

flamed the resentment of the sons of Ancus, and they determined to destroy him.

5. To effect their purpose, they hired two ruffians, who pretending that they came to seek justice at the hands of the king, with the blow of an axe struck him dead in his own palace. The lictors who waited upon the king seized the murderers and put them to death, but the sons of Ancus found safety in flight.

Thus died Tarquinius, being eighty years of age, after a reign of thirty-eight years.

6. In the tumult which followed the king's death, Tanaquil, his widow, desirous that her son-in-law Servius Tullius should succeed him, dissembled her sorrow, and from one of the windows of the palace assured the people that Tarquinius was not dead, that he would soon recover, and that in the meantime he had deputed his power to his son-in-law.

7. Servius Tullius, who was the son of a Latin bondswoman, therefore assumed the dignity, and performed the duties of the king, until he had secured a strong party among the nobles. The death of Tarquin being then publicly declared, Servius came to the throne, solely at the appointment of the senate, without attempting to gain the suffrages of the people.

8. Servius made a great change in the Roman constitution, by admitting the plebeians to a share in the civil government. He divided the Romans into classes and centuries, according to their wealth, and the amount of taxes which they paid to the state. He also instituted another regulation, called a kustrum. By this, all the citizens were to assemble once in five years in complete armor on the Campus Martius, or Field of Mars, there to give account of their families and fortunes.