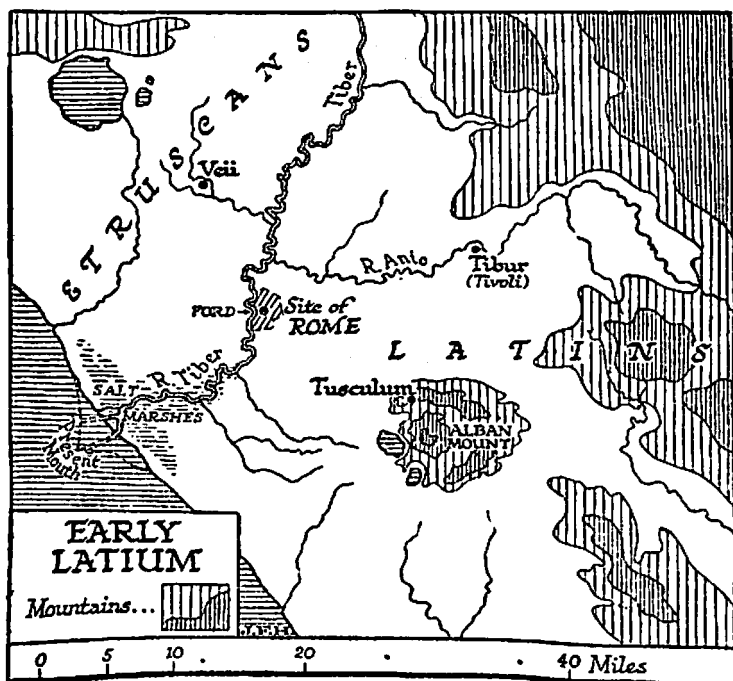
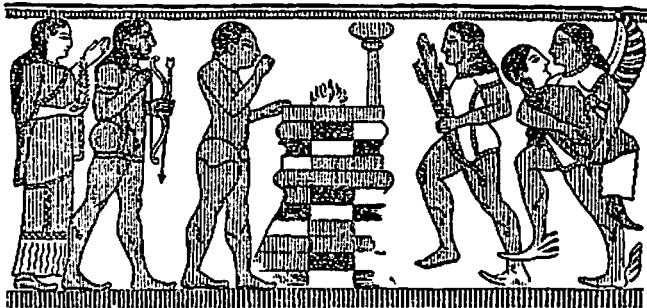


number of settlements sprang up, which finally amalgamated into one city.

Most people have heard the story of the two brothers Romulus and Remus, who founded Rome, and the legend of how they were exposed as infants and sheltered and suckled by a wolf. Little value is now attached to this tale by modern historians. The date 753 B.C. is given for the founding of Rome, but there are Etruscan tombs beneath the Roman Forum of a much earlier date than that, and the so-called tomb of Romulus bears an indecipherable Etruscan inscription.

The peninsula of Italy was not then the smiling land of vineyards and olive orchards it has since become. It was still a rough country of marsh and forest, in which the farmers grazed their cattle and made their clearings. Rome, on the boundary between Latin and Etruscan, was not in a very strong position for defence. At first there were, perhaps, Latin kings in Rome; then it would seem the city fell into the hands of Etruscan rulers whose tyrannous conduct led at last to their expulsion, and Rome became a Latin-speaking republic. The Etruscan kings were expelled from Rome in the sixth century





*Etruscan painting of a Ceremonial Burning of the Dead—*

B.C., while the successors of Nebuchadnezzar were ruling by the sufferance of the Medes in Babylon, while Confucius was seeking a king to reform the disorders of China, and while Gautama was teaching the Aryan Way to his disciples at Benares.

Of the struggle between the Romans and the Etruscans we cannot tell in any detail here. The Etruscans were the better armed, the more civilized and the more numerous, and it would probably have gone hard with the Romans if they had had to fight them alone. But two disasters happened to the Etruscans which so weakened them that the Romans were able at last to master them altogether. The first of these was a war with the Greeks of Syracuse in Sicily which destroyed the Etruscan fleet (474 B.C.), and the second was a great raid of the Gauls from the north into Italy. These latter people swarmed into North Italy and occupied the valley of the Po towards the end of the fifth century B.C., as a couple of centuries later their kindred were to swarm down into Greece and Asia Minor and settle in Galatia. The Etruscans were thus caught between hammer and anvil, and after a long and intermittent war the Romans were able to capture Veii, an Etruscan fortress, a few miles from Rome, which had hitherto been a great threat and annoyance to them.

It is to this period of struggle against the Etruscan monarchs, the Tarquins, that Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, familiar to every schoolboy, refers.

But the invasion of the Gauls was one of those convulsions of the nations that leave nothing as it has been before. They carried their raiding right down the Italian peninsula, devastating all Etruria. They took and sacked Rome (390 B.C.). According to Roman legends—on which doubt is thrown—

the citadel on the Capitol held out, and this also the Gauls would have taken by surprise at night, if certain geese had not been awakened by their stealthy movements and set up such a cackling as to arouse the garrison. After that the Gauls, who were ill-equipped for siege operations, and perhaps suffering from disease in their camp, were bought off, and departed to the northward again; and, though they made subsequent raids, they never again reached Rome.

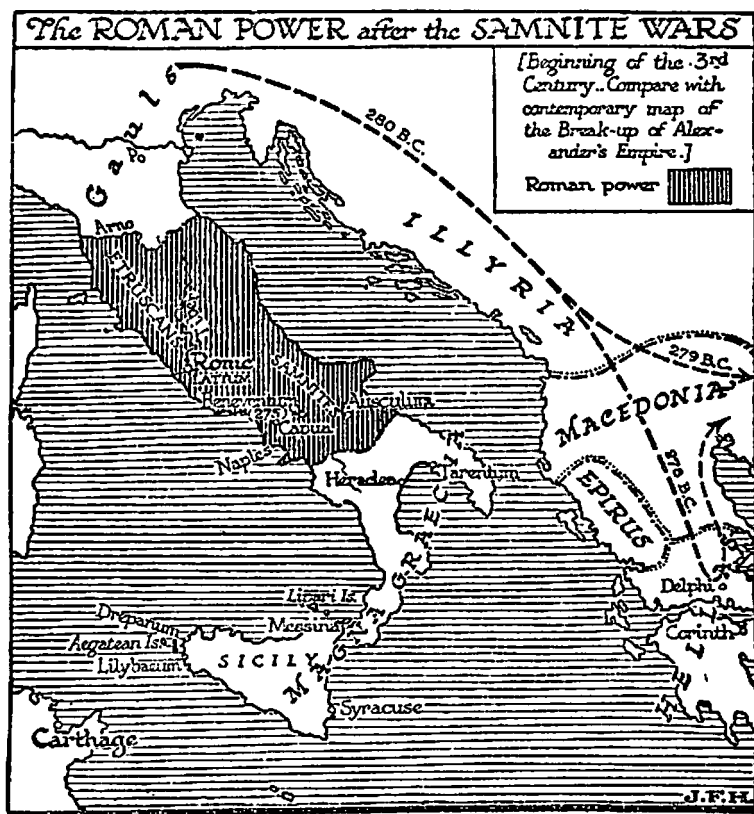
The leader of the Gauls who sacked Rome was named Brennus. It is related of him that as the gold of the ransom was being weighed there was some dispute about the justice of the counterpoise, whereupon he flung his sword into the scale, saying, "*Væ victis!*" ("Woe to the vanquished!")—a phrase that has haunted the discussions of all subsequent ransoms and indemnities down to the present time.

For half a century after this experience Rome was engaged in a series of wars to establish herself at the head of the Latin tribes. For the burning of the chief city seems to have stimulated rather than crippled her energies. However much she suffered, most of her neighbours seem to have suffered more. By 290 B.C. Rome was the mistress city of all Central Italy from the Arno to south of Naples. She had conquered the Etruscans altogether, and her boundaries marched with those of the Gauls to the north and with the regions of Italy under Greek dominion (*Magna Græcia*) to the south. Along the Gaulish boundary she had planted garrisons and colonial cities, and no doubt it was because of that line of defence that the raiding enterprises of the Gauls were deflected eastward into the Balkans.

After what we have already told of the history of Greece and the constitutions of her cities, it will not surprise the reader to learn that the Greeks of Sicily and Italy were divided up into a number of separate city governments, of which Syracuse and Tarentum (the modern Taranto) were the chief, and that they had no common rule of direction or policy. But now, alarmed at the spread of the Roman power, they looked across the Adriatic for help, and found it in the ambitions of Pyrrhus, the king of Epirus. Between the Romans and Pyrrhus these Greeks of *Magna Græcia* were very much in the same position that Greece proper had been in between the Macedonians and the Persians, half a century before.

The reader will remember that Epirus, the part of Greece that is closest to the heel of Italy, was the native land of Olympias, the mother of Alexander. In the kaleidoscopic

changes of the map that followed the death of Alexander, Epirus was sometimes swamped by Macedonia, sometimes independent. This Pyrrhus was a kinsman of Alexander the Great, and a monarch of ability and enterprise, and he seems to have planned a career of conquest in Italy and Sicily. He commanded an admirable army, against which the comparatively inexpert



Roman levies could at first do little. His army included all the established military devices of the time, an infantry phalanx, Thessalian cavalry, and twenty fighting elephants from the East. He routed the Romans at Heraclea (280 B.C.), and, pressing after them, defeated them again at Ausculum (279 B.C.) in their own territory. Then, instead of pursuing the Romans further, he made a truce with them, turned his attention to the subjugation of Sicily, and so brought the sea power of Carthage into alliance against him. For Carthage could not afford to

have a strong power established so close to her as Sicily. Rome in those days seemed to the Carthaginians a far less serious threat than the possibility of another Alexander the Great ruling Sicily. A Carthaginian fleet appeared off the mouth of the Tiber, therefore, to encourage or induce the Romans to renew the struggle—and Rome and Carthage were definitely allied against the invader.

This interposition of Carthage was fatal to Pyrrhus. Without any decisive battle his power wilted, and, after a disastrous repulse in an attack upon the Roman camp of Beneventum, he had to retire to Epirus (275 B.C.).

It is recorded that when Pyrrhus left Sicily he said he left it to be the battleground of Rome and Carthage. He was killed three years later in a battle in the streets of Argos.

The war against Pyrrhus was won by the Carthaginian fleet, and Rome reaped a full half of the harvest of victory. Sicily fell completely to Carthage, and Rome came down to the toe and heel of Italy, and looked across the Straits of Messina at her new rival. In eleven years' time (264 B.C.) the prophecy of Pyrrhus was fulfilled, and the first war with Carthage, the first of the three Punic Wars, had begun. ("Punic" from the Latin *Punicus*, Carthaginian, *i.e.* Phœnician.)

## § 2

### *A New Sort of State.*

But we write "Rome" and the "Romans," and we have still to explain what manner of people these were who were playing a rôle of conquest that had hitherto been played only by able and aggressive monarchs.

Their state was, in the fifth century B.C., a republic of the Aryan type very similar to a Greek aristocratic republic. The earliest accounts of the social life of Rome give us a picture of a very primitive Aryan community. "In the second half of the fifth century before Christ, Rome was still an aristocratic community of free peasants occupying an area of nearly 400 square miles, with a population certainly not exceeding 150,000, almost entirely dispersed over the countryside and divided into seventeen districts or rural tribes. Most of the families had a small holding and a cottage of their own, where father and sons lived and worked together, growing corn for the most part, with here and there a strip of vine or olive. Their few head of cattle were kept at pasture on the neighbouring common land; their clothes and simple implements of husbandry they

made for themselves at home. Only at rare intervals and on special occasions would they make their way into the fortified town, which was the centre at once of their religion and their government. Here were the temples of the gods, the houses of the wealthy, and the shops of the artisans and traders, where corn, oil, or wine could be bartered in small quantities for salt or rough tools and weapons of iron.”<sup>1</sup>



This community followed the usual traditions of a division into aristocratic and common citizens, who were called in Rome patricians and plebeians. These were the citizens; the slave or outlander had no more part in the state than he had in Greece. But the constitution differed from any Greek constitution in the fact that a great part of the ruling power was gathered into the hands of a body called the Senate, which was neither purely a body of hereditary members nor directly an elected and repre-

<sup>1</sup> Ferrero, *The Greatness and Decline of Rome.* \*

sentative one. It was a nominated one, and in the earlier period it was nominated solely from among the patricians. It existed before the expulsion of the kings, and in the time of the kings it was the king who nominated the senators. But after the expulsion of the kings (510 B.C.) the supreme government was vested in the hands of two elected rulers, the *consuls*; and it was the consuls who took over the business of appointing senators. In the early days of the Republic only patricians were eligible as consuls or senators, and the share of the plebeians in the government consisted merely in a right to vote for the consuls and other public officials. Even for that purpose their votes did not have the same value as those of their patrician fellow-citizens. But their votes had at any rate sufficient weight to induce many of the patrician candidates to profess a more or less sincere concern for plebeian grievances. In the early phases of the Roman state, moreover, the plebeians were not only excluded from public office, but from intermarriage with the patrician class. The administration was evidently primarily a patrician affair.

The early phase of Roman affairs was therefore an aristocracy of a very pronounced type, and the internal history of Rome for the two centuries and a half between the expulsion of the last Etruscan king, Tarquin the Proud, and the beginning of the first Punic War (264 B.C.), was very largely a struggle for mastery between those two orders, the patricians and the plebeians. It was, in fact, closely parallel with the struggle of aristocracy and democracy in the city states of Greece, and, as in the case of Greece, there were whole classes in the community, slaves, freed slaves, unpropertied free men, outlanders, and the like, who were entirely outside and beneath the struggle. We have already noted the essential difference of Greek democracy and what is called democracy in the world to-day. Another misused word is the Roman term *proletariat*, which in modern jargon means all the unpropertied people in a modern state. In Rome the *proletarii* were a voting division of fully qualified citizens whose property was less than 10,000 copper asses (£275). They were an enrolled class; their value to the state consisted in their raising families of citizens (*proles*=offspring), and from their ranks were drawn the colonists who went to form new Latin cities or to garrison important points. But the *proletarii* were quite distinct in origin from slaves or freedmen or the miscellaneous driftage of a town slum, and it is a great pity that modern political discussion should be confused by an inaccurate use of a term which has no exact modern

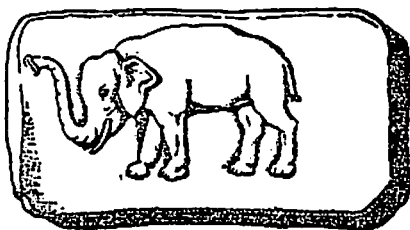
equivalent and which expresses nothing real in modern social classification.

The mass of the details of this struggle between patricians and plebeians we can afford to ignore in this *Outline*. It was a struggle which showed the Romans to be a people of a curiously shrewd character, never forcing things to a destructive crisis, but being within the limits of their discretion grasping hard dealers. The patricians made a mean use of their political advantages to grow rich through the national conquests, at the expense not only of the defeated enemy but of the poorer plebeian whose farm had been neglected and who had fallen into debt during his military service. The plebeians were ousted from any share in the conquered lands, which the patricians divided up among themselves. The introduction of money probably increased the facilities of the usurer and the difficulties of the borrowing debtor.

Three sorts of pressure won the plebeians a greater share in the government of the country and the good things that were coming to Rome as she grew powerful. The first of these (1) was the general strike of plebeians.

Twice they actually marched right out of Rome, threatening to make a new city higher up the Tiber, and twice this threat proved conclusive. The second method of pressure (2) was the threat of a tyranny. Just as in Attica (the little state of which Athens was the capital) Peisistratus raised himself to power on the support of the poorer districts, so there was to be found in most periods of plebeian discontent some ambitious man ready to figure as a leader and wrest power from the senate. For a long time the Roman patricians were clever enough to beat every such potential tyrant by giving in to a certain extent to the plebeians. And finally (3) there were patricians big-minded and far-seeing enough to insist upon the need of reconciliation with the plebeians.

Thus, in 509 B.C., Valerius Poplicola (3), the consul, enacted that whenever the life or rights of any citizen were at stake, there should be an appeal from the magistrates to the general assembly. This *Lex Valeria* was "the Habeas Corpus of Rome," and it freed the Roman plebeians from the worst dangers of class vindictiveness in the law courts.



ROMAN COIN STRUCK TO COMMEMORATE  
THE VICTORY OVER PYRRHUS AND HIS  
ELEPHANTS.



In 494 B.C. occurred a strike (1). "After the Latin war the pressure of debt had become excessive, and the plebeians saw with indignation their friends, who had often served the state bravely in the legions, thrown into chains and reduced to slavery at the demand of patrician creditors. War was raging against the Volscians; but the legionaries, on their victorious return, refused any longer to obey the consuls, and marched, though without any disorder, to the Sacred Mount beyond the Anio (up the Tiber). There they prepared to found a new city, since the rights of citizens were denied to them in the old one. The patricians were compelled to give way, and the plebeians, returning to Rome from the 'First Secession,' received the privilege of having officers of their own, tribunes and *ædiles*."<sup>1</sup>

In 486 B.C. arose Spurius Cassius (2), a consul who carried an Agrarian Law securing public land for the plebeians. But the next year he was accused of aiming at royal power, and condemned to death. His law never came into operation.

There followed a long struggle on the part of the plebeians to have the laws of Rome written down, so that they would no longer have to trust to patrician memories. In 451-450 B.C. the law of the Twelve Tables was published, the basis of all Roman law.

But in order that the Twelve Tables should be formulated, a committee of ten (the *decemvirate*) was appointed in the place of the ordinary magistrates. A second decemvirate, appointed in succession to the first, attempted a sort of aristocratic counter-revolution under Appius Claudius. The plebeians withdrew again, a second time, to the Sacred Mount, and Appius Claudius committed suicide in prison.

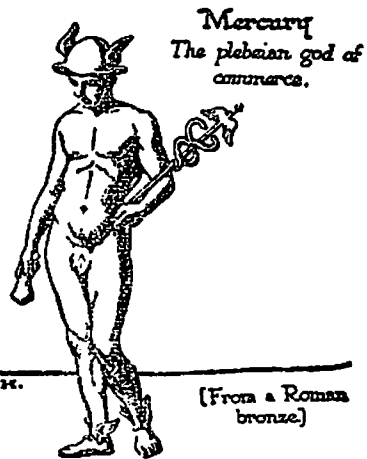
In 440 came a famine, and a second attempt to found a popular tyranny upon the popular wrongs, by Spurius Mælius, a wealthy plebeian, which ended in his assassination.

After the sack of Rome by the Gauls (390 B.C.), Marcus Manlius, who had been in command of the Capitol when the geese had saved it, came forward as a popular leader. The plebeians were suffering severely from the after-war usury and profiteering of the patricians, and were incurring heavy debts in rebuilding and restocking their farms. Manlius spent his fortune in releasing debtors. He was accused by the patricians of tyrannous intentions, condemned, and suffered the fate of condemned traitors in Rome, being flung from the Tarpeian Rock, the precipitous edge of that same Capitoline Hill he had defended.

<sup>1</sup> J. Wells, *Short History of Rome to the Death of Augustus*.

In 376 B.C. Licinius, who was one of the ten tribunes for the people, began a long struggle with the patricians by making certain proposals called the Licinian Rogations, that there should be a limit to the amount of public land taken by any single citizen, so leaving some for everybody, that outstanding debts should be forgiven without interest upon the repayment of the principal, and that henceforth one at least of the two consuls should be a plebeian. This precipitated a ten-year struggle. The plebeian power to stop business by the veto of their representatives, the tribunes, was fully exercised. In cases of national extremity it was the custom to set all other magistrates aside and appoint one leader, the Dictator. Rome had done such a thing during times of military necessity before, but now the patricians set up a Dictator in a time of profound peace, with the idea of crushing Licinius altogether. They appointed Camillus, who had besieged and taken Veii from the Etruscans. But Camillus was a wiser man than his supporters; he brought about a compromise between the two orders in which most of the demands of the plebeians were conceded (367 B.C.), dedicated a temple to Concord, and resigned his power.

Thereafter the struggle between the orders abated. It abated because, among other influences, the social differences between patricians and plebeians were diminishing. Trade was coming to Rome with increasing political power, and many plebeians were growing rich and many patricians becoming relatively poor. Intermarriage had been rendered possible by a change in the law, and social intermixture was going on. While the rich plebeians were becoming, if not aristocratic, at least oligarchic in habits and sympathy, new classes were springing up in Rome with fresh interests and no political standing. Particularly abundant were the freedmen, slaves set free, for the most part artisans, but some of them traders, who were growing wealthy. And the Senate, no longer a purely patrician body—since various official positions were now open to plebeians, and such plebeian officials became senators—was becoming now



Mercury  
The plebeian god of  
commerce.

J.F.H.

[From a Roman  
bronze.]

an assembly of all the wealthy, able, energetic, and influential men in the state. The Roman power was expanding, and as it expanded these old class oppositions of the early Latin community were becoming unmeaning. They were being replaced by new associations and new antagonisms. Rich men of all origins were being drawn together into a common interest against the communistic ideas of the poor.

In 390 B.C. Rome was a miserable little city on the borders of Etruria, being sacked by the Gauls; in 275 B.C. she was ruling and unifying all Italy, from the Arno to the Straits of Messina. The compromise of Camillus (367 B.C.) had put an end to internal dissensions, and left her energies free for expansion. And the same queer combination of sagacity and aggressive selfishness that had distinguished the war of her orders at home and enabled her population to worry out a balance of power without any catastrophe, marks her policy abroad. She understood the value of allies; she could assimilate; abroad as at home she could in those days at least "give and take" with a certain fairness and sanity. There lay the peculiar power of Rome. By that it was she succeeded where Athens, for example, had conspicuously failed.

The Athenian democracy suffered much from that narrowness of "patriotism," which is the ruin of all nations. Athens was disliked and envied by her own empire because she dominated it in a spirit of civic egotism; her disasters were not felt and shared as disasters by her subject-cities. The shrewder, nobler Roman senators of the great years of Rome, before the first Punic War overstrained her moral strength and began her degeneration, were not only willing in the last resort to share their privileges with the mass of their own people, but eager to incorporate their sturdiest antagonists upon terms of equality with themselves. They extended their citizenship cautiously but steadily. Some cities became Roman, with even a voting share in the government. Others had self-government and the right to trade or marry in Rome, without full Roman citizenship. Garrisons of full citizens were set up at strategic points and colonies with variable privileges established amidst the purely conquered peoples. The need to keep communications open in this great and growing mass of citizenship was evident from the first. Printing and paper were not yet available for intercourse, but a system of high roads followed the Latin speech and the Roman rule. The first of these, the Appian Way, ran from Rome ultimately into the heel of Italy. It was begun by the censor Appius Claudius (who must not be

confused with the decemvir Appius Claudius of a century earlier) in 312 B.C.

According to a census made in 265 B.C., there were already in the Roman dominions, that is to say in Italy south of the Arno, 300,000 citizens. They all had a common interest in the welfare of the state; they were all touched a little with the diffused kingship of the republic. This was, we have to note, an absolutely new thing in the history of mankind. All considerable states and kingdoms and empires hitherto had been communities by mere obedience to some head, some monarch, upon whose moods and character the public welfare was helplessly dependent. No republic had hitherto succeeded in being anything more than a city state. The so-called Athenian "empire" was simply a city state directing its allies and its subjugated cities. In a few decades the Roman republic was destined to extend its citizenship into the valley of the Po, to assimilate the kindred Gauls, replacing their language by Latin, and to set up a Latin city, Aquileia, at the very head of the Adriatic Sea. In 89 B.C. all free inhabitants of Italy became Roman citizens; in A.D. 212 the citizenship was extended to all free men in the empire.

This extraordinary political growth was manifestly the precursor of all modern states of the western type. It is as interesting to the political student, therefore, as a carboniferous amphibian or an *archæopteryx* to the student of zoological development. It is the primitive type of the now dominant order. Its experiences throw light upon all subsequent political history.

One natural result of this growth of a democracy of hundreds of thousands of citizens scattered over the greater part of Italy was the growth in power of the Senate. There had been in the development of the Roman constitution a variety of forms of the popular assembly, the plebeian assembly, the assembly by tribes, the assembly by centuries, and the like, into which variety we cannot enter here with any fullness; but the idea was established that with the popular assembly lay the power of initiating laws. It is to be noted that there was a sort of parallel government in this system. The assembly by tribes or by centuries was an assembly of the *whole citizen body*, patrician and plebeian together; the assembly of the plebeians was, of course, an assembly only of the plebeian class. Each assembly had its own officials; the former, the consuls, etc.; the latter, the tribunes. While Rome was a little state, twenty miles square, it was possible to assemble something like a representative

gathering of the people, but it will be manifest that, with the means of communication existing in Italy at that time, it was now impossible for the great bulk of the citizens even to keep themselves informed of what was going on at Rome, much less to take any effective part in political life there. Aristotle, in his *Politics*, had already pointed out the virtual disenfranchisement of voters who lived out of the city and were preoccupied with agricultural pursuits, and this sort of disenfranchisement by mechanical difficulties applied to the vast majority of Roman citizens. With the growth of Rome an unanticipated weakness crept into political life through these causes, and the popular assembly became more and more a gathering of political hacks and the city riffraff, and less and less a representation of the ordinary worthy citizens. The popular assembly came nearest to power and dignity in the fourth century B.C. From that period it steadily declined in influence, and the new Senate, which was no longer a patrician body, with a homogeneous and on the whole a noble tradition, but a body of rich men, ex-magistrates, powerful officials, bold adventurers and the like, pervaded by a strong disposition to return to the idea of hereditary qualification, became for three centuries the ruling power in the Roman world.

There are two devices since known to the world which might have enabled the popular government of Rome to go on developing beyond its climax in the days of Appius Claudius the Censor, at the close of the fourth century B.C., but neither of them occurred to the Roman mind. The first of these devices was a proper use of print. In our account of early Alexandria we have already remarked upon the strange fact that printed books did not come into the world in the fourth or third century B.C. This account of Roman affairs forces us to repeat that remark. To the modern mind it is clear that a widespread popular government demands, as a necessary condition for health, a steady supply of correct information upon public affairs to all the citizens and a maintenance of interest. The popular governments in the modern states that have sprung up on either side of the Atlantic during the last two centuries have been possible only through the more or less honest and thorough ventilation of public affairs through the press. But in Italy the only way in which the government at Rome could communicate with any body of its citizens elsewhere was by sending a herald, and with the individual citizen it could hold no communication by any means at all.

The second device, for which the English are chiefly re-

sponsible in the history of mankind, which the Romans never used, was the almost equally obvious one of representative government. For the old Popular Assembly (in its threefold form) it would have been possible to have substituted a gathering of delegates. Later on in history, the English did, as the state grew, realize this necessity. Certain men, the Knights of the Shire, were called up to Westminster to speak and vote for local feeling, and were more or less formally elected for that end. The Roman situation seems to a modern mind to have called aloud for such a modification. It was never made.

The method of assembling the *comitia tributa* (one of the three main forms of the Popular Assembly) was by the proclamation of a herald, who was necessarily inaudible to most of Italy, seventeen days before the date of the gathering. The augurs, the priests of divination whom Rome had inherited from the Etruscans, examined the entrails of sacrificial beasts on the night before the actual assembly, and if they thought fit to say that these gory portents were unfavourable, the *comitia tributa* dispersed. But if the augurs reported that the livers were propitious, there was a great blowing of horns from the Capitol and from the walls of the city, and the assembly went on. It was held in the open air, either in the little Forum beneath the Capitol or in a still smaller recess opening out of the Forum, or in the military exercising ground, the Campus Martius, now the most crowded part of modern Rome, but then an open space. Business began at dawn with prayer. There were no seats, and this probably helped to reconcile the citizen to the rule that everything ended at sunset.

After the opening prayer came a discussion of the measures to be considered by the assembly, and the proposals before the meeting were read out. Is it not astonishing that there were no printed copies distributed? If any copies were handed about, they must have been in manuscript, and each copy must have been liable to errors and deliberate falsification. No questions seem to have been allowed, but private individuals might address the gathering with the permission of the presiding magistrate.

The multitude then proceeded to go into enclosures like cattle-pens, according to their tribes, and each tribe voted upon the measure under consideration. The decision was then taken not by the majority of the citizens, but by the majority of tribes, and it was announced by the heralds.

The Popular Assembly by centuries, *comitia centuriata*, was very similar in its character, except that instead of thirty-five

tribes there were, in the third century B.C., 373 centuries and there was a sacrifice as well as prayer to begin with. The centuries, originally military (like the "hundreds" of primitive English local government), had long since lost any connection with the number one hundred. Some contained only a few people; some very many. There were eighteen centuries of knights (equites), who were originally men in a position to maintain a horse and serve in the cavalry, though later the Roman knighthood, like knighthood in England, became a vulgar distinction of no military, mental, or moral significance. (These equites became a very important class as Rome traded and grew rich; for a time they were the real moving class in the community. There was as little chivalry left among them at last as there is in the "honours list" knights of England of to-day. The senators from about 200 B.C. were excluded from trade. The equites became, therefore, the great business men, *negotiatores*, and as *publicani* they farmed the taxes.) There were, in addition, eighty (!) centuries of wealthy men (worth over 100,000 asses), twenty-two of men worth over 75,000 asses, and so on. There were two centuries each of mechanics and musicians, and the *proletarii* made up one century. The decision in the *comitia centuriata* was by the majority of centuries.

Is it any wonder that with the growth of the Roman state and the complication of its business, power shifted back from such a Popular Assembly to the Senate, which was a comparatively compact body varying between three hundred as a minimum, and, at the utmost, nine hundred members (to which it was raised by Cæsar), men who had to do with affairs and big business, who knew each other more or less, and had a tradition of government and policy? The power of nominating and calling up the senators vested in the Republic first with the consuls, and when, some time after, "censors" were created, and many of the powers of the consuls had been transferred to them, they were also given this power. Appius Claudius, one of the first of the censors to exercise it, enrolled freedmen in the tribes and called sons of freedmen to the Senate. But this was a shocking arrangement to the conservative instincts of the time; the consuls would not recognize his Senate, and the next censors (304 B.C.) set aside his invitations. His attempt, however, serves to show how far the Senate had progressed from its original condition as a purely patrician body. Like the contemporary British House of Lords, it had become a gathering of big business men, energetic politicians, successful adventurers, great landowners, and the like; its patrician dignity

was a picturesque sham; but, unlike the British House of Lords, it was unchecked legally by anything but the inefficient Popular Assembly we have already described and by the tribunes elected by the plebeian assembly. Its legal control over the consuls and proconsuls was not great; it had little executive power; but in its prestige and experience lay its strength and influence. The interests of its members were naturally antagonistic to the interests of the general body of citizens, but for some generations that great mass of ordinary men was impotent to express its dissent from the proceedings of this oligarchy. Direct popular government of a state larger than a city state had already failed therefore in Italy, because as yet there was no public education, no press, and no representative system; it had failed through these mere mechanical difficulties, before the first Punic War. But its appearance is of enormous interest, as the first appearance of a set of problems with which the whole political intelligence of the world wrestles at the present time.

The Senate met usually in a Senate House in the Forum, but on special occasions it would be called to meet in this or that temple; and when it had to deal with foreign ambassadors or its own generals (who were not allowed to enter the city while in command of troops), it assembled in the Campus Martius outside the walls.

### § 3

#### *The Carthaginian Republic of Rich Men.*

It has been necessary to deal rather fully with the political structure of the Roman republic because of its immense importance to this day. The constitution of Carthage need not detain us long.

Italy under Rome was a republican country; Carthage was that much older thing, a republican city. She had an "empire," as Athens had an "empire," of tributary states which did not love her, and she had a great and naturally disloyal industrial slave population.

In the city there were two elected "kings," as Aristotle calls them, the *suffetes*, who were really equivalent to the Roman censors; their Semitic name was the same as that used for the Jewish *judges*. There was an impotent public assembly and a senate of leading personages; but two committees of this senate, nominally elected, but elected by easily controlled methods, the Hundred and Four and the Thirty, really constituted a close oligarchy of the richest and most influential men. They



told as little as they could to their allies and fellow-citizens, and consulted them as little as possible. They pursued schemes in which the welfare of Carthage was, no doubt, subordinated to the advantage of their own group. They were hostile to new men or novel measures, and confident that a sea ascendancy that had lasted two centuries must be in the very nature of things.

## § 4

*The First Punic War.*

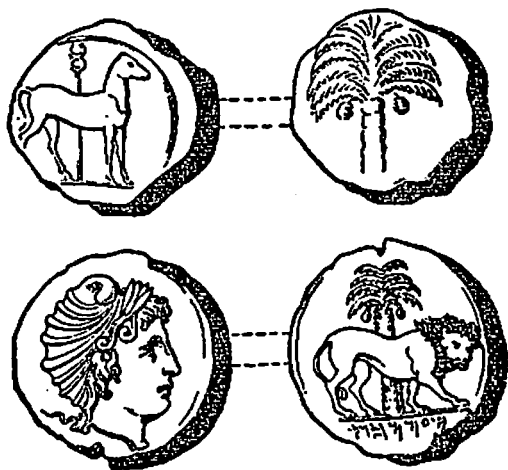
It would be interesting, and not altogether idle, to speculate what might have happened to mankind if Rome and Carthage could have settled their differences and made a permanent alliance in the western world. If Alexander the Great had lived, he might have come westward and driven these two powers into such a fusion of interests. But that would not have suited the private schemes and splendours of the Carthaginian oligarchy, and the new Senate of greater Rome was now growing fond of the taste of plunder and casting covetous eyes across the Straits of Messina upon the Carthaginian possessions in Sicily. They were covetous, but they were afraid of the Carthaginian sea-power. Roman popular "patriotism," however, was also jealous and fearful of these Carthaginians, and less inclined to count the cost of a conflict. The alliance Pyrrhus had forced upon Rome and Carthage held good for eleven years, but Rome was ripe for what is called in modern political jargon an "offensive defensive" war. The occasion arose in 264 B.C.

At that time Sicily was not completely in Carthaginian hands. The eastward end was still under the power of the Greek king of Syracuse, Hiero, a successor of that Dionysius to whom Plato had gone as resident court philosopher. A band of mercenaries who had been in the service of Syracuse seized upon Messina (289 B.C.), and raided the trade of Syracuse so that at last Hiero was forced to take measures to suppress them (270 B.C.). Thereupon Carthage, which was also vitally concerned in the suppression of piracy, came to his aid, and put in a Carthaginian garrison at Messina. This was an altogether justifiable proceeding. Now that Tyre had been destroyed, the only capable guardian of sea law in the Mediterranean was Carthage, and the suppression of piracy was her task by habit as well as by tradition.

The pirates of Messina appealed to Rome, and the accumu-

lating jealousy and fear of Carthage decided the Roman people to help them. An expedition was dispatched to Messina under the consul Appius Claudius (the third Appius Claudius we have had to mention in this history).

So began the first of the most wasteful and disastrous series of wars that has ever darkened the history of mankind. But this is how one historian, soaked with the fantastic political ideas of our times, is pleased to write of this evil expedition: "The Romans knew they were entering on war with Carthage;



*Carthaginian coins.*

but the political instincts of the people were right, for a Carthaginian garrison on the Sicilian Straits would have been a dangerous menace to the peace of Italy." So they protected the peace of Italy from this "menace" by a war that lasted nearly a quarter of a century! They wrecked their own slowly acquired political *moral* in the process.

The Romans captured Messina, and Hiero deserted from the Carthaginians to the Romans. Then for some time the struggle centred upon the town Agrigentum. This the Romans besieged, and a period of trench warfare ensued. Both sides suffered greatly from plague and irregular supplies; the Romans lost 30,000 men; but in the end (262 B.C.) the Carthaginians evacuated the place and retired to their fortified towns on the western coast of the island, of which Lilybæum was the chief. These they could supply easily from the African mainland, and, as

long as their sea ascendancy held, they could exhaust any Roman effort against them.

And now a new and very extraordinary phase of the war began. The Romans came out upon the sea, and, to the astonishment of the Carthaginians and themselves, defeated the Carthaginian fleet. Since the days of Salamis there had been a considerable development of naval architecture. Then the ruling type of battleship was a trireme, a galley with three banks (rows) of oars; now the leading Carthaginian battleship was a quinquereme, a much bigger galley with five banks of oars, which could ram or shear the oars of any feebler vessel. The Romans had come into the war with no such shipping. Now they set to work to build quinqueremes, being helped, it is said, in their designing by one of these Carthaginian vessels coming ashore. In two months they built a hundred quinqueremes and thirty triremes. But they had no skilled navigators, no experienced oarsmen, and these deficiencies they remedied partly with the assistance of their Greek allies and partly by the invention of new tactics. Instead of relying upon ramming or breaking the oars of the adversary, which demanded more seamanship than they possessed, they decided to board the enemy, and they constructed a sort of long draw-bridge on their ships, held up to a mast by a pulley, and with grappling-hooks and spikes at the end. They also loaded their galleys with soldiers. Then, as the Carthaginian rammed or swept alongside, this *corvus*, as it was called, could be let down and the boarders could swarm aboard him.

Simple as this device was, it proved a complete success. It changed the course of the war and the fate of the world. The small amount of invention needed to counteract the *corvus* was not apparently within the compass of the Carthaginian rulers. At the battle of Mylæ (260 B.C.) the Romans gained their first naval victory and captured or destroyed fifty vessels. At the great battle of Ecnomus (256 B.C.), "probably the greatest naval engagement of antiquity,"<sup>1</sup> in which seven or eight hundred big ships were engaged, the Carthaginians showed that they had learnt nothing from their former disaster. According to rule they out-maneuvred and should have defeated the Romans, but the *corvus* again defeated them. The Romans sank thirty vessels and captured sixty-four.

Thereafter the war was continued with violent fluctuations of fortune, but with a continuous demonstration of the greater energy, solidarity, and initiative of the Romans. After

<sup>1</sup> J. Wells, *Short History of Rome to the Death of Augustus*,

Encomus the Romans invaded Africa by sea, and sent an insufficiently supported army, which after many successes and the capture of Tunis (within ten miles of Carthage) was completely defeated. They lost their sea ascendancy through a storm, and regained it by building a second fleet of two hundred and twenty ships within three months. They captured Palermo, and defeated a great Carthaginian army there (251 B.C.), capturing one hundred and four elephants, and making such a triumphal procession into Rome as that city had never seen before. They made an unsuccessful siege of Lilybæum, the chief surviving Carthaginian stronghold in Sicily. They lost their second fleet in a great naval battle at Drepanum (249 B.C.), losing one hundred and eighty out of two hundred and ten vessels; and a third fleet of one hundred and twenty battleships and eight hundred transports was lost in the same year partly in battle and partly in a storm.

For seven years a sort of war went on between the nearly exhausted combatants, a war of raids and feeble sieges, during which the Carthaginians had the best of it at sea. Then by a last supreme effort Rome launched a fourth fleet of two hundred keels, and defeated the last strength of the Carthaginians at the battle of the Ægatian Isles (241 B.C.)—after which Carthage (240 B.C.) sued for peace.

By the terms of this peace, all Sicily, except for the dominions of Hiero of Syracuse, became an "estate" of the Roman people. There was no such process of assimilation as had been practised in Italy; Sicily became a conquered province, paying tribute and yielding profit like the provinces of the older empires. And, in addition, Carthage paid a war indemnity of 3,200 talents (rather more than £2,000,000).

## § 5

### *Cato the Elder and the Spirit of Cato.*

For twenty-two years there was peace between Rome and Carthage. It was peace without prosperity. Both combatants were suffering from the want and disorganization that follow naturally and necessarily upon all great wars. The territories of Carthage seethed with violent disorder; the returning soldiers could not get their pay, and mutinied and looted; the land went uncultivated. We read of horrible cruelties in the suppression of these troubles by Hamilcar, the Carthaginian general; of men being crucified by the thousand. Sardinia and Corsica revolted. The "peace of Italy" was scarcely happier. The Gauls rose

and marched south; they were defeated, and 40,000 of them killed at Telamon. It is manifest that Italy was incomplete until it reached the Alps. Roman colonies were planted in the valley of the Po, and the great northward artery, the Via Flaminia, was begun. But it shows the moral and intellectual degradation of this post-war period, that, when the Gauls were threatening Rome, human sacrifices were proposed and carried out. The old Carthaginian sea law was broken up—it may have been selfish and monopolistic, but it was at least orderly—the Adriatic swarmed with Illyrian pirates, and, as the result of a quarrel arising out of this state of affairs, Illyria, after two wars, had to be annexed as a second "province." By sending expeditions to annex Sardinia and Corsica, which were Carthaginian provinces in revolt, the Romans prepared the way for the Second Punic War.

The First Punic War had tested and demonstrated the relative strength of Rome, and Carthage. With a little more wisdom on either side, with a little more magnanimity on the part of Rome, there need never have been a renewal of the struggle. But Rome was an ungracious conqueror. She seized Corsica and Sardinia on no just grounds, she increased the indemnity by 1,200 talents, she set a limit, the Ebro, to Carthaginian developments in Spain. There was a strong party in Carthage, led by Hanno, for the propitiation of Rome; but it was natural that many Carthaginians should come to regard their natural adversary with a despairing hatred.

Hatred is one of the passions that can master a life, and there is a type of temperament very prone to it, ready to see life in terms of vindictive melodrama, ready to find stimulus and satisfaction in frightful demonstrations of "justice" and revenge. The fears and jealousies of the squatting-place and the cave still bear their dark blossoms in our lives; we are not four hundred generations yet from the old Stone Age. Great wars, as all Europe knows, give this "hating" temperament the utmost scope, and the greed and pride and cruelty that the First Punic War had released were now producing a rich crop of anti-foreign monomania. The outstanding figure upon the side of Carthage was a great general and administrator, Hamilcar Barca, who now set himself to circumvent and shatter Rome. He was the father-in-law of Hasdrubal and the father of a boy Hannibal, destined to be the most dreaded enemy that ever scared the Roman Senate. The most obvious course before Carthage was the reconstruction of its fleet and naval administration, and the recovery of sea power, but this, it would seem, Hamilcar

could not effect. As an alternative he resolved to organize Spain as the base of a land attack upon Italy. He went to Spain as governor in 236 B.C., and Hannibal related afterwards that his father then—he was a boy of eleven—made him vow deathless hostility to the Roman power.

This quasi-insane concentration of the gifts and lives of the Barca family upon revenge is but one instance of the narrowing and embitterment of life that the stresses and universal sense of insecurity of this great struggle produced in the minds of men. A quarter of a century of war had left the whole western world miserable and harsh. While the eleven-year-old Hannibal was taking his vow of undying hatred, there was running about a farmhouse of Tusculum a small but probably very disagreeable child of two, named Marcus Porcius Cato. This boy lived to be eighty-five years old, and his ruling passion seems to have been hatred for any human happiness

but his own. He was a good soldier, and had a successful political career. He held a command in Spain, and distinguished himself by his cruelties. He posed as a champion of religion and public morality, and under this convenient cloak carried on a lifelong war against everything that was young, gracious, or pleasant. Whoever roused his jealousy incurred his moral disapproval. He was energetic in the support and administration of all laws against dress, against the personal adornment of women, against entertainments and free discussion. He was so fortunate as to be made censor, which gave him great power over the private lives of public people. He was thus able to ruin public opponents through private scandals. He expelled Manlius from the Senate for giving his wife a kiss in the daytime in the sight of their daughter. He persecuted Greek literature, about which, until late in life, he was totally ignorant. Then he read and admired Demosthenes. He wrote in Latin upon agriculture and the ancient and lost virtues of Rome. From these writings much light is thrown upon his qualities. One of his maxims was that when a slave was not sleeping he should be working. Another was that old



Roman As (bronze, 4<sup>th</sup> Cent. B.C. Half size)