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JULIUS CÆSAR'S INVASION OF BRITAIN.

By EDWIN GUEST, LL.D., F.R.S., Master of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

CIRCUMSTANCES have given a fresh interest to all matters connected with Cæsar's invasion of Britain, and the criticism his narrative has been subjected to, more particularly in France, seemed to require some notice at the hands of English antiquaries. The subject was accordingly selected as a suitable one for discussion at the meeting of the Institute held at Rochester. The arguments then brought forward were afterwards circulated more widely in the pages of the *Athenæum*;¹ and the present article is little more than a republication of the papers which appeared in that journal. Some alterations and additions have been made and a map appended, which it is hoped may make the author's reasoning clearer, by bringing the relative position of the several localities more distinctly before the reader.

Cæsar twice invaded Britain. It is clear from his narrative that on both occasions he sailed from the same port in Gaul, and landed on the same part of the British coast. In his account of his second transit he calls the port he sailed from the *Portus Icius*. Our first question, then, will be, Where was situated this *Portus Icius*?

After his interview with the Gaulish traders, Cæsar despatched Volusenus to explore the British coast. He then, as the narrative tells us (*B. G.*, IV. xxi.), "sets out for the country of the Morini, because from thence the passage to Britain was the shortest. Hither he orders ships to come from all the neighbouring districts, and also the fleet which he had constructed the summer before for the war against the Veneti." A few sentences afterwards we read (*B. G.*, IV. xxii.), that "while Cæsar is detained in these parts with

¹ *Athenæum*, Aug. 15, 1863, p. 210; Aug. 22, p. 241; Sept. 26, p. 400; Oct. 3, p. 433.

the view of getting the vessels ready," embassies come to him from various tribes of the Morini. When I read these passages, I find it very difficult to arrive at any but one conclusion, viz., that the Portus Icius was some port of the Morini; and I should be driven to adopt this conclusion, even though Strabo had not distinctly told us, that "the Itium which the deified Cæsar used as his port when he crossed over to the island" *was* in the country of the Morini (Geogr., IV. v. 2). I shall start therefore, with this assumption.

On the coast of the Morini, from the Canche northwards, are numerous little inlets, which are, or we may presume at one time to have been, tidal harbours—Etaples (formerly Cwanta-wic), Boulogne, Wimereux, Ambleteuse, Wissant, Sangatte,² Calais, Gravelines, and Dunkerque. Each one of these small ports has in its turn been selected as the representative of the Portus Icius. But in the midst of the rival ports there are two, Boulogne and Wissant, whose claims have always stood forth pre-eminent. It was their claims which divided the great European scholars three centuries ago, and which have been the subject of the keenest controversy among our modern antiquaries. I shall therefore narrow the question to the issue, Was the Portus Icius Wissant or Boulogne?

In his second transit, Cæsar ordered his ships to assemble at the Portus Icius, "from which port he had ascertained that the passage to Britain was extremely convenient" (B. G., V. ii.)—*commodissimum*. The partizans of Boulogne construe the word as if it signified "the most convenient;" and a vast amount of learning has been expended to show the superiority of Boulogne as a port over Wissant. Cæsar, during his first stay on the coast, was busy providing ships for the transport of his legions, and was at the same time watching the movements of his dangerous neighbours the Morini. Though the busiest man the world ever saw, he

² Sangatte is now a large village, situated on a low cliff beside the sea. It has no port, nor is it easy to see how it ever could have had one. Yet all who have discussed this question are agreed in ascribing to it the character of an ancient port, and I think with reason, for if it were not a port in ancient times, it would be difficult to account for the

Roman remains so frequently found there, or for the Roman road which leads to it from Thérouanne. Possibly Cape Blanc-nez may have projected further seawards two thousand years ago than at present, and so have afforded it something like a shelter from the south-west wind.

had no time for weighing the comparative merits of the ports north and south of him, and for determining which of them was "the most convenient." He went into the country of the Morini "because the passage from thence to Britain was the shortest;" and I believe he selected the Portus Icius because it afforded him this shortest passage.

Closely connected with this part of our inquiry is the question, Which are the ports in Gaul that have at various times been selected as channels of communication between Britain and the Continent? During the Roman occupation of Britain, Gesoriacum, or Boulogne, was the favoured port. The fact cannot be denied, and I admit it most fully. Equally clear, though less known, are the facts, that during the Anglo-Saxon period—that is, from the sixth to the ninth century—Cwanta-wic (now Etaples) was the chief port of communication; that from the tenth to the fifteenth century Wissant³ enjoyed this honour; and that Calais in its turn succeeded Wissant. It is interesting to speculate on the causes which led to these several changes. Wissant seems to have yielded to Calais because early in the fifteenth century its port was destroyed by one of those sand-storms which are so frequent on the opposite coast, and with which all who have been resident there for any length of time must be familiar. Cwanta-wic fell a prey to the Northmen in the latter part of the ninth century; and Wissant may have taken its place owing, as M. l'Abbé Haigneré suggests (*Etude sur le Portus Itius*, p. 28), to the growing importance of the Flemish towns in the neighbourhood, and their increasing commerce with England. The motives which induced our ancestors to abandon Gesoriacum (Boulogne) for Cwanta-wic, are not easy to discover, but the reasons which led the Romans to prefer Gesoriacum to the Portus Icius are I think sufficiently obvious. They are, however, too important to be noticed incidentally. They bear directly upon the subject before us, and will require a distinct and careful consideration.

On the eastern coast of the sea which divides England from the Continent, there seems to be a tendency, owing to the action of the tides, to deposit a line of sand-hills across

³ This village is generally called Wit-sand in mediæval writings; and we are expressly told that it received this name

owing to the white sands with which it was surrounded.

the mouth of any bay which deeply indents the land. To such a belt of sand-hills Holland owes its origin. The whole space between the sand-hills—or downs, as they are called—and the upland was originally, at high water, a lake, and at low water a collection of mud-banks, through which the great rivers from the interior worked their way, escaping into the sea through gaps in the line of sand-hills. A similar belt of sand-hills stretched across the bay which, no doubt, once existed between the capes Gris-nez and Blanc-nez. The sand-downs still rise from 50 to 60 and 70 feet in height, and stretch from a point east of Gris-nez to Wissant, a little to the west of Blanc-nez. Between these downs and the upland is now a flat sandy plain, some two or three miles long, and varying from a quarter to half a mile in breadth. I think no one can look down upon this plain from any of the neighbouring heights without being convinced that it was formerly what in some parts of England is called a “backwater.” The waters which cross the plain reach the sea by three outlets in the line of sand-hills,—the Rieu d’Herlan by an outlet near Wissant; the Rieu des Anguilles, the drain of the *Marais de Tardinghen*, which seems to be the lowest part of the plain, by another gap; and by a third gap further westward, the Rieu du Châtelet. It is probable that these little streams once flowed into the backwater, and that the latter was connected with the sea by a single outlet; and if I might be allowed to speculate on such slender premises, I would say, that the gap through which flows the Rieu des Anguilles may probably represent the mouth of the ancient port.

At the east end of the plain, near Wissant, are sand-drifts which have evidently been swept there by the prevailing south-west wind. In the midst of these drifts is a little basin, scooped out by the windings of the Rieu d’Herlan, or Wissant brook, and which some antiquaries have mistaken for the mediæval port. No doubt it occupies in part the site of this port, for on the banks of the brook have been found balks of timber which it is generally admitted must have been part of the old quay; but a basin surrounded by cliffs of sand cannot be of ancient date, and it certainly does not define the limits of the port of Wissant. What those limits were it is very difficult to say. M. de Saulcy seems to consider them (see *Les Campagnes de Jules*

César, p. 172,) as coincident with those of the little plain I have described, and he mentions a tradition which assigns to the port two entrances, one at its eastern and the other at its western extremity. I have myself little faith in traditions, and think it would not be impossible to point out the circumstance in which this particular tradition originated. When in the tenth and eleventh centuries the port of Wissant first began to play a part in history, it seems probable that a large portion of the ancient backwater was already silted up, and that the entry of the mediæval port was where the Rieu d'Herlan now enters the sea. At an earlier period, no doubt, it was otherwise, and everything tends to show, that in the time of Cæsar the whole space now occupied by the plain was one continuous port.

Here, then, between Cape Gris-nez and Wissant was formerly a port, amply large enough to contain the 800 ships which on his second transit Cæsar collected there. In the offing was a roadstead fairly sheltered, and containing good anchoring ground; and immediately in front was Dover. Cæsar might well consider the transit from thence to Britain "extremely convenient." How the Romans came to reject all these conveniences of transit and deliberately to select Boulogne as their "Portus Britannicus," we have now to inquire.

No one can explore the neighbourhood of Wissant without being struck with its extreme sterility. In one of the dissertations appended to the *Histoire de St. Louis*, and the existence of which seems to be unknown to our English antiquaries, Du Cange has collected all the learning relative to Wissant, and in spite of himself has shown the poverty of the place and the slenderness of its resources. On one occasion, when two or three hundred travellers had been staying there fourteen or fifteen days, we are told they could hardly obtain food owing to the barrenness of the country. The Boulognese antiquaries dwell with much triumph on these testimonies to the poverty of the rival port; but it is forgotten that these testimonies afford a sufficient answer to the question put forward with so much confidence, viz., how came the Romans to make Boulogne their port of transit during their occupation of Britain, if Wissant were the *Portus Icius*? Wissant, or rather the port adjacent to Wissant, may have answered Cæsar's pur-

pose, when he had hundreds of ships to supply the wants of his commissariat ; but when a port was to be provided to meet the ordinary purposes of traffic, it was necessary to select one that possessed local resources. The neighbourhood of Boulogne was, comparatively speaking, fertile, and as its harbour was not inferior to that of Wissant, the Romans selected it for their port notwithstanding the greater length of the voyage. If Boulogne was the original terminus of Agrippa's highway, this selection must have been made within thirty years of Cæsar's transit, and it certainly must date earlier than the Roman occupation of the island.

During three days I carefully explored the country round Wissant, but found nothing in the neighbourhood which I could venture to call Roman. The several "mottes," which have given rise to so much discussion, seemed to me to be of mediæval origin, and I looked in vain for anything of a Roman character in the old road which runs from Wissant to Guines. It is undoubtedly the road referred to in the old chronicle quoted by Bergier (*Hist. des Grands Chemins*, i. 104) but may have come into use in the tenth century as a means of reaching the Roman Road that led from Sangatte to Thérouanne. It is said that a Gallo-Roman tomb has been found at Wissant, but, on the whole, it seems probable that from the time of Cæsar to the tenth century the *Portus Icius* was the subject of little public interest.

As I extended my wanderings, I obtained ready answers to many of the objections which have been brought against the views I am now advocating. Cæsar tells us that, at his first transit, the eighteen ships of burden which conveyed his cavalry were kept from joining him, owing to their being wind-bound, eight miles off, in what he calls "the further" (B. G., IV. xxiii.), and in another place "the upper port" (B. G., IV. xxviii.). Sangatte, it is urged, is six miles, and Calais eleven miles from Wissant, the first distance being too short and the latter too long. The answer is an easy one. Wissant was not built till centuries after Cæsar's time, and lies at the eastern extremity of the *Portus Icius*. We have only to suppose that Cæsar's camp lay near the middle of the port, and we at once get the eight miles to Sangatte.

On the return from Britain two of the ships missed their port, and landed the 300 soldiers they carried a few miles to

the southward, probably at Ambleteuse. As the soldiers were making their way to the camp, they were attacked by some thousands of the Morini, but bravely defended themselves till relieved by the cavalry sent to their assistance. The next day Cæsar despatched Labienus against the Morini, and as this people, "on account of the drying up of the marshes (*paludum*), had no refuge to betake themselves to, as they had the previous summer, almost all of them fell into the power of Labienus" (B. G., IV. xxxviii.). It has been asked, where can we find these marshes except to the south of Boulogne? I know of no fen-district which is now to be found in the country of the Morini south of Wissant; but in Cæsar's time every brook must have had its marsh, and no one who has explored the Slacq-valley and its tributaries above Ambleteuse will be at a loss to discover the locality where, under ordinary circumstances, the delinquent Morini might have found a refuge. This valley has a bottom some half-a-mile broad, flat as the fens of Cambridgeshire, and stretching for miles into the country. Even at the present day, after a rainfall, much of the valley is under water.

It has always seemed to me that the language of the classical geographers goes far to disprove the identity of Gesoriacum (Boulogne) and the Portus Icius. When Ptolemy mentions the Ician promontory, and immediately afterwards Gesoriacum, we might have expected him to call the latter place the Ician Port, if it ever really bore that name; and it certainly is strange, if we assume the identity of the two places, that Boulogne is never called by that name, notwithstanding the frequent references made to Gesoriacum in classical history. But the strongest argument is, perhaps, furnished by the language of Strabo. This geographer tells us (Geogr., IV. v. 2) there were four ways of passing over to the island, viz., from the mouths of the Rhine, of the Seine, of the Loire and the Garonne; and he proceeds: "when people sail from the country near the Rhine, the voyage is not actually from the mouth of the river, but from the country of the Morini, who border on the Menapii, among whom also is the Itium, which the deified Cæsar used as his port when he passed over to the island." Every Boulonnese will admit that this usual port of transit which Strabo refers to must be Boulogne; and every

unprejudiced reader, I think, will be of opinion that he distinguishes it from his "Itium."

When describing the coast of Gaul, Ptolemy mentions three places as lying between the Seine and the Scheldt—the river Phrudis, the Ician promontory and the port of Gesoriacum. As the only river of importance on the coast is the Somme, and the only promontory of importance is Cape Gris-nez, the great French geographers D'Anville, Walckenaer, and others identify the river Phrudis with the Somme, and the Ician Promontory with Cape Gris-nez. In so doing they assume that Ptolemy has committed a blunder in placing the Ician promontory before, instead of after Gesoriacum. This kind of blundering is not unfrequent with the author who assigns London to Kent, and fixes the second Legion at the Isca of the Damnonii, instead of the Isca of the Silures; and such blundering need not surprise us, when we remember how great were the difficulties of the task he had undertaken. The partisans of Boulogne, as might have been expected, refuse to abide by this decision. They fix the Ician promontory at Cape Alpreck, a little south of Boulogne, and tell us that it once projected much further seaward than at present. This is probably true, for the cliffs both on the French and the English coast have certainly been much wasted by the action of the tides and of the weather. But there is nothing that gives importance to Cape Alpreck save its connexion with this "Ician controversy;" whereas Cape Gris-nez is the most important point on the French coast north of the Seine. At Cape Gris-nez, the coast, which has hitherto trended to the north, begins to turn eastward. It is this cape, moreover, which, together with the cliffs of Dover, forms the Straits, and which the Dutch must have had in view when they gave the Straits the name of *De Hofden*—the headlands. South of this cape the flood-tide flows to the eastward, while north of it the tide changes its course and flows to the north-eastward. The importance of Cape Gris-nez, indeed, cannot be overlooked, and is still fully recognised. On it the French Government have lately exhibited one of those magnificent lights which put our English lighthouses to shame, and which, with commendable pride, they are now enshrining in a structure built of the most costly materials. Cape Gris-nez, there can hardly be a doubt, was the Ician promontory,

and if so, the great port which lay beneath it must have been the Ician Port.

Amid that vast mass of authorities which Du Cange has brought together respecting Wissant are extracts from William of Poitiers and William of Jumieges. The latter of these writers tells us that the young prince, the brother of the Confessor, who was murdered soon after his landing in England, sailed from Witsand; while the other tells us that he sailed from the Portus Icius. Du Cange points to this testimony as making strongly in his favour. M. Haigneré considers that it merely adds one more to the number of the partisans of Wissant (*Etude, &c.*, p. 59). The answer is hardly worthy of a man so able, for it assumes that the "Ician controversy," and all the partisanship it has given rise to, were known in the eleventh century! It might, however, be said—true this Norman monk calls Wissant the Portus Icius—in his days it was the ordinary means of communication with Britain, and he naturally supposed it was used by Cæsar. I believe this answer would have no sounder foundation to rest on than that of M. Haigneré, but it is much more difficult to dispose of. The knowledge of classical literature possessed by the educated monks of the Middle Ages, though a subject of very interesting inquiry, has been hitherto but little investigated. They were well acquainted with the classical poets, and even with some of the classical historians, but seem to have been almost entirely ignorant of Cæsar's Commentaries. I know, indeed, of two instances in which the Commentaries are quoted previously to the eleventh century, but in both instances with considerable parade of learning. In the present case, we must suppose that William of Poitiers quotes them familiarly, and expects his reader to be equally well acquainted with them. I cannot believe that either the one or the other possessed this knowledge. It may be asked, whence then did William of Poitiers get the name of Portus Icius? I would answer, most probably from that current of obscure literature which, from the nature of things, we might assume to have existed, and which many facts connected with our national history prove, almost to demonstration, did exist during the Middle Ages. It seems to have consisted mainly of chronicles, of compilations like that of Nennius, and of national songs. By this means the name

of *Icius*, which must originally have been nothing more than the latinized form of some Celtic word, may have come down to William of Poitiers. The old Irish name for the English Channel is *Muir n' Icht*, and Donovan, the first of modern Irish scholars, translates it without hesitation "the Ician Sea." Dr. Reeves, in a note to his *Life of Adomnanus*, follows Donovan's example. Neither of these scholars gives any reason in support of the translation, but I think, nevertheless, that it may be supported. *Muir n' Icht* means the "Sea of the Icht." The word *icht* is found in no Irish dictionary or glossary with which I am acquainted, but the Gaelic *uchd* means "the brow of a hill" (vide Gaelic Dict. of the Highland Society); *Muir n' Icht* may therefore signify the "Sea of the Promontory," and we are at once referred to the Ician promontory of Ptolemy. I know of no Gaelic word of which *uchd* can be a derivative, but in the Welsh there is an adjective, *uch*, higher, which may very well be its root. If we might assume that in ancient Celtic *uch* was used as a substantive in the sense of *height*, then we see at once the origin of the word *Icius*, and perhaps may account for all the variations that are found in the MSS., viz., *Icius*, *Ictius*, and *Itius*. *Icius* and *Ictius* may represent the Celtic words *uch* and *uchd*, and *Itius* be a corruption of *Ictius*. When in Celtic, a guttural precedes a dental, it is very commonly melted into a breathing and lost; thus the *Caractac-us* of Tacitus became in Dion and Zonaras *Karatak-os*, in modern Welsh *Cara-dawg*, and in English *Cradock*.

Briefly to recapitulate—I believe the port which once existed between Cape Gris-nez and Wissant to be the Portus Icius: 1st, because it afforded the shortest passage to Britain, 2ndly, because it was amply large enough for Cæsar's purposes, 3rdly, because it lay immediately beneath Cape Gris-nez, which I believe to be the Ician promontory, and lastly, because a Norman monk in the eleventh century expressly calls it the Portus Icius; and I think this name may have been handed down to him by the Romanized Gauls, inasmuch as the name of Ician seems to have been long kept afloat in the recollection of the Celtic population of these islands.

In his first invasion of Britain Cæsar carried over with him two legions, probably from 8000 to 10,000 men. Some

of his vessels in the "further port" could not join him for the wind. His means of transport were eighty ships of burthen, and a certain number of "long ships" or galleys, perhaps in all a hundred sail. On the fourth day after he reached Britain there was a full moon, and we may, with much probability, fix the day of his sailing to the 25th of August in the year 55 B.C. He weighed anchor at midnight (B. G., IV. xxiii.), and as it was half-way to low water at that time on the French coast, and as the Portus Icius was, no doubt, a tidal harbour, he must have brought out his ships as occasion served at high water, and sailed from the offing.

The wind was suitable (*idonea tempestas*), and as on his second invasion he sailed with a south-west wind (B. G., V. viii.), and as a south-west wind would keep the vessels in the "further port" wind-bound, we may presume that he sailed with the wind in that quarter. The presumption is strengthened on our finding, that when on the occasion of his second transit he first ordered his troops on board, he uses the very same expression, and speaks of the wind as "suitable" (B. G., V. vii.). If, then, as is probable,⁴ he steered for Dover, he would have the wind nearly abeam or at right angles to his course. His first vessels reached the opposite coast by ten the next morning, but the whole fleet was not assembled there till three in the afternoon. He found the cliffs covered with armed men, and so closely was the sea hemmed in by these cliffs, that a missile could be hurled from the heights upon the shore.⁵ Like Halley and the majority of our English antiquaries, I recognise in this description the cliffs near Dover, and I suppose that Cæsar's fleet was moored in Dover-wick, the roadstead which lies between Dover and the South Foreland, and is commanded by the guns of the castle.

The slowness of the passage is remarkable. The vessels of burthen, which of course were the laggards, were country-built ships. These Gaulish vessels are elsewhere described by Cæsar (B. G., III. xiii.). Their sails were of skins, and

⁴ From the heights near Wissant may be seen the whole of the English coast from Sandgate to the South Foreland, and a beautiful sight it is, a long line of white cliff broken in the middle by the gap, in which lies Dover. This gap at

once fixes the attention and is the only well-defined landmark within view.

⁵ Adeò montibus angustis mare continuebatur, uti ex locis superioribus in littus telum adjici posset (B. G. IV. xxiii.).

they had, strange to say, chain-cables ; their keels were flatter than those of the Roman vessels, to enable them to take the ground more easily at low water, and they were raised to a great height both at stem and stern ; their timbers were all of oak, and of such stout scantling, and so strongly put together, that the beaks of the Roman galleys could make no impression upon them. They were evidently huge vessels, built almost solely with a view to strength, and therefore their slow rate of sailing need not surprise us. But even the Roman "long ships" were ten hours in crossing ; and as the flood and the ebb may to some extent have counterbalanced each other, I do not think that the tide-drift will altogether account for such slow progress. On certain occasions Roman ships are known to have sailed seven miles an hour ; but in such cases, whenever reference is made to the wind, we always find it was right astern. What was the rate of sailing when the wind was nearly abeam I do not know, but I suspect it was extremely slow. The ordinary Roman galley was propelled by a single square mainsail, for though it carried a small foresail on a raking mast, such foresail was evidently used less to propel the vessel than to swing it round when tacking. The motive power must have been applied much in the same way as that which acts upon a Chinese junk. The junk, as is well known, makes good way before a wind, but with the wind abeam is little better than a log upon the water. Cæsar's vessels too were probably ill built ; they were put together in a hurry (*celeriter*, B. G., III., ix.), and by imperfectly-skilled workmen ; for though Cæsar sent for sailors, rowers, and pilots from "the Province," he says nothing about shipwrights, and there can be no doubt that the ships were constructed by the artisans of the legions, to whom he entrusted their reparation when they were damaged by the storm (B. G., IV. xxxi.). When we remember, also, that these "long ships" formed part of a fleet, and would naturally have their speed in some measure accommodated to that of the other vessels ; that the sailors and pilots were from the Mediterranean, and strangers to the perplexing currents and the short jerking waves of the new sea, I think our surprise will be the less, when we find their rate of sailing *through the water* was barely two miles an hour. The difficulties we have been considering will be diminished

only in a trifling degree by supposing that Cæsar sailed from Boulogne.

Cæsar reached Britain at ten o'clock in the morning, but, "judging the place by no means a suitable one for landing, he waited at anchor to the ninth hour (three o'clock in the afternoon),⁶ till the rest of the vessels were assembled there. In the mean time, having called together the Legati and the military tribunes, he told them what he had learnt from Volusenus, and what he wished to have done, &c. When these were dismissed, having got at the same time *both wind and tide* in his favour, he gave the signal, and weighing anchor advanced some seven or eight miles (the MSS. differ as to the distance) from that place, and brought the ships to on a level and open shore."⁷ The question is, did he advance eastward or westward?

Halley, arguing from the present state of the tidal currents, concluded, that on the day when Cæsar reached Britain, it was low water off that place about two (he should have said half-past one) in the afternoon; that at three the flood-tide was well made up, and that Cæsar proceeded with it eastward towards Deal; and he speaks with singular confidence as to the correctness of these results. He seems to have thought that, after slack water the flood-tide ran for five or six hours to high water, and then after a pause the ebb-tide ran for five or six hours to low water, and so on. This is not the law which prevails in narrow channels like those of rivers, or in narrow seas like that which separates Britain from the Continent. In such cases the flood-tide begins to flow two or three hours before high water, and *continues to flow two or three hours after it*, then after a pause the ebb-

⁶ Roman hours coincided with our modern hours only at the equinoxes, and as Cæsar sailed three or four weeks before the autumnal equinox, his ninth hour did not coincide with our "3 o'clock in the afternoon." But all who have hitherto treated on these subjects have assumed the coincidence of our own and Roman hours, and to make the necessary corrections would not only require some nice calculation, but would render it difficult to lay the present speculations side by side with the arguments of those who have preceded me. I have preferred therefore to use language not altogether correct, rather than perplex the reader with niceties that relate to matters of

subordinate interest, and do not materially affect the issues, on which, as it seems to me, the decision of the question now before us mainly rests.

⁷ Hunc ab egrediendum nequaquam idoneum arbitratus locum, dum reliquæ naves eò convenirent, ad horam nonam in anchoris expectavit. Interim legatis tribunisque militum convocatis, et quæ ex Voluseno cognosset, et quæ fieri vellet, ostendit: monuitque, &c. His dimissis, et ventum et æstum uno tempore nactus secundum, dato signo et sublatiis anchoris, circiter millia passuum vii. ab eo loco progressus, aperto ac plano littore naves constituit. (B. G., IV. xxiii.)

tide flows two or three hours to low water, *and two or three hours after it*, and so on. This general law, however, is subject to many exceptions; a headland may divert the current, or an estuary produce in it the most extraordinary disturbances, so that no man, however great his analytical skill may be, can calculate from mere theory what will be the state of the tide at a given time, at any particular place in the English Channel: it can only be learnt from observation. Professor Airy, to whom we owe the ablest work on the tides that has yet appeared,^s at once saw the weak point in Halley's argument. With that eminently practical turn of mind which distinguishes him he consulted Captain Beechey, who had been officially employed in investigating these currents, and satisfied himself that the ebb-tide was still flowing at three o'clock, and, accordingly, he carried Cæsar's fleet with it to the westward. Mr. Lewin, who brings Cæsar from Boulogne to Folkstone, following Professor Airy's example, carries him westward and lands him at Hythe. Dr. Cardwell, who appears to have paid much attention to the tides off Folkstone, distinguished between the in-shore and mid-channel currents, and thought he had good grounds for maintaining that near shore the flood-tide would make as early as three o'clock, and might very well have carried Cæsar eastwards towards Deal. I may say in passing that my own observations at Folkstone strongly corroborate those of Dr. Cardwell, but unfortunately I cannot avail myself of them, as, according to my theory, Cæsar's fleet was moored at Dover-wick. Captain Beechey's observations, confirmed as they have been by those more recently made by order of the Admiralty, show clearly enough that, if we admit the premises, the tide off Dover at three o'clock in the afternoon of the day in which Cæsar reached Britain must have been flowing to the westward. As I believe Cæsar's fleet sailed in the opposite direction, I can only extricate myself from the dilemma by attacking the premises on which the conclusion is founded.

It is a curious circumstance that French and English antiquaries put different constructions on Cæsar's language. Our countrymen seem to consider the words *in anchoris* to form, as it were, a substantive part of the verb *expectavit*, as

^s Of course I refer to the admirable essay by Professor Airy which appeared in the Encyclopædia Metropolitana.

if the sentence might be rendered, "to the ninth hour he lay at anchor waiting for the assembling of the other ships." The Frenchman appears to consider them as parenthetic, and would, I presume, construe "to the ninth hour he waited (at anchor) for the assembling," &c. This construction⁹ admits of there being a certain interval between the assembling of the ships and the time of Cæsar's departure; and as the military tribunes were legionary officers, it is not very easy to see how Cæsar could give them his orders till all the ships carrying the legionary soldiers had come in. M. de Saulcy assumes ('Campagnes de J. C.,' p. 193) that an hour and a half were spent in making the necessary preparations for departure, and he starts Cæsar at half-past four, when he supposes that the flood-tide was making towards Deal. Of course, if we admit there was an interval, it can be accommodated to any hypothesis, and all the reasoning of our English antiquaries, from the time of Halley, downwards, falls at once to the ground.

But there is another objection, which seems to me to be no less fatal to the arguments usually adduced in support of the opinion I am now combating. I shall venture to ask whether we are justified in reasoning from present phenomena to the state of the tides in the time of Cæsar?—whether the conditions of the problem are the same now as they were 2,000 years ago?—whether, in short, the alterations in the coast-line of Kent have been so insignificant that they may be safely neglected in the calculation? In discussing the question I shall put out of view the waste of the cliffs and the more substantial parts of the coast—first, because I believe this waste has been overrated, and, secondly, because in all probability it has been, on the whole, pretty equably distributed, so that the general outline of the

⁹ I have been asked to state more explicitly my own view of the construction of the passage in question. It may be done in few words. The phrase *expectare dum*, to wait for the happening of a certain event, is a well-known Latin idiom; and *in anchoris expectare dum* can only mean, to wait at anchor for the happening of the event. If we add the words *ad horam nonam*, surely we make the ninth hour the limit, not of lying at anchor, but of waiting for the event. I do not see how M. De Saulcy's translation can be questioned.

Our countrymen seem to have been misled by the emphasis given to the words *in anchoris*, owing to their collocation immediately before the verb. The words are certainly emphasized, but I think the significance of the emphasis has been mistaken. Cæsar probably steered for Dover with the view of landing his men as the vessels came in, but finding his landing opposed, he awaited the arrival of his other vessels *in anchoris*, i. e. in the roadstead. The emphasis marks the change of plan occasioned by the unexpected opposition he met with.

coast may not be greatly altered, though it may be now more inland than formerly. What I want more particularly to call the reader's attention to are the changes which have been wrought in the marshes, the sands, and the shingle-beds of the Kentish coast.

We will begin with the Romney Marshes. No one now doubts that the portion of the Marshes called Old Romney Marsh was "inued" by the Romans; and as it is protected from the sea by the spit of shingle which runs from Hythe to New Romney, we may conclude that thus far the present coast coincided with that which existed in the time of Cæsar. According to Mr. Elliott, the very intelligent engineer of the Marshes, the Rother formerly emptied itself at New Romney, and there, accordingly, must have been the inlet by which the tide originally entered. By a cautious and well-reasoned induction, Mr. Elliott arrives at the following conclusions: that an inland spit of shingle called "Lydd Rypes" was the ancient beach south of this inlet, in the time of Cæsar, the remainder of Dungeness being a later accretion from the sea,—that this spit was prolonged across the bight formed by the Rother when it scooped out its present channel in the thirteenth century,—and that Old Winchelsea stood on this prolongation of the spit, many circumstances conspiring to fix the site of the lost town in this position. What then must have been the course of the tide-wave in these days of old? It must have come up the Channel uninterruptedly along a coast of gentle curvature, and at New Romney must have been swallowed by an estuary spreading over some 50,000 acres. From this estuary it is now excluded, and instead of the uninterrupted flow I have described, it is dashed against the shingle-beds of Dungeness. Diverted from its course, it runs round the Ness with a current like a mill-race, and forms on the other side, in Romney Hoy, a strong eddy, so that when a vessel is wrecked (as too often happens) on the west side of the Ness it throws up its timbers and the bodies of the poor fellows who went down in it in this Romney Hoy. Can we readily imagine a greater derangement of the tidal currents?

Let us now pass north of Dover to the Goodwin Sands. All the antiquaries who have lately discussed the present question assume that these sands existed in the time of Cæsar. Is this probable? Somner, who is preeminently

the antiquary of Kent, informs us that, "with several men of judgment, it (*i. e.*, the Goodwin) is looked on as a piece of later emergency than Earl Goodwyn" (Roman Forts, p. 24); while Sir Thomas More's story of the Tenterden steeple shows us that, in his opinion, the sands were of recent origin; and his testimony is valuable, for though not a Kentish man, he was brought up in the household of Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1500; and we may infer that such at that period was the opinion of educated men who had local knowledge, and, therefore, the best means of information. Leland (vii., 138) attributed the decay of Sandwich to the Goodwin Sands, and as Sandwich was a flourishing port in the fourteenth century, we may infer that it was not till the fifteenth that the sands attained those formidable dimensions which produced so much mischief. John Twine, of Canterbury, that "learned old man," as Camden calls him, describes, on the authority of "certain writers," an island named Lomea, the history of which he connects with that of the Goodwin Sands. According to him, it was exceedingly fertile and abounding in pastures, and was once the property of Earl Godwin. It was somewhat less elevated than Thanet, from which it was three or four miles distant, and it was swept away during a terrific storm and an unusually high tide (*De Rebus Albioniciis*, Lib. I.). As Lomea is not mentioned in Domesday, it was probably destroyed before that compilation was made. Hector Boethius has also given us a short account of the Goodwins, which, as far as it goes, is in perfect agreement with that we have taken from the pages of John Twine. The conclusion these considerations point to is confirmed by the names given to the celebrated anchoring grounds off Deal and Sandown Castle—viz., the Downs and the Small Downs. The word *downs* signifies sand-hills, and in this sense is well known on both sides of the Channel. Immediately north of Sandown Castle is a tract of land covered with low sand-hills, and which in the older maps of Kent—Philipot's, for example—is called the "smale downes." The sea has long been eating away this tract of sand-hills, and even within my memory the changes wrought have been most extraordinary. The sea has lately reached the fort, which has been dismantled and sold, and in a few months every vestige of Sandown Castle will have disappeared. I

can only account for the name given to the anchorage by supposing that it once formed part of these "smale downes"; and for a similar reason I infer that the Downs were also at one time dry land covered with sand-hills. As the land was, probably, from the first nothing but a mud-bank covered with sand, a deep channel might easily be scooped out of it. In the Romney Marshes the sea-silt has been found on boring to be fully ninety feet deep.

I think there can be little doubt that the flats round Sandwich once projected into the sea as a low ness or foreland—probably divided into islands, of which Lomea was the easternmost. After the destruction of this island, the Goodwin Sands may have been gradually accumulated, not necessarily on the site of the island, but near it, and the Downs just as gradually excavated. If I have been correctly informed, the Goodwins are still slowly growing to the southward, and the Small Downs are certainly, and by no means slowly, enlarging their boundaries. How altered has been the working of the tides in this neighbourhood appears from the fact that the beach now thrown up at Deal and Sandown is shingle, whereas we have very clear proof that it once was sand.

It may be well to recapitulate the several changes in the coast-line, on which I rely to support my inference as to there having been *some* changes in the inshore tidal currents. They are—the contraction of the Thames estuary owing to the inning of its marshes, the silting up of the Wantsum, through which we know that vessels sailed as late as the fifteenth century, the formation of the Goodwin Sands, the excavation of that deep-sea channel called The Downs, the inning of the Romney Marshes, and the creation of Dungeness—and by the creation of Dungeness I do not mean merely the accretions of shingle that have been added to it since the time of Cæsar, but the entirely new configuration given to it owing to the bight which the Rother excavated, when it formed its present channel some five centuries ago. These are not "*changemens peu considerables*," according to the language adopted by General Creuly,¹ but changes

¹ General Creuly's *Etude* was, I believe, in type when my papers in the *Athenæum* appeared. They must I fear have been very distasteful to him, for they ran counter to some of his most

cherished speculations. These speculations seem to be the General's test of orthodoxy. When Professor Airy agrees with them, his decision is represented as authoritative; when he differs from

of enormous magnitude, such as are without parallel elsewhere on the British coast, or indeed on the coast opposite, if we except the changes that have taken place in Holland. What effect these changes would have on the inshore currents I believe no one can tell. The laws which regulate these currents are to the last degree perplexing. They evidently depend on complex causes, and cannot be treated as mere corollaries to the law which regulates the great tide drift in mid-channel. No one by the mere aid of calculation can say for how long a time the tide will run on a given day, at a given place, on the coast of the English Channel. The modern theories which have been started on the subject of the tides, admirable though they be, cannot solve the problem. The learned mathematician is on a level with the illiterate; both must trust to "the practical man," and wait for "observations." To assume that changes, such as I have enumerated, could not affect the inshore currents off Dover, seems to me an assumption much too hazardous to reason from.

If we hesitate to yield our assent to conclusions drawn from the state of the tides, we are necessarily thrown back upon the statements made by the classical writers. Cæsar tells us he "advanced" (*progressus*),² and from the language he usually employs we may presume it was to the north-eastward; for he calls the western parts of Britain "the lower part of the island" (B. G., IV. xxviii.), and it is generally admitted that the "upper" or "further port" was to the north of the Portus Icius. According to a passage in Dion (Hist. Rom., XXXIX. li.), which Halley relied on, Cæsar went round a certain headland, and landed on the other side. The rounding of the South Foreland is the chief incident of the voyage from Dover-wick to Deal; and this promontory was the only one on the coast, for Dungeness

them, his views are thrown aside as of little value. General Creuly starts Cæsar from Ambleteuse and lands him at Port Sutherland, in the Romney Marshes. These mistakes, for such I must consider them, may I think be traced chiefly to his ignorance of the localities. He seems to have been at Deal, but it is pretty clear that he never saw Sangatte or Wissant. I have doubts if he is even acquainted with Ambleteuse, and I am sure he never visited the Romney

Marshes, for no French officer who possessed local knowledge could under Cæsar's circumstances have thought of landing 10,000 men in the neighbourhood of Fort Sutherland.

² Mr. Lewin was the first to point out the argument that might be raised on the use of this word by Cæsar, and it was much to the credit of his candour, as it made strongly against the theory he had adopted.

was not then in existence. He brought his ships to a coast, level and open (B. G., IV. xxiii.) and soft (B. G., V. ix.). All these conditions are fulfilled if we suppose Cæsar to have landed on some of the marshy lands off Deal. If we land him at Hythe, though the shore be level, it can hardly be called open, for there is a range of heights at no great distance, and the word *soft* seems strangely out of place when applied to a bed of shingle. It has been said that the shingle was soft "in a sailor's sense," as it would "give" when a vessel was beached upon it. But I know of no authority for assigning to it this meaning, and it surely indicates a soft, oozy and muddy shore. Can we suppose that Cæsar would land close to Hythe harbour (the Portus Lemannis) without once alluding to it, or upon a bed of shingle, where his only means of obtaining water for 8,000 or 10,000 men would be from his ships?

As regards the length of the passage from the Continent to Britain, we get the thirty miles at which Cæsar rates it (B. G., V. ii.) by adding seven miles to the distance from Wissant to Dover. He reckoned, no doubt, as D'Anville pointed out, from the port of departure to the place of landing.

On his second transit, Cæsar carried over from thirty to forty thousand men, and sailed about sunset with a gentle south-west wind (B. G., V. viii.). He had with him 800 ships, most of them small, flat-bottomed vessels, constructed specially with the view of landing the soldiers in shallow waters, and of being afterwards drawn up on land; the time was, probably, the latter end of July, and we may conjecture that he steered for Dover. At midnight the wind fell, and the fleet drifted with the tide, so that at daybreak they found they had left Britain on their left hand. The tide then turning in their favour, they betook themselves to their oars, and about noon reached their former landing-place. D'Anville supposes they drifted into the Thames, and that six or seven hours' rowing, with the tide in their favour, would carry them beyond Deal, and he therefore lands them at Hythe. But the drift could not possibly carry them where D'Anville supposes. The flood-tide runs to the north-east; and if we draw a line of eight or ten miles towards Dover, to represent the space sailed over, and then one of fourteen or fifteen miles to the north-east, to

represent the drift, we shall have the position of Cæsar's fleet at daybreak. They would, at that time, have the Dover cliffs on their larboard bow, and would be about as far distant from them as when they first started. The ebb-tide would, perhaps, about counterbalance the error produced by the flood; but, on the lowest computation, they would have to make some twenty miles *through the water* before they reached their former landing-place. When we remember the kind of vessels they were rowing, the soldiers fairly earned the compliment they received for their exertions (B. G., V. viii.).

The Britons, affrighted at the vast number of vessels, deserted the shore and took refuge in the hills (*loca superiora*, B. G., V. viii.), and the same night Cæsar marched against them to the banks of a certain river about twelve miles off. The Britons opposed the passage of the river with horsemen and chariots drawn up on the hill side, but they were repulsed, and retired to a wood where was a fortified post—no doubt a British *oppidum*, such as Cæsar has elsewhere described, and, probably, the stronghold of one of the four petty kings who, at that time, bore rule in Kent. The stronghold was attacked, and, after some little trouble, taken by Cæsar.

I believe this stronghold was the capital of the district of which Canterbury is now the centre; but our antiquaries make a great mistake when they suppose this city to occupy its site. Canterbury represents the Roman *castellum*, and the Romans generally built their *castellum* two or three miles from the British *oppidum*. If we pass two or three miles down the Stour, we shall find a locality which answers all the demands of Cæsar's narrative. North of the river is a range of low hills, on which still lie large masses of natural wood. The river runs at the foot of the hills, and to the south of it is a flat country which stretches away towards Sandwich and Deal. The latter place is about twelve miles distant.

Those who maintain that Cæsar landed at Hythe suppose that the night march carried him to Wye. But at Wye the Stour is a mere brook, and there is nothing to justify us in supposing that there was ever a British fortress in the neighbourhood. It has, indeed, been assumed that this was the highway to Canterbury, and that a fortress was erected

to bar the pass, which has been termed "the British Thermopylæ." But if Cæsar wanted to reach Canterbury, why did he not at once march over the downs in the direction in which the Roman Road was afterwards carried? The distance from Hythe to Canterbury was little greater than that to Wye, and the road to the one was as easy as to the other.

While on this subject of topography, it may be well to notice an objection that has been brought against Deal as the place of Cæsar's landing. The neighbourhood of Cæsar's landing-place, it has been said, was a mixture of woodland and arable; the uplands round Deal are a chalk district, unsuited for corn crops and perfectly open. It might be answered that these uplands are every autumn white with corn; and if it be said this is the result of modern farming, I might reply that a system of long fallows might be a substitute for sheep-husbandry. It is a mistake to suppose that the shallow soils were not formerly cultivated; I have seen undoubted marks of ancient cultivation in localities where a modern farmer would long hesitate before he risked his capital. The disappearance of the woodlands is what might have been expected. Where are now many of our great historical forests,—Arden and Braden, for example? They have been long swept from the face of the country. On the Downs further south, where the sward barely covers the chalk, and the profits of the woodland equal those of the arable, we find the woodlands preserved; and the same character of country, no doubt, once extended to Deal—a wide, undulating plain, dotted over with beechwoods.

Camden quotes Nennius as stating that Cæsar fought at Dole, and he supposes the name to be the Welsh word Dol, which is generally said to mean a plain beside a river. This word, no doubt, gave a name to the town of Dol in Brittany, which, like our Deal, is situated on the borders of an alluvial plain. It may have been the British name for the flats round Sandwich, and gradually appropriated to designate the seaport which arose on their confines. When D'Anville affects to place the testimony of Nennius on the same level with that of Geoffrey of Monmouth, he shows a want of critical discrimination. But the passage Camden refers to is certainly surrounded with difficulties, arising from the

variations in the MSS. It was, no doubt, a subject of blunder and mistake as early as the tenth century, and the attempts made by copyists to explain the mistakes, have increased the confusion. Dropping an obvious interpolation, the Vatican copy furnishes the following extract, which will, I think, give the text much as it was read by Camden :—"Tunc iulius cæsar cum accepisset totius orbis singulare imperium et primus obtineret, valde iratus ad brytanniã cum LX ceolis pervenit in ostio fluminis tamensis, in quo naufragium naves illius perpersæ sunt dum ille pugnaret apud dolo bellum et iulius reversus est sine victoria cæsis militibus fractisque navibus."

The use of the phrase "*apud dolo*" strengthens my belief in the genuineness and the antiquity of this fragment, which was probably taken, at least portions of it, from some very ancient chronicle. *Dolo* is, no doubt, one of those monoptote or undeclined nouns which occur so frequently in the Itineraries, and appear to have gone not long afterwards out of fashion. When the Wantsum was open, the country round Deal and Sandwich might very well be described as lying at the mouth of the Thames ; and I think we may point to this fragment as bearing something like historical evidence in our favour, when we venture to fix upon Deal as the place where Cæsar landed.

It is a source of no small comfort to me,* differing as I do in these speculations from many whom I respect, to find that, both as regards the port of departure and the place of landing, I am in so close an agreement with a man like Camden.

EDWIN GUEST.