

Sicily, Greece, and every where upon the waves of the Mediterranean, as, in gigantic conflict, Rome and Carthage struggled for the sovereignty of the world.

Tidings now reached the senate that Hasdrubal, the brother of Hannibal, was leaving Carthage with a strong reënforcement, to traverse Spain and Gaul, and convey to his brother in Italy succors, which would render him invincible. The danger was considered so imminent that a dictator was immediately appointed. Q. Fulvius, one of the most renowned generals of the empire, was placed in this responsible post, and was also appointed consul, with another renowned general, Fabius, as his colleague. These two generals in coöperation with Marcellus, the conqueror of Sicily, combined all their energies, aided by dictatorial power, in organizing a campaign for crushing Hannibal before his brother could arrive with his reënforcements. Each was placed at the head of a full consular army, and from different directions they commenced their march into Apulia to overwhelm the foe who had so long set Rome at defiance. The doom of Hannibal seemed now sealed. It was not doubted that Hannibal, in the south of Italy, would thus be destroyed before Hasdrubal could bring his reënforcements across the Alps.

In this perilous hour the military genius of Hannibal shone forth with even unwonted splendor. Like a lion at bay he sprang first upon Fulvius, and drove his legions broken and bleeding in utter rout from the field. Utterly exhausted by the blows he had received, the vanquished, humiliated, breathless consul took refuge within the walls of Venusia, where he was compelled to remain repairing damages and healing wounds for the remainder of the campaign. Freed from this enemy Hannibal turned, with a tremendous bound, upon Marcellus. The approach of the Carthaginians, impetuously, like the rush of the tornado, struck the inferior band with terror. They fled to a hill for safety. Here they were surrounded,

and only saved themselves from a bloody grave by an unconditional surrender.

Without the loss of a day Hannibal then turned upon Fabius, whose troops had marched to the assault of the impregnable walls of Tarentum, which city, capable of repelling any foe, was held by the Carthaginians. But treachery betrayed the frowning fortresses into the hands of the Romans, and when Hannibal had arrived within five miles of the gates, to his utter consternation he learned that the garrison had capitulated, and that the Roman banners were floating over the towers of the city. He, however, advanced to the walls, and encamped, for a few days, before the city, practicing every stratagem to lure the Romans out to battle. Failing in this, he resumed his resistless march of devastation and plunder.

The result of the campaign caused great disappointment. Though Tarentum had been gained by the Romans, the acquisition was the result of treason, not of military prowess, and the superiority of Hannibal was more manifest than ever before. The indignation against Marcellus, who had taken shelter behind the walls of Venusia for the whole summer, was so strong that one of the most venerable of the tribunes brought in a bill before the people to deprive him of his command. Marcellus returned to Rome to plead his own cause. He declared that he had done the best he could; that it was not his fault if he had been conquered by one whom none other of the Roman generals had yet been able to withstand. No one could seriously doubt the courage of the old man, and the people, moved by his mortification, generously forgave him his want of success, rejected the bill of impeachment, and elected him consul.

Again the cloud of adversity began to darken over the Roman republic. Hasdrubal was advancing, with rapid strides, through the passes of the Alps. Hannibal seemed to be invincible. Twelve of the Roman colonies, dreading his

ravages, refused longer to contribute to carry on the war against him, and there were many indications that the Etruscans, one of the most powerful of the Italian nations in alliance with Rome, were preparing to receive Hasdrubal as a deliverer.

The spring of the year 208 B. C. now came, opening the eleventh campaign of this memorable war. Two consular armies were raised amounting to forty thousand men, and were sent against Hannibal. As these troops were on the march, confident from their superiority in numbers that Hannibal would not venture to risk a battle, they were suddenly assailed, in the flanks of their column, by the whole Carthaginian cavalry. The Romans, taken by surprise, were routed, trampled down, and scattered in all directions. In a skirmish, which soon after ensued, Marcellus himself was slain. The Romans retreated to a hill where they threw up entrenchments and stood upon the defensive. They no longer thought of assailing Hannibal, but hoped only to escape from his terrible arm. For the remainder of the season the field was left free to Hannibal.

Again a fearful wave of dismay was rolled over Rome. The tidings came that Hasdrubal, with a large army, had succeeded in crossing the Alps and was advancing with his exultant troops through the plains of Cisalpine Gaul. Hasdrubal crossed the Pyrenees at their western extremity, and thus eluded the soldiers sent to oppose his march by guarding the eastern passes of the mountains. He continued his march across Gaul, passed the Rhone near Lyons, and struck the route of Hannibal in the plains of Dauphiné, at the foot of the Alps. There were now two Carthaginian armies marching upon Rome—Hannibal from the south, and Hasdrubal from the north.

Again Rome roused all her energies, and created and equipped two consular armies for the conflict. Nero and Livius were chosen consuls, both men of great energy. The

whole Roman force sent into the field for this campaign, consisting of Romans and their allies, amounted to one hundred and fifty thousand men. But for her allies, Rome would now inevitably have been crushed; for the whole population of Roman citizens, capable of bearing arms, amounted at this time to but one hundred and thirty-seven thousand one hundred and eight. So great was the demand for men that the slaves were invited to enlist, and *two* legions were composed of them. The consul Livius, a very stern old man, was sent to oppose Hasdrubal, and the consul Nero led the army against Hannibal.

Hasdrubal issued from the Alps, through the same defiles his brother had threaded eleven years before, and crossing the Po, descended the right bank to Placentia. A Latin colony held this city, and, faithful to Rome, it closed its gates against the invaders. Hasdrubal, having no enginery of war sufficiently powerful to batter down the walls, after a delay of a few days marched on toward the shores of the Adriatic. He immediately despatched six horsemen to his brother to inform him of his approach, and to propose a union of their two armies in Umbria, and a prompt march upon Rome by the Flaminian road.

Hasdrubal advanced in such strength that Livius was unable to oppose him, and he consequently retreated, and intrenched himself behind the Metaurus, near the maritime colony of Sena. Nero, with an army of forty thousand infantry, and twenty-five thousand cavalry, was at Venusia, operating to prevent Hannibal from marching north to cooperate with his brother. There was also a Roman army of twenty thousand men in the rear of Hannibal at Tarentum. Still Hannibal baffled all the endeavors of Nero. Marching to and fro he gathered supplies and increased his force, and encamped in strong array at Canuriuna, waiting for tidings from his brother.

In the meantime the six horsemen despatched by Hasdrubal

bal, with wonderful bravery and sagacity traversed the whole length of Italy, through many hair-breadth escapes, until, losing their way, they arrived near Tarentum, where they encountered a foraging party of the Romans, by whom they were taken prisoners, and despatched under a strong escort to Nero. The letter found in their possession, revealed to Nero a full plan of Hasdrubal's contemplated operations. Nero despatched the letter to the Roman senate, recalled to his banners all the scattered divisions of his army, and summoned to his camp every Roman citizen capable of bearing arms. Leaving this force under the command of his lieutenants, to check any movement of Hannibal, he placed himself at the head of a select body of seven thousand men, one thousand of whom were cavalry, and starting from his camp at midnight, by forced marches, hastened to the banks of the Metaurus to join his colleague Livius, and aid him in crushing Hasdrubal before Hannibal could march to his aid.

As he advanced on this secret expedition, he revealed to his soldiers his plan. They shared the spirit of their leader, and with great enthusiasm pressed on their way. As they passed rapidly along, the whole population crowded the roadside with offerings of meat, drink, clothing, horses, and carriages. Altars were reared to the gods at various points on their route, which were incessantly smoking with incense to propitiate divine favor. The soldiers were so eager, that they pressed on day and night, hardly allowing any halt. In seven days the march was accomplished, and Nero, with his army increased to eight or ten thousand, in the darkness of the night entered the Roman camp of Livius, which was then intrenched upon some eminences fourteen miles south of the Metaurus. Hasdrubal had also crossed that river, and had established his lines at but half a mile distant from the Roman ramparts, preparing to give battle.

Nero had so secretly entered the encampment of Livius, that Hasdrubal was as unconscious of his arrival as Hannibal

was of his departure. But the next morning as Hasdrubal rode out to reconnoiter, he was struck with the vast increase in the number of his foes, an increase so great as to demand his immediate retreat across the Metaurus. He attempted it the next night, leaving all his camp-fires burning. But Livius and Nero vigorously followed; attacked him vehemently upon the precipitous and wooded banks of the stream, and, after a desperate battle, overwhelming him with numbers, cut his whole army to pieces. Hasdrubal, seeing that all was lost, spurred his horse into the midst of a Roman cohort and fell pierced by innumerable wounds, selling his life as dearly as possible. The whole Carthaginian camp, with all its wealth, fell into the hands of the conquerers. Of the ten elephants which Hasdrubal had led across the Alps, six were killed in the action and four were taken alive. Three thousand Roman prisoners were found in the camp, and set at liberty. Hasdrubal's army was thus utterly destroyed, and Hannibal was left alone to struggle against the Roman power now rising with new energies.

Nero cut off the head of Hasdrubal, and returning rapidly to Apulia, where Hannibal was impatiently waiting for intelligence from his brother, threw the gory head into the Carthaginian camp. This was the first intelligence Hannibal received of the irreparable disaster. For a moment he was overwhelmed, exclaiming:

"My fate is sealed. All is lost. I shall send no more news of victory to Carthage. In losing Hasdrubal my last hope is gone."

When the tidings of the great victory was received in Rome, a scene of exaltation and joy was witnessed such a Rome had never displayed before. The two consuls were honored with the most gorgeous triumph Rome could then furnish. Victories, as well as reverses, often come in troops. While Rome was blazing with illuminations, and echoing with the huzzas of the people, news came that the Roman legions

in Spain were also trampling down their foes. Scipio was there marching from conquest to conquest, crushing all opposition before him. He had reached and captured New Carthage, now Carthagena, the proud capital of Carthaginian power in the peninsula.

Scipio, the young general now rising so rapidly to renown in the war in Spain, merits special notice. When but twenty-six years of age, he was appointed to the command of the Roman troops in Spain, under circumstances very similar to those in which Napoleon took charge of the army of Italy in 1796; and Scipio wielded the powers placed in his hands with scarcely less of skill and energy than Napoleon subsequently displayed. It is said that he marched from the Ebro to New Carthage, a distance of three hundred and twenty-five miles, in seven days. Carthagena, as the city is now called, stands at the head of its world-renowned bay, and spreads its streets widely over hills and valleys. These valleys were then lagoons, and the city was built on a peninsula, connected by a very narrow isthmus with the main land. Scipio, after a short siege, took the city by storm, in one of the fiercest fights on record, he having inspired his soldiers with his own invincible daring. The slaughter of the wretched inhabitants was dreadful, ten thousand only being reserved as captives. These the conqueror treated with great humanity, and thus secured their gratitude and their loyalty. His honorable bearing, so unusual in those dark days, and particularly the delicacy with which he treated his female prisoners, produced a deep impression in his favor all over Spain.

CHAPTER VII.

FOREIGN CONQUESTS AND INTERNAL FEUDS.

FROM 208 B. C. TO 121 B. C.

SCIPIO.—HIS CHARACTER AND CAREER.—THE CONQUEST OF SPAIN.—QUELLING THE MUTINY.—MILITARY PROWESS OF HANNIBAL.—HE RETIRES FROM ITALY.—SCIPIO INVADES AFRICA.—DESTRUCTION OF THE CARTHAGINIAN ARMY.—TRUCE AND HUMILIATION OF CARTHAGE.—LANDING OF HANNIBAL IN AFRICA.—BATTLE OF ZAMA.—CLOSE OF THE SECOND PUNIC WAR.—CONQUEST OF GREECE.—INVASION OF SYRIA.—THIRD PUNIC WAR.—DESTRUCTION OF CARTHAGE.—THE NUMIDIAN WAR.—BARBARIAN INVASION.—THE PLEBEIAN AND PATRICIAN CONFLICT.—GRACCHUS AND OCTAVIUS.

THE victories of Scipio in Spain, and the skill with which he combined humanity with severity, speedily created a strong disposition with the Spaniards to throw off their alliance with Carthage and receive the Romans as their protectors and masters. Many Spanish tribes joined the army of Scipio. This young Roman general was one of those marked men born to command. In both form and feature he was remarkably attractive and imposing. He was courteous and polished in his manners, and displayed that consciousness of greatness, blended with gentleness, magnanimity, and an entire absence of arrogance, which naturally wins the homage of all human hearts. The Carthaginian generals complained that no Spanish troops could be trusted, if they were once brought within the sphere of his influence.

As soon as Scipio received the news of the great victory of the Metaurus, he was roused to the strongest desire to emulate that victory by a still more decisive action in Spain. A general by the name of Hasdrubal Gisco was now in command of the Carthaginian forces, having an army of seventy