

## Driving out the peoples' foe

Subsequently the need of fresh religious observances was brought to their notice in consequence of the prophetic utterances of Marcius. This Marcius was a famous seer and his prophecies had come to light [...] One of the two referred to events which had already happened before it saw the light, and the authority thus acquired by its fulfilment gained more credence for the other, which had yet to be fulfilled. In the first the disaster of Cannae was foretold [ .... ] Then the second prophecy was read. It was not only more obscure than the first because the future is more uncertain than the past, but it was also more unintelligible owing to its phraseology. It ran as follows:

"If, Romans, ye would drive the foemen forth  
Who come from far to mar your land, then see  
That Games be held as each fourth year comes round  
In honour of Apollo and your State  
Shall bear its part and all your folk shall share  
The holy work, each for himself and his.  
Your praetor, who shall justice do for each  
And all, shall have the charge. Then let there be  
Ten chosen who shall offer sacrifice  
In Grecian fashion. This if ye will do  
Then shall ye evermore rejoice and all  
Your State shall prosper; yea, the god shall bring  
Your foes to nought, who now eat up your land."

They spent one day interpreting this prophecy. The day following, the senate passed a resolution that the Ten should inspect the sacred books with reference to the institution of Games to Apollo and the proper form of sacrifice. After they had made their investigations and reported to the senate, a resolution was passed "that Games be vowed and celebrated in honour of Apollo [.... ] Such is the origin of the Apollinarian Games, which were instituted for the cause of victory and not, as is generally thought, in the interests of the public health.

The History of Rome XXV, 12, Titus Livius, translated by Rev. Canon Roberts, Ed. Ernest Rhys.  
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N.B. the quote in the course text is George Baker's translation of the text as found in the Online Library of Liberty