

HISTORY OF ROME.

CHAPTER I.

FROM THE ORIGIN OF THE ROMANS TO THE DEATH OF ROMULUS.

1. The Romans, desirous of being called the descendants of the gods, trace their origin to Eneas, the son of Venus and Anchises, who having escaped from the destruction of Troy, after many adventures and dangers, arrived in Italy, A. M. 2294. Latinus, the king of that country, received him kindly, and gave him his daughter Lavinia in marriage. Eneas built a city, which in honor of his wife he named Lavinium. Over this city he reigned only four years, when he was slain in battle.

2. The succession continued in the family of Eneas for upwards of four hundred years, during which time fifteen kings had reigned. Numitor, the fifteenth king, was deposed by his brother Amulius. He, the better to secure the throne which he had usurped, murdered the sons of the deposed monarch, and caused his only daughter Rhea Silvia to become a vestal.

3. His precautions, however, proved vain. According to tradition, Rhea Silvia and Mars, the god of war, became the parents of two boys. Amulius condemned the mother to be buried alive, and ordered that the boys should be flung into the Tiber. It happened, however, that this cruel order was executed at a time when the