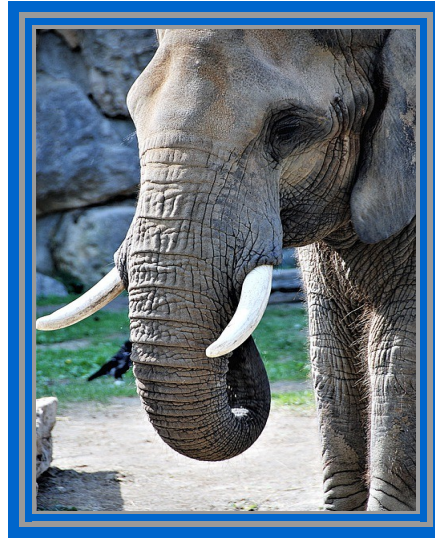


veritatis simplex oratio est.¹

Literature 16



Hannibal (1)

1 Greek Legends

Theseus was the son of Zeus. His friend Pirithous was the son of Poseidon. They decided that they would marry daughters of Zeus. Theseus chose the fair Helen, and together the two friends captured her with the idea of keeping her until she was old enough to marry Theseus. Pirithous chose Persephone daughter of Ceres. Leaving Helen with Theseus's mother they set out for the underworld where Persephone lived for six months of the year with her husband Pluto. While they were away Helen was rescued by her brothers Castor and Pollux – but that is another story.

They arrived at the very edge of of Tartarus and here Theseus sat down to rest on a rock. To his horror as he sat down he felt his limbs begin to change and become stiff. Trying to rise he found himself unable to do so. He was fixed to the rock! He turned to cry out to Pirithous and saw with terror that his friend was surrounded by the snake-haired Furies with their torches and long whips in their hands. Pirithous was unable to resist these monsters and they led him away.

Fixed to the rock Theseus remained for months, bewailing the loss of his friend and his own predicament. Then Hercules arrived in the Underworld to perform his twelfth labour which was to capture Cerberus, the great hound that guarded the gate of the underworld and prevented the dead from escaping. He pulled Theseus from the rock and persuaded Persephone to forgive him for taking part in Pirithous's adventure and to allow him to return to the land of the living. But Pirithous was never allowed to escape and had to remain in the Kingdom of Pluto.

2 Rome

¹ The Language of truth is simple. Seneca.

Hannibal 1

Stories from Roman History Retold by Lena Dalkeith (1906)

One day, more than two hundred years before the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, a crowd of citizens filled the streets of the ancient city of Carthage. They were waiting to see the Roman ambassadors pass on their way to the senate.

'Will it be peace or war, think you?' asked a dark Carthaginian.

'War,' answered his neighbour. 'There is not room in the world for two great republics. Either Rome must fall, or Carthage, and if Hannibal has aught to do with it we need not fear for Carthage. Already 'tis said the Romans tremble at the sound of his name, and they have cause. One day he will conquer Rome itself, and then we Carthaginians will be masters of Italy, and Rome will pay tribute to Carthage, the greatest city in the world.'

So proudly spoke the man. He could not know that in less than a hundred years Carthage would be in ruins – burned to the ground by the Roman troops, and all her great possessions given over to Roman rule. But at that time there was good cause for boasting, for Carthage with all its splendid temples and beautiful buildings, overlooking the blue Mediterranean Sea, rivalled even Rome in greatness and power, and no one could then tell which of the two republics – Roman or Carthaginian – would prove the stronger in the end.

'Hannibal has ever hated the Romans!' This time it was a woman who spoke. 'His father taught him that lesson well. 'Tis said that when the boy was but nine years old, Hamilcar made him swear, before the altar of the gods, a bitter oath of hatred against Rome.'

'Hamilcar conquered Hispania (Spain) for us, and he was a great general,' said the first man, 'but his son will be still greater, mark my words. Already he has forced many more of those wild Spanish tribes to pay him allegiance, and look you, he keeps to his oath. Why did he besiege Segantum and take it? For no other cause than to pick a quarrel with the Romans. The city was under their protection, now it belongs to Carthage, thanks to Hannibal, and if they do not beware he will take more from them yet.'

'Hush! Here they come!' said the woman.

Swiftly the Roman ambassadors passed, as eager as the Carthaginians to know whether it was to be war or peace.

'Know ye what Hannibal has done?' cried Fabius, the chief ambassador, as they stood before the Carthaginian senators. 'The republic sent him word that if he took Segantum it would mean war with Rome. In spite of this warning he has besieged and taken the city. Now we would know what the Carthaginian Government has to say?'

'Hannibal acted as he thought best for the good of his country,' answered the senators, and thereupon they began to make excuses for their general. Fabius lost patience.

'I here bring you war or peace: take which you please,' he said, and gathered up his toga into a heavy fold.

'Give us which you like,' was the answer.

Fabius shook out the fold.

'I give you war,' he said.

'We accept the gift, and welcome,' cried the senators.

Hastily Fabius set sail for Spain, where he hoped to persuade the Spanish tribes to turn against the Carthaginians or Africans as they were called later; but he failed. Quickly he journeyed to Gaul: nothing could be done there for his cause. The Gallic tribes, although they had been conquered by the Romans, were at heart enemies to Rome: no help was to be had from them.

To Rome then Fabius returned, to find the citizens much alarmed, busy making ready for the terrible war which they knew must come.

In Spain, in the city which Hamilcar had founded and named New Carthage, his son Hannibal was training both Spanish and African troops for the great invasion. He had made up his mind to do a wonderful thing; he was going to march over the Pyrenees through Gaul, and over the Alps into Cisalpine Gaul, which is now called Northern Italy. On the way he hoped that many of the Gallic tribes would join him, and with their help he hoped, this daring man, to conquer, not only Gaul, Etruria, and the other provinces, but Rome, the unconquerable city itself.

The desperate march began. Hannibal at the head of 90,000 foot and 20,000 horse soldiers and thirty-seven elephants (the Carthaginians made great use of elephants in battle), was on his way to conquer Italy.

But the river Iberus once crossed, his troubles began. The tribes there fought with him for every inch of the way, and when he came to the foot of the Pyrenees the fourth part of his army had been slain. Worse was to come. At the sight of the terrible snow-topped mountains 11,000 soldiers refused to go further. Hannibal, who himself was as brave as a lion, who never once complained however tired or cold or hungry he was, said not one word of reproach to them.

'Go if ye will!' he said, knowing that unwilling soldiers make bad fighters; and they went.

On marched Hannibal with the rest of his army over the Pyrenees, through Gaul to the foot of the Alps, and as yet the Romans had made no sign. I think not one of them believed that Hannibal would dare to lead his army over those terrible mountains.

'Impossible,' they cried, 'for any soldiers save mountaineers, lightly armed, and with no baggage and horses to hinder.'

'Nothing is impossible for Hannibal!' his soldiers would have answered had they been there; for Hannibal all through his life was adored by his men.

Winter was near. Already snow had fallen, but in spite of the cold Hannibal would not wait. He persuaded some of the Gauls to show them the way up the pass, but on the third day's march the guides turned traitor, and the whole tribe fiercely attacked the Carthaginians, even climbing the high precipice above the road to roll down great stones upon the soldiers. This went on until at a turning of the pass Hannibal with a few men kept them at bay, while the rest of the army filed past in safety.

But the brave soldiers had to fight with still stronger foes than men. The cruel snow and sleet fell upon them: bitter winds froze them to the bone: the steep, slippery, dangerous road hindered their marching: hunger and weariness went with them day by day. The men died by hundreds, nay, by thousands; the elephants and horses dropped exhausted by the way, and still Hannibal would not

give in, still they struggled up the pass; higher, and higher, and higher, until on the ninth day they reached the top: Italy was in sight.

'On! my heroes, on!' cried Hannibal, when the troops had rested awhile; and the downward march began. The road was so bad that three days had to be spent in the mending of it, and three days meant the loss of many more soldiers' lives. Another three days of still greater hardships, and Hannibal, with all that was left of his army, entered Cisalpine Gaul. He had reached Italy at last.

How many lives do you think that terrible sixteen days' march cost him? Thirty-four thousand men alone, not counting the horses, were killed by hunger and cold and weariness, for there had been little fighting.

Happily the tribes in that part of the country were friendly, and for a time he stayed there to rest his troops and find fresh horses.

There was need. Rome presently sent an army of 40,000 men led by two consuls, and a great battle was fought. Hannibal, in spite of his smaller army, cleverly won. The Romans fled, and the whole of Cisalpine Gaul was at the mercy of Hannibal. He, however, having lost a great many men retired into winter quarters, there to wait until spring should make war possible again.

If you have a synchronological chart you can find Hannibal on it.

Vocabulary for you indexed notebook:

Romanus a Roman

Bible example:

*Ego, viri fratres, quum nihil fecerim adversus populum aut ritus patrios, vincitus traditus sum Hierosolymis in manus **Romanorum**.* Acts 28:17b (Beza's translation)

You might get *nihil* if you know who a "nihilist" is. *Adversus* is related to the word "adverse" and *populum* to "popular." *Manus* is related to "manual." You will get the name of the city if you drop the "H" and remember that "i" and "j" are the same letter in Latin.

legatus envoy, senior officer

Bible example:

*Sed Rachabam meretricem cauponam, et familiam paternam eius, cum omnibus qua erant ei, vivam conservavit Iehoschuah, qui habitavit inter Israelitas usque in diem hunc: eo quod abscondisset **legatos** illos, quos miserat Iehoschuah ad explorandum Ierichuntem.* Joshua 6:25. (Tremellius' translation.)

The word *legatos* here is translated "messengers" in our Bible but we usually call these men "spies"! Change some (but not all) capital "I"s to "J"s to help you guess some more words. You know *sed, et, vivam* and *habitavit* (although you do not yet know the tense of this last word). You can probably guess *conservavit* and *explorandum*.