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THE CASTLE HILL, FOLKESTONE.

BY MR. W. J. JEAFFRESON.

OUR learned Secretary, in his printed programme has cut, so to speak, the very ground from beneath my feet, by telling you in half a dozen words almost all that can be said, with certainty, as to the interesting remains amidst which we are standing.

The name which they popularly bear is Cæsar's Camp, but I think I am right in saying that no serious writer on Kentish antiquities makes use of that name. In Lambarde, Hasted, and Ireland you will find the spot mentioned as Castle Hill—a more vague but not more satisfactory appellation.

If there is nothing beneath our feet but the earthworks which we see, and we have no right to assume that there is anything else, then neither from the form, position, and size of these entrenchments, nor from any documentary or traditionary evidence of any value, nor from any remains found on or near to the spot, can any one reasonably conclude that we have Roman work before us, or that the Romans at all—much less Cæsar—were ever brought into actual connection with this particular locality. We inhabitants of Kent undoubtedly owe a debt of gratitude to the greatest of Roman commanders—

“Kent, in the Commentaries Cæsar writ,
Is termed the civil'st place in all the isle.”

It is something to win praise from Cæsar, and to have that praise echoed by Shakespeare, but if we may say *amicus Cæsar* we must, as a scientific body, proclaim *magis amica veritas*, and confess that we have no trace of Cæsar's handiwork here. Had we been standing amidst the anxious crowd gathered, without doubt, on this spot, about a month later than this, in the year 55 B.C., we should have beheld less dubious signs of Cæsar. At about half-past seven, in the evening of the 26th of August, in that year, it was high water in Boulogne harbour, and Cæsar's fleet, of not less than a hundred sail, dropping down at the end of the flood and the beginning of the ebb, was outside the port, and ready for the passage of the Channel at midnight or the third watch, four days, as Cæsar tells us, before the new moon, which occurred at three in the morning, on the 31st of August. By the fourth hour on the next day (half-past eight in the morning, at that season of the year)

Cæsar was off Dover, and there rode at anchor, waiting for sixteen cavalry transports, detained by the westerly wind, at Ambleteuse, about eight miles east of Boulogne. As he lay in the offing Cæsar could plainly observe that the cliffs, on either side probably, were crowded with Keltic natives, who, without risk to themselves, could command with their missiles the narrow strip of shingle between the sea and the foot of the chalk, so, seeing it impossible to effect a landing, after a conference on board ship with the legates and tribunes of the fleet, at 3.30 in the afternoon, he weighed anchor. It had been high water at Dover, at about half-past seven, on August 27th, in the year 55 B.C., and the tide there, after running east for four hours, would have turned at 11.30, and commenced its run of six hours to the west. The wind, too, had in all probability shifted with it, so with wind and tide in his favour Cæsar dropped down the coast seven Roman miles, and found himself opposite a shelving beach, with the chalk hills receding to some distance from the sea. The distance and description answer very well to Lympne, near Hythe. It was there, if this account be accepted, that Cæsar's landing took place, and, as was often the case, at the first landing places of the Romans, a flourishing port sprang up there.

But not only am I digressing from my own subject—though the events I have faintly sketched must have occurred within view of the spot where we now stand—I am also trespassing on the ground of our Secretary at Hythe, who has a rich treat in store for you whenever the Society can arrange to pay him a visit.

Leaving Cæsar behind, then, let us touch for a moment on the idea borrowed by most Kentish antiquaries from Camden, that this hill was crowned by one of the forts built by Theodosius, at the end of the fourth century, according to Gildas, along the whole southern coast, to protect Britain against the Saxons, much as the Martello Towers of a later date were raised to protect us from French invasion. There seems absolutely no evidence to support this statement. Neither the *Notitia*, nor the *Itinerary*, make any mention of such a station, nor would the shape and position of these remains suggest anything of the character of a Roman fort, to any one not previously possessed with the idea.

Lastly, comes a theory which is probably familiar to most of us as being propounded by the compilers of Murray's Handbook, on the authority of Mr. Wright, namely, that this is the site of a Roman Pharos, or Light-house, such as existed on the Castle height at Dover. I find it stated in Murray, in confirmation of this hypothesis, that

Roman bricks, tiles, and masonry have been found on the spot. All I can say is that neither the relics themselves nor the memory of them have been preserved, so far as I can ascertain, in Folkestone. No antiquary mentions them, and Ireland expressly states that not a vestige can be found. Besides, no one looking at these works can imagine that they were raised for any other than a military purpose.

To what origin, then, must we ascribe the structures before us? As our learned Secretary has already told you, the balance of probability inclines strongly towards their being of British or Keltic origin. The Keltic inhabitants of these islands, as well as on the continent, appear generally to have built their cottage dwellings ("tuguria") separately, and at some distance apart. This accounts for their traces being comparatively rare. Occasionally a number of their abodes was grouped together, and formed what the Romans called a "vicus," a village community such as is characteristic of early civilisation in most races. Besides these vici, we read in Cæsar of "oppida," which, for want of a better translation, we must call towns. Eminent antiquaries have divided these "oppida" into two classes. 1st. Towns proper, permanent settlements, such as Avaricum, Gergovia, Genabnum, Lutetia. These consisted of a number of dwellings surrounded by fortifications of a more or less complete construction. Cæsar, in the Seventh Book of the Commentaries (ch. xxiii.), gives a minute description of the walls of Avaricum or Bourges, built of alternate layers of timber and stone, with earth rammed between. It is doubtful whether any structures of this kind were raised by the less civilized Kelts of the north, and we certainly have not a specimen of them here. Leaving these "oppida murata," or "oppida-villes," as De Caumont styles them, we will pass to the inferior class of oppida—the "oppida rustica" or "vallata" of antiquaries, though classical writers draw no such distinctions. These "oppida" were not inhabited permanently, but served as camps of refuge in the wars between tribe and tribe, or in cases of foreign invasion. The spot upon which we are standing was, in my opinion, occupied by such a camp. The positions selected for works of this kind are always of great natural strength, and altogether different from the open level exposed situations on which we find Roman encampments. Favourite sites are an island in a marsh, a peninsula all but cut off by the windings of a river, the junction of two valleys, and perhaps most often a plateau on the top of a nearly isolated hill, such as we have here. Such stations are more frequent in proportion as one moves further north in Gaul, and reaches ground occupied by ruder tribes. There are many similar remains in northern France, especially

in the Department of Calvados. At Limes especially, about two miles from Dieppe, exists an entrenchment that some here may have seen, or may see in future, which resembles in many respects the one before us. Like this, it is popularly called *Cæsar's Camp*—"Le Camp de César." Like this, it is on the coast, but is even nearer, the camp being bounded on one side by the steep chalk cliff. Like this, though on a far larger scale, it is divided into two portions, one more elevated, the other lower and of greater extent. Many camps of the same kind have been noticed by French archæologists in Normandy and Picardy, nearly all possessing many features in common with this, and attributed erroneously to a Roman or a Norman origin. In our own country the Herefordshire Beacon may be cited as a most striking example. It shews a double enclosure like this, and occupies a limited space on a hill-top. *Caer-Caradoc* and *Old Sarum* may also be cited. A very celebrated specimen, though not so similar to the camp before us, is that at *Abury*, in Wilts. All these will be found figured in Knight's "*Old England*." The dimensions of these camps of refuge would vary according to circumstances. In many cases, as here, the local features must limit the size. Generally speaking, *De Caumont* considers that they diminish as one moves northward. This is a small example, as it encloses less than two acres; many are found six, eight, ten times the size. The inner and higher part, the *Prætorium* it has been strangely called, you will observe, is of a more clearly oval shape than the whole enclosure, but its extent is only half as much, the longest diameter measuring about fifty yards. To the south-east, where the hill is steep, the vallation or entrenchment is single, to the east it appears to have been double, and towards the plain on the north it was triple, as is testified by the older antiquaries, though the traces of the third line are somewhat feeble. In many French encampments have been found traces of circular huts, but whether the holes to be seen within these works can be referred to the same purpose I will not attempt to discuss. On the side of the adjoining hill have been found undoubted remains of coffins containing human bones, and with them an urn, which belongs to the British Roman period, and says but little as to the original builders of this monument. I have heard rumours, too, of what was described as a dagger having been found during the excavation of the reservoir below, but I cannot track out its present possessor. In a mere sketch like this one cannot attempt to bring convincing proofs. *De Caumont's* plates, which, by the kindness of Canon Jenkins, lie at the Temporary Museum, will help to corroborate my remarks, and by the courtesy of Mr. Bateman

such relics as have been preserved of the burying place above-mentioned, as well as the illustrations of similar camps in Knight's "Old England," will be found at the same place. To set the whole question at rest an inexpensive exploration of the ground is required. Let me conclude my remarks, after begging your kindest indulgence for so crude and imperfect a paper, by trusting that after this meeting public spirit enough may be aroused to undertake the task.