

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGNS OF HANNIBAL

FROM 217 B. C. TO 208 B. C.

DEVASTATING MARCH OF HANNIBAL.—COMPOSITION OF HIS ARMY.—TERROR IN ROME.—WINTER QUARTERS IN APULIA.—DISSENSIONS IN THE ROMAN ARMY.—THE BATTLE OF CANNÆ.—ANNIHILATION OF THE ROMAN ARMY.—INCREASING PERIL OF HANNIBAL.—RETREAT FROM TIFATA.—MARCH UPON ROME.—SIEGE OF CAPUA.—SLAVERY OF CAPTIVES.—THE MARCH OF HASDRUBAL.—PASSAGE OF THE ALPS.—NEW VICTORIES OF HANNIBAL.—DEATH OF HASDRUBAL AND DESTRUCTION OF HIS ARMY.—THE HEAD OF HASDRUBAL.—EXULTATION IN ROME.—DESPAIR OF HANNIBAL.

HANNIBAL tarried for a short time in the defile of Thrasymene to bury his dead, and to take care of his wounded. He sought earnestly among the slain for the body of the Roman consul Flaminius, wishing to give it honorable burial; but the body could not be found. Again resuming his march, he crossed the head waters of the Tiber, and entered the plains of Umbria. Scattering his forces over this rich country he devastated it without mercy. The war-cry of the Gaulish barbarians, in alliance with the Carthaginians, echoed along the banks of the Tiber, and the terrified people, abandoning their homes, fled to the mountains. The army of Hannibal presented a singular conglomeration of diverse people. There were slingers from the Balearian islands, Spanish foot-soldiers from the mountains of Grenada, with their picturesque attire of white jackets and scarlet edgings, African infantry with their long and slender lances and polished shields, wild Numidians, on their scraggy horses, without saddles or bridles, scouring the plains with whoop and halloo; and there were Gauls, barbaric and skin-clad, fierce as the wolves which howled in the caves of their forests. Advancing to Spoleto,

Hannibal found the walls so high and so well guarded that he could not take the city by assault. Not wishing to lose time in a siege, he crossed the Apennines to the shores of the Adriatic and followed along the coast, plundering the region of property of every description, and loading his army with more booty than they could bear along with them. The soldiers reveled in such abundance of all good things, that it was reported that they even bathed their horses in old wine. Every Roman they met, capable of bearing arms, was by the order of Hannibal put to death.

When the intelligence of the battle of Thrasymene, and of the advance of the Carthaginians reached Rome, the dismay was inexpressible. "Our colder temperaments," says Thomas Arnold, "scarcely enable us to conceive the effect of such tidings on the lively feelings of the people of the south, or to imagine to ourselves the cries, the tears, the hands uplifted in prayer or clenched in rage, the confused sounds of ten thousand voices, giving utterance, with breathless rapidity, to their feelings of eager interest, of terror, of grief, or of fury. All the northern gates of the city were beset with crowds of wives and mothers, imploring every fresh fugitive from the fatal field for some tidings of those most dear to them."

The senate was immediately called together and continued in session day and night for several days. No one thought of peace. A dictator, Q. Fabius, was promptly appointed. He was a member of one of the old aristocratic families, and a very devout man, according to the Roman system of religion. One of his first measures was to decree that every animal, fit for sacrifice, born between the first of March and the thirteenth of April of that year, should be offered upon the altars to Jupiter. Prayers resounded in all the temples, and new temples were reared. The whole population of Rome was convened day after day to attend upon religious rites.

At the same time the most vigorous measures were

adopted for active warfare. The fortifications of Rome were strengthened. Bridges were broken down and roads destroyed, to arrest the advance of the enemy. In the line of Hannibal's anticipated march, the inhabitants were ordered to flee to the walled towns, and the country was laid waste. These measures were quite effectual in retarding the march of Hannibal upon Rome. Fabius, wielding the energies of dictatorial authority, soon found himself at the head of an army more powerful in numbers than that of Hannibal; but conscious that his inexperienced troops could not cope with the veteran legions of the Carthaginians, he prudently avoided giving battle. Keeping ever at a distance of five or six miles from Hannibal he encamped in strong positions, and watched the movements of his foe.

The skillful measures of Fabius soon involved Hannibal in many embarrassments. Finding himself hedged in by hills, whose defiles were guarded by the Romans, he ordered all his Roman prisoners, whose presence endangered the safety of his army, in cold blood to be slain. Then, with characteristic cunning, he selected two thousand stout oxen, and bound firmly to their horns, with wire, fagots of dry wood, dipped in resin. Two hours before midnight these oxen were driven to the hills and the fagots set on fire. The animals, thus cruelly tortured, ran wild and bellowing in all directions. The leaves and branches of the forest were soon blazing; and the Romans, astonished by the tumult and the strange spectacle, supposing that the Carthaginians were coming down from the heights to attack them, incautiously left one of the passes unguarded, and Hannibal quietly marched through the defile to a place of safety.

The sagacious warrior, leaving his shamed and baffled foes behind, strode onward, marking his path with devastation and ruin. The summer was now far advanced, and Hannibal had overrun a large portion of Italy. Still not a single walled city had as yet fallen into his hands. He had ravaged the

plains of Italy, but had by no means conquered the Romans. It was now necessary for him to retire to winter quarters. He accordingly returned, burdened with plunder, to his old encampment in Apulia. All Italy could not afford more pleasant winter quarters than those which Hannibal selected upon the edge of a fertile plain, beneath the protection of a range of mountains. Before him were boundless fields waving with harvests, and behind him wide pastures upon the mountain sides, presenting rich forage for his horses, while sweeping forests afforded him an ample supply of wood. There was a small walled town in the vicinity of the proposed encampment. Hannibal took it, put all its inhabitants to the sword, and leaving the walls and houses standing, used the buildings as a great magazine for his army; while the soldiers were quartered in an entrenched camp around the walls. Having made these arrangements, he kept one-third of his soldiers to defend the camp, while the remaining two-thirds were despatched in all directions to plunder the surrounding country.

Loud outcries arose at Rome against the dictator Fabius; but he, with imperturbable patience, pursued his measures against the formidable and sagacious foe. Following Hannibal into Apulia, he encamped upon impregnable heights, and watched for opportunities to harass the Carthaginians, without exposing himself to the perils of a battle, for he was fully conscious that his inexperienced troops were not able to cope with the veteran warriors arrayed against them. Minucius, master of the horse, was opposed to the cautious measures of Fabius, and was eager for a more vigorous prosecution of the war. His cause was espoused by the eager popular party at Rome, while the more cautious aristocratic party rallied around Fabius. After violent contention a bill was carried, making the two generals, Fabius and Minucius, equal in command. The army was consequently divided

between them, and they encamped about a mile distant from each other, each taking one half of the military force.

Hannibal was quite elated with this evidence of want of coöperation, and eagerly availed himself of it. By a skillful stratagem he allured the self-confident Minucius into an engagement, and then falling upon him with five thousand troops, which had been placed in ambush, he would have cut his army entirely to pieces had not Fabius magnanimously come to his rescue. Minucius, with rare generosity, publicly acknowledged that Fabius had saved him from destruction, and relinquishing his separate command, placed himself and his division under the control of the more wary and sagacious dictator.

In the mean time, at Rome, party politics ran high. There was a new election of consuls, and the plebeian party succeeded in electing C. Terentius Varro, a very energetic, eloquent man, who had raised himself to distinction, from the humble condition of a butcher's boy. The aristocracy succeeded in choosing one of the consuls of their own number, in the person of L. Emilius Paulus. The winter and the spring passed away with no military operations of importance. Suddenly, late in the spring, Hannibal broke up his camp, and, descending into the Apulian plains, surprised and captured Cannæ, the great magazine of the Roman army.

All Italy was now exposed to be ravaged for another summer. The two new consuls having raised a large army, resolved to give battle. Each of the two consuls took the supreme command alternately every other day. After many weeks of marchings and counter-marchings, each army endeavoring to find a favorable field of battle, they at last met on the unobstructed plain of Cannæ, near the mouth of the Aufidus, on the shores of the Adriatic.

The Roman consuls led eighty-seven thousand troops upon this field, and their plumes of mingled red and black, a foot and a half high, lit up the vast expanse over which they

spread like a waving forest. Hannibal led a veteran army of fifty thousand men. The sun of a hot August day rose cloudless over the plain when the battle began. When that sun went down the Roman army was annihilated. Over eighty thousand Romans lay dead upon the field, and among them were the gory bodies of the consul Emilius, the master of the horse, Minucius, and eighty Roman senators. Three thousand men only, of the whole Roman army, escaped.

On this bloody field Hannibal lost but six thousand men. Hannibal was greatly elated with his victory, and doubted not that Rome itself would now be compelled to bow before him. Thus far his march had been resistless and desolating, like the flow of a lava flood down the sides of Vesuvius. When the tidings arrived in Rome of the utter destruction of the army the consternation was inexpressible. Within eighteen months one-fifth part of the whole male population of Rome over seventeen years of age had been slain. Every house was literally in mourning. All eyes were again directed to Fabius, and every measure he proposed, though his legal dictatorship was at an end, was immediately adopted.

The consul Varro, at the head of seventy horsemen, had effected his escape from the field, and despatches were soon received at Rome from him, informing the senate that he had rallied the wrecks of the army at Canusium, and that Hannibal was not advancing upon the city. With much moral courage the defeated consul then hastened to Rome, and presenting himself before the senate, dissuaded from all thoughts of peace, and urged the desperate prosecution of the war to the last extremity. Thus animated, a new dictator, M. Junius Pisa, was chosen; eight thousand slaves were enlisted; all the criminals and debtors were released, upon condition of their taking up arms. Thus twenty-five thousand men were speedily raised, and at the head of this small force, Pisa marched to embarrass the movements of the foe. At the same time the old men and

the boys in Rome were organized into military bands for the defense of the capital.

Hannibal had now crossed the Apennines from the Adriatic shore, and was encamped upon the right bank of the Volturnus, about twelve miles above Capua. This renowned city, then second only to Rome, had capitulated to the conqueror. The summer had now passed away, and Hannibal, gathering his army within and around the walls of Capua, went into winter quarters. The soldiers, fearing no assault and surrounded with abundance, surrendered themselves to luxurious indulgence.

Notwithstanding Hannibal's victories, he had much cause for solicitude. Upon the field of Cannæ he had lost six thousand of his best troops. He was far from home, and his army was daily growing weaker. He, therefore, found it very convenient to remain behind the walls of Capua, while he sent to Carthage for reënforcements. With the opening of the spring active operations were renewed. Three Roman armies, amounting in all to sixty thousand men, were encamped on the banks of the Vulturinus. Hannibal marched out of Capua and took a strong position on the heights of Mount Tifata. During the winter Philip, king of Macedon, had entered into an alliance with Hannibal offensive and defensive. Sicily was now in open revolt against Rome. The whole summer, however, passed away without any decisive action, the two hostile armies watching each other and maneuvering, with occasional skirmishes, to gain the advantage. Still on the whole the Romans were recruiting their energies, while Hannibal was growing weaker.

Through almost uninterrupted victory Hannibal's army, far from home, was wasting away, while from every defeat, the Romans rose with recruited vigor. For many months the storm of battle raged around the walls of Capua, recruits being continually sent in to fill up the broken battalions of the Romans. At length the Romans, with an army of sixty thou-

sand men, surrounded Capua, and in concentric lines threw up their entrenchments, so that the city was effectually blockaded. Hannibal was absent, ravaging the fields of southern Italy, when he heard of the danger of Capua and of the garrison he had left there. With characteristic energy he placed himself at the head of his cavalry, some regiments of light infantry, and thirty-three elephants, which had just been sent to him from Carthage, and descending like a whirlwind into the plain of Capua, commenced a fierce attack upon the Roman lines. But the Romans, strongly entrenched, repelled all his assaults, and drove him back to the mountains. His peril was now great. The country all around had been converted into a desert, and the horses of Hannibal, which constituted the most effectual portion of his army, were perishing. Under these circumstances he adopted the desperate resolve to march upon Rome.

Leaving his camp-fires burning upon the ridges of the Tifata, to deceive his foes, at midnight he commenced his march upon the eternal city. With hasty strides he advanced to the upper waters of the Tiber, and then descending the left bank of the stream, encamped his hosts within four miles of Rome. Before his terrible march crowds of fugitives fled, seeking refuge behind the walls of the city, while in his rear his route was marked with lurid flames, blood, smoke, and ashes. The gleam of his spears and banners, as the awful apparition thus unexpectedly appeared before the walls of Rome, created the utmost consternation. The women fled in dismay to the temples, imploring the aid of the gods. Every man capable of bearing arms rushed to the walls. It so happened that just at this time a political festival had assembled within the walls of Rome ten thousand men from the cities and villages around, and they eagerly united with the citizens to repel the assault.

Hannibal, apprised of these vigorous measures of defense, deemed an attack hopeless; but he was in one of the most in-

viting regions the world could present for plunder. For one hundred and fifty years no enemy had approached the walls of Rome. This long period of peace had secured a dense population; cities and villages abounded, filled with all the creations of opulence, while the fields waved with harvests. Hannibal swept the country, accumulating vast stores of plunder and unnumbered prisoners. It is said that at the head of a body of cavalry he rode up to the Colline gate of the city and defiantly hurled a dart against it.

For more than six years Hannibal had been ravaging the territory of the Romans, and he had slain more of the Romans than were then left living capable of bearing arms against him; and now his troops were surrounding the walls of Rome itself, challenging the inhabitants to a conflict which they dared not accept. The Romans, who were besieging Capua, learning that Rome was in danger, hurriedly broke up their encampment and hastened to the defense of the capital. Hannibal commenced a retreat, cautiously pursued by the Romans. Suddenly he turned upon his foe, in a midnight attack, and routed them with great slaughter. He then marched unobstructed through southern Italy, plundering and burning in all directions.

Capua, thus abandoned, was soon starved into submission, and surrendered to the Romans. Their punishment for lending compulsory assistance to the foe was as cruel as fiendlike malignity could devise. Many of the most illustrious men were sold into slavery; many were mercilessly scourged and then beheaded; and many were thrown into dungeons, where they were left to the lingering torments of starvation.

The reconquest of Capua encouraged the Romans, and struck terror into the revolted provinces, which had allied themselves with the Carthaginians. The position of Hannibal was becoming daily more perilous, and the tide of fortune was manifestly turning against him. His hopes of rallying a coalition of the Italian states against Rome were at an end. But

still he was at the head of a victorious army; he had met his foes but to trample them beneath his feet; and in a resistless march of hundreds of miles he had plundered and desolated the plains of Italy. He consequently doubted not that he could hold his position as long as he pleased, supporting his army at the cost of his enemies.

In the mean time the war between Rome and Carthage was raging in Spain, in Greece, and in Sicily, with varying success. There is but little worthy of note in these scenes of savage cruelty and blood. The siege of Syracuse, in Sicily, has obtained a world-wide renown in consequence of the defense organized and conducted by the genius of Archimedes. Marcellus, the Roman general, who had command of the fleet, attacked the city by water. Appius Claudius conducted the land attack, bringing his ships up to the sea-wall, and attempting to scale the battlements by means of immense ladders, raised by ropes running through blocks attached to the masts.

But Archimedes had armed the ramparts with enginery of such terrific power as to baffle all the efforts of the besiegers. A storm of stones, arrows, and javelins swept the decks of the ships as they approached. When the ladders were placed against the walls it was found that the walls were loopholed so that the men, as they attempted to ascend, were shot by an unseen enemy. Long poles were thrust out from the battlements, dropping down from their gigantic arms immense rocks and masses of lead, which fell with crushing violence upon the ships below. Enormous cranes were also thrust over the wall, with iron grapples affixed which seized hold of the stem or stern of the ship, and then by the application of an immense mechanical power, raised the end seized many feet, and then dropped it into the sea with violence, which either upset the ship or filled it with water. On the land side also, with equal vigor, the assault was repelled. Marcellus, at length, in despair relinquished the attempt to take the place

by storm, and prepared, by a regular blockade, to starve out the garrison.

In the haze of these distant ages we see fleets incessantly coming and going, and hear the smothered roar of battle, but it is now quite impossible to give a chronological narrative of many of the events as they ensued. Polybius states that the blockade of Syracuse lasted eight months, and the city finally surrendered to the Roman arms, as is supposed, in the year 213 B. C. Marcellus, having reconquered the island from the Carthaginians, again took possession of it in the name of the Roman people. But for two years the Carthaginians maintained a foothold in many fortresses of the island, and the fluctuations of the war were such that at one time there were sixty-two towns in a state of revolt against the Romans. But though the billows of war thus rose and fell, the Roman arms were steadily in the ascendant, and in the year 210 before Christ, word was sent to Rome that the war in Sicily was at an end. We read the brief record of this stern strife with composure. But no imagination can conceive the horrors of the conflict. The whole island was for years swept with flame and deluged with blood.

Both parties were equally merciless. There was no pity for the widow or the orphan, the matron or the maiden. The captives were scourged and then beheaded, or sold into perpetual slavery. This horrible bondage was not the doom of any particular race or color, but men of senatorial dignity, and maidens of exalted birth and of richest accomplishments, were sold unscrupulously in the slave-marts of Rome and Carthage. This is the slavery which existed in the time of our Saviour, and which we are now told that Christ and His apostles regarded without disapprobation. And this barbaric system of selling captives of all conditions taken in war, is appealed to as an argument in support of slavery in the midst of the Christian institutions of the nineteenth century. The Romans came in crowds to Sicily, purchased at a merely nominal price

vast tracts of land, which war had depopulated, and cultivated their extended plantations by the unpaid toil of these woe-stricken brothers and sisters of the human family whom barbaric war had enslaved. Neither whites nor blacks will long endure such wrongs. Eighty years passed away, when a servile insurrection broke out, and the Roman slave-holders bit the dust.

Hannibal was now in Apulia recruiting his soldiers, and undecided as to the direction in which he would lead his army. The terrible severity with which Rome had punished the insurgents of Capua, and those in Sicily who had espoused the Carthaginian cause, intimidated all the tribes of Italy, who had any disposition to unite with Hannibal in the endeavor to throw off the Roman yoke. Two consular armies were now sent into Apulia to operate against the invaders. But even these two united, dared not meet Hannibal in the open field. Concentrating his band of veterans, he marched to and fro, whithersoever he pleased, all opposition flying before him. He burnt farm-houses and villages, plundered the granaries, trampled down the harvests, and drove off the cattle. Famine, and its invariable concomitant, pestilence, followed in his path.

With stratagem characteristic of this shrewd chieftain, Hannibal detached one of the consular armies, that of Falvius, from its ally, fell upon it unexpectedly, and almost every man was hewn down by the sabres of his cavalry. But notwithstanding these successes, no one thought, even, of proposing terms of peace with the invader. The terror, however, which the individual powers of Hannibal inspired, is conspicuous, from the fact that while he was almost without opposition plundering the plains of Italy, Rome, fearing to meet him in battle, sent armies across the sea to carry the war to the walls of Carthage. The war now was spread over almost the whole of southern Europe and northern Africa. The crash of arms and cry of onset were heard in Italy, Spain, Africa,