

quently, rallied around him. The nobles, or patricians as they were then called, were bitterly hostile to his democratic sway. He established laws based on equal rights, and, to protect the people from despotism, decreed that after his death there should no longer be a king, but that the supreme executive should thereafter be placed in the hands of two men to be annually chosen by the people.

Servius had two daughters, but no son. One of these daughters, Tullia, was a very famous woman, and she married Lucius, one of the sons of king Tarquinius. Tullia and Lucius plotted with the nobles who were eager for the overthrow of the king, and taking advantage of the season of harvest, when most of the common people were in the fields, they caused the assassination of Servius Tullius. Lucius Tarquinius, supported by the nobles, with blood-stained hands, ascended the throne, as is generally supposed, five hundred and thirty-five years before the birth of Christ.

The administration of the tyrant Tarquinius was as execrable as were the means by which he attained his power. A guard of armed men ever surrounded him, while he mercilessly plundered the people, banishing and beheading those who excited his displeasure. To secure renown in subsequent ages, he built a magnificent temple upon the Capitoline hill, consecrated to Jupiter.

During his reign a strange, weird woman is reported to have appeared before him offering to sell, at a stipulated price, nine books of prophecies, written by the Sibyl of Cumæ. The king declined the purchase, and the woman threw three of the books into the fire, and then demanded the same price for the six which she had asked for the nine. This offer being contemptuously rejected, she threw three more into the fire, and then demanded the whole price for the remaining three. The king, apprehensive that the sacred books might thus be entirely destroyed, purchased those which were left, when the woman disappeared and was seen no more. The

books were placed in a stone chest and deposited in a vault under the capitol, where a guard of two men was stationed over them by day and by night.

Under the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, as he is usually called, the laws which Servius had enacted for the protection of the common people, were abrogated. The nobles were reinstated in their exclusive privileges, and the plebeians toiled in penury, hunger, and degradation. Like beasts of burden, they were driven to construct the great works of Rome, rearing temples, digging canals, and forming roads. Still fable is so blended with history in the narrative of his reign, that it is found impossible to detach truth from fiction. It is certain, however, that under the sway of this tyrant, Rome made great progress in military power and in the extent of her dominions. As Tarquinius was waging war against the Rutulians, and besieging the city of Ardea, which was but sixteen miles from Rome, one night his eldest son, Sextus Tarquinius, and Colatinus, a Roman noble, with several other young men of the army, were sitting in their tent, inflamed with wine, in midnight carousals, when a dispute arose respecting the comparative beauty and virtue of their wives. To settle the question they agreed immediately to make a visit in company to each of their homes. Mounting their horses, they rode instantly to Rome, though the night was far advanced, and sought the ladies in question. Some of them were at brilliant parties, some indulging in private domestic luxury, but the wife of Colatinus, whose name was Lucretia, was surrounded by her maids, working at the loom. Lucretia, by unanimous consent, was declared to be the worthiest and most beautiful lady.

The rare loveliness of Lucretia and her modest deportment inflamed Sextus Tarquinius with a guilty passion. A few days after he called at her house again. She received him hospitably as the son of the king and the friend of her husband, and provided him with lodgings for the night. At

midnight he arose, and stealthily proceeding to her chamber awoke her, and with a sword presented at her breast, threatened her with instant death if she should resist him. Preferring death to dishonor, the virtuous Lucretia remained inexorable to his demands. He then declared that if she did not yield he would first kill her, then kill one of his slaves and lay him in the bed by her side, and report that he had discovered him there and slain them both. By this threat, which would consign her name to eternal infamy, Lucretia was vanquished. The next morning Sextus Tarquinius returned to the camp, exulting in his brutal victory.

Lucretia, overwhelmed with anguish, sent for her husband and her father, and informed them of the outrage.

"I am not guilty," said the noble woman, "yet must I share in the punishment of this deed, lest any should think that they may be false to their husbands and live."

Then drawing a poniard from beneath her robe she plunged it into her heart. A young man, Lucius Junius Brutus, was present, who had accompanied Colatinus. His father had been put to death by the tyrant Tarquinius. This young Brutus, who was very rich, had for some time feigned insanity, lest he should also share his father's fate. Brutus drew the poniard from the wound, and, brandishing it in the air, exclaimed:

"Be witness, ye gods, that from this moment I proclaim myself the avenger of the chaste Lucretia's cause. By this blood I swear that I will visit this deed upon king Tarquinius and all his accursed race; neither shall any man hereafter be king in Rome, lest he do the like wickedness."

Each one present, in his turn, took the bloody dagger and repeated the oath. They then carried the body of Lucretia to the forum, and an immense and enraged concourse collected around it. The whole city was in a tumult. Tarquinius, who was with his troops at the camp before Ardea, set out with an armed band to quell the insurrection. But the populace

closed the gates against him, and the senate issued a decree banishing him and his family forever from the city. The unanimity in the banishment of the Tarquins was so entire, that it was in vain for the king to attempt any resistance. He apparently submitted to his fate, but only sought to gain time that he might recover his lost power.

The people now resolved to reestablish the laws of the good king Servius, and abolishing the monarchy, to choose annually two men who should be intrusted with the supreme power. The choice fell first upon Brutus and Colatinus, the husband of Lucretia. Soon the exiled Tarquinius succeeded in forming a conspiracy, and, by bribes, secured the cooperation of the two sons of Brutus. The two guilty young men, Titus and Tiberius, were arrested and brought before the tribunal of their father. With Roman sternness of justice, though his heart was bleeding, he, in accordance with the laws, doomed them both to be scourged and then to be beheaded. The sentence was executed before the eyes of Brutus, who, apparently unmoved, witnessed their punishment.

The ancient Roman monarchy, after a continuance of two hundred and forty-five years, terminated with Tarquinius Superbus. A republican government, or, as it was called, the Roman commonwealth, commenced under Brutus and Colatinus. These two magistrates were called consuls. The commonwealth is supposed to have commenced five hundred and forty-five years before Christ.

Tarquinius, frustrated in his conspiracy, now resorted to a coalition. He engaged a neighboring tribe, the Veians, to assist him, and with a considerable army advanced toward Rome. Brutus, at the head of the Roman cavalry, went out to meet him. Aruns, a son of Tarquinius, led his father's cavalry. Seeing Brutus advancing, he spurred his horse in front of his ranks, defying the consul to single combat. They met and both fell dead together. A bloody battle ensued, in

which eleven thousand perished upon each side, but the Romans remained in possession of the field.

Tarquinius, defeated but not dismayed, engaged another tribe, the Etrurians, to espouse his cause, and shortly after marched again upon Rome with a still more numerous army, led by Porsenna, king of this Etrurian tribe. Publius, by the death of his colleague, being left in supreme command, and deeming the state in imminent danger, commenced building a citadel upon the hill Velia,* which looks down upon the forum. The people, jealous of their liberties, were alarmed, and began to murmur, saying :

"Publius wishes to become a king. He is erecting this citadel that he may dwell there with his guards and bring us into subjection."

Publius complained bitterly of the injustice thus done him. To remove all suspicion, he caused a law to be enacted declaring that whosoever should attempt to make himself king should become thus outlawed, and any one might lawfully slay him. This satisfied the populace, and they gave him in consequence the title of Poplicola, or *the peoples' friend*. An assembly of the people was soon convened, and Spurius Lucretius, the father of the sainted Lucretia, was chosen consul in the place of Brutus. But the venerable old man was, at the time of his election, in the decline of life, and in a few days he died. Marcus Horatius was then chosen in his room. It is recorded as a worthy act of the consul Marcus, that as he was dedicating to Jupiter the temple which had been erected on the Capitoline hill, he was suddenly informed that his son was dead. But so intently was the father engrossed with the religious solemnities, that he simply replied, "Then let them carry him out and bury him," thus honoring the gods above his son.

The banished king Tarquinius, soon marched with a vast

* The visitor to Rome will find the Velian hill near the Palatine. The Via Sacra passes over it and the Arch of Titus stands upon its summit.

Etruscan army against Rome, and drove the Romans, who had advanced beyond the Tiber to meet him, back into the city. The Romans destroyed the wooden bridge by which they effected their retreat, and thus cut off the pursuit of the Etruscans. The Etruscans commenced a vigorous siege of the city. A young Roman, Caius Mucius, resolved to free his country from the impending peril by the assassination of the invading Etruscan king Porsenna. In disguise he penetrated the hostile camp and plunged a dagger into the heart of an Etruscan officer, whom he mistook for the king. He was arrested and threatened with the most excruciating torture unless he would answer every question. The young man thrust his arm into a fire which was burning upon an altar, and held it immovable until it was consumed by the fierce flame.

"See now," said he, "how little I care for your torments."

The king, amazed at such fortitude, looked upon the young man admiringly, and said :

"Go thy way, for thou hast injured thyself more than me. Thou art a brave man, and I send thee back to Rome, unpunished and free."

Caius replied, "For this thou shalt get more of my secret than all thy tortures could have extorted from me. Three hundred noble youths of Rome have bound themselves by oath to take thy life. Mine was the first attempt. The others will, each in his turn, lie in wait for thee. I warn thee, therefore, to look to thyself well."

Porsenna was alarmed, and proposed peace on terms which, though humiliating, were eagerly embraced by the Romans. Ten noble young men and ten noble maidens were surrendered to the Etruscans as a pledge that the peace should be faithfully kept. One of these maidens was named Clœlia. She encouraged her companions to escape from the Etruscan camp, and being pursued, as they reached the Tiber, they plunged into the stream and swam to the opposite shore. But the Romans proud of unblemished faith, sent them all back.

Porsenna, marveling more than ever at the courage of the Roman maidens, and the honor of the Roman Senate, gave Clælia her liberty, and not only sent her home free, but allowed her also to choose a certain number of the young men to accompany her. She selected those of the most tender age, and, thus escorted, returned to Rome. Caius was rewarded, by the Roman Senate, with an extensive grant of land; and a statue was erected to Clælia on a conspicuous point of the sacred way.

Tarquinius, seeing there was no hope of aid from Porsenna, turned to the Latins, south of Rome, and soon succeeded in engaging thirty cities to espouse his cause. The Sabines, occupying the banks of the Upper Tiber, also united with the Latins, and Rome was again seriously imperiled. The crisis demanded energetic action, and the nobles, taking advantage of it, appointed one of the consuls, Titus Larcus, *Master of the People*, and invested him with dictatorial power. They hoped, by means of this dictatorship, to regain their lost prerogatives. The hostile Latin force was encamped on the banks Lake Regillus, but a few miles south from Rome. Tarquinius and his son relied upon this army as their last hope. The Romans and Latins had been, for many years, at peace, and intermarriages had been frequent between them. Before hostilities commenced it was mutually agreed, between the contending parties, that the Latin women, with their virgin daughters, might leave their Roman homes and return to their countrymen, and that the Roman women, who had married Latins, might leave their Latin relatives and return to Rome if they wished. But all the Latin women, excepting two, remained in Rome; and all the Roman women, without exception, took their daughters and returned to the homes of their fathers.

A great battle was now fought on the banks of Lake Regillus. Livy gives this battle the date of 499 years before Christ. In reference to this battle Niebuhr says:

“It was a conflict between heroes, like those in the Iliad

All the heroes meet hand to hand, and by them the victory is thrown now into one scale and now into another, while the troops fight without any effect.”

Two divine heroes, Castor and Pollux, in the most momentous juncture of the bloody fray, are reported to have appeared on milk-white steeds, and, sweeping down whole battalions of the Latins, to have given a signal victory to the Romans. The son and the son-in-law of Tarquinius were both slain upon that fatal field; and Tarquinius himself, in despair, fled to Cumæ, a city of the Greeks, where he subsequently died.

The chronology of this period is in a state of inextricable confusion. Approaches only to accuracy can be attained. These poetical stories have undoubtedly a foundation in fact, but how much is mere embellishment can never now be known. Some of the laws enacted at this time continued for ages, and were barbaric and inhuman in the extreme. A creditor, unable to collect his debt, was authorized to arrest his debtor and bring him before the court. If no one would be his security the poor debtor was imprisoned for sixty days, with a chain weighing fifteen pounds upon his person, and fed with a pound of grain daily. During these sixty days of imprisonment, he was brought before the court on three successive market days, and the amount of his debt declared, to see if any one would come forward for his release. If, on the third day, no friend appeared, he was either put to death or sold into slavery. If there were several creditors they might, at their option, instead of selling their debtor into slavery, hew his body to pieces.

By the banishment of Tarquinius Superbus the Romans had exchanged the monarchy for an aristocracy. But the commons soon found that this aristocracy was as insupportable as the reign of the kings. Another revolution ensued, the particulars of which are sought for in vain. The revolution assumed the character of a servile insurrection, the commons endeavoring in a body to escape from Rome, like the Israelites

from Egypt, and to establish a new nation for themselves. The patricians, alarmed by the movement, came to terms, and appeased the commons by a grant of privileges which they had never enjoyed before. The hill upon which these conditions were ratified, was forever after called the sacred hill.

By the pacification, adopted on the sacred hill, it was agreed that five officers called tribunes, which number was subsequently increased to ten, should be chosen by the people, and that they should, in addition to other privileges, have the power of a *veto* over all the acts of the senate. This was a signal popular triumph, and the commons were thus gradually elevated to share with the patricians the honors and the emoluments of their common country. The conflict, however, between the plebeians and the patricians was continued for a long time.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRETORSHIP, DECEMVIRATE, AND CONSULATE.

FROM 493 B. C. TO 433 B. C.

STORY OF CORIOLANUS.—APPOINTMENT OF A DICTATOR.—ACHIEVEMENTS OF CINCINNATUS.—WAR WITH THE ÆQUIANS AND VOLSCIANI.—THE SOLDIERS REFUSE TO FIGHT.—INFAMOUS CONDUCT OF THE NOBLES.—APPIUS CLAUDIUS.—VIRGINIA CLAIMED AS A FUGITIVE SLAVE.—SLAIN BY HER FATHER.—INSURRECTION OF THE PEOPLE.—ITS SUCCESS.—CONSPIRACY OF THE YOUNG NOBLES.—KESO, SON OF CINCINNATUS.—CINCINNATUS CHOSEN CONSUL.—CHANGE IN HIS CHARACTER.—AVENTINE HILL TAKEN BY THE COMMONS.—IMPEACHMENT OF APPIUS CLAUDIUS.—THE POPULAR CAUSE TRIUMPHANT.—THE DECEMVIRI REJECTED AND EXPELLED.—INTRODUCTION OF THE CONSULATE.

THE dictator was appointed for six months only; but during that time his power was absolute. The revolt of the commons, and the compromise into which they entered with the patricians, seem to have restored affairs to their ancient order. We now begin slowly to emerge from the mists of fable into the clearer light of authentic history. The tribunes continued the guardians of popular rights, while the senate was ever vigilant to extend the prerogatives of the nobles. From this time we must date the struggle between the two orders, the plebeians contending for equality of rights, and the patricians for aristocratic privilege. One Spurius Cassius, who was now consul, or pretor, as the office was then called, formed an alliance with the Latin confederacy, which was confirmed by the most solemn rites.

The ancient annals here introduce a story which is characteristic of the times, though its historical verity is not sustained by subsequent research. It is said that there was a famine in Rome, caused by the revolt of the people, who, in