boats reached her side, most of the French officers accepted the offer of safety and sprang into them. Standing upon *L'Orient's* deck was the little ten-year-old son of the Captain, named Casabianca, who was the favourite of everyone on board, and as he made no attempt to move, the British sailors shouted to him to come with them.

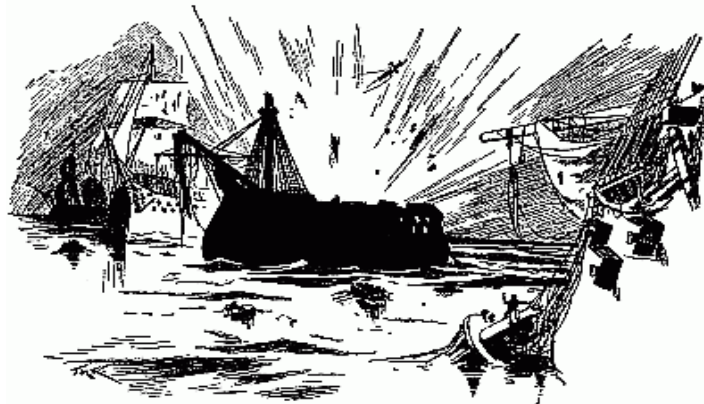
"No," replied the boy; "my father told me to remain here, and not to stir unless he called me."

"But," cried the sailors in amazement, "your father lies mortally wounded on deck, and the ship will soon blow up. Jump into the boat and save yourself."

"No," again responded the little fellow; "I must obey my father's orders."

As there was no time to linger, the boat put off from the ship's side. A few minutes later the figure of Casabianca was seen in the glare of the flames, leaning over the prostrate figure of his father.

Soon after, a terrible explosion shook every ship in the bay, while burning fragments of *L'Orient* were hurled in the air, falling heavily to the water in all directions. A dead silence followed this fearful sound, and then the British boats rowed busily about, picking up those who had leapt from the burning vessel in time to save their lives. In this way about seventy were saved. But where was the brave boy, Casabianca? Not a sign of him was to be seen. The noble lad had perished with his father, faithful until death.



## Handel, the Great Musician

In the small German town of Halle there once lived a barber-surgeon named George Handel. In those days barbers were nearly always surgeons as well, and George Handel was a very respected member of the profession. He had a large family of sons and daughters, the youngest of whom was called George Frederick. When quite a small child this little fellow showed a decided taste for music. In the nursery his only toys were trumpets, drums, flutes, and anything out of which he could get musical sounds. As he grew older this intense love of music increased, until it became the one great thought and pleasure of his life. Seeing this his father was very distressed and alarmed, for he did not wish his little son to take up music as the means of earning his living.

At that time organists and musicians were very poorly paid, and George Handel wanted his boy to get on well in the world. So he tried to turn the child's mind away from all such ideas, by never allowing him to go to any place where music was performed, and by sending every instrument out of his house. But in spite of so much care and trouble taken, it was impossible to destroy the strongest desire of the boy's nature.

One night, after the household had gone to bed, Mr. Handel was awakened by the sound of soft music stealing from an unused garret. He arose in great surprise, and calling his wife they went to find out the cause of these strange sounds.

Going quietly to the garret they paused to listen outside for a few moments, when their astonishment was increased by the beauty of the melody which met their ears. Then, opening the door and holding up the candle he carried, George Handel peered wonderingly into the dusty old lumber-room. There, seated at a clavichord (an instrument something like a piano, only much smaller), was his little son Frederick, then only six years old. The child had coaxed one of his aunts, who was his friend and sympathizer, to help him smuggle the clavichord into the garret, where he taught himself to play while his parents were asleep, or out of the house.

The wonderful sweetness of the music, together with the earnest entreaties of the tiny performer, softened the heart of his father to forgiveness of his conduct. But even then the old gentleman could not be induced to allow his son to follow the profession for which nature had so well fitted him, as he feared he would not be able to earn his living at it. However, it happened not long after that the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels heard the boy play, and was so struck by his genius that he persuaded his parent to consent to have him properly trained.

When once he was enabled to continue his studies under the guidance of a good master, it did not take young Handel long to show not only his father, but the whole world, that he was a truly great and marvelously gifted musician. To-day his famous oratorios are played everywhere, and people delight in them and marvel at them just as much as when they were first produced.



**THE CHILD MUSICIAN**





## COLUMBUS ON HIS VOYAGE TO AMERICA

### The Story of Columbus

About four hundred years ago there lived an Italian sailor, named Christopher Columbus. In those days people supposed that there were no continents in the world besides Europe, Asia, and Africa, but Columbus believed there was a great country across the ocean that had never been discovered. He felt a burning desire to sail in search of this land, but as he was a poor man he had not the money with which to get the necessary ships and men. For some time he wandered from place to place trying to induce others to help him carry out his plan, but he was only laughed at and called a fool and a madman. At length he obtained an interview with King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. At first they refused to give him any assistance, but afterwards the Queen said she would pledge her jewels to raise the needful money.

So in the month of August, Columbus sailed away upon his voyage of discovery, his little fleet consisting of three small vessels. For four weeks they sailed on over the dark and stormy waters, during which time Columbus had much trouble with his sailors, who grumbled and complained unceasingly. When at length they found themselves alone on the vast unknown seas, with no sign of land, they became panic-stricken, and implored Columbus to take them home again. He reproved them for their want of courage. Then for a little while they showed a braver spirit, but before long they again broke out into rebellion; but Columbus was so strong-minded and courageous that he succeeded in quelling the mutiny.

Thus days passed, until one night, in the middle of October, as Columbus was walking on deck he suddenly saw a light ahead which told the sea-weary mariners that the longed-for land must lie not far distant. When at last dawn came it showed an island lying in the blue waters before them. A boat was at once lowered, in which Columbus and a party of his men landed upon the unknown shore. Groups of dark-skinned natives crowded to the water side, gazing in fear and wonder at the strange white men. Then, with the Spanish royal flag in one hand and his sword in the other, he took possession of the island in the name of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. Having visited other islands, Columbus returned in triumph to Spain, where he was greeted as a hero.

## Antonio Canova



**A CLEVER PUPIL**

In the sunny land of Italy, in the obscure little village of Possagno near Venice, there once lived a little lad whose name was Antonio Canova. As he was left an orphan at three years old he dwelt with his grandfather, who earned his living by cutting figures and ornaments out of stone. The old man took the greatest care of his grandson and wished to train Antonio to become a stone-cutter too, so with this end in view the boy was taught drawing. He soon showed great talent, and when he began to model birds and flowers in clay, he succeeded so well that his grandfather was both astonished and delighted. Even in his ninth year he made two beautiful marble shrines which can be seen to this day.

One day a nobleman called Giovanni Falieri, who was about to give a large dinner party, asked old Canova to make him some ornament for the table. He said he did not care what it was, but wanted something new and uncommon. There was but little time before the date fixed for the party, and the old stone-cutter tried in vain to think of a suitable object. Seeing his grandfather so troubled, Antonio said to him, "I think I can make something to please his lordship. If you will let me have some good hard butter I will make him a butter lion."

"That is an excellent idea," replied the old man. And he sent for the butter at once.

Antonio set to work, and very soon he had shaped a lion's head, with fine flowing mane, out of the creamy mass. Then followed a beautifully formed body and limbs.

When the animal was complete his grandfather looked at it with intense pride and admiration, and it was carefully carried to his lordship. It attracted a great deal of attention at the dinner party, and amid cries of wonderment was passed from hand to hand. When the nobleman and his guests heard that it was the work of a boy, they expressed a great desire to see the talented young artist. Antonio was sent for, and his lordship was so impressed with his talent that he promised to see that he had the best masters, and that he was given every chance to succeed in his profession.



Giovanni Falieri nobly kept his word, and placed him as a pupil under Bernardi, or as he is usually called Torretti, a famous Venetian sculptor, who happened to be staying in a neighbouring village at the time. By the aid of this kind friend, and the power of his own genius, Antonio became a world-renowned sculptor. And not only was he a famous sculptor, but he was even entrusted with great affairs of state.

When the great Napoleon conquered Italy he carried off most unjustly hundreds of priceless works of art, and when the tyrant was overthrown the young Canova was sent as ambassador to Paris to find the whereabouts of these works. For these and other services he was made by the Pope Marquis of Ischia, and given a pension of 3000 scudi. But Canova was very good and generous and he devoted all this pension for the relief of his poor brother artists. Thus the little figure of the butter lion proved to be the stepping-stone to fame.



**CANOVA'S BUTTER LION**



## Damon and Pythias

The city of Syracuse was once ruled over by a clever but very cruel man called Dionysius. Perhaps he would not have been so harsh and cruel if he had been able to trust his people; but he knew that the Syracusans hated him. It happened that he once suspected a certain Greek called Pythias, and his anger was so terrible that he sentenced the unfortunate man to death. Pythias begged to be allowed to go and bid his relations in the country farewell, promising to return at a given time to suffer the death to which he had been condemned. Dionysius laughed his request to scorn, saying that once he was safely out of Syracuse it was not likely he would ever return to die. Pythias replied that he had a friend, named Damon, who would be answerable for his return at the given time. Damon then came forward and swore that if Pythias did not keep his word, he himself would suffer death in his stead. Dionysius consented to let Pythias go.

Time went on and the day fixed for his return drew near, but still he did not come. The Syracusans told Damon that he would have to die for his faithless friend, but Damon showed no anxiety. At length the very day and hour upon which the condemned man was to die came round. But a few minutes before the fatal time Pythias rushed in, and having warmly embraced his friend, he went forward to take his place. Dionysius was so struck by the conduct of the two men that he pardoned Pythias, and calling him and Damon to his side he entreated them to allow him to be a third in their friendship.



## Charlemagne and the Charcoal-burner



**CHARLEMAGNE AND THE CHARCOAL-BURNER**

Once the noble Charlemagne, King of the Franks, was riding across a lonely moor with some of his courtiers, when they were overtaken by a terrific storm. It became so dark that the party lost sight of one another, and the King found himself alone in the tempest of wind and rain. As he struggled on he met a poor man leading a horse with two great baskets upon its back.

"What is your name, friend?" enquired Charlemagne.

"I am Ralph, the charcoal-burner," replied the man.

"Can you tell me where I can find shelter for my horse and myself?" asked the King.

"If you care to come with me to my cottage you will be very welcome," answered Ralph.

The King was only too glad to accompany the man to his house in the forest. When they reached the door the charcoal-burner called to his wife to hasten to let them in. Ralph stood aside for his companion to pass in first, but Charlemagne hung back behind. Seeing this the man took him by the neck and pushed him in the house, saying, "It is only right that my guest should enter first."

When supper was ready the charcoal-burner bade King Charlemagne go to the table before him. But again His Majesty held back. Then Ralph gave his visitor such a sound box on the ear that he staggered and fell.

"Why will you not do as I bid you?" he cried angrily.

"These are strange doings indeed," said the King to himself, as he rose from the ground.

"Now tell me who you are, and where you live?" said the peasant to his royal guest.

"My name is Uzmond, and I live at Court, where I have an office with the Queen," replied Charlemagne.



Early the next morning, Charlemagne before starting offered to pay Ralph for his food and lodging, but the man refused to take payment for sheltering one who belonged to the Court of the noble King of France.

"So be it," answered His Majesty. "But if you will not let me pay you, come to the Court with a load of coals and I will see that you sell your goods."

"That will I do," answered Ralph.

The following day Ralph loaded his mare with two large baskets of coal and set off to Court. When he arrived there he asked for one Uzmond, but no one knew of such a person. The King had given orders that he should be admitted into the Palace, and at length he came to a splendid hall, where Charlemagne sat at dinner with his nobles. The poor charcoal-burner at once pointed at His Majesty, exclaiming, "See, there sits Uzmond, but truly he must be a greater man than he said!"

At this His Majesty burst into a loud laugh, and rising from his seat he told the whole company how he had fared at Ralph's cottage. The lords all laughed heartily, but some of them would have had Ralph punished for having boxed the King's ears.

"Nay," said Charlemagne, "Heaven forbid I should harm him. He is an honest man who can strike a hard blow, and I shall make him a knight instead."



**THE CHARCOAL-BURNER AT THE PALACE**

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