

mous. The simple transference of the island of Sicily from the government of Carthage to that of Rome, cost Rome seven hundred ships of war, and Carthage five hundred. It is estimated that in this long struggle five hundred thousand men perished by sword, shipwreck, and pestilence. Carthage was humiliated, not crushed, and the Carthaginians burned with desires for vengeance. Rome, elated, was far from satisfied with this vast addition to her domain, and was only stimulated with still more intense desires for conquest. There was continually developed between these two great republics an instinctive hostility, which rendered it inevitable that conflicts would be incessantly renewed, until the one or the other should wholly perish.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE PASSAGE OF THE ALPS BY HANNIBAL.

FROM 241 B. C. TO 217 B. C.

INVASION OF SPAIN BY CARTHAGE.—WAR RENEWED BETWEEN ROME AND CARTHAGE.—NEW GAULISH INVASION.—ANNIHILATION OF THE GAULISH ARMY.—CONQUEST OF CISALPINE GAUL.—HANNIBAL CROSSES THE RHONE.—PASSAGE OF THE ALPS.—INVASION OF ITALY.—BATTLES ON THE TIGRINO AND THE PO.—DISCOMFITURE OF THE ROMANS.—HANNIBAL ENTERS TUSCANY.—GREAT BATTLE OF THRASYMENE.—ANNIHILATION OF THE ROMAN ARMY.—COMMEMORATED BY BYRON.

AFTER the close of the first Punic war there was peace with Carthage for twenty-two years. Rome was now undisputed mistress of the Italian peninsula, and of the island of Sicily. The early years of this period of peace were devoted to internal improvements. The island of Sardinia, which had for some time been in possession of Carthage, was in a state of revolt against that government. The insurgents entreated Rome to espouse their cause. She did so, and, hunting up some fancied grievances, declared war against Carthage. Hamilcar, not yet prepared to renew the strife, purchased peace by the surrender of Sardinia to Rome.

Hamilcar was at this time gathering his forces for a war-like expedition against Spain. In view of the enterprise solemn sacrifices were offered to propitiate the gods. As Hamilcar was performing these rights of superstition, he suddenly requested all the attendant officers to retire, and calling his little son Hannibal to his side, a boy then nine years of age, led him up to the altar, and offered to take him to Spain if he would give his solemn vow never, so long as he lived, to make peace with the Romans. Hannibal eagerly placed his hand upon the sacrifice and took the oath. Faithfully he

redeemed his pledge. This scene produced an impression on the child's mind which was never effaced, and which nerved him to unswerving purpose and to energy of action which has won the admiration of the world.

The Romans watched this embassy to Spain with much uneasiness, fearful that the success of the Carthaginians might so strengthen them as to disturb their own supremacy. The remonstrances of Rome were so persistent and menacing, that at length Hanno, one of the Carthaginian ambassadors, exclaimed to the Roman senate impatiently and boldly:

"If you will not make peace with us, then give us back Sardinia and Sicily; for we yielded them to you, not to purchase a brief truce, but your lasting friendship."

Rather reluctantly Rome consented to the ratification of amity with Carthage. Still they kept their armies disciplined by sending them on military expeditions to Sardinia, to Corsica, and to Cisalpine Gaul. Many of these semi-barbaric people were taken captive and transported to Italy, where they were sold as slaves. Twelve years after the end of the first Punic war, the Romans sent a body of troops across the Ionian gulf to Illyria, as the western coast of Greece was then called. This expedition consisted of a consular army of twenty-two thousand men, conveyed by a fleet of two hundred quinqueremes. They landed almost unopposed, and sweeping all opposition before them, ravaged the country at their pleasure. The Illyrians were soon subjugated and their country placed under the rule of Demetrius, a Greek, appointed by the Romans.

Hamilcar, the renowned general of Carthage, was now sweeping Spain with his victorious armies, and had already reached the Tagus, when he was slain in battle, and was succeeded by his son-in-law Hasdrubal. This distinguished man, alike skilled in the arts of war and of peace, devoted his energies to the consolidation of his conquests, and to winning the friendship of the Spaniards. He was a man of commanding

stature, and of very courteous bearing, and was eminently fitted to obtain an ascendancy over barbaric minds. In his efforts he was signally successful, and many of the native Spanish princes crowded around him seeking his alliance.

The Romans, with an anxious eye, watched the progress of his conquests, and the vast increase of his power; but just then Rome was threatened with a Gaulish invasion, and the senate deemed it not prudent to provoke the Carthaginians to unite with the Gauls. In the early spring of the year 226 B. C. the Transalpine Gauls crossed the Alps, and uniting with their brethren, the Cisalpine Gauls, commenced their march for the invasion of Italy. They advanced in such strength that Rome was thoroughly aroused, and the most vigorous measures of resistance were adopted. A careful list was made of every individual capable of bearing arms throughout the Roman states. Active armies and armies of reserve were organized. Immense magazines of provisions and military stores were collected, and the coöperation of allies was secured to assail the foe on the flanks and in the rear. The Cenomanians and Venetians, who occupied the region now called Venice and much of Lombardy, presented such a menacing attitude to the Gauls, that they were compelled to leave a large portion of their force to protect their own territory. Still they commenced their march with an invading army of fifty thousand foot, and twenty thousand war chariots.

There were two roads leading from Cisalpine Gaul to the heart of Italy. Both of these roads the Romans barricaded, one with an army of Romans and allies amounting to about sixty thousand men, and the other by an army of fifty-four thousand; while Rome itself was protected by a reserve force of over fifty thousand troops. The whole available military force of the Roman republic, should it be found necessary to resort to a *levy en masse*, amounted at that time to seven hundred and fifty thousand men.

With music and banners the warlike Gauls, sanguine of

success, pressed along their march, and avoiding the two roads which the Romans had so carefully guarded, treaded the defiles of the Apennines, pouring through those solitudes, like torrents, into the valley of the Arno. Unopposed, they pressed along the banks of this sunny stream, and then, turning to the right, entered the heart of Etruria. They had thus skillfully eluded two Roman armies, fearlessly leaving them in their rear.

As soon as informed of this, both of these armies, in great alarm, commenced pursuit of the foe, who were rushing upon Rome. One of these armies, consisting of fifty thousand men, under a Roman pretor, soon overtook the invaders. The Gauls turned upon them like wolves at bay, and, in a short conflict, routed them entirely. For a few hours they delayed pursuit, to plunder the Roman camp, and then, encumbered with booty, commenced chasing the fugitives. After the march of a few leagues they found that the routed troops had rallied behind the solid columns of the other Roman army, now consisting of sixty-seven thousand men, under the command of the consul, L. Emilius.

The Gauls, enriched with immense plunder, thought it not expedient to hazard another battle, but determined to carry their prisoners and their booty to their own country; and then, having increased and recruited their battalions, to commence their march anew. As the Roman armies were between them and the Apennines, cutting off their retreat through the defiles of the mountains, they turned short to the left, and followed down the banks of a little stream called the Ombrone, to the shores of the sea. They then vigorously commenced their march homeward, over apparently an unobstructed path. But soon a new foe rose like an apparition before them—a foe as much astonished to see the Gauls as the Gauls were to see them.

One of the consuls, C. Regulus, had been on an expedition, with a large army, to Sardinia. He was now, in consequence

of the state of affairs at home, returning with his army. He had landed his troops at Pisa, to be ready to cooperate with the Roman forces in that region if necessary; but his services not being required, he was marching as rapidly as possible along the shore of the sea toward Rome. Thus unexpectedly the Gauls and the Romans came upon each other like two railroad trains in accidental collision.

There was nothing to do, of course, but to fight, retreat being out of the question for either of the parties. The battle had hardly begun when the Gauls were appalled by the clangor of Roman trumpets and the waving of Roman banners in their rear. It was the army of the enemy in eager pursuit. They were now between two armies. The massacre was soon finished, and the whole Gaulish host passed away in a wail of death. One of the Roman consuls, C. Regulus, was slain. But the other, L. Emilius, led his triumphant troops across the frontier into Gaul, and, with the savage license of war, killed, plundered, and destroyed in all directions. He then returned to Rome, where a magnificent triumph awaited him. The temple of the capitoline Jupiter was most richly ornamented with the treasures won in this campaign.

The Romans now determined upon the entire subjugation of Cisalpine Gaul; and for three years all their energies were devoted to the attainment of this end. Barbarians are not easily subdued, as we have often learned to our cost in our conflicts with the American Indians. But tribe after tribe was subjugated, and province after province was annexed. During all these wars and accessions the conflict was still continued between the patricians and plebeians. The aristocracy were ever urging measures to add to the dignity and the exclusiveness of the proprietors of the soil; while the people were watching with an eagle eye to curb the power of the nobles. At this time the celebrated military road, called the Flaminian Way, was constructed from Rome through the defiles of the Apennines, to the shores of the Adriatic. Flam-

inius, the censor, who constructed this road, administered the government with an impartial hand, opposing alike the assumptions of the aristocracy and the exactions of the populace.

The Carthaginians were still pressing the war in Spain, when Hasdrubal was assassinated in his tent; and the voice of the army, echoed back by the equally unanimous voice of Carthage, called Hannibal to the supreme power. With great energy the young general took the command, and in two campaigns made such rapid strides, that the Spaniards, in their alarm, sent to Rome for help. The Romans very gladly listened to their call, and sent an ambassador to Carthage, forbidding the Carthaginians to advance any further in the conquest of Spain.

"Twice in history," says Thomas Arnold, "has there been witnessed the struggle of the highest individual genius against the resources and institutions of a great nation, and in both cases the nation has been victorious. For seventeen years Hannibal strove against Rome; for sixteen years Napoleon Bonaparte strove against England. The efforts of the first ended in Zama; those of the second in Waterloo."

Hannibal now rises upon the theater of action as the great genius of the times; and for some years all the prominent interests of the world seem to revolve about his person. Hannibal was but twenty-six years of age when, upon the death of Hasdrubal, he took command of the Carthaginian army in Spain. On the eastern coast of the Spanish peninsula, near the Mediterranean shore, stood the important city of Saguntum. The unimportant town of Murviedro, about sixty miles north from Valencia, now occupies the spot upon which Saguntum once stood. Hannibal, defiant of the frowns of Rome, laid siege to this city, and after a conflict eight months in continuance, took it by storm. A large number of prisoners and an immense amount of booty fell into the hands of the conqueror.

As soon as Rome heard of the fall of Saguntum, two ambassadors were despatched to Carthage with a message of indignation, and to demand that Hannibal and all his generals should be given up to Rome, declaring that the attack upon Saguntum was a breach of the treaty of peace. The Carthaginians denied that the attack upon Saguntum was a violation of the treaty with Rome. But the Roman ambassadors, eager for war, were not in a mood to listen to reason. One of them, M. Fabius, rolling up his toga, held it out and insultingly said:

"Behold, here are peace and war; take which you please."

The Carthaginian judge, unintimidated, replied, "Give whichever thou wilt."

"Here, then," said Fabius, shaking out the folds of his toga, "we give you war." The Carthaginian counselors, roused by this defiance, shouted with one voice, "With all our hearts we welcome it."

The Roman ambassadors immediately left Carthage, and both parties prepared for war.

The energy of Hannibal was such, and the wisdom of his measures was so manifest, that, by general assent, rather than by any vote, the whole management of affairs was left in his hands. A large part of Spain had been conquered by the Carthaginians and Hannibal sent Spanish troops to garrison the fortresses of Carthage, and all the Carthaginian troops which could be raised were despatched across the sea to Spain. Ambassadors were sent to Gaul to explore the passes of the Alps, and to secure the coöperation of that warlike people in Hannibal's contemplated descent upon the plains of Italy.

With wonderful energy and promptness all these measures were prosecuted. The envoys to Gaul soon returned with the report that the Gauls were eager to unite with Carthage against Rome, and that though the natural difficulties of the passage of the Alps were great, they were by no means insuperable. Hannibal assembled his troops and thus addressed them:

"The Romans have demanded that I and my principal officers should be delivered up to them as malefactors. Soldiers, will you suffer such an indignity? The Gauls are holding out their arms to us, inviting us to come to them, and to assist them in avenging their manifold injuries. The country which we shall invade, so rich in corn, and wine, and oil, so full of flocks and herds, so covered with flourishing cities, will be the richest prize that could be offered by the gods to reward your valor."

This speech was greeted by the huzzas of the soldiers, and with shouts of enthusiasm they heard the day designated when they were to commence their march. For eighteen years Hannibal had been longing for this event. The memory of the oath he had taken to his father to wage eternal warfare against Rome ever inspired him. Like all truly great men, Hannibal had high conceptions of a Supreme Being who controlled human events; and his first impulse was to seek that divine aid in his great enterprise. Accompanied by his staff, he went to one of the temples of the supreme God, offered sacrifices and fervently implored the assistance of Heaven.

It was now late in May, and Hannibal, leaving his younger brother Hasdrubal in command of the conquered provinces in Spain, placed himself at the head of his army of one hundred thousand men, with thirty-seven elephants, and commenced his march along the shores of the Mediterranean, toward the Pyrenees. Hannibal was now twenty-seven years of age, and he consecrated himself to the enterprise before him with an entireness of devotion and a recklessness of self-sacrifice which the world has, perhaps, never seen surpassed, and has rarely seen equaled.

It was now the 218th year before the birth of Christ. Cornelius Scipio and Sempronius Longus were Roman consuls. Scipio took a large army and sailed with a fleet of transports and fifty quinqueremes for the Rhone, that he might make a stand upon the eastern bank of that broad, deep, rapid stream,

and prevent the passage of the Carthaginian army. Longus, with a still larger fleet, convoyed by one hundred and sixty quinqueremes, sailed for Sicily, intending thence to pass over into Africa, and carry the war to the walls of Carthage. A third Roman army was also raised and stationed in Cisalpine Gaul, to be ready for any emergencies. This army was placed under the command of the pretor Lucius Manlius Vulso.

Hannibal crossed the Ebro, then called the Iberus, unopposed. This stream had been considered the boundary between the Carthaginian and Roman conquests. As some of the tribes between the Ebro and the Pyrenees, a distance of about one hundred and fifty miles, remained friendly to the Romans, Hannibal thought it prudent to take military possession of the whole region, that his line of communication might not be interrupted. This caused delay, several battles, and a heavy loss of men.

When he arrived at the Pyrenees and entered those gloomy defiles, to march through them apparently to the ends of the earth, many of the soldiers were alarmed and began to murmur. One division of the army, consisting of ten thousand men, refused to advance. Hannibal, with the tact of a consummate general, assembled them in the presence of his whole army and saying that he wished for no cowards to accompany him on his expedition, dismissed them ignominiously, and sent them back to their homes. This act redoubled the ardor of those who remained.

The Carthaginian army, now amounting to but fifty thousand foot and nine thousand horse, successfully threaded the defiles of the Pyrenees, and emerged upon the plains of southern France, then called Gaul. Marching along the shores of the gulf of Lyons for two hundred miles, and encountering no opposition from the tribes through whom he passed Hannibal reached the Rhone, near the present small village of Roque-moure, about twenty miles above the city of Avignon. The river was here about a quarter of a mile in width, gliding

through one of the most beautiful, picturesque, and delightful regions on the globe. There were no bridges, and the banks of the barbaric stream were covered with forests. The spears and banners of a hostile host were seen upon the eastern shore, giving indubitable evidence that the passage of the stream was not to be accomplished without a conflict. Scipio had just landed his force at the mouth of the eastern branch of the river, and having no idea that Hannibal could have advanced so far, had leisurely encamped, and was recruiting his troops sixty miles below the spot where the Carthaginians were preparing to cross the stream. He, however, sent out a reconnoitering party of three hundred horsemen to ascend the river, to learn what they could respecting the movements of the enemy.

Hannibal immediately seized or purchased every boat which could be found on the western bank of the Rhone, and employed all the mechanical force of his army in cutting down timber, digging out canoes, and constructing rafts. The foe, upon the opposite bank, with no weapons but arrows and javelins, could not obstruct his works. In two days he was prepared to attempt the passage. By night he secretly dispatched a small but very efficient force up the river twenty miles, there to cross, and then to march noiselessly down through the forest on the opposite shore, and take a position, to be ready to attack the foe in the rear. As soon as they were in position they were to build a fire, the smoke of which would be a signal to Hannibal.

The movement proved an entire success, and soon a column of smoke, rising through the distant forest, informed Hannibal of the arrival of his detachment; and all things being in readiness, the army was instantly put in motion. The Gauls, eagerly watching, lined the banks, quite confident of being able to repel their assailants. As the boats and rafts neared the eastern shore, and the tempest of war was at its height, the air being filled with arrows and javelins, and the

cry of battle resounding along the river banks, the Carthaginian soldiers, with hideous yells, rushed from their ambush, and assailed the Gauls in the rear. For a few moments there was a scene of awful confusion, and then the Gauls, bewildered and in dismay, broke and fled. The rout was entire, and before the next morning the whole army of Hannibal, elephants and all, were encamped on the eastern bank of the Rhone. Just at this time a delegation of the Cisalpine Gauls, that is the Gauls from the Roman side of the Alps, arrived in the Carthaginian camp, to welcome their allies, and to proffer aid.

The arrival of this embassy encouraged the soldiers exceedingly, as it proved that the passage of the Alps was practicable, and that they would meet friends upon the Italian side. Hannibal gathered his army around him, and after addressing them in cheering words, to which his troops responded with most enthusiastic cheers, he offered sacrifices to God, returning thanks for the prosperity which had thus far been vouchsafed him, and imploring the continuance of divine favor.

In the mean time Scipio's scouts had fallen in with a small party of the Carthaginians, and a skirmish, sanguinary though indecisive, had ensued. Hannibal, paying no attention to the foe at the mouth of the river, immediately put his army in vigorous motion, advancing north up the eastern bank of the Rhone. Scipio, also, learning from his reconnoitering party the position of the Carthaginians, commenced a pursuit, following up also the left side of the river. When he arrived at the spot where the Carthaginians had crossed, he found it deserted, Hannibal having been already gone three days. It was in vain to follow a foe so alert. Scipio, therefore, decided to return as rapidly as possible to Italy; his route, by water, being the chord of a circle, of which Hannibal was necessitated to traverse by land in long circuit, the arc. He accordingly retraced his steps to the mouth of the Rhone, and,