

## CHAPTER I.

### LEGENDARY ROME.

FROM 700 B. C. TO 493 B. C.

THE ITALIAN PENINSULA.—UNCERTAIN HISTORY.—LEGEND OF TROY.—THE FLIGHT OF ÆNEAS.—LANDING IN ITALY.—WARS WITH NATIVE TRIBES.—ALBA LONGA.—THE STORY OF ROMULUS AND REMUS.—THE FOUNDATION OF ROME.—THE RAPE OF THE SABINES.—CONTINUED CONQUESTS.—TRANSLATION OF ROMULUS.—THE HORATH AND CURIATH.—CONQUEST OF ALBA LONGA.—ACCESSION OF TARQUINIUS.—SERVIUS TULLIUS.—HIS DEMOCRATIC SWAY.—ACCESSION OF TARQUINIUS SUPERBUS.—THE BOOKS OF THE SIBYL.—THE STORY OF LUCRETIA.—BANISHMENT OF TARQUIN.—REIGN OF THE CONSULS.—INSURRECTION OF THE COMMONS.

THE Italian peninsula extends from the foot of the Alps into the Mediterranean sea, about seven hundred and fifty miles. Its breadth is very unequal. In the extreme north, where it is bounded by the circular sweep of the Alps, which separate the plains of Lombardy from Switzerland and the Tyrol, the country presents a breadth of one hundred and fifty miles. In the center it is but about eighty miles from the bay of Naples to the Adriatic, while in Calabria the width dwindles to but eighteen miles from sea to sea. The islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, with several others of minor importance, have also been usually considered as a part of Italy. The area of the main land, exclusive of these islands, is estimated at a little over one hundred thousand square miles, being about equal to all of New England and the State of New York. Italy now contains twenty-five millions of inhabitants, and is divided into several States, consisting of the two kingdoms of Sardinia and Naples; Venetian Lombardy—the Papal States—the liliputian republic of San Marino, and the four duchies of Tuscany, Parma, Modena, and Lucca. A range of

mountains, the Apennines, traverses the peninsula from north to south, creating rivers, plains, and valleys, which, by the common consent of mankind, have been pronounced to be more beautiful than can be found elsewhere on the surface of the globe. The soil is fertile, the climate remarkably genial, and poetic inspiration has been exhausted in extolling the purity of its breezes and the splendor of its skies.

The first glimpse we catch of Italy, through the haze of past ages, is exceedingly dim and shadowy. Uncounted tribes spread over the mountains and valleys, either tilling the fields or herding their cattle, or pursuing wild beasts in the chase. Even the tradition, recorded by the Roman historians, of the origin of the Roman empire, from a colony of fugitives escaping from the sack of Troy, is deemed utterly devoid of foundation in historic truth. These traditions, in which history and poetry are inseparably commingled, are so confused and contradictory that they are utterly rejected by sound criticism. It is the verdict of the most accomplished scholars that the date and origin of the eternal city are involved in impenetrable obscurity. Most modern writers on Roman history, adopting the statements of Varro and Cato, place the foundation of Rome somewhere between the years 752 and 729 before Christ.

The most ancient historians give a narrative of the rise and progress of the city of Rome, which rapidly spread its conquests over all the Italian tribes and all of the then known world, in which narrative truth and fiction are so intermixed that they can not now be separated. As nothing whatever is known of these early ages but what is contained in these legends, and as they have ever been deemed beautiful creations which, like romances founded in fact, contain much historic truth, blended with fiction, and are illustrative of the habits of thought and customs of the times, this legendary history becomes the appropriate and essential introduction to a narrative of the fortunes of the Italian peninsula.

It is recorded that upon a plateau of Asia Minor, near the Ægean sea, there existed, about a thousand years before the birth of our Saviour, a large city called Troy. It was besieged, taken, and utterly destroyed by the Greeks. Some of the fugitives, led by a renowned chieftain, Æneas, escaped, and taking a ship, after encountering innumerable perils, succeeded in reaching the shores of Italy. They landed near the center of the western coast, upon territory occupied by a tribe called Latins, whose king or chief was Latinus. The fugitives were kindly greeted by the natives, and received a grant of land, upon which they were permitted to establish themselves as a colony. Soon, however, a quarrel arose, and the Trojans, attacking the Latins, defeated them, killed their king, and Æneas, marrying the daughter of Latinus, became sovereign of the conquered tribe, and assumed for all his people the name of Latins.

Two neighboring tribes, the Rutulians and Etruscans, were alarmed by the encroachments of the new comers, and entered into an alliance for their destruction. In the war which ensued, Turnus, king of the Rutulians, was slain, and Æneas also perished. Ascanius, the son of Æneas, now assumed the command, and carried on the war vigorously against the Etruscans. Ascanius was a soft-haired, beardless boy, but heroic in spirit. He succeeded in one of the battles in encountering Mezentius, the Etruscan king, in single combat, and slew him. This conquest greatly increased the territory and the power of the young colony, and Ascanius selected another site for his city on the side of a mountain, where there was an extensive prospect and many facilities for defense. Thirty years had now passed since the first landing of the Trojans in Italy. The first city, called Lavinium, was built on the low lands near the shore. This second city, which Ascanius named Alba Longa, was built on the side of Monte Cavo, from whose summit the eye commands a prospect of wonderful extent and beauty, often embracing in the field of vision, when the atmosphere is

clear, the distant islands of Sardinia and Corsica. Niebuhr states that the site where Alba stretched its long street between the mountain and the lake is still distinctly marked. At this point there is confusion in the legends which it is idle to attempt to reconcile. A list of the succeeding Alban kings is given, which contains a medley of names without the slightest claims to authenticity.

Some three hundred years are supposed to have passed away after the founding of Alba Longa, when, during the reign of Amulius, two children, offspring of Sylvia, a niece of the king, were ordered by the king, who feared their rivalry, to be cast into the river Tiber. The god Mars was reported to be the father of these children. There was a great inundation at the time, and the infants, placed in a wicker basket, floated down the stream, until the basket struck a fig-tree and upset, and the children were thrown upon a mound of dry land, near the foot of a hill, subsequently called the Palatine hill. A she-wolf found the children and took them to her cave and suckled them. At length a herdsman, who lived upon the hill, chanced to discover the infants, and took them to his wife. She nursed them tenderly, and named them Romulus and Remus. The children growing to manhood, accidentally discovered their regal descent, and, raising a party of young men from the banks of the Tiber, waged war against Alba, slew the king, Amulius, and placed his elder brother, Numitor, the father of their mother Sylvia, upon the throne.

Though the two brothers, Romulus and Remus, were now received at court and recognized as of royal blood, still they were so strongly attached to their childhood's home, upon the banks of the Tiber, that they retired from Alba to the Palatine hill, and decided to build a city in that vicinity. A dispute arose respecting its precise location. In a fit of anger one of the chief builders struck Remus with a spade and killed him. Romulus now urged forward his buildings, surrounded the city, which he called Rome, with a wall, and invited all ad-

venturers, exiles, fugitives, and even criminals and runaway slaves, to repair to the city and place themselves under his protection. The population rapidly increased, and the streets of Rome were soon crowded with men of the most bold and desperate character. But wives were wanted, and by fair means they could not be obtained.

Romulus proclaimed to the neighboring tribes that there was to be a great festival celebrated at Rome with the most imposing sports and games, which they were invited to attend. Large numbers from the densely populated region around, with their wives and children, flocked to the city. When all were intently gazing upon the spectacle, a band of armed men rushed upon the strangers, and, seizing the young women, bore them, shrieking with terror, to appointed places of rendezvous. The exasperated tribes immediately seized their arms to avenge this outrage; but not acting with sufficient concert, several of them were vanquished, one after another, and their territories seized by the energetic Romans. At length the king of the Sabines, who was the most powerful of these adjacent tribes, led an army so well appointed and numerous against Rome, that Romulus, unable to resist him in the field, was compelled to take refuge behind the walls of the city. Opposite the Palatine hill, upon which Rome was built, there was, at some distance, another eminence, then designated the Saturnian hill, but since called the Capitoline. Here the Sabines entrenched themselves. For some time the conflict continued with varying success. At length the Sabine women, who had become attached to the husbands who had wooed and won them so rudely, anxious to effect a reconciliation between their husbands and their fathers, rushed between the combatants and effected a peace. The two nations were now united under the name of the Romans and the Quirites. The women were richly rewarded for their heroism; and, in requital to the sex, laws were passed requiring every man to make way for any matron who might meet him, and punishing with death any

man who should insult a woman by a wanton word or look Tatius, the king of the Sabines, erected a city on the Capitoline hill, and the united senate of the two kingdoms met in the valley between these eminences, and the spot was hence called Comitium. At length Tatius, in a conflict with a neighboring tribe, was killed, and Romulus ruled over both nations.

It is represented that Romulus, after a mild and just reign of forty years, assembled the people, on a certain occasion, for a festival, on a plain near lake Capra. Suddenly a fearful storm arose, producing midnight darkness. Rain fell in torrents, and the thunder and lightning were more terrible than had ever before been known. In the confusion of the tempest the people dispersed. After the storm had passed they returned to the field, but Romulus was no where to be found. They sought for him anxiously in all directions, and they could only solve the mystery by supposing that the god Mars, the reputed father of Romulus, had descended in this tempest, and conveyed his son to heaven in a chariot of fire. This supposition was soon confirmed, for Romulus appeared that night, in god-like stature and beauty, to one Proculus Julius, who was coming from Alba to Rome, and said to him,

"Go and tell my people that they weep not for me any more. Bid them to be brave and warlike, and so shall they make my city the greatest in the earth."

Such are the outlines of the traditional history of Rome. For centuries this narrative was held sacred, being commemorated in poetry and repeated by successive historians. It is now impossible to determine whether Romulus and Remus are historical personages or not. And still these traditions reveal to us all that was imagined respecting the early history of Rome, when Livy wrote his renowned annals near the time of the birth of our Saviour.

For a year after the translation of Romulus the senators declined choosing a king, but divided themselves into committees of tens, each ten to exercise the supreme power for five

days. The people murmured so loudly at this that it was found to be necessary to choose a king. As the Romans and the Sabines each wished to furnish the sovereign, a compromise was made, by which it was agreed that the king should be a Sabine, but that the Romans should choose him. Numa Pompilius was elected, a man distinguished for justice, wisdom and piety. The reign of Numa Pompilius is represented as a continued triumph. For forty years he administered the government with probity and wisdom almost superhuman. The most scrupulous attention was devoted to the worship of the gods. A nymph Egeria, in her sacred grove, counseled the favored monarch respecting all his measures, and thus Rome rapidly increased in extent and riches; and peace and prosperity reigned undisturbed. At the age of four score Numa peacefully died, and was buried upon the banks of the Tiber.

After the death of Numa the senate again, for a time, exercised the supreme power, until they chose Tullus Hostilius for their king. A war soon broke out between the Romans and the Albans, and the latter marched to attack Rome, and encamped within five miles of the city. The leaders of the two armies, to save the effusion of blood, agreed to submit the question to the result of a conflict between three, to be selected on each side. The Romans chose three twin brothers, the Horatii. The Albans also chose three twin brothers, the Curiatii. Both armies were drawn up to witness the combat. Soon two of the Horatii were slain, and all three of the Curiatii were severely wounded. The last of the Horatii, who was unhurt, feigned terror and flight. With tottering steps the wounded Curiatii pursued him. As soon as they became separated in the chase, Horatius turned, and slew each one successively.

The Romans returned to their city in triumph, bearing at their head Horatius decorated with the armor of his three vanquished foes. As they approached the city the sister of Horatius came out to meet them. She had been betrothed to

one of the Curiatii, and a cloak, which she had embroidered for her lover with her own hands, was borne upon the shoulders of the victor. The maiden, overwhelmed with grief, burst into tears. The stern brother, intoxicated with triumph, plunged his sword to the hilt in his sister's heart, exclaiming,

"So perish the Roman maiden who shall weep for the enemy of her country."

For the crime he was condemned to die. From the decision of the court he appealed to the people. The people, in consideration of the victory he had gained for them, voted a pardon. But as innocent blood had been shed, which, by the Roman law, required atonement, they appropriated a certain sum of money to defray the expense of sacrifices which were forever after to be offered to the gods by members of the house of the Horatii.

The Albans were now in subjection to the Romans; but as they did not honestly fulfill their pledge, Tullus, by guile, seized their king, tore him to pieces between two chariots, destroyed the city of Alba, and removed all the Albans to Rome. The hill Caelius was assigned as their dwelling place. But Tullus, by his neglect of religion, offended the gods. A plague was sent upon the people, and Tullus himself was severely stricken. Still he did not repent, and Jupiter sent a bolt of lightning upon the house of Tullus, and he was consumed in the conflagration of his dwelling. This judgment taught the Romans that they must choose a king of religious character if they would hope for prosperity. They chose, therefore, a grandson of Numa, a young man by the name of Ancus Marcius, who had established a reputation of unquestioned piety. For twenty-three years Ancus reigned in prosperity, and the Roman people, incited by his example, scrupulously observed the ceremonies of divine worship. Such are the legends, combining fact and fiction which have taken the place of the lost history of Rome.

But we do not yet enter upon the period of authentic his-

tory. We must continue, groping along guided only by the bewildering light of tradition. During the reign of Ancus Marcius, a wealthy Etruscan came to Rome, to take up his residence in the attractive city. He received the name of Lucius Tarquinius. As he drew near the city in his chariot, with his wife Tanaquil sitting by his side, an eagle plucked his cap from his head and soared away with it into the clouds, then, returning from his flight, he replaced the cap upon the head of the traveler. This was deemed a good omen. Tarquinius, a sagacious, energetic man, encouraged by this indication of the favor of the gods, consecrated his great wealth to public utility, and so won the affections of the people that, upon the death of Ancus he was, with great unanimity elected king. He proved equally skilled in the arts of war and of peace, enlarging, by his conquests, the Roman territory, and greatly promoting the internal improvements of his realms. His reign was long, and almost miraculously prosperous. There was in his household a very handsome young man of remarkably attractive character. His bearing was such that many deemed him the son of a god. This young man, whose name was Servius Tullius, so won the heart of the king, that he promised him his daughter in marriage. The sons of Ancus, alarmed lest this favorite should gain the crown, hired two shepherds to assassinate Tarquin, intending thus to prevent him from conferring the crown upon Tullius. Effectually they accomplished their work, splitting open his brain with a hatchet. But, notwithstanding this assassination, through the instrumentality of the king's wife, the young favorite, Servius Tullius, obtained the throne, and the two sons of Ancus were compelled to flee to a foreign land.

Servius Tullius proved a humane and able monarch, consecrating his energies to the promotion of the welfare of the people. The arrogance of the patricians he repelled, and added greatly to the embellishments of Rome, and to the general prosperity of the citizens. The masses of the people, conse-