CHAPTER XXXI

THE EARLY REPUBLIC: (II) ROME BECOMES SUPREME IN ITALY

509–264 B.C.

I. South Etruria and Latium become Roman

395. Weakness of Rome; Alliance with the Latins. — While the Romans were improving the government and the condition of the plebeians in the way described above, they were gradually extending their power over Italy. In tracing this territorial expansion we must begin with the founding of the republic and continue through the period covered by the preceding chapter.

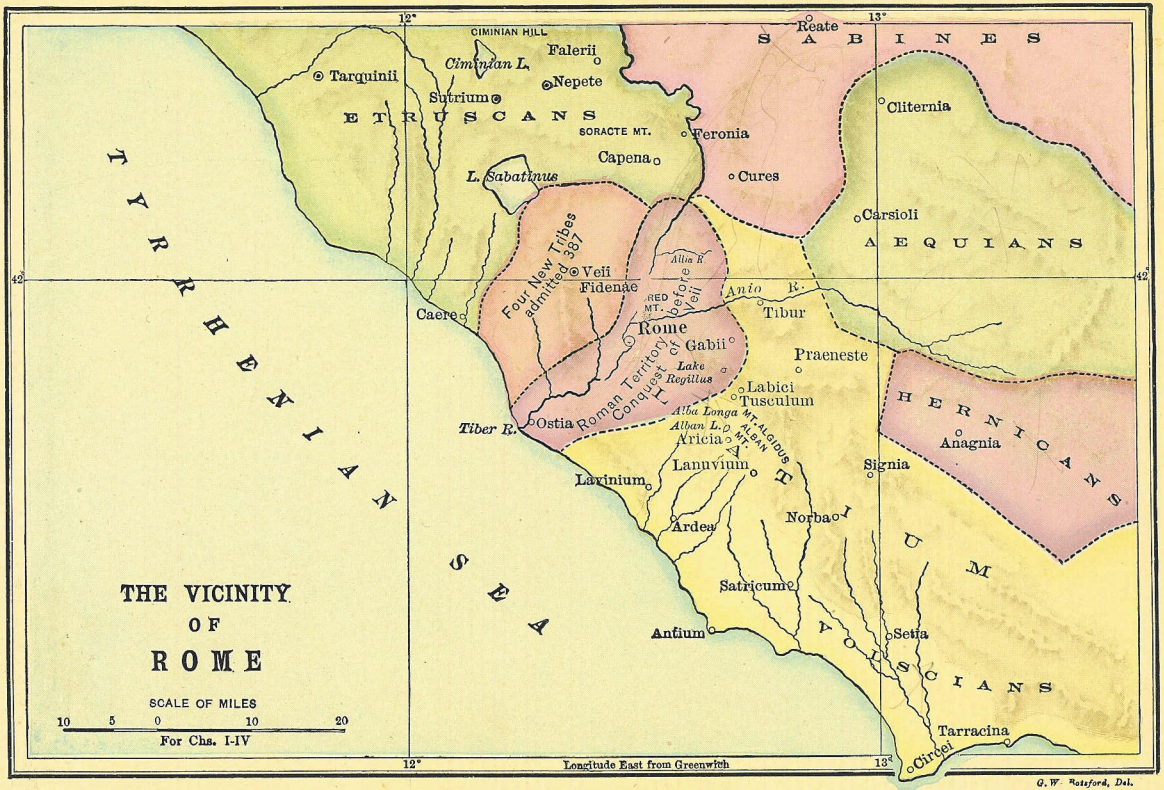
The downfall of monarchy weakened Rome; for the state no longer had a single strong ruler to lead in war and to put down civil strife. The dissensions between the patricians and the plebeians [1] exposed the country to attacks from all its neighbors. The greatest danger came from the Latins, whose cities had long been united in a league.[2] Under the later kings they had acknowledged the headship of Rome, but now they revolted. After a brief war Spurius Cassius,[3] the leading Roman statesman of the time, negotiated with the Latin League a perpetual peace (493 B.C.).[4]

396. Wars with the Aequians and the Volscians (486–405 B.C.). — It was well that the Romans and the Latins renewed their alliance; for they had soon to begin a long, hard struggle in defence of their property and their lives against the hungry tribes of the hills. Year after year the Sabines, descending from their mountain homes, pillaged the Roman territory. Often, too, the Aequians burned farmhouses and drove off the peasants' cattle. The story is told that once they entrapped a consul and his army

[1] See especially § 381 for the secession of the plebs.

[2] § 357. [3] § 383.

[4] This is the year in which Rome for the first time had tribunes of the plebs; § 382.


THE VICINITY
OF
ROME
SCALE OF MILES
10 5 0 10 20
For Chs. I-IV
TYRRHENIAN SEA
ETRUSCANS
SABINES
AEQUIANS
HERNICANS
VOLSCIANS
LATIUM
CIMINIAN HILL
Ciminian L.
Falerii
Nepete
Tarquinii
Sutrium
SORACTE MT.
Feronia
Capena
L. Sabatinus
Cures
Reate
Cliternia
Carsioli
Four New Tribes admitted 387
Veii
Fidenae
Alba R.
RED MT.
Anio R.
Caere
Rome
Tibur
Gabii
Praeneste
Lake Regillus
Labici
Tusculum
Roman Territory at Conquest of Veii
Tiber R.
Ostia
Alba Longa
Alban L.
Mt. Algidus
Aricia
Anagnia
Lanuvium
Signia
Lavinium
Norba
Ardea
Satricum
Setia
Antium
Circei
Tarracina
12°
13°
42°
Longitude East from Greenwich
G. W. Rotsford, Del.

in a valley. Thereupon the other consul, at the request of the senate, nominated Cin-cin-nă'tus dictator.[1] Messengers then bore the commission across the Tiber to his four-acre farm. Finding him in his tunic, engaged in some rural work, they greeted him as he leaned on his spade. Then, wiping the sweat and dust from his brow, he listened to the message. He took command. Without delay he relieved the besieged army, humbled the enemy, and returned to Rome, his troops laden with booty. So brilliant was the victory that the senate granted him a triumph. A grand procession, accordingly, moved along the Sacred Way[2] through the Forum, then up the Capitoline to the temple of Jupiter. In front were the captive leaders of the Aequians; men followed with the standards of the enemy; then came the triumphal car in which sat the general clad in splendid robes. Behind the car the soldiers marched carrying the booty, singing the hymn of triumph, while the citizens spread tables before their houses for the entertainment of the army. The procession halted before the temple, that the general might bring the chief of the gods an offering of gratitude for the victory. Then, resigning his command the sixteenth day after taking it, he returned to his farm. Though not genuine history, the story of Cincinnatus gives a true picture of the simple life of those early times and of the triumph of a victorious general. After Cincinnatus, the Romans had still many years of unsuccessful war with the Aequians.

Meantime the Volscians, who lived in the mountains southeast of the Hernicans, descending into Latium, overran the country to within a few miles of Rome. At one time the mountaineers held nearly all Latium. But after a long struggle for existence, Rome and her allies began to make headway against their enemies. Before the end of the century they had recovered Latium (405 B.C.). Though the Aequians and the Volscians still gave trouble, they ceased to be dangerous.

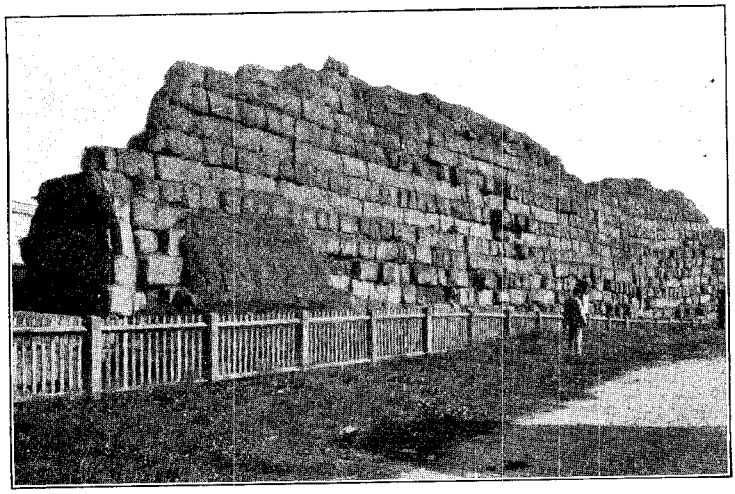
397. The Siege of Veii (405–396 B.C.). — Toward the end of the century the Romans began war upon Vei'i, an Etruscan city as large as their own, situated twelve miles distant on a steep and strongly fortified height. After a long siege the dictator Ca-mil'lus

[1] § 378.

[2] A street in the city, indicated on the map, p. 457.

took it. This conquest doubled the Roman territory, which soon afterward extended on the north to the Ci-min'i-an Hill.

398. The Sack of Rome by the Gauls (390 B.C.). — In Etruria Rome first came into collision with the Gauls — tall warriors with fair hair and flashing eyes. Wherever they marched, "their harsh music and discordant clamors filled all places with a horrible din."



REMNANT OF THE SO-CALLED SERVIAN WALL
(From a photograph)

Shortly before this time they had begun to cross the Alps and to drive the Etruscans from the Po Valley.[1] Now they were invading Etruria. About eleven miles from Rome, on the Al'li-a, a tributary of the Tiber, they met the entire force of the Romans. The barbarians fought in dense masses; their enormous swords cut through the helmets and gashed the heads of the Romans. The men, who had often faced the hill tribes in battle, fled in terror from these gigantic northerners. Some took refuge in deserted Veii; others bore news of the disaster to Rome. The city was in a panic; no one thought of defending the walls. The soldiers and

[1] § 360.

the younger senators hurried to the citadel to strengthen its defences. The rest of the city was sacked and burned.

At length, weary with continual watching and threatened with famine, the Romans on the Capitoline offered the Gauls a thousand pounds of gold if they would withdraw. It is said that the barbarian chief threw his sword into the scale, exclaiming, "Woe to the vanquished!" and that while the parties were disputing over this increased demand, Camillus, again dictator, appeared with an army on the scene, and drove the Gauls away without their gold.

The people returned to the city and proceeded to clear away the rubbish. Each man built his hut wherever he found a convenient place. Within a year Rome, with her narrow, crooked streets, arose from the ashes. To guard against future attacks, they surrounded the city with a great stone wall, remnants of which are still standing.[1]

399. The First Samnite War (343–341 B.C.). — The half-century following the rebuilding of the city was a time of great military success for Rome. On every side she was victorious over her enemies, and either won new territory or secured more thorough control of the lands she had already acquired. In this period she came into contact with Samnium, the most powerful nation in the interior of the peninsula. For a time the two states were allies, but afterward quarrelled over the possession of Cap'u-a, a wealthy city of Campania. As the Samnites threatened to conquer Capua, this city gave itself up to Rome in return for protection. By accepting these terms the Romans brought upon themselves their first war with Samnium.

The two nations, however evenly matched, differed in character. The Samnites were mountaineers, who had no cities, no wealth, no king or aristocracy. Poor but brave and free, they looked greedily down upon the well-cultivated plains on their western border. With their skilful swords they hoped to win a title to these rich lands.

The Romans and Latins were far superior in military organization and equipments. Their army was a peasant militia, obedient to command, brave, patient, hardy, ready for long marches

[1] Writers who lived long after these events assigned this wall to Servius Tullius; §§ 364, 375. Scholars now agree, however, that the work is no earlier than the fourth century B.C.

and severe toils, rarely over-elated by success or cast down by misfortune. They were inspired, too, with the idea that the struggle was one for home and country, in defence of the wealth and civilization of the plain against encroaching barbarism. They fought, therefore, with great spirit and success. As a result of the war, the Romans not only retained Capua, but gained control of nearly all Campania.

400. The Great Latin War (340–338 B.C.). — In 341 B.C. Rome and Samnium suddenly made peace and alliance; but the Latins and other allies of Rome continued the war. Finally the Latins, thinking that they were as strong as the metropolis, demanded that they be made citizens of Rome and that one consul and half the senators should be chosen from their number. The demand was rejected with scorn; "a foreign consul and foreign senators sitting in the temple of Jupiter would be an insult to the supreme god of the state, as though he were taken captive by the enemy!"[1] War followed. The Romans and the Latins had the same arms, the same military organization and discipline. Rome, however, enjoyed the advantage that comes to a single city in opposing a loose confederacy. She brought the war to a successful close in one or two fierce battles and a series of sieges. She then dissolved the Latin League.[2]

401. Admission of South Etruria, Latium, and Campania into the Roman State. — The territory now under the control of Rome extended from the Ciminian Hill in Etruria to Mount Vesuvius in Campania. It remains to consider how she organized the territory recently acquired in war, and how she treated its inhabitants.

Rome enslaved the people of Veii.[3] The territory belonging to that city she assigned to her own citizens, and made of it four tribes,[4] in some such way as new states are formed from territory acquired by the American government. There was no reason, however, for treating the Latins harshly; for in blood and language they were one with the Romans, and as soldiers they would be of great value to Rome in her future wars. The senate determined therefore to admit most of them to full citizenship, and to organize them and their territory in new tribes. A

[1] Livy, viii. 4 f. [2] §§ 357, 395. [3] § 397. [4] § 376.

few Latin towns, however, remained inferior to the rest. They were admitted to the Roman citizenship, but were not given the right to vote or to hold office at Rome. Thus their citizenship was limited. The Etruscan city of Caere had already been admitted to the Roman state and placed in this position. Such people were described as citizens without suffrage — *cives sine suffragio*. Like the other citizens, they were required to perform military service. A large part of Campania had fallen under the Roman power;[1] and the inhabitants were likewise placed in the same class of inferior citizens. Whatever the grade of their citizenship, the people admitted to the Roman state retained their towns with self-government in local matters.[2]

All the Latins, however, were not taken into the Roman state. Tibur, Praeneste, and one or two other old Latin cities[3] remained independent, and separate treaties of alliance were made between them and Rome. Several colonies, founded in Etruria and Latium, were, like Tibur and Praeneste, given the position of allies. Such were called Latin colonies.[4]

II. The Conquest of Italy

338–264 B.C.

402. The Second Samnite War (326–304). — For fifteen years there was peace between Rome and Samnium. During this time the Romans continually gained strength. This ambitious policy made the Samnites fear for their own safety. Accordingly, when Rome laid siege to Naples, a free Greek city of Campania, the Samnites reënforced the place. This unfriendly act led to the Second Samnite War.

The fortunes of war varied. At first Rome was successful; then the tide turned in favor of Samnium. In 321 B.C. Pon'ti-us, the Samnite leader, enticed the consuls with forty thousand men into an ambush at the Cau'dine Pass, in a valley of the Apennines, and compelled them to surrender. The consuls, in the name of the

[1] § 399. [2] As explained in § 405. [3] § 357.

[4] Among them were Sutrium and Nepete in Etruria and Norba, Satricum, and Setia in Latium.

state, swore to the enemy's terms of peace. Then a yoke was formed of three spears — two fixed upright in the earth and the third placed across the top. Deprived of their arms by the enemy, the Roman troops passed humbly under this yoke in token of their complete submission. It was the worst disgrace a soldier could undergo at the hands of an enemy. All were allowed to return home, excepting six hundred knights, who were detained as hostages. To the people at home the surrender was a greater humiliation than would have been the entire destruction of the army. Accordingly they soon found a pretext for breaking the treaty.

After the disaster at the Caudine Pass, the war dragged on from year to year. It was the policy of Rome to settle and organize every foot of conquered ground, and to hem in her enemy by establishing fortress colonies on the border. Although the Samnites were reënforced by the Etruscans and the Umbrians, Rome now met with success in all her battles. The consuls ravaged Etruria, and captured the strongholds of Samnium. The war ended in 304 B.C.; though the Samnites had suffered great losses, they remained free, and renewed the former treaty.

403. The Third Samnite War (298–290 B.C.). — In the Third Samnite War all the Italic peoples, the Etruscans, and a horde of Celtic invaders took part against Rome. The decisive battle was fought at Sen-ti'num in Umbria (295 B.C.). Here by a hard-won victory Rome broke the league of her enemies. Deserted by their allies, the Samnites held out resolutely for five more years. At last Man'i-us Cu'ri-us Den-ta'tus, a peasant who by personal merit had raised himself to the consulship, compelled them to sue for peace. They were now dependent allies of Rome.

The strife between the plain and the mountains began in the wars with the Aequians and the Volscians as early at least as the beginning of the republic.[1] In time it culminated in a fierce struggle between Rome and Samnium, which, with brief interruptions, raged for more than half a century. The long conflict was now ended. It had desolated Italy from Etruria to Lucania. Cities and villages were in ruins; pastures and cornfields had become a lonely waste; thousands of warriors had fallen in battle and thou-

[1] §§ 356 f., 396.

sands of men, women, and children once free were now slaves of the Romans. Civilization had triumphed, yet at a great cost; the war whetted the Roman appetite for plunder, and fostered slavery, the curse of ancient society.

404. The War with Tarentum or War with Pyrrhus (281–272 B.C.). — After winning the supremacy over Samnium, the Romans naturally thought it expedient to round out their league, by gaining control of all southern Italy. The principal states in that region were Greek. But many Greek cities had been conquered by the natives. Naples and a few others had become allies of Rome. The only important state remaining wholly independent was Tarentum.[1] It had long been a great centre of commerce and industry. The chief activity was the manufacture and dyeing of woollen goods. As most of the wool for this purpose came from Samnium, the Tarentines felt that their trade was menaced by the extension of the Roman supremacy over that country. They had made a treaty with the Romans according to which the ships of the latter should not sail past the La-cin'i-an promontory in the direction of Tarentum. With their city strongly fortified, they felt secure so long as their fleet held command of the sea, and it hardly occurred to them that Rome could build a fleet strong enough to dispute their naval supremacy. When they saw a small Roman squadron, in open violation of the treaty, sail beyond the forbidden point, they put to sea in great indignation, sunk several of the Roman ships, and massacred the crews of the others. The Romans sent an embassy to demand reparation for this and other alleged wrongs. The insolent treatment of these ambassadors led to war. Thereupon the Tarentines called on Pyrrhus, king of Epeirus, for help. This king, a brilliant military genius, came with a small but strong body of troops who were skilled in the arms and tactics of the Macedonian phalanx.[2] He first met the enemy at Her-a-cle'a (280 B.C.). Seven times the light battalions of Rome threw themselves against his "hedge of spears," only to be repulsed each time with heavy loss. Then his trained elephants, charging the weakened enemy, breached their lines like a volley of artillery. The Romans were shrinking before the "gray oxen,"

[1] § 126. [2] § 308.

as they called these enormous beasts, when a sudden dash of the Thessalian horse completed their ruin. Allies now began to join the victorious general, who pushed on till he came within forty miles of Rome. So great had been his own losses in the recent battle, however, that he was anxious to make peace with the enemy, whose bravery and discipline he admired. Cin'e-as, his ambassador, spoke eloquently in the senate; but Appius Claudius Caecus, a statesman old and blind, was carried on a litter into the senate-house to raise his voice against these shameful proceedings: "Let Pyrrhus return home, and then we may make peace with him." In these words he set forth the principle that thereafter Rome would take care of the interests of Italy. Failing to win his cause by eloquence or bribery, Cineas returned to his master with the report that the Roman senate was an assembly of kings. Pyrrhus won another battle at As'cu-lum (279 B.C.), so dearly that he remarked to his friends, "Another such victory will ruin us." Then he crossed over to Sicily to aid his countrymen against the Carthaginians; but even with his brilliant successes there, he failed to dislodge the enemy from the island. Returning with a few veterans to Italy, he was defeated at Ben-e-ven'tum (275 B.C.) by Dentatus, and thereupon withdrew to his home. After his departure Tarentum surrendered, and soon Rome became mistress of all Italy south of the Rubicon.

Suggestive Questions

1. Write a summary of this chapter like that on p. 285. 2. Describe the triumph of a victorious general. 3. From the map facing p. 353 show the increase of Rome's territory to the conquest of Veii. Describe the location of all the peoples mentioned on the map. 4. Describe the location of the Allia River, Rubicon River, Ciminian Hill, Caere, Naples, Asculum, Heraclea, Beneventum, Sentinum, Lacinian Promontory, and Tarentum. 5. Describe the structure of the Roman wall illustrated on p. 354. What is the shape of the stones, and how are they arranged? 6. Which wars of this period formed part of the long conflict between the plain and the mountains?

Note-book Topics

I. **The Second Samnite War.** — Botsford, *Story of Rome*, 72–77; Munro, *Source Book*, 74–77; Duruy, *History of Rome*, i. 425–445.

II. **Pyrrhus.** — Botsford, 77–83; Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*.

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