Stories from Roman History

Lena Dalkeith

Illustrated by Paul Woodroffe
Edited by John Lang


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EDITED BY JOHN LANG

STORIES FROM ROMAN HISTORY

BY

LENA DALKEITH

WITH PICTURES BY
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TO

ROBERT HUSTED CHAMBERS

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book is not big enough to hold all the stories that might be written about the Romans, and at first it was puzzling to know how to choose. One day after reading and reading Roman history, I shut the book more puzzled than ever. Then I must have fallen asleep; I dreamt I was in Rome. To me as I stood in the great city there came an old man, saying, 'I know why you are here, and I can help you to choose.' He led me into a beautiful temple where there were many men gathered together, all clad in flowing togas and crowned with wreaths of laurel.

'Who are these?' I asked. 'They are the heroes of the Roman Republic,' answered the old man. 'Mark well those to whom I give greeting,' and he began to wend his way from one end of the building to the other. Romulus, Horatius, Coriolanus, the Scipios, the Gracchi, Pompey, Julius Caesar, they were all there, and many more, and he greeted them each in turn, but when we came to Julius Caesar, he sighed deeply. 'What chance had the Republic against such a man!' be said; then turning to me, he added: 'Write your stories about these men-heroes of the greatest Republic that ever was, and leave the Empire and its tyrants to the history books.' 'Who are you?' I asked wonderingly. He smiled. 'I have written the stories of all these great men,' he said. 'You are Plutarch!' I cried. . . and awoke, and lo! the stories were chosen. My dream had done this for me together with gentle Plutarch, whose book you will surely read one day-that is to say if you like this one, as I hope you will.

LENA DALKEITH.

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I. OF ROMULUS AND REMUS
HOW ROME FIRST CAME TO BE BUILT

Long and long ago, it is said, Nimitur, King of Alba, was robbed of his crown, and thrust from his kingdom by his younger brother, Amulius.

Now Nimitur had one daughter Ainulius, when he bad made himself king, forced this maiden to become a 'Vestal,' — that is to say, a high priestess, and, as a Vestal, she had to make a vow never to marry. This Amulius did in order to reign in safety, for he was afraid if the daughter of Nimitur were to marry that her children might some day try to win back their rightful inheritance. However, his cunning plan failed: the maiden was loved by the god Mars; she broke her vow, and Romulus and Remus were born.

Amulius, as soon as he heard of the birth of the twin boys, condemned their mother to be buried alive. This was the terrible punishment in those days for vestals who broke their vows. Also, he gave orders that the babies should be thrown into the river Tiber, which was at that time in flood.

These two cruel things were done: the daughter of Nimitur was put to death: her children were thrown into the Tiber. Happily they fell into a shallow pool, and by a strange chance the water shrank back as if afraid to be the cause of the babies' death, and thus Romulus and Remus were saved. To them, as they lay crying helplessly under a wild fig-tree, came a great she-wolf. The beast, pitying them, stayed to nurse and mother them, feeding them with her own milk until they were old enough to take other food. Then a woodpecker came, bringing meat every day, and in this strange way, nursed by beast and bird, these two little princes grew into strong and sturdy boys.

Romulus and Remus

One day they were found by a herdsman, who took them home to his cottage and brought them up with his own children. There for a long time they lived contentedly, helping the man to watch the flocks on the side of Mount Palatine. This herdsman was a servant of Amulius. Now the herdsmen who called Ainulius master were at war with those who belonged to Nimitur. There came a day when Nimitur's men seized Remus and carried him off to their master. Romulus followed after them, anxious to help his brother.

The two youths were brought before their grandfather, they being quite unknown to him and he to them, for the old king believed the twins to be dead, and they never guessed their royal birth. Nevertheless, although they were dressed in rough clothes, something in their look and bearing aroused the King's interest, and after questioning and hearing their strange story he found that they were in very truth his daughter's children, and with great joy he made himself known to them.

Romulus and Remus when they were told how King Nimitur had been dethroned, how their mother had been put to death, and they themselves thrown into the river, grew fierce and angry and vowed to be revenged on Amulius. They set out straightway for the city of Alba where Amulius was: there they slew him and restored King Nimitur to his throne again. This done, they refused to stay longer in the city of their forefathers. 'No,' they said, 'we will build a city of our own close to the spot where we were saved from death.'

So they returned again to that place; but soon there arose a quarrel between them as to where the city should be built. Romulus wished to build on Mount Palatine, Remus on Mount Aventine, and neither would give in to the other. What was to be done? They prayed the gods for a sign: then they agreed to watch one whole day, — Romulus on Palatine, Remus on Aventine, — and at sunrise on the second day he who saw a flight of birds should found the city. Remus first saw the sign. He saw six vultures flying on his left. A little later Romulus caught sight of twelve hovering over Mount Palatine, and this sign, he said, was more favourable than the other, and showed plainly whom the gods had chosen. Remus would not agree: the sign had been given to him first. Long and bitterly the brothers wrangled, at last they fought, and in the end Romulus killed Remus, either by a chance blow or in a wild moment of anger. Thus it was Romulus who first began to build on Mount Palatine, and the name of his city was Rome.

Now this legend, which is more than two thousand years old, you may believe or you may not, as you like: for the books which told of the first founding of Rome and the beginnings of the Roman people

were destroyed. The Romans themselves believed in the legend, but now no one can really tell whether it is true, or only a tale.

II. OF HORATIUS
HOW HE KEPT THE BRIDGE

This story you will like, for it is about three brave men and the noble deed they did — how they saved Rome from falling into the hands of her enemies the Etruscans. Horatius Codes, Spurius Lartius and Herminius lived in the days when Rome was young, when the Romans were quite a small people. After many years they grew, as you know, to be the greatest nation in the world, the most powerful and the most war-like. Still even in those early times they were a fighting people.

Italy was then divided up into little kingdoms and cities, between one or other of which there was nearly always war. The Etruscans were the most powerful, and very eager they were to conquer the Romans: indeed, before they were finally driven out of Italy they had won for themselves a great part of the Roman possessions and forced the Roman people to sue for peace: but this was later, and in the end they had to go.

At the time when Horatius and his friends lived there was civil war in Rome. The people, led by the nobles, or the patricians as they were called, had risen in revolt against their tyrant king, Tarquinius Superbus or Tarquin the Proud.

So much had the patricians suffered under the tyrant's rule and so fiercely did they hate him, that after the revolution they made the people swear never to allow another king to reign in Rome.

Tarquin fled fearing for his life — fled to Etruria to ask for help, and no man knew when he might come again to try and win back the kingdom. All were sure, however, that he would not leave the city long in peace and that the Etruscans would only be too glad of an excuse to make war on them.

Thus Rome was made republic. Junius Brutus, the leader of the revolution, and another patrician ruled as consuls, that is to say, chief magistrates. They had the power of a King, but being two, the power was divided, and so each was less likely to act unjustly, or to wrong the people. I tell you this because these two were the first Roman Consuls of the great Roman Republic. Later on it was found better in times of war to give all power into the hands of one man, called the Dictator, as the consuls often quarrelled among themselves and so endangered the safety of the State.

Yet at first all went well: the patricians were content, the people did not complain: the laws which Tarquin had changed were righted again: a plot which some friends of the king had started, in the hope of throning him again, was discovered and the Conspirators put to death.

Then lo! one day the cry arose in the city, 'To arms! to arms! The Etruscans are here!' Out rushed the soldiers, battleaxe in hand: straight to the banks of the Tiber they ran, to that place where stood the Sublician Bridge, for over this narrow wooden bridge, the enemy would have to pass before they could reach the city.

All the citizens followed; men, women, children, and slaves, ran helter-skelter to the bank of the river to watch their soldiers break down the bridge. Only thus could Rome be saved and the Etruscans prevented from entering the city.

But it was too late! too late! Proud Tarquin with Lars Porsenna of Clusium at the head of a strong Etruscan army stood there on the other side ready to cross the river.

'They will be over before we can cut down the bridge!' shouted the soldiers.

'We are lost! Rome will be taken! The gods have forsaken us!' cried the women wildly, and clasped their children close and wept.

On a sudden, clear and strong, above the noise and the tumult rang the voice of Horatius.

'The city shall be saved! The bridge shall fall! By the gods, I swear it!' he cried, 'Romans! Who will keep yonder side with me so that none shall pass while the work is done?'

'I will!' answered Spurius Lartius.

'And I!' said Herminius, and lightly and proudly the three crossed the bridge even unto the end where the Etruscans were.

'Lars Porsenna, ye pass not by here save only ye pass over our dead bodies!' they cried.

And when the enemy stood still in astonishment, 'Etruscans, ye do well to fear three Romans!' laughed Horatius,

'Forward!' thundered Porsenna, and on pressed the Etruscans by threes and fours, (for the passage was narrow), only to be slain or thrust back by the valiant three, while behind them the Roman soldiers worked for dear life, slashing and hacking at the bridge whose downfall would save Rome.

The women watching on the banks could see it fall, beam by beam — could see every moment the gap widening between the three brave men and the bridge. Wider and wider it grew, and with one voice the Romans cried, 'Jump! Horatius, Lartius, Herminius! Jump while you can!'

Lartius and Herminius obeyed. Again rose the cry —

'Horatius, come while there is time!'

'Not till the last beam is down!' answered Horatius, and another Etruscan fell to the ground before him.

Horatius keeps the Bridge

Swift and furious flew the axes: beam after beam crashed into the water. At last! At last! The bridge was down, and Horatius, leaping into the river, swam to the other side unhurt. Rome was saved.

You can picture for yourselves the greeting that was given to him, how the people rejoiced, what honours were paid to him and his two friends, but for such brave men the greatest reward and honour was in knowing that they had saved the city they loved so dearly.

III. OF CAIUS MARCIUS CORIOLANUS
HOW HE WON HIS NAME, HOW HE WAS EXILED AND WHAT CAME OF IT

Hear first how Caius Marcius came to be called Coriolanus, he who was the mightiest soldier, the strongest, bravest patrician in Rome.

The Romans were at war with the Volscians. Their army lay encamped round about Corioli, the Volscian capital, and the Volscians, fearing that the city might be taken by their enemies, were marching to rescue their besieged countrymen.

To prevent this, Cominius, the Roman general, divided his army into two parts. He himself with one half of the troops marched to meet the enemy, leaving the other half — Caius Marcius among them — to carry on the siege.

No sooner was Cominius out of sight, than the besieged Volscians rushed from the city and attacked the enemy with such surprising fierceness that the Romans turned to flee.

'Shame Shame upon you, soldiers!' cried Caius Marcius, dashing into the fray, and so terrible was his voice, and so awful his look, that the Volscians fell back in dismay, and the Romans turning again chased them to the very gates of the city. A shower of arrows from the walls met them there, but Marcius took little notice.

'The gates are open for the victors,' he cried, and boldly entered with his enemies, followed only by a few of his bravest soldiers.

Once inside the walls, Marcius fought so furiously that the Volscians fled like frightened rabbits before him. Not one among them dared stand against this terrible stranger with his angry flaming eyes and merciless sword. And before long the city was captured by the strength and valour of one man.

Even then Marcius was not content. With a few soldiers he rode hurriedly to join the rest of the army, and overtook Comimius as he was about to give battle. Wounded as he was, Marcius fought as bravely as ever, doing marvellous deeds of arms. The Volscians were defeated, and many prisoners and much treasure taken from them.

The next day the Consul, before the whole army, offered the hero a tenth part of the captured treasure as a reward for his bravery, — but this Marcius refused to take.

'I will share and share alike with the rest, for I have only done my duty, and I want no reward,' said he. 'Only one gift will I ask of you. Among the prisoners I have a friend, a good and true man. It would grieve me to see him sold as a slave, therefore I pray you to give me his freedom.'

The soldiers liked Marcius better for this speech than for all the brave deeds he had done, and when the sound of their cheering died away, the Consul answered,

'So be it — the man is free.'

Then turning to the Romans, he cried, 'Soldiers. if Caius Marcius will take no reward, we cannot force him; but let us give him that which he cannot refuse, let him from henceforth be called Coriolanus, so that he may be honoured for ever as the man who captured Corioli'

Thus Caius Marcius won his famous name.

Hear now how, after peace had been made the with Volscians, Coriolanus was banished, and how he avenged himself.

When first Rome became a republic, the plebeians, that is to say the people, rejoiced greatly — 'At last we shall be treated with justice,' they said, but soon they found that the patrician senators ruled as harshly and unjustly as the kings had done, and that instead of having one tyrant over them, they had many.

At last they could bear this no longer. A whole band of them left the city, and marched to a hill not far away, where they meant to found a new colony. The senate in alarm sent one of the oldest and wisest patricians to persuade them to return. To his prayers and entreaties they made answer:

'When two men, chosen by us alone, shall be allowed to sit in the Senate, to speak for us, to make laws for us, and to defend our liberty, then and only then will we return to Rome.'

The senators unwillingly granted the request, and the plebeians marched back in triumph. Ever afterwards they had the right to choose their own tribunes — Tribunes of the Plebs they were called — who sat in the senate and watched over the cause of the people. At first there were only two, afterwards five, and later even more.

But all this time no work had been done, no harvest gathered, so that there was no corn for the making of bread, and before long the citizens were starving.

War broke out again, but the people sullenly refused to fight. Coriolanus, taking with him all his servants and retainers and as many soldiers as would join him, marched into the enemy's country, returning soon victorious, with food, corn and gold.

The plebeians, seeing the soldiers living in plenty while they were starving, grew angry with Coriolanus. Indeed he had never been a great favourite of theirs. He was the proudest and haughtiest of all the proud and haughty patricians. He despised the people, and they disliked and feared him. They feared him because he was ever trying to take from them the little power they had won, and therefore when he offered himself as consul they refused him, and gave their votes to another patrician.

This made the senate very indignant, for they loved and honoured Coriolanus more than any other man. As for Coriolanus, he grew more angry and bitter against the plebeians than ever before.

At this time a large quantity of bread-corn was brought into the city. Some of it had been bought from other Italian towns, and some was the gift of the King of Syracuse.

When the starving citizens heard the joyful tidings they hurried to the Forum to hear what the senate would say about the matter. They expected to be able to buy some of the corn for very little money and to be given the rest, since it was a royal gift; so patiently and hopefully they waited outside for their tribunes to bring word from the senate.

But within Coriolanus was speaking, the younger senators were approving his every word, the older men were shaking their heads, and the tribunes were growing angrier and more uneasy every moment. For Coriolanus was speaking against the people; he was telling them that the price of the corn must not be lowered, nor the citizens given a grain of it.

'They are growing too powerful,' he said, 'and they must be humbled or we shall soon be nothing but their slaves.'

The tribunes, seeing that most of the senators agreed with him, ran out to the people and angrily told them what was happening.

Wild with hunger and rage they called for Coriolanus to be brought before them. The two tribunes were sent with the aediles (the guardians of the peace) to bring him. Coriolanus refused to go, and when the aediles would have laid hands on him to drag him out by force, the patricians beat them off and thrust the tribunes from the place.

Next morning an angry crowd of citizens thronged the Forum, and so dark were their looks, so threatening their cries, that the senators came hastily out to tell them that all should be as they wished — that half the corn should be given, and half sold at a small price.

This calmed the anger of some, but others never ceased calling for Coriolanus to come and defend his action. Not only had he tried to

keep the corn from them, but he had said that the tribunes ought not to be allowed a place in the senate any longer.

Coriolanus was as eager to speak as they were to hear. But instead of defending his unjust words and designs, he scolded the people for their rebellious ways, and so fiercely and haughtily that they lost all patience.

The tribunes in a rage sentenced him to death, but when the aediles tried to seize and bind him, the patricians, shocked and surprised, gathered round him and would let no one come near, and even the people themselves cried out against such an outrage. Wishing to keep the peace, the tribunes took back the death-sentence, but they ordered Coriolanus to be tried by the people for treason against the republic.

And tried he was and found guilty, and forbidden ever to enter the city of Rome again, for the people could not forget or forgive his tyranny, and the patricians were too much afraid of them to help their friend. Yet while they wept and bewailed his hard fate, Coriolanus showed no sign of sorrow. He was too angry.

Sadly he bade farewell to his mother Volumnia, whom he loved better than any one else in the world, and to his wife and his children — they also were dear to him. Then in silence he passed through the gates and left Rome for ever.

He first went to a lonely place where he could think and plan how best to be revenged on the people who had turned against him, and the friends who feared to defend him. His poor proud heart instead of being softened by sorrow, had become hard and bitter.

One night a dark figure stole through the streets of Antium, a Volscian city, to the house of the general Tullus. Little did the Volscians know that this stranger was their hated enemy, the man who had captured Corioli — Coriolanus. He entered the house of Tullus, and going straight to the hearth, where a bright fire was burning, sat down beside it and covered his face with his cloak.

This he did because in those days the fire was a sacred thing, and any one who sat by the hearth, no matter how great an enemy he might be, was safe from all harm.

Tullus was at supper in an upper chamber when the servants told him of the strange man who sat by the fire with his face hid in his cloak. Tullus at once came down to see. When he entered the room Coriolanus uncovered his face, and the two looked at each other for a time in silence.

The Roman was the first to speak:

'Tullus, you know me well; Coriolanus has been no friend to you, and your country-men fear his name still. But now he comes to do you a service. My people have turned against me, my friends have deserted me, and I would be avenged. Give me an army to lead, and before long Rome shall be yours, and the Romans shall rue the day they sent Coriolanus like a stranger from their gates.'

On hearing this Tullus gladly welcomed his strange guest, and in a little while Coriolanus, at the head of a large Volscian army, was marching through the country, burning and capturing the Roman cities and laying waste their lands, and when at last he encamped not far from Rome the citizens gave themselves up for lost.

They were too frightened even to think of fighting their terrible foe. Instead they sent a number of his old friends, the senators, to beg him to spare their city.

'Can ye expect mercy from me,' he said to them bitterly, 'Go, tell the Romans that there can be no peace between us until all the lands that have been taken from the Volscians are surrendered again, together with the city of Rome.'

And he gave them thirty days' grace wherein to make up their minds.

The Romans were terror-struck. They sent the priests next to plead their cause, for in spite of their fears they were too brave to surrender; but the priests returned with the same stern answer.

Then Volumnia and Virgilia, the mother and the wife of Coriolanus, and his two children, together with many noble Roman matrons, made their way to the Volscian camp, and at the sight of them even their enemies were silent.

Coriolanus tenderly kissed his mother, and then his wife and children. Tears came to his eyes, and for a time he could not speak.

Then Volumnia, seeing that he loved them still, began to pray him to have pity on Rome.

If you do not grant me my prayer,' she said, 'then to reach Rome your horses will have to trample over my dead body, for I cannot live to see my son either his country's captive or conqueror.'

And when Coriolanus answered her never a word, she cried:

'Why are you silent, O my son? It is no honour to nurse anger and hate in your heart. You of all men who have suffered so for much from ingratitude, should take care not to be ungrateful yourself. You have done much for your country, but what have you done for me — your mother — in return for all my love and care? Oh, surely you cannot refuse me this one thing!'

'Ah, mother,' said Coriolanus sadly, 'what have you done? You have saved Rome, but you have slain your son!' for he knew that the Volscians would not forgive him for sparing Rome: nor did they.

When the women had returned with the joyful news, Coriolanus ordered his army to retire. They obeyed, but soon after, at Antium, the Volscian generals, who had grown jealous, slew the great Roman.

Coriolanus at the Gates of Rome.

Thus died Coriolanus, a man who, great as he was, would have been so much greater had he learned to be as humble and forgiving as he was honourable and brave.

IV. OF HANNIBAL
HOW HE CROSSED THE ALPS

One day, more than two hundred years before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, a crowd of citizens filled the streets of the ancient city of Carthage. They were waiting to see the Roman ambassadors pass on their way to the senate.

'Will it be peace or war, think you?' asked a dark Carthaginian.

'War,' answered his neighbour. 'There is not room in the world for two great republics. Either Rome must fall, or Carthage, and if Hannibal has aught to do with it we need not fear for Carthage. Already 'tis said the Romans tremble at the sound of his name, and they have cause. One day he will conquer Rome itself, and then we Carthaginians will be masters of Italy, and Rome will pay tribute to Carthage, the greatest city in the world.'

So proudly spoke the man. He could not know that in less than a hundred years Carthage would be in ruins — burned to the ground by the Roman troops, and all her great possessions given over to Roman rule. But at that time there was good cause for boasting, for Carthage with all its splendid temples and beautiful buildings, overlooking the blue Mediterranean Sea, rivalled even Rome in greatness and power, and no one could then tell which of the two republics — Roman or Carthaginian — would prove the stronger in the end.

'Hannibal has ever hated the Romans!' This time it was a woman who spoke. 'His father taught him that lesson well. 'Tis said that when the boy was but nine years old, Hamilcar made him swear, before the altar of the gods, a bitter oath of hatred against Rome.'

'Hamilcar conquered Hispania (Spain) for us, and he was a great general,' said the first man, 'but his son will be still greater, mark my words. Already he has forced many more of those wild Spanish

tribes to pay him allegiance, and look you, he keeps to his oath. Why did he besiege Segantum and take it? For no other cause than to pick a quarrel with the Romans. The city was under their protection, now it belongs to Carthage, thanks to Hannibal, and if they do not beware he will take more from them yet.'

'Hush! Here they come!' said the woman.

Swiftly the Roman ambassadors passed, as eager as the Carthaginians to know whether it was to be war or peace.

'Know ye what Hannibal has done?' cried Fabius, the chief ambassador, as they stood before the Carthaginian senators. 'The republic sent him word that if he took Segantum it would mean war with Rome. In spite of this warning he has besieged and taken the city. Now we would know what the Carthaginian Government has to say?'

'Hannibal acted as he thought best for the good of his country,' answered the senators, and thereupon they began to make excuses for their general. Fabius lost patience.

'I here bring you war or peace: take which you please,' he said, and gathered up his toga into a heavy fold.

'Give us which you like,' was the answer.

Fabius shook out the fold.

'I give you war,' he said.

'We accept the gift, and welcome,' cried the senators.

Hastily Fabius set sail for Spain, where he hoped to persuade the Spanish tribes to turn against the Carthaginians or Africans as they were called later; but he failed. Quickly he journeyed to Gaul: nothing could be done there for his cause. The Gallic tribes, although

they had been conquered by the Romans, were at heart enemies to Rome: no help was to be had from them.

To Rome then Fabius returned, to find the citizens much alarmed, busy making ready for the terrible war which they knew must come.

In Spain, in the city which Hamilcar had founded and named New Carthage, his son Hannibal was training both Spanish and African troops for the great invasion. He had made up his mind to do a wonderful thing; he was going to march over the Pyrenees through Gaul, and over the Alps into Cisalpine Gaul, which is now called Northern Italy. On the way he hoped that many of the Gallic tribes would join him, and with their help he hoped, this daring man, to conquer, not only Gaul, Etruria, and the other provinces, but Rome, the unconquerable city itself.

The desperate march began. Hannibal at the head of 90,000 foot and 20,000 horse soldiers and thirty-seven elephants (the Carthaginians made great use of elephants in battle), was on his way to conquer Italy.

But the river Iberus once crossed, his troubles began. The tribes there fought with him for every inch of the way, and when he came to the foot of the Pyrenees the fourth part of his army had been slain. Worse was to come. At the sight of the terrible snow-topped mountains 11,000 soldiers refused to go further. Hannibal, who himself was as brave as a lion, who never once complained however tired or cold or hungry he was, said not one word of reproach to them.

'Go if ye will!' he said, knowing that unwilling soldiers make bad fighters; and they went.

On marched Hannibal with the rest of his army over the Pyrenees, through Gaul to the foot of the Alps, and as yet the Romans had made no sign. I think not one of them believed that Hannibal would dare to lead his army over those terrible mountains.

'Impossible,' they cried, 'for any soldiers save mountaineers, lightly armed, and with no baggage and horses to hinder.'

'Nothing is impossible for Hannibal!' his soldiers would have answered had they been there; for Hannibal all through his life was adored by his men.

Winter was near. Already snow had fallen, but in spite of the cold Hannibal would not wait. He persuaded some of the Gauls to show them the way up the pass, but on the third day's march the guides turned traitor, and the whole tribe fiercely attacked the Carthaginians, even climbing the high precipice above the road to roll down great stones upon the soldiers. This went on until at a turning of the pass Hannibal with a few men kept them at bay, while the rest of the army filed past in safety.

But the brave soldiers had to fight with still stronger foes than men. The cruel snow and sleet fell upon them: bitter winds froze them to the bone: the steep, slippery, dangerous road hindered their marching: hunger and weariness went with them day by day. The men died by hundreds, nay, by thousands; the elephants and horses dropped exhausted by the way, and still Hannibal would not give in, still they struggled up the pass; higher, and higher, and higher, until on the ninth day they reached the top: Italy was in sight.

'On! my heroes, on!' cried Hannibal, when the troops had rested awhile; and the downward march began. The road was so bad that three days had to be spent in the mending of it, and three days meant the loss of many more soldiers' lives. Another three days of still greater hardships, and Hannibal, with all that was left of his army, entered Cisalpine Gaul. He had reached Italy at last.

How many lives do you think that terrible sixteen days' march cost him? Thirty-four thousand men alone, not counting the horses, were killed by hunger and cold and weariness, for there had been little fighting.

Happily the tribes in that part of the country were friendly, and for a time he stayed there to rest his troops and find fresh horses.

There was need. Rome presently sent an army of 40,000 men led by two consuls, and a great battle was fought. Hannibal, in spite of his smaller army, cleverly won. The Romans fled, and the whole of Cisalpine Gaul was at the mercy of Hannibal. He, however, having lost a great many men retired into winter quarters, there to wait until spring should make war possible again.

V. OF FABIUS MAXIMUS
HOW HE FOUGHT WITH HANNIBAL

The patrician general, Fabius Maximus, was the man chosen by the frightened citizens to be Dictator of Rome and leader of the army, when they heard that Hannibal had made himself master of Etruria as well as of Cisalpine Gaul.

Above everything Fabius loved his country, and his one great desire was to save it from the Carthaginians, who were taking city after city, burning, robbing, murdering, leaving misery behind them wherever they went.

Fabius was sad when he thought of this and of the two brave armies that had already been slaughtered by Hannibal, and he prayed earnestly to the gods to grant him their favour and give him victory over the enemy. Then he set out at the head of the army, his mind quite made up as to the way he should fight against Hannibal. A canny, cautious way it was, and because of it he was sometimes called 'the Lingerer.' Wherever Hannibal and his army went, Fabius followed with his: if the Carthaginians camped, Fabius did the same, if they marched, so did he, yet he would never let his army be drawn into a pitched battle, but always kept them a little distance away from the enemy.

His soldiers fretted sorely at this, for they loved to fight. His generals and captains were angrier still, thinking of the glory which would be theirs if Hannibal were defeated. Lucius Minucius, the general of horse and next in rank after Fabius, was the angriest of them all. Many bitter things he said to the army about their Dictator, calling him an 'old woman,' and mocking at him whenever the chance was given him, until at last the soldiers came to despise Fabius, and longed to have Lucius for their leader.

The general of horse grew prouder and more insolent every day. It was the custom of Fabius to encamp on the hillside and in high

places, so that the army might be out of reach of the enemy's horse. Lucius said that this was done to let the Roman soldiers see how many towns Hannibal had burned to the ground. Then he would ask the Dictator's friends if Fabius wished to hide from his enemy behind a screen of fog and cloud: these and many other things he said, accusing his leader of cowardice.

Fabius, when he was told of it, answered:

'It is true that I fear Hannibal, but for my country's sake, not for my own, and it is no shame for a brave man to fear for his country and to act as he thinks best for its defence. The only way we can hope to vanquish Hannibal is by tiring him out, by keeping him always on the watch for an attack which may or may not come. The only way is for us to bide our time. With every town that he captures he loses more men, and here he cannot find soldiers to fight in 'their place, for this part of the country keeps faithful to Rome. Thus his army is growing less and less, and one day, if we are patient, we shall give battle and win, for no general, however great, can conquer without men and money.'

Then his friends begged him to fight once at least, for the people in Rome, hearing no good news, were growing discontented and angry. To this Fabius calmly answered:

'I should indeed be the coward they think me if I put the whole army in peril — nay, endangered Rome itself — because I fear their mockery and scorn. This is the only way, and however much I am hated and despised I will keep to it as long as I am Dictator of Rome.'

After this something happened which made the soldiers and the Roman citizens, when they heard, even more discontented with Fabius. Hannibal, clearer-sighted than the Romans, understood very well that it was not fear that made the Dictator avoid a pitched battle. He guessed the clever plan, and did his best to spoil it. Although his army was the smaller, his men were better trained and more skilful than the Romans, and he himself was a far greater

general than Fabius, so being sure of victory he was very anxious to fight.

Therefore he marched into the Campania, thinking that when Fabius saw all that most beautiful part of the country laid waste by fire and sword, be would no longer refuse his soldiers their will to fight. But the guides, instead of leading him the right way, brought him by mistake into a valley out of which there was no opening save through the passes in the hills.

Fabius, who as usual had followed the enemy closely, took care to have each pass guarded by the Roman legions. Thus Hannibal was caught like a rat in a trap, or so it seemed. Was he caught, the great Hannibal — really caught at last? Even his own troops thought so, and confusion and terror reigned in the camp until Hannibal himself calmed the tumult, telling the men to have no fear, but to wait quietly till dark.

When night time came he caused great lighted torches to be bound to the horns of two thousand oxen, and had the beasts driven up the hill-side.

The Romans saw lights moving over the bill through the darkness, and thinking that the enemy were trying to escape that way, rushed to prevent them. This left the pass clear; Hannibal marched quickly and safely through it, and was once more free to work his will upon the country.

Fabius was bitterly reproached for letting the enemy escape, and the people firmly believed that they had made a mistake in appointing him Dictator.

'Fabius has done nothing yet to show himself worthy of the great trust we put in him,' they said, and Fabius bore the injustice patiently, for he knew that if he had not conquered Hannibal he had at least kept him in check.

About this time he had to go to Rome to offer up sacrifices to the gods. Lucius Minucius, who was left in charge of the army, disobeyed orders. While Hannibal with most of his army was away from the camp, having gone in search of food, Lucius attacked those who were left, and by good fortune won a slight victory without losing many of his men in the tussle.

This, when it became known, made him the idol of the people, and had they dared, they would have taken the command from Fabius and given it to Lucius.

Fabius, when the news was brought to him cried:

'Alas! this will make him rasher than ever! At any rate he shall be punished when I return for having disobeyed orders.'

The people, fearing for their hero, thereupon made Lucius Dictator as well, giving him equal power with Fabius. Thus there were two Dictators, and when Fabius joined the troops again the army was divided into two camps — one obeying Fabius, the other Lucius.

As you will guess, Lucius at once caused the red robe to be hung over his tent, which was a sign to the soldiers to prepare for battle. Hannibal was delighted; he had been waiting anxiously for this. The battle took place. Lucius, who was more courageous than wise, was defeated.

Towards the end of the day, Fabius, who was watching the battle from a hill near by, turned to his men and cried:

'Soldiers, if you love your country follow me now. Lucius Minucius is a brave man and a gallant soldier, and he deserves to be helped. So long as there was a chance of victory we were bound to stay here, but now in misfortune we can lend him our aid.'

Whereupon he led his army to the rescue, caused Hannibal to retire, and saved Lucius and his soldiers from being wholly slaughtered.

Thus again Hannibal was victorious, yet the generous Fabius said never a word of blame or reproach to his rash comrade.

Lucius showed that be too could be generous and great-hearted. Before the whole united Roman army he begged Fabius to forgive him, and turning to his soldiers, he bade them behold their leader, gave up his title of Dictator, and until the end of that campaign obeyed Fabius cheerfully and uncomplainingly, like the good soldier he really was. And the Roman citizens, hearing of the matter, from that time forth began to give Fabius the trust and respect that his patient courage deserved.

VI. OF HANNIBAL
HOW ITALY WAS SAVED IN THE END

It was in late spring, when the sky shone blue and the flowers were in bloom, that Rome first had word of the Battle of Cannae. The young patrician Cornelius Lentulus brought the terrible news. As he came riding furiously into the city, the citizens rushed eagerly to meet him, for ever since the army had marched out from Rome — 88,000 brave men and strong, led by Paulus Aemilius and Varro — they had been waiting for news.

'This time,' thought they, 'we are sure to hear good tidings. Has not Varro promised to conquer Hannibal in one day? Did he not swear to show us that Fabius was wrong to avoid giving battle, and is not Varro as good a general as Fabius, bolder and younger, and a man of the people like ourselves? Yes! A thousand times yes! Victory is sure!'

'Hail, Cornelius Lentulus,' they cried, 'what news from Cannae?'

Ah, what news! Cornelius turned his white anguished face upon the people, and they at the sight of it fell back, whispering uneasily amongst themselves, not daring to ask another question.

To the weary messenger came Fabius, who was then in Rome, having given up the Dictatorship after six months, according to custom.

'Speak, Cornelius,' he said. 'We know by your looks that you bring no good news to Rome, and we are prepared.'

'Alas for me that I must speak! Alas for you that ye must hear!' cried Cornelius. 'Our army is no more — 70,000 Romans lie slain upon the dreadful field of Cannae!'

The people groaned and cried aloud in terror, but Fabius, calmly bidding them be silent, said, 'Tell us more. What of our consuls? What of Varro and Paulus Aemilius?'

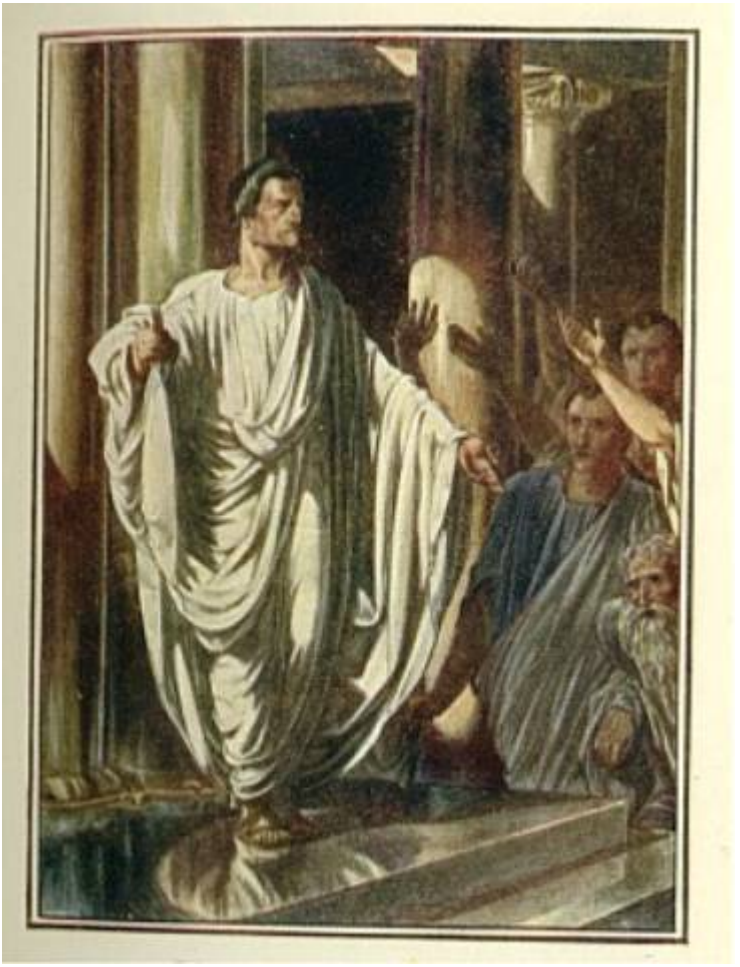
'Varro has fled to Venusia with the few that are still living, and there he seeks to make one more stand against the enemy.'

'And Aemilius?' questioned Fabius anxiously; for Aemilius was dear to him, being one of those who had taken his part against Varro.

'I bring you his last words,' answered the messenger sadly. 'When fortune went against us and all fled, Aemilius, wounded and heart-broken, would not leave the field, and when I prayed him with tears to take my horse and save himself, he would not, preferring death to flight. He bade me tell you, Fabius Maximus, that he followed your orders faithfully to the last, but that he was first overcome by Varro, and then by Hannibal. And I will bear witness before ye all that this is true. Listen, Romans. Following the custom, each consul commanded the troops in turn, and whatever Aemilius did one day to keep the soldiers from fighting, Varro undid the next by leading them forward, and this went on until there came a day when Varro caused the red robe to be hung over his tent, so sure was victory, so eager was he to deliver us our enemy. Alas! alas!'

'Alas!' echoed the terrified people. 'The gods are against us! Our army is lost, our sons are slain, Hannibal will march on Rome, and our city will be taken!' and some, mad with fear, tried to flee through the gates.

But Fabius with other brave Romans strove to calm their fears, placed a guard at the gates, appointed new consuls and began to raise another army, and little by little the people took courage, and as time went on and Hannibal did not come, they began to hope again.



Fabius calms the fears of the Romans.

Varro was called back from Venusia. Poor Varro, he returned sad and ashamed, bitterly regretting the mistake he had made, and the sorrow he had brought on his country.

But the Romans were a great-hearted people. They understood that what he had done was for love of his country and not for the sake of winning honour for himself, and when he arrived the whole senate and all the people went to the gates to welcome him.

When there was silence, the senators, amongst whom was Fabius, praised Varro for having tried to gather an army together again at Venusia, and for returning to Rome ready to do whatever might be asked of him. This they did to console and comfort him; and to show that he still had their trust, Varro was given many important things to do all through the war. After the defeat at Cannae, nearly every city in Italy surrendered to Hannibal, but in Rome the people did not despair. They raised army after army, giving freely of their money and their jewels to pay the cost of the war. A great many of the soldiers were not even paid, but that did not make them any less eager to defend their country. Many generals were sent out against Hannibal, but the two greatest of these were Fabius Maximus and Marcellus. The Romans named them the Sword and the Shield of Rome. Fabius they called the Shield, because he was ever eager for the defence, while Marcellus was the Sword, because he loved nothing better than the attack. These two together managed to keep the enemy at bay. Indeed, after some time Hannibal began to fear them both. As Fabius had foretold, his army grew less and less, and he was defeated more than once. Fortune had turned against him at last. The Italian cities, one by one, went over again to Rome. His own country deserted him in his sore need. When he begged the Carthaginians to send him more soldiers they would not, and the Romans began to hope that their troubles would soon be at an end. Scipio Africanus, the great general who afterwards conquered Hannibal in Africa, went with an army to Spain and drove the Carthaginians from there. Hannibal's brother, on his way to invade Italy, was killed by another Roman general, and Hannibal himself with his few remaining men was driven into a corner of the land near the sea.

Two or three years he fought bravely there, until Carthage sent for him to return at once to lead an army against Scipio. So, after nearly sixteen years' fighting, after winning nearly the whole of Italy and losing it again, the great general left Italy for ever.

Fabius Maximus, who was old when the war began, lived to see his country freed from its terrible foe. The grateful citizens, remembering that it was he who had first showed them that Rome

need fear no foe, however great, gave him the highest honour that it was possible for Rome to give. This was the Wreath of the Blockade — a simple wreath woven of grass that had been plucked in the place where an army had been besieged and rescued again.

VII. OF PAULUS AEMILIUS
HOW HE CONQUERED MACEDONIA

For three years the Roman legions had fought in Macedonia and each year a different consul had commanded them, yet Macedonia remained unconquered.

'It is time,' said the senate, 'to send a man who can fight.

'Send Paulus Aemilius,' cried the Roman citizens, and as they said, so it was done.

Paulus Aemilius was made consul, and as soon as possible given command over the army in Macedonia.

Paulus Aemilius, the son of that general who died at Cannae, was not young, but he was honoured above all the brave men in Rome (and there were many at that time) for his splendid honesty and his skill in war.

When at last he reached the Roman camp in Macedonia he found that there was a great deal to do before he could even think of giving battle. The consul before him had not been strict enough with the soldiers; therefore they had grown discontented and impudent, and worse than all, careless of their duties.

Aemilius very speedily let them know that he was their master, and that they must obey him or else be severely punished. Among other things he forbade the sentinels to go on night duty with their shields, for the Roman shield was so large and long that a man might easily prop himself up against it and sleep standing. This the soldiers often did, even when they knew that the enemy was near and they might be attacked at any moment.

Aemilius had need of all his wit and his bravery in the coming war. His army was much smaller than that of his enemy. Perseus, the

Macedonian king, had 40,000 foot and 4000 horse soldiers, and he might have commanded even more if he had not been such a mean man.

The Bastarnae, a fierce and warlike Gallic tribe, came, 20,000 strong, to offer their services, but these warriors wanted paying, and Perseus, rather than part with his precious gold (of which he had more than enough), sent them away again. His love of gold seems to have been even greater than his hatred of the Romans or his fear of them, for he was a coward as well as a miser.

Nevertheless, mean and cowardly as he was, Perseus commanded a magnificent army. His camp was pitched by the seaside at the foot of Mount Olympus, in a place impossible for the Romans to capture.

Aemilius first set about frightening the enemy from the stronghold. This was done by sending some of the troops under the command of young Scipio Nasica — Scipio with the long nose — by a steep and perilous road to attack the Macedonians in the heights.

Scipio succeeded so well that Perseus left the place in haste and marched to Pydna, where, after putting the troops in order of battle, he awaited the Romans.

He chose for the battlefield the plain outside the town of Pydna, because there the ground was smooth and even, and only on smooth, even ground was the Macedonian Phalanx of any use. The Phalanx was formed by a large square of foot-soldiers armed with long heavy pikes and large shields. Upon the order being given to advance, each soldier linked his shield with that of his neighbour, and at the same time thrust forward his pike, so that all along the line nothing could be seen but bristling pike and gleaming shield, and as long as the men kept together it was almost impossible for the enemy to break through the terrible Phalanx.

Across the plain two rivers flowed; they were not very deep, for it was the end of summer, but they were quite deep enough to give trouble to the Romans. Also, near by, there was a chain of little hills

to which the more lightly armed soldiers could retreat and make ready for the next attack, so you see altogether Perseus had chosen his field of battle wisely.

By and by up came the Romans, marching steadily and in good order. Aemilius, when he saw the army of his enemy all in battle array, stood silent awhile in astonishment and some little dismay.

Scipio Nasica, made eager by his victory on the heights, asked to be allowed to attack on the instant. Aemilius smilingly shook his head.

'If I were as young as you are, my friend,' he said, 'I should certainly give battle at once. But I am old enough to know that were we to attack now it would mean defeat, for we are weary with marching, while our enemies are fresh and eager for the fight.'

So saying, he bade the first line of soldiers stand on guard, while the rest began quickly to dig the trenches of the camp, and very soon the whole army, having supped, lay down to sleep.

And then a strange thing happened. The full moon which shone high in the heavens began to disappear. Little by little her light went out in a most mysterious way, and ere long the earth was in thick darkness.

The Macedonians, now in their camp, lay awake shivering with fright, for they believed that this strange darkness was a sign of the anger of the gods, a sign of defeat, a sign of the coming death of their king. But the Romans slept peacefully and woke up calm and cheerful on the morning of the battle, for Aemilius had told them beforehand to fear nothing. The darkness was only an eclipse of the moon.

The fateful hour of battle came at last. Aemilius, as he watched the Phalanx advancing, was afraid in his heart, although like a brave man he hid his fear, and went up and down the ranks bareheaded and without a shield, cheering and encouraging his men.

First came the tall Thracians, terrible to behold with their black vests and glistening white shields: their iron-shod pikes shaking on their shoulders as they marched. After them followed the hired soldiers, and after these again the Macedonians themselves, splendidly clad in new purple vests, bearing arms that shone golden in the sun.

The Romans first attacked the terrible fronted Phalanx, but for all their bravery they could not break the line. Their swords were not long enough to reach the men who bore the long pikes.

Steadily, step by step, the enemy advanced, and as they did so the Romans retreated. They did not flee, but they were not anxious to face the pikes again. Aemilius rent his clothes and prayed the gods to help him.

Suddenly he saw that here and there the Phalanx was broken owing to the ground becoming more uneven. At once he sent little companies of men who fought their way through the broken spaces, and so made the division still wider. This turned the fortunes of the day, for the Phalanx once broken its soldiers were almost helpless, their heavy pikes being of little use at close quarters.

Perseus fled with the cavalry, leaving the brave men who had fought so well to their fate. All was over. Aemilius had conquered Macedonia in one little fortnight. All the gold which Perseus had so carefully hoarded was taken by his conquerors. Aemilius kept none for himself but gave it all to his country, and so great was the treasure that for more than a hundred years the citizens in Rome paid no taxes.

Perseus, coward to the last, tearfully surrendered, and was brought to Italy in triumph with his wife and children.

Aemilius lived some time after his conquest, loved and honoured by his country-men. When he died, his ashes (for the Romans always burned their dead) were carried to the tomb by some Macedonian nobles, who, being in Rome at the time, wished to do honour to the brave man who had conquered them.

His son, who fought also at the battle of Pydna, rose to be even a greater man. He was the second Scipio Africanus, the man who destroyed Carthage.

VIII. OF SCIPIO AEMILIANUS AFRICANUS HOW HE DESTROYED CARTHAGE

Cato the Censor, when he was an old man, always used to finish his speeches in the senate with these words:

'And I, for my part, think that Carthage should be destroyed!'

Thereupon without fail, Scipio Nasica, in his turn, would make answer:

'And I, for my part, think that Carthage should be left standing!'

Most of the senators agreed with Cato. They were afraid that Carthage, which was fast recovering the power it had lost after the defeat of Hannibal by the first Scipio Africanus, would rise up again to be a dangerous rival to Rome. Fear made them both cruel and unjust, and they decided to destroy the city.

An excuse was soon found for declaring war. The Carthaginians at once sent ambassadors to Rome to beg for mercy, but in vain; the Romans were merciless. They told these messengers that if they wished to save Carthage they must destroy all their ships, and deliver up their weapons of war to Rome.

The wretched Carthaginians, believing that if this were done peace would be made, obeyed the command, and straightway the treacherous senators broke all their promises by sending a large army to Utica — a town twelve miles from Carthage.

Soon messengers arrived there from the threatened city to ask why this had been done. They were told that Rome could not rest in peace while Carthage stood by the sea; therefore it was the will of the senate that the Carthaginians should leave their city and build another further inland.

When the messengers returned with this terrible answer, the Carthaginian senate held a meeting behind closed doors, but the citizens suspecting that all was not right, broke through the doors and demanded to know the whole truth. It was told to them.

Mad with rage and fear, they slew every Roman in the city. Then they rushed to the armoury for weapons; there was not one weapon to be found. They ran to the harbour to man the ships; there was not one ship to be seen. They wept and bewailed their misfortunes; they shrieked out curses upon those who had brought them to such a pass. The ambassadors fled for their lives from that city where nought was to be heard but sounds of woe, of anger and despair.

But their very despair gave the citizens courage; war was declared against the Romans; Hasdrubal, one of their generals, was given command of the troops outside the city, while another of the same name took charge of those within the walls.

Then day and night, night and day, men, women and children worked in the houses, in the shops, in the public buildings — even in the temples of the gods. They were making weapons for the coming struggle.

Every day 140 shields, 300 swords, 500 spears and javelins, besides many bolts and catapults, were finished. The women cut off their long hair and twisted it into strings for the catapults. Lead was taken from the roofs, iron from the walls. The fortifications were strengthened; the gates were closed; the slaves were set free so that they might fight with more goodwill, and when at last the Romans came marching to take what they thought was a defenceless city, they found to their great surprise that the Carthaginians were ready for them.

For two years the Romans besieged the gallant city, but without success. At last Scipio Aemilianus, made consul by the senate, took command of the troops, and the Carthaginians soon learned to fear

the very sound of his name. He drove Hasdrubal to take refuge within the walls, and having captured the market-places and suburbs which gave food to the city, he made up his mind to starve the citizens into surrendering.

Carthage stood on a peninsula, and was joined to the mainland by a narrow isthmus. Across this strip of land Scipio caused trenches to be made, three miles long, and parallel with the walls. For their defence towers and fortifications were raised, so that when the work was done not a morsel of food could enter the city by land. Neither could anything reach it by sea, for across the harbour-mouth Scipio built a large embankment or mole of stone, and outside this lay the Roman ships.

The citizens in Carthage starved. Once they managed to capture a little food, but Hasdrubal, their own general, took it all for himself and his soldiers. Nevertheless they gave no sign of surrender at that time. Scipio attacked the walls, scaled them, and took the market-place and the splendid temple of Apollo. But the hardest task of all was still to come — this was the capture of the citadel.

Three long streets lined with high six-storied houses led up to it. Every house, packed as it was with Carthaginian men-at-arms, had to be fought for, and captured, before the citadel itself could be attacked.

The Romans chased their enemies from floor to floor and from house to house. They fought with them on the stairs, on the flat roofs, on the narrow planks which were laid across to the opposite houses as a means of escape. There never was a more terrible fight. The houses had to be burned after they were captured, the fire lasted six days, and all that time Scipio scarcely eat or slept, so anxious was he.

On the seventh day he sat down to rest awhile, and as he rested a company of Carthaginians appeared before him. They offered to surrender if he would spare their lives. Upon Scipio agreeing, 5500

men and women marched out of the citadel through an opening in the wall. Hasdrubal, his wife and his children, together with 900 deserters from the Roman ranks, fled to the temple of Aesculapius, but very soon, mad with hunger and fear, they themselves set fire to the building.

Hasdrubal, turning coward, rushed out from the flames with an olive branch in his hand and fell at Scipio's feet to beg mercy. Scipio scornfully gave him his life. Then through the roar of the flames came the sound of a woman's voice, — the voice of Hasdrubal's wife.

'Scipio, I wish you nothing but happiness,' she cried, 'for all you have done has been according to the rules of war. But I charge you show no mercy to Hasdrubal, who has betrayed his country, his gods, his wife and his children.'

And having said this she flung herself into the flames.

The city thus captured, Scipio had still another thing to do. It was the will of the senate that Carthage should be destroyed, and therefore the city must be burned to the ground.

Scipio wept as he watched the magnificent buildings fall one by one into the ashes.

'Assyria has fallen,' said he, 'and Persia and Macedonia; Carthage is burning, the day of Rome may come next.'

But he was too good a soldier not to obey orders. Every stone of the houses was levelled. A plough drawn by oxen was driven over the ground where Carthage once stood, as a sign that the city was to be left desolate for ever. Last of all Scipio spoke the curse over the ruins, forbidding any man whatsoever to build there again.

The Destruction of Carthage.

It was done. Rome had no more need to fear its ancient enemy. Carthage was no more.

IX: OF THE GRACCHI-1
HOW TIBERIUS GRACCHUS FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE, AND HOW HE WAS SLAIN

Cornelia, daughter of the first great Scipio Africanus, proud mother of the Gracchi, was famous throughout Rome for the beautiful way in which she brought up her children after their father's death.

'She has Greek tutors for her sons, so that they may become learned in all the noble arts,' the patrician mothers would tell each other.

'She will make heroes of them,' said the Roman citizens, who had begun already to love the gentle brave-hearted boys.

Tiberius and Caius Gracchus were indeed happy in their childhood. Nobly born, they did not despise the plebeians as did most of the other patricians, for their father, while he lived, and their mother afterwards, taught them to be just and kind and honourable, to love liberty, to hate all tyranny, to think noble thoughts and do noble deeds.

Sometimes, half in fun, half in earnest, Cornelia would say to them:

'My sons, men honour me because I am the daughter of the great Scipio Africanus; will they ever honour me for being the mother of the Gracchi?'

And gravely Tiberius and Caius would answer, 'That time will surely come, O my mother.' Their words came true, as you shall hear.

Tiberius Gracchus was nine years older than his brother, so he it was who first left home to serve in Africa under his brother—in-law, Scipio Aemilianus. Though still very young, he won honour and renown in the war, and after Carthage had been destroyed he went to join the army in Spain. It was on his way there, while riding

through Etruria, that he made up his mind to become a defender of the people.

Looking round him he saw many things that made him sad-beautiful cities in ruins, empty houses, lonely farms, no labourers in the fields, miles and miles of untilled land where herds of wild cattle fed, watched by savage shepherd-slaves who gazed sullenly at Gracchus as he passed.

'How is it,' he asked himself; 'that the people are so unhappy now when the Republic is the greatest in the world? Once all this country was covered with busy farms. Each man had his share of land, his own fields, his cattle and free labourers to work for him, and in war-time these brave farmers and labourers could wield the sword as well as the spade. It is they who have made Rome great, and what has Rome given them in return? They have been slain in battle, and the lands which should by right belong to their sons have been bought by rich nobles who have slaves to work for them instead of free men. This must be changed, or Rome will lose all its power. I will make a just law which shall force the patricians to give back to the people their ancient right to the land.'

So when Gracchus returned to Rome he told the citizens of the law he proposed to make, and offered himself as tribune. The news spread far and wide, and poor farmers came from all over the country to give him their votes. The patricians were furious at the thought of having to give up the greater part of their lands, but they could not prevent the people from making Gracchus one of the tribunes of the year.

Soon the great day arrived when the new tribune was to make his first speech and read out his law before the citizens. The Forum was crowded. Gracchus, mounting the Rostra, or platform on which the orators stood, began to speak. He begged the patricians to be generous and give back their lands to the poor people who had none.

'The beasts have their lairs and their dens,' he said, 'but the men who shed their blood for Italy have air and light- nothing more. They wander homeless from place to place with their wives and children seeking for shelter, and they find it not. Being Roman soldiers they are called masters of the world, but they have not a foot of ground which they can call their own.

How the people cheered and rejoiced! How proud was Cornelia of her noble son! Ah, and how angry were the haughty nobles with this man who dared try and make them give up their lands!

'He will not triumph so easily,' they said in their hearts, for they knew what was about to happen.

Gracchus began to read his law, but before more than a few words had been spoken, Octavius, the tribune, rose from his seat and cried: 'I object!' The people groaned and cried aloud angrily. They knew that no law could be passed unless each of the tribunes gave his consent.

Gracchus, surprised and indignant, ordered all the law-courts to be closed and sealed up the treasury. Again upon another day the citizens met to hear the reading of the law, and again Octavius stood up crying, 'I object!'

You must have guessed by this time that it was the patricians who told him to do this. But Gracchus meant to pass his law in spite of them. The senate would not help him. There was only one thing to do.

He called the people together again, and before them all begged Octavius to change his mind, warning him that unless he did so, he, Gracchus, would be forced to ask the people to take away the power they had given, to thrust him from his seat among the tribunes.

'You are acting against the people,' he told him, 'and are no more deserving the name of tribune.'

Octavius refused, but with tears in his eyes, for Gracchus and he had been play-fellows once. Then he was dragged from his seat by the angry people, and the tribuneship taken away from him.

After this, the law was passed, to the great joy of the plebeians, but the patricians went about clad in mourning robes, bewail-ing their hard fate. This was not all; they began to plot against Gracchus to take his life when his year as a tribune should be ended. They had to wait until then, for it was against the law to hurt or slay a tribune. He was a defender of the people, and his life was sacred.

Meanwhile the fickle people began to tire of their hero, yet when Gracchus (to save his life) offered himself again as tribune, they were quite willing to accept him. He had promised to make other good laws for them, and this made them look with favour on him again.

'But,' said the patricians, 'no man can be tribune for two years together. It is against the law.' And the senate met in the Temple of Faith to talk over the matter.

Outside the Temple of Jupiter crowded the friends of Gracchus, and soon the tribune himself appeared. As they stood talking together Fulvius Flacchus rushed out from the senate.

'Tiberius Gracchus is sentenced to death,' he cried as he came near, and scarcely had he spoken the fatal words when Publius Nasica, bitter enemy to Gracchus, burst from the temple, followed by many patri-cians with their slaves and retainers, all armed with clubs and staves.

The people stupidly made way for them, and soon most of the tribune's friends were felled to the ground. Gracchus fled; some one caught his cloak; he let it slip from his shoulders, and ran quickly to the Temple of Jupiter. There priests barred the way. Gracchus turned, tripped, fell. As he struggled to his feet again another tribune, one of his own comrades, slew him with his club. The people had lost their friend and their tribune for ever.

Very bitterly they blamed themselves after-wards for not having saved him as they might so easily have done, and so deep was their remorse, and so fierce their hatred of his murderers, that Publius Nasica had to leave the city, he being the leader of those who had robbed Rome of a hero.

X. OF THE GRACCHI-2
HOW CAIUS GRACCHUS FOLLOWED FAITHFULLY IN HIS BROTHER'S STEPS

'What will Caius Gracchus do?' the patricians asked uneasily, after the murder of the elder Gracchus. 'What have we to fear from him? Is he too the people's friend, and if so how can we prevent him from being made tribune?'

That Caius Gracchus was the people's friend his enemies found out very soon. He was as noble and as good as his brother but more fiery and high-spirited, and he had the gift of splendid speech.

The first time the citizens heard him speak they felt as if they could listen for ever, such a golden voice was his, so beautiful were the words he used, so noble and free the gestures he made.

The angry and jealous patricians tried their best to keep him out of Rome. They forbade him to leave the army, which was then in Sardinia. Caius, who had served more than his full time as a soldier, was so indignant at the order that he returned at once to the capital. Then the senate accused him of having disobeyed the order of the State, but Caius defended himself easily at the trial; the people pronounced him innocent, and directly afterwards, he offered himself as tribune — and was accepted, for the people loved him, both for his dead brother's sake and for his own.

Now Caius had loved his brother dearly; he longed to avenge his death, and at first all the laws he made were for that purpose. But Cornelia, his mother, at last persuaded him to give up his vengeance, and afterwards he thought only of doing good to the people, like his brother before him.

He made a great many good and just laws, which took the power from the rich, and gave more freedom and comfort to the poor. He

built granaries in which to store corn; he made beautiful, even, straight roads all over the country, so that the traffic might come and go without let or hindrance; he divided these roads into furlongs, each one-eighth of a mile in length, and put milestones up all along the way.

Wherever he went he was followed by a crowd of magistrates, architects, and labourers, eager to ask his advice about their work, and busy as he was, he had time to spare for all.

The people adored him, and though he never asked them, they made him tribune for the second time. The patricians hated and feared him, for his power was even greater than that of the senate, and they spent their days in plotting his ruin.

A strange way they chose for the destroying of his power. As time went on it was seen that Caius had a rival. This man, who did all he could to make the people love him, was also a tribune, Livius Drusus by name. If one day Caius founded a colony for the poor, the next day Drusus founded twelve. When Caius made the citizens pay a small rent for their land, Drusus took away the rent and gave it them for nothing. Caius passed a law which made the country Italians equal with the Roman citizens, whereupon Drusus passed another law which forbade the soldiers to be flogged for any fault whatsoever.

So it went on; and all that Caius did the senate found fault with, while Drusus received nothing but praise for his deeds. Then those ungrateful people began to forget what Caius had done for them; they began to put Drusus first and Caius last, for Drusus gave them all that they wanted, whether good things or bad, while Cams refused to do anything but what was for their good. And so they came to dislike him, these foolish, spoilt people. They did not know that Drusus was secretly working for the senate, and that all the freedom he gave them would be taken away again when Caius was overthrown.

So when the time came for the making of new tribunes Caius was not chosen, nor any of his friends. The Consul Opimius who hated him, now boldly declared that he was going to change some of the laws that Caius had made. There was to be a meeting held in the Capitol, and Caius was to be there.

As he left home his wife put her arms round him and begged him not to go.

'How do I know if you will ever come back again? Remember your brother! They will murder you as they did him, and fling your body into the Tiber,' she cried, and wept and clung to him.

Sadly Caius unloosed her arms, and silently joined his friends on their way to the Capitol. Outside the temple stood a lictor, an attendant of Opimius. This man insulted Caius; very likely he mocked at him for having lost the tribuneship. At any rate he made the friends of Caius so angry that they slew him on the spot. The people, crying 'Murder! Murder!' rushed to the Forum. Opimius, coming out of the temple where he had been sacrificing, caused the body to be carried through the streets, hoping thereby to rouse the anger of the citizens against Caius.

That night faithful friends kept watch over his house, fearing an attack. From dark until dawn they watched, silent, grave, and thoughtful, as brave men are in times of danger.

The next morning Opimius ordered all the senators and knights to arm themselves, then he called for Caius and his friends to be brought before him to account for the death of his servant, and when they would not come, but fled with their followers to the temple of Diana on Mount Aventine, he declared them to be enemies of the people. To the man who should bring him the head of Caius he promised its weight in gold, and he offered a free pardon to all those who would desert their leader.

Death of Gracchus the Younger.

Sad to tell, a great many of the citizens accepted the offer, and left Caius to defend himself as best he could. The patricians attacked Mount Aventine. What hope was there for Caius with so few men to fight for him? He fled to the temple, and flinging himself on his knees before the statue of Diana prayed to the goddess to curse the Roman citizens with the curse of slavery, for they had shown themselves unworthy of freedom.

Then as the patricians burst into the building he and two faithful friends ran towards the Sublician Bridge. Their enemies followed. So that Caius might have time to cross in safety his two friends kept the bridge, and nobly they fought, and nobly they died.

On fled Caius. He reached the other side; he called for a horse, but no man would lend a hand to save him, and so in the sacred grove of the Furies he slew himself to escape the disgrace of being slain by his enemies.

It was not long before the citizens, cruelly oppressed by the patricians, began to repent them for having deserted their friend; but it was too late; they could not bring him to life again. All they could do was to raise a statue in honour of his memory and that of his brother Tiberius. And when Cornelia, their mother died some time afterwards, she too had her statue with these words engraved upon it: 'Cornelia, the Mother of the Gracchi.'

But she lived to be quite an old lady. She had many noble friends who loved to hear her tell the story of her brave sons. And she always ended the story by saying: 'The grandchildren of the great Scipio Africanus were my sons. They perished in the temples and the groves of the gods, and they deserved to fall in these holy spots, for they gave their lives for the noblest of ends — the happiness of the people.'

XI. OF POMPEY THE GREAT
HOW HE WON HIS THIRD TRIUMPH

The great King Mithridates was very old when Pompey first was sent to the east to conquer him. An old man he was, but a great soldier to the last, and ever ready to do battle with his hated enemies.

Mithridates had spent most of his life in warring with the Romans. Once, Sylla, the Dictator, had vanquished him, but after Sylla's death Mithridates recovered his kingdom, and once again attacked the Roman Provinces in Asia.

Many battles were lost and won on both sides, but on the whole Mithridates had the advantage. The Roman soldiers, discontented and rebellious, would not rest until Lucullus their leader had been recalled to Rome and Pompey sent in his stead.

The soldiers loved Pompey; they would have none other to lead them, for to fight under Pompey was to conquer. Then he was good to look upon, pleasant in his manners, just and generous in his ways. To be sure he used to scold when they did wrong, but he never failed to praise and reward their bravery. And above all he was their master; he knew how to make himself obeyed; he was their favourite, their hero; he was Pompey the Great.

So Pompey went to the East to take command over both army and navy, and soon leaving ships to guard the sea, he set out with his troops in search of the enemy.

Mithridates was strongly encamped upon a mountain, but when the Roman Legions came in sight he moved his army further away, for there was no water upon the mountain, and moreover he was not yet ready to fight.

Pompey then pitched his camp in the same place, but when his soldiers cried out for water, he told them to dig wells in the ground, and lo! in a little while there was water in plenty, and every one wondered why Mithridates had not thought of this before.

Afterwards Pompey again gave chase and surrounded the enemy's camp. For forty-five days Mithridates was besieged, but he managed to slip away again with the best of his troops. Keen as a hound on the trail Pompey followed, and after a long march overtook his prey near the river Euphrates.

It was midnight when he ordered out his troops from the camp, yet the night was not too dark. Low in the sky the pale moon hung peaceful and still, and the soldiers looked like dim ghosts moving softly in the faint shadowy light.

In the Eastern camp old Mithridates lay asleep, and while he slept he dreamed. He thought that he was sailing over pleasant seas blown by fair winds towards a safe harbour. On a sudden, while he was telling his friends how happy he was, the ship was wrecked and he found himself clinging to a broken mast, tossed hither and thither by great black ugly waves. And then Mithridates awoke, for his friends had come to tell him that the Romans were about to attack.

He had now to defend his camp. The troops were ordered into line. Closer and closer came those dark splendid shapes that were the Romans, and the light of the moon shining behind them caused their shadows to fall in long black lines, so that the old King's troops were puzzled to know which was shadow, which soldier.

In doubt they flung their spears too soon, and the Romans, quick to see their mistake and to profit by it, shouted as they marched, and this confused and frightened their enemies more than ever. They fled, and many were slaughtered in the flight.

Suddenly, above the noise and the terror and the tumult of the fight came a sound as of thunder and the rushing of a mighty wind, and

Mithridates at the head of eight hundred horsemen swept through the enemy's ranks and vanished into the night.

Pompey never captured the great king, for some time after this, in despair, Mithridates slew himself. But his kingdom was taken by the Romans, with many others besides, and Pompey, having conquered the East, set about returning with his army through Greece into Italy. And now the patricians and even the people began to fear what the great general might do.

'The soldiers adore him,' they said, 'and with so great an army he might easily make himself Dictator or even King.'

But they had nothing to fear from Pompey. As soon as the army landed he told his soldiers to go to their homes, for he had no more need of them until the day of his Triumph.

Only the generals who had won great victories were honoured by a Triumph. They rode through the streets of Rome in a beautiful chariot drawn by beautiful horses, followed by other chariots, on which were placed all the richest treasures captured in the war. After them marched the officers and soldiers bearing banners and trophies, and then came the prisoners, some with and some without chains. Songs were sung and trumpets blown, and all that day the Roman citizens made holiday.

At Pompey's third Triumph there were so many treasures to show, and so many soldiers and prisoners to follow that it had to be divided into two days.

Oh! proud was Rome of the hero then! At the head of the procession, upon splendid banners blazed the names of the conquered nations — sixteen in all. Kings and queens, princes and nobles walked among the captives, and the treasures displayed were priceless.

It seemed to the citizens as they looked that Pompey was the conqueror of the world. His first triumph was over Africa, his second over Europe, and his third over Asia. And they would have laughed

with scorn if you had told them that already in Rome there was a greater man, one who very soon was to do far greater deeds than ever Pompey had done; one whose name is written to this day in the book of Fame among the first on the soldiers' page — Julius Caesar.

XII. OF JULIUS CAESAR-SOLDIER
HOW HE FOUGHT IN GAUL

At first scarcely a man in Rome believed that Julius Caesar would ever make a great soldier. The citizens were fond of him because he was always good to them, but at the same time they never expected him to do anything else but eat, drink, and be merry, until he died.

Yet deep down in his heart Caesar was always ambitious; he knew his own greatness, and he meant to astonish the world some day. He feasted and made merry with the other patricians because it served his purpose. For one thing it won the hearts of the citizens; they loved those who spent money freely. And then for another thing it deceived the jealous senators; they, thinking him a careless 'silly sort of man,' did not take much notice of him at first, and so he had time to make his plans for the future.

The time came when they found out their mistake; when Caesar began to show the power that was in him. He made friends with Pompey, and by his help received the command of the army in Spain. And then — Hey Presto, it was like a fairy tale — within three months he had conquered Spain, and was back again waiting with his army outside the walls of Rome for his Triumph.

He returned just before the time for the making of the new consuls. And now Caesar had to choose between two honours. He must either offer himself as consul, or claim his Triumph. He could not do both, for to be consul he must enter the city, and to win his Triumph he must stay outside. No general was allowed to enter Rome with his troops until the day of the Triumph.

Then said the senators, 'Now we shall know whether this man is really to be feared. If his ambition is to rule the State, he will choose the consulship; if he only wishes a little glory he will claim the Triumph.'

Caesar, ever wise, chose the consulship, and for a year he ruled as he liked in Rome; no man was strong enough to stand against him. At the end of the year he asked the senate to give him the command in Gaul. The senators to get rid of him granted his request, for, they said to themselves: 'Perhaps he will be slain in battle, and at any rate, while he is away we shall have time to think of a way to humble him.'

But Caesar feared their spite as little as he feared the strange lands through which he marched, and the fierce warriors with whom he fought. Picture to yourselves the land of Gaul as it was when Caesar and his soldiers conquered it. A few roughly built cities there were, leagues and leagues distant one from the other; high mountains and hills, wide plains, lonely valleys, and great dark, dangerous forests where wild beasts roamed, and savage tribes hid, waiting for the chance to spring out upon their enemies unawares.

And through this wild land Caesar led the brave soldiers who would have followed him cheerfully to the world's end. He was their comrade as well as their general; he led them to battle; he marched by their side, hungered and thirsted, grew cold and weary as they did. He swam with them over rivers, climbed mountains, slept under the stars, and bore — this slight, delicate man — as many hardships as the meanest soldier of them all.

For these things they adored him; the most cowardly would fight like heroes for his sake, and so Caesar won victory after victory, until at last the whole of Gaul was his to command.

Soon the conquered Gauls, looking upon him as their defender, asked him to protect them from the Germans, of whom they lived in deadly fear. Caesar, nothing loath, sent word to Ariovistus, the German king, bidding him come to the Roman camp so that they might have speech together. To which Ariovistus sent answer:

'If I wanted anything of Caesar I should go to seek him; if Caesar wants anything of me let him come hither'; for he was a proud man,

leader of thousands of brave, strong warriors, and he had no fear of Caesar.

This answer came to the Romans while they were in the Gallic City of Vesontis. Caesar at once ordered the Legions to make ready to march northwards. Now amongst the officers were many young patricians who had joined the campaign, not because they wished to fight, but because they thought that they would be able to amuse themselves with the gold won from the conquered tribes.

These cowardly young nobles did not like the thought of the long terrible march which was coming, and the still more terrible battle which would be fought at the end of it. So they went about the camp frightening the men by telling them tales of the strong fierce Germans and their prowess in battle. They even retired to their tents and made their wills as if they had no hope whatever of coming back alive.

Caesar, hearing this, called the discontented officers to him and before the whole army said: 'You may turn back if you will and take your troops with you; I give you free leave; but I will go forward with only the Tenth Legion and will conquer these Germans whom you fear, for they are no more terrible than the foes whom you have already fought with and vanquished.'

O the brave soldiers of the Tenth Legion — Caesar's favourite! How proudly their hearts beat, and how happy they were to be so honoured by their hero. The other Legions, in the hope of winning like praise, began to make ready for the march with the greatest good-will possible. The officers, very much ashamed of themselves, begged to be allowed to go forward, and so the whole army set out, marching so quickly and so well that in a few days they reached the German camp.

Ariovistus and his men were surprised and downcast at the sight of their enemy. Such speed on the march seemed almost magical, and they grew sadder than ever on being warned by their soothsayers

not to give battle before the new moon, as until then the mystic signs foretold defeat.

Caesar gave them no time to await the new moon. At once he attacked their hill and camp, and this put them in such a fury that they rushed down to the plain, gave battle and were defeated.

This is but one of the many battles fought by Caesar on his way North. Later he crossed the River Rhone into Germany. He sailed the Channel and invaded Britain; and wherever he went fortune was with him, so that he might have said of Gaul what later he said of an Eastern country — 'Veni, vidi, vici,' which is to say, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.'

XIII. OF JULIUS CAESAR AND POMPEY
HOW THE TWO MADE WAR AND WHO CONQUERED

'If it were not for Caesar,' said Pompey, 'I should be the greatest man in Rome.'

'If it were not for Pompey I should rule the world,' said Caesar. 'There is no virtue in the Republic; it is near to its end. The time has come for one man to take command over all, and why should I not be that man!'

'Why should not I?' echoed Pompey.

Mark you, neither of the two rivals spoke their thoughts aloud, but their deeds spoke for them, and there was not a man in Rome but could have told you that trouble was brewing between Pompey and Caesar.

They were both of them great generals, both commanded large armies, both wanted to be at the head of the State, neither would give in to the other, and in the end their jealous quarrel brought the misery of a civil war on their countrymen.

The people, at least most of them, preferred Caesar, because he always took their part against the patricians. As for the senators, they favoured Pompey; he had not such a strong will as Caesar, and therefore he could more easily be flattered into giving them what they wanted.

First, then, the senate set about humbling Caesar. A messenger was sent to Gaul, over which he was reigning like a king.

'Give up the command of Gaul; dismiss your army,' was the order Caesar received.

'Why should I send away my army when Pompey still keeps his?' he replied, and later he sent word again to Rome:

'If Pompey will give up his command I will do the same.'

But Pompey refused, and the quarrel went on until at last the senate said that unless Caesar laid down his arms before a given day, they would declare him to be an enemy of the people.

They did not even wait until that day, so eager were they to defy him. A letter that he sent was not read, and when his friends, Mark Antony and another tribune, objected to the declaration, they were thrust from the senate, and afterwards had to flee from the city in disguise.

Caesar had left Gaul and was in Ravenna when he first heard of what the senate had done. Only one Legion was with him at the time, — that is to say 5000 foot and 400 horse soldiers; nevertheless he decided straight-way to march to Rome.

First he sent the Legion forward to await him at the River Rubicon, and then, as if nothing had happened, he went to the theatre to see the gladiator show, and afterwards feasted some friends in his own house. Towards the middle of the evening he left them, entered his chariot, and drove away through the darkness to join his troops.

Now the River Rubicon marked the boundary between Italy, as it was then, and the provinces. No general was allowed to cross it with his army. If any one did so it was a sign that he entered Italy not as a friend but as an enemy, not in peace but in war.

When Caesar came at last to this river he hesitated; — for a long time he sat on the bank, silent, in deep thought. He was unwilling to turn back, yet loth to enter his own country as an enemy. Officers and men both watched him anxiously, and even as they watched him he rose to his feet and crying ' Jacta est alea' ('the die is cast'), gave the order to cross; but before ever a man could put foot on the bridge he turned to his officers and said: 'We may turn back yet, but once we

cross this river all must be decided by the sword.' Then at the head of the Legion Caesar crossed the Rubicon.

Caesar at the Rubicon.

This was on the 16th of January, 49 years before the birth of Christ, and on the 16th of March, two months later, without fighting a single battle, without shedding a drop of blood, Caesar was master of all Italy.

What had happened to Pompey, then? Pompey, at the first word of his enemy's approach, had fled from Rome to Epirus across the Adriatic Sea, and with him were his legions and most of the patricians. And why did he leave Italy without giving battle, he who had once boasted that he had only to stamp his foot and legions of soldiers would appear?

The truth was he wanted to gain time. Although his army was as large, his soldiers were not so skilled in war as were those of Caesar. They had need of much drilling and training before they could be trusted in battle. And then the East had always brought fortune to Pompey. He had won his third Triumph by the conquest of Asia, and he knew that the wild Eastern warriors would flock to his banner as soon as he landed in Epirus. And he was right. They came pouring into his camp by thousands and tens of thousands, and soon his army was more than doubled.

Caesar was as busy gathering troops in the West as Pompey in the East. Gaul sent him many a brave legion; Germany gave him cavalry; Spain, which he took from Pompey's lieutenants, also sent troops; indeed every country that had ever been conquered by the Romans sent soldiers to fight either for Pompey or for Caesar, either to the East or to the West.

Caesar, ever quick in his movements, made the first step. He set sail for Epirus with only three legions. He had few ships, for Pompey commanded the whole of the fleet, and so the rest of Caesar's army was forced to wait with Mark Antony at Brundusium until more ships could be found to transport it.

After being nearly wrecked on the rocks by which he passed to escape Pompey's ships, Caesar landed safely in Epirus, and pitching his camp close to that of the enemy, settled down to wait for his legions.

Fortunately for him and his small army winter set in, and until the cold weather passed no battle could be fought. Pompey steadily drilled his soldiers, Caesar anxiously watched for the ships that

never came. Months passed, and still there was no sign of them, for Pompey's ships guarded the sea, and Antony dared not venture. At last Caesar could wait no longer; he would go and fetch them himself, and putting on a large cloak he stole secretly down to the seashore. There he hired a fishing-boat and bade the men row him over to Brundusium.

Both wind and current were against them; a storm arose; Caesar uncovering his face, cried:

'Fear not; ye carry Caesar and his fortunes with you.'

But although the men rowed bravely and well it was of no use; even Caesar could not command the sea, and at last he gave the order to return.

Not long after this, however, the ships hove in sight, and soon Caesar had the whole army under his command again. Pompey, more cautious than ever, marched to a safer place by the sea, and Caesar, following him, pitched his camp there also. Both armies were soon in a sorry plight. Pompey's soldiers had no water and no green food for their horses, for Caesar had taken care to cut off all the streams. The Caesareans, on the other hand, had nothing to eat but roots and herbs.

When the days began to be hot Pompey made up his mind to attack his enemy. Guided by some deserters he entered Caesar's camp by a secret way, surprised them and put them all to flight.

You can imagine Pompey's pride and the joy of his army. They had defeated the famous conqueror of Gaul! Another battle and their cause would be won. So sure were the patrician officers of this that they cast lots for Caesar's gardens and palaces in Rome.

But Pompey's very success was his ruin in the end. Instead of following his enemy and giving battle again at once, he avoided him, and this gave Caesar time to put the sick and wounded in a friendly town and march to the Plain of Pharsalia, where Pompey was now

encamped. A river divided the plain into two equal parts, and on the banks of this river one of the greatest battles in the world was fought.

Pompey was not anxious to give battle. He would have liked to tire his enemy out by letting him march through Greece, wasting his strength in small tussles. But the vain and haughty patricians, longing to return to their pleasant life in Rome, taunted and reproached him until at last he gave way. Caesar rejoiced greatly when one day at noon he saw the Pompeians marching out in order of battle, and yet verily it seemed as though Pompey would be the victor. He had twice as many foot and seven times as many horse soldiers as Caesar, and so many Eastern warriors that they could not be counted.

The two armies faced each other. Pompey placed himself on the left; Caesar opposite, headed his favourite Tenth Legion. Near to Pompey was the cavalry, magnificent men and horses both; Caesar, noticing this, put behind his poor little thousand of German horse, three cohorts of foot-soldiers, and he warned them that the success of the day depended greatly on their bravery. They swore not to fail him, and they kept their vow.

The order for the attack was given. The Caesareans dashed forward at a run, threw their javelins, drew out their swords, and the battle began.

Pompey's cavalry charged, the German horse gave way — slowly — slowly, until they had retreated to where the cohorts stood. These then rushed forward, thrusting their spears into the faces of their enemies, and so furiously that the dismayed horsemen broke their lines and fled to the hills for safety.

The brave cohorts now attacked the archers and slingers, and having swept them aside, fell upon the soldiers to the left of the line.

Caesar, seeing that the victory would be his, ordered his men to attack the Eastern soldiers, and to spare their own countrymen as

much as possible. The soldiers advanced, shouting the order, and Pompey's Roman legions hearing, opened up their ranks. The Caesareans swept onward and very soon put the barbarians to flight.

And Pompey? Pompey lost heart early in the day when the cavalry failed him. He retired to his camp silent and downcast, only to be told by the frightened soldiers that he was not safe even there. 'What! assault my very camp!' he cried, and went out to see to its defence. But there was no hope of defending it; the guards had fled, and Pompey, mounting his horse, galloped quickly through the gates at one end of the camp just as Caesar's soldiers rushed in at the other.

And what do you think they found in the deserted camp? The patricians were so sure of victory that they had caused a feast to be made ready for their return. Tables stood spread with delicate meats and delicious wines in golden dishes and goblets. Couches had been laid out for them and their turf-huts (tents were not fine enough for these dainty warriors) had been hung with myrtle and ivy leaves. A very different sight this from Caesar's camp before the battle, and very likely Pompey would not have suffered so great a defeat had he been without his patrician officers.

But now all was over. Never again did Pompey make another stand against Caesar, for before he could gather together a new army he was treacherously killed in Egypt, where he had fled for safety.

I think he was glad when death came to him. He was growing old, and he had been defeated. It would have been hard for him to live to see his rival ruling victorious in Rome.

Caesar wept when he was told of Pompey's death. He buried him with great honour and magnificence, and caused the men by whom he had been so treacherously slain to be fitly punished for their crime.

XIV. OF JULIUS CAESAR: DICTATOR
HOW HE WAS SLAIN

Julius Caesar ruled in Rome, and his will was law. He sat on a golden chair of state in the senate, and wore a wreath of laurel about his brow. Every year his birthday was kept as a holiday, and to his birthday month was given his name — Julius, or July as it is now called.

The senators, once his bitter enemies, now obeyed his slightest word, and sought by every means in their power to do him honour. They made him Dictator for life; they named him 'Imperator,' 'Father of the People,' 'Julius the Invincible.' They took an oath to watch over his safety; they caused his statue to be put beside those of the seven ancient kings of Rome; indeed so eager were they to please him that if he had told them to lie down and let him walk over them I verily believe they would have done so.

The people too were delighted with their generous Dictator, their victorious general who had won four Triumphs and who had made Rome greater than ever before. On his return from the Civil War he had given gold to both the soldiers and the citizens. He had feasted them royally; given them games and circus-shows, gladiator-fights, and all manner of things, and then having amused and pleased his people, Caesar set about ruling them.

He made many good laws, for this wonderful man could rule as well as he could fight. He took some of the power away from the patricians to give it to the plebeians. He brought wise men over from Egypt to help him to alter the Roman Calendar. He was going to make a great many more changes in the country, but Pompey's sons raised a rebellion in Spain, and he had to leave Rome to go and fight against them.

After a year's hard fighting he returned to Italy, and it was about this time that the people began to accuse him of wishing to be king.

Now some say that Caesar really did long to wear a royal crown, and others say that he did not; however that may be, the Roman citizens believed that he wanted to be king, and their love for him began to cool. This was because ever since the days of Tarquin the Proud the very name of king had been hated in Rome.

Some of the patricians who had fought for Pompey, and whom Caesar had pardoned and taken into favour again, began to say to each other that it would be better for Rome if Caesar were dead. Soon they took to meeting secretly together to plot how best they might slay him. Most of the conspirators were jealous, ambitious men, who envied and hated Caesar's power. Fierce, dark, Caius Cassius was the chief among these, but there was another who joined the plot later, and he was different from all the rest. This was Marcus Brutus.

After Caesar, Brutus was the most powerful man in Rome. Caesar both honoured and loved him dearly, and the two were the greatest of friends. Yet Brutus in the end became leader in the plot to slay this same Caesar whom he loved.

And why? Because Brutus loved the Republic better than his friend. He did not think it right that one man should rule the whole nation, and he believed that if Caesar were slain Rome would become a Republic again; that the power would again be divided equally between the people and the senate.

Meanwhile the common folk were still wondering about Caesar's wish to be king. As he returned from the Latin Festival some citizens hailed him as king; others showed their dislike of the name, and Caesar crying, 'I am no king, but Caesar,' passed on his way. Nevertheless it was believed that he said this only to please the people.

Again, another time at the feast of Lupercalia Mark Antony offered a crown to Caesar. The Dictator refused, again it was offered, again refused, and at last Antony had to lay it aside. Upon this the people, who had been silent during the offering, burst into loud cheers. And yet there were some who said that Caesar, had he dared, would have accepted the kingship.

This was in February, when the Dictator was making ready for a new war with Parthia. Following the usual custom, he sent to the soothsayers to ask if he should be victorious. The answer given was that none but a king could conquer Parthia. 'Let Caesar bear the name of king until the war is over; thus we shall be sure of victory,' said some one, and the senate was to hold a meeting on the Ides of March (that is the 15th of March), to decide whether this should be done or not. That day, the conspirators vowed, should be the day of Caesar's death.

'The Ides of March will bring misfortune to Caesar,' cried the soothsayers, who could, so it was believed, tell what was going to happen. 'The Ides of March?' echoed the wondering people, 'what will happen to Caesar then?' 'He shall die,' whispered the conspirators, but they took care to let no man hear.

The fatal day came at last. Caesar awoke that morning, restless and uneasy, for he had been told of the dark saying of the sooth-sayers, he knew he had many enemies, and moreover his wife, Calpurnia, had dreamed that he was dead. With tears she begged him to stay away from the senate. Caesar would have given in to her wish had not the conspirators, to make more sure of his coming, sent one of their number to fetch him. And this man spoke so cunningly and softly that Caesar was persuaded to order his litter and set out for the senate.

As he passed through the streets he met with Spurinna the soothsayer.

'Ah, Spurinna,' cried Caesar, 'the Ides of March are come!'

The Death of Caesar.

'Ay,' softly spoke the soothsayer, 'but they are not gone, Caesar!'

Many people tried to press through the crowd to warn him of his danger, but some of the conspirators kept these from coming near enough to the litter for speech. One man thrust a scroll of paper into his hand, begging him to read it at once, for it concerned his safety, but every time Caesar opened the scroll he was interrupted, and when at last he entered the senate it was still in his hand unread.

When Caesar had seated himself, one of the conspirators, Metellus Cimber by name, knelt down at his feet on the pretence of asking some favour; the rest crowded round as if they too were anxious to plead their friend's cause. Caesar refused to grant the prayer. Closer and closer they pressed, laying their hands upon his robe, his arms, his shoulders. He tried to push them from him and to rise to his feet; thereupon Cimber, catching hold of Caesar's toga, pulled it firmly down over his arms.

Behind the golden chair stood Casca, the man who was to strike the first blow. He struck, but the dagger barely touched Caesar's shoulder.

'Thou villain Casca! What means this?' cried the Dictator, and swinging round by a great effort he snatched at the other's dagger.

'Brothers, help!' called Casca at one and the same time.

Then each man drew out his hidden weapon, and the treacherous work began. Caesar fought as only Caesar could; but what hope was there for one unarmed man against so many? Still he struggled, wounded and bleeding, until Brutus, — Brutus, whom he loved, and who loved him, — came forward with the rest, dagger in hand.

'Thou too, Brutus!' cried the dying Caesar piteously, and covering his face with his robe he let the murderers have their way. A few moments after he fell dead at the foot of Pompey's statue.

Rome had lost her greatest son. Mighty Caesar ruled no more.

XV. OF JULIUS CAESAR: DEAD
HOW THEY BURIED HIM

Upon that terrible day when Caesar came by his death, Mark Antony, his most faithful friend, was hindered from entering the senate by a conspirator, one Decimus Albinus. This man kept Antony talking outside the building. Suddenly Decimus stopped speaking, for he had heard sounds from within; there was no longer any need to deceive Antony; Julius Caesar was dead.

Ay, Caesar was dead! Those senators who were his friends, and who had been too shocked and surprised to lift a finger to save him, now rushed out from the building, pale and terrified, for they knew not whose turn would come next.

Antony too fled into hiding. He, of all Caesar's friends, had most cause to fear the daggers of the murderers, for they knew that he loved Caesar and would seek to avenge his death.

Soon the news spread throughout the whole city. The shops were shut; people ran hither and thither, scarce knowing what they did, so great was their terror and dismay. The crowds lined the streets, watching the conspirators as they marched to the Forum, waving their blood-stained daggers and crying out that they had killed a tyrant and a king. But the citizens answered never a word to their cries and speeches. They could not yet believe that Caesar was really dead. Had they not seen him pass through the streets alive and well that very day? Had not some of them spoken with him, some touched his hand?

The Conspirators finding that all their speeches were received in heavy silence, took fright and fled to the Capitol for safety.

The next day Antony came out from his retreat to go to a meeting of the senate. As he went the people greeted him gladly, earnestly

warning him to take care of his own life. Antony smiling, lifted his toga, and they saw that beneath it he wore a steel corslet.

The conspirators, not daring to leave the Capitol, sent Cicero, the great orator, to speak for them in the senate. It was then decided that peace should be made, and that Caesar should be given a public funeral with all the honours due to his rank and greatness. The body was to be brought to the Forum, and then Caesar's will was to be read to the people and the funeral speech made. After which the body was to be burned in a field outside the city wall, and the ashes laid in the tomb according to the usual custom.

Antony was very anxious indeed for the funeral to be public. As first consul he would have to make the speech. He knew the Roman people, and he had his own plans for arousing their anger against the murderers of his friend.

As the senate had decreed, so it was done. The body of Caesar was brought to the Forum, laid upon a golden shrine and covered with a cloth of purple and gold. Above it hung the very toga which the dead man had worn on the fatal day. Beside this there was a wax figure of Caesar himself, painted so as to show his twenty-three wounds.

Antony, clad in mourning robes, took his place on the rostra, beside the body; and in the silence began to read aloud Caesar's last will.

As he read, the people murmured angrily against the conspirators, for lo! this tyrant, this man who was said to have thought only of himself, had left to every Roman citizen the sum of three pounds; he had given also his own beautiful gardens to the people, and to most of the senators who had slain him he had left large sums of money.

To the people as they listened, it seemed as if no punishment could be great enough for those who had murdered so generous a man.

Having read the will, Antony began his speech. Never before and never again did he speak so well. Anger and sorrow for the loss of

his dearest friend, and the manner of his death, gave him power. He reminded the people of all Caesar's glorious deeds in war, and they wept for their hero. He told them of all the great things the Dictator had done for Rome, and of all he would have done had he lived, and they groaned out their rage against his murderers. He spoke of Caesar's courage, of his justice, his mercy and kindness, his love for the people and for his country; then leaning on the body, he began to sing, like a priest to a god, a strange wild song of mourning, and at the same time the attendants lifted the wax figure on high, turning it now this way, now that, for all to see.

This sent the people into a fury of rage and grief. They shrieked, they groaned, they sobbed, they laughed, indeed they knew not what they did, so deeply were they stirred by the sound of that wild voice.

Suddenly the song ceased, and Antony, before any one could tell what he was about, tore aside the cover of the shrine, and the citizens beheld great Caesar — dead.

If they were angry before, this sight brought their passion near to madness. They cursed his murderers; they cursed the senators; they vowed to take vengeance on all his enemies. They cried out that they themselves would bury Caesar, and there and then they broke up the rostra, and with its planks laid the foundation of the funeral pyre.

They rushed into the houses, and dragging out chairs, tables, benches, and all manner of household things, piled them high into one great heap. Men flung their tools and their weapons upon it, women their jewels and even their dresses, children their playthings, and on the very top they placed the golden shrine in which lay the body of Caesar.

When all was ready, two beautiful youths, girded with swords, and bearing flaming torches in their hands, set fire to the whole. Higher rose the flames and higher, and while they roared and hissed, the furious citizens ran through the streets of the city seeking the conspirators to slay them; but not one was to be found: they had all wisely fled at the first sign of danger.

Little by little, as the fire died down, the people grew calmer, and after some days of mourning they began to go about their work again as if nothing had happened.

Brutus and Cassius, who still dreamed of a day when Rome should be republic again, gathered together an army determined to fight to the last for the cause of liberty, but they were defeated by Antony and Octavius, the great-nephew of Caesar and his heir, and to escape surrendering to the enemy they slew themselves.

Brutus did his best, but neither by slaying Caesar nor by any other means could the Republic be made strong again. The people had become too weak, too fond of pleasure and ease ever to rule themselves again, and they allowed Octavius to finish what Caesar had begun — the making of the empire. He changed his name and became the first of the emperors: the Emperor Augustus Caesar.

Under his rule the empire prospered, but after him came the cruel Tiberius, Claudius, Caligula, and Nero, the most terrible tyrant of them all, and after them many and many another who made slaves of the people, and spoilt the soldiers, until at last Rome lost all power, either as a nation or as an empire.