

Liv. II, 32,9,1-12

Text Übersetzung:

(Benjamin Oliver Foster)

32. Thereupon the senators became alarmed, fearing that if the army should be disbanded there would again be secret gatherings and conspiracies. And so, although the levy had been held by order of the dictator, yet because the men had been sworn in by the consuls they regarded the troops as bound by their oath, and, under the pretext that the Aequi had recommenced hostilities, gave orders to lead the legions out of the City. [2] This brought the revolt to a head. At first it is said, there was talk of killing the consuls, that men might thus be freed from their oath; but when it was explained to them that no sacred obligation could be dissolved by a crime, they took the advice of one Sicinius, and without orders from the consuls withdrew to the Sacred Mount, which is situated across the river Anio, three miles from the City.

[...]

[7] Assuredly no hope was left save in harmony amongst the citizens, and this they concluded they must restore to the state by fair means or foul. [8] They therefore decided to send as an ambassador to the commons Agrippa Menenius, an eloquent man and dear to the plebeians as being one of themselves by birth. On being admitted to the camp he is said merely to have related the following apologue, in the quaint and uncouth style of that age: [9] In the days when man's members did not all agree amongst themselves, as is now the case, but had each its own ideas and a voice of its own, the other parts thought it unfair that they should have the worry and the trouble and the labour of providing everything for the belly, while the belly remained quietly in their midst with nothing to do but to enjoy the good things which they bestowed upon it; they therefore conspired together that the hands should carry no food to the mouth, nor the mouth accept anything that was given it, nor the teeth grind up what they received. [10] While they sought in this angry spirit to starve the belly into submission, the members themselves and the whole body were reduced to the utmost weakness. [11] Hence it had become clear that even the belly had no idle task to perform, and was no more nourished than it nourished the rest, by giving out to all parts of the body that by which we live and thrive, when it has been divided equally amongst the veins and is enriched with digested food—that is, the blood. [12] Drawing a parallel from this to show how like was the internal dissension of the bodily members to the anger of the plebs against the Fathers, he prevailed upon the minds of his hearers.