CHAPTER XXXIII

THE EXPANSION OF THE ROMAN POWER TO THE END OF THE SECOND PUNIC WAR

264–201 B.C.

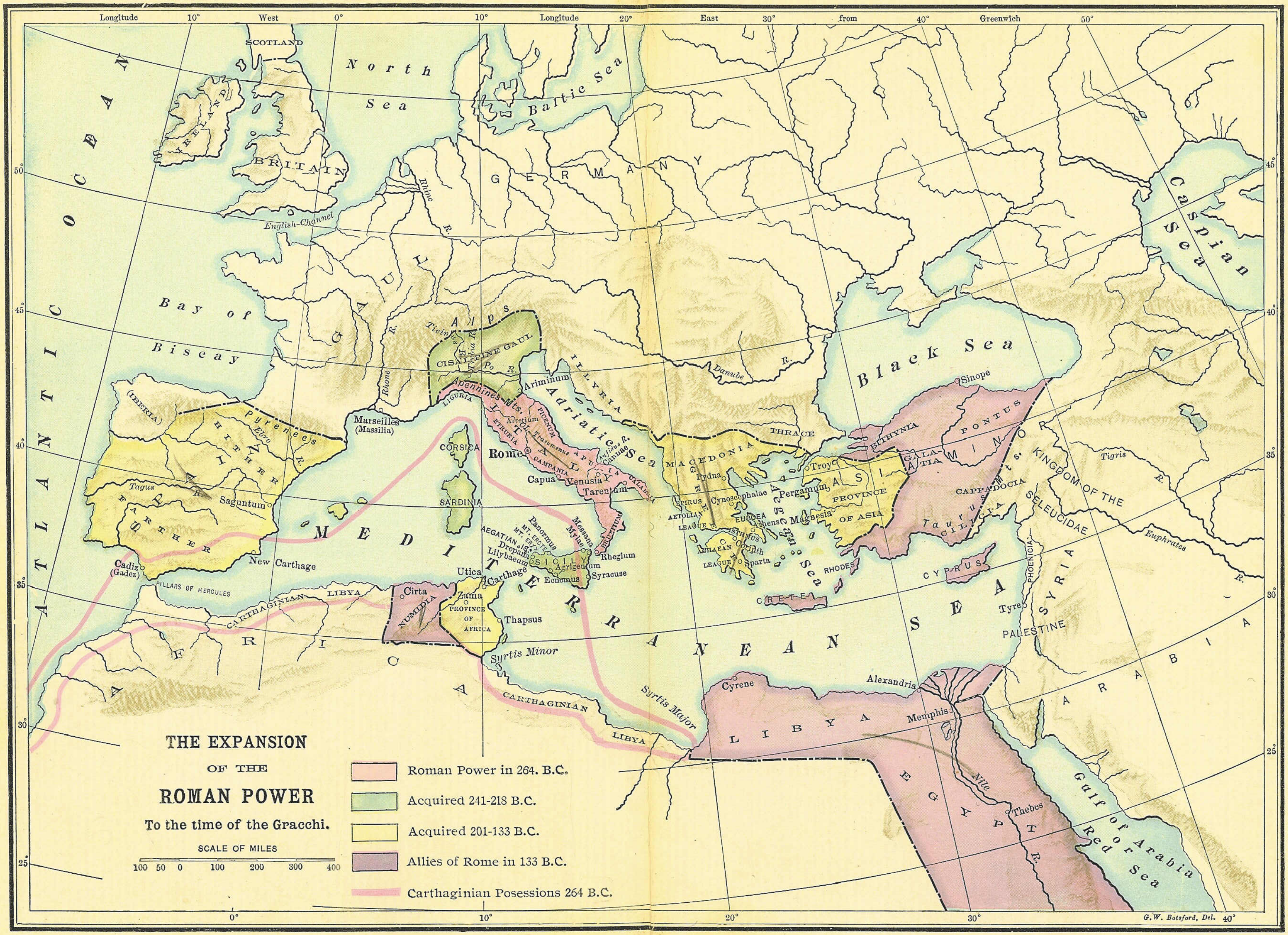
I. THE FIRST PUNIC WAR: A STRUGGLE FOR THE POSSESSION OF SICILY

264–241 B.C.

412. Carthage and her Empire. — On the northern coast of Africa, opposite Rome, was the Punic city of Carthage.[1] Not only did the country about it produce abundant harvests, but it was well situated for trade with the East and the West, and with Sicily and Italy. These advantages made the city wealthy and prosperous. In time it became, too, a political power.[2] On the coasts and islands of the western Mediterranean Carthage built up a great empire. It included the larger part of the north coast of Africa, a strip of the western coast beyond the Pillars of Hercules, part of southern Spain, and of Corsica, all Sardinia, and nearly all Sicily, besides many small islands. Carthage was about to wrest the remainder of Sicily from the Greeks when Pyrrhus came as their champion.[3] He tried in vain to drive her from the island. As he departed, he is said to have exclaimed regretfully, "What a fair battlefield we are leaving to the Romans and the Carthaginians!" These two nations were then allied against him, but he knew well that they would soon dispute the possession of Sicily. Quickly the Carthaginians regained the whole island with the exception of the territory belonging to Mes-sa'na and Syracuse. If they could conquer these two cities, they would naturally invade Italy. Rome, the protector of the Italians, was anxiously watching her rivals' movements.

The ambition of the Carthaginians was even more for commercial

[1] § 49. "Punic" (*Punicus*) is Latin for Phoenician. [2] § 208. [3] § 404.


THE EXPANSION
OF THE
ROMAN POWER
To the time of the Gracchi.
SCALE OF MILES
100 50 0 100 200 300 400
Roman Power in 264. B.C.
Acquired 241-218 B.C.
Acquired 201-133 B.C.
Allies of Rome in 133 B.C.
Carthaginian Posessions 264 B.C.
Longitude
West
East
from
Greenwich
ATLANTIC OCEAN
SCOTLAND
IRELAND
BRITAIN
English Channel
North Sea
Baltic Sea
GERMANY
Caspian Sea
GAUL
Bay of Biscay
Alps
CISALPINE GAUL
Po R.
Rhine R.
Rhone R.
Apennines Mts.
LIGURIA
ETRURIA
ITALY
Ariminum
Rome
Capua
Venusia
Tarentum
CAMPANIA
APULIA
CALABRIA
ILLYRIA
Adriatic Sea
Danube R.
Black Sea
Sinope
THRACE
MACEDONIA
Pydna
Cynoscephalae
EPIRUS
AETOLIAN LEAGUE
ACHAEAN LEAGUE
EUBOEA
Athens
Sparta
Aegean Sea
Troy
Pergamum
Magnesia
ASIA
PROVINCE OF ASIA
BITHYNIA
PONTUS
GALATIA
ASIA MINOR
CAPPADOCIA
CILICIA
Taurus Mts.
KINGDOM OF THE SELEUCIDAE
Tigris R.
Euphrates R.
RHODES
CRETE
CYPRUS
SYRIA
PHOENICIA
Tyre
PALESTINE
ARABIA
IBERIA
Pyrenees
HITHER SPAIN
FARTHER SPAIN
Tagus
Saguntum
New Carthage
Cadiz (Gadez)
PILLARS OF HERCULES
Marseilles (Massilia)
CORSICA
SARDINIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SICILY
Panormus
Messana
Mylae
Drepana
Lilybaeum
Agrigentum
Syracuse
Ecnomus
Rhegium
AEGATIAN IS.
MT. ERYX
Utica
Carthage
Zama
Cirta
NUMIDIA
PROVINCE OF AFRICA
Thapsus
Syrtis Minor
Syrtis Major
CARTHAGINIAN LIBYA
AFRICA
Cyrene
LIBYA
Alexandria
Memphis
Thebes
Nile R.
EGYPT
Gulf of Arabia or Red Sea
G. W. Botsford, Del.

than for political empire. At the time Rome became a republic they were willing to grant her people a right under certain restrictions to trade with their cities; a century and a half later they closed their ports to the Romans, excepting those of Carthage itself. As time went on, they determined more resolutely to monopolize the commerce of the western Mediterranean. When, therefore, in their voyages they fell in with a vessel bound for any of their western ports, they used to confiscate it and throw the crew into the sea. "The Romans cannot wash their hands in the sea without our consent," exclaimed one of their admirals. It is easy to understand how so aggressive a spirit was sure to involve Carthage in war as soon as she came into contact with a power capable of defending itself.

An Asiatic race, the Carthaginians were inferior to the Romans in character and civilization. In times of excitement the government was controlled by the mob of citizens; under normal conditions, by the power of wealth. Their public men were corrupt; they oppressed their subjects with heavy taxes, and gave them no hope of ever having equal rights with themselves. Their religion, too, was inhuman and immoral. Such being the case, it would have been unfortunate for any large part of Europe to fall permanently under their rule. It was the task of Rome to protect the higher and better civilization of Europe from this danger.

413. Causes of the War. — The underlying cause of the war was simply the conflict of interests between Carthage and Rome. Carthage felt it to her advantage to gain possession of all Sicily, and afterward of Italy if possible. Thus far her power had expanded unchecked, and she could not see how the Romans, who had no navy, could stand in her way. Rome, on the other hand, as the head of Italy, was under obligations to defend the peninsula. The chief motive of the Romans, therefore, was the protection of themselves and of their allies. There were among them, however, a few influential nobles who were not satisfied with what Rome had already acquired, but wished to annex a part of Sicily. Some, indeed, were willing to embark the state in wars merely to win glory and profit for themselves. Hence we may say that a secondary motive on the part of Rome was the glory and profit of conquest.

The immediate cause of war was as follows. Some Campanian mercenaries, released from the service of Syracuse, seized Messana. They killed the men, and divided the women, children, and property among themselves. For a time the Mam'er-tines ("sons of Mars"), as these robbers called themselves, enjoyed their ill-got homes, and levied tribute on many towns of Sicily; but, threatened by both Greeks and Carthaginians, they appealed to Rome for aid on the ground of kindred blood. Although the senate felt it would be unjust to aid the Mamertines, it feared that if the Carthaginians should conquer them and gain control of all Sicily, they would not hesitate to lay hands on Italy. For this reason the assembly was persuaded to vote for a defensive alliance with Messana. This act was equivalent to a declaration of war with Carthage.

414. **The Resources of Rome and Carthage.** — The resources of the two nations were quite different. With her magnificent navy Carthage controlled the sea. Her wealth enabled her to enlist great armies of mercenaries, who however often proved treacherous to the city they served. Her citizens were mostly merchants and artisans, wholly unfit for military duty. Few served in the war except as officers. This condition of the army was a great source of weakness to Carthage. Italy, on the other hand, was an agricultural country with a dense population; it had more men fit for military service than any other state of the world at that time. Accustomed to severe, patient labor on their farms, they were the hardiest, best-disciplined fighters in the world. Equally important is the fact that they were devoted to their country and to Rome. Their states formed a strong league of kinsmen; each managed its own local affairs, but all acknowledged Rome absolute mistress of their military resources. Their only weakness was their lack of ships and of naval experience. Of the two great powers now coming into conflict, each was strong where the other was weak. The struggle was to be long and severe; no one knew which would conquer.

415. **Opening Events; the Battle of Mylae** (260 B.C.). — After the government had resolved to help the Mamertines, the consul in command borrowed a few ships from the naval allies, and skilfully brought his army into Messana, though the Carthaginians and

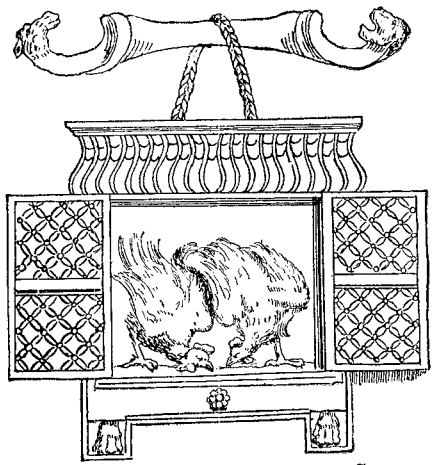
Syracusans were besieging the city by land and sea. Driving the besiegers away, the Romans made an alliance with Hi'e-ron, king of Syracuse. The cities of the interior readily yielded, as they found greater security under Rome than either Syracuse or Carthage had given them. To drive the Carthaginians from the coast towns it was necessary to build a fleet. For though the Greek allies of Rome could furnish a few triremes, no state in Italy possessed quin'-que-remes, — vessels with five banks of oars, — such as made up the strength of the enemy's navy. But using a stranded Carthaginian quinquereme as a model, the Romans, with their usual courage and energy, began to build a fleet. While some were busy with this work, others trained the crews by having them sit on benches along the shore and practise rowing in the sand.[1] When they had completed their fleet, they put to sea and engaged the enemy off My'lae (260 B.C.). Their ships were clumsy and their sailors awkward, but they boarded the enemy's vessels by means of drawbridges which they had recently invented, and thus gained the victory. This success increased their fervor for war.

416. The Invasion of Libya and the Captivity of Regulus (256–250 B.C.). — The Romans then built a fleet of three hundred and thirty vessels, and placing on board nearly a hundred and forty thousand men, they set sail for Libya. Off Ec'no-mus on the Sicilian coast they met and defeated a still larger fleet of the enemy, after which they continued on their way to Africa. There, under the consul Reg'u-lus, they gained victories and captured towns, till Xan-thip'pus, a Lacedaemonian, taught the Carthaginians to offer battle in the plain, where they could use their elephants and their great force of cavalry to advantage. The result was the destruction of the Roman army and the capture of Regulus.

Other misfortunes followed; but in 250 B.C. a great victory at Pa-nor'mus gave the Romans nearly all Sicily. Under these circumstances the government of Carthage sent Regulus, who was still a captive, to Rome, to arrange for an exchange of prisoners, promising him liberty if he should succeed. In the story told by Roman poets who lived long after the event, he refused to enter

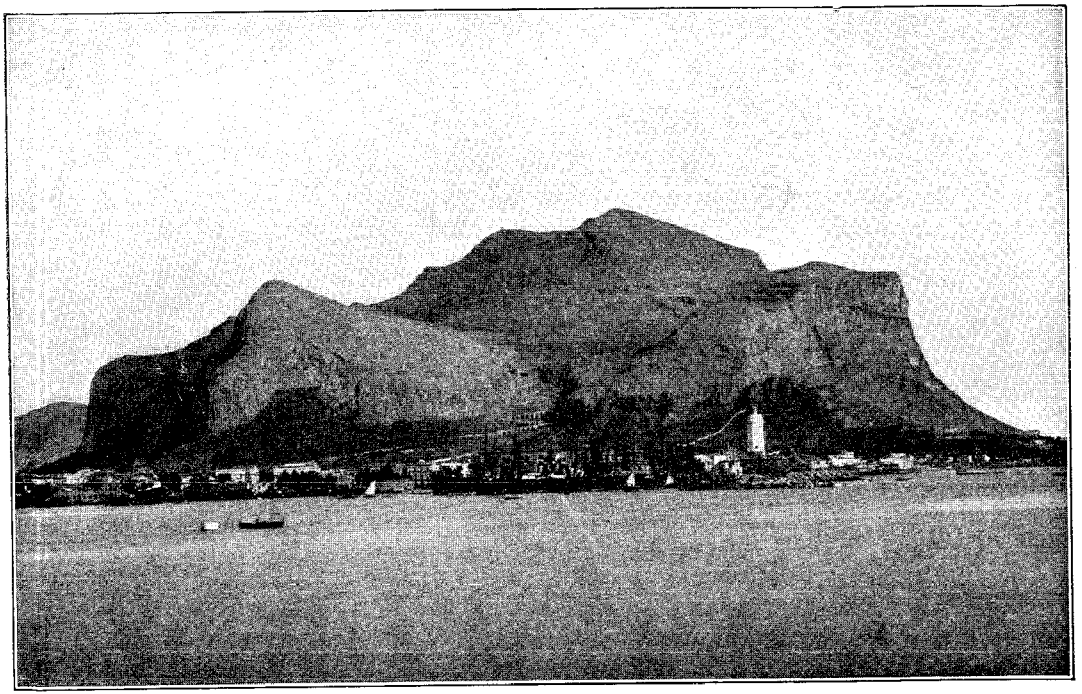
[1] This account is given by Polybius, an eminently trustworthy historian, and there is no reason for doubting it.

Rome as a senator or even as a citizen, saying he had forfeited all his rights by allowing himself to be taken captive. When finally he was persuaded to address the senate, he advised that body not to make peace or to ransom the captives, but to let them die in the land where they had disgraced themselves by surrender. Thus they would serve as an example to others; he would himself return and share their fate. In vain the senators remonstrated against his decision. While departing from Rome he kept his eyes fixed on the ground that he might not see his wife or his children. Then, returning to Carthage in accordance with his oath, he is said to have suffered death by torture. Notwithstanding some poetic touches, the story seems in the main to be true. It is a picture of a man who was absolutely faithful to his plighted word, of a stern patriot ready to sacrifice himself and his fellow-captives for what he believed to be his country's good, of a strong-willed man who knew his fate and walked resolutely to meet it. These were traits of the ideal Roman.



SACRED CHICKENS IN A PORTABLE COOP
(From Schreiber, *Atlas of Classical Antiquities*)

417. The Defeat at Drepana (249 B.C.). — At this time the Romans were besieging Lil-y-bae'um on the west coast of Sicily. Farther to the north was Drep'a-na, where Ad-her'bal, a Punic admiral, was stationed with his fleet. In 249 B.C. the consul Publius Claudius sailed from Lilybaeum to Drepana to surprise Adherbal. But the admiral, far from being caught napping, met the enemy and inflicted upon him an overwhelming defeat. The Romans tried to account for this disaster by a story that when Claudius was planning the attack, he received word that the sacred chickens



MOUNT ERCTE
(From a photograph)

would not eat,[1] — an omen which signified that the gods forbade the enterprise. Haughtily exclaiming that if the fowls would not eat, at least they would have to drink, he threw them into the sea. His impiety, together with his lack of skill, is given as the cause of this great misfortune.

418. **Hamilcar Barca** (247–241 B.C.). — While the Romans were besieging Lilybaeum, Carthage sent out a general who was to prove, in himself and in his sons, the most dangerous enemy Rome ever met. This was Ha-mil'car, surnamed Bar'ca (the "Lightning"), a man of extraordinary genius for war. He occupied Mount Erc'te, above Panormus, which was then held by a Roman army. On the top of the mountain he fed cattle and raised corn to support the handful of troops who performed wonders under the spell of his genius. From the little harbor beneath him his light ships harassed the Italian coasts, while from the eagle's perch above he used to swoop down, rapid as the lightning, upon the Romans in the neighborhood, and as easily retire to the nest which no enemy dared explore.

After maintaining himself for three years in this position, he suddenly abandoned it for a post on the side of Mount E'ryx, where he could coöperate with his friends at Drepana. But with his small force he could accomplish little. Neither nation in fact had any longer the means of supporting a fleet or a strong army in service. Without a navy Rome could not hope to gain complete possession of Sicily. Under these circumstances the wealthier citizens offered their private means for the building of new warships. With two hundred vessels thus provided for, the consul Cat'u-lus, at the Aega'ti-an islands, met a new Carthaginian fleet bringing supplies to Sicily, and totally defeated it (241 B.C.).

As the Carthaginians could carry on the war no longer, they gave Hamilcar full power to make peace. In the treaty as finally adopted, the Carthaginians agreed to give up Sicily, pay the Romans within ten years an amount equivalent to three and a

[1] Whereas a magistrate in Rome took auspices by watching the sky (§ 374), the commander of an army carried with him on his campaigns a flock of sacred chickens, whose manner of eating furnished him with auspices. The more greedily they ate, the more favorable were the omens.

half millions of dollars, and release all prisoners without ransom. After continuing twenty-three years, the First Punic War came to an end in 241 B.C.

II. "Breathing-Time" between Two Great Wars

241–218 B.C.

419. Sicily the First Roman Province (227 B.C.). — When the Romans began to win victories in Sicily, their first thought was to regard the island merely as an extension of Italy. In this frame of mind they made treaties of alliance with Messana, Syracuse, and a few other towns which had specially favored them. These states were left precisely in the same condition as Italian allies. Another class of Sicilian states, slightly more numerous, were declared "exempt from tribute and free" — not by treaty, but by an act of the Roman government. They had substantially the same rights as the allied states, but no guaranty for the continuance of these rights, as Rome could alter their condition at her pleasure. This was a departure from the Italian federal system. A far greater departure was taken when an act of the government placed the remainder of the states[1] in a condition of perpetual subjection. The group of dependent states constituted the province of Sicily. It included the greater part of the island. The organization of the province was completed in 227 B.C., when Rome began to send out every year a praetor[2] to govern it. His duties were mainly military and judicial. He commanded the army in the province, and settled disputes at law between Romans. Each state had its own courts for the trial of its citizens. It retained its own laws and customs, its magistrates, council, and popular assembly, and was usually free from interference on the part of the governor. In fact, the Roman government did not have a sufficient number of officials for managing the affairs of the states, even if it had wished, and the idea of taking charge of such local matters did not occur to Rome till long

[1] All the states here referred to — in fact, nearly all the states of the Roman empire — were little city-states; § 118. Every province was a group of such states.

[2] The praetorship was instituted at Rome in 367 B.C. (§ 392). In 227 B.C. there were four praetors. Two attended to judicial business at Rome, and two were sent out to govern the new provinces organized in that year.

after the republic had passed away. The subject states were free from military duty, but paid instead an annual tribute. In the case of Sicily it was a tenth of all the produce of the fields. Two quaestors were annually sent to Sicily to manage these finances. At an auction they sold to the highest bidder the privilege of collecting the taxes, making a separate sale in the case of each state. Usually a state sent its own agent to bid for the collection, in order that it might be free from the exactions of foreign tax-collectors. This was the organization of the first Roman province, and these afterward established differed but slightly.[1] As the number of provinces increased, they came to be governed, not by magistrates, but by promagistrates — men who held magisterial rank and power, without office, outside of Rome. Such governors were either propraetors or proconsuls. On the whole the plan of administration was fair; and if justly adhered to, it would not have been oppressive. The abuses of the system will be considered in another place.[2]

420. The Mercenary War and the Seizure of Sardinia and Corsica (241–237 B.C.). — As Carthage could not pay her mercenaries for their service in the war, they mutinied, and were joined by the Libyans, who revolted against their harsh taskmasters. While the whole strength of Carthage was engaged in this war (241–237 B.C.), the Romans treacherously seized Sardinia and Corsica; and when she remonstrated, they imposed upon her a heavy fine. Utterly exhausted by the mercenary war, then drawing to a close, Carthage yielded. It would be impossible on moral grounds to justify the conduct of the Romans in these dealings with their defeated enemy. Their motive, however, was not mere greed for territory. They had fought twenty-three years for the possession of Sicily, mainly for the protection of their own peninsula from Carthaginian attack. After expending so much treasure and blood for the accomplishment of this end, they would remain almost as much exposed to attack as ever, so long as Carthage held Sardinia and Corsica. Self-preservation was accordingly their chief motive for the treacherous seizure of these islands. Sardinia and Corsica together became the second Roman province in the same year as

[1] For instance, every other province had but one quaestor. [2] § 444.

Sicily (227 B.C.). Its government was about the same, though somewhat less favorable to the inhabitants.

421. Gaius Flaminius; the Gallic War (225–222 B.C.). — The majority of Roman citizens were not satisfied with the new provincial system. They were disappointed to receive no assignments of land in Sicily, whereas the nobles seemed to them to be bent upon enriching themselves by trade and speculation in the new provinces. It was a further cause of dissatisfaction that large tracts of land recently acquired by the state in Picenum and along the Umbrian coast were reserved by the nobles, to be "occupied"[1] by themselves instead of being distributed among the citizens. This selfish policy was upheld by the senate. Against its wishes Gaius Fla-min'i-us, tribune of the plebs in 232 B.C., carried through the assembly a law for distributing these public lands among the citizens. In the new settlements immediately established there under this law the Gauls of the Po valley[2] saw a menace to their own possessions. They began war upon Rome, therefore, in 225 B.C. Two years later Flaminius as consul conducted the decisive campaign. The battle fought with them in their own territory was planned and waged with extraordinary daring and skill, resulting in a complete victory. In the following year, 222 B.C., the authority of Rome was extended to the foot of the Alps. Gallia Cis-al-pi'na, as the Po basin was now called, eventually became a province.[3]

422. The Flaminian Way and the Flaminian Circus. — In this new country the Romans began immediately to plant colonies on the banks of the Po. Elected censor for 220 B.C., Flaminius connected it with Rome by a great road from the city to Ar-im'i-num, named after him the Flaminian Way.[4] It was of priceless value for the protection and development of the new territory, and for supplying the armies, and in time of scarcity the inhabitants of Rome, with provisions from the marvellously fertile valley of the Po.[5]

[1] In theory the rents of this land went to the support of the government, but in point of fact, the occupiers generally failed to pay anything for its use.

[2] §§ 360, 398.

[3] When it was thus organized is disputed by modern authorities. The expression sometimes used to designate this Gallic war — "the extension of Italy to its natural boundaries" — that is, to the Alps — is incorrect; it was not till 42 B.C. that Cisalpine Gaul came to be included in Italy.

[4] Cf. § 409.

[5] § 351.

At the same time it opened up to the Romans a great outlook for northward expansion, of which they had not hitherto even dreamed.

The road here mentioned started from the gate at the foot of the Capitoline hill and crossed the Campus Martius.[1] Below the gate, in the direction of the Tiber, were the Flaminian meadows, which from earliest time had belonged to the censor's family. Either he or an ancestor had presented this estate to the government. There the censor built the Flaminian Circus for horse and chariot races and for other popular exhibitions. In its arcades citizens walked, children played, and tradesmen held their fairs. The building was for the use of the masses of citizens.

From beginning to end Flaminius worked chiefly for the interests of the peasant proprietors, the foundation of Rome's greatness. With the acquisition of territory outside Italy a class of capitalists was already growing up in Rome, and Flaminius felt that capitalism would ruin the peasantry. In this respect he proved himself a far-sighted statesman.

423. War with the Illyrians (229–228 B.C.). — For some time Italian merchants, trading with Greece, had been plundered by Illyrian pirates. Some had been murdered, and others taken captive and held for ransom. After many complaints of these outrages had come before the Roman government, the senate sent a commission to Il-lyr'i-a, to investigate. The members were mistreated, and one was killed. Thereupon the Romans made war against the offending country. In a brief naval campaign they chastised the piratical inhabitants, and made them promise to pay tribute. Corcyra and one or two other Greek states became allies of Rome to secure protection from the Illyrians for the future. Roman envoys then went to the Achaean and Aetolian leagues[2] to justify the conduct of their city in the war. The federal authorities expressed their gratitude to the friendly state which had chastised the pirates. These were Rome's first diplomatic relations with Greece.[3]

[1] § 380.

[2] § 338 f.

[3] Ten years afterward there was a second Illyrian war (219 B.C.), in which the Romans were likewise successful. Illyria then became dependent on Rome, but was not organized as a province under the name Illyricum till some unknown time after 167 B.C.

424. Hamilcar in Spain (237–229 B.C.). — While Rome was gaining these successes in the north of Italy and in Illyria, a power was arising in Spain which was soon to threaten her existence. Hamilcar, who had looked upon the peace between Rome and Carthage as a temporary makeshift, grew indignant over the treachery of the Romans in relation to Sardinia and Corsica. His soul burned with hatred of the city, which by force and fraud had robbed his fatherland of its naval supremacy and its fairest possessions. He began to think how he might lead an army into Italy and attack Rome. But as he could not depend upon mercenaries, he planned to create in Spain a province which should supply both troops and provisions for another war. When he was about to set out for Spain, he is said to have led his son Han'ni-bal, then a boy of nine years, to the altar and made him swear undying enmity to Rome. Hannibal went with his father, and was true to his oath.

In Spain Hamilcar occupied nine years in forming a Carthaginian province more by diplomacy than by war; he taught the native tribes to live together in peace under his rule and to develop the resources of their country. "Then he died in a manner worthy of his great achievements; for he lost his life in a battle in which he showed a conspicuous and even reckless bravery. As his successor, the Carthaginians appointed his son-in-law Has'dru-bal." [1]

425. Hannibal. — Hasdrubal continued the wise policy of his predecessor with wonderful skill in gaining over the tribes and in adding them to his empire. When after eight years of such service he was murdered by a Celt, the soldiers with loud enthusiasm carried Hannibal to the general's tent and proclaimed him commander (221 B.C.). As they looked upon this young man, "the veterans imagined that Hamilcar in his youth was restored to them; they noticed the same vigor in his frame, the same animation in his eyes, the same features and expression of the face. . . . His courage in meeting dangers and his prudence in the midst of them were extreme. Toil could neither exhaust his body nor subdue his mind, and he could endure hunger and cold alike. He ate and drank no more than nature demanded. Working day and night, he thought of sleep only when there was nothing else to do; then, wrap-

[1] Polybius, ii. 1.

ping himself in his military cloak, he would lie on the ground among the watchers and the outposts of the army. Though he dressed as a plain officer, his arms and his horses were splendid." [1]

III. The Second Punic War

218–201 B.C.

426. Invasion of Italy (218 B.C.). — When Hannibal felt himself prepared, he attacked Sa-gun'tum, a city of Spain in alliance with Rome, and took it after a siege of eight months. This act gave the Romans a pretext for war. But while they were preparing to invade both Spain and Libya, Hannibal, with a well-trained army of fifty thousand infantry, nine thousand cavalry, and a number of elephants, crossed the Pyrenees and marched rapidly through Gaul. Recently the Romans had conquered the Celts of northern Italy.[2] As this whole nation was indignant with Rome on account of injuries received, they eagerly supported Hannibal in his march through their country. It was not till the crossing of the Rhone that he met with opposition from the natives. When, however, he began the ascent of the Alps the real difficulties of his journey appeared; for the way was narrow and rough, and the mountaineers attacked him. From the higher ground, which secured their own safety, they rolled stones and hurled missiles upon the troops and upon the long train of pack animals. Many soldiers fell, and many beasts of burden were either disabled or lost, so that the army suffered for want of provisions. At length with great toil and peril Hannibal reached the summit, where he rested his men and cheered them with some such words as these: "Here on the summit of the Alps, we hold the citadel of Italy; below us on the south are our friends, the Gauls, who will supply us with provisions from their bountiful lands and will help us against their foes; and yonder in the distance lies Rome!"

But when he reached the plain below, he had less than half the army with which he had set out from Spain. And those who survived were worn out with fatigue, hunger, and exposure to the cold.

[1] Livy, xxi. 4.

[2] § 421.

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