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CAESAR  
THE GALLIC WAR

WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY

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## LIBER I

1 GALLIA est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur. Hi omnes lingua, institutis, legibus inter se differunt. Gallos ab Aquitanis Garumna flumen, a Belgis Matrona et Sequana dividit. Horum omnium fortissimi sunt Belgae, propterea quod a cultu atque humanitate provinciae longissime absunt, minimeque ad eos mercatores saepe commeant atque ea quae ad effeminandos animos pertinent important, proximique sunt Germanis, qui trans Rhenum incolunt, quibuscum continenter bellum gerunt. Qua de causa Helvetii quoque reliquos Gallos virtute praecedunt, quod fere cotidianis proeliis cum Germanis contendunt, cum aut suis finibus eos prohibent, aut ipsi in eorum finibus bellum gerunt. Eorum una pars, quam Gallos obtinere dictum est, initium capit a flumine Rhodano; continetur Garumna flumine, Oceano, finibus Belgarum; attingit etiam ab Sequanis et Helvetiis flumen Rhenum; vergit ad septentriones. Belgae

## BOOK I

GAUL is a whole divided into three parts, one of which is inhabited by the Belgae, another by the Aquitani, and a third by a people called in their own tongue Celtae, in the Latin Galli. All these are different one from another in language, institutions, and laws. The Galli (Gauls) are separated from the Aquitani by the river Garonne, from the Belgae by the Marne and the Seine. Of all these peoples the Belgae are the most courageous, because they are farthest removed from the culture and the civilization of the Province,<sup>1</sup> and least often visited by merchants introducing the commodities that make for effeminacy; and also because they are nearest to the Germans dwelling beyond the Rhine, with whom they are continually at war. For this cause the Helvetii also excel the rest of the Gauls in valour, because they are struggling in almost daily fights with the Germans, either endeavouring to keep them out of Gallic territory or waging an aggressive warfare in German territory. The separate part of the country which, as has been said, is occupied by the Gauls, starts from the river Rhone, and is bounded by the river Garonne, the Ocean, and the territory of the Belgae; moreover, on the side of the Sequani and the Helvetii, it touches the river Rhine; and its general trend is northward. The Belgae, beginning

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the Roman province of *Gallia Narbonensis*, formed about 121 B.C.

21 Trinobantibus defensis adque ab omni militum iniuria prohibitis Cenimagni, Segontiaci, Ancalites, Bibroci, Cassi legationibus missis sese Caesari dedunt. Ab his cognoscit non longe ex eo loco oppidum Cassivellauni abesse silvis paludibusque munitum, quo satis magnus hominum pecorisque numerus convenerit. Oppidum autem Britanni vocant, cum silvas impeditas vallo atque fossa munierunt, quo incursionis hostium vitandae causa convenire consueverunt. Eo proficiscitur cum legionibus: locum reperit egregie natura atque opere munitum; tamen hunc duabus ex partibus oppugnare contendit. Hostes paulisper morati militum nostrorum impetum non tulerunt seseque alia ex parte oppidi eiecerunt. Magnus ibi numerus pecoris repertus, multique in fuga sunt comprehensi atque interfecti.

22 Dum haec in his locis geruntur, Cassivellaunus ad Cantium, quod esse ad mare supra demonstravimus, quibus regionibus quattuor reges praeerant, Cingetorix, Carvilius, Taximagulus, Segovax, nuntios mittit atque eis imperat uti coactis omnibus copiis castra navalia de improvviso adorianentur atque oppugnent. Ei cum ad castra venissent, nostri eruptione facta multis eorum interfectis, capto etiam nobili duce Lugotorige suos incolumes reduxerunt. Cassivellaunus hoc proelio nuntiato tot detrimentis acceptis, vastatis finibus, maxime etiam permotus

When the Trinobantes had been placed under protection and secured from all outrage at the hands of the troops, the Cenimagni, the Segontiaci, the Ancalites, the Bibroci, and the Cassi sent deputations and surrendered to Caesar. From them he learnt that the stronghold of Cassivellaunus was not far from thence, fenced by woods and marshes; and that he had assembled there a considerable quantity of men and cattle. Now the Britons call it a stronghold when they have fortified a thick-set woodland with rampart and trench, and thither it is their custom to collect, to avoid a hostile inroad. For this spot Caesar now started with the legions: he found it thoroughly fortified by nature and by handiwork, but none the less he made a vigorous assault from two sides. The enemy tarried for a space, but did not stand the assault of our troops, and broke away from another side of the stronghold. A great quantity of cattle was found there; and many of the enemy were caught in the act of fleeing and put to death.

While these events were proceeding thereabout, Cassivellaunus sent messages to Kent, a country by the sea, as above set forth,<sup>1</sup> over whose four districts Cingetorix, Carvilius, Taximagulus, and Segovax ruled as kings, and commanded them to collect all their forces for a sudden attempt and assault upon the naval camp. But when they were come to the camp the Romans made a sortie and slew many of them, capturing also Lugotorix, a commander of noble station; and then withdrew the detachment without loss. Upon report of this engagement Cassivellaunus was constrained, by the numerous defeats he had suffered, by the devastation of his borders, and chiefly by his alarm at the revolt of the states, to send depu-

<sup>1</sup> Ch. 14 *supra*.

defectione civitatum, legatos per Atrebatem Commium de deditio ad Caesarem mittit. Caesar, cum constituisset hiemare in continenti propter repentinos Galliae motus, neque multum aestatis superesset, atque id facile extrahi posse intellegeret, obsides imperat et quid in annos singulos vectigalis populo Romano Britannia penderet constituit; interdicit atque imperat Cassivellauno, ne Mandubraccio neu Trinobantibus noceat.

23 Obsidibus acceptis exercitum reducit ad mare, naves invenit refectas. His deductis, quod et captivorum magnum numerum habebat, et nonnullae tempestate deperierant naves, duobus com meatibus exercitum reportare instituit. Ac sic accidit, uti ex tanto navium numero tot navigationibus neque hoc neque superiore anno ulla omnino navis, quae milites portaret, desideraretur; at ex eis, quae inanes ex continenti ad eum remitterentur et prioris com meatus expositis militibus et quas postea Labienus faciendas curaverat numero LX, perpaucae locum caperent, reliquae fere omnes reicerentur. Quas cum aliquamdiu Caesar frustra expectasset, ne anni tempore a navigatione excluderetur, quod aequinoctium suberat, necessario angustius milites collocavit ac summa tranquillitate consecuta, secunda inita cum solvisset vigilia, prima luce terram attigit omnesque incolumes naves perduxit.

24 Subductis navibus concilioque Gallorum Samarobrivae peracto, quod eo anno frumentum in Gallia propter siccitates angustius provenerat, coactus est

ties to Caesar and treat for peace, by the help of Commius the Atrebatian. Caesar had determined to winter on the Continent, in view of sudden commotions in Gaul; and as he had little of the summer left, and was aware that it might easily be spun out to no purpose, he made requisition of hostages, and determined what tribute Britain should pay yearly to Rome. He straitly charged Cassivellaunus to do no hurt to Mandubraccius or the Trinobantes.

As soon as the hostages were received he led the army back to the sea, and found the ships repaired. When they had been launched he decided, as he had a great number of prisoners, and some ships had perished in the storm, to convey the army back by two journeys. And eventually, of all that number of ships and in all those voyages, not a single ship carrying troops in this or the previous year was missing. But of the ships sent back empty to him from the Continent—both those which had disembarked troops on the first journey, and the second fleet which Labienus had caused to be built,<sup>1</sup> to the number of sixty—very few made the rendezvous; almost all the rest were driven back. Caesar waited some time for these in vain; then, fearing he might be precluded from sailing by the season, as the equinox was nigh at hand, he packed the troops of necessity more closely together; a complete calm ensued, and he weighed anchor at the beginning of the second watch, and at dawn touched land and brought all the ships safely to port.

The ships were beached, and a council of the Gauls was held at Samarobriva (Amiens). Then, as the corn-crop had been scantier that year in Gaul on account of droughts, Caesar was forced to dispose

<sup>1</sup> See ch. 11.

19 Cassivellaunus, ut supra demonstravimus, omni deposita spe contentionis dimissis amplioribus copiis milibus circiter quattuor essedariorum relictis itinera nostra servabat paulumque ex via excedebat locisque impeditis ac silvestribus sese occultabat, atque eis regionibus quibus nos iter facturos cognoverat pecora atque homines ex agris in silvas compellebat et, cum equitatus noster liberius praedandi vastandique causa se in agros eiecerat, omnibus viis semitisque essedarios ex silvis emittebat et magno cum periculo nostrorum equitum cum eis configebat atque hoc metu latius vagari prohibebat. Relinquebatur ut neque longius ab agmine legionum discedi Caesar pateretur, et tantum in agris vastandis incendiisque faciendis hostibus noceretur, quantum labore atque itinere legionarii milites efficere poterant.

20 Interim Trinobantes, prope firmissima earum regionum civitas, ex qua Mandubracius adulescens Caesaris fidem secutus ad eum in continentem Galliam venerat, cuius pater in ea civitate regnum obtinuerat interfectusque erat a Cassivellauno, ipse fuga mortem vitaverat, legatos ad Caesarem mittunt pollicenturque sese ei dedituros atque imperata facturos; petunt, ut Mandubracium ab iniuria Cassivellauni defendat atque in civitatem mittat, qui praesit imperiumque obtineat. His Caesar imperat obsides quadraginta frumentumque exercitui Mandubraciumque ad eos mittit. Illi imperata celeriter fecerunt, obsides ad numerum frumentumque miserunt.

When Cassivellaunus, as above set forth, had relinquished all hope of a struggle, and disbanded the greater part of his force, with the remainder—about four thousand charioteers—he kept our marches under observation, and, withdrawing a little from the route, concealed himself in entangled positions among the woods. In whatever districts he had learnt that we intended to march he drove all cattle and human beings from the fields into the woods; then, whenever our cavalry dashed out over the fields to plunder and devastate more freely, he sent out charioteers from the woods by every road and path, engaging our cavalry to their great danger, and preventing them by the fear thus caused from ranging farther afield. The only course left to Caesar was to allow no party to remove very far from the main column of the legions, and to do as much harm to the enemy in laying waste the fields and in conflagrations as the marching powers of the legionaries could accomplish.

In the meantime the Trinobantes, the strongest state, perhaps, in those parts—the state from which young Mandubracius, in quest of the protection of Caesar, had come to him on the mainland of Gaul: his own father had held the kingship in the state, but had been slain by Cassivellaunus, when he himself had escaped death by flight—sent deputies to Caesar, promising to surrender to him and to do his commands, and beseeching him to protect Mandubracius from outrage at the hands of Cassivellaunus, and to send him to their state as ruler and sovereign lord. Caesar required of them forty hostages, and corn for the army, and sent Mandubracius to them. They speedily did his commands, and sent hostages to the number required, and corn.

meridie, cum Caesar pabulandi causa tres legiones atque omnem equitatum cum Gaio Trebonio legato misisset, repente ex omnibus partibus ad pabulatores advolaverunt, sic uti ab signis legionibusque non absisterent. Nostri acriter in eos impetu facto repulerunt neque finem sequendi fecerunt, quoad subsidio confisi equites, cum post se legiones viderent, praecipites hostes egerunt magnoque eorum numero interfecto neque sui colligendi neque consistendi aut ex essedis desiliendi facultatem dederunt. Ex hac fuga protinus, quae undique convenerant, auxilia discesserunt, neque post id tempus umquam summis nobiscum copiis hostes contenderunt.

18 Caesar cognito consilio eorum ad flumen Tamesim in fines Cassivellauni exercitum duxit; quod flumen uno omnino loco pedibus, atque hoc aegre, transiri potest. Eo cum venisset, animum advertit ad alteram fluminis ripam magnas esse copias hostium instructas. Ripa autem erat acutis sudibus praefixis munita, eiusdemque generis sub aqua defixae sudes flumine tegebantur. His rebus cognitis a captivis perfugisque Caesar praemisso equitatu confestim legiones subsequi iussit. Sed ea celeritate atque eo impetu milites ierunt, cum capite solo ex aqua exstarent, ut hostes impetum legionum atque equitum sustinere non possent ripasque dimitterent ac se fugae mandarent.

men, though more feebly than on the day before. But at noon, when Caesar had sent three legions and all the cavalry with Gaius Trebonius, the lieutenant-general, to get forage, the enemy swooped suddenly from all directions upon the foraging parties, with such vigour that they did not stop short of the legions drawn up for battle. Our troops charged them fiercely and drove them back, and did not bring the pursuit to an end until the cavalry, relying on the support of the legions they saw behind them, drove the enemy headlong and slew a great number of them, giving them no chance to rally or stand fast, nor to leap down from their chariots. After this rout the succours which had assembled from all quarters took their departure; and never afterwards did the enemy engage us at their full strength.

Having obtained knowledge of their plans, Caesar led his army into the borders of Cassivellaunus as far as the river Thames, which can be crossed at one place only on foot, and that with difficulty. When he was come thither he remarked that on the other bank of the river a great force of the enemy was drawn up. The bank was fortified with a fringe of sharp projecting stakes, and stakes of the same kind fixed under water were concealed by the stream. When he had learnt these details from prisoners and deserters, Caesar sent the cavalry in advance and ordered the legions to follow up instantly. But the troops moved with such speed and such spirit, although they had only their heads above water, that the enemy could not withstand the assault of legions and cavalry, but abandoned the banks and betook themselves to flight.

statione pro castris collocati, acriter pugnaverunt, duabusque missis subsidio cohortibus a Caesare atque eis primis legionum duarum, cum hae perexiguo intermisso loci spatio inter se constitissent, novo genere pugnae perterritis nostris per medios audacissime perruperunt seque inde incolumes receperunt. Eo die Quintus Laberius Durus, tribunus militum, interficitur. Illi pluribus submissis cohortibus repelluntur.

16 Toto hoc in genere pugnae, cum sub oculis omnium ac pro castris dimicaretur, intellectum est nostros propter gravitatem armorum, quod neque insequi cedentes possent neque ab signis discedere auderent, minus aptos esse ad huius generis hostem, equites autem magno cum periculo proelio dimicare, propterea quod illi etiam consulto plerumque cederent et, cum paulum ab legionibus nostros removissent, ex essedis desilirent et pedibus dispari proelio contenderent. Equestris autem proeli ratio et cedentibus et insequentibus par atque idem periculum inferebat. Accedebat huc ut numquam conferti sed rari magnisque intervallis proeliarentur stationesque dispositas haberent, atque alios alii deinceps exciperent, integrique et recentes defetigatis succederent.

17 Postero die procul a castris hostes in collibus constituerunt rarique se ostendere et lenius quam pridie nostros equites proelio lacessere coeperunt. Sed

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* because they were armed for fighting only in close formation.

<sup>2</sup> The skilful co-operation between the British chariot-

duty in advance of the camp, they fought fiercely. And though Caesar sent up two cohorts in support—and those the first cohorts of two legions—and the two detachments had taken post with a very slight interval between them, the enemy most gallantly broke through in the middle (as our troops were disconcerted by the novel kind of fighting), and retired safely from the field. On that day a tribune, Quintus Laberius Durus, was killed. The enemy were driven back when more cohorts had been sent up.

The action took place in front of the camp and under the eyes of all; and it was clear that in all such fighting our infantry, by reason of their heavy armament, since they could neither pursue a retiring enemy nor venture far from the standards,<sup>1</sup> were but poorly fitted for an enemy of this kind. It was clear, again, that our cavalry fought with great risk, because the enemy often retired of deliberate purpose, and, when they had separated our horse a little from the legions, leapt down from their chariots and fought on foot to our disadvantage. Their cavalry tactics, however, threatened us with exactly the same danger in retirement or pursuit.<sup>2</sup> Add to this that the enemy never fought in close array, but in small parties with wide intervals; and had detachments posted at regular stations, so that one party covered another in turn, and fresh, unspent warriors took the place of the battle-weary.

Next day the enemy took post on the hills, at a distance from the camp, and began to show themselves in small parties and to assail our horse-

fighters and cavalry placed the Roman cavalry at a disadvantage at every turn of the fight. For the tactics of the chariot-fighters see IV. 33. Many editors bracket this sentence as spurious.