

4. The efforts of Tarquin to recover the throne gave rise to a conspiracy among some of the younger patricians who had shared in the tyrant's extortions. Among the conspirators were the sons of Brutus; and the duty of pronouncing their fate devolved upon the consul their father, who, laying aside parental affection, and acting the part of the magistrate only, condemned them to death. The

II. ETRUS' CAN WAR. cause of the Tarquins was also espoused by the Etrus' cans, to whom they had fled for protection, and thus a war was kindled between the two people.

5. The accounts of the events and results of this war are exceedingly conflicting. The ancient Roman legend relates that when Porsenna, king of Clusium,¹ the most powerful of the Etrus' can princes, led an overwhelming force against Rome, the Romans were at first repulsed, and fled across a wooden bridge over the Tiber; and that the army was saved by the valor of Horatius Coclès, who alone defended the pass against thousands of the enemy, until the bridge was broken down in the rear, when he plunged into the stream, and, amid a shower of darts, safely regained the opposite shore.

6. It is farther related, that when Porsenna had reduced Rome to extremities by famine, a young man, Matius Scæv' ola, undertook, with the approbation of the Senate, to assassinate the invading king. Making his way into the Etrus' can camp, he slew one of the king's attendants, whom he mistook for Porsenna. Being disarmed, and threatened with torture, he scornfully thrust his right hand into the flame, where he held it until it was consumed, to show that the rack had no terrors for him. The king, admiring such heroism, gave him his life and liberty, when Scæv' ola warned him, as a token of gratitude, to make peace, for that three hundred young patricians, as brave as himself, had conspired to destroy him, and that he, Scæv' ola, had only been chosen by lot to make the first attempt.

7. The Roman legend asserts that Porsenna, alarmed for his life, offered terms of peace, which were agreed upon. And yet it is known, from other evidence, that the Romans, about this time, surrendered their city, and became tributary to the Etrus' cans; and it is probable that when, soon after, Porsenna was defeated in a war with the Latins, the Romans embraced the opportunity to regain their independence.

8. It was only while the attempts of the Tarquins to regain the

¹ Clusium, now Chiusi, was a town of Etruria, situated on the western bank of the river Clanis, a tributary of the Tiber, about eighty-five miles north-west from Rome. (Map No. VIII.)

throne excited alarm, and the Etrus' can war continued, that the government under the first consuls was administered with justice and moderation. When these dangers were over, the patricians again began to exert their tyranny over the plebeians, and as nearly all the wealth of the State had been engrossed by the former, the latter were reduced to a condition differing little from the most abject slavery. A decree against a plebeian debtor made not only him, but his children also, slaves to the creditor, who might imprison, scourge, or otherwise maltreat them.

9. The contentions between the patricians and plebeians were at length carried to such an extent, that in time of war the latter refused to enlist; and as the consuls, for some cause now unknown could not be confided in, the plebeians were induced to consent to the creation of a *dictator*, who, during six months, had III. OFFICE OF supreme power, not only over patricians, plebeians, and DICTATOR. consuls, but also over the laws themselves. Under a former law of Valerius the people had the right of appeal from a sentence of the consul to a general assembly of the citizens; but from the decision of the dictator there was no appeal, and as he was appointed by the Senate, this office gave additional power to the patrician order.^a

10. During a number of years dictators continued to be appointed in times of great public danger; but they gave only a temporary calm to the popular dissensions. It was during a war with the Volscians' and Sabines that the long-accumulating resentment of the plebeians against the patricians first broke forth in open IV. PLEBEIAN insurrection. An old man, haggard and in rags, pale INSURRECTION and famishing, escaping from his creditor's prison, and bearing the marks of cruel treatment, implored the aid of the people. A crowd gathered around him. He showed them the scars that he had received in war, and he was recognized as a brave captain who had fought for his country in eight and twenty battles. His house and farm-yard having been plundered by the enemy in the Etrus' can war

¹ The Volscians were the most southern of the tribes that inhabited Latium. Their territory extending along the coast southward from Antium about fifty miles, swarmed with cities filled with a hardy and warlike race. (Maps Nos. VIII. and X.)

^a The office of *dictator* had existed at Alba and other Latin towns long before this time. The authority of all the other magistrates, except that of the tribunes, (see p. 138,) ceased as soon as the dictator was appointed. He had the power of life and death, except perhaps in the case of knights and senators, and from his decision there was no appeal; but for any abuse of his power he might be called to account after his resignation or the expiration of his term of office. At first the dictator was taken from the patrician ranks only; but about the year 356 B. C. it was opened by C. Marcius to the plebeians also. See Niebuhr's Rome, i. 270

famine had first compelled him to sell his all, and then to borrow; and when he could not pay, his creditors had obtained judgment against him and his two sons, and had put them in chains. (495 B. C.)

11. Confusion and uproar spread through the city. All who had been pledged for debt were clamorous for relief; the people spurned the summons to enlist in the legions; compulsion was impossible, and the Senate knew not how to act. At length the promises of the consuls appeased the tumult; but finally the plebeians, after having been repeatedly deceived, deserted their officers in the very midst of war, and marched in a body to Mons Sacer,¹ or the Sacred Mount within three miles of Rome, where they were joined by a vast multitude of their discontented brethren. (493 B. C.)

12. After much negotiation, a reconciliation was finally effected on the terms that all contracts of insolvent debtors should be cancelled; that those who had incurred slavery for debt should recover their freedom; that the Valerian law should be enforced, and that two annual magistrates, (afterwards increased to five,) called *tribunes*,^a whose persons were to be inviolable, should be chosen by the people to watch over their rights, and prevent any abuses of authority. It will be seen that the power of the tribunes, so humble in its origin, eventually acquired a preponderating influence in the State, and laid the foundation of monarchical supremacy.^b

13. During the same year that the office of the tribunes was created, a perpetual league was made with the Latins, (493 B. C.) and seven years later with the Hernicians, who inhabited the north-eastern parts of Látium, both on terms of perfect equality in the contracting parties, and not, as before, on the basis of Roman supe-

1. The *Mons Sacer*, or "Sacred Mountain," is a low range of sandstone hills extending along the right bank of the Anio, near its confluence with the Tiber, about three miles from Rome. (*Maps Nos. VIII. and X.*)

a. The *tribunes of the people* wore no external marks of distinction; but an officer called *praetor* attended them, to clear the way and summon people. Their chief power at first consisted in preventing, or arresting, by the word *veto*, "I forbid," any measure which they thought detrimental to the interests of the people.

b. After the plebeians had withdrawn to the "Sacred Mount," the Senate despatched an embassy of ten men, headed by Menenius Agrippa, to treat with the insurgents. Agrippa is said, on this occasion, to have related to the people the since well-known fable of the Belly and the Members. The latter, provoked at seeing all the fruits of their toil and care applied to the use of the belly, refused to perform any more labor; in consequence of which the whole body was in danger of perishing. The people understood the moral of the fable, and were ready to enter upon a negotiation.

riority. These leagues made with cities that were once subject to the Romans, show that the Roman power had been greatly diminished by the plebeian and aristocratic contentions in the early years of the Republic.

14. In the interval between these treaties, occurred important wars with the Volscians and Æquians.¹ The historical VI. VOLSCIAN AND ÆQUIAN WARS. contradictions of this period are so numerous, that little reliance can be placed on the details of these wars; but it is evident that the Volscians and Æquians were defeated, and that Caius Marcius, a Roman nobleman, acquired the surname of Coriolanus from his bravery at the capture of the Volscian town of Corioli² and that Lucius Quinctius, called Cincinnátus, acquired great distinction by his conduct of the war against the Æquians. Coriolanus belonged to the patrician order, and was an enemy of the tribunes; and it is related that when, during a famine, a Sicilian prince sent a large supply of corn to relieve the distresses of the citizens, Coriolanus proposed in the Senate that the plebeians should not share in the subsidy until they had surrendered the privileges which they had acquired by their recent secession.

15. The rage of the plebeians was excited by this proposition, and they would have proceeded to violence against Coriolanus, had not the tribunes summoned him to trial before the assembly of the people. The senators made the greatest efforts to save him, but the commons condemned him to exile. Enraged by this treatment, he went over to the Volscians—was appointed a general in their armies—and, after defeating the Romans in several engagements, laid siege to the city, which must have surrendered had not a deputation of Roman matrons, headed by the wife and the mother of Coriolanus, prevailed upon him to grant his countrymen terms of peace. It is said that on his return to the Volscians he lost his life in a popular tumult; but a tradition relates that he lived to a very advanced age, and that he was often heard to exclaim, "How miserable is the condition of an old man in banishment."

16. It is related that during the war with the Æquians the enemy had surrounded the Roman consul in a defile, where there was neither forage for the horses nor food for the men. In this extremity, the

1. The Æquians dwelt principally in the upper valley of the Anio, north of that stream, and between the Sabines and the Marsi. (*Maps Nos. VIII. and X.*)

2. *Corioli* is supposed to have been about twenty-two or twenty-three miles south-east from Rome. A hill now known by the name of *Monte Giove*, is thought, with some degree of probability, to represent the site of this ancient Volscian city. (*Map No. X.*)

Senate and people chose Cincinnátus dictator, and sending in haste to inform him of his election, the deputies found him at work in his field, dressed in the plain habit of a Roman farmer. After he had put on his toga, or cloak, that he might receive the message of the Senate in a becoming manner, he was saluted as dictator, and conducted into the city. He soon raised an army, surrounded the enemy, and took their whole force prisoners, and at the end of sixteen days, having accomplished the deliverance of his country, resigned his power, and returned to the peaceful pursuits of private life.^a

17. The first acquisitions of territory made by the Romans appear to have been divided among the people at large; but of late the conquered lands had been suffered to pass, by connivance, occupation, or purchase, chiefly into the hands of the patricians. The complaints of the plebeians on this subject at length induced one of the consuls, Spurius Cassius, to propose a division of recently-conquered lands into small estates, for the poorer classes, who, he maintained, were justly entitled to their proportionate share, as their valor and labors had helped to acquire them. But while this proposition alarmed the Senate and patricians with danger to their property, the motives of Cassius appear to have been distrusted by all classes, for he was charged with aiming at kingly power, and, being convicted, was ignominiously beheaded, and his house razed to the ground. (458 B. C.)

18. Still the people continued to demand a share in the conquered lands, now forming the estates of the wealthy, and, as the only way of evading the difficulty, the Senate kept the nation almost constantly involved in war. During thirty years succeeding the death of Cassius, the history of the Republic is occupied with desultory wars waged against the Æquians and Volscians, and with continued struggles between the patricians and plebeians. At length the tribunes succeeded in getting their number increased from five to ten, when the Senate, despairing of being able to divert the people any longer from their purpose, consented to the appointment of ten persons,

hence called *decem' virs*, who were to compile a body of laws for the commonwealth, and to exercise all the powers of government until the laws should be completed. (451 B. C.)

19. After several months' deliberation, this body produced a code

^a. It should be remarked here, that the story of Cincinnátus formed the subject of a beautiful poem, to the substance of which most writers have given the credit of historical authenticity, although Niebuhr has shown that the truth of the legend will not stand the test of criticism. (See Niebuhr, vol. ii. pp. 125-6. and Arnold's Rome, l. pp. 131-5. and notes.)

of laws, engraven on ten tables, which continued, down to the time of the emperors, to be the basis of the civil and penal jurisprudence of the Roman people, though almost concealed from view under the enormous mass of additions piled upon it. The new constitution aimed at establishing the legal equality of all the citizens, and there was a show of dividing the great offices of State equally between patricians and plebeians, but the exact character of the ten tables cannot now be satisfactorily distinguished from two others that were subsequently enacted.

20. After the task of the decemvirs had been completed, all classes united in continuing their office for another year; and an equal number of patricians and plebeians was elected; but the former appear to have sought seats in the government for the purpose of overthrowing the constitution. The decemvirs now threw off the mask, and enacted two additional tables of laws, by which the plebeians were greatly oppressed, for, among the laws attributed to the *twelve* tables, we find that although all classes were liable to imprisonment for debt, yet the pledging of the person affected plebeians only,—that the latter were excluded from the enjoyment of the public lands,—that their intermarriage with patricians was prohibited,—and that consuls could be elected from the patrician order only. Moreover, the decemvirs now refused to lay down the powers of government which had been temporarily granted them, and, secretly supported by the patricians, ruled without control, thus establishing a tyrannical oligarchy.

21. At length a private injury accomplished what wrongs of a more public nature had failed to effect. Appius Claudius, a leading decemvir, had fallen in love with the beautiful Virginia, daughter of Virginus, a patrician officer; but finding her betrothed to another, in order to accomplish his purpose he procured a base dependant to claim her as his slave. As had been concerted, Virginia was brought before the tribunal of Appius himself, who, by an iniquitous decision, ordered her to be surrendered to the claimant. It was then that the distracted father, having no other means of preserving his daughter's honor, stabbed her to the heart in the presence of the court and the assembled people. (448 B. C.)

22. A general indignation against the decemvirs spread through the city; the army took part with the people; the power of the decemvirs was overthrown; and the ancient forms of government were restored; while additional rights were conceded to the commons, by

giving to their votes, in certain cases, the authority of law. Appius, having been impeached, died in prison, probably by his own hand before the day appointed for his trial.

23. Other plebeian innovations followed. After a difficult struggle the marriage law was repealed, (B. C. 445,) and two years later military tribunes, with consular powers, were chosen from the plebeian ranks. One important duty of the consuls had been the taking of the census once in every five years, and a new distribution of the people, at such times, among the different classes or ranks, according to their property, character, and families. But the patricians, unwilling that this power should devolve upon the plebeians, stipulated that these duties of the consular office should be disjoined from the military tribuneship, and conferred upon two new officers of patrician birth, who were denominated *censors*;^a and thus the long-continued efforts of the people to obtain, from their own number, the election of officers with full consular powers, were defeated.

24. But while dissensions continued to mark the domestic councils of the Romans with the appearance of divided strength and wasted energies, the state of affairs presented a different aspect to the surrounding people. They saw in Rome only a nation of warriors that had already recovered the strength it had lost by a revolutionary change of government, and that was now marching on to increased dominion without any signs of weakness in the foreign wars it had to maintain. Véii,¹ the wealthiest and most important of the Etruscan cities, had long been a check to the progress of the Romans north of the Tiber, and had often sought occasion to provoke hostilities with the young republic. At length the chief of the people of Véii put to death the Roman ambassadors; and the Roman Senate, being refused satisfaction for the outrage, formally resolved that Véii should be destroyed.

25. The Etruscan armies that marched to the relief of Véii were

1. Véii, numerous remains of which still exist, was about twelve miles north from Rome, at a place now known by the name of *l'Isola Farnese*. (Maps Nos. VIII. and X.)

a. An important duty of the *censors* was that of inspecting the morals of the people. They had the power of inflicting various marks of disgrace upon those who deserved it,—such as excluding a senator from the senate-house—depriving a knight of his public horse if he did not take proper care of it;—and of punishing, in various ways, those who did not cultivate their grounds properly—those who lived too long unmarried—and those who were of dissolute morals. They had charge, also, of the public works, and of letting out the public lands. The office of censor was esteemed highly honorable. In allusion to the severity with which Cato the Elder discharged its duties, he is commonly styled, at the present day, “Cato the Censor.”

repeatedly defeated by the Roman legions, and the people of Véii were finally compelled to shut themselves up in their city, which was taken by the Roman dictator, Camillus, after a blockade and siege of nearly ten years. (396 B. C.) The spoil taken from the conquered city was given to the army, the captives were sold for the benefit of the State, and the ornaments and images of the gods were transferred to Rome. The conquerors also wreaked their vengeance on the towns which had aided Véii in the war, and the Roman territory was extended farther north of the Tiber than at any previous period.

26. But while the Romans were enjoying the imaginary security which these successful wars had given them, they were suddenly assailed by a new enemy, which threatened the extinction of the Roman name. During the recent Etruscan wars, a vast horde of barbarians of the Gallic or Celtic race had crossed the Alps from the unknown regions of the north, and had sat down in the plains of Northern Italy, in the country known as Cisalpine Gaul.¹ Tradition relates that an injured citizen of Clusium, an Etruscan city, went over the mountains to these Gauls, taking with him a quantity of the fruits and wines of Italy, and promised these rude people that if they would leave their own inhospitable country and follow him, the land which produced all these good things should be theirs, for it was inhabited by an unwarlike race; whereupon the whole Gallic people, with their women and children, crossed the Alps, and marched direct to Clusium. (391 B. C.)

27. Certain it is that the people of Clusium sought aid from the Romans, who sent three of the nobility to remonstrate with the Brennus, or chieftain of the Gauls, but as the latter treated them with derision, they forgot their sacred character as ambassadors, and joined the Clusians in a sally against the besiegers. Immediately Brennus ordered a retreat, that he might not be guilty of shedding the blood of ambassadors, and forthwith demanded satisfaction of the Roman senate; and when this was refused he broke up his camp before Clusium and took up his march for Rome at the head of seventy thousand of his people.

28. Eleven miles from the city, on the banks of the *Al'ia*,¹ a battle

1. *Cisalpine Gaul*, meaning “Gaul this side of the Alps,” to distinguish it from “Gaul beyond the Alps,” embraced all that portion of Northern Italy that was watered by the river Po and its numerous tributaries, extending south on the Adriatic coast to the river Rubicon, and on the Tuscan coast to the river Macra. (Map No. IX.)

2. The *Al'ia*, now the *Aia*, was a small stream that flowed into the Tiber from the east, about ten miles north-east from Rome. (Map No. X.)

was fought, and the Romans, forty thousand in number, were defeated. (390 B. C.) Brennus meditated a sudden march to Rome to consummate his victory, but his troops, abandoning themselves to pillage, rioting, and drunkenness, refused to obey the voice of their leader, and thus, the attack being delayed, the existence of the Roman nation was saved. The defeat on the *Al'ia* had rendered it impossible to defend the city, but a thousand armed Romans took possession of the capitol and the citadel, and laying in a store of provisions determined to maintain their post to the last extremity, while the mass of the population sought refuge in the neighboring towns, bearing with them their riches, and the principal objects of their religious veneration. But while the rest of the people quitted their homes, eighty priests and patricians of the highest rank, deeming it intolerable to survive the republic and the worship of the gods, sat down in the Forum,¹ in their festal robes, awaiting death.

29. Onward came the Gauls in battle array, with horns and trumpets blowing, but finding the walls deserted, they burst open the gates and entered the city, which they found desolate and death-like. They marched cautiously on till they came to the Forum, where, in solemn stillness, sat the aged priests, and chiefs of the senate, looking like beings of another world. The wild barbarians, seized with awe at such a spectacle, doubted whether the gods had not come down to save the city or to avenge it. At length a Gaul went up to one of the priests and gently stroked his white beard, but the old man indignantly repelled the insolence by a stroke of his ivory sceptre. He was cut down on the spot, and his death was the signal of a general massacre. Then the plundering commenced: fires broke out in several quarters; and in a few days the whole city, with the exception of a few houses on the *Pal'atine*, was burnt to the ground.^a (390 B. C.)

30. The Gauls made repeated attempts to storm the citadel, but in vain. They attempted to climb up the rocks in the night, but the cackling of the sacred geese in the temple of *Júno* awoke *Marcus Man'lius*, who hurled the foremost Gaul headlong down the

1. The Roman *Forum* was a large open space between the *Capitoline* and *Pal'atine* hills, surrounded by porticos, shops, &c., where assemblies of the people were generally held, justice administered, and public business transacted. It is now a mere open space strewn for the most part with ruins, which, in the course of centuries, have accumulated to such an extent as to raise the surface from fifteen to twenty feet above its ancient level. See p. 582.

a. Different writers have given the date of the taking of Rome by the Gauls, from 388 to 398 B. C.

precipice, and prevented the ascent of those who were mounting after him. At length famine began to be felt by the garrison. But the host of the besiegers was gradually melting away by sickness and want, and Brennus agreed, for a thousand pounds of gold, to quit Rome and its territory. According to the old Roman legend, *Camil'lus* entered the city with an army while the gold was being weighed, and rudely accosting Brennus, and saying, "It is the custom of us Romans to ransom our country, not with gold, but with iron," ordered the gold to be carried back to the temple, whereupon a battle ensued, and the Gauls were driven from the city. A more probable account, however, relates that the Gauls were suddenly called home to protect their own country from an invasion of the *Venetians*.¹ According to *Polybius* this great Gallic invasion took place in the same year that the "peace of *Antalcidas*" was concluded between the Greeks and Persians. (See p. 89.)

31. The walls and houses of Rome had now to be built anew, and so great did the task appear that the citizens clamored for a removal to *Véii*; but the persuasion of *Camil'lus*, and a lucky omen, induced them to remain in their ancient situation. Yet they were not allowed to rebuild their dwellings in peace, for the surrounding nations, the *Sábines* only excepted, made war upon them; but their attacks were repelled, and one after another they were made to yield to the sway of Rome, which ultimately became the sovereign city of Italy.

32. Soon after the rebuilding of the city the old contests between the patricians and plebeians were renewed, with all their former violence. The cruelties exercised towards helpless creditors appear to have aroused the sympathies of the patrician *Man'lius*, the brave defender of the capitol, for he sold the most valuable part of his inheritance, and declared that so long as a single pound remained no Roman should be carried into bondage for debt. Henceforward he was regarded as the patron of the poor but for some hasty words was thrown into prison for slandering the government, and for sedition. Released by the clamors of the multitude, he was afterwards accused of aspiring to kingly authority; and the more common account states that he was convicted of treason, and sentenced to be thrown headlong from the *Tarpéian rock*, the scene of his former glory. But another account states that, being

1. The *Venetians* were a people of ancient Italy who dwelt north of the mouths of the *Po*, around the head waters of the *Adriatic*. (Map No. VIII.)

in insurrection, and in possession of the capitol, a treacherous slave hurled him down the precipice.^a (384 B. C.)

33. The plebeians mourned the fate of Man'lius, but his death was a patrician triumph. The oppression of the plebeians now increased, until universal distress prevailed: debtors were every day consigned to slavery, and dragged to private dungeons; the number of free citizens was visibly decreasing; those who remained were reduced to a state of dependence by their debts, and Rome was on the point of degenerating into a miserable oligarchy, when her decline was arrested by the appearance of two men who changed the fate of their country and of the world.

34. The authors of the great reform in the constitution were Licinius Stolo and Lucius Sextius. Confining themselves strictly to the paths permitted by the laws, they succeeded, after a struggle of five years against every species of fraud and violence, in obtaining for the plebeians an acknowledgment of their rights, and all possible guarantees for their preservation. (376 to 371 B. C.) The history of the struggle would be too long for insertion here. As on a former occasion, it was only in the last extremity, when the people had taken up arms, and gathered together upon the Aventine, that the patrician senate yielded its sanction to the three bills brought forward by Licinius. The first abolished the military tribuneship, and gained for the plebeians a share in the consulship: the second regulated the shares, divisions, and rents, of the public lands: the third regulated the rate of interest, gave present relief to unfortunate debtors, and secured personal freedom against the rapacity of creditors. To save something from the general wreck of their power, the patricians stipulated that the judicial functions of the consul should be exercised by a new officer with the title of *Prætor*,¹ chosen from the patrician order; yet within thirty-five years after the passage of the laws of Licinius, not only the prætorship, but the dictatorship also, was opened to the plebeians.

35. The legislation of Licinius freed Rome from internal dissensions, and gave new development to her strength and warlike ener-

1. The *prætors* were judicial magistrates,—officers answering to the modern chief-justice or chancellor. The modern English forms of judicial proceedings in the trial of causes are mostly taken from those observed by the Roman prætors. At first but one prætor was chosen; afterwards, when foreigners became numerous at Rome, another prætor was added to administer justice to them, or between them and the citizens. In later times subordinate judges, called *provincia prætors*, were appointed to administer justice in the provinces.

a. See Niebuhr, i. 275.

gies. Occasionally the Gauls came down from the north and made inroads upon the Roman territories, but they were invariably driven back with loss; while the Etruscans, almost constantly at war with Rome, grew less and less formidable, from repeated defeats. On the south, however, a new and dangerous enemy appeared in the Samnite¹ confederacy, now in the fulness of its strength, and in extent of territory and population far superior to Rome and her allies.

36. Cap'ua,² a wealthy city of Campânia, having obtained from Rome the promise of protection against the Samnites, the latter haughtily engaged in the war, and with a larger army than Rome could muster invaded the territory of Campânia, but in two desperate battles were defeated by the Romans. Two years later the Samnites proffered terms of peace, which were accepted. (341 B. C.) A league with the Samnites appears to have broken the connection that had long existed between Rome and Látium, and although the latter was willing to submit to a common government, and a complete union as one nation, yet the Romans, rejecting all compromise, haughtily determined either that their city must be a Latin town, or the Latins be subject to Rome. The result of the Latin war was the annexation of all Látium, and of Campânia also, to the territory of the Republic. (338 B. C.)

37. The Samnites were alarmed at these successes, and Roman encroachments soon involved the two people in another war. The Samnites lost several battles, but under their able general Pontius they effectually humbled the pride of Rome. The armies of the two Roman consuls, amounting to twenty thousand men, while passing through a narrow defile call the Caudine Forks,³ were surrounded by the enemy, and in this situation, unable either to fight or to retreat, were obliged to surrender. (321 B. C.) The terms of Pontius were that the Roman soldiers should be allowed to return to their homes, after passing under the

1. The *Samnites* dwelt at the distance of about ninety miles south-east from Rome, their territory lying between Apulia on the east and Campânia and Látium on the west. (Maps Nos. VIII. and X.)

2. *Cap'ua*, the capital of Campânia, was about three miles from the left bank of the river *Vultur' nus*, (now *Vulturno*), about one hundred and five miles south-east from Rome. The remains of its ancient amphitheatre, said to have been capable of containing one hundred thousand spectators, and some of its tombs, &c., attest its ancient splendor and magnificence. Two and a half miles from the site of the ancient city, is the modern city of Cap'ua, on the left bank of the *Vulturno*. (Map No. VIII.)

3. The *Caudine Forks* were a narrow pass in the Samnite territory, about thirty-five miles north-east from the *Cap'ua*. The present valley of *Arpaia*, (or *Forchia di Arpaia*), not far from Benevento, is thought to answer to this pass.

yoke; that there should be a renewal of the ancient equal alliance between Rome and Samnium, and a restoration of all places that had been dependent upon Samnium before the war. For the fulfilment of these stipulations the consuls gave their oaths in the name of the republic, and Pontius retained six hundred Roman knights as hostages.

38. But notwithstanding the recent disaster, and the hard fate that might be anticipated for the hostages, the Roman senate immediately declared the peace null and void, and decreed that those who had sworn to it should be given up to the Samnites, as persons who had deceived them. In vain did Pontius demand either that the whole army should be again placed in his power, or that the terms of capitulation should be strictly fulfilled; but he showed magnanimity of soul in refusing to accept the consuls and other officers whom the Romans would have given up to his vengeance. Not long after, the six hundred hostages were restored, but on what conditions is unknown.

39. The war, being again renewed, was continued with brief intervals of truce, during a period of thirty years; and although the Samnites were at times aided by Umbrians,¹ Etruscans, and Gauls, the desperate valor of the Romans repeatedly triumphed over all opposition. The last great battle, which occurred fifty-one years from the commencement of the first Samnite war, and which decided the contest between Rome and Samnium, has no name in history, and the place where it was fought is unknown, but its importance is gathered from the common statement that twenty thousand Samnites were left dead on the field and four thousand taken prisoners, and that among the latter was Pontius himself. (B. C. 292.) He was led in chains to grace the triumph of the Roman general, but the senate tarnished its honor by ordering the old man to execution. (291 B. C.) One year after the defeat of Pontius, the Samnites submitted to the terms dictated by the conquerors. (290 B. C.)

40. The Samnite wars had made the Romans acquainted with the Grecian cities on the eastern coast, and it was not long before they found a pretext for war with Taren'tum, the wealthiest of the Greek towns of Italy. The Tarentines, abandoned to ease and luxury, had often employed mercenary Gre-

¹ *Um'bria*, the territory of the Umbrians, was east of Etruria on the left bank of the Tiber and north of the Sabine territory. (*Maps Nos. VIII. and X.*)

cian troops in their wars with the rude tribes by which they were surrounded, and now, when pressed by the Romans, they again had recourse to foreign aid, and applied for protection to Pyr'rhus, king of Epirus, who has previously been brought under our notice in connection with events in Grecian history. (See p. 106.)

41. Pyr'rhus, ambitious of military fame, accepted the invitation of the Tarentines, and passed over to Taren'tum at the head of an army of nearly thirty thousand men, having among his forces twenty elephants, the first of those animals that had been seen in Italy. In the first battle, which was fought with the consul Lævinus, seven times was Pyr'rhus beaten back, and to his elephants he was finally indebted for his victory. (280 B. C.) The valor and military skill of the Romans astonished Pyr'rhus, who had expected to encounter only a horde of barbarians. As he passed over the field of battle after the fight, and marked the bodies of the Romans who had fallen in their ranks without turning their backs, and observed their countenances, stern even in death, he is said to have exclaimed in admiration: "With what ease I could conquer the world had I the Romans for soldiers, or had they me for their king."

42. Pyr'rhus now tried the arts of negotiation, and for this purpose sent to Rome his friend Cineas, the orator, who is said to have won more towns by his eloquence than Pyr'rhus by his arms; but all his proposals of peace were rejected, and Cineas returned filled with admiration of the Romans, whose city he said, was a temple, and their senate an assembly of kings. The war was renewed, and in a second battle Pyr'rhus gained a dearly-bought victory, for he left the flower of his troops on the field. "One more such victory," he replied to those who congratulated him, "and I am undone" 279 B. C.)

43. It is related that while the armies were facing each other the third time, a letter was brought to Fabricius, the Roman consul and commander, from the physician of Pyr'rhus, offering, for a suitable reward, to poison the king, and that Fabricius thereupon nobly informed Pyr'rhus of the treachery that was plotted against him. When the message was brought to Pyr'rhus, he was astonished at the generosity of his enemy, and exclaimed, "It would be easier to turn the sun from his course than Fabricius from the path of honor." Not to be outdone in magnanimity he released all his prisoners without ransom, and soon after, withdrawing his forces, passed over into Sicily, where his aid had been requested by the