

## Poplicola

By Plutarch

(legendary, lived 500 B.C.E.)

Translated by John Dryden

Such was Solon. To him we compare Poplicola, who received this later title from the Roman people for his merit, as a noble accession to his former name, Publius Valerius. He descended from Valerius, a man amongst the early citizens, reputed the principal reconciler of the differences betwixt the Romans and Sabines, and one that was most instrumental in persuading their kings to assent to peace and union. Thus descended, Publius Valerius, as it is said, whilst Rome remained under its kingly government, obtained as great a name from his eloquence as from his riches, charitably employing the one in liberal aid to the poor, the other with integrity and freedom in the service of justice thereby giving assurance, that, should the government fall into a

republic, he would become a chief man in the community. The illegal and wicked accession of Tarquinius Superbus to the crown, with his making it, instead of kingly rule, the instrument of insolence and tyranny, having inspired the people with a hatred to his reign, upon the death of Lucretia (she killing herself after violence had been done to her), they took an occasion of revolt; and Lucius Brutus, engaging in the change, came to Valerius before all others, and, with his zealous assistance, deposed the kings. And whilst the people inclined towards the electing one leader instead of their king, Valerius acquiesced, that to rule was rather Brutus's due, as the author of the democracy. But when the name of monarchy was odious to the people, and a divided power appeared more grateful in the prospect, and two were chosen to hold it, Valerius, entertaining hopes that he might be elected consul with Brutus, was disappointed; for, instead of Valerius, notwithstanding the endeavours of Brutus, Tarquinius Collatinus was chosen, the husband of Lucretia, a man noways his superior in merit. But the nobles dreading the return of their kings, who still used all endeavours abroad and solicitations at home, were resolved upon a chieftain of an intense hatred to them, and noways likely to yield.

Now Valerius was troubled that his desire to serve his country should

be doubted, because he had sustained no private injury from the insolence of the tyrants. He withdrew from the senate and practice of the bar, quitting all public concerns; which gave an occasion of discourse, and fear, too, lest his anger should reconcile him to the king's side, and he should prove the ruin of the state, tottering as yet under the uncertainties of a change. But Brutus being doubtful of some others, and determined to give the test to the senate upon the altars, upon the day appointed Valerius came with cheerfulness into the forum, and was the first man that took the oath, in no way to submit or yield to Tarquin's propositions, but rigorously to maintain liberty; which gave great satisfaction to the senate and assurance to the consuls, his action soon after showing the sincerity of his oath. For ambassadors came from Tarquin, with popular and specious proposals, whereby they thought to seduce the people, as though the king had cast off all insolence, and made moderation the only measure of his desires. To this embassy the consuls thought fit to give public audience, but Valerius opposed it, and would not permit that the poorer people, who entertained more fear of war than of tyranny, should have any occasion offered them, or any temptations to new designs. Afterwards other ambassadors arrived, who declared their king would recede from his crown, and lay down his arms, only capitulating for a restitution

to himself, his friends, and allies, of their moneys and estates to support them in their banishment. Now, several inclining to the request, and Collatinus in particular favouring it, Brutus, a man of vehement and unbending nature, rushed into the forum, there proclaiming his fellow-consul to be a traitor, in granting subsidies to tyranny, and supplies for a war to those to whom it was monstrous to allow so much as subsistence in exile. This caused an assembly of the citizens, amongst whom the first that spake was Caius Minucius, a private man, who advised Brutus, and urged the Romans to keep the property, and employ it against the tyrants, rather than to remit it to the tyrants, to be used against themselves. The Romans, however, decided that whilst they had enjoyed the liberty they had fought for, they should not sacrifice peace for the sake of money, but send out the tyrants' property after them. This question, however, of his property was the least part of Tarquin's design; the demand sounded the feelings of the people, and was preparatory to a conspiracy which the ambassadors endeavoured to excite, delaying their return, under pretence of selling some of the goods and reserving others to be sent away, till, in fine, they corrupted two of the most eminent families in Rome, the Aquillian, which had three, and the Vitellian, which had two senators. These all were, by the mother's side, nephews to Collatinus; besides which

Brutus had a special alliance to the Vitellii from his marriage with their sister, by whom he had several children; two of whom, of their own age, their near relations and daily companions, the Vitellii seduced to join in the plot, to ally themselves to the great house and royal hopes of the Tarquins, and gain emancipation from the violence and imbecility united of their father, whose austerity to offenders they termed violence, while the imbecility which he had long feigned, to protect himself from the tyrants, still, it appears, was, in name at least, ascribed to him. When upon these inducements the youths came to confer with the Aquillii, and thought it convenient to bind themselves in a solemn and dreadful oath, by tasting the blood of a murdered man, and touching his entrails. For which design they met at the house of the Aquillii. The building chosen for the transaction was, as was natural, dark and unfrequented, and a slave named Vindicius had, as it chanced, concealed himself there, not out of design or any intelligence of the affair, but, accidentally being within, seeing with how much haste and concern they came in, he was afraid to be discovered, and placed himself behind a chest, where he was able to observe their actions and overhear their debates. Their resolutions were to kill the consuls, and they wrote letters to Tarquin to this effect, and gave them to the ambassadors, who were lodging upon the

spot with the Aquillii, and were present at the consultation.

Upon their departure, Vindicius secretly quitted the house, but was at a loss what to do in the matter, for to arraign the sons before the father Brutus, or the nephews before the uncle Collatinus, seemed equally (as indeed it was) shocking; yet he knew no private Roman to whom he could intrust secrets of such importance. Unable, however, to keep silence, and burdened with his knowledge, he went and addressed himself to Valerius, whose known freedom and kindness of temper were an inducement; as he was a person to whom the needy had easy access, and who never shut his gates against the petitions or indigences of humble people. But when Vindicius came and made a complete discovery to him, his brother Marcus and his own wife being present, Valerius was struck with amazement, and by no means would dismiss the discoverer, but confined him to the room, and placed his wife as a guard to the door, sending his brother in the interim to beset the king's palace, and seize, if possible, the writings there, and secure the domestics, whilst he, with his constant attendance of clients and friends, and a great retinue of attendants, repaired to the house of the Aquillii, who were, as it chanced, absent from home; and so, forcing an entrance through the gates, they lit upon the letters then lying in the lodgings

of the ambassadors. Meantime the Aquillii returned in all haste, and, coming to blows about the gate, endeavoured a recovery of the letters. The other party made a resistance, and throwing their gowns around their opponents' necks, at last, after much struggling on both sides, made their way with them their prisoners through the streets into the forum. The like engagement happened about the king's palace, where Marcus seized some other letters which it was designed should be conveyed away in the goods, and, laying hands on such of the king's people as he could find, dragged them also into the forum. When the consuls had quieted the tumult, Vindicius was brought out by the orders of Valerius, and the accusation stated, and the letters were opened, to which the traitors could make no plea. Most of the people standing mute and sorrowful, some only, out of kindness to Brutus, mentioning banishment, the tears of Collatinus, attended with Valerius's silence, gave some hopes of mercy. But Brutus, calling his two sons by their names, "Canst not thou," said he, "O Titus, or thou, Tiberius, make any defence against the indictment?" The question being thrice proposed, and no reply made, he turned himself to the lictors and cried, "What remains is your duty." They immediately seized the youths, and, stripping them of their clothes, bound their hands behind them and scourged their bodies with their rods; too tragical a scene for others to look

at; Brutus, however, is said not to have turned aside his face, nor allowed the least glance of pity to soften and smooth his aspect of rigour and austerity, but sternly watched his children suffer, even till the lictors, extending them on the ground, cut off their heads with an axe; then departed, committing the rest to the judgment of his colleague. An action truly open alike to the highest commendation and the strongest censure; for either the greatness of his virtue raised him above the impressions of sorrow, or the extravagance of his misery took away all sense of it; but neither seemed common, or the result of humanity, but either divine or brutish. Yet it is more reasonable that our judgment should yield to his reputation, than that his merit should suffer detraction by the weakness of our judgment; in the Roman's opinion, Brutus did a greater work in the establishment of the government than Romulus in the foundation of the city.

Upon Brutus's departure out of the forum, consternation, horror, and silence for some time possessed all that reflected on what was done; the easiness and tardiness, however, of Collatinus gave confidence to the Aquillii to request some time to answer their charge, and that Vindicius, their servant, should be remitted into their hands, and no longer harboured amongst their accusers. The consul seemed inclined



to their proposal, and was proceeding to dissolve the assembly; but Valerius would not suffer Vindicius, who was surrounded by his people, to be surrendered, nor the meeting to withdraw without punishing the traitors; and at length laid violent hands upon the Aquillii, and, calling Brutus to his assistance, exclaimed against the unreasonable course of Collatinus, to impose upon his colleague the necessity of taking away the lives of his own sons, and yet have thoughts of gratifying some women with the lives of traitors and public enemies. Collatinus, displeased at this, and commanding Vindicius to be taken away, the lictors made their way through the crowd and seized their man, and struck all who endeavoured a rescue. Valerius's friends headed the resistance, and the people cried out for Brutus, who, returning, on silence being made, told them he had been competent to pass sentence by himself upon his own sons, but left the rest to the suffrages of the free citizens: "Let every man speak that wishes, and persuade whom he can." But there was no need of oratory, for, it being referred to the vote, they were returned condemned by all the suffrages, and were accordingly beheaded.

Collatinus's relationship to the kings had, indeed, already rendered him suspicious, and his second name, too, had made him obnoxious to

the people, who were loth to hear the very sound of Tarquin; but after this had happened, perceiving himself an offence to every one, he relinquished his charge and departed from the city. At the new elections in his room, Valerius obtained, with high honour, the consulship, as a just reward of his zeal; of which he thought Vindicius deserved a share, whom he made, first of all freedmen, a citizen of Rome, and gave him the privilege of voting in what tribe soever he was pleased to be enrolled; other freedmen received the right of suffrage a long time after from Appius, who thus courted popularity; and from this Vindicius, a perfect manumission is called to this day vindicta. This done, the goods of the kings were exposed to plunder, and the palace to ruin.

The pleasantest part of the field of Mars, which Tarquin had owned, was devoted to the service of that god; but, it happening to be harvest season, and the sheaves yet being on the ground, they thought it not proper to commit them to the flail, or unsanctify them with any use; and, therefore, carrying them to the river-side, and trees withal that were cut down, they cast all into the water, dedicating the soil, free from all occupation, to the deity. Now, these thrown in, one upon another, and closing together, the stream did not bear them far,

but where the first were carried down and came to a bottom, the remainder, finding no farther conveyance, were stopped and interwoven one with another; the stream working the mass into a firmness, and washing down fresh mud. This, settling there, became an accession of matter, as well as cement, to the rubbish, insomuch that the violence of the waters could not remove it, but forced and compressed it all together. Thus its bulk and solidity gained it new subsidies, which gave it extension enough to stop on its way most of what the stream brought down. This is now a sacred island, lying by the city, adorned with the temples of the gods, and walks, and is called in the Latin tongue *inter duos pontes*. Though some say this did not happen at the dedication of Tarquin's field, but in aftertimes, when Tarquinia, a vestal priestess, gave an adjacent field to the public, and obtained great honours in consequence, as, amongst the rest, that of all women her testimony alone should be received; she had also the liberty to marry, but refused it; thus some tell the story.

Tarquin, despairing of a return to his kingdom by the conspiracy, found a kind reception amongst the Tuscans, who, with a great army, proceeded to restore him. The consuls headed the Romans against them, and made their rendezvous in certain holy places, the one called the

Arsian grove, the other the Aesuvian meadow. When they came into action, Aruns, the son of Tarquin, and Brutus, the Roman consul, not accidentally encountering each other, but out of hatred and rage, the one to avenge tyranny and enmity to his country, the other his banishment, set spurs to their horses, and, engaging with more fury than forethought, disregarding their own security, fell together in the combat. This dreadful onset hardly was followed by a more favourable end; both armies, doing and receiving equal damage, were separated by a storm. Valerius was much concerned, not knowing what the result of the day was, and seeing his men as well dismayed at the sight of their own dead, as rejoiced at the loss of the enemy; so apparently equal in the number was the slaughter on either side. Each party, however, felt surer of defeat from the actual sight of their own dead, than they could feel of victory from conjecture about those of their adversaries. The night being come (and such as one may presume must follow such a battle), and the armies laid to rest, they say that the grove shook, and uttered a voice, saying that the Tuscans had lost one man more than the Romans; clearly a divine announcement; and the Romans at once received it with shouts and expressions of joy; whilst the Tuscans, through fear and amazement, deserted their tents, and were for the most part dispersed. The Romans, falling upon the remainder, amounting to nearly five thousand,

took them prisoners, and plundered the camp; when they numbered the dead, they found on the Tuscans' side eleven thousand and three hundred, exceeding their own loss but by one man. This fight happened upon the last of February, and Valerius triumphed in honour of it, being the first consul that drove in with a four-horse chariot; which sight both appeared magnificent, and was received with an admiration free from envy or offence (as some suggest) on the part of the spectators; it would not otherwise have been continued with so much eagerness and emulation through all the after ages. The people applauded likewise the honours he did to his colleague, in adding to his obsequies a funeral oration: which was so much liked by the Romans, and found so good a reception, that it became customary for the best men to celebrate the funerals of great citizens with speeches in their commendation; and their antiquity in Rome is affirmed to be greater than in Greece, unless, with the orator Anaximenes, we make Solon the first author.

Yet some part of Valerius's behaviour did give offence and disgust to the people, because Brutus, whom they esteemed the father of their liberty, had not presumed to rule without a colleague, but united one and then another to him in his commission; while Valerius, they said, centering all authority in himself, seemed not in any sense

a successor to Brutus in the consulship, but to Tarquin in the tyranny; he might make verbal harangues to Brutus's memory, yet when he was attended with all the rods and axes, proceeding down from a house than which the king's house that he had demolished had not been statelier, those actions showed him an imitator of Tarquin. For, indeed, his dwelling-house on the Velia was somewhat imposing in appearance, hanging over the forum, and overlooking all transactions there; the access to it was hard, and to see him far off coming down, a stately and royal spectacle. But Valerius showed how well it were for men in power and great offices to have ears that give admittance to truth before flattery; for upon his friends telling him that he displeased the people, he contended not, neither resented it, but while it was still night, sending for a number of work-people, pulled down his house and levelled it with the ground; so that in the morning the people, seeing and flocking together, expressed their wonder and their respect for his magnanimity, and their sorrow, as though it had been a human being, for the large and beautiful house which was thus lost to them by an unfounded jealousy, while its owner, their consul, without a roof of his own, had to beg a lodging with his friends. For his friends received him, till a place the people gave him was furnished with a house, though less stately than his own, where now stands the temple,

as it is called, of Vica Pota.

He resolved to render the government, as well as himself, instead of terrible, familiar and pleasant to the people, and parted the axes from the rods, and always, upon his entrance into the assembly, lowered these also to the people, to show, in the strongest way, the republican foundation of the government; and this the consuls observe to this day. But the humility of the man was but a means, not, as they thought, of lessening himself, but merely to abate their envy by this moderation; for whatever he detracted from his authority he added to his real power, the people still submitting with satisfaction, which they expressed by calling him Poplicola, or people-lover, which name had the pre-eminence of the rest, and, therefore, in the sequel of his narrative we shall use no other.

He gave free leave to any to sue for the consulship; but before the admittance of a colleague, mistrusting the chances, lest emulation or ignorance should cross his designs, by his sole authority enacted his best and most important measures. First, he supplied the vacancies of the senators, whom either Tarquin long before had put to death, or the war lately cut off; those that he enrolled, they write, amounted

to a hundred and sixty-four; afterwards he made several laws which added much to the people's liberty, in particular one granting offenders the liberty of appealing to the people from the judgment of the consuls; a second, that made it death to usurp any magistracy without the people's consent; a third, for the relief of poor citizens, which, taking off their taxes, encouraged their labours; another, against disobedience to the consuls, which was no less popular than the rest, and rather to the benefit of the commonalty than to the advantage of the nobles, for it imposed upon disobedience the penalty of ten oxen and two sheep; the price of a sheep being ten obols, of an ox, an hundred. For the use of money was then infrequent amongst the Romans, but their wealth in cattle great; even now pieces of property are called peculia from pecus, cattle; and they had stamped upon their most ancient money an ox, a sheep, or a hog; and surnamed their sons Suillii, Bubulci, Caprarii, and Porcii, from caproe, goats, and porci, hogs.

Amidst this mildness and moderation, for one excessive fault he instituted one excessive punishment; for he made it lawful without trial to take away any man's life that aspired to a tyranny, and acquitted the slayer, if he produced evidence of the crime; for though it was not probable for a man, whose designs were so great, to escape all notice; yet



because it was possible he might, although observed, by force anticipate judgment, which the usurpation itself would then preclude, he gave a licence to any to anticipate the usurper. He was honoured likewise for the law touching the treasury; for because it was necessary for the citizens to contribute out of their estates to the maintenance of wars, and he was unwilling himself to be concerned in the care of it, or to permit his friends or indeed to let the public money pass into any private house, he allotted the temple of Saturn for the treasury, in which to this day they deposit the tribute-money, and granted the people the liberty of choosing two young men as quaestors, or treasurers. The first were Publius Veturius and Marcus Minucius; and a large sum was collected, for they assessed one hundred and thirty thousand, excusing orphans and widows from the payment. After these dispositions, he admitted Lucretius, the father of Lucretia, as his colleague, and gave him the precedence in the government, by resigning the fasces to him, as due to his years, which privilege of seniority continued to our time. But within a few days Lucretius died, and in a new election Marcus Horatius succeeded in that honour, and continued consul for the remainder of the year.

Now, whilst Tarquin was making preparations in Tuscany for a second

war against the Romans, it is said a great portent occurred. When Tarquin was king, and had all but completed the buildings of the Capitol, designing, whether from oracular advice or his own pleasure, to erect an earthen chariot upon the top, he intrusted the workmanship to Tuscans of the city Veii, but soon after lost his kingdom. The work thus modelled, the Tuscans set in a furnace, but the clay showed not those passive qualities which usually attend its nature, to subside and be condensed upon the evaporation of the moisture, but rose and swelled out to that bulk, that, when solid and firm, notwithstanding the removal of the roof and opening the walls of the furnace, it could not be taken out without much difficulty. The soothsayers looked upon this as a divine prognostic of success and power to those that should possess it; and the Tuscans resolved not to deliver it to the Roman, who demanded it, but answered that it rather belonged to Tarquin than to those who had sent him into exile. A few days after, they had a horse-race there, with the usual shows and solemnities, and as the charioteer with his garland on his head was quietly driving the victorious chariot out of the ring, the horses, upon no apparent occasion, taking fright, either by divine instigation or by accident, hurried away their driver at full speed to Rome; neither did his holding them in prevail, nor his voice, but he was forced along with violence till, coming to the

Capitol, he was thrown out by the gate called Ratumena. This occurrence raised wonder and fear in the Veientes, who now permitted the delivery of the chariot.

The building of the temple of the Capitoline Jupiter had been vowed by Tarquin, the son of Demaratus, when warring with the Sabines; Tarquinius Superbus, his son or grandson, built but could not dedicate it, because he lost his kingdom before it was quite finished. And now that it was completed with all its ornaments, Poplicola was ambitious to dedicate it; but the nobility envied him that honour, as, indeed, also, in some degree, those his prudence in making laws and conduct in wars entitled him to. Grudging him, at any rate, the addition of this, they urged Horatius to sue for the dedication, and, whilst Poplicola was engaged in some military expedition, voted it to Horatius, and conducted him to the Capitol, as though, were Poplicola present, they could not have carried it. Yet, some write, Poplicola was by lot destined against his will to the expedition, the other to the dedication; and what happened in the performance seems to intimate some ground for this conjecture; for, upon the Ides of September, which happens about the full moon of the month Metagitnion, the people having assembled at the Capitol and silence being enjoined, Horatius, after the performance

of other ceremonies, holding the doors, according to custom, was proceeding to pronounce the words of dedication, when Marcus, the brother of Poplicola, who had got a place on purpose beforehand near the door, observing his opportunity, cried, "O consul, thy son lies dead in the camp;" which made a great impression upon all others who heard it, yet in nowise discomposed Horatius, who returned merely the reply, "Cast the dead out whither you please; I am not a mourner;" and so completed the dedication. The news was not true, but Marcus thought the he might avert him from his performance; but it argues him a man of wonderful self-possession, whether he at once saw through the cheat, or, believing it as true, showed no discomposure.

The same fortune attended the dedication of the second temple; the first, as has been said, was built by Tarquin, and dedicated by Horatius; it was burnt down in the civil wars. The second, Sylla built, and, dying before the dedication, left that honour to Catulus; and when this was demolished in the Vitellian sedition, Vespasian, with the same success that attended him in other things, began a third and lived to see it finished, but did not live to see it again destroyed, as it presently was; but was as fortunate in dying before its destruction, as Sylla was the reverse in dying before the dedication of his. For

immediately after Vespasian's death it was consumed by fire. The fourth, which now exists, was both built and dedicated by Domitian. It is said Tarquin expended forty thousand pounds of silver in the very foundations; but the whole wealth of the richest private man in Rome would not discharge the cost of the gilding of this temple in our days, it amounting to above twelve thousand talents; the pillars were cut out of Pentelican marble, of a length most happily proportioned to their thickness; these we saw at Athens; but when they were cut anew at Rome and polished, they did not gain so much in embellishment as they lost in symmetry, being rendered too taper and slender. Should any one who wonders at the costliness of the Capitol visit any one gallery in Domitian's palace, or hall, or bath, or the apartments of his concubines, Epicharmus's remark upon the prodigal, that-

"'Tis not beneficence, but truth to say,  
A mere disease of giving things away," would be in his mouth in application to Domitian. It is neither piety, he would say, nor magnificence, but, indeed, a mere disease of building, and a desire, like Midas, of converting everything into gold or stone. And thus much for this matter.

Tarquin, after the great battle wherein he lost his son in combat with Brutus, fled to Clusium, and sought aid from Lars Porsenna, then one of those most powerful princes of Italy, and a man of worth and generosity; who assured him of assistance, immediately sending his commands to Rome that they should receive Tarquin as their king, and, upon the Romans' refusal, proclaimed war, and, having signified the time and place where he intended his attack, approached with a great army. Poplicola was, in his absence, chosen consul a second time, and Titus Lucretius his colleague, and, returning to Rome, to show a spirit yet loftier than Porsenna's, built the city Sigliura when Porsenna was already in the neighbourhood; and walling it at great expense, there placed a colony of seven hundred men, as being little concerned at the war. Nevertheless, Porsenna, making a sharp assault, obliged the defendants to retire to Rome, who had almost in their entrance admitted the enemy into the city with them; only Poplicola by sallying out at the gate prevented them, and, joining battle by Tiber side, opposed the enemy, that pressed on with their multitude, but at last, sinking under desperate wounds, was carried out of the fight. The same fortune fell upon Lucretius, so that the Romans, being dismayed, retreated into the city for their security, and Rome was in great hazard of being taken, the enemy forcing their way on to

the wooden bridge, where Horatius Cocles, seconded by two of the first men in Rome, Herminius and Lartius, made head against them. Horatius obtained this name from the loss of one of his eyes in the war, or, as others write, from the depresso of his nose, which, leaving nothing in the middle to separate them, made both eyes appear but as one; and hence, intending to say Cyclops, by a mispronunciation they called him Cocles. This Cocles kept the bridge, and held back the enemy, till his own party broke it down behind, and then with his armour dropped into the river, and swam to the hither side, with a wound in his hip from a Tuscan spear. Poplicola, admiring his courage, proposed at once that the Romans should every one make him a present of a day's provisions, and afterwards give him as much land as he could plough round in one day, and besides erected a brazen statute to his honour in the temple of Vulcan, as a requital for the lameness caused by his wound.

But Porsenna laying close siege to the city, and a famine raging amongst the Romans, also a new army of the Tuscans making incursions into the country, Poplicola, a third time chosen consul, designed to make, without sallying out, his defence against Porsenna, but, privately stealing forth against the new army of the Tuscans, put them to flight

and slew five thousand. The story of Mucius is variously given; we, like others, must follow the commonly received statement. He was a man endowed with every virtue, but most eminent in war; and, resolving to kill Porsenna, attired himself in the Tuscan habit, and using the Tuscan language, came to the camp, and approaching the seat where the king sat amongst his nobles, but not certainly knowing the king, and fearful to inquire, drew out his sword, and stabbed one who he thought had most the appearance of king. Mucius was taken in the act, and whilst he was under examination, a pan of fire was brought to the king, who intended to sacrifice; Mucius thrust his right hand into the flame, and whilst it burnt stood looking at Porsenna with a steadfast and undaunted countenance; Porsenna at last in admiration dismissed him, and returned his sword, reaching it from his seat; Mucius received it in his left hand, which occasioned the name of Scaevola, left-handed, and said, "I have overcome the terrors of Porsenna, yet am vanquished by his generosity, and gratitude obliges me to disclose what no punishment could extort; and assured him then, that three hundred Romans, all of the same resolution, lurked about his camp, only waiting for an opportunity; he, by lot appointed to the enterprise, was not sorry that he had miscarried in it, because so brave and good a man deserved rather to be a friend to the Romans than an enemy.



To this Porsenna gave credit, and thereupon expressed an inclination to a truce, not, I presume, so much out of fear of the three hundred Romans, as in admiration of the Roman courage. All other writers call this man Mucius Scaevola, yet Athendrous, son of Sandon, in a book addressed to Octavia, Caesar's sister, avers he was also called Postumus.

Poplicola, not so much esteeming Porsenna's enmity dangerous to Rome as his friendship and alliance serviceable, was induced to refer the controversy with Tarquin to his arbitration, and several times undertook to prove Tarquin the worst of men, and justly deprived of his kingdom. But Tarquin proudly replied he would admit no judge, much less Porsenna, that had fallen away from his engagements; and Porsenna, resenting this answer, and mistrusting the equity of his cause, moved also by the solicitations of his son Aruns, who was earnest for the Roman interest, made a peace on these conditions, that they should resign the land they had taken from the Tuscans, and restore all prisoners and receive back their deserters. To confirm the peace, the Romans gave as hostages ten sons of patrician parents, and as many daughters, amongst whom was Valeria, the daughter of Poplicola.

Upon these assurances, Porsenna ceased from all acts of hostility,

and the young girls went down to the river to bathe at that part where the winding of the bank formed a bay and made the waters stiller and quieter; and, seeing no guard, nor any one coming or going over, they were encouraged to swim over, notwithstanding the depth and violence of the stream. Some affirm that one of them, by name Cloelia, passing over on horseback, persuaded the rest to swim after; but, upon their safe arrival, presenting themselves to Poplicola, he neither praised nor approved their return, but was concerned lest he should appear less faithful than Porsenna, and this boldness in the maidens should argue treachery in the Romans; so that, apprehending them, he sent them back to Porsenna. But Tarquin's men, having intelligence of this, laid a strong ambuscade on the other side for those that conducted them; and while these were skirmishing together, Valeria, the daughter of Poplicola, rushed through the enemy, and fled, and with the assistance of three of her attendants made good her escape, whilst the rest were dangerously hedged in by the soldiers; but Aruns, Porsenna's son, upon tidings of it, hastened to their rescue, and, putting the enemy to flight, delivered the Romans. When Porsenna saw the maiden returned, demanding who was the author and adviser of the act, and understanding Cloelia to be the person, he looked on her with a cheerful and benignant countenance, and, commanding one of his horses to be brought, sumptuously

adorned, made her a present of it. This is produced as evidence by those who affirm that only Cloelia passed the river on horseback; those who deny it call it only the honour the Tuscan did to her courage; a figure, however, on horseback, stands in the Via Sacra, as you go to the Palatium, which some say is the statue of Cloelia, others of Valeria. Porsenna, thus reconciled to the Romans, gave them a fresh instance of his generosity, and commanded his soldiers to quit the camp merely with their arms, leaving their tents, full of corn and other stores, as a gift to the Romans. Hence, even down to our time, when there is a public sale of goods, they cry Porsenna's first, by way of perpetual commemoration of his kindness. There stood also, by the senate-house, a brazen statue of him, of plain and antique workmanship.

Afterwards, the Sabines, making incursions upon the Romans, Marcus Valerius, brother to Poplicola, was made consul, and with him Postumius Tubertus. Marcus, through the management of affairs by the conduct and direct assistance of Poplicola, obtained two great victories, in the latter of which he slew thirteen thousand Sabines without the loss of one Roman, and was honoured, as an accession to his triumph, with an house built in the Palatium at the public charge; and whereas

the doors of other houses opened inward into the house, they made this to open outward into the street, to intimate their perpetual public recognition of his merit by thus continually making way for him. The same fashion in their doors the Greeks, they say, had of old universally, which appears from their comedies, where those that are going out make a noise at the door within, to give notice to those that pass by or stand near the door, that the opening the door into the street might occasion no surprisal.

The year after, Poplicola was made consul the fourth time, when a confederacy of the Sabines and Latins threatened a war; a superstitious fear also overran the city on the occasion of general miscarriages of their women, no single birth coming to its due time. Poplicola, upon consultation of the Sibylline books, sacrificing to Pluto, and renewing certain games commanded by Apollo, restored the city to more cheerful assurance in the gods, and then prepared against the menaces of men. There were appearances of great preparation, and of a formidable confederacy. Amongst the Sabines there was one Appius Clausus, a man of a great wealth and strength of body, but most eminent for his high character and for his eloquence; yet, as is usually the fate of great men, he could not escape the envy of others, which was much occasioned

by his dissuading the war, and seeming to promote the Roman interest, with a view, it is thought, to obtaining absolute power in his own country for himself. Knowing how welcome these reports would be to the multitude, and how offensive to the army and the abettors of the war, he was afraid to stand a trial, but, having a considerable body of friends and allies to assist him, raised a tumult amongst the Sabines, which delayed the war. Neither was Poplicola wanting, not only to understand the grounds of the sedition, but to promote and increase it, and he despatched emissaries with instructions to Clausus, that Poplicola was assured of his goodness and justice, and thought it indeed unworthy in any man, however injured, to seek revenge upon his fellow citizens; yet if he pleased, for his own security, to leave his enemies and come to Rome, he should be received, both in public and private, with the honour his merit deserved, and their own glory required. Appius, seriously weighing the matter, came to the conclusion that it was the best resource which necessity left him, and advising with his friends, and they inviting others in the same manner, he came to Rome, bringing five thousand families, with their wives and children; people of the quietest and steadiest temper of all the Sabines. Poplicola, informed of their approach, received them with all the kind offices of a friend, and admitted them at once to the franchise

allotting to every one two acres of land by the river Anio, but to Clausus twenty-five acres, and gave him a place in the senate; a commencement of political power which he used so wisely, that he rose to the highest reputation, was very influential, and left the Claudian house behind him, inferior to none in Rome.

The departure of these men rendered things quiet amongst the Sabines; yet the chief of the community would not suffer them to settle into peace, but resented that Clausus now, by turning deserter, should disappoint that revenge upon the Romans, which, while at home, he had unsuccessfully opposed. Coming with a great army, they sat down before Fidenae, and placed an ambuscade of two thousand men near Rome, in wooded and hollow spots, with a design that some few horsemen, as soon as it was day, should go out and ravage the country, commanding them upon their approach to the town so to retreat as to draw the enemy into the ambush. Poplicola, however, soon advertised of these designs by deserters, disposed his forces to their respective charges. Postumius Balbus, his son-in-law, going out with three thousand men in the evening, was ordered to take the hills, under which the ambush lay, there to observe their motions; his colleague, Lucretius, attended with a body of the lightest and boldest men, was appointed to meet

the Sabine horse; whilst he, with the rest of the army, encompassed the enemy. And a thick mist rising accidentally, Postumius, early in the morning, with shouts from the hills, assailed the ambuscade, Lucretius charged the light-horse, and Poplicola besieged the camp; so that on all sides defeat and ruin came upon the Sabines, and without any resistance the Romans killed them in their flight, their very hopes leading them to their death, for each division, presuming that the other was safe, gave up all thought of fighting or keeping their ground; and these quitting the camp to retire to the ambuscade, and the ambuscade flying to the camp, fugitives thus met fugitives, and found those from whom they expected succour as much in need of succour from themselves. The nearness, however, of the city Fidenae was the preservation of the Sabines, especially those that fled from the camp; those that could not gain the city either perished in the field, or were taken prisoners. This victory, the Romans, though usually ascribing such success to some god, attributed to the conduct of one captain; and it was observed to be heard amongst the soldiers, that Poplicola had delivered their enemies lame and blind, and only not in chains, to be despatched by their swords. From the spoil and prisoners great wealth accrued to the people.

Poplicola, having completed his triumph, and bequeathed the city to the care of the succeeding consuls, died; thus closing a life which, so far as human life may be, had been full of all that is good and honourable. The people, as though they had not duly rewarded his deserts when alive, but still were in his debt, decreed him a public interment, every one contributing his quadrans towards the charge; the women, besides, by private consent, mourned a whole year, a signal mark of honour to his memory. He was buried, by the people's desire, within the city, in the part called Velia, where his posterity had likewise privilege of burial; now, however, none of the family are interred there, but the body is carried thither and set down, and some one places a burning torch under it and immediately takes it away, as an attestation of the deceased's privilege, and his receding from his honour; after which the body is removed.

THE END