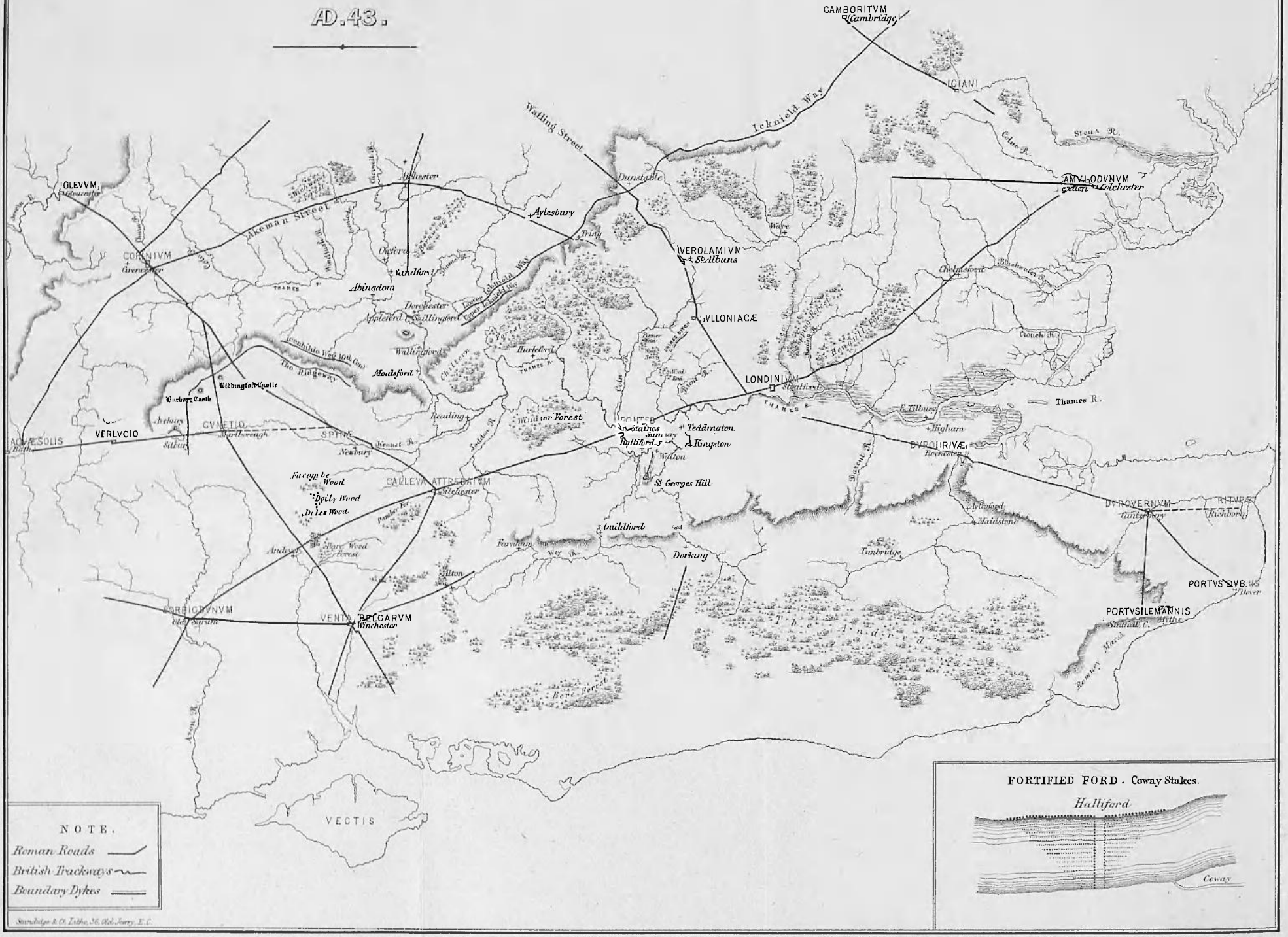
Campaign of Aulus Plautius.

A.D. 43.



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THE CAMPAIGN OF AULUS PLAUTIUS.[1]

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BEFORE we can discuss with advantage the campaign of Aulus Plautius in Britain, it will be necessary to settle, or at least endeavour to settle, certain vexed questions which have much troubled our English antiquaries. The first of these relates to the place where Cæsar crossed the Thames. Cæsar tells us (B. G. v. 11) that "the river called Tamesis divided the country of Cassivelaunus from the maritime states about eighty miles from the sea;" and, in another passage (B. G. v. 18), that "he led his army unto the river Tamesis to the country of Cassivelaunus. The river was passable on foot only at one place, and that with difficulty. When he came there, he observed that there were large bodies of the enemy drawn up on the opposite bank. The bank, also, was defended with sharpened stakes fixed in front, and stakes of the like kind were fixed below under water, and concealed by the river. Having learnt thus much from the prisoners and deserters, Cæsar sent forward the cavalry and immediately ordered the legions to follow them; but the soldiers went at such a pace and with such an impetus, though they had only the head above water, that the enemy could not resist the impetus of the legions and the cavalry, but deserted the bank and took to flight."

According to Orosius, "nearly the whole ford under water" was covered with the stakes; and Bede, when he copies the statement, adds (H. E. i. 2), "The remains of the

[1] This discourse was delivered in the Section of History at the Meeting of the Archaeological Institute in London, July 19, 1866.

stakes are to be seen there to this very day (*usque hodie*); and it appears, upon inspection (*inspectantibus*), that each of them was as thick as a man's thigh, and that they were covered (*circumfusæ*) with lead, and fixed immovably in the depths of the river." Bede never saw the Thames; but it is not difficult to point out the man from whom he derived the information he has handed down to us. In the opening of his Ecclesiastical History he acknowledges his literary obligations to a London priest named Nothelm. Nothelm was a Londoner born, and died Archbishop of Canterbury, and there can be little doubt he was Bede's informant. It appears, therefore, that in Bede's time, that is, seven or eight centuries after Cæsar's invasion, there was some place on the Thames where the bottom of the river was covered with stakes, and which educated men, who must have been well acquainted with the river and its neighbourhood, considered to be the place where Cæsar crossed it.

Camden was the first of our modern antiquaries to direct attention to this subject. He lighted on a place near Walton called "Coway Stakes," and as it was "about eighty miles from the sea," and as he found there stakes driven into the bed of the river, he fixed upon it unhesitatingly as the place where Cæsar crossed the Thames. It is probable that many of the stakes had been removed even before Camden's time, owing to the requirements of the navigation; but a considerable number of them were, no doubt, remaining when Gale visited the place in 1734. He tells us (Arch. i. 183), "As to the wood of the stakes, it proves its own antiquity, being, by its long duration under water, so consolidated as to resemble ebony, and will admit of a polish, and not in the least rotted. It is evident from the exterior grain of the wood that the stakes were the entire bodies of young oak trees, there not being the least appearance of any tool to be seen upon the whole circumference, and if we allow in our calculation for the gradual increase of growth towards its end where fixed in the river, the stake, I think, will exactly answer the thickness of a man's thigh, as described by Bede; but whether they were soldered with lead at the end fixed in the bottom of the river is a particular I could not learn: but the last part of Bede's description is certainly just, that they are unmovable, and remain so to this day."

At present, when a pile is driven into the bed of a river, it

is shod with iron, and also has its upper end strengthened with bands of iron, to prevent its splitting. The stakes could hardly have been shod with so soft a metal as lead; but as iron was costly (*ejus exigua est copia*, B. G. v. 12), and lead was produced even at that early period in great abundance, the latter metal may have been used to wrap round the stakes, to give them greater stiffness. The uppermost plates of lead must have been removed when the stakes were sharpened, and the rest may have been stripped off in later times by the fishermen.

Hitherto there had been a pretty general agreement among our antiquaries as to the locality of Cæsar's ford. But, soon after Gale's visit, Daines Barrington went to Coway, and thought he had discovered a "decisive proof" that the opinions prevalent on this subject were erroneous. A fisherman, who "had been employed by some gentlemen to take up the stakes at that place," told him that the stakes were ranged *across the river*, and, consequently, not in a position to oppose any impediment to Cæsar's passage. He refused therefore to consider them to be the stakes referred to by Cæsar, and suggested that they might be the remains of some fishing weir. At the beginning of the present century, Bray, the editor of Manning's "History of Surrey," paid a visit to Coway, and was told that the stakes were ranged across the river *in two rows*, some nine feet apart. The fisherman, his informant, had weighed several of the stakes, each as thick as his thigh and shod with iron, and sold them for half-a-guinea a piece to a foolish antiquary. Only one stake was then remaining. Bray seems to have been half inclined to adopt the fisherman's notion, that the stakes were the remains of a bridge.[2]

All this conflict of opinion appears to have arisen from a false assumption. Our antiquaries assume that the stakes were fixed in the bed of the river merely to prevent Cæsar's passage. I believe them to have been fixed there for a very different purpose, years before Cæsar came into the island. I think the stakes formed part of what may be called a fortified ford, and were distributed so as to stop all transit over the river,

[2] Manning and Bray, History of Surrey, vol. ii. p. 759. A "Coway Stake" is preserved in the British Museum. It was obtained in 1777, as noticed Arch. Journ. vol. xvi. p. 203, where also another, in possession of the late Earl of Shrewsbury, is described.

save along a narrow passage, which would bring the passenger directly under the command of the watch, stationed on the northern bank to guard the ford and to receive the toll. The shallow at Coway was probably of considerable extent, and through its whole length must have extended the line of stakes which Cæsar observed on the northern bank. But there must also have been two other lines of stakes across the river to mark out and define the passage. The remaining portion of the shallow was, no doubt, covered with the short stakes that were "concealed by the river." These contrivances agree with the means of defence which we know were adopted in other instances. There are ancient strongholds in Ireland, the front of which still bristles over with jagged pieces of rock fixed in the ground, evidently for the purpose of impeding the advance of an assailant.

That such was really the disposition of the stakes may, I think, be gathered, not only from the reports of the fishermen, but also from Cæsar's narrative. When he saw the Britons ranged along the northern bank with the stakes in front of them, he ordered the cavalry to pass the river, and the legions to follow them. How could either cavalry or infantry cross the river if the stakes were ranged as our antiquaries assume them to have been? The passage could have been effected only by a miracle.

The Emperor of the French has seen the difficulty, and endeavours to meet it. He supposes that Cæsar sent the cavalry across the river at some place, either above or below the ford, to take the Britons in flank, and that the soldiers then removed the stakes, when the legions hurried across the river in the way described by Cæsar. As the river was fordable "only at one place," the cavalry, on this hypothesis, must have swum the river. But to swim cavalry over such a river as the Thames is not a military operation of every day's occurrence. Can we suppose, if it really took place, that Cæsar would have made no allusion to it? Besides, what were the Britons doing while the Roman soldiers were removing the stakes in front of them? It is clear they did not break till the legions reached them. Cæsar says not a word about taking the Britons in flank, nor about removing the stakes. The whole is mere hypothesis—hypothesis not only unsupported by Cæsar's narrative, but, as it appears to me, inconsistent with it When he had sent the cavalry across

the river, he ordered the legions "*subsequi.*" I submit that this means to follow *immediately* after, or, in other words, in company with the cavalry. The employment of the two arms together seems to have been one of Cæsar's favourite tactics, and, in describing it, he sometimes uses the very same phrase as on the present occasion, *e. g.*, when describing his pursuit of the Belgæ (B. G. ii. 11). There can be little doubt that Cæsar's attack was made in front, and that the enemy's position was carried by what, in modern military language, is called "a rush." It was a daring attempt, and not without its peril; but Cæsar well knew the men he commanded, and he was successful.

The Emperor sent over engineer officers to examine the present state of the river near Coway. They reported that there was no ford at Coway, but that there were several fords to the eastward—a piece of information which had been long familiarly known to English antiquaries. The Emperor reasons thus: the tide ends at Teddington—the name of which he tells us means Tide-end town—and as Cæsar would hardly select a spot for crossing the river where he might be interrupted by the tide, he must have passed it west of Teddington. Of the various fords between Teddington and Coway, the Emperor selects the one at Sunbury as being, in his judgment, the most convenient.

The fallacy which runs through this reasoning is a patent one. The Emperor reasons from the present to the past without taking any note of the changes that have occurred during 2,000 years. In the time of Cæsar the river ran from the high levels of Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire to the sea—uninterruptedly. *Now,* from Teddington westward it is a canal, crossed every two or three miles by weirs and locks; in short, a mere string of pounded waters rising step above step till they reach the high levels of which we have been speaking. The tide comes up to Teddington Lock, and there, of course, it ends; but as the lock did not exist in the time of Cæsar, any inference drawn from the fact that the tide now ends there, is beside the question. How can we argue from the present artificial state of the river to its state in the time of Cæsar? Its scour must be different, its deposits must be different—to say nothing of the dredging machine, which has been at work year by year from a period antecedent even to the construction of the locks. The river

now falls over a weir in a cascade some six feet high, hurries along for a mile or so with a strong current, and then gradually slackens its pace till half-a-mile or three-quarters of a mile before the next weir it becomes a pond, with hardly a ripple on its surface. It then tumbles over the weir, and the process is repeated. The consequence is, that the silt and gravel beneath each weir are torn up, carried down by the current, and deposited in the still water, so that before each weir there is a tendency to form a shallow, over which in one or more places a man may, in certain states of the river, wade across it. These are the fords which the French engineer officers have brought under the notice of the Emperor. The shallow at Sunbury is a mere consequence of Sunbury weir. Remove the weir, and Cæsar's ford at Sunbury would be swept away in a twelvemonth by the natural scour of the river.

I have argued that the fords noticed by the French officers have been produced entirely by the present artificial conditions of the river. But there is one shallow which is due to a very different agency, to causes, indeed, which must have been in operation even as early as the time of Cæsar. A spring-tide, when backed by an east wind, comes up to Teddington Lock in great force, and sometimes rises above the weir and sweeps up the river to the next lock. The consequence is an accumulation of silt and gravel in front of Teddington Lock, which is a serious impediment to the navigation, and on which barges may sometimes be seen aground for days together before they can enter the lock. I think it probable that when the river was in its natural state, these spring-tides ran up the river eight or nine miles further—in other words, to Coway; and that the deposit which they now leave at Teddington then contributed to form the shallow over which Cæsar passed. This is, of course, mere conjecture; but I submit it as a reasonable one.

There is one means of arriving at a conclusion on this much-vexed question which has hitherto been neglected—I mean the topography of the Thames valley. When we find a village or hamlet on the banks of a stream bearing a name which ends in the word *ford*, we may infer with certainty that, *at the time the name was given*, there was a ford in the neighbourhood of such village or hamlet. Such names are frequent on the upper Thames, *e.g.*, Oxford, Shillingford,

Wallingford, Moulsford, &c., and even in the forest district round Marlow we have Hurlyford; but from Hurlyford to the sea, a distance of nearly 100 miles, taking into account the windings of the river, there is but one place on the banks of the Thames bearing a name which indicates a ford over it. This solitary place is Halliford, at the Coway stakes. Cæsar says there was but one ford on the Thames—meaning, of course, the lower Thames, with which alone he was acquainted, and we now have but one place on its banks the name of which points to the existence of a ford. Our topography is in perfect agreement with his statement; and, to my mind, this coincidence is almost decisive of the question.

In this inquiry it is well to keep in mind the distinction between a ford which is passable under the ordinary circumstances of the river, and a shallow which can only be crossed under circumstances that are special and extraordinary. There are shallows on the Thames, some of them lying east of Teddington, which certain fishermen will tell you can be waded over, while others will as stoutly deny that such is the case. I think it probable that in seasons of drought, or at low ebb with the wind in a particular quarter, men may have passed over these shallows. In the year 1016 Edmund Ironside twice led his forces over the Thames at Brentford; and there are antiquaries who, coupling this fact with the indications of a ford furnished by the name of Brentford, have inferred that there was once a ford over the Thames at that place. But the name of Brentford had no reference to a ford over the Thames; it certainly designated the ford over the Brent by which the Roman Road from London to Staines crossed the latter river. Edmund's passage of the Thames must have been attended with great peril, for we are told in the chronicle that "there was great loss of English folk by drowning, owing to their own carelessness." We can readily understand that the silt brought up by the spring-tides would leave deposits behind it in the bights of the river and also in the tails of the several "eyots"—some of which, by-the-by, lie off Brentford—and when the scour of the river was weakened by the erection of a bridge at London, these deposits would naturally tend to form shallows. Little is known of the bridge which spanned the river in the eleventh century, but we may assume that like its successor it rested upon huge substructions, and con-

sequently that its action on the tides and the scour of the river was very similar to that of Old London Bridge. The reader will hardly need to be reminded how the old bridge dammed back the water at ebb of tide, and how greatly the scour of the river was increased when this impediment was removed. But there are probably few that have troubled themselves to inquire how far the effects resulting from the altered conditions of the river extended. If my information can be relied on, and I think it trustworthy, these effects were more or less felt as high up the river as Teddington. In Cæsar's time, before London bridges were thought of, or London itself existed, I believe the downward current swept every obstruction before it from the Coway stakes to the Nore.

I must now briefly call attention to the districts which Roman geographers recognised in this part of Britain, or rather, I should say, which Ptolemy recognised, for he is our great authority on the subject. Cantium may be said, speaking roughly, to be represented by our modern Kent, and the country of the Trinobantes, which had for its capital Colchester (*Camulodunum*), by our modern Essex. West of the Trinobantes were a people whom our antiquaries call the Catyeuchlani. I have no doubt this is a blundered name. It is only used by Ptolemy, and by him only on one occasion. Dion calls the people the Kataouellanoi, and in a Cumberland inscription they are called the Catuvellauni. Catuvellauni is merely the Latin form of the Greek name Kataouellanoi; and I shall henceforth give this very important tribe the name of Catuvellauni. Their principal town was Verulam. South of the river were the Atrebates, with Silchester for their capital, and further west were two other tribes—the Dobuni, whose principal town was Cirencester, and the Belgæ proper, two of whose towns were Old Sarum and Winchester. I call the last tribe the Belgæ proper, to prevent any false inference. The Atrebates were just as much a Belgic race as the Belgæ proper; and the same may be said of the Catuvellauni and of the different tribes who ruled in Kent. The people of Winchester and Old Sarum may have been called the Belgæ specially, because they were the earliest settlement of that race in Britain.

To trace the boundaries of these different tribes is a question of great difficulty, but of still greater interest. On the

northern borders of Middlesex is an earthwork, called by the peasantry of the neighbourhood the Grimesditch. It runs for about two miles to the North-Western Railway, and fragments of it may be found west of the line. Its ditch is to the south, and it must, therefore, have been a boundary of the Catuvellauni. It appears to have reached the woodland which once seems to have shut in the Colne valley on the east, and in the other direction I have little doubt that it was connected with the earthworks which surrounded the British town of Sulloniacæ (Brockley Hill). But the whole face of the country in that neighbourhood has been long since torn up for brick-earth, and the dyke has consequently disappeared. Whether it was continued east of Sulloniacæ I cannot say. Possibly forest may have filled the whole space between the Lea and Sulloniacæ; at least, this is the only explanation I can give of the curious turn which the Roman road makes at Tyburn. I would then draw the boundary line of the Catuvellauni from Brockley Hill along the Grimesditch to the woodland, down the woodland to the Brent, and so down the Brent to the Thames.

As the western boundary of the Trinobantes was undoubtedly the marshy valley of the Lea, the question naturally arises, what became of the district between the Lea and the Brent. Here we have the larger part of the metropolitan county unaccounted for. I believe this district, whose market value at the present time is greater than that of any other district of similar extent in the world, was, in the early times of which we are now speaking, merely a march of the Catuvellauni, a common through which ran a wide trackway, but in which was neither town, village, nor inhabited house. No doubt the Catuvellauni fed their cattle in the march, and there may have been shealings there to shelter their herdsmen, but house for the usual purposes of habitation I believe there was none. We have Cæsar's authority for saying (B. G. iv. 3) that the imperfectly civilised races of that period prided themselves in having a belt of desolate country around their settlements, and I have little doubt that between Brockley Hill and the Thames all was wilderness, from the Lea to the Brent.

The subject of these boundary dykes is so important, that I make no apology for calling the reader's attention to two others, which belonged to the Atrebates. The Roman road

connecting their capital, Silchester, with Old Sarum, no doubt was preceded by a more ancient British trackway. This trackway ran between two masses of forest, remains of which still exist; and in the opening between the forests, a little to the north-east of Andover, there are the remains of a dyke, which I have no doubt once shut in the whole space between the woodlands. The ditch is to the west; so the boundary dyke must have been raised by the Atrebates, and here the wayfarer from Old Sarum must have halted and paid the toll. The other boundary dyke has a historical significance, which bears directly upon the question we have already discussed at so much length. From the Coway stakes the ground rises gradually for about three miles, and then dips almost precipitously into the valley of the Wey. On the top of the hill (St. George's Hill) is an ancient British stronghold,[3] which commands the whole valley, and as the valley certainly belonged to the Atrebates, I infer that it was this people that constructed the fortress. Aubrey tells us that "a trench" went from this fortress to Walton, and gave that village its name. A dyke still runs from the ramparts towards Walton. I have traced it for more than one-third of the distance, and I have no doubt that it once reached the village, and, as Aubrey conjectured, gave it its name. *The ditch is towards the river.* For what purpose could this dyke have been raised? The only object for which I can conceive it was made, was to bar progress along the trackway which led from the Coway stakes eastward to the maritime states. If such were its object, we have another strong proof that the great means of access to the country of Cassivelaunus was at the spot where Camden placed it.

In the country of the Catuvellauni have been found numerous coins bearing the name of a prince called Tasciovanus, together with the name of Verulam. It has been inferred that Tasciovanus was king of the Catuvellauni, and that he minted money at Verulam. Some of his coins have

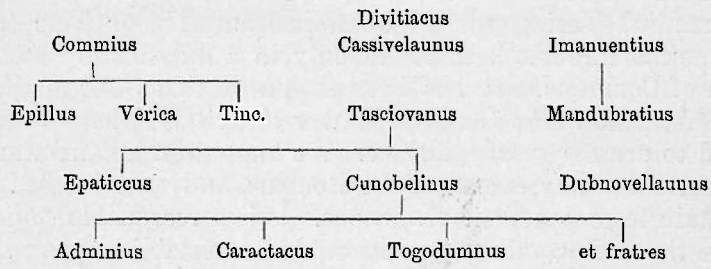
"Sur la Colline de Saint-Georges (Saint George Hill), près de Walton sur la Tamise, il n'a jamais existé de camp." —Histoire de Jules Cesar, ii. 191, n. When I read this note, I began to fear that "Cæsar's Camp," on St. George's Hill, like so many other of our national monuments, had been swept away in that mania for "improvements" which has distinguished the last twenty years. But on a visit to Oatlands I was glad to find "Cæsar's Camp" every whit as perfect as on the day when I first made its acquaintance years ago.

on them the inscription "SEGO." It is supposed that this is an abbreviation of Segontium, which we know from Henry of Huntingdon was a name sometimes given to Silchester; and it has been conjectured that Tasciovanus conquered the country of the Atrebates, and minted money in their capital, Silchester. Coins have also been found in that district, inscribed "EPATICCUS, son of Tasciovanus;" and it would thence appear that Tasciovanus handed down his conquest to his son Epaticcus. In Essex vast numbers of coins are found inscribed with the name of "CUNOBELINUS, son of Tasciovanus." These coins were minted at Colchester (Camulodunum). In the same district we find other coins inscribed with the name of "Dubnovellaunus." It has been inferred that Dubnovellaunus was a successor to, and perhaps a descendant of, Mandubratius, the prince whom Cæsar made King of the Trinobantes, and that he was expelled by Tasciovanus, or by his son, Cunobelinus. On the south of the Thames also are found coins bearing the names of Commius, Epillus, son of Commius, Verica, son of Commius, and Tin or Tinc (the name has hitherto been found only in a fragmentary state), son of Commius. It has been supposed that Commius was the Atrebat whom Cæsar sent over to Britain, where he was said to possess great influence. We know that he afterwards became a deadly enemy of the Romans, and that he fled to Britain to escape their vengeance. It is a reasonable conjecture that this Gaulish chief succeeded in establishing a principality among his countrymen, the British Atrebates, and that he handed down his British dominions to his sons, Epillus, Verica, and that other son with a fragmentary name, Tin... or Tinc....

Dr. Birch, in deciphering the legend, "CUNOBELINUS, son of Tasciovanus," led the way to the Numismatic discoveries on which these historical inferences mainly rest. They are, to some extent, supported by the celebrated "Monumentum Ancyranum." This monument mentions, among other kings who fled to Augustus as suppliants, two British princes, one named DOMNO. BELLAVNVS, and another with a mutilated name, of which only the initial "T" can be made out satisfactorily. It has been supposed that Domno Bellaunus represents the Dubnovellaunus of the Essex coins, and T..., the Tin... or Tinc..., who appears on the coins as the son of Commius. There would be no difficulty

in identifying Dubnovellaunus with Domnovellaunus ; but the division of the name DOMNO. BELLAVNVS presents a difficulty. Perhaps the copies of the inscription may be faulty. It is very important that this portion of it should be copied correctly, for it bears directly upon our British history.

There seems to be little doubt that the Divitiacus, King of the Suessiones, mentioned by Cæsar (B. G. ii. 4), first led into Britain the Belgic tribes which we find settled in the basin of the Thames. He flourished about 100 B.C. The Cassivelaunus who opposed Cæsar must have been descended, if not from the Gaulish monarch himself, at least from one of his officers, and Cassivelaunus may have been an ancestor, perhaps the father, of Tasciovanus. The following scheme will bring at once under the reader's eye the families which exercised lordship in the Thames valley during the century preceding the invasion of Aulus Plautius :—



This scheme differs from the one I exhibited at Cambridge, twelve years back, only in the addition of the name of Epaticcus. The name of this British prince was first made out by Mr. John Evans, the same gentleman who discovered, simultaneously I believe with Dr. Birch, the name Dubnovellaunus.

The invasion of Britain by Divitiacus probably took place about 100 years B.C. Forty-five years afterwards we find the Catuvellauni rapidly working their way to a supremacy in South Britain. The chief result of Cæsar's invasion was the check it put upon their progress. We are told it was the defection of the tribes which mainly led Cassivelaunus to submit, and we know he was compelled to acknowledge, as king of the Trinobantes, Mandubratius, whom he had driven into exile, and whose father, Imanuentius, he had

slain. If it effected nothing else, Cæsar's invasion at least relieved the weaker British tribes from the domination of the Catuvellauni.

It was during the depression of the dominant tribe that Commius seems to have established his kingdom south of the Thames. When the Atrebates made their boundary dyke from St. George's Hill to the river, it is clear they must have been in a condition to hold their own against their encroaching neighbours. But before half a century had passed, the tide of conquest was flowing in its old channel, and we find the Catuvellauni driving the successor of Mandubratius from Essex, and the descendants of Commius from the southern bank of the Thames. Everything seemed to intimate that they were about to found a great monarchy in Britain, when the Roman eagles again made their appearance, and the petty fortunes of an obscure British tribe yielded before a mightier destiny.

The campaign of Aulus Plautius, though in its results, perhaps, the most important that has taken place in Britain, has seldom engaged the attention of our historians. For our knowledge of its incidents we must chiefly rely on Dion Cassius. "One Bericus," we are told, induced Claudius to undertake the enterprise; and it has been conjectured that this Bericus was the "Verica, son of Commius," whose name appears on coins that are occasionally picked up in Surrey. If such be the case, Bericus must have been an aged man when he fled to Claudius. Plautius was the general selected to conduct the expedition, and a great force was brought together in Gaul to invade the island. But when the troops were assembled for embarkation, they declared that Britain lay beyond the limits of the known world, and refused to proceed. Narcissus, the Emperor's favourite freedman, was sent from Rome to pacify them. and on his arrival was grossly insulted by the soldiery. With the caprice, however, which sometimes seizes on large bodies of men, they at the same time declared their readiness to follow their general, embarked on board the vessels, and sailed for Britain.

This expedition sailed in the year 43, and Caractacus was captured in the year 50. As to these dates there can be no doubt. But Tacitus tells us (Ann. XII. 36) that Ca-

ractacus was captured "in the ninth year after the war began in Britain." It is probable that the troops had assembled, and all friendly relations between Britain and the Continent had ceased some time in the year 42, and that Tacitus considered the war to have commenced in that year, though this hypothesis will not account for the words "in Britain." The mutiny of the soldiers may have delayed the expedition till after winter, and it probably sailed early in the following spring. From incidental notices that occur in Tacitus, it would seem that four legions were engaged in the early operations of the war, namely, the 2nd, the 9th, the 14th, and the 20th. They came with their auxiliaries (Agric. 10) and their cavalry, so that the force which Plautius led into Britain could not be much less than 50,000 men. He had under him, in subordinate commands, Vespasian, his brother Flavius Sabinus, a man of almost equal merit, and a veteran officer named Cneius Osidius Geta. The fleet, no doubt, sailed from Boulogne, from which we know that Claudius sailed a few months later. Boulogne was the terminus of the celebrated highway which, half a century before, Agrippa had carried across Gaul, and this circumstance alone would be sufficient to establish it as the "Portus Britannicus," *i. e.* as the principal means of communication with the island. Having in mind, probably, Cæsar's disappointment at Dover, Plautius divided his force into three bodies, to prevent the mischiefs which might result from a check, if all passed over together. There can be little doubt that the three points to which the fleet directed its course were the three little ports on the Kentish coast, which we know the Romans chiefly used in their journeys to the Continent, namely, Hythe, Dover, and Richborough. The first and last of these are now silted up, but Dover still maintains its place as one of our chief ports of embarkation for the Continent. The Romans met with no opposition on their landing. Britain had been often threatened since the days of Cæsar, but never attacked. Augustus, it is well known, entertained thoughts of invading it, and Caligula assembled an army for the purpose, but the Britons received damage from neither. When, therefore, they heard that the army of Plautius had refused to obey its officers, they seem to have considered the danger as past, and to have discontinued their preparations for

defence. When the storm at last burst upon them, the petty chiefs of Kent appear to have sought refuge in their woods and marshes, and Plautius had to penetrate deeply into the country before he could find the opponents he was in search of. The following is Dion's account of his movements :—

"Plautius had much trouble in searching for them; but when at last he found them—they were not independent, but subject to different kings—he defeated first Karatakos and afterwards Togodoumnos, the sons of Kunobelinos, who himself was dead. When they took to flight, he won over by agreement a certain portion of the Bodounoi, whom they that are called the Kataouellanoi had under their dominion; and from thence, having left a garrison behind them, they advanced further. When they had come to a certain river, which the barbarians did not think the Romans could pass without a bridge, and on that account were encamped on the opposite bank somewhat carelessly, he sends forward the Keltoi, whose custom it is to swim, with their arms, even over the most rapid rivers; and they having thus fallen on their opponents unexpectedly, though they hit none of the men, and only wounded the horses that drew the chariots, yet as these were thus thrown into confusion, the riders could no longer be sure of their safety. He sent over also Flavius Vespasianus, the same who afterwards obtained the supreme power, and his brother Sabinus, who served under him as lieutenant, and so they also, having somewhere passed the river, slew many of the barbarians, who were not expecting them. The rest, however, did not fly; but on the following day, having again come to an engagement, they contended on almost equal terms, till Cneius Osidius Geta, after running the risk of being captured, so thoroughly defeated them that he obtained triumphal honours, though he had never been Consul. The Britons having withdrawn themselves thence to the river Thames where it empties itself into the ocean, and at flow of tide forms a lake, and having easily passed it, as being well acquainted with such parts as were firm and easy of passage, the Romans followed them, but on this occasion failed in their object. The Keltoi, however, having again swum over, and certain others having passed over by a bridge a little higher up, engaged them on several sides at once, and cut off many of them, but

following the rest heedlessly, they fell into difficult marshes, and lost many of their men. On this account, therefore, and because the Britons did not give in, even though Togodoumnos had perished, but the rather conspired together to revenge him, Plautius became alarmed and advanced no further. But his present acquisitions he made secure with a guard, and sent for Claudius, for so it was ordered him if any particular difficulty arose, and great provision had been made for the expedition, of other things as well as of elephants. When the news arrived, Claudius . . . crossing over into Britain, joined the army that was awaiting him on the Thames, and having taken the command, passed over it, and coming to blows with the barbarians, who were concentrated to oppose his advance, he conquered them in a battle, and took Kamoulodunum, the royal residence of Kunobelinos. Afterwards he brought many over, some by agreement, others by force, &c., and taking from them their arms, he placed them under Plautius, and ordered him to bring the remainder under subjection. He himself hurried to Rome, having first sent news of his victory by the hands of his sons-in-law, Magnus and Silanus."

Camden supposes that the term Bodounoi, or Boduni, to give the Latin equivalent, was another name for the people called Dobuni, and he endeavours to show etymologically that the two phrases, Boduni and Dobuni, have the same signification. Other antiquaries consider the phrase Boduni, which only occurs in this passage of Dion, to be a clerical blunder for Dobuni; and I confess I think their view of the subject to be the more reasonable one. In either case the same people are meant, and the general direction of the Roman march is clearly indicated. Where the two battles took place which were fought before the Romans reached the Dobuni we do not know. The Britons seem to have abandoned Kent without a struggle; but we may conjecture that they would not yield up the district of the Atrebates without a battle, and that they would risk a second to save the countless herds of cattle which must have been pasturing along the upper Thames, in the country of the Dobuni. The Romans, on leaving Silchester, may have marched over the Marlborough Downs towards Cirencester—under the names of these Roman stations I wish to indicate the British towns they supplanted—and on the chalk hills leading down into

the valley, Togodoumnus may have met them. After his defeat, the Dobuni were not unwilling to exchange the yoke of the Catuvellauni for that of the Romans, and entered into an alliance with Plautius. The Roman general was 160 miles distant from his ships, and the advantages he derived from making the rich country round Cirencester a new base of operations are sufficiently obvious. From Cirencester he seems to have marched in search of his enemy down the valley of the Thames, and probably along the Icknield Way. This British trackway would lead him to Wallingford; and here, I believe, was fought the great battle of the campaign.

After losing the districts inhabited by the Atrebates and the Dobuni, the British princes would naturally do their utmost to save from invasion the land which gave rise to their family, and which must have constituted the main element of their power. The country of the Catuvellauni lay, as it were, astride on the woodlands which stretch north of the Thames within the Chiltern. Its three principal thoroughfares were those known in later times as the Watling Street, the Akeman Street, and the Icknield Way. The Watling Street ran from the fords over the Severn near Wroxeter to the fords over the Lea at Stratford, and connected western Britain with the country of the Trinobantes, our modern Essex. Akeman Street came from Bath, and, passing into the London basin by the gap at Tring, joined the Watling Street at Verulam. The Icknield Way came from Suffolk, and ran along the chalk hills of the Chiltern across the other two trackways, coasting the vales of Buckingham and Aylesbury, which were, no doubt, the richest portions of the district. It seems to have crossed the river at Wallingford, and to have run into the vale of White Horse, for a road in that neighbourhood is expressly called the *Icenhilde Wæg* in a charter of the tenth century. For more than a thousand years the ford at Wallingford was recognised as the chief pass on the river. It was at this place that the Conqueror crossed the Thames, and following the Icknield Way to Tring turned his steps thence to St. Albans (Verulam), and so descended upon his prey—London. At this pass, barring access to the rich country in their rear, the Britons took their stand. The fords in front of them were probably fortified, for it is said that when Shillingford Bridge was built beams and piles were taken from the bed of the river.

With guards to watch these fords, the Britons might not unreasonably consider themselves secure.

The daring act of the auxiliaries in swimming the river must first have shown Caractacus—for he, no doubt, was the British commander—how much he had miscalculated. In the confusion that followed, Vespasian seems to have forced his way over the ford at Wallingford. Here a passage had no doubt been left to accommodate the traffic that passed along the Icknield Way, though the fords at Shillingford and Moulsford may have been rendered altogether impassable. The Romans made good their passage of the Thames; but the Britons did not fly, and how desperate was the next day's engagement appears from the account which Dion has handed down to us. The Britons withdrew their shattered forces along the same route that was followed by William a thousand years afterwards. They were too disheartened to make an attempt to save Verulam, but continued their retreat till they had crossed the Lea and placed the Essex marshes between them and their pursuers.

I have relied for these results chiefly on critical inference. But they are so obvious that they have been partially adopted, though not critically worked out, by other antiquaries; for instance, by Gough (Gough's "Camden," i. 30), and by Sir Richard C. Hoare. (Vide Intr. to Gir. Cambr.) I think, however, there is something like authority for the sketch I have given, though it may require some little introduction to lay the authority on which I rely clearly before the reader.

Welsh legends, as handed down to us in the Triads, altogether ignore the conquests of Plautius. He disappears amid the glory which encircles the name of Cæsar, and to the latter alone is attributed the Roman conquest of Britain. This tendency to melt into one the two invasions of Britain arose, I believe, from the loose, confused, and what may be even termed the blundered statements which are met with in the classical writers. Orosius never mentions the name of Plautius; and though he refers to the expedition of Claudius, it is done in such a way that the reader might suppose he went to Britain merely to repress some casual disturbances in the island. When Polyænus tells us that Cæsar employed elephants to force his way over the Thames, every critical reader *feels* there must be some mistake; and when we find that Claudius did actually employ elephants in his advance

upon Colchester, we cannot help suspecting that Polyænus has assigned to the first invasion an event which really took place in the second. Again, when Orosius states that Cæsar sailed to Britain in early spring (*primo vere*), we see at once there is a blunder. We know that Cæsar sailed on his first expedition in the autumn, and on his second in the height of summer; but as we have reason to believe that Plautius did really sail *primo vere*, we may reasonably conclude that the careless compiler somewhere found the statement that "the British expedition" sailed *primo vere*, and concluded that Cæsar's expedition was referred to.

Alfred translated Orosius, and it is curious to see how he deals with the statements of his author. He abridges, enlarges and alters them at pleasure, not under the guidance of any critical discrimination, but merely in the exercise of that freedom which the usage of the time allowed to a translator. It is well he took this view of his duty, for it enables us to form some estimate of the knowledge he had acquired on the various subjects he deals with. The following is his account of the Conquest of Britain :—

"After that he (Cæsar) had conquered them (the Galli), he went to the island Bryttanie and fought with the Brits, and was put to flight in the land that is called Kentland. Soon afterwards he fought with the Brits again in Kentland, and they were put to flight. Their third fight was nigh the river that is called Temese, nigh the ford which is called Wellinga Ford. After that fight there submitted to him the king and burgh-men that were in Cyrncester, and afterwards all that were in the island."

Cæsar we know never approached either Wallingford or Cirencester, and Orosius makes not the slightest reference either to the one or to the other. I can only account for their appearance in Alfred's work on the supposition that he found them mentioned in some Welsh chronicle, or in some Welsh compilation like that of Nennius. The Welsh writer he was copying may have confounded the events of the second invasion with those of the first, and so led Cæsar along a route which was really traversed a century later by Aulus Plautius. The fact that Alfred makes the battle of Wallingford precede instead of follow the capture of Cirencester need not disturb us. The entry in the Welsh chronicle was probably much in the following form: "Anno—Caer Ceren taken, Fight at

Wallingford," some Welsh name, of course, taking the place of Wallingford. Alfred, or the Welsh compiler he was copying, would naturally suppose that the surrender of the fortress was a consequence of the battle, and hence the blunder.

We are now brought face to face with the question which is the great difficulty that meets us in the present inquiry. The conditions of the problem we have to solve may be stated as follows. The Britons in their retreat crossed the Thames by a well-known and accustomed ford, and the Romans "a little higher up," by means of a bridge. When the Romans got entangled in the marshes, they retreated, and awaited the arrival of Claudius. Claudius joined the army "that was awaiting him on the Thames," passed over it and marched to Colchester. The puzzling question is, where were situated the ford and the bridge here referred to? My own solution of the difficulty is the following. When the Romans came down the Watling Street to the neighbourhood of London, they saw before them a wide expanse of marsh and mudbank, which twice every day assumed the character of an estuary, sufficiently large to excuse, if not to justify, the statement in Dion, that the river there emptied itself into the ocean. No dykes then retained the water within certain limits. One arm of the great wash stretched northwards, up the valley of the Lea, and the other westward down the valley of the Thames. The individual character of the rivers was lost; the Romans saw only one sheet of water before them, and they gave it the name of the river which mainly contributed to form it. When they stated that they crossed the Thames, they merely meant that they crossed the northern arm of the great lake which spread out its waters before them, and on either hand.

That such is the true interpretation of Dion's language is clear, I think, from the circumstances of the case. I am not one of those who consider the Britons of this period to have been "barbarians"; but that they were able to construct a bridge near London, over the proper Thames,—a tidal river, some 300 yards wide, with a difference of level at high and low water of nearly 20 feet,—I cannot believe. The construction of a bridge over the marshy valley of the Lea may have been within reach of their ability. The existence, also, of a ford over the proper Thames, at a place which can by any licence of language be represented as lying near the

mouth of the river, is beset with insuperable difficulties. At Higham, east of Gravesend, are the remains of a causey that no doubt led to the ferry which we know once existed between Higham and East Tilbury, in Essex. Hasted suggests that it may have led to the ford with respect to which we are now speculating. Other antiquaries have repeated his statement without the hesitation that accompanied and qualified it. It is a sufficient answer to say, that the river in this neighbourhood is six fathoms deep at low water. The notion of there having once been a ford near London has been more widely entertained, and even by men of ability; but it appears to me to be almost as untenable as the one we have been discussing. There is no river in the world, the history of which, for the last thousand years, is so well known as that of the Thames near London. We are told that, in the reign of Henry the First there was so great a scarcity of water in the river that men waded across it westward of the Tower; and a similar dearth of water is recorded in the reign of Elizabeth. But these are exceptional cases, and are noticed by the chroniclers, just as they hand down to us accounts of the Plague, or of the Great Fire. If it be said that the condition of the river may have been very different before the embankment was constructed on the Surrey side from what it has been since, I must appeal to the authority of Cæsar. *He* knew the river in its natural state, and had within reach adequate means of acquiring knowledge on this subject. To say nothing of other refugees and deserters, he had in his camp Mandubratius, who had lived all his life in Essex, and must have been acquainted with every circumstance connected with the river. Better authority than a statement of Cæsar we can hardly look for, and he tells us distinctly that the Thames was passable on foot *only in one place*. I indulge a hope that I have advanced reasons sufficient to justify Camden's decision in this matter, and which may induce the reader to fix the place at the Coway Stakes; at any rate it is certain that it cannot be fixed in the neighbourhood of London. If neither Dion's bridge nor his ford can be located on the Thames proper, it seems to me that we are necessarily driven to place them in the neighbourhood of Stratford.

When Plautius withdrew his soldiers from the marshes they had vainly attempted to cross, he, no doubt, encamped them somewhere in the neighbourhood. I believe the place

was London. The name of London refers directly to the marshes, though I cannot here enter into a philological argument to prove the fact. At London the Roman general was able both to watch his enemy and to secure the conquests he had made, while his ships could supply him with all the necessaries he required. When, in the autumn of the year 43, he drew the lines of circumvallation round his camp, I believe he founded the present metropolis of Britain.

The notion entertained by some antiquaries that a British town preceded the Roman camp, has no foundation to rest upon, and is inconsistent with all we know of the early geography of this part of Britain. Such town could not have belonged to the Trinobantes, for it lay beyond their natural limits, nor to the settled district of the Catuvellauni, for then Cæsar's statement that the Thames divided their country from the maritime states, "about 80 miles from the sea," would be grossly inaccurate. But if we suppose that an uninhabited marsh-land reached from the Lea to the Brent, we can assign a plausible reason for the construction of the work called the Grimesditch, and Cæsar's language will have all the accuracy that is usually characteristic of it.