

## THE PASSAGE OF JULIUS CÆSAR ACROSS THE LOWER THAMES.

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WHEN the members of the London and Middlesex Archæological Society assembled in October, 1915, at the ferry head, Brentford, they stood upon one of the most historic spots in England. Four well-known events have occurred here, and these are recorded upon a granite monument, erected in 1909 on the bank of the Thames by the townsfolk of Brentford, in the following words:—

- B.C. 54: At this ancient ford the British tribesmen under Cassivellaunus bravely opposed Julius Cæsar on his march to Verulamium.
- A.D. 780-1: Near by Offa King of Mercia with his Queen, the Bishops and principal officers, held a Council of the Church.
- A.D. 1016: Here Edmund (Ironside) King of England drove Cnut and his defeated Danes across the Thames.
- A.D. 1642: Close by was fought the Battle of Brentford between the forces of King Charles I and the Parliament.

To these, as will presently be set forth, even a fifth event might be added, viz., the passage in A.D. 43 of a Roman army under the Emperor Claudius on his way to capture Camulodunum, a momentous occasion, as it

was the commencement of the Roman occupation of Britain.

In the past some writers have claimed that Julius Cæsar crossed the Thames by Coway, in Shepperton, Middlesex, while others have favoured Chelsea.

As regards the first contention, it appears that in pre-Saxon days the Thames flowed in a channel now known as "the old river," which is still to be seen at the foot of the bluff where the Oatlands Park Hotel stands, and is situated about a quarter of a mile south of its present course. From the bed of the river where it now flows, the remains of a few stakes have been recovered. They were situated in a double row nine feet apart extending *across* the stream, and *not* upon the bank. This indicates that a passage or footway had been constructed for cattle to enable them to safely reach the cow-farrens, or half-acre allotments, on the former common pasture land of the vill of Shepperton, Middlesex, though now situated on the south, or Surrey, side of the Thames, owing to the change in the course of the river. This detached piece of land consisted of 18 acres, with the right lying to pasture a cow thereon, and is known as Coway (from the way by the stakes to this pasturage?) or Cowey (cow island?)\*.

The authority for Cæsar's passage at Chelsea is Maitland, who in his *History of London* (I. p. 8) states, that in 1732 he took a boat to sound the river for a shallow place, and 30 yards west of Chelsea College Garden found the "channel N.E. to S.W. was no more than 4 feet 7 inches deep." Thereupon he concluded that this must be the passage which Cæsar forced when he routed the Britons, forgetting that he had just

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\*For further details see, by the writer, "Some Antiquities of Middlesex. Addenda I," and his article, "The Great Ford across the Lower Thames," "*Archæological Journal*," March, 1906.

previously stated that the greatest marshes were on the south side of the Thames, and reached from Woolwich to Wandsworth. Cæsar with his army would have met with disaster, if, in the face of the Britons, he had attempted to pass across the marshes which then bordered the river on both the Battersea and Chelsea sides for at least half a mile in width. This was the fate which befell the soldiers of Aulus Plautius when pursuing the Britons across this marsh a little lower down in the neighbourhood of Kennington, where a minor ford through the river to Westminster then existed. Faulkner in his "History of Chelsea" (I. p. 6) quotes Maitland, adding that "in the absence of positive proof, it must be confessed that the suggestion displays no little probability."

Conjecture must now give way to proof, for the place where Cæsar's historic passage occurred has at last been definitely settled, by the recent discovery of the remains of extensive palisade work disclosed during dredging operations in the Brentford reach of the river, where it flows over a wide and shallow stretch of gravel, where in past times a well-known ford existed. The next main crossing-place of the Britons was some 50 miles higher up the river at Wallingford, though as above mentioned, a minor ford existed from Thornea Island, Westminster, to the Surrey shore, whence two miles of treacherous marsh had to be traversed until the Romans constructed a causeway across it.

The first mention by *name* of the ford at Brentford occurs in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for A.D. 1016, where it is stated, that Edmund (Ironsides) the King gathered his forces, and went north of the Thames to London and relieved the citizens, and then two days after went over at Brentford, and there fought against the (Danish) army and put it to flight.

The next is by William of Malmesbury (*circa* 1110), who in his "History of the Kings of England," in referring to this rout of the Danes, twice mentions the ford by name: "transito vado quod Brentford dicitur" and "præoccupatoque vado quod superius nominavi Brentford."

Later on Bishop Gibson in his edition of Camden's Britannia, 1695, records that "the Thames was in ancient times easily forded at Brentford, and is so still, there being now at low ebb not above three feet of water."

In early days before the beginnings of London, Brentford must have been well known, and a place of some importance, for it was not only the fortified entrance to the tribal territory of the Catuvellauni, but also the portal through which passed the trade to and fro between the Midlands and the Continent.

When the Romans led Watling Street across the Thames at London 8 miles lower down, the ford became of less consequence, though Brentford, even centuries after, was still a well-known place, for in A.D. 780, Offa King of Mercia held a Council of the Church there, and then signed a charter describing the spot as "*in loco celebri ad Bregantforde*."

Let us now turn to Cæsar's account of his passage across the Thames, and determine, after hearing what has been discovered at Brentford, whether it took place there.

In his *De Bello Gallico*, V. xi, he says that the territory of Cassivellaunus was divided from the maritime states by the Thames; distance about 80 miles. His object was to defeat Cassivellaunus, the powerful British chief of the tribe of the Catuvellauni, whose territory extended *inter alia* over Middlesex, Essex, Herts, and Bucks, with a capital town or entrenchment at Verulamium, by St. Albans, lying 19 miles

north of Brentford. It is obvious that the 80 miles could not refer to the stretch of the lower Thames, but to some place of passage across it, where the territory of the hostile chief could be entered, and we find the ford at Brentford to be that place. From the neighbourhood of Deal—the generally accepted place of Cæsar's landing—the route to the great ford of the lower Thames, and entrance to the Midlands, was well known, and the mileage mentioned by Cæsar is practically correct.

Further on in his narrative (ch. 18) Cæsar states that he:—

“being aware of their plans, led his army to the Thames to the kingdom of Cassivellaunus. The river was passable on foot only at one place, and that with difficulty. When he arrived there he observed a large force of the enemy drawn up on the opposite bank.

“The bank also was defended with sharpened stakes fixed outwards, and similar stakes were placed under water and concealed by the river. Having learnt these particulars from the captives and deserters, Cæsar sent forward the cavalry, and immediately ordered the legions to follow. But the soldiers went at such a pace and in such a rush, though only their heads were above water, that the enemy could not withstand the charge of the legions and cavalry, and they left the bank and took to flight.”

Now it will be observed that three facts are mentioned regarding this ford, all of which will be shown to have existed at Brentford, and nowhere else.

The first is, that the Thames could only be crossed at one place, and that with difficulty, meaning by his army, which consisted of about 14,000 men.

The difficulties obviously were: That it was a tidal ford: and a double one, for after the main stream had been crossed, and a delta of land formed by the mouths of the Brent reached, an arm of this river had to be forded, before the firm bank on the Middlesex side was gained. The other two facts stated were: (1) that the

bank on the further side was defended by sharpened stakes fixed outwards, and (2) that similar ones were placed in the river.

As regards the stakes in the bank. Mr. B. Hanson, of Southall, a well-known contractor, informed the writer that in 1881, while engaged on riverside works for the Thames Lighterage Co., a little below Brentford ferry-head, on the Middlesex shore (see G on diagram), he laid bare, at 10 feet below the then surface of the bank, a triple vertical line of heavy piles of oak interlaced with top and lop, through which were thrust stout stakes, with sharpened ends pointing outwards at an angle of 45 degrees, and kept in position by layers of heavy stones.

He further mentioned that much labour had to be expended on the removal of this unexpected defence work, which was of a massive character, and encrusted with semi-petrified sand of a dull leaden hue. He regretted that no particular attention was then paid to this ancient work, or to the numerous stone celts, coins, etc., found in the adjacent soil.

The Venerable Bede, writing early in the 8th century, when referring to Cæsar's celebrated passage of the Thames, mentions that some of the defence work was still visible.

To persons then using the ford, or passing along the Roman road—which I call, for convenience, "Tamesis Street"—which replaced the British track-way, where is now Brentford High Street, the remains of the oak piles on the bank, or appearing above low water in the Thames, would at that date be visible.

With respect to "similar stakes placed in the bed of the river." There is abundant evidence of their existence in this reach of the stream, recently brought to light during the dredging operations of the Thames Conservancy, and according to their records, nowhere

else in the lower Thames have any ancient stakes been found. Between Isleworth Ait and Kew Bridge upwards of 266 oak stumps have from time to time been removed as they became dangerous to navigation, where the bed of the river had been lowered 9 inches through the dredging.

In his younger days the writer in his small centre-board sailing boat often grounded at low water in the Brentford reach, and he has seen the shallow draught "penny steamboats" stuck fast there waiting for the flood tide to enable them to reach Richmond. By a curious coincidence, on the occasion of unyeiling the Brentford monument by the Duke of Northumberland on May 12th, 1909, so low was the tide over the site of the ancient ford that small skiffs which had been moored in the stream were resting on the shingle bed of the river, and children were paddling half-way across it. This was subsequent to the dredging operations referred to above.

In 1905, my attention was first drawn to the remains of old piles, which were constantly being extracted from the bed of the river. I thoroughly investigated the matter, and interviewed the workmen, from whom I obtained many specimens. They consisted of the remains of stout young oak trees, varying in length from 3 to 6 feet, with diameters up to 12 inches, and roughly pointed.

In condition they differed: on the best specimens decay existed to an inch or so in depth, rifts and splittings appearing during the process of drying on exposure to the air. These ridges could be broken off by the finger, but the cores were intensely hard and almost black in colour. From these portions many articles as mementoes have been fashioned.

The upper ends of the piles which stood in and above water, have long since decayed during the twelve

centuries since the time of Bede, but their lower ends, or stumps, owe their preservation to being buried in the soil of the river away from the air. The tops of the stumps which projected just above the surface of the bed, were in some instances frayed from contact with the keels of barges, or from the action of the river drift.

The results obtained up to and since 1905 may be thus apportioned over the reach.

In ancient times a palisade of stakes appears to have almost continuously guarded the shallow bed of the river which extended for nearly two miles, from Isleworth Ait to Kew Bridge. Commencing at the south end of that Ait, the remains of about 30 stumps have been removed from that point. Below Isleworth ferry, upwards of 100 stakes have been drawn; some of these stood in double lines across the stream, and were apparently interlaced, while others led down the river (see diagram A to B). Opposite Syon Park and above "Old England"—C to D—about 50 stumps have been taken up, and 20 in front of "Old England." From the side channel dividing the aits by Brentford Ferry—F—about 36. And 30 from across the northern channel at the lower end of the Ait by Kew Bridge—H. In addition to the 266 stumps which have been drawn, there are doubtless many others still in the bed of the river, but in too decayed a condition to constitute a source of danger to the bottoms of vessels.

The existence of so long a line of defence work, which must originally have required 2,000 or more piles for its construction, shows that the river was generally fordable over the gravel bed in this reach, but the usual route probably lay across to "Old England," that historic and well-named spot, where numerous evidences of ancient warfare have been discovered in the 'sixties, when the G.W. Railway docks were excavated. Many of these relics, consisting of





polished celts, bronze and iron swords, iron spearheads, etc., were, fortunately, preserved by the late Thomas Layton, F.S.A., of Brentford, and the collection is now to be seen in the museum of the Public Library there, having been well displayed by Mr. Turner, the librarian.

After Cæsar had forced his way across the Thames and had gained the opposite shore, he tells us that Cassivellaunus disbanded his levies, retaining a large number of chariots from which he watched the Roman advance, and when their cavalry ventured into the fields to plunder, he being acquainted with the local tracks and defiles, would sally forth from the woods, and with some chariots fall upon the soldiers, dispersed and in disorder. The wooded slopes of northern Middlesex, afterwards called the Forest of Middlesex, through which the route lay to Verulamium (St. Albans) only 19 miles away, afforded excellent cover from which these sallies could be made. Cicero, writing to Trebatius (*Ad Treb ep. vi*), who was with the expedition, sarcastically suggests to him to "take care, you who are always preaching caution, mind you do not get caught by the British chariot men, I advise you to capture a chariot and drive straight home."

On the Middlesex side upon the narrow ridge between the Brent and a small brook, Cæsar would come to a circular encampment of about 170 yards in diameter guarding the ford below. Its ditch and rampart extended over a portion of the space now called "The Butts," and formerly common land of Brentford Manor. The old highway leading north from the ford, in skirting the eastern side of the earthworks, took a semi-circular route, which the road to Hanwell still follows. On the west side of the camp, a segment of its circular course is shown on a plan, made at the end of the 18th century by the Grand Junction Canal Company for their works

on the Brent. The site is now divided by a modern road running E. and W., and by an ancient footway, probably connected with the camp, which it traversed from N. to S.

Here Cæsar may have received the submission of some of the tribes, or on the open and level ground a mile away to the N., on the way to Verulamium, where before the land was built over in recent years, some traces of a rectangular camp could be seen. This will be more particularly described later on.

Cæsar's expedition reached Britain about the middle of July, B.C. 54, and returned to Gaul a little over two months later, "without having achieved any permanent conquest, though leaving behind a dread of the Roman name." "We are all awaiting the issue of this British war," wrote Cicero to Atticus. "Anyhow, we know that not one scruple of money exists there, nor any other plunder except slaves, and none of them either literary or artistic. I heard on October 24th from Cæsar and my brother Quintus, that all is over in Britain. No booty. They wrote on 26th September just embarking" (iv. 15).

#### THE PASSAGE OF CLAUDIUS CÆSAR IN A.D. 43 ACROSS THE LOWER THAMES.

IN A.D. 43, Aulus Plautius landed in Kent with an army estimated at about 40,000 men (included in which were the following legions:—II Augusta: ix. Hispana: xiv. Gemina Martia: and Valeria Victrix).

His object was to capture Camulodunum (Lexden by Colchester), the capital entrenchment of Caractacus the King of the Catuvellauni, and his way there from Kentland lay through the great ford of the lower Thames at Brentford, thence by the eastern chariot- or

track-way across the River Lea at Old Ford, and on through Essex.

The reason for describing this campaign is on account of the side light it throws upon the difficulties connected with a passage into Middlesex by the minor ford at Thornea Island, Westminster, and on the protection which the Thames and its bordering marshes then afforded against incursions by tribes dwelling in the S.E. portion of Britain.

Up to the time of the invasion under Plautius, it would seem that the Thames and its marshes formed a division between two tribal groups or confederacies. To the south of the river stretched the latest Belgic group in touch with their brethren in Gaul, and in Cæsar's time they were under Commios the Atrebate, whose sons Tincommios, Verica and Eppillos ruled respectively over the Regni, Atrebates and Cantii. To the north of the Thames lay the Catuvellauni and their allies under Cassivellaunus, who was finally defeated by Cæsar at Verulamium. He was succeeded by his son or grandson Tasciovanus, who died about A.D. 5. Cunobeline, son of Tasciovanus, held his capital at Camulodunum and died about A.D. 41; and Togodumnus (slain in battle) and Caractacus, sons of Cunobeline, were the British leaders who so stoutly opposed the advance of Plautius. Another son Adminius had been banished by his father and fled as an exile to the Emperor Caligula in Gaul, A.D. 40.

Dion Cassius, an historian (*circa* A.D. 150), relates that:—

“The Romans met with no opposition on their landing, the petty Chiefs of Kent appear to have sought refuge in their woods and marshes. . . Plautius first defeated Caractacus and afterwards Togodumnus, the sons of Cunobeline, who was dead. When they took to flight, he won over by agreement a certain portion of the Boduni, whom they that are called Catuvellauni

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, he sends forward the Keltoi whose custom it is to swim with their arms, even over the most rapid rivers . . . he sent over Flavius Vespasianus . . . and so they also, having somewhere passed the river and slew many of the barbarians who were not expecting them; the rest, however, did not fly, but on the following day having come to an engagement, they contended on almost equal terms till Cneius Osidius Geta . . . thoroughly defeated them. . . .

"The Britons having withdrawn themselves thence to the river Thames, whence it empties itself into the ocean and at flow of tide forms a lake, and having easily passed it, 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 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 Togodumnus had perished, but they 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 his orders were to do this if any particular difficulty arose. Large supplies had been collected beforehand for the expedition, including elephants among other things.

"When the news arrived, Claudius, crossing 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 Camulodunum, the royal residence of Cunobeline. Afterwards he brought many over, some by agreement, others by force. He placed them under Plautius and ordered him to bring the remainder under subjection; and Claudius reached Rome after an absence of six months, of which he had only spent sixteen days in Britain."—(Trans. by Dr. Guest, "*Archæological Journal*," XXIII, 173.)

It thus appears that the Britons, after their second defeat, which was probably by the river Medway, with-

drew to the Thames, where at flow of tide it formed a lake.

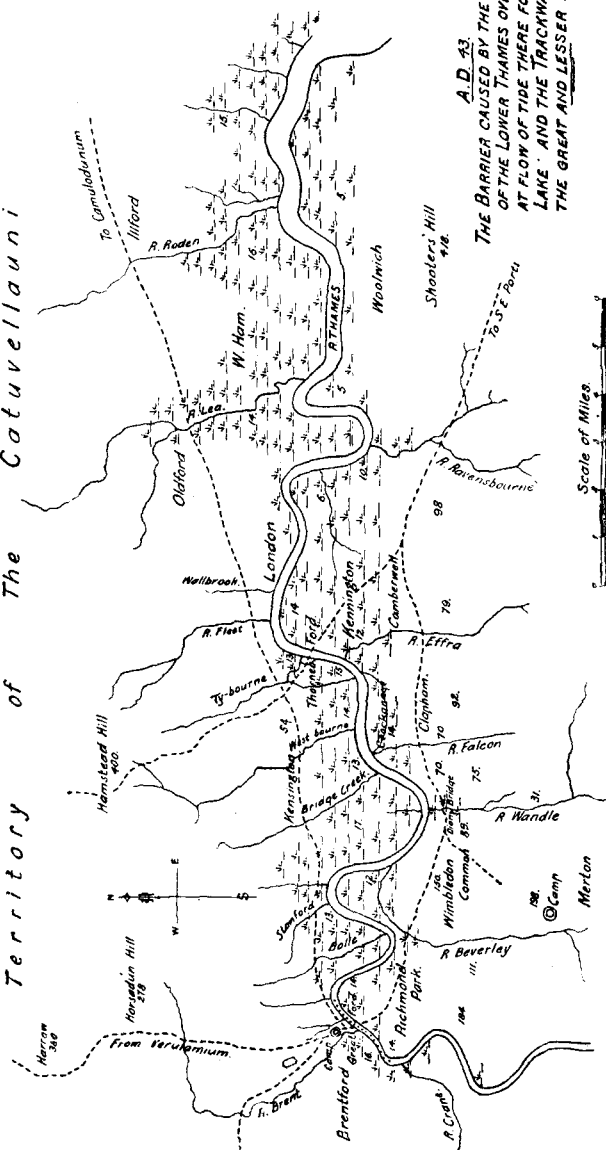
This would be over the great marsh then bordering the river from Woolwich to Wandsworth, eight miles in length by two in breadth in some places. They were pursued by Plautius towards the great ford of the lower Thames at Brentford, and upon reaching the neighbourhood of Shooters' Hill he would see beneath him the Thames and its vast stretches of marshes. After crossing the Ravensbourne, Plautius probably advanced into the neighbourhood of Camberwell. From somewhere here he appears to have sent a detachment to follow the Britons across the marsh, where Kennington now stands. The latter being well acquainted with the bye-paths across this marsh, to the minor ford of the Thames at Westminster, easily escaped and passed over, but not so the Romans, who failed in their object, because they did not know the intricacies of the paths—and particularly when the tide began to flow over them. And so the soldiers splashed and foundered in the marshy mire.

Afterwards, during the Roman occupation, a causeway was constructed across this marsh from the Stonegate, where St. Thomas' Hospital now stands, and another from opposite the town of London, both connecting near Shooters' Hill with Watling Street on the Roman military road to the S.E. ports.

Now comes the difficulty as to the location of Dion's bridge. As regards the lower Thames, it can hardly be suggested that in pre-Roman days any such structure spanned the river. The Britons, it is said, were capable of building a bridge of small width, and across any adjoining swamp, to lay a trackway to it upon a bed of piles covered with wattles.

Some such construction upon piles of oak driven into the muddy banks of the Wandle, with firm approaches

# Territory of The Catuvellauni



A.D. 43

THE BARRIER CAUSED BY THE MARSHES OF THE LOWER THAMES OVER WHICH AT FLOW OF TIDE THERE FORMS A LAKE. AND THE TRACKWAYS TO THE GREAT AND LESSER FORDS.

across the bordering marshes (which seem to have extended for some little distance up stream) was doubtless in existence in British days to take the constant traffic passing over the main S.E. chariot-way.

Here across the Wandle I would place Dion's Bridge, for Plautius wanted to capture Camulodunum in Essex, and since his army could not cross the Thames by the minor ford at Westminster, he was forced to continue his march along the chariot-way to its principal ford, which lay a few miles westward at Brentford.

On arriving at the river Wandle, he would see on its further side the steep rise of over 100 feet, which leads to Wimbledon Park and Common. Here the British force would be drawn up, advantageously placed to offer a stout resistance to the Roman advance, also having immediately behind them a large circular entrenchment of over 300 yards in diameter, now commonly known as Cæsar's Camp.

To attack the British on several sides at once, as Dion says, the Roman general must have sent some of his Celtic troops to swim past the mouth of the Wandle to the shore at Putney, and others to cross the river higher up towards Merton, while he pressed forward with other soldiers to cross by the bridge and attack the British centre. In this engagement the Romans were successful, though they lost many men in the marshes whilst heedlessly pursuing the enemy.

But though Togodumnus, the brother of Caractacus, had fallen in this conflict, the Britons did not submit, but rather became more aggressive, and on this account Plautius advanced no further, but sent for the Emperor, as he was ordered to do if difficulties arose. Meantime his army would rest on the high ground of Wimbledon Common, or Richmond Park, from whence he could watch the great ford across the Thames, while he brought up the elephants, and his train of supplies, which



were considerable, for the expedition had been fitted out to undertake the subjugation of Britain.

On his arrival, Claudius Cæsar took command of the army which was awaiting him on the Thames, and, more fortunate than his predecessor, Julius Cæsar, experienced no difficulty in passing the defences of the river at Brentford. This may be attributed to the presence of one of the elephants, which Plautius had brought with his army, the sight even of which in its war panoply was too much for the Britons drawn up on the Middlesex shore, who thereupon fled.

In support of this contention there is the account by Polyænus (*circa* A.D. 180), of the panic caused to the Britons by an armed elephant crossing the river, and though this writer ascribes the incident to the earlier campaign of Julius Cæsar—who does not mention elephants in his account of his passage of the Thames—it rather seems to properly pertain to that of Claudius Cæsar, whose army Dion states was accompanied by these huge beasts.

Polyænus says:—

“Cæsar, in Britain, was undertaking to cross a large river. The king of the Britons, Cassivellaunus (?) was holding him in check with many horses and chariots. Cæsar was accompanied by a huge elephant, an animal that the Britons had never seen. Having protected it with iron plates, and having set upon its back a big tower with bowmen and slingers thereupon, he ordered it to enter the river. The Britons were panic-stricken at the sight of this strange beast. As to the horses, what need is there to say anything, seeing that even among the Greeks horses take fright at the sight of even an unarmed elephant.

“They could not even endure to look at one carrying a tower cased in armour, and shooting out darts and stones. So then the Britons began to make off, horses, chariots, and all, and the Romans crossed the river in safety, having frightened away their enemies by means of a single beast.”—(“Strategemata,” L. viii, 5.)

It is difficult to reconcile the story of the elephant as told by Polyænus, with the account given by Julius Cæsar of his engagement with Cassivellaunus on the Thames. In speaking of "sending forward the cavalry," Julius would surely have mentioned so remarkable a fact as the presence of an elephant in the midst of his war horses, nor would he be likely to omit so creditable an exploit.

The earlier passage of the ford was opposed, and only overcome by the joint action of cavalry and infantry, while the later one was uncontested. Further, Cæsar would not necessarily mean Julius; it might be Claudius, or any other Roman emperor. Polyænus apparently confuses the earlier with the later passage of the Thames, and calls the British chieftain Cassivellaunus, instead of Caractacus.<sup>1</sup>

After crossing the river, Claudius advanced by the eastern chariot-way, which skirted the marshes on the Middlesex side of the Thames. It led through Chiswick, Kensington, and along Piccadilly to the river Lea at "Old Ford," and thence across Essex to Camulodunum, distant 60 miles, which he captured after an engagement with the Britons. The Emperor then returned to the Continent after an absence of only 16 days, leaving the command to Plautius, who remained three years in Britain, continuing the subjugation of the southern portion of the country.

Such was the commencement of the Roman occupation that was to continue for upwards of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  centuries. As Tacitus says (*Agri.* 13). "Julius, the first of all the Romans who entered Britain with an army . . . can be

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<sup>1</sup> "Polyænus wrote 140 years after the event, and the value of his work as an historical authority is very much diminished by the little judgment which the author evidently possessed, and by an ignorance of the sources from which he took his statements."—*Dict. of Biography, Smith.*

considered merely to have discovered, but not appropriated, the island for posterity. . . Claudius was the originator of the exploit, and transported his legions and allies . . . the natives were subdued and princes made captive."

In conclusion. It seems only natural to suppose that at the commencement of his campaign, Plautius would establish a temporary base camp in the neighbourhood of Brentford, where he could store his supplies, and from whence he could protect the portal of his line of communication with the coast.

As already mentioned, Brentford in pre-Roman times, was an outpost of considerable importance, as it commanded the main entrance to the country north of the lower Thames, and from whence chariot-ways branched off to the E., N., and N.W. Its strategic value, however, lessened, when 8 miles lower down the river, upon a slight bluff clear of marsh and shallows, and convenient of approach by vessels with seaborne supplies, the town of London was established, and more so when to this new town were laid the great trunk routes known as Watling and Ermine Streets, which connected Middle England with the Kentish ports, and shortened the distance over the British main route through Brentford.

But this was not so when Plautius resumed the command, and what better location could he have selected for this camp than the level stretch between the Brent and a brook, a mile above the fortified ford at Brentford. Here, until recent building operations covered the site, traces of the outlines of such a camp could apparently be seen, but recourse must now be had to the last 25-inch Ordnance Survey map, on which will be noticed a remarkable excrescence or deviation of the otherwise straight course of the parish boundary line dividing Hanwell from Ealing. In its turnings here this

line corresponds in a remarkable degree with the outline of the half of a fair-sized Roman field camp, and along its western side, between what would constitute its northern and southern portals, ran a bank with hedge and ditch (see diagram).

The boundary line of the camp on its eastern side has been levelled by the plough, but an ancient public way appears to indicate a portion of its limits, from passing outside the earthwork and ditch.

Here the width E. to W. is 515 yards, and excluding the abutments for the portals, the length measures 585 yards, thus forming nearly a square, but having rounded corners just as Roman camps were laid out, and enclosing an area of about 65 acres.

A strip of land consisting of about 270 acres, which included the area of the camp, seems to have been added to the hamlet of Ealing in Fulham manor about the middle of the twelfth century, and the Hanwell boundary set back to its present line along the western side of the camp. On the strip becoming cultivated the earthworks on the eastern side would form an obstruction, hence their disappearance.