XXIII. *Remarks on the Time employed in Caesar's two Expeditions into Britain. By the Rev. Dr. Owen, of St. Olave's, Hart Street. Communicated by the Hon. Daines Barrington [a].*

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FIRST EXPEDITION.

CAESAR's expedition into Britain was made in the 5th year before Christ. He landed on the 26th of August in the Downs [b]. He met, upon his landing, with a warm reception. "Pugnatum est ab utrifque acriter [c]." The ground was marshy, and full of deep ditches, which embarrassed the Romans: "impeditos adoriebantur (Britanni) [c]." This battle was fought on the sea shore, and not far from it. Nothing more was done for four days, viz. till August 30 at night, which was the full moon, when the storm arose that wrecked the ships, which had carried Caesar's army. "Post diem 4. quam est in Britanniam ventum,—eâdem nocte accidit, ut esset luna plena, &c." This misfortune the Britons took advantage of—broke from their allegiance—stopped all provisions—and wisely endeavoured to protract the war, as knowing that the approaching winter would distress the Romans, and give them cause to repent their rashness. This Caesar suspected, and therefore provided against it as well as he could, by bringing in corn for his present

[a] These remarks of the Rev. Dr. Owen are printed from loose scraps of paper, just as they occurred to him upon reading Caesar's account of his invasion of Britain.

[b] See Phil. Trans. N^o. 193.

[c] De Bell. Gall. iv. § 24.

supply

supply—and refitting his ships for his future return. This took up at least a week, which brings it to the 7th of September.

AFTER this, and in consequence of the resolution which the Britons had taken to defend themselves, they fell on a party of the Romans, as they were *reaping*, killed some, and put the rest in disorder. This was still but at a small distance from the camp; for it was in sight of it.

IN this conflict, Caesar, by his own account, seems to have had the worst of it. He dared not continue the battle. All he could do, was to bring back his men into the camp.

AFTER this, there followed about the new moon, viz. about Sep. 13, *several* days of tempestuous weather, which kept the Romans in their camp, and the Britons in their respective retreats. In the mean time, however, the latter sent messengers into all parts of the country, and collected together a large number of foot and horse, and then came to the camp—and hazarded another battle. They were again defeated, and pursued *some* way,—“ Quos
“ tanto spatio secuti, quantum cursu & viribus efficere potue-
“ runt [*d*].” It is added, “ deinde omnibus *longe lateque* aedificiis ad-
“ flictis incensisque, se in castra receperunt [*e*].” This is the whole of Caesar's exploit; and through the progress of it, it is very plain, that he always kept within sight of his camp; therefore this *longe lateque* can reasonably comprehend but a small extent.

THIS last battle was probably fought in the morning; and the very same day at midnight, which was but a little short of the autumnal equinox,—propinquâ die æquinoctii—he left Britain, and set sail for the continent.

FROM hence then it appears,

1. THAT Caesar was in Britain about 23 days.
2. THAT he fought his first battle on the *sea shore*, at his landing, August 26. His second battle within sight of his camp, and near

[*d*] § 33.

[*e*] § 31.

it, about September 7; and his third near the camp again about September 18; which when he had got, he marched off. Caesar, therefore, from this expedition, could know but little of the island, and that of the eastern coast; where he landed. It does not seem that they ever ventured three miles from the camp, which, I suppose, was fixed on the first firm dry ground they came to, and perhaps about a mile from the sea. It would be worth inquiring whether there is any tradition about it.

S E C O N D E X P E D I T I O N .

C A E S A R, on his second expedition, landed in Britain about mid-day, at the same place he had done the year before [*f*]. This place I suppose to be somewhere about *Deal*.

HAVING fixed his camp in a convenient place, and evidently not far from the sea, § 8, he set out in the night in pursuit of the enemy. When he had advanced, guided by some prisoners, about *twelve miles*, he came in fight of the *British* forces. They were posted on a river, “*ad flumen progressi*,” and disputed the passage with the Romans. Quere, where is this river *twelve miles* from *Deal*; and a river too with a *high ground* on the western side, “*ex superiore loco?*” Be it where it will, the Britons were beaten, and forced to retire into the woods. But they retired, it seems, to a place *well known*, and of *great consequence*; a place *remarkably* fortified both by *art* and *nature*—“*egregie et naturâ et operâ mun- nitum.*” But why fortified? The reason follows. “*Quem (locum) domestici belli, ut videbatur, causâ, jam ante præparaverant* [*g*].” *Præparaverant who?* *Britanni*, you will say. Not *all* the Britons surely—but some *body* of them: and a *body* that waged *domestic* war with their neighbours. Let this at present be only *re- marked*. From *this* fortified place the Britons were at length ex-

[*f*] De Bello Gallico, lib. v. § 7.

[*g*] § 8.

pelled, and driven into the *woods*. The day being now far spent, here Caesar rested. The first day's march was therefore twelve miles.

THE next day, intending to pursue the enemy, he was obliged to desist, and recall his forces, on account of the damage which his ships had sustained by a violent tempest the night before.

FROM the similar accidents that happened to his ships, one would be apt to conclude, that he came into the island about the *same time* in both years, or rather about *eleven* days sooner this year than the last, so as to make this tempest correspond with the *full moon* in *August* again. This tempest then came on August 19 or 20, and they seem to have been aware of it; and to have provided against it in some degree; but it rose higher than they expected, “quod neque anchorae funesque subsisterent; neque
“nautae gubernatoresque vim tempestatis pati possent [*b*].”

WHETHER Caesar drew back his army to the ships, or went there alone, does not clearly appear; though the former is the most probable. However, it took him up no less than *ten* days, “*dies x* consumit,” in refitting his ships. This brings us to the *beginning* of *September*. At this time then Caesar returned to his *old camp*, twelve miles from *Deal*. When he came *there*, he found the British forces increased, and the command of them given, by common consent, to *Cassibellan*. Who this *Cassibellan* was, we are not told; but it seems he was a powerful prince, and had waged, for some time past, continual war—“*cum reliquis civi-*
“*tatibus*,”—with the *other* cities or states.—Which *other* states, it should appear by the context, must mean the *maritime* cities or states, just before mentioned. And the same may be deduced from another circumstance.

IT was observed above, that the *strong fortification* in the wood was erected by the Britons on account of their *domestic* war.—Its situation, being only twelve miles from the sea, plainly shews that

[*b*] § 9.

it

it was erected by, and belonged to, the inhabitants of the *sea coast*; or the *maritimae civitates*, who were continually at war with the people of the *upper country*. For the state of things seems to have been at that time as follows. The *maritime* cities, or *Kent*—"nam
" Cantium est ad mare [*i*]," contained four kingdoms. Now the inhabitants of these cities or kingdoms, though called by the name of *Britons*, were really of *foreign* extraction [*k*]. And as they got possession at first of these parts by invasion and violence, *ibid.* so it is probable, that they afterwards endeavoured to extend their territories, and took every opportunity of making encroachments on the more inland parts. Herein they were opposed by *Cassibellan*, who seems to have been the King of the *upper country*; and hence we may account for the continual wars between them.

BUT this account, which makes *Cassibellan* King of the *inland* part of *Kent*, is in no wise, it will be said, agreeable to the description which *Caesar* gives of his territories. For he describes him as possessed of a kingdom, "cujus fines a maritimis civitatibus
" flumen dividit, quod appellatur *Tamesis*, a mari circiter millia
" passuum LXXX [*l*]." That is, "whose borders are divided
" from the *maritime states*, by the river they call *Thames*, at the
" distance of about eighty miles from the sea."

HERE the question is, whether *they* called *that* river the *Thames*, which we call so *now*. I should think *not*; and my reason for it is this—because *our* *Thames* is in no wise correspondent to *Caesar's* account. It cannot be said to divide any place in Britain from the *maritime* towns of *Kent*, but *Essex*—nor properly that. Whereas the *Medway* answers the description in every respect. It *divides* the county into two parts—and that at the distance of about eighty miles from the sea, following the course of the river. In this view the account is clear, and conformable to *fact*: but the common interpretation contradicts fact, and is absurd. For to say, that "the river *Thames*, at the distance of eighty miles

[*i*] § 18.

[*k*] § 10.

[*l*] § 9.

Y 2.

from

from the sea, or “above *London*, divides *Middlesex* from the *maritime* states of Kent,” sounds to me not a jot more rational, than it would be to say, that “*Blackbeath* is a promontory.” Besides, the *Thames* there does not touch Kent.

BUT let us now quit this subject, and follow Caesar; for matters may perhaps clear up as we proceed.

CAESAR, let it be remembered, returned to his camp, twelve miles from the sea, in the beginning of *September*, and found the British forces greatly increased. It should seem, that, in their march to this camp, Caesar's army was sorely harassed by the British horse [*m*]. And after they had reached it, whilst they were busy in fortifying it, the Britons made an unexpected sally upon them from the woods, and were repelled with difficulty. This was the work of one day in the defence of their camp: or if you suppose the Romans to be this day on their march, “in itinere,” from their camp, yet they could go but a little way, when so often interrupted. The next day the Britons fought them again; but were entirely routed, and put to flight. This day, therefore, the Romans could not advance *far*, if they advanced at all. Hence then it should seem, that they were not yet got at most above eighteen or twenty miles from the place at which they had landed. And this was at least September the 2d or 3d.

THE Britons, finding themselves, after the last defeat, unable to stop the Romans, did little more than skirmish. The auxiliaries departed [*n*]; but evidently departed on some design, and probably with that of intercepting the Romans at the *ford*, to which the road they were in led, and where alone they could pass the river.

CAESAR, being informed of their design, “cognito eorum consilio,” led his army to, or rather towards the river *Thames*, on the confines of *Cassibellan's* territories—“ad flumen *Tamesin*, in fines *Cassivellauni*.” I shall not stay to discuss the passage over

[*m*] § 11.

[*n*] § 13.

that

that river at present; it will come more properly hereafter. It is spoken of proleptically. For § 15 ought undoubtedly to be connected with the first sentence of § 14. In the mean time, *Cassibellan*, as observed before, having dismissed the greatest part of his forces on that secret design, kept about 4000 *essedarii*, or charioteers, with him, to watch CAESAR'S *marches*—"itinera [o];" and with these he harassed him greatly, not only by continual skirmishing, but also by driving the cattle, &c. out of the fields, through which he *knew his road lay*—"quibus nos itur facturos" "cognoverat [o]." This was the *road* to the *ford* or *passage*; else how could he know which way they would go? All, therefore, that the Romans could do, was to lay waste the fields, and burn the houses that stood near their route.

IN the mean time, or, if I mistake not, as the Romans were marching towards the *ford*, the *Trinobantes*, inhabitants of one of the strongest cities in those parts [p], but formerly oppressed by *Cassibellan*, applied to Caesar for protection. He made their former King's son, *Mandubratius*, who was *then in his army*, and probably *conducted* it all this way, King over them in his father's stead. The tribute of *corn*, which he required of them, and which they *speedily*, "*celeriter*," sent him, shews they were situated not far from his army [q]; nay, I should think he marched through their territories, as they are said to be, "*defensi, atque ab omni militum injuria prohibiti* [r];" for these *milites* were evidently his own men.

THE favour shewn to the *Trinobantes* encouraged five other states (neighbouring ones, I suppose,) viz. *Cenimagni*, *Segontiaci*, *Ancalites*, *Bibroci*, and *Cassi*, to surrender likewise. Quere, are there no traces of these people?

THE *Trinobantes* appear, as Caesar reached *them* first, to have been seated the most *easterly* of all these states, and in a corn coun-

[o] § 15

[p] Quere, its situation?

[q] § 10.

[r] § 17.

try,

try, which is another proof that they were not among the *interiores*: for “interiores pierique *frumenta non ferunt* [s].” The other states lay perhaps in his route in the very order he mentions them; so that the *Cassi* might probably be the tributaries, or subjects of *Cassibellan*, whose mansion was at *no great* distance off, “non longe ex eo loco,” to the west.

WHEN Caesar was informed by the people where *Cassibellan's* fortress was, he proceeded immediately to take it, as it was his chief aim from the beginning. And *now*, I think it was, that he came to the river *Thames*, or, as I would say, the *Medway*, which *Cassibellan*, knowing he must needs pass before he could attack him, had taken care to defend with *stakes*, according to the method commonly used in such cases, and to get his forces ready to guard the passage. But Caesar's army, flushed with their former success, pushed through the river—defeated *Cassibellan's* forces—made up to his mansion, or fortified habitation—and, after some resistance took it—killed many men, and carried away a great number of cattle.

WHILE these things were transacting in *these parts*, that is, as I understand it, while Caesar was advancing towards the *river*, &c. *Cassibellan*, like an experienced commander, sent to *Cantium*, or the *maritime* states, ordered them to collect all their forces, and make a sudden attack on his *camp*s on the *sea shore*, in order to gain possession of his ships. They accordingly obeyed, and made the attempt; but were beaten off with great loss.

CASSIBELLAN, hearing of this defeat, and having suffered greatly by the devastations of his country, and finding himself peculiarly weakened by the forementioned states, sent to Caesar proposals of surrender, which he gladly accepted, as the summer was *far advanced*—“neque multum aestatis superesset,”—and *Cassibellan's* forces were still able to keep him employed till the winter—“atque id facile extrahi posse intelligeret.” He therefore demanded

[s] § 10.

hostages,

hostages, and appointed the tribute which the Britons were to pay, &c. Having received the hostages, he led back his army to the sea. Here he waited *some days*—"aliquandiu [*t*],"—for the transports: but finding they did not come; and fearing the weather should grow tempestuous, for it was *now* near the *equinox*—"quod aequinoxium fuberat;"—he crowded the soldiers into the ships he had, and sailed off.

THIS is the account which Caesar gives of his second expedition into this island, and the only account that deserves to be regarded.

Now, from this account, it appears:

1. That he landed in Britain about the 18th of *August* at noon, p. 1. and 3; and that he quitted it a *few* days before the *equinox*; that is, about the 19th of *September*. His *whole stay*, therefore, in Britain was about *thirty-two* days. But he waited before he went off, "aliquandiu," some *few days*, suppose *two*, for the ships he expected—and he spent *ten* days in refitting after the tempest. These twelve days, subtracted from thirty-two, leave but twenty for all his grand transactions and marches. But are twenty days a space of time in any wise sufficient for accomplishing the progress, which he is generally supposed to have made? Could he, in so short a time, lead from the sea shore of *Kent*, through an almost impassable country in its then state, his *heavy-armed* soldiers, who were often harassed and interrupted by the enemy, often obliged to fight them, and to deviate into the woods in pursuit of them? Could he lead, I say, his soldiers, thus circumstanced, through the wilds of Kent, quite up to the river *Thames*; cross it above Richmond, eighty miles from the sea; enter at least ten miles into *Middlesex*, ravage again the country, &c. and then lead them back in so short a time? In plain terms, can any one believe, that Caesar could travel with his legions, maugre all the inconveniences and embarrassments mentioned by him, *a hundred and eighty* miles in the compass of *twenty* days? that is, nine miles *per*

[*t*] § 19.

day,

day, without intermission, though he was often interrupted by battles, and oftener obliged to go out of his way to skirmish with the enemy, and to ravage the country? *Credat Judaeus Apella.*

BESIDES, let us suppose, as is commonly supposed, that *Cassibellan* lived in *Middlesex*, and that Caesar crossed the *Thames* on the *tenth* day (which is as soon as he could) from his setting out: Now I would ask, does it seem practicable (which yet, by the account, must be the case) that *Cassibellan* could send a messenger to the maritime states; that those states could collect their forces, and make an attack upon the ships or naval camp; that the news of their defeat could be brought back to *Cassibellan* into *Middlesex*; that the treaty could afterwards be ratified; and Caesar be able to return with his army *ninety miles*? Is it probable, I say, that *all this* could be done in *ten* days more? Make *Cassibellan* King of upper Kent, and interpret *Tamesis* by the *Medway*, and the whole becomes feasible.

IF this is not approved of, then make *Cassibellan* King of *Essex*, and get over the *Thames* into that county where you can.

H. OWEN.

XXIV. *The*