

In the early intercourse of Rome with Britain, the southern and eastern coasts were probably known to the strangers most completely, if not exclusively: but in subsequent periods the midland and northern districts became familiar to them, in a series of tremendous struggles with the hardy people. Cunobelin, one of the few famous of British names, was the most powerful of the kings before the invasion of Claudius. Nearly a century had elapsed between the invasion of Cæsar and that period, and the government of the country had manifestly sustained great changes. The separate dominion of many petty chieftains had been merged in that of kings, each ruling over large parts of the island. Cunobelin was king of the Trinobantes, whose territory embraced a large portion of South Britain. His capital, Camalodunum, is now considered, by most antiquarian authorities, to have been Colchester, or the immediate neighbourhood. It was favourably situated for maritime communication by the estuary of the Colne. That Cunobelin was surrounded by some attributes of a later civilisation may be gathered from the various coins of his reign which still exist. There are earlier coins, some bearing the name of Tasciovanus, supposed to be the father of Cunobelin. The numerous coins of the king of the Trinobantes were once thought to be of Roman workmanship: they undoubtedly exhibit an acquaintance with the mythology of Rome, and with Roman customs: on the reverse of them we see Apollo, Hercules, Pegasus, Medusa; on others we have types of British productiveness—a pig and an ear of barley.* There is abundant evidence that the great idea of imperial Rome was familiar to the rulers of England, although they were yet free from her chain.

* It is now held by many numismatists that the Britons practised the art of coining previous to the Roman invasion. In the received editions of Cæsar's Commentaries there is this passage:—"Utuntur aut ære aut taleis ferreis ad certum pondus examinatis, pro nummo;" from which it is inferred that the Britons determined the value of pieces of metal by their weight, having no coinage. Mr. Hawkins has discovered that the passage in Cæsar was altered in the seventeenth century, and that all the principal manuscripts of Cæsar give the passage thus:—"Utuntur aut ære aut nummo aureo aut annulis ferreis ad certum pondus examinatis pro nummo;" from which is derived the opposite conclusion—that they had brass and gold money. See 'Remarks on the Ancient British Coins,' in *Monumenta Historica Britannica*, p. cii.

CHAPTER II.

Caligula's mock triumph, A.D. 40.—Expedition of Plautius, A.D. 43.—Arrival of Claudius in Britain.—Camalodunum.—Temple of Claudius.—Roman estimate of the British People.—Defeat of Caractacus, A.D. 50.—Attack of Suetonius upon Mona, A.D. 61.—Revolt of Boadicea.—Destruction of British Cities.—Defeat of Boadicea.—Consulship of Agricola, A.D. 78.—Defeat of Galgacus, A.D. 84.—Hadrian: his Wall, A.D. 120.—Severus, A.D. 203.—Death of Severus, A.D. 211.

"WHY tribute? Why should we pay tribute? If Cæsar can hide the sun from us with a blanket, or put the moon in his pocket, we will pay him tribute for light; else, sir, no more tribute."* The dramatic poet has faithfully interpreted the spirit of the Britons in their dealings with Rome, after the generation had passed away which had witnessed the might of the great Julius. The island was, no doubt, under the shadow of the eagle's wing, but there was no homage, and no violence. "There was a long oblivion of Britain," says Tacitus.†

In the fortieth year of the Christian era, and ninety-five years after the invasion of Cæsar, Adminius, a son of Cunobelin, who had been banished by his father, placing himself under the authority of Caligula, instigated an invasion of his native country. During the previous reign of Tiberius there had been courteous intercourse between Britain and Rome; for the soldiers of Germanicus, who were shipwrecked on the British shore, were rescued and sent home by the islanders. Caligula, one of those monstrous examples which all history, and the Roman especially, presents, of an insane will united with an unbridled power, hastily resolved—abandoning the war which he was carrying on in Germany—upon a causeless invasion of Britain. He marched his legions to Boulogne; he embarked in a stately galley; and, having looked upon the white cliffs as he sailed a little way from the shore he returned to the port, and, ascending a throne, commanded his troops to gather all the shells of the beach, and bear them in triumph to Rome, as "the spoils of

* *Cymbeline*, act iii., sc. 1.

† It is unnecessary to refer to the numerous passages of Tacitus which form the chief authority for many of the facts of this chapter.

the ocean." One monument of this folly remained for ages. On a cliff near the entrance of the port stood, till the year 1644, a Roman lighthouse, held to have been the building which Caligula is asserted to have set up on this occasion. In that year the cliff was undermined by the sea, and the lighthouse fell. At Dover there was a corresponding Roman pharos. The remains of each carry us back to the time when the masters of the world, amidst the pride and luxury of their ambitious empire, left the foot-prints of a great civilisation wherever they trod. They marked their course by works of utility. The Roman historians despised Caligula, his ocean-spoils and his lofty throne. But his pageant was to be played over again with a nearer approach to a stern reality. Seventeen hundred and sixty-four years after Caligula's survey of the coasts, came to the same spot another young emperor, flushed with power; and there he encamped his legions, and prepared his rafts for a mighty invasion. Suetonius tells the story of Caligula: * Thiers that of Napoleon. † The parallel is somewhat remarkable. In the centre of an amphitheatre, on the margin of the sea, was erected a throne for the French emperor. Before it, "after the modes of the Roman people assembled in their vast arenas," were ranged the various corps of the army in close columns; and as the hero distributed rewards, the chosen "swore to shed their blood on the coast of England, to assure to their country, and to the man who governed it, the uncontested empire of the world." The camp broke up, almost as hastily as Caligula's. A useless column remains to tell of the modern pageant.

The mock triumph of Caligula had soon to be succeeded by a real struggle. Claudius became emperor; and he was stirred up to the hazard of an invasion of Britain by discontented fugitives from the power of the native rulers. He resolved to make Britain a province of the empire; and selected Aulus Plautius to cross the sea with an army from Gaul. At first he had to encounter a mutinous soldiery. A century had nearly elapsed since the Roman arm had come into conflict with the British. The popular opinion was that the Britons were a fierce people, beyond the bounds of the habitable world, whom Cæsar had vainly attempted to subdue, and who refused tribute to Augustus. The contemptible termination of Caligula's expedition might have been the result of similar forebodings amongst his legions. The troops of Plautius at last consented to embark. They were divided into three bodies, so as to

* Cap. 46.

† Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire, livre xx.

land at several points. They were anxious and dispirited; but at length the Roman courage was aroused by the Roman superstition. As the fleet was coasting from east to west a meteor travelled over their course, shooting flames from the east, as if to indicate the point to which they should navigate. They landed without opposition; "for the Britons," says Dion Cassius, "from what they had learned, not expecting that they would come, had not assembled together; nor even when they arrived did they attack them, but fled to the marshes and woods, hoping to wear them out by delay; and that, as had happened under Julius Cæsar, they would go back without effecting their purpose." *

During the reign of Caligula, Cunobelin had died; and his two sons, Caractacus and Togodumnus, succeeded to his power. It was against these princes that Plautius directed his attacks. There was the same course of strategy on the part of the invaded as in the time of Cæsar. They fancied themselves secure when they could place a river, of which they knew the fords, between themselves and their enemy. But the Romans had expert swimmers in their ranks, who, again and again, surprised the too confident natives, and drove them onward to their marshes. In the treacherous swamps and the pathless woods, large bodies of the Romans themselves perished; and Plautius, in the midst of victories, became irresolute, and sent for succour to his Emperor. Togodumnus had fallen; Caractacus remained to brave the imperial power. Claudius comes:—"He who waited ready with a huge preparation, as if not safe, though amidst the flower of all his Romans, like a great Eastern king, with armed elephants marches through Gallia. So full of peril was this enterprise esteemed, as not without all this equipage, and stronger terrors than Roman armies, to meet the native and the naked British valour defending their country." † Caractacus had retreated to the west. Claudius having, after his landing, joined his forces to those of Plautius, marched with an overwhelming power upon Camalodunum. His expedition to Britain was more a parade than a conquest. He was only sixteen days in the island. The army saluted him with the title of Imperator; and he returned to Rome, to assume the name of Britannicus and to be worshipped as a god. The memory of his Britannic triumph is preserved upon his coinage.

In the ancient town of Colchester stand the walls of a vast square building, known as the Castle. It is a work of most extraor-

Dion Cassius, lib. lx.

† Milton. History of England, book ii.

dinary size and solidity, far exceeding in dimensions and strength any of the Norman keeps, such as those of Rochester and London. The Roman tile is imbedded, with considerable regularity, in many parts of the wall; and the internal arrangement appears to be essentially different from the remaining examples of Norman defences. A theory therefore has been set up, and supported with great ingenuity, that this is the veritable temple erected by the Roman colonists of Camalodunum, in honour of the deified Claudius. Tacitus, describing the revolt of the Iceni, seventeen years after the invasion of Claudius, repeatedly mentions the Temple of Camalodunum. "They" (the Britons) "regarded the temple erected to the god Claudius as the bulwark of eternal domination;"—"Their substance was devoured by the priests who ministered in the Temple;"—"The veterans relied upon the shelter and strength of the temple." Without adopting or controverting the opinion that the Castle of Colchester is the actual Temple of Claudius,* the locality itself possesses the highest interest, as one of the principal scenes of that great conflict which, after various fortunes, ultimately placed the whole of South Britain under the power of Rome.

It is extremely difficult minutely to follow the relations of the ancient historians in regard to the localities of the long Roman warfare with the British tribes. Nor is it necessary. We know distinctly that Vespasian, the lieutenant of Plautius, afterwards Emperor, conquered the Isle of Wight; but we also learn, that the success of this General, who subjected twenty towns, was not accomplished without a perpetual struggle. His son, Titus, who in Britain was acquiring that military training which made him the great instrument of the Divine will in the destruction of Jerusalem, is recorded to have saved the life of his father, who was "hemmed in by the barbarians, and in imminent danger of being slain." Although the southern and southeastern parts of the island were comparatively tranquil, and the Romans could pour in reinforcements along the whole line of the coast, and by the estuaries of the Thames and the Colne, numerous tribes were in arms in the north and the west; and those of the south and east, who had been imperfectly subdued, were ready for new efforts to throw off the yoke. The triumphs which Rome bestowed upon her victorious generals Plautius and Vespasian; the perseverance with which the most ambitious of her sons went again and again to the struggle

* Colchester Castle, built by a Colony of Romans as a Temple to their deified Emperor, Claudius Caesar. By the Rev. H. Jenkins.

with the so-called barbarians; are sufficient to show the importance that was attached to this distant empire. The common opinion of the low state of civilisation amongst the people who thus contended with the greatest military power of the world, is amply refuted by the naked facts of this early history. Till Agricola came, with the tranquillising power of the great coloniser superadded to the brute force of the remorseless conqueror, there was a perpetual series of revolts against the invader, more or less national. The stirring histories of Caractacus and Boadicea have furnished subjects for the poet and the painter; and the Roman annalists themselves have been eloquent in their panegyrics of the noble captive and the warrior queen. But however magnified by the ancient historians may have been the heroism of individual leaders, the character of the people has received ample praise from the most acute and discriminating of Roman writers. According to Tacitus, they were resolute and fierce by nature; they would pay tribute and submit to the Roman levies, but they would bear no insult or injury; they would obey, but they would not be slaves. Assuredly the great composite edifice of the British character has been raised upon very solid foundations.

There is a lofty hill in Shropshire, near the junction of the Clun and the Teme, which still bears the name of Caer-Caradoc, the town of Caradoc. Caradoc was Caractacus. Tacitus has described the fortified place where the British Chieftain met the legions of Ostorius Scapula, after that General had subdued the revolted Iceni, who inhabited Norfolk and Suffolk. The position of Caractacus was on a mountain-ridge, with a wall of stone for a rampart. At the foot of the mountain flowed a river dangerous to be forded, and hosts of men guarded the intrenchments. From the time of that great battle, according to Camden, the place was called Caer-Caradoc. The confederated Britons were unable to resist the Roman assault. The Britons fought with arrows, which did terrible execution as the assailants scaled the mountain-sides; but in the hand-to-hand fight which followed, the close order of the disciplined veterans prevailed against the tumultuous onslaughts of the hardy mountaineers. "Signal was this victory," says Tacitus; "the wife and daughters of Caractacus were taken prisoners, and his brothers surrendered to mercy." Caractacus put himself under the protection of Cartismandua, Queen of the Brigantes (the people of Yorkshire and Lancashire), by whom he was betrayed, and delivered up to the Romans. Tacitus says that he had held out

against the Romans nine years. The invasion of Claudius took place A.D. 43; the defeat of Caractacus was in the year 50 or 51. The oration of Caractacus before Claudius and Agrippina is probably one of those many passages in which the Roman historians put on the attributes of the poet. Milton has expressed his contempt of such historical embellishments: "I affect not set speeches in a history, unless known for certain to have been so spoken in effect as they are written, nor then, unless worth rehearsal; and to invent such, though eloquently, as some historians have done, is an abuse of posterity, raising in them that read other conceptions of those times and persons than were true."* And yet the speeches which Tacitus puts into the mouths of Caractacus and Boadicea, and Galgacus, were certainly intended to present true conceptions of times and persons. He lived very near to those times. If he were not in Britain himself, he must have attained the most accurate notions of the condition of the country from his father-in-law Agricola. When, therefore, he makes Caractacus say that he was a prince born of illustrious ancestors, and governing many nations—master of men, and arms, and horses, and riches—he means to exhibit, not the character of a proud savage, but of a high-minded chief of a warlike people,—of the inhabitants of a land abounding in possessions, of which the Romans came to plunder them. The historian mingled the dramatic form with the narrative. The great captive enters Rome, with his servants and followers bearing his war-trappings, and golden collars, and spoils that he had won in his native wars. His wife, and daughter, and brothers followed. But in the triumphal pomp the man himself was the great object of curiosity to the assembled people and the Prætorian bands—he who had so long defied the Imperial power. His renown had gone before him. The noble bearing of Caractacus, according to the historian, saved his life. To Ostorius was decreed a triumph; and the Senate proclaimed the capture of Caractacus as an event no less illustrious than those of past times, when conquered kings were presented to the Roman people, as Syphax was by Publius Scipio, and Perseus by Lucius Paulus. But if Caractacus were spared, other British captives had been offered as sacrifices to the love of ferocious excitement in the Roman people. In the triumph of Plautius, "many foreign freedmen and British captives fought in the gladiatorial combat, numbers of whom he (Claudius) destroyed in this kind of spectacle, and gloried in it." †

* History of England, book ii. † Dion Cassius.

The tribes whom Caractacus had led, though scattered, were unsubdued. The Silures, a people of South Wales, continued to make the most obstinate resistance, insomuch that Claudius declared that their very name must be blotted out. Amidst this harassing warfare Ostorius died, worn out with anxiety.

A few years roll on, and Nero wears the Imperial purple. Since Ostorius, there had been two commanders in Britain, Aulus Didius and Veranius. In the year 58, Suetonius Paulinus succeeds to the command. He ruled in tranquillity for two years, when he resolved to attack Mona (the Isle of Anglesey), the great seat of Druidism. Over the Menai Strait, where the railway train now shoots with the rapidity of the hurricane, he transported his infantry in shallow vessels, whilst his cavalry swam across the passage. Tacitus has described the scene which ensued, with his characteristic power. On the shore were armed men in dense array; women with loose hair, running amongst them like furies, clothed in dark robes and bearing lighted torches. The Ate of the poets, with her burning torch and her bloody sword, would seem to be the personification of these terrific women. Surrounding these multitudes were bands of Druids, lifting up their hands to heaven with the most frantic gestures. The Roman soldiers were awe-struck, and with difficulty could be led on to attack such unwonted enemies. The priests, and the women, and the armed hosts, at length fled from the real terrors of an unsparing soldiery; and multitudes perished by sword and fire. "A garrison," says Tacitus, "was afterwards placed amongst the vanquished, and the groves consecrated to their cruel superstition were cut down; for they held it right to smear their altars with the blood of their captives, and to consult the will of the gods by the quivering of human flesh."

In the attack upon Mona, Suetonius was probably impelled by the desire to root out the religious system of the Britons, which was one of the chief causes of their enduring hostility to Rome. The Druidical worship was a deep-rooted belief, long established, and universally adopted. The mythology of the Pantheon was contemptible and odious to those who cultivated a superstition of a more solemn and influential character. It gave them the daring courage and deep revenge of fanaticism. In the revolt of Boadicea, which took place while Suetonius was making his attack upon Mona, the extraordinary impulse which collected a hundred and twenty thousand of the natives in arms was as much given by the insults to their national worship and their sacred places, as by the rapacious ex-

tortions and the gross licentiousness of the Roman officials. Boadicea, "bleeding from the Roman rods," stirred the Iceni to vengeance not more than "the temple built and dedicated to the deified Claudius." When the statue of Victory in that temple fell down without any visible violence, and the affrighted Romans of Camalodunum saw terrible omens in the appearances of the tidal lakes, women chanted prophetic denunciations in the streets, and strangers howled and murmured in the public places.* Contempt and defiance preceded the work of destruction. If the orations which Dion Cassius has put into the mouth of Boadicea at all represent the real conceptions of times and persons, there was a deep hatred of the Roman character, as exhibited in the soldiers and settlers, which instigated the Britons to the most rash and obstinate resistance. To her "incensed deities" the outraged queen appealed, "against men who are revilers, unjust, insatiable, impious." She despised those who could endure neither hunger nor thirst, nor cold nor heat; who bathed in tepid water, and lived on dressed meats, and drank undiluted wine, and anointed themselves with spikenard. This may be only a denunciation of the Roman luxury, compared with the British simplicity, as it appeared to a writer who was born a century after the revolt of Boadicea. In the same way there may be great exaggeration when he paints her "of the largest size, most terrible of aspect, most savage of countenance, harsh of voice; having a profusion of yellow hair which fell down to her hips, and wearing a large golden collar; a parti-coloured floating vest drawn close about her bosom, over this a thick mantle connected by a clasp, and in her hand a spear." Tacitus, a contemporary, says nothing of her ferocious aspect. He relates her injuries, and the terrible retribution inflicted upon the Romans and their allies by the multitudes whom she led. Their chief objects of attack were the towns of Camalodunum, Londinium, and Verulam. In the narrative of Tacitus we see pretty distinctly the nature of the Roman occupation of Britain. These events happened in the year 61, only eighteen years after the invasion of Claudius. In the newly-founded colony of Camalodunum, the veterans and common soldiers had thrust the natives out of their dwellings, and exterminated them from their lands. Londinium, first noticed by Tacitus, is described as a place of importance, "not indeed dignified by the name of a colony, but yet of the highest distinction for abundance of regular merchants, and of traffic with

* Xiphilini Epitomes Dionis Cassii, lib. lxxiii. quædam præterea

other places." Verulam was a municipal city. In the indiscriminate slaughter which took place in all these three towns, we may assume that few of the natives were included, and that the chief inhabitants were Roman settlers. Upon the return of Suetonius from Mona, who rapidly marched through the country to Londinium, he at first resolved there to make a stand, but he subsequently abandoned the city. He dreaded the fate which had awaited the ninth legion at Camalodunum. The wretched inhabitants of the great emporium of the Thames implored him to defend them. He drafted some of them into his ranks, but all who remained behind—the women, the old men, those who clung to their pleasant abodes—fell, without exception, in one terrible destruction. In those three places, seventy thousand souls perished, "all Romans, or confederates of Rome." Tacitus says, that after the great battle in which Suetonius routed the revolters, famine, above all other calamities, destroyed the insurgent people, who had utterly neglected to cultivate the land, being wholly bent upon war, and hoping to appropriate the Roman stores to their use. The Romans, in eighteen years, had created their Londinium, and Verulam, and Camalodunum, upon spots where the natives had planted their stockades and their hill-forts, or carried on a small commerce by the vessels that sailed up the great estuaries of the Thames and the Colne. Whether Camalodunum be the present Colchester, or the neighbouring hill of Lexden, the valley beneath was undoubtedly in great part a marsh, and the Colne overspread its banks at every flow of the tide. The whole of the low ground between the Essex hills and Camberwell was considered by Sir Christopher Wren to have been anciently a great arm of the sea; and thus what the early Romans described as the mouth of the Thames would only have been a few miles below London, where the river was confined in artificial embankments. The great wall of the Thames, which the steamboat traveller now gazes upon at low water, on the Essex shore, is an ancient work, either British or Roman. Upon these cities, surrounded by waters and woods, the infuriated forces of Boadicea made their devastating attacks. They came,—they, the Iceni and Trinobantes,—from the scattered villages of Norfolk, and Suffolk, and Essex, and Hertford, where they lived and worshipped after the fashion of their forefathers, to do battle with their oppressors, who had thrust their countrymen forth from their ancient seats, and had built more luxurious dwellings amidst their old cabins, and raised temples to strange gods whom their own

sacred priesthood despised. They came for vengeance; but their triumph was of short duration.

The locality where Suetonius, with his ten thousand legionaries, in serried ranks, encountered the multitudinous army of Boadicea, has not been determined with any certainty. It is not likely, as was once believed, to have been so near the city as the spot now known as Battle Bridge. Suetonius, as we have seen, had abandoned Londinium to the fury of his enemy. After the devastation of Camalodunum, the British had spread westward, and left the eastern citadel open for the re-occupation of the Romans. To that neighbourhood, it is held that Suetonius marched, with the native hordes pressing on his rear.* The description of Tacitus clearly shows the immense superiority of the Roman strategy. He prepared for encountering the enemy in open battle. He was posted in a place which stretched out into a hollow and narrow valley, with steep sides, and girt behind with a wood. He knew that the Britons were to be expected upon the plain in front. They came: everywhere exulting and bounding, in great separate bands, some of horse, some of foot. The legionary soldiers were drawn up in thick and condensed ranks. The Britons came, encumbered with multitudes of women, and weak followers, in crowded wains, with which they surrounded their camp. Boadicea was borne about on a chariot, wherein sat her two daughters. The Britons advanced upon the Roman army, who remained secure in their vantage-ground; but when they came within arrow-shot, the Romans rushed out with the force and keenness of a wedge. The rout was terrible. Eighty thousand, says the historian, were slain in that bloody field. Some escaped; but could never rally. Boadicea ended her life by poison. The remnant of the dispersed armies was pursued with unrelenting hostility; and every tribe that appeared inimical to Rome was devastated by fire and sword. The power of the confederated natives of Southern Britain was utterly broken. Yet there were still remaining the smouldering embers of revolt; and Tacitus has recorded the curious fact, that, however terrible was the power of the Roman arms, the subdued people would still indulge in the bitter luxury of contempt. When one of Nero's freedmen was sent to inspect the condition of Britain, and came with great pomp and power, he was an object of derision to the natives, who marvelled that their conquerors should be subjected to the interference of imperial slaves.

* See an able article in 'Quarterly Review,' No. cxciii.

It would appear that Suetonius had followed up his triumph by too violent an exercise of the power of the sword. The Roman government had no desire to hold a devastated country which would yield nothing to the conquerors. Nero, therefore, sought to reconcile the revolted tribes. We may well conclude that the destruction of all material wealth during this last terrible contest had been enormous. Everything in Camalodunum, dignified as a colony, was razed or burnt. Verulam was seized by the spoiler. Londinium, there is reason for believing, was laid in ashes. Tacitus, speaking of the horror of Boadicea's assault, enumerates the implements of destruction as the sword, the gibbet, the cross, and the fire. Antiquaries have found the evidences of a burnt city many feet below the present surface. In excavating for a sewer in Lombard Street, in 1784, the following appearances are recorded: "The soil is almost uniformly divided into four strata; the uppermost, thirteen feet six inches thick, of factitious earth; the second, two feet thick, of brick, apparently the ruins of buildings; the third, three inches thick, of wood ashes, apparently the remains of a town built of wood, and destroyed by fire; the fourth, of Roman pavement, common and tessellated."* Many similar vestiges of fire, at the lowest level at which any traces of building have been discovered, have been found in this neighbourhood of the present city. These are not the remains of a Londinium, at a period rich with the monuments of Rome when her power was firmly established. They belong to an earlier age of Roman occupation. They tell of some great catastrophe when Londinium was indeed prosperous, through resident merchants and foreign traffic; but was still a mean town, partly of wooden cabins that had been planted there amidst the ancient forests and fens; and partly of the better abodes of Roman officials, and of those who had come across the sea in trading ships, to settle upon the first convenient place that could be found as they ascended the great tidal river.

The events which succeeded the defeat of Boadicea, during sixteen years, present little that is remarkable. There was occasional revolt, especially amongst the mountain-tribes of the West; and one legate succeeded another without any material advance in the tranquil and secure possession of the country. At length the administration of the province was confided by Vespasian to Agricola—one of those illustrious men who, by their personal qualities,

* *Archæologia*, quoted in "London."

determine the destinies of nations, and whose influence extends far beyond the times in which they live.

Agricola had learnt the rudiments of war in Britain, under Suetonius Paulinus, at that terrible period when, as Tacitus relates, the Roman veterans were slaughtered, their colonies burnt down, their armies surprised and made prisoners,—when the struggle was for life rather than for victory. Eight years after the revolt of Boadicea, he commanded the twentieth legion in Britain (A.D. 69). He was subsequently invested with the government of the province of Aquitaine. Public opinion indicated his fitness for the more difficult task of the command in Britain. He entered upon his office in the year 78, having been previously raised to the dignity of consul.

The summer was nearly over when Agricola landed. The Orдовices, the indomitable tribe who defied the Roman power from the fastnesses of Denbighshire and Caernarvonshire, had recently slaughtered a band of horse stationed on their confines. Agricola immediately took the field. He gathered the scattered troops, who were retiring to their winter-quarters, and, suddenly marching upon the tribes, routed them in their mountain-holds. He continued his victorious course to the strait of Anglesey; and, disregarding the want of transports, landed with his swimming legions, and completely subdued the island of the Druids.

We shall more particularly notice, as we proceed, the labours of Agricola in correcting the abuses of the provincial governors, and in subduing the natives as much by the amenities of peace as by the severities of war. Meanwhile, we shall rapidly run over the events of his campaigns.

On the approach of the second summer he collected his army. The hostile people were dispersed about the country. He made himself acquainted with every locality. He knew the boundaries of the salt-marshes and the dense woods. He saw where the arms of the sea were to be crossed. He made sudden incursions wherever a tribe was collected in arms. He held out the hand of friendship to those who came to him with submission. He planted garrisons and fortresses throughout the land. He conciliated the chiefs by gathering them in the towns, and teaching them to build and adorn in accordance with the Roman tastes. He was in great degree the founder of the municipal institutions that rapidly sprang up in South Britain. We may collect from the narrative of Tacitus that the country was peacefully settled from the Thames

to the Severn, and from the Humber to the Dee, after a few years of his administration.

In the third and fourth summers of his command, Agricola was engaged with no mean enemies in the northern parts of the country. He discovered new people, says the historian, and continued his conquests quite to the mouth of the Tay. He built forts on the very borders of the Grampian Hills, and there wintered at the end of the third summer. The historian implies that the vain desire to maintain the glory of the Roman name impelled the armies beyond the natural boundary that ought to have been assigned to the conquest of Britain. Between the estuaries of the Forth and the Clyde there was only a narrow neck of land, and this was secured by a line of garrisons. The enemy, says Tacitus, was driven, as it were, into another island. The Romans would probably have been content with the possession of the fertile lowlands, could they have been secure against the incursions of the hardy tribes of the highlands. The conqueror passed the boundary in his fifth campaign, and planted forces on the western coast. He had the subjugation of Ireland in prospect, and courted the friendship of one of its chieftains. But Caledonia was yet unsubdued.

In the sixth summer Agricola explored the coast to the north of the Forth. Wherever he proceeded in his conquests he had a fleet; and the same camp, says his historian, often contained horse and foot, and sailors. Here they each related the perils of this great enterprise, and their escapes amongst barren mountains, and gloomy forests, and tempestuous seas. The hardy Caledonians did not wait for the attacks of their invaders. They assaulted the camp of the ninth legion, and were with difficulty repulsed by Agricola, who came upon their rear. The doubtful victory was to be followed by a fiercer conflict.

In his seventh summer the Roman army, to which their commander had added some of the southern Britons, marched onward to the Grampians. There were thirty thousand mountaineers in arms, under the command of Galgacus, who surpassed all in valour and descent. The oration which Tacitus assigns to the Caledonian leader is by Milton called, somewhat uncritically, "his rough oratory." It is a most elaborate composition, valueless as an historical fact, but exceedingly interesting in its illustrations of the nature of the war, and of the mode in which the historian systematically elevates the barbaric character, contrasting it with the oppressions of the government of the Cæsars, and the corruptions of

luxurious Rome. Speaking through Galgacus, he calls the Romans "plunderers of the earth;" "to spoil, to harass, and to butcher their style government—

They make a solitude, and call it peace."

He shows the condition of the conquered people, exhausted by tribute; stripped of the grain which they had sown; compelled to make pathways through the woods, to drain the marshes, to dig mines for their oppressors. The people of his own remote districts, says Galgacus, have no fields to cultivate, or mines to dig, or ports to construct. The Romans were jealous of their liberty and security. The Romans led against them an army compounded of many nations—Germans, Gauls, and Britons, who had been much longer the enemies than the slaves of the invaders. The speech of Agricola to his soldiers is a feeble declamation by comparison. The great battle of the Grampians had the usual termination of the contests between a disciplined army and an armed multitude. Their osier targets and their pointless swords, their chariots and their darts, were weak instruments to meet the impetuous charges of the cohorts and the cavalry of Rome. Ten Thousand Caledonians were slaughtered in the plain and on the mountain-sides. Night put an end to the carnage. The next day showed the conquerors an unusual scene. There was profound silence all around; the smoke of burning dwellings rose in the hills, but not a living soul remained amidst the desolation. The victors attempted no pursuit, but marched slowly back to their winter garrisons, awing the natives as they passed along with their terrible array, such as Milton has so nobly described:—

"Light-armed troops,
In coats of mail and military pride;
Nor wanted clouds of foot, nor on each horn
Cuirassiers, all in steel, for standing fight."

In the address of Agricola to his army, Tacitus makes him say, "We possess the very extremity of Britain;—Britain is entirely discovered." The sagacity of Agricola had put an end to a controversy which had long agitated the speculative philosophers of Rome. Some held that Britain was part of an unexplored continent; some that it was an island. Chance in some degree determined the question. A cohort of Germans who had been brought into the country, having slain the Roman soldiers who were training them, put to sea in three pinnaces; a few who survived the

hardships to which they were exposed, were carried round Britain, and, falling into the hands of some continental natives, made the knowledge of its coast more familiar to the Romans. Dion Cassius relates that they sailed round the western coasts, as the wind and tide bore them, and landed inadvertently on the opposite side, where a Roman camp was situated, and that then Agricola sent others to explore the same course. After the close of the Caledonian war, Tacitus says that Agricola sent the Admiral of the fleet to encompass the island—"circumvehi Britanniam."

After the recall of Agricola by the jealous Domitian (A.D. 84) we know little of the condition of Britain for many years. Juvenal alludes to a chief, Arviragus, who was hurled headlong from his chariot; and the satirist indicates that the boast of such feats was common in Rome. In the year 120, the Emperor Hadrian, is in Britain. His life, says Gibbon, "was almost a perpetual journey; and as he possessed the various talents of the soldier, the statesman, and the scholar, he gratified his curiosity in the discharge of his duty. Careless of the difference of seasons and of climates, he marched on foot and bareheaded over the snows of Caledonia and the sultry plains of the Upper Egypt." Spartian, a Roman historian who flourished at the end of the third century, says, "He visited Britain, where he corrected many things; and first built a wall eighty miles in length, which divided the Romans from the Barbarians." In another passage the same historian states, that Severus "built a wall across the island." The line of forts which Agricola raised from the Clyde to the Forth, was strengthened, sixty years after, by a turf rampart known as the wall of Antoninus, which extended for thirty-six miles. But the wall of Hadrian, or of Severus, was a much more important work. This is the wall which, eleven hundred years ago, Bede described as "still famous to be seen . . . eight feet in breadth and twelve in height, in a straight line from east to west." There are two parallel lines of stone wall and earthen entrenchments, running from a point on the river Tyne between Newcastle and Shields to Boulness on the Solway Frith, a distance of nearly eighty miles. The boundary of Agricola and Antoninus was raised against the warlike tribes of the Caledonian highlands. The wall of Hadrian, or of Severus, was the great artificial boundary of Roman England from sea to sea. It has been customary to ascribe the earthen rampart to Hadrian, and the stone wall to Severus; but it has been recently contended by an accomplished antiquary, Mr. Bruce, that they are

essential parts of one fortification. The name of Hadrian frequently occurs on inscriptions found in this locality. Severus may have repaired the work of Hadrian; and to this the few words of Spartian may have reference.* However this may be, it is pretty clear that, for a century, a constant strengthening of the defence of South Britain against the irruptions of the North was the policy of the Roman colonisers. Agricola left one rampart against the bands who he foresaw would come from the Grampians,

“To insult the plenty of the vales below.”

The wall of Hadrian was an inner line of defence, raised, probably, against the people of the wild districts that in later times were called the Borderland. But neither of them was a defence to be neglected. Antoninus strengthened the rampart of Agricola. Severus perfected the wall of Hadrian. The mighty rampart from the Solway to the Tyne was a frontier erected not only as a defence against devastating hostilities, but as a barrier to dangerous amities. The Brigantes, who dwelt in Lancashire and Yorkshire and Cumberland and Durham, amidst marshy valleys and barren mountains, had not borne the Roman yoke with the ease with which it had been imposed upon those parts of England, which, from their characteristics of soil and climate, were more fitted to receive the impress of a luxurious civilisation. The Mæatæ, a nation of the South of Scotland, were ready to join with them in revolt. They were driven back by the lieutenant of Antoninus. Again and again were the Roman stations assaulted. The history of the second century of the conquest of Britain is very meagre; but it sufficiently shows us that in the North there was perpetual violence and suspicion. At length the stern spirit of Severus was roused by the persevering resistance to the Imperial domination. The narrative of Dion Cassius of this period of our national history is graphic and interesting.

The Mæatæ, he says, dwell close to the wall which divides the island into two parts;—the Caledonians beyond them. By this wall, he means the rampart of Antoninus. They each lived, amidst mountains and marshes, by pasture and the chace, cultivating no land and inhabiting no towns, but dwelling in tents. Against these people Severus advanced. He underwent indescribable labours in cutting down woods, levelling hills, making marshes passable, and constructing bridges. He saw no army, and fought no battle; but

* See note in Dr. Smith's admirable edition of Gibbon, vol. i. p. 145.

he was perpetually harassed by ambuscades, and of his men fifty thousand perished. Suffering by infirmity and sickness, the iron will of the Emperor would not yield; and he was borne through the hostile district, in a covered litter, to the extremity of the island, where he concluded a treaty with the chieftains. There was an enemy near him more formidable than the Caledonians—his treacherous sons. There are few historical incidents more striking and characteristic than that which exhibits Severus, upon turning round as he headed his army, beholding the sword of one of these sons ready to strike him in the back; but, uttering not a word, ascending a tribunal, going through his ordinary duties, and then returning to his tent. The vengeance which next year Severus destined for the tribes who still continued to resist was cut short by his death, which took place at York in the year 211. Caracalla, his son, had other purposes of ambition than the chastisement of a barbarous tribe. He returned to Rome, leaving North Britain to its own fortunes by retiring from the hostile country.

For seventy years after the death of Severus, history is nearly silent on the affairs of Britain. In the Chronology of Events by Richard of Cirencester, there is only one entry from this period to the accession of Carausius in 286:—“During these times the Roman armies confined themselves within the wall, and all the island enjoyed a profound peace.” This is a period in which, it being unmingled with other elements, we may take a general view of the condition of the country in the middle of the third century.