

# **THE STORY OF THE ROMANS**



# **THE STORY OF THE ROMANS**

**BY**

**H. A. GUERBER**



**YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS**  
**CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA**

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## PREFACE

THIS elementary history of Rome, since it is intended for very young readers, has been related as simply and directly as possible. The aim is not only to instruct, but to interest, school children, and to enable them, as it were in play, to gain a fair idea of the people and city of which they will hear so much.

This book is also planned to serve as a general introduction to the study of Latin, which most pupils begin before they have had time to study history. With little, if any, knowledge of the people who spoke the language they are learning, children cannot be expected to take so lively an interest in the study as they would if they knew more. Many a schoolboy is plunged into the Commentaries of Cæsar before having any idea of the life of that great man; and, as the information gained about him through the Latin is necessarily acquired piecemeal and slowly, it is no great wonder that Cæsar has been vaguely, yet vindictively, stigmatized as “the fellow who fought a lot of battles just so he could plague boys.”

By gaining a general idea of the great heroes of Roman history, a child's enthusiasm can be so roused that Latin will be connected ever after—as it

should be—with a lively recollection of the great men who spoke and wrote it.

To secure this end, the writer has not only told the main facts of Roman history, but has woven in the narrative many of the mythical and picturesque tales which, however untrue, form an important part of classical history, literature, and art. Government, laws, customs, etc. have been only lightly touched upon, because children are most interested in the sayings and doings of people.

This volume may be used merely as a reader or first history text-book, but the teacher will find that, like “The Story of the Greeks,” it can also serve as a fund of stories for oral or written reproduction, and as an aid to the study of European geography.

The writer trusts that “The Story of the Romans” may prove sufficiently interesting to young readers to make them look forward to reading and learning more about the people to whom they are now introduced.

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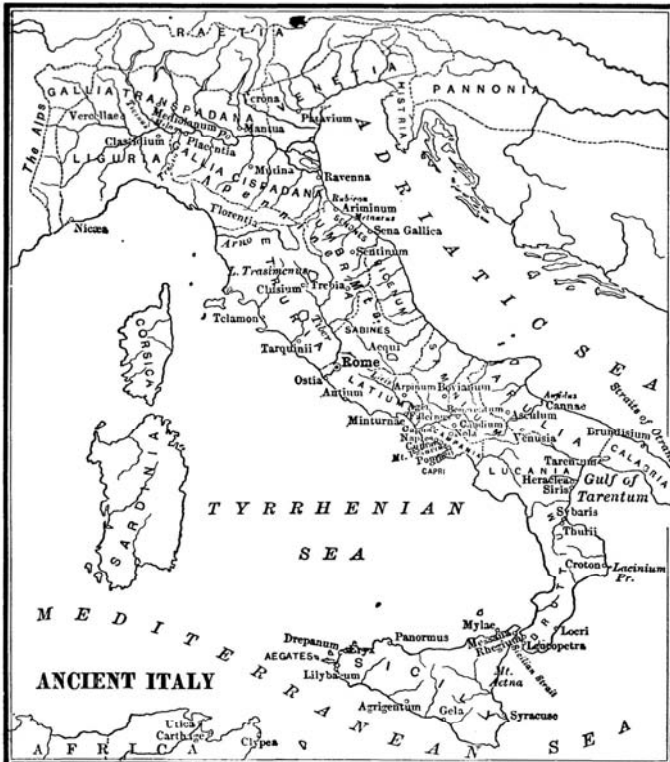
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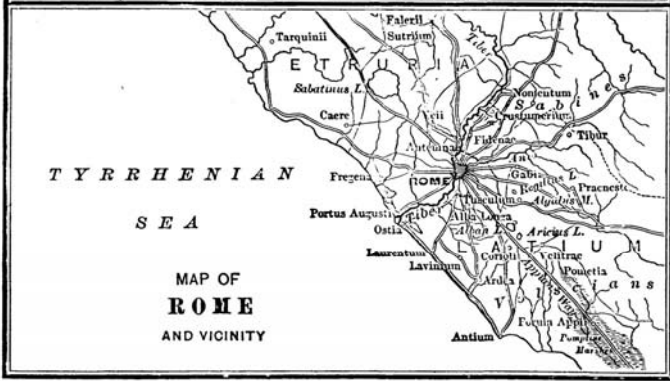
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**ANCIENT ITALY**



**MAP OF  
ROME  
AND VICINITY**







## CHAPTER I

# THE FIRST SETTLERS

**Y**OU are now going to hear about the building of Rome, the capital of Italy, in Europe. By looking at your maps, you will soon find in Europe a peninsula, shaped somewhat like a boot, and surrounded on three sides by the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas. This peninsula is Italy. To the north are the snow-topped Alps, a chain of high mountains which separate this country from the rest of Europe; and through the peninsula run the Apennines, a less lofty mountain range.

As Italy is in the southern part of Europe, it has a very mild and delightful climate. The tall mountains in the north prevent the cold winds from sweeping down upon it, and many plants which you see here in hothouses grow there in the open ground.

Orange and almond trees, camellias and pomegranates, are all covered with fruit or flowers, and the vine and olive both yield rich harvests in this beautiful land. The soil is so rich that people do not

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need to work very hard in order to have fine crops, and, as the weather is generally clear, they can live out of doors almost all the year round.

As the climate is so pleasant, the land so fertile, the skies so blue, and the views so beautiful, travelers have always liked to visit Italy, and have spoken about its charms to all they met. It is no wonder, therefore, that many people have gone to settle there, and you will easily understand that the whole country was occupied long, long ago.

So many years ago that no one can really tell when it was, Italy was already inhabited by a people who, judging from what we have heard of them, must once have lived in Central Asia. These people were probably crowded at home, and left their native land in search of good pasture for their cattle, and a fertile country where they might dwell.

They traveled on and on, day after day, and coming finally to the great mountains, some of them climbed up to see what was on the other side. When they beheld the green valleys of Italy, and saw how beautiful the country was, they told their companions, and all made haste to cross the mountains.

These people traveled on foot, with their families, cattle, and all their household goods; and they were very rude and uncivilized. Little by little, however, they learned to build houses, to cook their food, to make rude pottery from the clay they found in the valleys, to spin and weave the wool from their



## *THE FIRST SETTLERS*

sheep, and to fashion this homemade stuff into garments.

Although each family at first lived by itself, they soon discovered that if several families joined together, they could cultivate the ground better, could hunt more successfully, and that in time of danger they could more easily defend themselves.

Thus several families would form a tribe under the strongest and cleverest man among them, whom they chose as their leader. These leaders selected the best place for them to settle in, told them what to do in time of war, and thus became chiefs or kings over their own tribes.

There were a number of such little kingdoms scattered throughout Italy, and as the people grew richer, wiser, and more numerous, they occupied more and more land.

Now it was from some of these tribes that the Romans were mostly descended. Their city became in time the greatest in the world, and many histories have been written about it; but none of them were begun until several centuries after Rome was founded. Hardly any records had been kept of the distant past, and the best that could be done was to write down some stories that had been told by parents to their children, and thus had been preserved from generation to generation. These had become much changed by being told so many times, and they were connected and rounded out by pure guesswork; but the whole was soon accepted as true, and was believed in by every one for ages.

## *THE STORY OF THE ROMANS*

You will now read the story from the beginning, as the Romans themselves told it. Many of the events in the first part of it never really happened; but no one can tell exactly where the mere stories leave off, and the true history begins. And every well-educated person is expected to know the whole story.

## CHAPTER II

# THE ESCAPE FROM THE BURNING CITY

**I**N the days when the Greeks were fighting against Troy,—that great city in Asia Minor which they besieged for ten years,—the people in Italy were divided into several small kingdoms, among which were those of the Etruscans and the Latins.

The Etruscans occupied the northern part of Italy, or the top of the boot, and called their country Etruria, while the Latins dwelt farther south, in a province named Latium. Each of these kingdoms had its own leader or king, whom all the people obeyed.

Now the King of Latium in those days was Latinus. He had a beautiful daughter called Lavinia, and as soon as she was old enough to marry, he thought of getting her a good husband. One night King Latinus dreamed that the gods of his country came and spoke to him, telling him to be sure and give his daughter in marriage to a stranger whom they would send to Latium.

## THE STORY OF THE ROMANS

When Latinus awoke, he was very much troubled, because his wife was anxious that Lavinia should marry Turnus, a neighboring king. The queen soon persuaded Latinus to allow this engagement to take place, but he insisted that the marriage should be postponed for some time longer.

In the mean while the city of Troy had at last fallen into the hands of the Greeks. The brave Trojans were attacked by night, and only a few among them managed to escape death.

Among these few, however, there was a prince named Æneas. His father was Anchises, the cousin of the King of Troy, and his mother was Venus, the goddess of beauty. As Venus did not want her son to die with the rest of the Trojans, she appeared to him during the fatal night when the Greeks had secretly entered Troy, and were plundering and burning the houses. She showed him that resistance would be useless, and bade him flee from the city, with all his family.

Æneas had been taught to obey every word the gods said; so he at once stopped fighting, and hurried back to his house. Then he lifted his poor old father up on his back, took his little son Iulus by the hand, and called to his wife and servants to follow him.

This strange group of fugitives quickly passed out of the city, where the flames were now rising on all sides, and, under cover of the darkness, made their way to a temple near by. Here they paused to

## *THE ESCAPE FROM THE BURNING CITY*

rest, and Æneas counted his followers to make sure that they were all there.

Imagine his sorrow when he found that his beloved wife was missing! He rushed back into the burning city, and searched everywhere for her, calling her name aloud, in spite of the danger. At last he met some one who told him that his wife had been killed, and that she wished him to escape to a better country, where he should find a new kingdom, and where a new wife should take her place, and make him happy once more.

Æneas sorrowfully turned back, and at the temple found that his followers had been joined by others who had managed to escape unseen amid the smoke and darkness. He led the way to a place of safety, and not long afterwards set sail with his little band of faithful Trojans, who all promised to obey and follow him wherever he went.

The ships drifted aimlessly for a long time, because Æneas had no idea where he was to find his new kingdom. Twice he tried to settle down, but each time something happened to drive him away. Finally he asked the advice of his father, Anchises, a wise and pious old man, who had snatched up his gods when he left his house, and had brought them with him on the ship.

The old man now said that he would consult these images, and he offered them a sacrifice. The next night Æneas dreamed that the gods spoke to him and told him that he should go to Italy, a land whence one of his ancestors had come to Troy.

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The little band therefore sailed for the west, although it was foretold that they would have to suffer many hardships ere they could reach Italy, and that they would not be able to settle until they had eaten the very boards upon which their food was served.

As Æneas was a brave man, the prospect of a terrible famine did not fill his heart with despair, and he calmly sailed on in search of a home. There are almost countless islands in that part of the Mediterranean, and thus the boats were seldom out of sight of land. They stopped from time to time, but Æneas did not dare to settle anywhere, because he thought the gods opposed it; and he always urged his people to embark again and sail on.

The Trojans were by this time very tired of sailing, but they loved Æneas so well that they gladly followed him, although they would have liked to make their homes in the islands they visited.

## CHAPTER III

### THE CLEVER TRICK

**A**FTER many days of sailing thus on the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and after much suffering in the different islands where they stopped to rest, Æneas and his companions came at last to the island of Sicily. This, as you will see on your maps, is a three-cornered piece of land, near the toe of the boot formed by the Italian peninsula. While the Trojans were resting here, poor old Anchises died, and was buried by his sorrowing son. But as soon as the funeral rites were ended, Æneas prepared to sail away, for he knew that this was not the place where he was to make his new home.

Unfortunately for Æneas, some of the gods whom his people had so long worshiped had taken a dislike to all the Trojan race. It was these gods who made him suffer so much, and one of them now stirred up a terrible tempest.

The boats were tossed up and down on the waves, and driven apart by the fierce winds, and some of them sank under the water. The other vessels would have been dashed to pieces, and all the men on board would have perished, had not a

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second god interfered in favor of Æneas, and suddenly stilled the awful storm.

The wind was so high, the darkness so great, and the lightning flashes so blinding, that Æneas had lost his bearings. When the storm was over, he sailed for the nearest land, and came to the coast of what is now Tunis; but he had no idea where he was. He therefore bade his companions remain on the ships, while he went ashore with only one man,—the faithful Achates, who always went with him, and was his devoted friend. So these two men started out and began cautiously to explore the country where they had landed, trying to find some one who could tell them where they were.



MEETING OF ÆNEAS AND VENUS

Before long they met a beautiful woman. This was Venus, the mother of Æneas, in disguise. She had come there to tell her son all about the place



## THE CLEVER TRICK

where he had landed, and to give him some good advice; but she did not wish to have him know her at first.

Venus, therefore, began to speak to Æneas as if he were a stranger, and in answer to his questions said that he had landed in Africa, near the new city of Carthage. This town, she said, was ruled by Dido, a beautiful queen, who had also come from the coast of Asia, but from a spot southeast of the ruined city of Troy.

Dido's husband had been murdered by her brother, and she had fled in the night, upon one of her vessels, carrying off all her treasures; for she knew that her brother would soon try to kill her also. Many of her faithful subjects followed her, swearing that they would settle wherever she wished, and promising to help her found a new kingdom of which she should be queen.

When Dido reached the coast of Africa, near the present city of Tunis, and saw how beautiful the country seemed, she wished to settle there; but the people refused to sell her the land on which to build a city. She tried in vain to persuade them, and finally made up her mind to secure the land by a clever trick. She therefore asked the people if they would be willing to sell her as much land as an oxhide would inclose. The rude people were quite ready to part with a few measures of dirt; so the bargain was at once made.

Imagine their surprise, however, when Dido had a large ox skin cut up into very narrow strips,

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drew these around a vast tract of land, and claimed it as her own! As the land had certainly been inclosed by an oxhide, they could not dispute her right to it, and Dido at once began to build a beautiful city, about which you will hear many tales.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE BOARDS ARE EATEN

VENUS went away after telling her son the story of the oxhide and of the founding of Carthage; and Æneas, following her advice, then walked on to the city. Here he was kindly received by the beautiful queen, who made him and all his companions welcome in her palace. While there Æneas told her all about the long siege of Troy, the taking of the city, his escape by night, his long wanderings on the sea, and his shipwreck near her city.

These stories greatly interested Dido, and she kept Æneas in her palace almost a whole year. As she had fallen in love with him, she would have liked to keep him there always; but the gods had decided that Æneas should again set sail, and one day they sent him orders to depart at once.

Æneas knew that Dido would do her best to keep him in Carthage, so he stole away while she slept, without even bidding her good-by. When she awoke and asked for him his ships were almost out of sight.

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In her grief at his departure, Dido made up her mind to die. She gave orders that all the things he had used during his visit should be placed on a great pile of wood. Then she set fire to it with her own hand, and, stabbing herself, sprang into the flames, where she died.

Of course we know that such a deed is a crime; but in the days of Queen Dido, people had not learned many of the things that are now taught even to children, and they thought it was very brave to take one's own life.

Æneas and his companions, having left Carthage, now sailed back to Sicily, where they visited the tomb of Anchises just one year after his death. To show respect for his father's memory, Æneas ordered the celebration of games, as was the custom among the Trojans. The men strove with one another in a boat race, a foot race, in boxing and archery matches; and the boys took part in a drill and sham battle on horseback.

After the games were over, the Trojans coasted along the shore of Italy for some time, and finally came to the mouth of the Tiber River. When Æneas saw the fair country that stretched out before him, he bade his men sail up the stream, and towards evening they all went ashore to cook their food. Some flat cakes were baked, and as they had no dishes with them, Iulus proposed that these should serve as plates.

The men all sat down around the fire; and Iulus, who was very hungry indeed, quickly ate his

## *THE BOARDS ARE EATEN*

share of meat, and then devoured the cake on which it had been placed. As he swallowed the last mouthful he cried: "Just see how hungry I was! I have eaten even the board on which my meal was served!"

At these words Æneas sprang to his feet, and cried that the prophecy was fulfilled at last, and that now they could settle in the beautiful country they had reached. The next day they were welcomed by Latinus, King of Latium, who, after hearing their story, remembered his dream, and promised that Æneas should have his daughter Lavinia in marriage.

## CHAPTER V

### THE WOLF AND THE TWINS

**A**LTHOUGH Æneas had been so kindly welcomed to Latium by the king, his troubles were not yet ended. Turnus, the young king who had been engaged to Lavinia, was angry at her being given to another, and, in the hope of winning her still, he declared war against the Trojan strangers.

During the war Æneas and Turnus both won much glory by their courage. At last they met in single combat, in which Turnus was conquered and slain; and Æneas, having thus got rid of his rival, married the fair princess.

He then settled in Latium, where he built a city which was called Lavinium, in honor of his wife. Some time after, Æneas fell in battle and was succeeded by his sons. The Trojans and Latins were now united, and during the next four hundred years the descendants of Æneas continued to rule over them; for this was the kingdom which the gods had promised him when he fled from Troy.

The throne of Latium finally came to Numitor, a good and wise monarch. He had a son

## THE WOLF AND THE TWINS

and a daughter, and little suspected that any one would harm either of them.

Unfortunately for him, however, his brother Amulius was anxious to secure the throne. He took advantage of Numitor's confidence, and, having driven his brother away, killed his nephew, and forced his niece, Rhea Sylvia, to become a servant of the goddess Vesta.



A VESTAL VIRGIN

The girls who served this goddess were called Vestal Virgins. They were obliged to remain in her temple for thirty years, and were not allowed to marry until their time of service was ended. They watched over a sacred fire in the temple, to prevent

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its ever going out, because such an event was expected to bring misfortune upon the people.

If any Vestal Virgin proved careless, and allowed the sacred fire to go out, or if she failed to keep her vow to remain single, she was punished by being buried alive. With such a terrible fate in view, you can easily understand that the girls were very obedient, and Amulius thought that there was no danger of his niece's marrying as long as she served Vesta.

We are told, however, that Mars, the god of war, once came down upon earth. He saw the lovely Rhea Sylvia, fell in love with her, wooed her secretly, and finally persuaded her to marry him without telling any one about it.

For some time all went well, and no one suspected that Rhea Sylvia, the Vestal Virgin, had married the god of war. But one day a messenger came to tell Amulius that his niece was the mother of twin sons.

The king flew into a passion at this news, and vainly tried to discover the name of Rhea Sylvia's husband. She refused to tell it, and Amulius gave orders that she should be buried alive. Her twin children, Romulus and Remus, were also condemned to die; but, instead of burying them alive with their mother, Amulius had them placed in their cradle, and set adrift on the Tiber River.

The king thought that the babes would float out to sea, where they would surely perish; but the cradle drifted ashore before it had gone far. There



## *THE WOLF AND THE TWINS*

the cries of the hungry children were heard by a she-wolf. This poor beast had just lost her cubs, which a cruel hunter had killed. So instead of devouring the babies, the she-wolf suckled them as if they were the cubs she had lost; and the Romans used to tell their children that a woodpecker brought the twins fresh berries to eat.

Thus kept alive by the care of a wolf and a bird, the children remained on the edge of the river, until a shepherd passed that way. He heard a strange noise in a thicket, and, on going there to see what was the matter, found the children with the wolf. Of course the shepherd was greatly surprised at this sight; but he took pity on the poor babies, and carried them home to his wife, who brought them up.

## CHAPTER VI

### ROMULUS BUILDS ROME

**R**EMUS and Romulus, the twins who had been nursed by the she-wolf, grew up among the shepherds. They were tall and strong, and so brave that all their companions were ready to follow them anywhere. One day, when they were watching their flocks on the hillside, their pasture was claimed by the shepherds who were working for Numitor.

The young men were angry at this, and as the shepherds would not go away, they began to fight. As they were only two against many, they were soon made prisoners, and were led before Numitor.

Their strong resemblance to the royal family roused the old man's suspicions. He began to question them, and soon the young men found out who they were. Then they called together a few of their bravest companions, and entered the city of Alba, where Amulius dwelt. The unjust king, taken by surprise, was easily killed; and the brothers made haste to place their grandfather, Numitor, again on the throne.

## *ROMULUS BUILDS ROME*

Remus and Romulus were too restless and fond of adventure to enjoy the quiet life at Alba, so they soon left their grandfather's court to found a kingdom of their own. They had decided that they would settle in the northern part of Latium, on the banks of the Tiber, in a place where seven hills rose above the surrounding plain. Here the two brothers said that they would build their future city.

Before beginning, however, they thought it would be well to give the city a name. Each wanted the honor of naming it, and each wanted to rule over it when it was built. As they were twins, neither was willing to give up to the other, and as they were both hot-tempered and obstinate, they soon began to quarrel.

Their companions then suggested that they should stand on separate hills the next day, and let the gods decide the question by a sign from the heavens. Remus, watching the sky carefully, suddenly cried that he saw six vultures. A moment later Romulus exclaimed that he could see twelve; so the naming of the city was awarded to him, and he said that it should be called Rome.

The next thing was to draw a furrow all around the hill chosen as the most favorable site. The name of this hill was the Palatine. Romulus, therefore, harnessed a bullock and a heifer together, and began to plow the place where the wall of the town was to be built. Remus, disappointed in his hopes of claiming the city, began to taunt his brother, and, in a fit of anger, Romulus killed him.

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Although this was a horrible crime, Romulus felt no remorse, and went on building his capital. All the hot-headed and discontented men of the neighboring kingdoms soon joined him; and the new city, which was founded seven hundred and fifty-three years before Christ, thus became the home of lawless men.

The city of Rome was at first composed of a series of mud huts, and, as Romulus had been brought up among shepherds, he was quite satisfied with a palace thatched with rushes. As the number of his subjects increased, however, the town grew larger and richer, and before long it became a prosperous city, covering two hills instead of one. On the second hill the Romans built a fortress, or citadel, which was perched on top of great rocks, and was the safest place in case of an attack by an enemy.

This is the city of which you are going to read the story. You will learn in these pages how it grew in wealth and power until it finally became the most important place in the world, and won for itself the name of the Eternal City.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MAIDENS CARRIED OFF

AS all the robbers, murderers, and runaway slaves of the kingdoms near by had come to settle in Rome, there were soon plenty of men there. Only a few of them, however, had wives, so women were very scarce indeed. The Romans, anxious to secure wives, tried to coax the girls of the neighboring states to marry them; but as they had the reputation of being fierce and lawless, their wooing was all in vain.

Romulus knew that the men would soon leave him if they could not have wives, so he resolved to help them get by a trick what they could not secure by fair means. Sending out trumpeters into all the neighboring towns and villages, he invited the people to come to Rome and see the games which the Romans were going to celebrate in honor of one of their gods.

As these games were wrestling and boxing matches, horse and foot races, and many other tests of strength and skill, all the people were anxious to see them; so they came to Rome in crowds, unarmed and in holiday attire. Whole families came to see the

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fun, and among the spectators were many of the young women whom the Romans wanted for wives.

Romulus waited until the games were well under way. Then he suddenly gave a signal, and all the young Romans caught up the girls in their arms and carried them off to the houses, in spite of their cries and struggles.

The fathers, brothers, and lovers of the captive maidens would gladly have defended them; but they had come to the games unarmed, and could not strike a blow. As the Romans refused to give up the girls, they rushed home for their weapons, but when they came back, the gates of Rome were closed.

While these men were raging outside the city, the captive maidens had been forced to marry their captors, who now vowed that no one should rob them of their newly won wives, and prepared to resist every attack. Most of the women that had been thus won came from some Sabine villages; and the Romans had easy work to conquer all their enemies until they were called upon to fight the Sabines. The war with them lasted a long time, for neither side was much stronger than the other.

At last, in the third year, the Sabines secured an entrance to the citadel by bribing Tarpeia, the daughter of the gate keeper. This girl was so vain, and so fond of ornaments, that she would have done anything to get some. She therefore promised to open the gates, and let the Sabine warriors enter during the night, if each of them would give her

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what he wore on his left arm, meaning a broad armlet of gold.



TARPEIA

The Sabines promised to give her all she asked, and Tarpeia opened the gates. As the warriors filed past her, she claimed her reward; and each man, scorning her for her meanness, flung the heavy bronze buckler, which he also wore on his left arm, straight at her.

Tarpeia sank to the ground at the first blow, and was crushed to death under the weight of the heavy shields. She fell at the foot of a steep rock, or cliff, which has ever since been known as the Tarpeian Rock. From the top of this cliff, the Romans used to hurl their criminals, so that they

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might be killed by the fall. In this way many other persons came to die on the spot where the faithless girl had once stood, when she offered to sell the city to the enemy for the sake of a few trinkets.



## CHAPTER VIII

# UNION OF SABINES AND ROMANS

**T**HE Sabine army had taken the citadel, thanks to Tarpeia's vanity; and on the next day there was a desperate fight between them and the Romans who lived on the Palatine hill. First the Romans and then the Sabines were beaten back; and finally both sides paused to rest.

The battle was about to begin again, and the two armies were only a few feet apart, threatening each other with raised weapons and fiery glances, when all at once the women rushed out of their houses, and flung themselves between the warriors.

In frantic terror for the lives of their husbands on one side, and of their fathers and brothers on the other, they wildly besought them not to fight. Those who had little children held them up between the lines of soldiers, and the sight of these innocent babes disarmed the rage of both parties.

Instead of fighting any more, therefore, the Romans and Sabines agreed to lay down their arms and to become friends. A treaty was made, whereby

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the Sabines were invited to come and live in Rome, and Romulus even agreed to share his throne with their king, Tatius.

Thus the two rival nations became one, and when Tatius died, the Sabines were quite willing to obey Romulus, who was, at first, an excellent king, and made many wise laws.

As it was too great a task for him to govern the unruly people alone, Romulus soon formed an assembly of the oldest and most respected men, to whom he gave the name of senators. They were at first the advisers of the king; but in later times they had the right to make laws for the good of the people, and to see that these laws were obeyed.

The younger and more active men were named cavaliers, or knights. These were the men who fought as horsemen in time of war; but before long the name was given only to those who had a certain amount of wealth.

The sons and relatives of the senators and knights, and all the earliest inhabitants of Rome, received also the name of Patricians, or nobles; while the people whom they had conquered, or who came to dwell there later, were called Plebeians, or ordinary people.

## CHAPTER IX

# DEATH OF ROMULUS

**W**E are told that Romulus reigned over the Romans for thirty-seven years. Although he was at first a very good ruler, he soon grew proud and cruel. As he was king, he wanted to have his own way in everything; and as he soon ceased to care whether what he wished would be good for the Romans, they began to dislike him.

A man who thinks only of himself can have no real friends, and Romulus soon stood alone. But although the people hated him, they feared him too much to defy him openly and show him their displeasure.

One day, when Romulus and all the people had gone to the plain beyond the citadel, a sudden storm arose. The darkness became so great that the people fled in terror, leaving the senators and king to look out for themselves.

When the storm was over, the Romans all came back again. To their surprise, however, Romulus did not appear. He was sent for, but no one could find him. The people were amazed, and

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were all talking about his sudden disappearance, and wondering what could have become of him, when one of the senators stood up and called for silence.

As soon as he could make himself heard, this man told the assembled Romans that he had seen Romulus being carried up to heaven. The king, he said, had called out that he was going to live with the gods, and wished his people to worship him under the name of Quirinus.

The Romans in those days were so ignorant and superstitious that they believed all this man told them. They therefore built a temple on the hill whence the senator said that Romulus had risen to heaven. This hill was called Mount Quirinal, and here for many years the Romans worshiped Romulus, the founder of their city, and their first king, whom they now called Quirinus.

In later times the Romans did not believe that Romulus was carried up to heaven; and many of them thought that the senators were so tired of the king's tyranny that they murdered him during the storm, cut his body to pieces, and carried it off, hidden under their long mantles.

## CHAPTER X

# THE STRANGE SIGNS OF THE ROMANS

**A**LTHOUGH the senator had told the Romans that Romulus had gone, never to return, they did not at once elect another king. They were afraid that their first ruler might yet come back, and so they let the senate govern the city for a while alone.

As time passed on without bringing any news of the missing king, they little by little grew sure that he would never return, and finally they elected a new ruler. This was Numa Pompilius, a Sabine, who was wise, just, gentle, and very good.

The new king of Rome was a pious man, and he built many temples for the worship of the gods. One of these was round, and was set aside for the service of Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, whose fire was guarded night and day by the Vestal Virgins.

Numa also built a square temple, in honor of the double-faced god Janus. This god was supposed to be the patron of all beginnings, and it is for this reason that the first month of the year was called January, or the month of Janus.

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The Temple of Janus was built in the form of a gateway; and the king ordered that its doors should be open in time of war, so that the people could go in freely to pray, and closed only in time of peace, when they felt no need of the god's help.

The second king of Rome was so wise that many people fancied that he was advised by a nymph, or water fairy, called Egeria. They said that this nymph lived in a fountain near Rome, in a beautiful spot which the king liked to visit; and whenever he went there to be quiet and think, they declared that it was to consult Egeria.

Numa Pompilius was not at all ambitious, and he had no wish to be king. He had accepted the office, therefore, only on condition that the people would obey him, and would try to be good.

Now, as you know, the Romans were a fighting people, and until then they had always been at war with some of their neighbors. But the new king made them keep the peace, and closed the gates of the Temple of Janus. Then he taught the Romans how to plow their fields, bade them sow and harvest grain, and showed them that farming was a far better and wise occupation than war.

The people were very superstitious, and thought that the stars, the weather, the flight of birds, and the actions of certain animals were signs of what would happen, if you could only understand them aright. Numa, therefore, said that there should be two companies of priests, whose duty it should be

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to tell what the gods wished, in a way that the people could understand.

In the first place, there were the Pontiffs,—priests who had general charge of all public worship, and who told the people which days would be lucky and which ones unlucky.

The other company of priests were called Augurs. They watched the changes in the weather, the flight of the birds, and the behavior of the geese which they kept in the temple. By observing these things carefully, they thought they could tell the future; and the people often asked them the meaning of certain signs, such as the sudden appearance of some bird or animal on their right or left side when they were starting out on a journey.

Of course all this was mere nonsense; yet some people still believe in these foolish things. You have all heard the saying, “See a pin and pick it up, all the day you’ll have good luck,” and “If your left ear burns, some one is talking ill of you.” It was such signs as these that the Romans believed in; and the augurs were supposed to know all about them, and to explain them to the people.

Besides the pontiffs and augurs, there was a lower class of priests, called Haruspices, who told the future by means of sacrifices. In those days the Romans used to offer up bulls, goats, sheep, and other animals, on the altars of their gods. It was the duty of these priests to kill the animals, open them, burn certain parts, and carefully examine the insides of the victims.

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The haruspices thought that they could see signs in the bodies of the animals they had sacrificed, and that these signs gave them very important knowledge. Of course this was all humbug, but the early Romans believed that the priests could thus learn much about the future.

As these Romans lived a long time ago, and had few chances to learn, their mistakes were very excusable; for you know it is no shame to be ignorant when one has no chance to learn. But it is a very great shame to be ignorant in such a country as this, where you can all attend good schools, and have teachers to explain anything you do not understand. Nowadays, when people believe in such silly things as signs, they are said to be superstitious. But as soon as they learn more, they see how foolish they have been.



## CHAPTER XI

### THE QUARREL WITH ALBA

FOR a long time the Roman people were in the habit of burying their dead; but by and by they began to burn the bodies, and keep the ashes in little urns.

When Numa Pompilius died, however, the people laid his body in a stone coffin. Many years later, so the Romans said, a farmer in plowing came across the tomb. He opened it, and found in the coffin, besides the king's bones, a number of old books. In them were written the laws which Numa Pompilius had made for his people, and an account of the religious ceremonies of his day.

The farmer, unfortunately, was a very ignorant man. He fancied that such old and musty books were of no value, and so he burned them up. By doing this, he destroyed a very great treasure; for if he had kept those ancient books, we would know much more about the early Romans than we do now.

As Numa was so good and wise a king, the people felt very sorry to lose him; and they said that

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his death was mourned even by the water nymph Egeria. The Roman mothers used to tell their children that this nymph wept so many tears that the gods, in pity, changed her into a fountain which still bears her name.

Numa Pompilius had no son to take his place on the throne, so the senators elected Tullus Hostilius, a patrician, as the third king of Rome. Unlike the former king, the new ruler was proud and quarrelsome; and, as he enjoyed fighting, the Romans were soon called to war.

Tullus first quarreled with his neighbors in Alba, the city where Amulius and Numitor had once reigned. Neither people was willing to yield to the other, and yet each disliked to begin the bloodshed; for they saw that they were about equally matched, and that their fighting would end only with their lives. As they could not wait forever, the two parties finally decided to settle their quarrel by a fair fight between three picked warriors on either side.

The Albans selected as their champions three brothers named Curiatius, all noted for their strength, their courage, and their great skill in handling arms. The Romans made an equally careful choice, and selected three brothers from the Horatius family. These six men are called the Curiatii and the Horatii, because these are the plural forms of their names in Latin, which was the language of both Rome and Alba.

Now, in the peaceful days of Numa Pompilius, long before there had been any thought

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of war, the Romans and Albans had often visited each other, and the Horatii and Curiatii were great friends. Indeed, the two families were so intimate that one of the Curiatii was engaged to marry Camilla, the sister of the Horatii.

In spite of this long-standing friendship, both families would have considered it a disgrace not to fight, when selected as their country's champions; and in spite of Camilla's tears and entreaties, all six young men prepared for the coming contest.

Poor Camilla was in despair, for either her brothers would kill her lover, or he would kill them. No matter which way the battle ended, it could not fail to bring sorrow and loss to her, for she was deeply attached to her brothers and lover; and she tried again and again to make them give up this fight.

## CHAPTER XII

# THE FIGHT BETWEEN THE HORATII AND THE CURIATII

THE Romans and Albans had all assembled to view the battle between their champions, and were eagerly awaiting the struggle which was to decide their fate. They had agreed that the nation which won should rule over the one which was worsted in the fight that was about to begin.

Encouraged to do their best by the feeling that so much depended upon their valor, the Horatii and Curiatii met. The Romans and Albans, stationed on either side, watched the encounter with breathless interest and in anxious silence.

The six young men were equally brave and well trained, but before long two of the Horatii fell, never to rise again. Only one of the Roman champions was left to uphold their cause; but he was quite unhurt, while all three of his enemies had received severe wounds.

The Curiatii were still able to fight, however, and all three turned their attention to the last Horatius. They hoped to dispatch him quickly, so as

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to secure the victory for Alba before the loss of blood made them too weak to fight.

The Roman champion knew that he would not be able to keep these three foes at bay, and he noticed how eager they were to bring the battle to a speedy close. To prevent that, he made up his mind to separate them, if possible, in order to fight them one by one.

He therefore made believe to run away, and was followed, as quickly as their strength allowed, by the Curiatii, who taunted him for his cowardice, and bade him stand and fight. The three wounded men ran on, as fast as they could, and were soon some distance apart; for the one whose wounds were slightest had soon left the others behind.

Horatius turned his head, saw that his enemies were now too far apart to help one another, and suddenly rushed back to attack them. A short, sharp encounter took place, and the first of the Curiatii fell, just as one of his brothers came to help him.

To kill this second foe, weakened as he was by the loss of blood and by the efforts he had made to hurry, was but the work of a moment. The second Curiatius sank beneath his enemy's sword just as the last of the Alban brothers appeared beside him. With the courage of despair, this Curiatius tried to strike a blow for his country; but he too fell, leaving the victory to Horatius, the sole survivor among the six brave warriors who had begun the fight.

The Romans had seen two of their champions fall, and the third take refuge in what seemed to be

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cowardly flight; and they fancied that their honor and liberty were both lost. Imagine their joy, therefore, when they saw Horatius turn, kill one enemy after another, and remain victor on the field! Shout after shout rent the air, and the Romans were almost beside themselves with pride and gladness when the Alban king came over and publicly said that he and his people would obey Rome.

Leaving the Albans to bury their dead and bewail the loss of their liberty, the Romans led their young champion back to the city, with every sign of approval and joy. Compliments and praise were showered upon the young man, who, in token of victory, had put on the embroidered mantle of one of his foes.

Every one received him joyfully as he entered the city,—every one except his sister Camilla. When she saw the mantle which she had woven and embroidered for her betrothed, she burst into tears. In her sorrow she could not hold her tongue, and bitterly reproached her brother for killing her lover.

Horatius, angry at being thus reprovèd, roughly bade Camilla dry her tears, and told her she was not worthy of being a Roman, since she welcomed her country's triumph with tears. As she kept on crying, after this harsh reproof, Horatius suddenly raised his hand and struck her a deadly blow with the same sword which had taken her lover's life.

The sight of this heartless murder made the Romans so angry that they wanted to put the young

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man to death, in spite of the service he had just rendered his country. But his aged father implored them to spare his life. He said that two of his sons were lying on the battlefield, where they had given their lives for Rome; that his lovely daughter Camilla was no more; and that the people ought to leave his only remaining child as a prop for his old age.

When Tullus Hostilius heard this pitiful request, he promised to forgive Horatius upon condition that he would lead the Roman army to Alba, and raze the walls of that ancient city, as had been agreed. The Albans were then brought to Rome, and settled at the foot of the Cælian hill, one of the seven heights of the city.

By other conquests, Tullus increased the number of his people still more. But as the streets were not yet paved, and there were no drains, the town soon became very unhealthful. A plague broke out among the people, many sickened and died, and among them perished Tullus Hostilius.

## CHAPTER XIII

# TARQUIN AND THE EAGLE

AS Tullus Hostilius was dead, the Romans wished to elect a new king; and they soon chose Ancus Martius, a grandson of the good and pious Numa Pompilius who had governed them so well. The new ruler was very wise and good. Although he could not keep peace with all his neighbors, as his grandfather had done, he never went to war except when compelled to do so.

There were now so many people in Rome that it was not easy to govern them as before. In fact, there were so many wrongdoers that Ancus was soon forced to build a prison, in which the criminals could be put while awaiting judgment. The prison was made as solid as possible, with thick stone walls. It was so strong that it still exists, and one can even now visit the deep and dark dungeons where the prisoners used to be kept more than six hundred years before Christ.

During the reign of Ancus Martius, as in those of the kings before him, many strangers came to settle in Rome. They were attracted thither by the rapid growth of the city, by the freedom which the



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citizens enjoyed, and by the chances offered to grow rich and powerful.

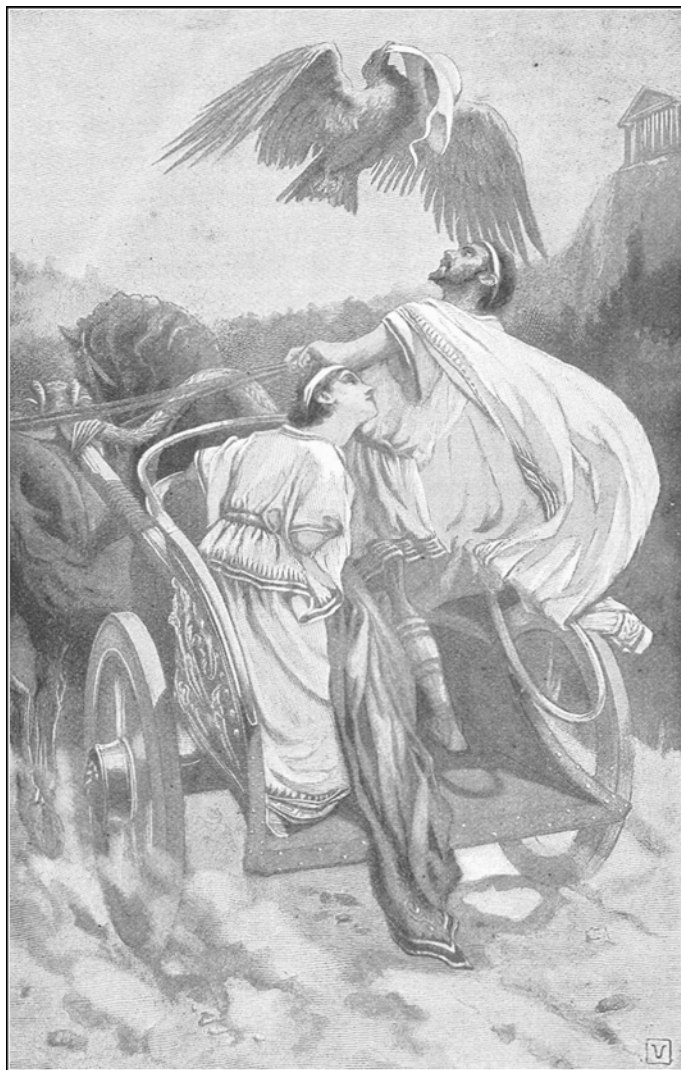
Among these strangers was a very wealthy Greek, who had lived for some time in a neighboring town called Tarquini. This man is known in history as Tarquinius Priscus, or simply Tarquin, a name given him to remind people where he had lived before he came to Rome.

As Tarquin was rich, he did not come to Rome on foot, but rode in a chariot with his wife Tanaquil. As they were driving along, an eagle came into view, and, after circling for a while above them, suddenly swooped down and snatched Tarquin's cap off his head. A moment later it flew down again, and replaced the cap on Tarquin's head, without doing him any harm.

This was a very strange thing for an eagle to do, as you can see, and Tarquin wondered what it could mean. After thinking the matter over for a while, he asked his wife, Tanaquil, who knew a great deal about signs; and she said it meant that he would sometime be king of Rome. This prophecy pleased Tarquin very much, because he was ambitious and fond of ruling.

Tarquin and his wife were so rich and powerful that they were warmly welcomed by the Romans. They took up their abode in the city, spent their money freely, tried to make themselves as agreeable as possible, and soon made a number of friends among the patricians.

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TARQUIN AND THE EAGLE

## *TARQUIN AND THE EAGLE*

Ancus Martius became acquainted with Tarquin, and, finding him a good adviser, often sent for him to talk about the affairs of state. Little by little, the man grew more and more intimate with the king; and when Ancus died, after a reign of about twenty-four years, no one was surprised to hear that he had left his two young sons in Tarquin's care.