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SECOND PUNIC WAR.

Many a schoolboy will remember this, and reflect with little pleasure on the time that he has been puzzled with translating it in a language which he could not well understand; but there are few young men who may not profit by reading it over again with attention; not to learn the art of war, but to learn to avoid danger by looking out for it in proper season; and that is perhaps of more importance; to learn the very great respect of ultimate success which awaits undaunted perseverance in times of extreme danger and difficulty. As this paper may be seen by some who have not read, or who have forgotten the history, we shall give a short summary of it. The Romans were at that time a powerful nation who had always been engaged in wars with their neighbours. They possessed all the skill and love of military honor which could be acquired by a long habit of successful war. Their opponents the Carthaginians were also a powerful and warlike people; the remains of the greatest commercial nation of antiquity; who being driven from Tyre had established themselves on the coast of Africa, and were in possession of a considerable part of Spain. Hannibal their great Commander was a man of extraordinary Genius, possessing uncommon talents for war; early in the season he led a numerous army across the Alps into Italy having to make a road in very severe weather the Mountains being covered with snow to a great depth. After the Mountains were passed he was obliged to march for a number of days on land overflowed by the spring floods. He lost many thousands of his men by the extreme severity of the weather, but the remainder were hardened to cold and fatigue by the same sufferings, and much more fit for service than when they commenced their march. The Romans raised great armies and opposed him with their usual courage, but notwithstanding their skill and valour they found themselves greatly overmatched, and lost one great battle after another. Hannibal did not confine himself to the common arts of war, but on many occasions introduced some new tactics by which he entrapped his enemies before they were aware of it. One of his stratagems may serve for a specimen. He fought a great battle on such a piece of flat ground as we call an Interval, bounded on one side by a river, and on the other by a very steep hill. The space being narrow the two armies approached each other in solid columns, whose breadth extended from the hill to the river, Hannibal however had taken the precaution to leave a

small space between his column and the river, this space was occupied by troops formed in line. His front was composed of Gauls, then accounted strong men and good soldiers. When the two armies came in contact it was found that Hannibal's front was formed in a curved line projecting in the centre. The Romans immediately closed up to their enemies, and by so doing made their front also a curved line, but hollow in the centre and projecting on each flank. All the lines which composed their column by closing up, were bent in the same way. After an hours hard fighting the Romans had gained considerable ground, and pushed the enemy back, but as they were facing partly towards the center of their line they had before they were aware become so crowded that they could not use their arms, and all the lines of their column were in the same condition, jammed shoulder to shoulder. Hannibal then making the troops wheel back, who formed a line from the front of his column to the river, sent forward through this space his best soldiers who had been reserved for this purpose, and they falling on the crowded mass of Romans who could neither fight nor fly cut down the greater part of them almost without resistance. After losing most of their best men the Romans found it necessary to avoid pitched battles with great armies, as they could not equal Hannibal in skill; but as no loss daunted them, after a very long and most destructive war they at last completely vanquished and ruined the Carthaginians, although for years the advantage had been greatly on their side.—What is particularly worthy of remark is, first, the indomitable perseverance of the Romans. They had resolved to conquer, nor did the greatest losses make them change their resolution. When money failed, all who could support themselves agreed to serve without pay, while the rich readily placed their wealth in the hands of the government. When their young men were slaughtered and sufficient numbers for their armies could not be found, they armed their slaves, promising them freedom if they fought well—when the enemy offered to let them have their prisoners for a small ransom, they refused to redeem men who could yield rather than die. Much of their produce was destroyed by the enemy's army who were living in the heart of their country, but although it was very uncertain who would reap the crops, the farmers cultivated their land as industriously as if they were perfectly secure, often ploughing the enemy's camp as soon as they had marched out of sight. The greatness of the danger had roused the full energy of the nation, their petty quarrels were forgotten, and one spirit seemed to pervade the whole.

Not the less worthy of our attention were the effects of success and failure even upon the mighty minds of both parties. The first was almost invariably followed with a degree of negligence which exposed the party to a reverse—while defeat produced increased application, watchfulness, and activity, on both sides, for each believed that they could, and determined that they would conquer. The cautious Hannibal having destroyed great armies resolved to give some repose to his troops after their extraordinary fatigues. He took up his winter quarters in one of the richest cities of Italy where every kind of luxury was to be had in abundance. There they spent the winter in amusements; but when the season enabled him again to take the field he found himself at the head of a different kind of troops from what they had been when they emerged