

Extracts from:

Caesar in Kent: The landing of Julius Caesar and his battles with the Ancient Britons, with some account of early British trade and enterprise

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Dedication

To the most noble The Marquis Conyngham, this book is, by permission, respectfully inscribed by his Lordship's Chaplain, Francis Thomas Vine.

MS comment (not by M Bell - not the same hand as the pencilled notes by him)

"Why His Lordship's Chaplain there was never a chapel in His Lordships House Bifrons, and the author seems to have been Vicar of Patricbourne. A little Victorian colour perhaps to be expected from or in connection with a family of doubtful honour"

Printed sources acknowledged:

The successful researches of the late Lord Albert Conyngham, afterwards Lord Londesborough, in the field of archaeology, and the liberal and personal support which he gave to many of our learned societies are well known. The valuable collection also of antiquities at Bifrons, the seat of the Marquis Conyngham, testifies to the same interest in the relics of the past by the grandfather and father of the present Lord.

See FT Vine in Arch. Cant. Vol. 18 re three tumuli cists in Gorsley Wood.

Napoleon III: The History of Julius Caesar: Cassell

Stephen Pritchard: History of Deal (E Hayward)

Batcheller's Sketch of Dover (Cuff Bros, Snargate St) (=Visitor's Guide to Dover)

Rev RW Morgan: The British Kymry

contrasted with the rough manufactures of the natives themselves. Such wealth as they could easily carry about with them would alone be valued by a migratory people like the ancient Britons. The simplicity of their habits, their contempt for luxury, and above all the rudeness of their habitations would render all other possession of little use to them. A glance at their dwellings will suffice to show how unsuitable to their wants would have been the articles of luxury and refinement with which the Romans and other cultivated nations were accustomed to adorn their houses. "The number of their oppida (or towns) was great" says Cæsar, and in describing them he states that "the Britons called that a town where they have used to assemble for the sake of avoiding an incursion of enemies, when they have fortified the entangled woods with a rampart and ditch." The remains of many of these oppida may still be seen in almost all parts of the country. In the immediate neighbourhood of Canterbury, the scene of Cæsar's early battles, several may be traced out, namely at Durover-

num, Iffin Wood, Atchester Wood, Bridge Hill, and other localities to which reference will be made in the course of this work. They are all similar in form, and answer well to the description given by Cæsar of the British oppida. Some of them are surrounded not by one but by several ramparts with deep ditches between them, and were evidently strongly fortified towns. The habitations contained within these walls of earth were mere huts of wood and thatch, though some which have been discovered consisted of holes dug in the earth, over which a thatched roof was probably constructed. The late Mr Frank Buckland in his "Curiosities of Natural History" thus describes some of them: "The ancient Britons were in the habit of digging holes for shelter. Not many weeks ago some labourers, when digging gravel at Brighthampton, near Oxford, came across several such excavations. They were simply pits dug in the earth large enough to hold one or two persons. From the sides of each of these pits a certain quantity of earth had been removed so as to form a seat. They were in fact nothing more than what were used by the

riflemen before Sebastopol in our day. The ancient Britons made them probably only for shelter. At the bottom of these pits were found a few rude arrow heads made of flint, and a quantity of bones. I examined these bones, and found them to be frogs and shrew mice. I suppose that these creatures fell into the pits long after they had ceased to be used by their original makers, and anterior to the time that they were finally filled up." In the remarkable British oppidum at Worlebury, near Weston Super Mare, several circular well-like pits may be fairly preserved in shape owing to the rocky nature of the ground in which they have been excavated. One in particular is very perfect, and about two feet from the bottom is a seat formed of the rock, as described in those seen by Mr Buckland, extending all round the pit. Tradition has assigned these circular pits in some parts of the country as the habitations of the Druids. De Moleville in his History of Great Britain says, "There still remain in the western islands of Scotland the foundations of such circular houses capable of containing only one person, and called by the

people of the country Druids' houses." It may be observed that in the remains of most British oppida hollows are to be seen which probably were originally of this shape, but owing to the sides having fallen in they have now the appearance of natural hollows in the earth. Some of the larger were perhaps used as repositories for grain and other produce.

A people so primitive in their habits and mode of life would readily supply themselves with all that was necessary for their simple wants. Their food was of the plainest description, consisting principally of milk and the flesh of animals, though in the southern parts of the island they also sowed corn. Their clothing was made of skins. Such earthenware vessels as they required for household purposes they understood the art of making, the rough sun-dried pottery dug up by Canon Greenwell in Yorkshire, by Mr Samuel Carrington in Staffordshire, by Mr Bell in Iffin Wood, and by others, being clearly of native manufacture. Bricks they would scarcely require, except, perhaps, for culinary purposes; but since they made pottery, they could not have been

The notion that Julius Cæsar began to build the castle seems to be derived from a table, or chart, which Camden says was formerly hung up there, which relates that "Cæsar after he had landed at Deal, and had beaten the Britons at Baramdowne (a plain hard by passable for horses, and fit to draw up an army in), began to build Dover Castle, and that Arviragus afterwards fortified it against the Romans and shut up the harbour."

We have quoted in full the remarks of the learned author Camden upon Dover, as they prove the importance which attached to the place 300 years ago, and the traditions respecting its harbour which were then current. The derivations he gives of the name of the place of themselves indicate what its nature formerly was, although it is doubtful whether any of these explanations of its origin is correct, and whether the name "Dover" was not rather derived from the river Dour (meaning "water") which there poured itself into the sea. With regard to the ancient town of Dover, Kilburne says that before King Arviragus stopped up the haven, the town

stretched itself more to the eastward under the castle, but that afterwards it was built on the south-west side. Whether the closing of the harbour was entirely the work of Arviragus seems doubtful. Batcheller in his excellent sketch of Dover says: "What circumstance could occasion so total a change is uncertain; either we must suppose that the old harbour was destroyed, and filled up by design to prevent the entrance of the Romans; or that the sea threw up such a vast quantity of beach, as rendered it impossible for the inhabitants to clear it, and induced them to form a harbour elsewhere which might be less liable to this obstruction." Napoleon gives the following particulars respecting the ancient harbour, and the alterations it has undergone:—"The port of Dover extended formerly from the site of the present town, between the cliffs which border the valley of the Dour or of Charlton. Indeed from the facts furnished by ancient authors, and geological examination of the ground, it appears certain that once the sea penetrated into the land, and formed a creek which occupied nearly the whole of the valley of Charlton. The

or Severus, may be readily conceded. In fact it is not improbable that the three camps at Richborough, Folkestone, and Findon, were thrown up by Aulus Plautius, who, as Dion Cassius narrates, "divided his forces into three portions, lest all arriving at one place he might be prevented from landing." What is more likely than that he chose for disembarking his army¹ the three most celebrated ports

¹ Aulus Plautius was sent over by Claudius with a double-consular army of 52,000 men, at the instigation of Bericus (or Vericus), a British chief who had been dispossessed of his territory. His landing was unopposed, the Britons being engaged in intestine wars, and unable to combine (as Bericus had informed Claudius) for the defence of their country. Geoffrey of Monmouth and Matthew of Westminster make him to have landed at *Caer-Peris* (Portchester), but their whole story of the event seems fabulous. From the account of his voyage by Dion Cassius, Plautius would appear to have sailed, perhaps with the main division of his army, in a westerly direction, and we find him defeating the Dobuni (the inhabitants of Gloucestershire), but whether he landed at Portchester or (as "*Cæsar's camp*," near Findon, would suggest) at Adurni is uncertain. It seems likely, however, that Plautius, having so large an army at his command, that he could divide it, would detach some portion to occupy the Kentish shore, where the Romans under Julius Cæsar had previously established themselves, and with this intent where could he

adjacent to these places, namely the *Portus Rutupinus*, *Lemanis*, and *Adurni*, the nearest ports (with the exception of Dover, which Julius Cæsar had found to be unsuitable for landing) to the coast of Gaul. Positions taken up by Aulus Plautius in the name of the Emperor Claudius would be more likely to be called "*Cæsar's camps*" than those associated with the expeditions of Julius Cæsar, for the Romans accorded the conquest of Britain to Claudius Cæsar rather than to the great founder of that have landed better than at *Rutupium* (Richborough), and *Lemanis* (Lymne)? Although we read of no conquests made by him in Kent, Suetonius seems to account for this when he says that "a part of the island surrendered without the hazard of a battle or the shedding of blood." That Aulus Plautius occupied Kent is rendered probable by the statement of Dion Cassius, that Claudius, when summoned by his general, crossed over to Britain, and *at once* marched to *the Thames*. This he could not have done with such confidence had he not known that Plautius had previously occupied the country through which he would pass.

With regard to Bericus, the author would mention, as a coincidence of name, but without founding any argument upon it, that there is in the parish of Bridge, near Canterbury, a place formerly called *Bereacre*, now *Great and Little Baraker*, and that the very ancient road leading to it is known locally as "*Bericus's road*."

secure peace by promising twice the number of hostages that Cæsar had before required.

The great Roman general, although in the end victorious, had little cause to congratulate himself upon the results of his expedition. With a shattered fleet, and an army largely reduced in numbers, he was compelled to return to the continent, not having gained sufficient footing in the country to maintain his position through the coming winter. Such a conquest seemed hardly distinguishable from a defeat, and although a thanksgiving of twenty days was decreed by the Senate in his honour, there were not wanting those who declared his expedition a failure and a disgrace, and charged him openly with turning his back upon the victorious Britons.



CHAPTER V.

CÆSAR'S SECOND INVASION OF BRITAIN. HIS VOYAGE, INLAND MARCH, AND FIRST BATTLE.

THE account of Cæsar's second invasion of Britain commences with the eighth chapter of the fifth book of his Commentaries. He proceeds to relate that having left Labienus on the Continent with three legions and 2000 horse, for the protection of the ports and for the provisioning of corn, as well as to watch the course of events and act as occasion might require, he himself with five legions and 2000 horse, set sail at sunset with a gentle south-west wind.¹ The wind, however, having slackened about midnight, he did

¹ Napoleon has proved by calculations based upon various data that Cæsar started on his second expedition on July 21st, in the year A.U.C. 700, or B.C. 54.

the enemy's forces from the captives, and we know that Cæsar usually took with him in his marches the captives taken in previous engagements, and that he had taken many captives in his previous invasion of Britain. But these captives could not have informed him as to the enemy's present position; and a few stragglers captured, even if he found any (which is hardly likely) immediately upon landing on the beach at Deal, could not be relied on to give accurate information as to the movements of the British now more than twelve miles distant. On the contrary, Cæsar's *rapid movement shows that he had a preconcerted scheme*, an accurate knowledge of the enemy's plans, a definite understanding with some secret ally, such as we find from the British account he had with Avarwy.

It will be necessary to be more discursive in our comments upon Cæsar's history of his progress from this point, for one of the principal objects of these pages is to trace the course of his army during the *next two days*, as marked out by historical, local, and traditional knowledge. After his march of twelve miles

from the coast he came in sight of the enemy, and he relates: "They having proceeded with chariots and cavalry to the river, began from the higher ground to check the advance of our men, and to join battle." The direction which Cæsar took on this occasion has been examined with great attention to detail by Napoleon III. From the measurements of his surveyors he has ascertained that a circle with a twelve mile radius, having Deal for its centre, touches the river Stour (*i.e.*, the river now known as the *lesser Stour*¹)

¹ Napoleon writes: "This stream is incontestably the *flumen* of 'the Commentaries.' There is less room for error, as we find no other stream in the part of the county of Kent comprised as between the coast of Deal and the Great Stour, and as this latter runs too far from Deal to answer to the text. Although the little Stour is not, between Barham and Kingston, more than from three to four metres broad, we need not be astonished at the denomination of *flumen* given to it by Cæsar, for he employs the same expression to designate simple rivulets such as the Ose and Oserain" (De Bello Gallico, vii. 69, Alesia). Napoleon also points out that it should not be expected from the recital of "the Commentaries" that the river was a very wide one, as "Cæsar's cavalry passed it without difficulty, and this fact forms an objection to the Great Stour which several authors, and amongst others General de Gæler, take for the *flumen* of the text; it is sufficiently broad and sufficiently steep-banked towards Sturry, where they place

along an arc, the two extreme points of which are at Kingston and Littlebourne. Napoleon inclines to the opinion that Kingston was the place where the two armies first joined battle, as answering best to the description in "the Commentaries;" although he admits it to be doubtful whether that or Littlebourne was the first battlefield. From traces of encampments which still remain, there is every reason to believe that Cæsar's army advanced towards both these localities. In marching from the coast, especially the scene of the action to render the passage difficult for cavalry. Moreover Sturry is fifteen and not twelve miles from the coast of Deal."

There is, however, every reason to believe that the lesser Stour, though not so wide and deep in Cæsar's time as to prevent the passage of cavalry, was formerly a very much wider stream, and more worthy the designation of "flumen" than it is at the present day. Among the authorities who have written on this subject the following from the Rev. Bryan Faussett may be quoted:—"In the bottom, between the village of Kingston and these tumuli, (referring to numerous tumuli on Barham Downs,) there is what in this part of Kent is commonly called an Aylebourne, Naylebourne, or rivulet, which though it is not now-a-days a constant but occasional stream, yet certainly was in former ages by no means unworthy the name of a river. And such indeed it is at this day, at the small distance of but a mile lower, namely to the north-

during the night, Cæsar would not strike out into the open country, but would follow the course of the ancient British road, probably that which may still be traced, and which tradition refers to an early period, from the Strand at Deal passing

west where it still retains the name of the Lesser Stour, and where it is seldom or never dry, but continues its course through Bishopsbourne, Bridge, Patricksbourne, and Bekesbourne, till at last it joins the greater Stour. Up to which last mentioned place (viz., Bekesbourne) there was, in the time of Edward III. and long after, a small navigation out of the Greater Stour. And as a proof of this Aylebourne having been much deeper and broader than it ever now is, I myself saw the shells of mussels turned plentifully out of the ground in digging a hole for a post at the distance of at least ten rods from its present channel, and at the perpendicular height of no less than three feet above its usual level." It may be added that the Greater Stour must have also been much wider in the time of Cæsar than it is now. It emptied itself into the Wantsum, and was probably tidal as far as Canterbury. This is indicated by the geological aspect of the surrounding land, and it may be mentioned in confirmation that the skeleton of an ox in an upright position, as if submerged while standing in the river, was some years ago dug out of the meadows near Canterbury. It is certain then that Cæsar could not have crossed the Stour at Sturry (as Dr Guest and others contend that he did) without experiencing considerable difficulty, especially for his cavalry. This would be contrary to what his "Commentaries" imply was the case.

through Upper Deal, Knowlton, Goodneston, and Adisham. Proceeding with all his forces by this road as far probably as what is now known as Adisham Mill, a remarkably elevated situation, he descried the British forces, where indeed from the information of Avarwy he had expected to find them, lining the crest of the hill (described in "the Commentaries" as "superior locus") from Garrington (near Littlebourne) on his right hand, to probably the part of Barham Downs opposite Bridge and Bishopbourne on his left. This was the best position which the Britons could possibly have chosen for the purpose of arresting the progress of an army marching upon Caer Caint (Canterbury); for the hills there are higher than any others in the immediate neighbourhood, varying from 190 to 120 feet above the sea level, as shown by the depth of the wells. We may assume that Cæsar, in accordance with his usual tactics, deployed his forces, after descriing the enemy, in three divisions, so as the more readily to extend them in line of battle, the vanguard moving to the right towards Garrington, forming the right wing of his army,

the centre advancing towards Bridge Hill, the rear guard extending to the left (as the left wing) to drive the enemy from their position on Barham Downs, where they threatened to intercept his approach to the river. This would be the probable disposition of the Roman forces, and we have reason to believe that they afterwards occupied and fortified these localities.

The first encounter seems to have been for the most part a cavalry engagement. This would naturally be the case. After a forced march of twelve miles through a country where he would meet with no streams of water, Cæsar's first thought would be to obtain water for his horses. The river being apparently open to him, or only weakly defended at Charlton (in Bishopsbourne), he directed his cavalry there in the first instance. The Britons, thinking that this was a movement to outflank them, rushed down, as Cæsar relates, "from the higher ground" with their chariots and their cavalry to the river;" no doubt to check their advance and prevent their reaching the stream. That the Britons were traditionally reported to have opposed

Cæsar's progress *before he reached* the river, rather than after passing it, may be inferred from the following passage from Pomponius Sabinus, out of Seneca: "And in the night marching twelve miles up into the country, Cæsar finds out the Britons, who *retreated as far as the river*, but gave him battle there."

The battle was a terrible one, but decisive. The Roman cavalry, of which there were 1700 (300 only out of the 2000 brought over by Cæsar having been left at the naval encampment at Deal), completely routed the enemy, and drove them into the woods. The right wing of Cæsar's army encountered no resistance, for at Garrington it is probable that Avarwy and his Coranidæ were stationed, and these at once deserted to the Romans. A gallant resistance, however, was offered by the Britons, who had sought refuge in the woods. "Being repulsed," says Cæsar, "by our cavalry, they withdrew themselves into the woods, and reached a place excellently fortified both by nature and art, which they had prepared before on account, as it seemed, of some domestic war, having closed all the approaches to it by

felled timber. They, few in number,¹ defended it from the woods, and prevented our men from entering the fortifications. The soldiers of the seventh legion, however, having formed a tortoise, and thrown up a mound against the fortifications, took the place, and drove them from the woods, a few wounds having been received."

The woods here mentioned still to a considerable extent remain.* Beyond them, along the brow of the hill looking towards Canterbury, is "the green spot," so called in the British narrative of the battle,—now known as Patricbourne Hill. It has been a burial-place of many generations. British, Roman, Saxon, Danish warriors here doubtless lie side by side, each nation, in accordance with an universal custom in those early times,

¹ The words of Cæsar, "ipsi rari propugnabant ex silvis," might be translated, "They in small detached parties defended it from the woods;" but this rendering does not seem to agree with the statement that the Britons found protection in an oppidum, all the approaches to which had been closed. That the Romans found it necessary to throw up a mound against the rampart proves that the difficulty in taking it arose, not from the opposition of small parties outside, but from the strength of its defences, and from the obstinate resistance of its garrison.

regarding a place of sepulture once set apart as devoted for such uses in perpetuity. These places were generally on the highest ground of the neighbourhood, and near the public roads.¹ The ground of Patixbourne Hill, except where roads have since intercepted it, has not been disturbed for many centuries. It is still "the green spot," the chalky subsoil presenting no inducement to the agriculturist to disturb it with the plough. Thus has nature preserved the site of the fight for liberty so gallantly made by our British forefathers. Through the woods and down the green slope of Patixbourne Hill, the Britons overpowered by numbers fled, and were pursued, many being cut down in their flight. A brave few, however, for some time arrested the onslaught of the enemy. A British Thermopylæ was found in an ancient oppidum² prepared for purposes of de-

¹ Many very interesting specimens of ancient pottery, and glass, brazen, and other ornaments, as well as iron spear heads and swords, with human remains, were dug up some years ago on Patixbourne Hill. They belonged to various periods. Some have been deposited in the Maidstone and Canterbury museums, and an interesting collection has been carefully preserved at Bifrons, the residence of the Marquis Conyngham.

² Cæsar (v. 21) says: "The Britains call that an oppidum

fence in their intestine wars. All the approaches to this oppidum were so protected by timber laid across and interlaced that the Roman cavalry could not dislodge the garrison which held it; and it was not until the soldiers of the seventh legion (Cæsar's favourite and most reliable corps) formed a tortoise with their shields, and under cover of it threw up a mound against the rampart, that they were able to scale its height. Even then its gallant defenders, though completely outnumbered, did not give way without inflicting some loss upon the enemy.

Now were we unable to discover any vestiges of this stronghold, there would be wanting one important link in the chain of evidence by which we identify the locality of Cæsar's first battleground. But the position of this oppidum can be readily assigned. Tradition points to a spot in Bourne Park not far from the road leading up Bridge Hill as the scene of the last struggle of these brave defenders of their country. It

where they have been used to assemble to avoid an incursion of enemies, when they have fortified the entangled woods with a rampart and a ditch."

bears the name of "Old England's Hole" or hollow, and has always been associated by local tradition with some gallant but ineffectual defence of the early inhabitants of the country against their invaders. "Never forget, my son," said the father of him whose researches and suggestions have done so much to inspire the writer of these pages, "never forget that this is 'Old England's Hole,' and that here a last stand was made for liberty by your British forefathers." An examination of "Old England's Hole" affords abundant confirmation of this tradition. Its situation is just where we might expect to find the oppidum mentioned in the history. "This place," says Napoleon, "must not be sought for far from the scene of the first encounter;" "England's Hole" is only a few hundred yards from the locality where we have placed that encounter, and from the outskirts of the woods into which, Cæsar says, the Britons retired. Its size is such that while it was a formidable stronghold, it might easily be defended by a few men. The rampart and ditch by which it was surrounded may still be traced. An agger or

mound (probably that thrown up by the Roman soldiers, as it is evidently not part of the fortifications of the place, but thrown up as it were against them from without) still remains as if to prove the accuracy of Cæsar's narrative. Cross roads, traces of which may still be seen within fifty yards of the enclosure, afforded the garrison of the oppidum a ready means of escape if necessary. One especially, the ancient Roman Watling Street, but before that in all probability a British road, runs close to the enclosure, below the modern road by which Bridge Hill is now ascended. Numerous trees, giving it the appearance of an ancient grove, afford some indication of what its strength must have been when to trees, the progenitors of these, were fastened and interlaced the felled timber by which, as we read in "the Commentaries," it was rendered yet more impregnable. Nor are there wanting other proofs of a struggle having taken place at this spot. When the present road on Bridge Hill was dug out in 1829 five or six Roman urns,¹ with six or eight human

¹ These urns are thus alluded to in the report of the first meeting, at Canterbury, of the Archæological Association:

skulls, were discovered about five feet below the surface, embedded in the chalk. The remains also of a horse in a ferruginous condition were found within the oppidum by some boys about fifteen years ago.

The few brave defenders of this oppidum being at length dislodged, the victory of the Romans was fully assured and the rout complete. Circumstances, however, prevented Cæsar from following up his advantage to its full extent. "Cæsar," says the history, "forbade his men to follow the

"It is remarkable that the hill above Bourne (called, from the neighbouring village, Bridge Hill), where the Saxon barrows are found, appears to have been previously a Roman cemetery; for about twelve years ago, when the new Dover road was cut through it, a number of Romano-British urns and earthen vessels were discovered, with skeletons and fragments of weapons, at a greater depth than the Saxon graves. Some of these urns, now in the possession of Mr W. H. Rolfe of Sandwich, were exhibited by that intelligent antiquary at the meeting of the primeval section." The Rev. J. Hughes-Hallet, of Higham, also possesses one of the urns. In a tumulus about eighty feet from the oppidum, Lord A. Conyngham (so the author is informed by the workman who opened it for him) found, together with a human skull and bones, a breastplate of silver, a curved sword six inches out of line, two bronze shoulder-pieces, four spear-heads, and a wooden vessel banded with bronze bands.

fugitives too far, both because he was ignorant of the nature of the place, and because a great part of the day was now spent, and he wished time to be left for the fortification of the camp." Cæsar had a general knowledge of the locality from information received from Avarwy, and from the captives he had brought over from Gaul, as well as from the numerous scouts which he employed whenever circumstances permitted. But the country into which his forces were now pursuing the enemy was densely wooded. At any point his soldiers might be taken in an ambush through ignorance of the positions of the various oppida (of which Cæsar says there were many), and which were generally concealed from view by thick foliage. Partly for this reason, and partly because in accordance with the universal custom of the Roman armies, he wished to fortify his camp for the night, Cæsar recalled his men.

This step, however, would in any case have been advisable in consequence of the great fatigue his soldiers had undergone. For two nights and nearly two days they had had no rest, and a recapitulation of the history will show that during

this period, extraordinary exertions had been required of them. They had set sail from the Portus Itius at sunset, and the first night had been spent in anxiety upon an unknown sea, their vessels being carried out of their course by the tide. From daybreak of the next day until noon Cæsar's soldiers were arduously employed in rowing the transports and heavy boats in order to regain the ground they had lost, and to land at the desired point of the shore. The rest of the day had been occupied in disembarking and securing their vessels. Another night followed, in which they were allowed no rest, but marching for the distance of twelve miles, they halted at daydawn, only to prepare for an immediate and sharply fought contest, which, although the recital of it occupies only a brief space in Cæsar's "Commentaries," lasted, with the subsequent rout and pursuit, till the day was far spent. Such unusual labours, with the necessary duty still before them of fortifying their camp before they could retire for the night, must have rendered it absolutely necessary, were there no other reasons for it, that the troops should be recalled from the pursuit.



CHAPTER VI.

CÆSAR'S SECOND INVASION. HIS FIRST INLAND ENCAMPMENT.

IN searching for the defences which Cæsar threw up after the victory recorded in the last chapter, and which were afterwards, during his absence at the place of disembarkation, more strongly fortified, we must not expect to find any traces of stone battlements or walls of brick. "It is certain," says the Rev. John Batteley, in his History of Rutupium, "that C. Julius Cæsar, both because of the continual movements of his troops in war, and because of the brevity of his stay in our island, left no camps except such as were hastily thrown up, and constructed only of turf and earth." Mr Batteley might have added

that from this very fact the vestiges of his camps may be expected to be the better preserved, mounds and fortifications of earth remaining clearly defined, especially in chalky soil, as the sepulchral tumuli in all parts of the world testify, for many centuries, long after buildings of stone and brick have entirely disappeared.

It has before been stated that the Roman forces were probably, on Cæsar's arrival at Adisham Mill or thereabout, extended in three divisions, the right wing towards Garrington, the centre towards Bridge Hill, and the left wing towards Charlton. That having occupied the positions at these localities, they afterwards fortified them, is evidenced by the remains of encampments and lines of earthworks still traceable at these places. Let us visit them in turn.

And first we bend our steps to what may be called "the heights of Garrington." Passing through the meadows at the back of Bekesbourne Vicarage we are struck by the unusual character of the hills to the right of us. Terrace rises above terrace, sometimes three, sometimes four or five, succeeding one another. Nature never

formed them.[?] We see here the defences found by experience to be the only effective ones against the formidable British chariots which struck such terror into the hearts of the Roman soldiers. It may be well to refer to Cæsar's description of the chariot mode of warfare as practised by the Britons. "This is the way of fighting from Chariots. First they drive about everywhere, and hurl darts; and generally cause disorder in the ranks by the very terror of the horses and the noise of the wheels, and when they have forced an entrance among the troops of horse, they leap down from the chariots and fight on foot. The charioteers meanwhile withdraw a little from the battle, and so dispose themselves that if those who are fighting should be pressed by a multitude of the enemy they may have a ready retreat to their own men. Thus they present in battle the mobility of horse, and the steadiness of foot soldiers, and they accomplish so much by daily use and exercise that on downhill and precipitous ground they are accustomed to hold up their horses when at full speed, and to manage and turn them in a short space, and to

run along the pole, and to stand upon the yoke, and thence to get back into their chariots with very great rapidity."¹ The student of Homer will recognise in this description a remarkable similarity to the chariot system of ancient Troy, and

¹ The chariot here described by Cæsar was called "Esse-dum" (from the British "Ess," a carriage). It carried several warriors, who were by its means enabled to transport themselves to any part of the battle where they could engage the enemy with the greatest effect, the headlong career of the chariots meanwhile causing great disorder in the enemies' ranks. The charioteers were called "essedarii."

The *scythed* chariots, said to have been also in use among the Belgi and Britons (Mela., iii. 6; Lucan, i. 426; Silius, xvii. 422), were called "Covini" (from the British Cowain, a waggon), and the drivers, who appear to have been their sole occupants, "covinarii." They had hooks or scythes fastened to the axles and other parts of the chariots, and being driven furiously among the enemy, committed great havoc, mowing down all who could not escape from them. We find mention of them among some other nations. Thus the Nigritæ are reported by Frontinus and Strabo to have used them in their wars, and the Cyrenians, a neighbouring people, delivered over to Thimbro (in the time of Alexander) half of their armed chariots. Antiochus Eupator also invading Judæa, apparently with a Greek force (b.c. 163), brought with him 350 chariots. Hirtius also (Bell. Alex., lxxv.) states that scythed chariots were employed by Pharnaces against Cæsar with great effect:—"Our ranks being not yet formed, the scythed chariots disordered and confused the soldiers."

will be disposed to regard with some interest the claim of the Britons to be of Trojan descent.

Against this mode of warfare the only effective defence was an embankment so precipitous that the chariots could not surmount it, and accordingly all British strongholds were surrounded by these steep embankments very frequently, as at Garrington, one above another. Let us ascend the "heights of Garrington¹ along the course of the old chariot road (characteristic of all British oppida²) which leads up to the inner rampart.

¹ This name, according to Hasted, was formerly "Garwinton," and in the Domesday Survey was written "Warwinton." It is reasonable to suppose that it took its origin from its fortified and commanding position.

² It may be objected that this and other similar narrow roads were boundaries between different properties. It is very probable that they were so used, but judging from their breadth and depth they certainly could not have been originally framed for that purpose; nor can we in this way explain the remarkable fact that to all British oppida, wherever they are found, similar roads may almost invariably be traced. The reason why old roads and escarpments became the boundaries of estates is not difficult to assign. When petty chieftains or lairds established themselves by right of conquest or by settlement upon the soil, and others began to settle around them, it became necessary to define their estates,

Ascending by this winding road, which commences from the extreme left of the hill, we reach at last an open plateau, from which we can survey the country beneath us. Let any military man stand on this high ground and walk along its whole length overlooking the terraced battlements, and he will at once acknowledge it to be a very commanding position. To his right is a considerable extent of marshy ground, even at the present day, although drained off in ditches, sometimes flooded in winter. The lesser Stour, which winds its way through this marshy ground, was, as we have before remarked, at one time a much wider stream than it is now, and navigable by vessels as far as Bekesbourne. It is certain then that the land to the left of Garrington was at the time of Cæsar everywhere a morass, with a river flowing through it. An army stationed on these heights would therefore have no reason to fear an attack upon its right, and the lines of earth-

and they claimed such boundaries for their properties as they found to be already existing. Thus ancient roads and escarpments came in time to be planted with hedges or other landmarks, the better to preserve the limits of estates.

works, by which the position is so well protected, would render it practically impregnable in front.

But it may be urged, "This is no *Roman* camp; it has none of the straight and exact lines which the Romans generally laid down in measuring out their camps; it has more the appearance of a British stronghold." And so in fact it was,—a part of Cæsar's camp, but fortified, perhaps long before, but if not, at any rate at the time of his encampment on Barham Downs, after the British mode. A reference to the British histories will afford the explanation of this. It has already been mentioned that, during the battle on Barham Downs and at Old England's Hole, Avarwy with the Coranidæ under his command went over, according to a preconcerted plan, to the Romans. These deserters were probably, as we have stated, originally opposed in position to the right wing of the Roman army, and after their desertion formed part of that wing. It is certain at any rate that in a subsequent battle fought after Cæsar's return from his naval camp, their forces were opposed to the left wing of the British force, for we read in the British account of the

battle, "On *the left*" (opposed therefore to the Roman right) "the battle raged between Nennius (a leader of the Britons) and the Coranidæ." The British position to the right of the marshy ground below Garrington is indicated by the description, also from a British source, "The British army occupied the open ground" (opposite the green slope), "its left wing under Nennius, *resting on a marsh.*" On the Garrington heights, therefore, we may assume that the Coranidæ, of which there were 20,000 under Avarwy, encamped after their desertion to the Romans, overlooking on their right the marshy ground before described. Fearful as to the consequences of their treachery, they threw up, if not previously existing, these formidable battlements which no enemy could with impunity assail. Supported, no doubt, by a considerable Roman force, they were permitted, being so numerous a body, to fortify their camp after their own manner.

Leaving then Garrington, with its garrison of Coranidæ, let us next visit Cæsar's own camp on Barham Downs. That these downs were the scene of Cæsar's first inland battle and encamp-

ment tradition universally asserts, and we have the direct statement recorded on the chart found in Dover Castle, that "Cæsar having landed at Deal, afterwards conquered the Britons on Barham Down, a plain hard by, passable for horses, and fit to draw up an army in." A very superficial examination of the ground will show here the traces of Roman encampments. The two historians who have given descriptions of Roman castra are Polybius, who wrote about B.C. 140, and Hyginus, who wrote about A.D. 110. Plans of these two camps, the first of which was for two legions, and the second for three legions, are given in Dr Smith's "Dictionary of Antiquities." The two plans differ as to the dimensions and the internal divisions of the camps, but they have certain points in common which we should therefore expect to find in any Roman castra thrown up between these two dates. These common characteristics are first the rampart and ditch which formed the defence all round the camp, except at the four gates; secondly, the intervallum or intervening space (in the camp of Polybius 200 feet, and in that of Hyginus 60 feet) between the

rampart and the camp itself; thirdly, the clearly defined roads marking out the different divisions of the camp, and which crossed one another at right angles. Examining the ground on Barham Downs with the view of tracing these characteristics, we are unable to describe with certainty the boundary ramparts enclosing the camp. From the extent of the ground apparently used for the purpose of encampment, there were probably two large oblong castra of the shape of that of Hyginus, the one extending along Barham Downs opposite Charlton, the other at the western extremity of the Downs extending over part of Bridge Hill, Bourne Park, and perhaps the grounds of Higham. Be this as it may, there can be no question that the remarkable parallel lines, in some places several exactly 60 feet apart, in others 20, 40, or 50 feet apart, with others intersecting at right angles, formed the dividing roads or *vias* of a Roman encampment. With the exception of these clearly marked lines excavated for military purposes, and the trenches dug out for the purpose of defining the race course which run in a different direction to the lines of the

Roman camp, it may be asserted with certainty that the Barham Downs have been undisturbed by man from time immemorial. They have always been used for pasturage only, the chalk with large flints interspersed on which the turf grows rendering them unsuitable for any other purpose; and there is no conceivable reason, except a military one, why these deep ditches or roads which are traceable on all parts of "the Downs" should have been dug out. When we consider that Cæsar's army with the camp followers could not have been less than 40,000 men, besides the 20,000 *Coranidæ* under Avarwy at Garrington, there can be no doubt that camps covering the whole ground which we have described would be required.

The question may arise whether the encampments traceable on Barham Downs were not the work of some of those armies which it is well known were encamped there in more recent times. It may be well, therefore, to note the various occasions when the Downs have been so occupied.

During the period of the Saxon and Danish

invasions we do not read of any resistance being offered in this immediate neighbourhood to their incursions, except perhaps on one occasion,¹ and

¹ The exception was the battle of Mercredesburne, which, as the site of it has not been before clearly identified, it will be well to describe. Several chroniclers of the Anglo-Saxon period have recorded this battle. The fullest account is that given by Henry of Huntingdon in his annals of the year A.D. 485. After describing the landing of Aella and his three sons Cymen, and Wlencing, and Cissa, he says, "The Britons fled as far as the nearest wood which is called Andredeslige. But the Saxons occupied the Sussex sea-shore more and more, seizing for themselves the land of the boundary until the ninth year of their coming. But then when they had seized too boldly the distant boundary, the kings and sovereigns of the Britons met at *Mercredesburne*, and fought against Aella and his sons, and the victory was almost doubtful: for each army being thoroughly injured and threatened, cursing the attack of the other, returned to their own. Aella therefore sent to his compatriots demanding help."

The same events are thus described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle:—A.D. 477. "This year Aella and his three sons, Cymen, and Wlencing, and Cissa, came to the land of Britain with three ships, at a place which is named Cymenes-ora, and there slew many Welsh, and some they drove in flight into the wood which is called Andredslea." A.D. 485. "This year Aella fought against the Welsh near the bank of *Mearcraedsburn*."

Florence of Worcester also gives the following account:—A.D. 485. Aella in a battle with the Britons near *Mercredes-*

the conflict did not then take place on Barham Downs, or indeed on that side of the river Stour. Canterbury was more than once ravaged by these

Burn, that is *Mearcred's Brook*, slew many of them, and put the rest to flight."

The battle lastly is thus described in the Chronicle of Fabius Ethelwerd:—"Aella arrived in Britain from Germany with his three sons at a place called Cymenes-ora, and pursued the Britons to a place called Aldredesleage. After eight years more the same chiefs attack the Britons near a place called *Mercredes-burnan-stede*."

Now, independently of any argument to be derived from the name of the site of this battle, as it is variously given by the different chroniclers, there is reason to believe that the country to the west of the lesser Stour must have been the scene of it. For the Saxon chronicle (see A.D. 893) states that the great wood of Andred extended from east to west 112 miles or longer, that it was 30 miles broad, and that the sea-port at the eastern end was Limene (Lymne). It is added that the river Limene (probably the Rother) *flowed out of the weald*; so that it is evident that the wood itself extended still further eastward, and there is therefore every reason to believe that the extensive woods called Atchester, Gorsley, and Whitehill, and other woods in the neighbourhood of Elham, Hardres, and Petham, were offshoots of the forest of Anderida or Andredeswold.

Now according to the quotation given above from Henry of Huntingdon, Aella, at his first landing, pursued the Britons into the wood of Andred, and then for eight years gradually encroached upon the land of the boundary along the sea coast, until at last venturing too boldly to seize the distant boundary,

devastating hordes, but their approach to the city was either from Rutupium or Lemanis, and after a weak resistance at those places their progress was practically unopposed, and was simply a continued

he was stoutly resisted by the British, and compelled to retire within his own lines. Now the meaning of the above account seems to be this: Aella, being unable to drive the British out of so immense a forest, contented himself with extending his conquests along the sea coast, until at last arriving at the termination of the wood, somewhere to the east of Lymne, he ventured inland, when he was opposed by the British at Mercraedsburn. This, as we have shown, would place the scene of the battle somewhere on the confines of the woods Atchester, Whitehill, Gorsley and others, which were the extreme eastward limits of the Forest of Anderida.

But there is other evidence that the scene of the battle was in this neighbourhood. The locality where it took place is variously described by the different chroniclers as "Mercredesburne," "near the bank of Mercraedsburn," "near Mearcredesburne, that is Mearcred's Brook," and "near a place called Mercredes-burnan-stede." Now, as there is no other brook outside the eastern limits of the wood of Andred except the Lesser Stour, which takes its rise in the Elham valley, this river must, I imagine, be the burn (or brook) here intended; and the termination of the name "Mercredsburn" seems to confirm this, since the Lesser Stour was formerly called "the Burn" (or "Bourne"), as we may surely gather from the fact that most of the villages through which it now passes, namely, Bishopsbourne, Patribourne, Bekesbourne, and Littlebourne, retain the suffix "burn" or "bourne" to the present

course of rapine and slaughter. Nor is there any reason to believe that the lines of fortification on Barham Downs were the work of armies in more modern times. The earliest account of any mili-

day. The first part of the name "Mercredsburne" was undoubtedly derived from the god Mercred or Mercury. We are told by Cæsar that "the Gauls and Britons worshipped as their divinity 'Mercury' in particular, and have many images of him, and regard him as the inventor of all arts; they consider him the guide of their journeys and marches, and believe him to have very great influence in the acquisition of gain and mercantile transactions." Mercredsburn seems to have been the name of the brook, and Mercredes-burnansted the name of the place near it where the battle was fought. From the latter, the exact locality of this battle may be assigned; for there is a place about a mile and a half distant from the river on its western side, named "Bursted," which may well be an abbreviated form of "Burnansted," and to which tradition has always pointed as the scene of some great battle. The "Mercred" in "Mercredes-burnansted" has now, it is true, been lost sight of, but it is still, I think, preserved in another form in a locality near at hand called "Hermansole," — evidently a corruption of "Ermenseul," the name given by the Saxons to the pillars or statues erected to the god "Hermes," the Greek form, as is generally supposed, of "Mercury." This place, Bursteds, entirely accords with the description given in the Saxon chronicle, and by Florence of Worcester, both of which accounts state that the battle was fought not *at* but *near* the bank of Mearcredesburn.

tary encampment on these downs since the Norman conquest is thus recorded by Hasted: "On these downs, anno 1213, King John encamped with a mighty army of 60,000 men, to oppose Philip, King of France, who was marching to invade this kingdom; but Pandulph, the Pope's legate, who was then at the house of the Knight's Templars in this neighbourhood, sent two of them to persuade the king to come to him there, where the King, in the presence of his principal nobles and the bishops, resigned his crown to the legate, as the Pope's representative." "Here also, in King Henry III.'s reign, Simon Montford, Earl of Leicester, being declared general of their army by the discontented barons, engaged a numerous army to oppose the landing of Queen Eleanor, whom the king had left behind in France." The downs were also used as a camping-ground in 1642 by the army of the Cavaliers; also in 1760, as appears from the following entry in the Register Book of Burials, in the parish of Bridge: "John Livingstone, a private soldier in Major-General Jeffery's Regiment of Foot (No. 14), who was accidentally killed by a bread or forage waggon

belonging to the camp at Barham Downs, going over his body, whereby he was crushed to death, Aug. 17, 1760." In still later times the British troops were also here encamped in preparation for their embarkation for the continent, previous to the battle of Waterloo.

With regard to these various occasions when Barham Downs were occupied by troops, it must be observed that the encampments were only temporary: we have no record of any engagements taking place, or of any escarpments being thrown up for defensive purposes. Barham Downs being within easy reach of the coast, were suitable as a temporary halting-place for troops about to embark for foreign service, or for providing a reserve force in case of the attempted landing of a hostile army; but we have no reason to suppose that any earthworks were thrown up by the troops thus for short periods quartered there. Indeed the defensive strength of the old English barons lay rather in stone walls and castles than in battlements of earth and turf. The fact that these Downs have been used in later years for military purposes, so far from afford-

ing any argument against Julius Cæsar having encamped there, points them out rather as the *traditional camping-ground* which, following the example of the Roman conqueror, successive generations employed in times of war.

But we have yet another portion of Cæsar's encampment to describe. The left wing of the Roman army, including the cavalry, advanced, as before-mentioned, in all probability towards the river at Charlton, that being the nearest part of the stream where, after their twelve miles' night-march, they could obtain water for the horses. After the victory of the Roman army on Barham Downs, the greater portion of the left wing was no doubt quartered within the lines of one of the great camps on the downs; but an examination of the declivity between Barham Downs and the river opposite Charlton reveals the traces of three lines of earthworks, each of the length of about three furlongs. Probably Cæsar here quartered his cavalry, in consequence of the proximity to the river. These lines of fortification were perhaps originally thrown up in earlier British wars, but even if they were so, they would

doubtless be used by the Romans as an outer line of defence for the camp. It may be noticed also that on the opposite hill, beyond the river, there is a double line of entrenchments, as if of an opposing army. These corresponding entrenchments on each side of the river extend, with greater or less prominence, as far as Kingston Church. There are also two parallel lines of escarpments about 200 yards in length on the brow of the hill in Bourne Park, with others at their extremities, at right angles to them, forming, as it were, a double parapet, one line within the other. They are not at first easily discerned (which argues their great antiquity), but when once noticed, can be plainly made out.

Before quitting Barham Downs and their neighbourhood, it will be well to notice one or two other features, which are corroborative as to their having been the site of Cæsar's camp.

On the brow of the hill, in Bourne Park, there are what appear to be the remains of two outposts, 400 yards apart, surrounded each by a ditch. They are of the same dimensions, and form almost perfect hexagons, each side being

about 50 feet in length. They are situated in commanding positions on a hill, called locally "Star Hill," and would afford excellent stations for the guards placed before the gates of the camp, whence they could view the position and movements of the enemy. They are known traditionally as "the Forts." They are now bare of trees, but have the appearance of having been planted at some comparatively recent period.

A deep depression a few yards distant from one of these may possibly have been one of those extemporized amphitheatres with which we know Cæsar sought amusement for his soldiers, when not in actual combat. While Cæsar was ten days absent repairing his vessels, such entertainments would doubtless be resorted to by his soldiery who remained, as we shall hereafter notice, at the camps.

A very formidable stronghold, pointed out by the Ordnance Surveyors on their map as "Roman entrenchments," may be seen at the eastern extremity of the Downs. It is not of Roman but British construction, but may very likely have been used by Cæsar's army as an outpost for the

*Never heard
this name
before*

*see page
191!*

defence of his camp on the extreme left. There appears also to have been a very great mound or tumulus near the south-east corner of the Downs.

On the south-west of Bourne Park there is a noted spring, which is still called "The Roman's Cold Bath." This may have had its origin in Cæsar's time, or subsequently; but we may remark that such a spring, if available, would be much sought for by the soldiers of a stationary camp (castrum stativum) such as Cæsar's was.

With these remarks upon the vestiges still remaining of Cæsar's camp, which, though necessarily imperfect, corroborate, so far as they go, the traditional site on Barham Downs, we pass on to his narrative of the events of the day following his first night of encampment. "Early the day after that day he sent foot soldiers and cavalry in three divisions on an expedition for the purpose of following up those who had fled." This pursuing force corresponded with the three divisions of Cæsar's army, each probably furnishing a contingent, so as not materially to weaken any one division. Three very ancient roads by which they doubtless pursued the retreating

*never heard
it called
"Roman's" before
M.B.*

Britons may all be seen from Patricbourne Hill, the left and central ones in particular being visible at the present day for more than a mile and a half. It is true that in Cæsar's time the country was more thickly wooded than it is now, but these roads passing over chalky soil, and being on rising ground, and converging towards Patricbourne Hill, would even at that period be readily discerned. We will describe them as they now present themselves to a spectator on the hill. The road on the left hand ascends the steep hill in the direction of Hardres, passing through Whitehill Wood. It leads to an ancient British oppidum in Iffin Wood,¹ a strongly fortified position still known as "the Castle." The central road is now the main road between Canterbury and Dover, and passes through the village of Bridge. It is for a considerable distance identical with the old Roman Watling Street, formerly a British road. The third or right hand road, seen more clearly from Cæsar's

¹ The owner of the property, Mr Bell of Bourne Park, some years ago opened a large tumulus within the enclosure, and dug up British sunburnt pottery and other remains, which showed clearly its British origin.

extreme right wing (consisting of the Coranidæ on the heights of Garrington) than from Patricbourne Hill, ascends Bekesbourne Hill and enters Canterbury at Longport, while there is yet another road passing through Patricbourne and Hode (known as the Pilgrims' way), which meets the last mentioned at St Martin's Hill.

There is no doubt of the great antiquity of these roads, and they would naturally be chosen by the Britons for their escape, since they all led to British strongholds, and afforded access to what would be probably their next rallying place, the well-fortified positions at Durovernum and Caer Caint (Canterbury).



ments on Barham Downs, namely, by their principal military road,¹ the Sarn Gwyddelin, or Irish Road, afterwards the Roman Watling Street. It is related by Geoffrey of Monmouth that Cassivellaunus, being defeated in the battle, fled with his disordered forces to a rocky hill, on the top of which was a thick hazel wood, and that he defended the hill with such bravery and obstinacy that Cæsar could only dislodge him by besieging the place for two days, after which, compelled by famine, Cassivellaunus submitted himself to his great conqueror. The details of this story must be rejected as altogether inconsistent with Cæsar's narrative; but that the Britons, followed in hot pursuit by the victorious Roman cavalry and legions, found at length a temporary refuge in

¹ The Romans laid down their military vias, wherever they could, upon the foundations of the previously existing British roads. The British chroniclers claim that the principal military roads (many of them known afterwards as Roman roads) of the country were the work of Dunwallo Molmutius (Dywnwal Moelmud), their great lawgiver, and that, being completed by his son, Belinus, they were called the Belinian Roads. The rapidity with which the British chariots moved from one point to another (see page 129) proves that these roads were well made and maintained.

some stronghold, whence they were with difficulty dislodged by Cæsar, is not improbable. That there was some such foundation for the story seems to be justified by a tradition which assigns to a hill near Newington, about eighteen miles from Canterbury, the name of Key Coll or Caius' (Julius Cæsar's) hill.

The disastrous results of this day's combat thoroughly disheartened the brave British allies. Cassivellaunus experienced the humiliating fortune of all unsuccessful generals, namely, the falling away of his auxiliary forces. "Immediately after this retreat," says Cæsar, "the auxiliaries who had assembled from all sides departed; nor after that time did the enemy ever engage with us in very large numbers."

The British resistance from this time consisted for the most part of a guerilla warfare, harassing, no doubt, to Cæsar's disciplined forces, but not affording any prospect of a successful result. Cæsar relates that, "*discovering their design*, he led his army into the territories of Cassivellaunus to the river Thames." It must be remembered that Cæsar wrote after the event; the design,