Liv. 2 1

1. THE new liberty enjoyed by the Roman people,[1] their achievements in peace and war, annual magistracies, and laws superior in authority to men will henceforth be my theme. [2] This liberty was the more grateful as the last king had been so great a tyrant. For his predecessors so ruled that there is good reason to regard them all as successive founders of parts, at least, of the City, which they added to serve as new homes for the numbers they had themselves recruited.[2] [3] Nor is there any doubt that the same Brutus who earned such honour by expelling the haughty Tarquinius, would have acted in an evil hour for the commonwealth had a premature eagerness for liberty led him to wrest the power from any of the earlier kings. [4] For what would have happened if that rabble of shepherds and vagrants, having deserted their own peoples, and under the protection of inviolable sanctuary having possessed themselves of liberty, or at least impunity, had thrown off their fear of kings only to be stirred by the ruffling storms of tribunician demagogues, breeding quarrels with the senators of a city not their own, [5] before ever the pledges of wife and children and love of the very place and soil (an affection of slow growth) had firmly united their aspirations? The nation would have crumbled away with dissension before it had matured. [6] But it was favoured by the mild restraint of the government, which nursed it up to the point [p. 221]where its ripened powers enabled it to bear good[3] fruit of liberty. Moreover you may reckon the beginning of liberty as proceeding rather from the limitation of the consuls' authority to a year than from any diminution of their power compared with that which the kings had exercised. [7] All the rights of the kings and all their insignia were possessed by the earliest consuls; only one thing was guarded against —that the terror they inspired should not be doubled by permitting both to have the rods. [8] Brutus was the first to have them, with his colleague's consent, and he proved as determined in guarding liberty as he had been in asserting it. [9] To begin with, when the people were still jealous of their new freedom, he obliged them to swear an oath that they would suffer no man to be king in Rome, lest they might later be turned from their purpose by the entreaties or the gifts of princes. [10] In the next place, that the strength of the senate might receive an added augmentation from the numbers of that order, he filled up the list of the Fathers, which had been abridged by the late king's butcheries, drawing upon the foremost men of equestrian rank until he had brought the total up to three hundred. [11] From that time, it is said, was handed down the custom of summoning to the senate the Fathers and the Enrolled, the latter being the designation of the new senators, who were appointed.[4] This measure was wonderfully effective in promoting harmony in the state and attaching the plebs to the Fathers.[5]

1 B.C. 509

2 This statement is too sweeping, for Livy nowhere attributes any enlargement of the City to Numa.

3 B.C. 509

4 Later any senator might be called *pater conscriptus,* and it is possible that Livy and Festus (p. 254 M) were misled in supposing that originally the *patres* were one class of senators and the *conscripti* another. See Conway's note.

5 Livy appears to have assumed that the new senators were plebeians, but this is almost certainly wrong. The first definite notice of a plebeian senator occurs at v. xii. 11 (400 B.C.).

Livy. Books I and II With An English Translation. Cambridge. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann, Ltd. 1919.

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