

## CHAPTER

3

# HANDS

## At Work

**A**BOUT 2500 YEARS AGO, THE ETRUSCANS, UNDER THE leadership of King Porsenna, besieged Rome. In an effort to end the siege and save his city, a Roman youth, Caius Mucius, sought and received permission to sneak into the enemy camp and kill Porsenna. Once in the Etruscan court he could not clearly identify the king and was smart not to ask. Instead he killed the best-dressed man there, who unfortunately turned out to be the king's secretary.

Captured and brought before Porsenna, Mucius remained undaunted. He calmly told the king that he was just an ordinary Roman citizen and that any Roman would duplicate his act to protect their beloved city. Then Mucius demonstrated his sincerity and indifference to suffering by placing his right hand in an altar fire and letting it burn without flinching.

Dazzled by this show of bravery, Porsenna released Mucius. In return for the king's mercy, Mucius revealed that he was merely the first of 300 Romans sworn to kill Porsenna and that all were equally committed. The king, intimidated by this (false) information, decided to negotiate a peace with the Romans rather than risk his life to enemies as loyal and determined as Mucius. On his return to Rome, Mucius became known as Scaevola ("left-handed") and was rewarded a tract of land near his beloved city.

## The Hand Owner's Manual

### Other topics covered in Chapter 3: Hands at Work

#### STOCKBROKER'S ELBOW

Ulnar nerve palsy at the elbow

#### HAND SAFETY IN THE CAR

Perils specific to driving

#### TOOL SAFETY

Tips for preserving hands in the workshop

#### A SAW WITH A CONSCIENCE

A power saw that spares fingers

#### MOWERS AND BLOWERS

Perils of lawnmowers and snow blowers

#### EXACTLY WHAT IS HAND SURGERY?

The history of this fascinating regional specialty

#### PICKING POCKETS

Sidewalk larceny revealed

#### TIPS FOR THE BOSS

Japanese criminal custom of cutting off small finger

#### HANDS THAT TALK, HANDS THAT HEAR

Sign languages

#### HANDS THAT READ

Braille

#### HANDS THAT WORK NOT QUITE RIGHT

Writer's cramp and other occupational movement disorders