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WITH
CÆSAR



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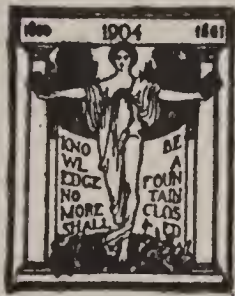


THE ENEMY DASHED AT THE STRUGGLING MEN IN THE WATER.—Page 196.

On Land and Sea with Cæsar,
or
Following the Eagles

By
Rubens Field
R. F. WELLS
"

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK T. MERRILL



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PREFACE

THIS book, like a previous one, is based on the story told by Cæsar himself in his "Commentaries on the Gallic War." The former, "With Cæsar's Legions," having two young cousins, Titus and Julius Colenus, as central figures, covered Book I. "On Land and Sea With Cæsar" in the same way carries the story through the remaining seven books. Much of it has to do with Books II, III, and IV, thus forming helpful side reading for the "Cæsar" usually studied in high schools, and for ancient history in general.

The tale is not merely one of following Cæsar the conqueror, for that would present only one view of a many-sided man. Cæsar did conquer Gaul, but he did far more than that. Wherever he went, he established stable government, promoted commerce and agriculture, brought law and order to jealous, quarreling communities, and never interfered with the religious institutions of conquered peoples. He was no less a statesman than a soldier.

Cæsar showed a most amazing skill in managing men, not only in directing the legionaries under his command, in whom he inspired a devotion shown to few generals in the world's history, but also in gaining the respect and confidence of alien nations, both leaders and common people.

These books deal with Cæsar's career as a soldier, when his ability was of the highest, and best shown when in straits, facing seemingly hopeless odds. "Cæsar had the inborn qualities of a great captain," says one military critic. The surpassing engineering skill of his campaigns excited admiration in Rome in his day, and the world still holds it. The superb courage and endurance of his troops have never lost their charm. These qualities were given in fullest measure to the service of the man who also won devotion to his cause from certain Gallic chiefs and entire Gallic tribes, and could record it all in lasting narrative. "Cæsar was born to do great things," says Plutarch.

R. F. WELLS.

Montpelier, Vt.

1926.

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On Land and Sea With Cæsar,
or
Following the Eagles

CHAPTER I

WITH THE EAGLES AGAIN

THE cavalcade turned the shoulder of a mountain and looked down into the valley below.

“Look!” shouted Julius. “There’s the camp.”

Far below in the bend of the river, the outline of the walls of the Roman camp could be made out, and the huts the legionary soldiers had occupied during the winter could be distinguished, standing in orderly rows along the camp streets.

“I wonder what the men have been doing all winter long,” said Titus.

“We shall soon find out,” replied Julius. “Won’t it be great to be back with the legion again?”

“You are right, it will,” agreed his com-

panion. "I'm dying to get back in the ranks again, aren't you? I for one am sick of the headquarters work."

"Me, too," answered Julius. "I hope Cæsar puts us back with our old command."

The two young Roman soldiers, Titus and Julius Colenus, were riding in the bodyguard of Julius Cæsar, commanding general of the Roman army of occupation in Gaul, who was returning in early spring to take personal command of his troops in the field, after having spent the winter in the provinces attending to his duties as proconsul.

The boys, still in their teens, the youngest legionaries in the Roman army, had seen a season of active service in the field. They had enlisted at the outbreak of hostilities in the war against the Helvetian people, taking part in the campaign the previous summer in which Cæsar with his legions had driven back the Helvetian tribes that migrated from their mountain homes, advancing into and devastating the country of the Gauls who were allied to the Romans, and threatening the safety of the Roman empire itself.

Then, later in the season, the Colenus boys

had gone with the Roman army in the march against the invading Germans and hurled them back across the Rhine. Detailed to serve through the winter with the general's bodyguard, they had spent several months away from the main body of troops.

"What's ahead for this season's work, I wonder," remarked Titus, as the general and his bodyguard rode down the mountainside towards the camp.

"Don't you know?" returned Julius. "I thought I told you what I overheard one of the centurions saying the other day. There are rumors that the Belgian tribes are forming a confederacy against us, to come against our army and drive us out of Gaul."

"The Belgians," exclaimed Titus. "Why, they are the bravest of the brave, I hear, the only tribes that could withstand the barbarians that swept over Gaul and conquered all the other tribes."

"The same," said Julius. "We shall have a hot summer's work, I think. Perhaps our last summer's campaign was a picnic compared to what is coming."

"That's all right if you mean it as a joke,"

replied Titus, "but it was no picnic, I tell you, when our cohorts stood the shock of those wild-eyed hordes of Ariovistus' army."

"No, indeed," his companion said, soberly. "I shall never forget that day we met the Germans in battle, our first big fight."

He held up his hand and gazed at the ring which he proudly wore on his finger, the gift of Cæsar, bestowed on him for personal bravery in that great battle.

Titus' body bore the scars of wounds received in the terrific struggle with the Germans, when the barbarians had pressed the sturdy Roman legions hard. Although both boys had entered the army at an age younger than that at which they might be drafted into service, they had borne their parts like men in all the hard marches, the skirmishes, and the final battle that brought victory to the Roman arms and made all the tribes of Central and Western Gaul look to the Roman general, Cæsar, as their friend and protector against invading tribes.

Titus returned to the line of questioning he had started. "Why is it the Belgians are arming against us?"

“All I know,” replied Julius, “is what I gathered from the conversation I overheard between two centurions. They said the Belgian tribes, along the northern seacoast, had taken alarm because Cæsar had come into Gaul, and were resolved to get up a huge army and come and crush us before we can subdue more tribes.”

“But we have not subdued the tribes of Gaul, nor put them under tribute except to supply the food needed to provision our army,” maintained Titus.

“No,” continued Julius, “but you can understand how they fear us and our growing power.”

“Surely,” said Titus. “But it would be for their advantage to make friends with us and become our allies.”

“Their chieftains evidently do not think so,” replied Julius, “for I understand that Cæsar has learned from the friendly Gauls that the Belgian confederacy is threatening serious trouble.”

“How many people make up these tribes?” asked Titus.

“I do not know exactly,” answered his com-

panion, "but I understand they can muster nearly three hundred thousand fighting men if they all get together."

"Well, we have learned, under Cæsar's leadership, not to fear numbers against us," continued Titus, "but it looks to me like quite a job for our small army. Think of having to fight against four or five times our number!"

The boys might indeed wonder what the task ahead would be, for the force under Cæsar's command in Gaul was not over sixty thousand, including the Gallic auxiliaries who were with his legionary soldiers. With six legions, during the previous summer, 58 B. C., Cæsar had met and conquered the Helvetians and the Germans. During the winter, two new legions, the thirteenth and fourteenth, had been raised and trained in Italy and sent over the mountain passes into Gaul, making a force of eight legions of heavy infantry, some forty thousand men, a quarter of them green troops.

In addition, he had some thirteen thousand auxiliary light-armed troops, Cretan archers and slingers, a force of Numidians, some Gallic infantry under Divitiacus, an Æduan chief, and five thousand Gallic cavalry, which were

useful in scouting, but of no great service in battle.

“ I can guess what Cæsar will do,” suddenly exclaimed Titus, after the boys had ridden along some distance in silence.

“ What? ” asked Julius.

“ Why, strike quickly, before the enemy has had time to gather,” was the answer.

“ Right you are,” declared Julius. “ That is Cæsar’s way. And come to think of it, we have been making some good distances on our marches the last few days. Here we are already at the winter quarters. We probably shall not have many days to visit our friends in camp before we march again.”

Cæsar halted the body of men who were making the journey with him when the river’s edge had been reached, and sent a messenger ahead to the Roman camp. Just beyond the river was the town of Vesontio, one of the important towns of Central Gaul, where the Roman army had been stationed for the winter, after using it as a base of action the previous summer. It was centrally located, so that a move might be made easily in any direction.

The halt for rest beside the river was not long. Cæsar, with his staff and the mounted troops which accompanied him as his body-guard, moved through the town and towards the camp.

Beyond the town walls lay an open, level field on which the Roman troops could drill, and beyond that, on rising ground, where it could be defended easily in case of an attack, was located the fortified camp. The parade ground was in full view as one passed through the gate of the town.

Through the gate rode the Roman general at the head of his men and as they passed beyond the walls, there on the parade ground was drawn up the whole Roman army to welcome its commander.

“Look! The legions,” whispered Julius, as by the side of his cousin Titus he rode forward to join their fellow soldiers.

“What a magnificent sight!” exclaimed Titus. “See, they are in full battle array!”

The legionaries were indeed in ordered ranks in battle formation and with all their fighting equipment. The afternoon sun flashed back from the metal bosses of their shields and from

the sharp-pointed javelins they held. The waving plumes on the helmets fluttered in the breeze. The standards of the legions were in their appointed places, proudly held by the standard-bearers so that the returning general might notice each unit of his command as he rode by in the review of his troops.

The serried ranks of the legions were an impressive sight. Stretching out in a seemingly endless line, the battle front extended for over a mile, one legion next to another, without a gap between.

Down the long line rode the Roman general, cheered by each cohort as he passed it. Last of all in the battle formation, at the extreme right of the line, stood the tenth legion, Cæsar's favorite, commanded by his faithful lieutenant, Titus Labienus. The cheers as the general approached rang louder from the tenth legion than from any of the others, for it was this unit of the army that Cæsar liked to take command of in person and lead into battle.

The veterans in its ranks had fought in strenuous campaigns. They were proud of the record they had made, prouder still of their dashing commander, who never failed to put

the tenth where danger threatened most, nor failed to lead in person with it if there was stiff opposition to overcome. The men showed it in their bearing, showed pride and confidence at once.

The men of the tenth legion knew full well they were the pick of the army. They knew they held their position of the first in the line and first in their general's estimation because of a past record of valor, and they were determined to maintain their leading place among their fellow soldiers in any work the next campaign might bring. The spirit showed itself in the cheering with which they welcomed Cæsar on his return. The spirit seemed to show, if such a thing be possible, in the standards of the legion.

The eagles of the tenth were no different from those of the other legions in the long line past which Cæsar had ridden to the cheers of his proud and confident soldiers, except that the white banner that fluttered from the crossbar of the standard, surmounted by the silver eagle, was marked with the numeral X, while others bore a VII, a XII, or whatever might be the number of the unit, the legion corre-

sponding somewhat in its numbers and arrangement to a modern regiment of infantry.

Yet somehow the pride and confidence that animated the men in the ranks appeared to be imparted to the inanimate standard. So at least it seemed to Titus and Julius as they rode behind the general with the rest of his bodyguard. Perhaps it was because the firmly-held standard, the proudly-waving banner, the shining eagle at the top, all showed, if they could not feel, the spirit of the man who held the standard.

The general and his escort rode on beside the ranks of the cheering soldiers of the tenth legion until it could be clearly seen that the standard, near the center of the line, was held by a grizzled veteran of many campaigns.

Julius could not restrain himself. Pointing to the veteran standard-bearer, he whispered excitedly, "Look, Titus! There is Gametius."

"Yes, yes, I see," said Titus, equally excited. "How proudly and confidently he holds the standard. Our old friend Gametius will lead the whole army this year."

"And we shall be well led," declared Julius.

CHAPTER II

A REUNION

“COME on, Titus, let’s go and find our old comrades,” said Julius.

“All right. I’m ready,” his cousin replied.

The parade was over, the troops had returned to camp, and Cæsar and his bodyguard had established themselves at the general’s headquarters. Titus and Julius had disposed of their baggage and had been freed from further duties for the rest of the day.

The cousins were anxious to see their old friends again, the soldier comrades from whom they had been separated during the winter. They hastened to the camp street occupied by the twelfth legion.

“Look, there’s Baculus,” said Titus, pointing to an officer who stood beside the door of one of the huts the legionaries had wintered in.

The centurion referred to, Publius Sextius Baculus, was a typical Roman officer, keen-eyed, erect, and with a soldierly bearing. The boys had been under his command when they

first entered the army, he serving at that time as the leader of their cohort. Because of his bravery in battle he had been promoted to the rank of first centurion of the legion, the chief position among all the subordinate officers.

He was only a non-commissioned officer, as ranks go nowadays in modern armies, but in ancient Rome the first centurion of a legion had far more authority than a captain of the present day, to which office the rank of centurion in some degree corresponds. Only Romans of noble birth could hold commissions, but the centurions had the full direction of the lesser units that made up a legion, serving under the tribunes and lieutenants. The first centurion was the chief subaltern of the whole body of five thousand, although each of the ten cohorts of each legion had its quota of centurions and sub-centurions.

Recognizing his young soldiers as they approached him, Centurion Baculus advanced to meet them, saying:

“Welcome to the ranks. I’m glad to see you again.”

“We’re mighty glad to be back, sir,” said Julius.

“ Yes, indeed,” said Titus. “ The staff work we have been doing gets monotonous when you have been at it several months. It’s more fun with our comrades in the ranks. I don’t think Julius and I are cut out for a place at headquarters.”

“ What have the men been doing all winter? ” inquired Julius.

“ Oh, nothing much,” replied the officer. “ You would have found it just as monotonous if you had been here as you say you did where you were. We wintered here among a friendly people. There was nothing to do but carry on the routine drills and work like that. You’ll not complain of lack of action much longer, I think. Now that Cæsar has come back to his army, I imagine we shall take the field again.”

“ Where shall we two be placed now? ” Titus asked. “ Cæsar has no further work for us with his staff and has sent us back among the legionaries. We get our orders from you, I suppose.”

“ Where do you want to go? Your place before was in the tenth cohort, I believe.”

“ Yes, but —— ” Julius did not finish the sentence he had begun.

“But what?” The officer was smiling faintly as if he anticipated the request that was to be made.

“But—but——” the boy continued. “Why, you were our centurion then, sir. Now that you have been transferred to the first cohort we shall have to be under another officer, I fear. That’s what I mean.”

“Please, sir,” Titus broke in, “can’t we be treated like new recruits now that we have come back to the eagles? We’ve been away so long it is just as if we had been taken into the army as new soldiers. Can’t you put us in your cohort, instead of the tenth? That is what Julius is trying to ask.”

“Why, perhaps I can,” replied the officer, rather pleased that the boys should want to be again under his direct command. “It really will not make much difference what unit you are in. Yes, I’ll do it. You are assigned to the first cohort.”

“Oh, thank you, sir,” said both boys in chorus.

They were more fond of Baculus than of any other officer they knew, for he had taken a fancy to them when they had first joined the

ranks the summer before as new recruits. He had not only been extremely kind to them, but had drilled them faithfully in their duties as soldiers and had watched over them with a fatherly interest.

Baculus was one of the older officers of the legion, a veteran who had served many years in the army. Noted for his great strength and his personal bravery, he was also an officer who was ever watchful of the interests of his men, a strict disciplinarian, but a commander whom the men obeyed because they liked him well.

He was not one to show partiality to any particular soldiers, but his fondness for Titus and Julius was well-known in the ranks. It did not cause any jealousy among their fellow legionaries, for the boys had made good as soldiers and were well liked by all their associates.

The bond between the centurion and the youngest members of the twelfth legion had another tie to strengthen it, in addition to the mutual admiration that existed. Julius, in the stress of a hard-fought fight, had saved Baculus' life when he was pressed by enemies who almost proved a match for him.

So the transfer of the young soldiers from their own cohort caused no very great surprise in the ranks, and they were welcomed by the men of the first cohort as readily as if it had been their own unit that they rejoined.

It did not take the boys long to place their few belongings in new quarters, for almost all they had with them was the military equipment that all the legionaries must have wherever they went. Before the first evening had passed after their arrival in camp, Titus and Julius were as much at home as if they, too, had spent the winter at Vesontio.

“We have not seen Gametius yet,” remarked Titus after supper.

“No. Let’s go right over to the quarters of the tenth legion,” said Julius.

Gametius, another friend and close associate of the boys during their first season’s campaign, was, like Baculus, an older man than most of the common soldiers. He had been the drill-master for the new recruits, and between him and Titus and Julius there had sprung up a close intimacy, even closer than that between them and Baculus, for in this case there was no difference in rank to make a barrier.

Gametius, standard-bearer of the tenth legion, had also been shifted from one unit to another. Serving with the boys in the twelfth legion in last summer's campaign against the Helvetians and Germans, he had distinguished himself in battle, and as a reward Cæsar had chosen him to carry the eagle of the commander's favorite legion, the one that all the soldiers in Gaul looked to as the foremost in bravery.

"Hi, Gametius," exclaimed Julius. "Don't you know your old friends? We passed by you this afternoon in the parade, almost close enough to speak to you and you never noticed us at all."

"No, you never moved an eyelash," asserted Titus. "There you stood like a statue, holding the standard firmly and never moving your head or your eyes, even when Cæsar himself passed."

"But I saw my general, just the same," replied the veteran, "and I'm glad to see my boys again. How are you?"

He grasped their hands.

"Fine," they exclaimed together. "Now tell us about yourself."

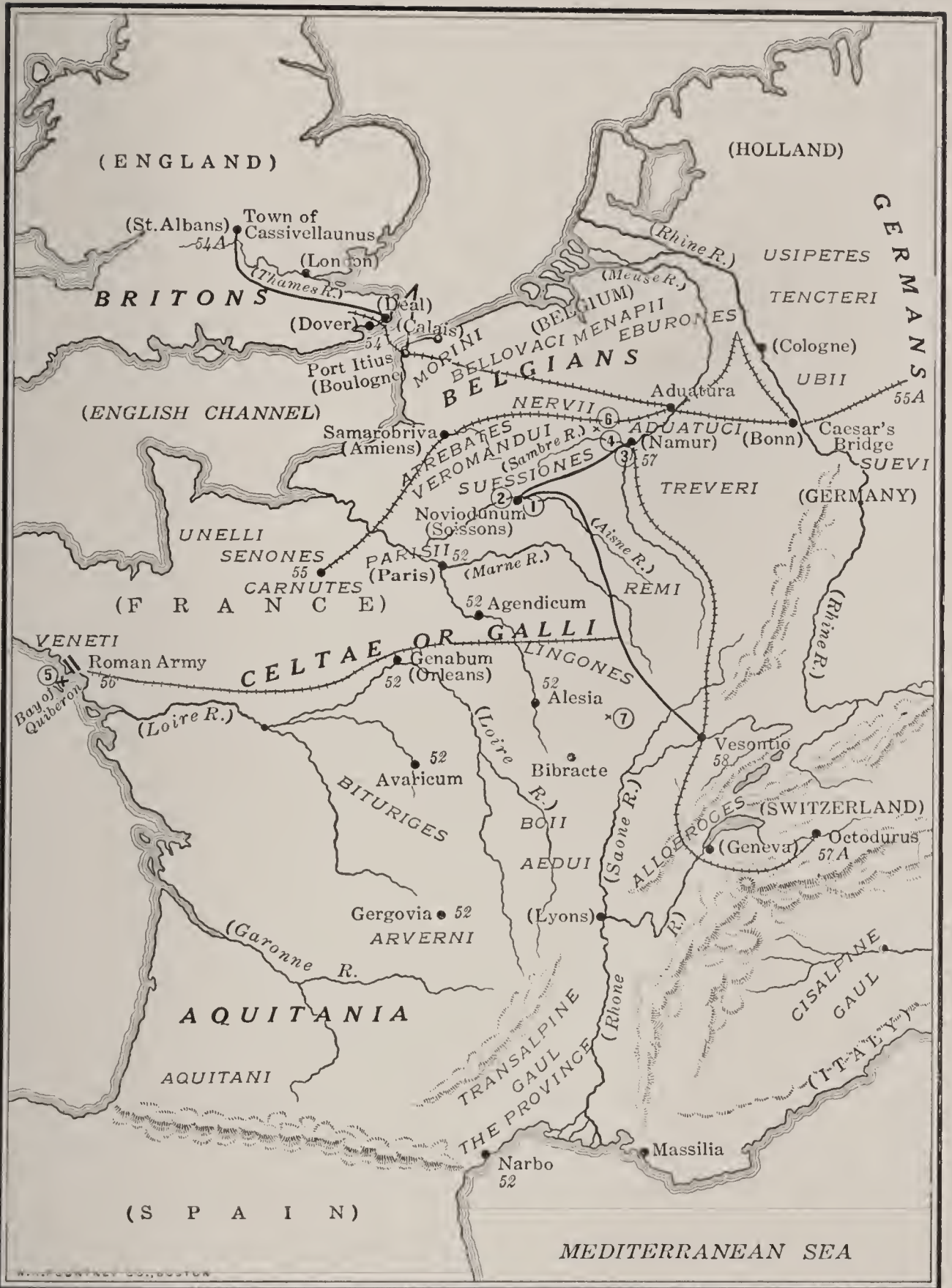
The three sat down and had an hour's chat. From Gametius the boys learned all that had happened in the winter camp. He listened with interest while they told him of their experiences in Northern Italy while they had been away. They had visited their homes, and with the tales of arduous campaigns they could recount, they had made a great impression in the quiet country village where they were born.

The first few days in camp passed quietly and pleasantly. Titus and Julius sought out all their particular friends among the legionaries and visited with them, not forgetting the trader Scæva, with whom they had struck up a friendship in the former campaign and with whom they had experienced an exciting adventure.

Scæva was one of the numerous tradesmen who accompanied the Roman army on its marches. He kept a stock of goods to sell to the soldiers and also bartered with the natives of the regions visited.

The traders, indeed, were as much a part of the army as the numerous other camp-followers, the officers' servants, and the drivers of the pack-trains, who did not bear arms but

were always with the legionaries wherever they went, sharing all the hardships of forced marches, experiencing the dangers of battle, and in general making themselves a part and parcel of the army. The traders were in business on their own account and did not draw pay as the legionaries did.



CAESAR'S ROUTES IN GAUL AND BRITAIN, 58-51 B.C.

CHAPTER III

MARCHING NORTH

IT was a bright May morning when the army began its northward march. The legions were well provisioned for a long campaign, an extra large baggage train accompanying the expedition. The column pushed steadily northward, day after day, following at first a route that was familiar to most of the soldiers, for all of them except the members of the two new legions had marched over it the previous fall in their campaign against the German king, Ariovistus.

But instead of turning towards the River Rhine, the column was headed in the direction of the northern seacoast, following a well-marked Gallic road, a main artery of trade through the region. The route was easy, and good progress was made, one hundred and forty-five miles the first fifteen days.

The territories of the Gallic tribes which had made treaties with the Romans were quickly passed, and the army came among the

Remi, the most southerly tribe of the Belgian confederacy.

So quickly had Cæsar's army left its winter camp and so soon had it pushed into the enemy's country that the Remi were taken by surprise. They had not raised an army and had not fully decided to join the union of northern tribes to make war on the Romans, although familiar with the plan and sympathetic with the object for which it was being made.

However, when Cæsar's army, with its force of Gallic cavalry and other allied native troops, appeared unexpectedly in their midst, they were afraid to wage war and sent ambassadors to make terms with Cæsar, offering to submit to the Roman authority.

The legions had camped near one of the principal towns of the Remi to get rest after the long fifteen-day march. The soldiers were allowed to mingle freely with the people of the country and learn what they could of the plans of the hostile tribes.

At noon one day a group of mounted men approached the main gate of the Roman camp. Titus and Julius were strolling near the gate

as the party approached. The centurion on duty at the gate summoned Titus to him, after talking with the visitors.

“Go tell Cæsar,” he said, “that an embassy has come from the Remi. Two of their principal chiefs, Antebrogius and Iccius, wish to consult him.”

Titus saluted and hastened to Cæsar’s tent, accompanied by Julius.

“I must see the general,” said Titus to the legionary on guard before the tent.

“On what errand?” inquired the soldier.

“A message from the Remi,” replied the boy. “Ambassadors have come to see him, two of the principal men of the state; Iccius and Antebrogius, their names are.”

“I will see them at once, here at my headquarters,” said Cæsar, suddenly stepping from his tent. Then, recognizing his young soldiers, he continued:

“You, Titus, deliver my message and conduct the Remian ambassadors here. You, Julius, get your tablets and your stylus and come here at once. I wish you to take as full notes as you can of the conversation I have with them. Set down particularly the num-

bers of the enemy tribes as I ask them questions about the strength of the forces against us.”

The boys saluted and withdrew. Julius, delighted with the prospect of being present at the interview between his general and the high dignitaries of the Belgian state, ran to his tent to get his writing materials.

“Don’t I have the luck,” he exclaimed to his tent-mate as he burst in upon him. “Cæsar wants me back at his headquarters for duty again.”

“I thought you were sick of that job once and wanted to be back in the ranks with the rest of us,” said the man.

“So I was when it was just the routine work of correspondence and getting out the orders and stuff like that, but this is different.”

“What’s up now?” The legionary was beginning to take more interest when he saw how excited his young companion was, although he could not make out what it was all about.

He was not to know just then, for Julius rushed off as soon as he had found his supplies, not waiting to make any explanation of his new assignment.

The boy had, indeed, grown weary of the routine of the headquarters work while he had been attached to Cæsar's staff during the winter and spring and was glad to get back to his cohort when the spring campaign opened and to perform the daily tasks of the legionary in the ranks.

But this was different. Here was a special task that promised a thrill of excitement—to be in at an important conference and perhaps learn important military secrets! He wondered, as he hastened back to his chief, why he had had this work so suddenly assigned to him.

“Perhaps there were no other secretaries around,” he thought, “but I don't care what the reason is. I'm in luck, anyway.”

He found himself at Cæsar's tent again almost before he knew it. The ambassadors and their escort arrived at once and were ceremoniously received by Cæsar outside his tent. The greetings over, the Roman general gave orders that a guard should be stationed about at some distance from the conference tent and taking with him only Julius, the two ambassadors and an interpreter, he bade them enter and be seated.

“ Say to them,” he directed the interpreter, “ that this interview shall be as private as they desire. They may speak freely. I have with me only a member of my headquarters staff, this young soldier, who will take notes of the parts of our conversation of which I wish to have a written record.”

He graciously extended his greetings to Iccius and Antebrogius, telling them that his mission was one of peaceable and friendly negotiation with all the tribes of Gaul and Belgium which would enter into friendly relations with the Romans, but that he had been informed that certain Belgian tribes were raising an army to drive him from the country. He wished to know the reason for this and to learn what forces were arming against him, their numbers and position.

“ My people,” began Iccius, a stately chieftain, whose bearing showed he was accustomed to rule and to receive homage, “ desire peace and friendship with you. We place our possessions and our supplies at your disposal and desire your protection against our enemies. We have not taken up arms, as you can see, but all the other Belgian tribes are in arms,

and the Germans who live on this side of the Rhine have joined with them. We alone have remained unmoved by the general warlike spirit, but so great has the infatuation become that we cannot restrain our own kinsfolk, the Suessiones, from joining the confederation to make war on you, even though they enjoy the same rights and the same laws with us and have one government in common.”

“What states are now in arms,” inquired Cæsar, “how powerful are they, and what can they do in war?”

Antebrogius answered that the Remi had been asked to join the general council among the Belgian tribes in planning for the war which they hoped would drive the Romans out of Gaul, so that he and his fellow ambassador knew the number of troops each nation had pledged.

The Bellovaci, he said, were the most powerful among them in valor, influence, and numbers. They could muster 100,000 armed men, and had promised from that number 60,000 picked troops, demanding for themselves the command of the whole war on account of their strength.

“Set all those numbers down carefully,” directed Cæsar, in an aside to Julius.

“I wish my secretary to make careful record of the forces of the enemy as you give them,” he explained to the ambassadors through the interpreter. “Now will you please go on? The information is of the greatest importance both to me and to you and your people. We are working in a common cause.”

“The Suessiones,” continued Antebrogius, “are our nearest neighbors and they possess a very fertile and extensive country. Your ally, Divitiacus, the Æduan, the most powerful man in all Gaul, was once their king. Galba now rules over them and has in his hands the government of a large part of this region, as well as of part of Britain. He has had the direction of the whole war conferred upon him by the consent of all, because of his integrity and prudence. The Suessiones have twelve towns. They have promised to send 50,000 fighting men.

“Next come the Nervii, who have promised another 50,000 men. They are reckoned the most warlike of all the Belgian tribes. They are situated at the greatest distance from where

we are now, and no conqueror has ever penetrated their country.”

“Are there others in the league?” asked Cæsar.

“Yes,” went on Iccius, taking up the tale Antebrogius had begun, “the Atrebates have promised 15,000 men, the Ambiani 10,000, the Morini 25,000, the Menapii 9,000, the Caleti 10,000, the Velocasses and Veromandui together another 10,000, the Aduatuci 19,000, and the tribes that are called by the common name of Germans 40,000.”

Inquiring still further about the Germans, Cæsar learned that those the ambassadors spoke of were tribes that had long been settled in the northern part of Gaul, that the Belgian nation was sprung from the Germans of early times, who had long ago crossed the Rhine, driving out the Gauls and inhabiting their fertile territory, that these Belgians were the only ones who had been able to prevent themselves in turn from being driven out by the Teutones and Cimbri, when these fierce tribes overran the whole country, even threatening Rome itself.

The ambassadors of the Remi declared that,

because of this record, the tribes composing the Belgian confederacy assumed to themselves great authority because of their bravery and were haughty in military matters, overlording the more peaceful tribes who welcomed the advance of Roman civilization.

Cæsar thanked the ambassadors for their information and assured them of his protection. He asked that the whole senate of the Remi should meet him in conference at as early a date as it could be assembled and that as hostages, for a pledge of good faith, the children of the chief men of the nation should be brought to him.

To this the ambassadors agreed. They took their leave with mutual pledges of good will.

Julius looked up from the notes he had taken with amazement as the men left the tent and he and Cæsar were alone together.

“Do you know how many men their army will have?” he asked in an awed tone.

“Have you added up the total?” inquired the Roman general.

“Yes, sir, it makes nearly 300,000 men, 296,000 to be exact, that have been promised by the different tribes.”

“And our forces number how many?” queried Cæsar.

“About 60,000, if we count all our auxiliaries. Of Roman legionaries we have less than 40,000.” Julius’ face looked blank. The overwhelming odds against the Romans had never appealed to him with such force as they did now, when he had just tabulated the enemy’s strength himself. He looked at his chief.

Cæsar’s face betrayed not the slightest anxiety. He reached quietly for the notes the boy had taken down and put them away for reference, not even glancing over them.

Julius stood by the tent-flap. “Shall I go now?” he inquired.

“No, I may need your advice. You see the problem before us as well as I do. What shall we do against this great army?”

“What!” faltered the young soldier, in amazement. “You ask me what to do? How can a soldier advise his leader?”

Cæsar turned full on him and shot at him a flashing glance. “The odds are five to one against us. We are, or soon shall be, in a hostile country, far from our base of supplies. Are you afraid to go on?”

“No, sir,” said Julius, firmly and without hesitation.

“Why not?”

“We have you to lead us.”

Cæsar smiled. “Are my other soldiers as fearless and as loyal as you?”

“You know they are, sir.”

“Good, we will go on,” continued the general. “But you have not answered my first question. How shall I proceed against such a large force?”

Julius was silent.

“I mean what I say,” said Cæsar. “I am your leader. You soldiers must do the fighting. But you fight better because you can think for yourselves. What would you do if you were in my place now? Answer me.”

Julius thought a moment and replied, “Do we need to meet this whole great army at once? The Remi yielded because we came on them so quickly. They were not prepared to fight. I remember the ambassadors said each tribe had *promised* so many men. Are they all together in one place yet?”

“Good,” said Cæsar. “You can use your wits. If the rest of my army can see as quickly

the advantage we have by keeping the enemy divided and striking before he is ready, we shall have no trouble. Here is one legionary out of 40,000 who does not think 300,000 tribesmen too much for us. What do the other 40,000 think?"

"They will think the same as I do when you speak to them," the boy replied.

"You may go now," Cæsar ordered. "Find Divitiacus, the Æduan chief, and send him here at once."

Julius ran to carry out the order.

The veteran leader of the Gauls was with Cæsar in his tent for half an hour. The Roman general impressed upon him the necessity, for the common security of both the Romans and the Gauls, to keep the Belgian hosts divided and to strike quickly.

Divitiacus was commissioned to lead his Æduan forces at once on a ravaging expedition into the country of the Bellovaci, taking with him such troops as the Remi were ready to put into action immediately. The first stroke of the campaign was to get the Remi fighting with their Roman allies and against their Belgian neighbors.

The main part of the Roman army was not long inactive. Scouts brought in the news that a large force of Belgians had assembled and was advancing towards the Romans. Cæsar ordered an advance. His army moved across the River Marne and on the River Aisne. Here was a bridge across the stream. Cæsar took possession of the bridge and threw up a strongly fortified camp on the north bank of the river.

On the south bank, to protect the bridge and to keep communications open to the rear, he fortified another camp and placed a guard of six cohorts in it under one of his lieutenants, Sabinus. This smaller camp was protected by a rampart twelve feet high and a trench eighteen feet in breadth.

The enemy was close at hand.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME EASY VICTORIES

THE defensive position chosen by Cæsar was a good one. The River Aisne protected a large part of the territory of his new allies, the Remi, and was a defense to the Roman line. The legionaries' camp north of the river was on a hill, at the foot of which ran a brook through low, marshy ground, rendering difficult an approach from two sides. The hill itself rose some eighty feet above the river. Its slopes were of such a nature that the legions could easily be deployed in battle position on them, one end of the line resting on the camp fortifications.

“This is a strong position to hold,” commented Titus, as he and Julius took their posts on the camp walls to do guard duty.

“By the gods, you're right,” asserted his companion. “I'd just like to see the enemy try to dislodge us from this hill, even if they bring up their whole army.”

“ Their army is on the way, I hear,” said Titus. “ Some scouts brought in word this afternoon that they had camped only about two miles away.”

“ Hurrah, they’ll be on us before long!” said Julius, exultingly.

“ Why are you so anxious to see them?” asked Titus, more cautious by nature than his younger cousin.

“ We’ll show them what is coming to them,” boasted Julius.

The night had fallen when the boys again took their posts on the ramparts, after a relief period.

“ You’ll have to keep a sharp lookout to-night,” cautioned the soldiers whose places on the sentry-beat they took when they returned to duty.

“ Why is that?” they asked.

“ Look,” one legionary said, pointing to the northern horizon. “ Do you see those camp-fires?”

“ Yes,” exclaimed Julius. “ They do show plainly, do they not? What a long line of them!”

Almost as far as the eye could see along the

horizon, the twinkling camp-fires could be made out.

“ We figure their camp stretches out at least eight miles,” continued the soldier. “ They are a host, all right. We shall have plenty of action soon.”

The foe made no attack that night nor the next day, but both armies sent out scouting parties of cavalry, which met in several encounters. In all of them the Roman forces were victorious.

These skirmishes were followed by small infantry actions, as reconnoitering parties were sent out to feel out the ground between the two armies. A cohort or two at a time, the legionaries met parties of the enemy of about equal strength or greater, each time proving themselves superior to the Belgian foot-soldiers.

The ambition of the Roman soldiers, both legionaries and light-armed auxiliary troops, to meet the enemy in a pitched battle increased. The skirmishes that had taken place gave them confidence in their own individual superiority, and they lost any dread of the overwhelming advantage of numbers the barbarians had.

The legionaries began to clamor to be led into battle.

But Cæsar proceeded cautiously, not wishing to put his soldiers to the test too quickly. A defeat at this stage of the campaign might spell disaster.

Experience had taught the Roman commander that he had nothing to lose in waiting for the enemy to make the attack, for his own well-drilled troops increased in steadiness as time went on, while the tribes he was facing, if they behaved like the rest of the Gauls his army had met in previous campaigns, would lose some of their impetuous bravery if a combat did not take place soon.

A quick onslaught was the usual method of making war these tribes employed. A progressive, well-planned campaign was seldom part of their course of action. But either because the huge bulk of their army made it unwieldy, or because the leaders were divided in their counsels, no general assault was made by the Belgians for several days.

The Roman general, restraining his eager troops, employed the time in still further strengthening his position. Between the camp

walls and the brook on one side and the river on the other were gaps through which the enemy might penetrate and take the legions in the rear. These places were fortified with a wall and trench four hundred paces long, at right angles to the front of the camp. At the end of each wall a strong redoubt was built.

“Won’t this shoveling and fort-building ever stop?” complained Titus to his centurion, Baculus, who was constantly with his men as they went about the task of fortifying that Cæsar had ordered.

“You ought not to object,” said the officer, not unkindly. “Is it any harder to keep off the enemy with a pile of dirt than it is with a shield? You have been in battle. Come, now, tell me truly. Would you really rather be part of a wall of men to hold back a barbarian rush than do a bit of shoveling to make our position secure?”

“No, sir,” replied Titus, rather shamefacedly. “I don’t mean to be a grumbler, but you see, sir, we are all anxious to get into action and show these Belgians what fighting is like.”

“You’re coming on as a soldier, all right, young man,” said Baculus, with a laugh. “Be-

fore the summer is over I can report that you are a seasoned veteran. A good soldier always has to growl just about so much, you know."

"Keep him at it more, then," said Julius, in great glee. "Shoveling is fine exercise for Titus. He needs to have his back strengthened. He is always complaining it is weak. I love to hear him grumble. He'll make a fine soldier in time, you say, Baculus. If grumbling at digging is any test, you ought to rank him high, already. You don't hear him all the time."

"Oh, keep still, will you?" retorted Titus. "Who is a worse grumbler than you, I want to know, if you don't get all you want to eat every day?"

Baculus laughed heartily at his young soldiers. "I have learned another point about you now," he said. "If Titus gets unruly, I'll put him at a job of shoveling. If Julius needs discipline, I'll reduce his rations."

"Tell me, sir," continued Titus, "what are some of the other marks of a good soldier? I guess we are a set of grumblers, all right, but we don't grumble much when we get in a tight place, do we?"

“No, you do not.” The veteran officer had become serious again. “I’ve served with several legions, and you may tell any one you want that I say I never had a better one than this twelfth legion when it comes to real patience in difficulty. Maybe you boys think I drive you hard sometimes, but I tell you that you and your mates are worth it. You respond. I think it is the spirit Cæsar is able to inspire in the soldiers under him, for I have served under some other generals where the lack of discipline made it hard for the officers, but somehow you men are always ready to do what is asked of you. We have not had a battle yet where the courage shown was not all any general could ask. We have not made a hard march which the men did not go through with to the last ounce of their strength. You are coming to be a body of men remarkable for toughness, force, and adaptiveness, and above all you have a confidence in your leader that is most noteworthy. Those are some of the marks of a good soldier, if you want my opinion on the matter.”

The officer walked away to chat with other legionaries.

“Do you know, Julius,” said Titus, looking after him, “we are mighty lucky to have such a centurion as Baculus.”

“Indeed I do,” his cousin replied. “They are not all like him. Tough, are we? We’ll show him. Give me my shovel.”

The Belgians, unwilling to storm the strong fortifications, made practically invincible while they delayed a frontal assault, tried another method of attack on Cæsar’s forces. Marching in small parties around the left of the Roman position, through thick woods that concealed their movements, they discovered a ford across the river.

By this means they could get in the rear of the Romans, attack the small camp which guarded the bridge-head, and strike the legions from behind. The flanking movement was discovered by Titurius, commander at the bridge-head, who reported at once to Cæsar. The general left his legions in camp, and taking the cavalry and light-armed auxiliaries with him, hastened across the bridge.

He arrived at the ford in the nick of time, for the enemy had begun to cross the river in considerable numbers. The light-armed troops

attacked them vigorously and repulsed them in the attempted fording of the river. The fight was soon over.

News of this victory over the Belgians caused rejoicing in the Roman camp. The legionaries were more eager than ever for the great and decisive battle all felt must soon come.

“What will we do to them!” exclaimed Julius, when he heard the news. “They fled before a few of our auxiliaries. What chance will they have when they meet us?”

“None at all,” declared Titus, full of the scorn of the enemy that all the Roman soldiers were beginning to feel. “I don’t believe they dare attack us, do they, Baculus?”

The centurion answered, “Don’t be overconfident, boys. We may have fighting to do yet, and stiff fighting. Don’t get in the habit of underrating your opponents. It’s sometimes fatal.”

“I don’t underrate the enemy, sir,” continued Titus, “but do you really suppose they will attack us in this stronghold? They tried to get around behind us and failed. Now what can they do?”

“ I don’t know, I’m sure,” replied the officer. “ We must wait and see. Here’s a chance to show your patience. Perhaps we shall know to-morrow. I fancy that their forces must be somewhat demoralized with the long wait and the reverses they have met. That’s the way with barbarians. Cæsar knows them and knows how to deal with them. The campaign is going well enough. Don’t be too impatient.”

“ It’s hard to wait,” said Julius, impulsively. “ I long to get at them. Here we’ve waited more than a week and given them every chance to attack us if they dare. Let them come on to-morrow. We are ready.”

The boys and their fellow soldiers did not have to wait until the next day to learn the plans of the enemy. About midnight that night, sounds of an unusual stir were heard from the Belgian camp.

Titus and Julius hurried to the camp walls with the other soldiers to learn what the commotion might mean. It soon became evident that the enemy was breaking camp and retiring.

Lack of success had upset the Belgian tribes and they decided to quit the war. The news

had come to them that the Æduans under Divitiacus had begun to raid the territories of the Bellovaci. The Bellovaci decamped at once to protect their own homes.

The other tribes feared what might befall their unprotected territories if they remained away on a long expedition and were eager to retire. Before they broke camp, the leaders of the various tribes agreed to assemble an army again to resist an attack if Cæsar marched against any tribe belonging to the confederacy.

Their retreat, begun under unfavorable circumstances in the night time, became confusion. The movement to retire having been decided on and put into operation at once by some of the more restless, each tribe tried to be first to set out on the homeward march. The whole camp was in disorder, the sounds of shouting among the Belgians being carried plainly to the Romans on the clear night air.

“Why, it sounds like a regular rout,” said Julius. “They are moving off, aren’t they? What else can they be doing?”

“I think you’re right,” said Titus. “Still, it may be only a ruse to draw us on. I hope we do not go out against them to-night. It

would be bad business in the woods in the dark, especially if the retreat is only a trick to deceive us.”

Cæsar, fearing treachery, kept his troops in camp during the night, but in the morning it was learned that the enemy's retreat was genuine and a pursuit was ordered shortly after dawn. The cavalry were sent after the retreating columns, cutting down thousands of men without resistance.

The twelfth legion and two others under the command of Lieutenant Titus Labienus were sent after the enemy to harass their rear. But the Belgians would not turn and fight. The pursuit was kept up till nightfall, when the legions returned to camp.

The soldiers, worn out with a night of excitement and a full day's marching, were glad to reach their quarters again and have a chance to rest.

“I'm too tired to sleep,” declared Julius, as he took off his armor. “What a day! What butchery! They wouldn't fight at all. Just let themselves be slaughtered like sheep. It's terrible!”

“It's war,” said Titus.

CHAPTER V

A SET-BACK FOR THE LEGIONS

NEXT morning the Roman army was astir early and was marched down the River Aisne to a town of the Suessiones called Noviodunum. The place now bears the name of Soissons. The Suessiones had joined the confederacy against the Romans and had put an army in the field, leaving their chief town with only a small garrison. By a forced march of twenty-eight miles the legions reached the town that afternoon.

Preparations were quickly made for an assault. The legions were drawn up in columns on a narrow front. Before them rose the walls of the town, massive and high. At the top of the ramparts stood the few defenders of the town.

“There are not many of them, so far as I can see,” said Julius.

“No, not many men, to be sure,” replied Titus, “but the wall is high. How shall we ever scale it?”

“Perhaps the gate is not strong,” Julius answered. “We may be able to batter it down with a ram.”

“But,” objected Titus, “we have no scaling-ladders with us nor any siege-engines. The place looks to me like a hard one to take by assault.”

Baculus approached and ordered his cohort to the rear to cut timber. Tall forest trees were hastily felled, trimmed of their branches, and fashioned into battering-rams with which to make an attack upon the gate. The army engineers, called on to direct the work of preparation and skilful in making clever contrivances with little to work with, had ready in short order also a supply of roughly built ladders.

Three legions were marshaled in three separate columns to make the assault. One was drawn up in close order opposite the principal town gate, against which the battering-rams were to be hurled, flanked on either side by a supporting legion carrying the ladders which had been built.

“Ready, now, men,” ordered Baculus, hastening about among the ranks of the twelfth

legion. "The attack will begin in a few moments. Form a testudo with your shields. Close ranks."

The shields were raised above the legionaries' heads, overlapping one another to form a complete roof-like protection under which the men might advance against the walls. The testudo thus formed would give protection from missiles thrown from the walls.

"Your work is to get a footing on the walls close by that tower which guards the gate," continued the centurion. "We must capture and hold the tower so that the tenth legion can work uninterruptedly with the rams at the gate. All three legions will move forward on the run together. Watch for the signal to charge. Then all together with a rush. The first man to scale the walls will have high honor. Ready now."

The assaulting columns had been quickly formed, but to the waiting men in the ranks it seemed an endless time. As the minutes passed, quickly enough in fact, but seeming to drag, the waiting men measured with their glances the distance they had to cross on the run to reach the walls. They measured the dis-

tance to the top of the walls. Had the calculations been made correctly? Would the ladders reach the top?

The minutes dragged on. A hush of expectancy fell on all the soldiers. There was dead silence in the ranks. Each man could distinctly feel his heart beat. It seemed to some as if these beats must make a noise their comrades could hear. The waiting legionaries were tense with excitement.

“Why doesn’t the signal come? Why aren’t we ordered forward?” whispered Julius.

“I don’t know. I can’t stand this much longer,” answered Titus, with a tremor in his voice, his nervous excitement showing more plainly than he realized until the words were out.

Julius noticed it and felt relieved. His own legs were shaking.

“Why, you’re as scared as I am,” he burst out. “I thought I was the only one.”

His lips were numb and strange, but it was a relief to speak. His knees trembled and felt weak, although he made a great effort to hold them firm by bearing down with all his weight, digging his toes into the ground with all his

might. No use; the young soldier's whole body was trembling.

"Scared? By Jupiter, I am," admitted Titus. "I never was so frightened in my life. What's the matter with us? Is it a panic? Are we going to break and run away?"

"It's the excitement of this waiting to begin the action," said a fellow-soldier, reassuringly, but in a voice that was a bit unsteady. "We are all alike. Hear the rattling of the shields as they rest on one another. The men can't hold their arms still."

"Is it always like this when waiting to attack?" asked Julius. "I've never been in a position just like this before. I didn't know what was the matter with me. I thought I had lost all my nerve."

"It will come back," promised his companion. "I myself never went into battle yet without being scared nearly to death at the start, especially if there was any waiting. You forget all about the fear when the rush of action comes, but this suspense is certainly terrible. It gets me. I never can go through it without trembling."

Knowing that the speaker was one of the

bravest of the legionaries in battle, Titus and Julius regained some of their self-control, although their hearts were beating wildly and their limbs shook in spite of every effort made to stand steadily in the position of attention.

“There. It’s coming now,” exclaimed Julius. “Watch Baculus.”

The centurion stood a short distance from the ranks, watching the higher officer from whom he was awaiting orders to be passed on to his own men. He raised his arm to have it ready to give the signal.

“Forward!” he shouted, swinging his arm in a half-circle and pointing towards the wall. He raised his shield above his head and rushed into the place that had been left for him in the ranks of the testudo, at the head of the column.

The men swept forward in a close-packed mass, yelling as they charged. Fear left them as they dashed into action. The assault was on. It was met by fierce cries from the besieged garrison, fierce cries and showers of stones and darts. The defenders were well-prepared.

The three attacking columns quickly crossed

the space that separated them from the foot of the wall. Down into the deep ditch before it the legionaries poured in massed formation and began to scale the walls.

“Hold that ladder firmly,” shouted Baculus. “Now, you, up it.”

An agile legionary sprang upon the ladder, instantly followed by others, holding their shields above their heads. One fell back, pierced through by a dart. His body was dragged back under the protection of the shield-made testudo of his mates below.

The topmost man had almost reached the parapet when the whole ladder was hurled backward by the defenders with forked sticks. Down it crashed upon the shields of the legionaries, the men who had been on it groaning with their hurts. Again the ladder was raised and again it was thrown back.

“Let me try,” cried Titus.

Before he could climb upon the rounds, two quicker soldiers had made their way up ahead of him. Up they climbed, only to be hurled back again.

“Hurt, Titus?” Julius helped him to his feet as he landed on the ground.

“No,” snapped Titus, fiercely. “Hold that ladder firm against the wall. Don’t let them push it back. I’ll reach the top.”

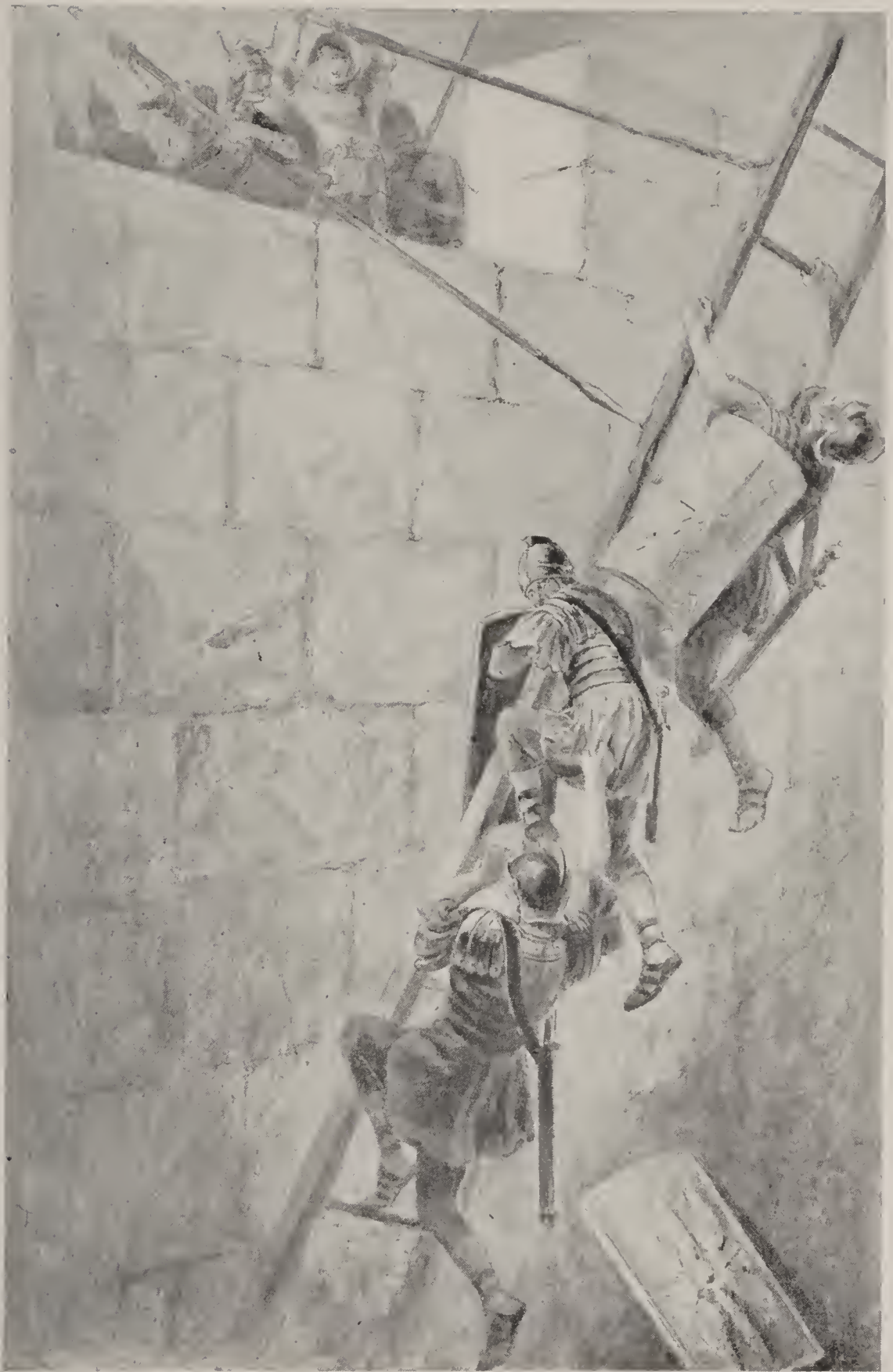
He rushed again to the foot of the ladder, but too late, for other eager legionaries were mounting it, only to be repulsed.

The attack was going badly all along the line. The Sussions from the wall began to taunt the Romans, encouraged themselves at the success of their defense.

Angered at being held back by smaller numbers, the legionaries pressed the attack with renewed vigor. Here and there along the wall, three or four of them succeeded in getting a foothold on the top, only to be cut down by the swords of the besieged.

From their advantageous position on the high wall the defenders rained down a shower of missiles which wrought havoc among the attackers. The legionaries fell fast, killed or wounded, not only those who were trying to mount the ladders, but those who stood clustered in the ditch below.

The tribunes in command of the twelfth legion gave orders to retreat, seeing the attack had failed. The Romans retired, sullenly,



THE WHOLE LADDER WAS HURLED BACKWARD.—*Page 63.*

baffled and beaten, angered by the taunting cries of the besieged. They withdrew out of range of the missiles, taking their dead and wounded with them.

Repulsed in their attack on the tower and the section of the wall on the opposite side of the gate, the ninth legion also withdrew to reform its broken ranks. The tenth legion, which had made a stubborn attack on the gate itself and had suffered heavy losses without being able to force an entrance, could not keep up the assault unsupported. It also retired, its seldom-defeated men raging at the set-back they had received.

Three more storming columns were formed from fresh legions and these were hurled against the town. But defeat met them, too.

Night came and Cæsar ordered his tired troops to camp. Exhausted with an all-day's pursuit of the fleeing enemy the day before, by an all-day's march of more than usual length and by the heroic, but unsuccessful efforts of the attack against the town, the legionaries sought the rest they badly needed.

It was a tired, discouraged army. To be repulsed by a handful of defenders! That was

a bitter pill to swallow for the seasoned soldiers who had swept before them all other Gallic armies they had met.

Cæsar spent the whole evening going about among his downhearted centurions who had led the unsuccessful assault.

“Cheer up, Baculus,” he said. “Your men did all they could. You led them gallantly. I watched your work. One moment I thought your cohort had gained a footing on the walls. We were repulsed, but the fault is not yours.”

“The disgrace is, though,” replied Baculus, sadly.

“No disgrace,” insisted the Roman general. “We must expect a reverse now and then. It is the hazard of war. Fortune does not always smile. She is a fickle goddess. You did your part nobly. I am proud of the twelfth legion.”

“Thank you, sir,” said the centurion, “but we shall not forget this day. We have been defeated. That is all there is to it.”

“I’ll take all the blame,” his commander went on. “The fault was mine. I should not have sent wearied troops against such strong fortifications without more preparation. You and your men did every bit you could. Take

heart. We have learned a lesson. I shall bring up siege-engines. This town shall not escape us."

While the legionaries slept, the army of the Suessiones, recovering from the panic of their hasty retreat when the Belgian army broke up, returned to their town. Creeping in by a side gate, under cover of the darkness, they reinforced the small garrison with fresh troops.

CHAPTER VI

SIEGE OPERATIONS

“THIS looks like a siege of some length,” remarked Titus.

“Why so?” inquired Julius.

“See what a wide terrace we are building,” replied his companion.

The boys were working in one of the vineae brought up to protect the workers from missiles thrown from the walls by the besieged, a sort of pent-house, roofed over for protection, but open at the ends, so that placed together in a row, end to end, they would make a covered gallery through which the besiegers could bring up materials from the rear to build the terrace. The tops and sides of the vineae were covered with skins, so that they could not be set on fire easily.

All the legionaries were put to work. The engineers who accompanied the army took charge of operations, driving the men to the limit. The terrace of logs and earth, wide at

the base, as Titus had said, was rapidly built up till its height would eventually equal that of the town walls.

“Yes, it’s big enough,” assented Julius. “It will be fifty feet or more wide at the top when we finish it. A storming party will have plenty of room to march along it.”

“No more wall-scaling here, when we get ready to make the assault,” said Titus.

“Come, boys, get to work,” a centurion ordered. “Don’t take time to talk while you are on the terrace. You’ll be relieved before you get tired, and then you may talk all you want.”

The boys turned to their work again. The task was not particularly dangerous, although there was always the risk that the enemy might make a sally from their fortifications to destroy the works that were being raised against the town. The legionaries kept their arms at hand while they worked, to be able to resist an attack.

The auxiliary troops were entrusted with the duty of keeping the enemy busy. The bowmen and slingers maintained a steady fire, so that the enemy within the town might have to stay within the protection of their ramparts.

Catapults and ballistæ were set up in the rear of the Roman lines. These engines could throw heavy stones and great arrows to a considerable distance.

So the legionaries worked under the fire of their own allies. Above their heads the stones thrown by the catapults flew into the defenses of the town. The stones were not heavy enough to batter down the walls, which were of immense thickness. If a breach was to be made in the walls, it would have to be done by special engines.

However, the plan of attack was to build up a high terrace, so that the legionaries might approach the town on a level with its defenders on the top of their walls. Immense as the terrace was, the building of it was accomplished so rapidly that the garrison of the town was astonished.

High towers were also constructed by the Romans, which when the moment for the attack came could be pushed up to the walls, permitting the archers stationed on them to shoot down at the defenders of the town.

The Suessiones, marveling at the completeness of the preparations for the attack

upon them, took counsel. Evidently they would be unable to resist the next assault, when Cæsar's forces were ready to make it. Such preparations! Such vast siege works and engines! What hope for their people? It would be better to surrender.

A delegation was sent from the town to sue for peace. Cæsar received the envoys graciously, and as their former friends, the Remi, now Cæsar's allies, pleaded for them, he made easy terms. The Suessiones were compelled to give up all their arms and to give him hostages, but would be allowed to retain their independence, subject to his orders. They accepted the terms.

Vast stores of arms were found in the town, all of which were destroyed.

Another tribe had been subdued. Another link in the strong chain about the Roman army had been broken. First the Remi, then the Suessiones, had surrendered. Cæsar's soldiers were elated. The campaign was going well.

No time was lost in moving against the Bellovaci, the next tribe to the north, considered one of the most dangerous of all those in the Belgian confederacy. The Roman army

crossed the Aisne and marched against the chief town of the Bellovaci, Bratuspantium.

No siege had to be commenced here. As soon as the Roman army drew near the place, a delegation of the old men came out to sue for peace, and when the walls of the town came in sight, the legionaries noticed that they were filled with women and boys, instead of soldiers, who made gestures of entreaty for mercy.

Divitiacus, the Æduan chief, begged Cæsar to spare these people, declaring that the promoters of the war had fled to Britain. Cæsar took the Bellovaci under his protection, requiring them to give as hostages six hundred children of the leading men of the nation, including two of the king's sons.

The Belgian confederacy was rapidly crumbling. The neighboring tribe, the Ambiani, also surrendered without a fight.

The end of July had come, but Cæsar, not satisfied that he had yet fully subdued the country, pressed on in a northeasterly direction.

“What tribe are we moving against now, Baculus?” asked Titus.

“The Nervii.”

“ Will they surrender, too, like all the others, do you think? ”

“ Perhaps,” replied the centurion, “ but they are different from the other tribes, I understand. They rank as the bravest of all. They may stand and fight.”

“ They are not alone, either,” said Julius, who had been listening. “ The report is that they have with them the Veromandui and the Atrebates. Three strong tribes. I guess we shall have our work cut out for us.”

“ Very likely you are right,” Baculus went on. “ The Nervii have been taunting the other tribes with cowardice for making treaties with us. They themselves will have nothing to do with strangers. They want to keep apart from all other nations. They will not engage in commerce with any people except their own. They appear to want no intercourse at all.”

“ They have had time enough to get ready,” said Titus. “ Have you heard anything about their preparations for war? ”

“ Yes,” replied Baculus. “ They have abandoned their towns, probably because they have seen how easily we have taken all other fortified places in this campaign. They have sent all

the women and children to a place that is practically inaccessible because of the marsh that surrounds it.”

The Roman army pushed on, and in three days' march came to the River Sambre. From prisoners it was learned that the Belgian army lay not ten miles away, down the stream, waiting for the approach of the legions.

Next day Cæsar's army broke camp at day-break and moved forward against the Nervii and the other Belgic tribes.

“The bravest of the brave, are they?” Titus mused as he marched along.

His wildest day-dreams could bring him no realization of the part he was to play in the coming contest.

CHAPTER VII

THE BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE

THE men of the twelfth legion laid down their packs and began to fortify a camp for the night. Their legion had been stationed at the right side of the camp, with the seventh legion to assist, while the eighth and eleventh had places assigned on the front wall, facing the river. On the left side were the ninth and tenth.

Across the river could be seen some cavalry of the enemy deployed as skirmishers, and against these Cæsar sent a detachment of the allied Gallic horsemen. Few of the legionaries were interested in watching the cavalry engagement, for such skirmishes with the Belgians were of almost daily occurrence. The Gallic horsemen did not attempt to push into the woods in which the enemy were located and which began some two hundred paces from the edge of the stream and reached to the top of the slope beyond.

“Why don’t we have some legionaries out in front to-day to protect us while we work, I wonder,” said Titus.

“I can’t say,” replied Julius, “but who cares? The more of us legionaries there are to make the fortifications, the sooner we shall finish the job. I guess the skirmish-line of cavalry can hold the enemy all right.”

“Possibly they can,” admitted Titus, “for they do not seem to be very thick in front of us, just a body of scouts, no doubt. I wonder where the main body of the Belgian army can be.”

The boys and all the other Roman soldiers were soon to know, for the Nervii and their allies, the Atrebates and the Veromandui, were close at hand in force. In the woods beyond the river the whole army of the enemy was drawn up in battle line, concealed by the thick forest, as was their camp farther up the hill. The scouts had failed to discover their presence.

The Nervian cavalry kept Cæsar’s Gallic cavalry from penetrating into the woods, so that the Roman army had no inkling of the fact that close at hand was the whole Belgian

army, awaiting a prearranged signal to begin an attack. Cæsar had depended on his allies to do the scouting, but they had not discovered the trap that was almost ready to close on them.

The Nerviiian chiefs had laid out a well-arranged plan of battle and were ready to strike the decisive blow. They had learned from their own scouts and from deserters from the Roman camp that Cæsar's army on its march was greatly impeded by its baggage-train.

With that in mind, the enemy devised their scheme. If the leading legion could be attacked as soon as its baggage-train appeared, which in the customary marching order followed immediately behind the legion to which it was attached, the Roman foot-soldiers might be thrown into confusion and be cut down before the next legion behind could get past the baggage-train and come to the assistance of the advance legion. The same plan was to be followed as each legion came up, each hindered by its baggage-train.

Thus, Cæsar's forces were to be attacked piecemeal, without risking a general engage-

ment for which the Roman general might have time to prepare. If the plan went well, his whole army might be routed and destroyed. The Nerviiian hopes were high for the success of the scheme. They patiently waited in the woods for the signal to begin the battle, the appearance of the baggage-train.

A thing that was unknown to them was that the baggage-trains of all the legions had been grouped in one train, with two legions left to guard it, while the main body of the legionaries moved on in advance. Six legions had come on the field instead of the one the enemy hoped to catch alone.

Ignorant of the plan formed for their destruction, ignorant, indeed, of the presence of the enemy in large numbers, the Roman soldiers went about the task of fortifying the camp in care-free fashion. Some took shovels and dug the ditch and threw up the earthworks. Others wandered about in search of wood for the palisades, many getting far from the camp site.

Strict orders from Cæsar kept all the officers at their posts with their men until the fortifications should be complete. On no ac-

count should they leave the men until this task was done.

The camp walls were about half finished when the head of the baggage-train appeared. The watchful enemy saw the signal for which they had been waiting. Like an avalanche they swept across the shallow river, brushing away like so much chaff the line of Gallic horsemen. Up the slope they dashed against the unarmed and unsuspecting Romans.

Sharp commands rang out from the Roman officers. The legionaries rushed for their shields and javelins, laid aside while the construction of the camp was in progress. The surprise was complete, but the discipline of the Roman legions once more stood them in good stead.

“Fall in! Fall in!” shouted the centurions.

The men obeyed by instinct. No time was given to seek one's regular position. The legionaries fell into ranks anywhere they might happen to be, about the standards that were hastily set in place. A cohort might have a hundred men or fifty—no matter, it was a fighting unit, ready for battle.

“Where's our cohort?” shouted Julius to

Titus, picking up a shield, whether his own or not he did not know or care.

“ Fall in here! Form ranks! ” a centurion commanded.

The boys obeyed. It was not their cohort. What odds? The formation was the same in all. The men about them took positions. The foe was close at hand and some sort of battle line must be formed at once. The legionaries had not even time to pull from the shields the covers that were used over them while on the march.

All over the field the ranks were formed. The officers rushed about, straightening the irregular lines, filling up gaps, bringing some semblance of order out of the confusion. The trumpets were sounding the alarm. The legionaries who were caught far from camp ran back to find a place somewhere in the lines.

In less than twenty minutes the army stood in order to receive the attack; not a moment too soon, for the enemy, already formed in battle order, wasted no time in forcing on the battle.

The Roman camp-followers, servants, drivers, and tradesmen, took to their heels and

fled from the camp gates to the woods. The allied cavalry and light-armed troops were in a panic, and many of them fled with the camp-followers to spread the news in the rear that the Roman army had been surprised and annihilated.

But the stout-hearted legionaries fell to with a will to resist the attack. The assault of the enemy was determined; the resistance they met was more so.

On the left of the hastily formed line of battle that surrounded three sides of the camp, the foe was repulsed. Out of breath with their rush through the woods, across the stream, and up the slope, the Atrebates could not gain the advantage in their attack, but were pushed back after some fierce fighting. The ninth and tenth legions, which met their onslaught, chased after them until the enemy's camp was reached.

The eighth and eleventh legions, in the center, held their positions and hurled their opponents, the Veromandui, back down the hill to the river, on the bank of which the battle was kept up.

With the seventh and twelfth legions the conflict went worse. The success of the legions

on their flank left their own position more exposed. While the battle was raging hottest there was no way for the soldiers to tell how it was going. Each legion had to fight for itself, with no chance to bring support to others, for no reserve, or supporting line, had been formed, so quickly had the attack been made.

Meanwhile a large force of the redoubtable Nervii had forded the river, climbed the heights above the Roman camp and now fell fiercely on the two hard-pressed legions.

The standards of the twelfth had been placed so closely together that the men were huddled in masses. There was scarcely room to use the sword to good effect. A rain of missiles fell upon the close-packed ranks, inflicting heavy losses. In some cohorts every officer was killed or wounded. Surrounded on three sides by the barbarian forces that outnumbered them six to one, the men of the twelfth legion fought on doggedly.

In the confusion of the fighting, Titus and Julius became separated from each other as the ranks moved back and forth. Pausing for a rest after he had taken his turn in the fighting

in the front line, Titus took the opportunity to look about him.

His legion and the seventh stood alone upon the hilltop by the camp. Below him, at the river bank, he could make out the lines of the eighth and eleventh, struggling to push back across the stream the barbarians who had attacked them. He pointed out the contest raging there to a fellow-soldier who stood nearest to him.

“ See! ” he said. “ I believe our troops are winning there in the center of the line. ”

“ The worse for us, ” the man replied.

“ Why so? ” asked Titus.

“ There’s no order to this battle, ” answered the soldier. “ It’s every legion for itself. There are those two legions, that ought to be supporting us, gone off, leaving our flank exposed. The farther they go, the worse for us. ”

“ Sure enough, ” admitted Titus, realizing for the first time how exposed their position was. “ But why can’t we drive our enemy down the hill, too? ”

“ Don’t ask me, ” replied the legionary, savagely. “ I’ve fought for all I’m worth and so has every man I’ve been next to. These

are the toughest barbarians I have ever met. They are more than a match for us, I fear."

"No, don't say that," said Titus. "To give up means our ruin. They will wipe us out if we don't drive them back."

"Yes, drive them back! Let me see you do it. You've had your chance in the front line, haven't you? Did you make them yield?"

"Not yet, but don't give up," pleaded Titus. "We shall drive them back. We must."

"Not without help," replied his fellow-soldier, wearily. "We've done our best. I've fought till I can hardly stand, I am so tired. A few minutes more, half an hour, perhaps, and we are doomed. There are no supports, no reserves to send to our help. There is no plan to this battle. We're lost, I tell you."

"I don't believe it," stoutly maintained Titus. "Wait till Cæsar comes. The tide will turn."

But although the boy tried to put assurance in his voice, he failed to convince his companion, who threw himself wearily upon the ground, the picture of despair.

Titus himself began to doubt the outcome of the struggle. His companion was right in

one way, there was no help in sight, no other legion to rush to the succor of the exhausted twelfth, not a cohort, even, anywhere to be seen which could be brought up to give the needed relief.

His eyes swept over the field of battle. In front he saw the soldiers of his own legion, fighting on stubbornly against superior numbers, fighting well, to be sure, but with less vigor than at first, as if they felt the hopelessness of the situation. The enemy pressed on more eagerly than in the first rush of the attack. Sure of victory, they shouted their exultant battle-cry. The Roman battle-cries had ceased.

The legion would not surrender, Titus knew, but how long could the men hold out? Man by man they were being cut down. Was the end to come within a half-hour, as his discouraged companion had predicted?

The boy looked back to the half-finished camp. No help was there. Not a soldier manned its walls, not a camp-follower was in sight, for all had fled.

He turned his eyes to the right. No help in that quarter, either, for the legions by the river

bank quite clearly had all they could manage in giving battle to the forces of the enemy with which they were engaged. Not a cohort could be spared from their ranks for the aid of the doomed twelfth legion.

But look! A horseman was galloping across the slope, headed in their direction, a messenger from the general, no doubt.

“Look! Look!” Titus shouted excitedly to the man beside him. “A messenger. Here come orders from our general.”

The weary legionary sprang to his feet.

“That’s no messenger,” he said. “It’s Cæsar himself. No other rides like that.”

In a moment the commander was by their side. He reined his horse sharply, sprang from the saddle and snatched the shield from Titus’ hand. He spoke not a word.

“Give me yours.” Titus in turn snatched the older legionary’s shield and followed Cæsar.

Through the ranks they pressed to the front.

“Come on, men, have at them!” shouted Cæsar.

His words electrified his soldiers, his actions spurred them to redoubled efforts. Led on by the general himself, they fell upon the enemy

with fury again. The Roman battle-cry rang out. Weariness and despair were forgotten. Victory was in sight.

Here and there about the battle front dashed Cæsar, a common soldier's shield before him, his own bright sword in his hand, wielded with a fury and a skill his men had never seen before. The enemy drew back before his impetuous onslaught. They did not know the fiery swordsman who had so suddenly appeared, but the Romans did.

“Cæsar leads! Have at them! Victory!” they shouted, charging forward.

“Fight, men, fight! Your lives depend upon it,” urged the general. “Sweep them back!”

From the left of the line to the center moved the Roman commander-in-chief, stopping here and there to plunge into the front rank fighting, setting an example to the men that was followed wherever he appeared. From the center to the right he swiftly made his way, followed at every step by Titus.

On the extreme right wing the ranks had been almost broken. In the confusion of forming the battle line, a gap had been left be-

tween the ranks of the twelfth legion and those of the seventh. Into this gap the foe had swarmed, charging with fury upon the exposed right flank of the twelfth.

Here Cæsar paused a moment to glance about the field before he plunged into the fighting. His eye quickly took in the situation. The slaughter of the legionaries had been terrific. Pressed together too closely to wield the sword to advantage, they stood huddled by the eagle-crowned standard, fighting manfully for the defense of the cherished eagle, but fighting a losing fight. To have its standard captured was an everlasting disgrace for a Roman legion.

To make matters worse, close by the spot where the standard had been set up, the enemy had gained command of a small knoll upon which they had stationed bowmen and slingers, who were causing frightful losses among the legionaries with the missiles they shot over the heads of their own men and into the close-packed Roman ranks. All the centurions and sub-centurions had been shot, picked off by the merciless archers. The legionaries were without leadership.

“Open ranks!” shouted Cæsar, pressing his way through the throng of men.

“Open ranks!” shouted Titus, an inspiration seizing him. He left his general’s side and moved through the masses of men—hardly ranks at all, so great had become the confusion.

Issuing the well-known commands he had learned to obey by long training, the youthful soldier shot out his orders in a firm and ringing tone. The men obeyed, not pausing to think from whom the commands came. Order emerged from disorder.

Titus moved swiftly among the legionaries, gaining assurance as he found his commands obeyed. He saw that discipline was beginning to prevail. Ranks formed in half the cohort, he met Cæsar, who had brought the confused men of the other half of the cohort to ordered ranks.

“Well done, boy,” the general said.

“What next, sir?” Titus asked.

“Lead a charge,” ordered Cæsar. “You see that knoll above, where the slingers and the archers of the enemy are?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Clear that height.”

“Yes, sir.” Titus saluted.

“One moment, before you go. Take this.” The general stooped and picked up a centurion’s staff that had fallen from the grasp of a dead officer. “Your badge of rank, Colenus. Now come, we will lead them on together.”

“Forward, men!” Titus ordered, waving his staff above his head. “Push the enemy from that height above.” He pointed to it. “Forward! Have at them!”

“Forward!” shouted Cæsar, stepping into the front rank beside his young centurion.

CHAPTER VIII

THE YOUNG CENTURION

How it happened Titus never knew exactly from his own recollection. The story of the rest of the fight he learned from Julius' lips.

The young centurion opened his eyes. He lay still, a curious feeling of weakness holding all his limbs. What had happened?

Above his head was a familiar sight, the roof of a tent. His own? It all seemed strange. What had happened? A slight sound reached his ears. Some one was in the tent. He turned his head and saw Julius.

"Julius," he called in a weak voice.

The other boy came quickly to his side.

"Oh, Titus, you're awake!" he exclaimed.

"What has happened?" questioned Titus.

"You were wounded," was the answer, "but you're a hero. It was splendid. All the men are talking about you."

"What do you mean? I don't remember." Titus' words came slowly. "Oh, yes. The battle. Did we win?"

“ We did. *You* did. Oh, Titus, it was wonderful. The way you led the charge! That was the turning point of the battle. Say, but I’m proud of you.”

He grasped his cousin’s hand and wrung it till he brought a groan of pain from the wounded boy.

“ I’m sorry,” said Julius. “ I didn’t mean to hurt you. I forgot.”

He bent down impetuously and kissed his cousin on the forehead. “ Go to sleep again. You’ll feel better by and by and then I’ll tell you all about it.”

“ No, tell me now,” insisted Titus. “ I feel tired, awfully tired and weak, but I can listen to such news as that.”

“ What was the last you remember about the battle? ” inquired Julius.

“ Let me see,” replied Titus, slowly. “ We were surrounded. It looked hopeless. Then Cæsar came. There was a charge, you say. Yes, I remember that. All was confusion. Something struck me, I suppose. I don’t remember. Tell me, please.”

“ I’ll tell you. Listen,” said Julius. “ Oh, it was glorious! You’re an officer now. Did

you know that? You won your promotion, right enough."

"An officer?" queried Titus. "How's that?"

For answer, Julius fumbled in the baggage in a corner of the tent and brought out a blood-stained centurion's staff.

"Look," he said. "Your badge of rank. You had it grasped tightly in your hand when we found you under a heap of dead Belgians. Cæsar gave you the staff himself, I'm told, and commanded you to clear some elevated ground the enemy held and where they had put archers and slingers who were mowing us down by hundreds. You led the men on. You drove the Nervii back, you and Cæsar. He fought like a fiend, they say, on foot among the common soldiers. I didn't see it myself, for I was in another part of the battle line. But somehow or other he got the disordered ranks of the twelfth and seventh legion straightened out—you and he. The men are simply wild about you. They say you acted like a veteran leader. There wasn't a centurion around, for all of them had been killed or wounded. The first centurion of the twelfth,

our old cohort leader, Baculus, was terribly wounded. He kept fighting on with wounds that would put most men out, fought until he fell.”

“ Was he killed? ” inquired Titus.

“ No, he’s coming on, all right, just as you are,” was his companion’s reply, “ but listen and don’t interrupt. I want to tell you about the battle. The legionaries had become almost panic-stricken and all the camp followers and the Gallic allies had fled. Our men were completely surrounded by the enemy and our camp was in their possession. It looked like a terrible disaster. But Cæsar got the two legions back to back, ours and the seventh, and then ordered you to charge. Think of it! You hadn’t been in the army but a year and you had been made an officer only a minute before, and then you were sent right up that hill in command of the men. My, what luck! Jove, I wonder if I’ll ever get a chance like that. I wonder if I’d make good in such a crisis. But you did. With a cohort or two following you, you captured the hill, put the enemy to flight, and turned the whole tide of battle right there.”

He paused a moment, then went on with his story. "There isn't a whole lot more to tell. Labienus came up with the tenth legion on the run. They had been successful on another part of the field against another tribe and they put the finishing touches on the Nervii, who so nearly routed our legion. It wasn't such an easy job, at that. They are a brave lot, these Belgians, don't know what fear is and don't know when they're beaten. They piled up their dead for breastworks and fought from behind them. They wouldn't give up or run. We killed most of them, I guess. They'll have to submit now."

"Then we won the fight!" exclaimed the wounded boy, whose eyes had glowed with pride as the tale of the conflict in which he had taken such a part was poured into his ears.

"Yes, indeed, we did," replied Julius. "The hardest fight our troops were ever in, I guess. The cost of the victory is terrible. I don't know how many men we lost in all. Almost every one of us has a wounded comrade to attend to, as I am attending to you. I found you myself and brought you in. I thought you were dead and ——"

He stopped abruptly, for his young companion had closed his eyes again and was peacefully sleeping.

For two days Titus lay weakly on his cot, tenderly nursed by Julius, but little by little he regained his strength and was able to walk about again. He and the other wounded men had time to recuperate, for there was no movement from the camp, which had been strongly fortified on Cæsar's orders. The Roman army was too much exhausted by the terrible struggle to take up the march again until the men had had a thorough rest and the wounded had become able to take their places in the ranks.

From Julius' lips Titus learned more of the battle and the events that followed it, how a delegation of the old men of the Nerviian nation had come to Cæsar to sue for peace, telling that of their six hundred senators only three had returned from the battle and that of 60,000 men who had been engaged in it, only five hundred could now bear arms, how Cæsar had been merciful in his terms because of the valor shown by the Belgians and how he had commanded neighboring tribes not to attack in

their present weakness those who had fought against him.

The Aduatuci, another Belgian tribe, had been on the march to assist the Nervii against Cæsar, but frightened at the reports of the battle by the River Sambre, they turned back and brought all their goods and people into one strongly fortified town, abandoning all their other towns.

Against this town of the Aduatuci, which is believed to have been opposite the site of the present city of Namur, Cæsar marched with seven legions as soon as his men were ready to take the field again. One legion, under Crassus, was detached from the rest of the army for scouting duty in the vicinity of the shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

The town of the Aduatuci was strongly fortified by nature. Around it on three sides rose high rocks and precipices that made approach impossible. On one side only was there a gently sloping approach, this not over two hundred feet wide. The exposed side of the town had been fortified by a double wall of great height. As it was foolhardy to attempt an assault by troops on such a place, the

Roman army camped before the town and Cæsar ordered ramparts thrown up around it and began a siege.

The fortifications thrown up by the Romans extended some fifteen miles in circumference, and their walls were built to a height of twelve feet. These operations were carried on without much hindrance from the besieged garrison, for the sallies made by the Aduatuci from within the town were by small parties which were easily driven off by the armed legionaries who protected the working Roman forces. When the walls that penned them in had been completed, the enemy kept within their own defenses.

At last the huge towers built by the Romans were completed and set in motion towards the walls of the town. The defenders on the town walls could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw the great machines move towards them, towering above their own high fortifications.

A hasty council was called and ambassadors were sent to Cæsar to treat for peace, stating that the Romans must have divine aid in their undertakings, for without it they would never

be able to move forward machines of such a height and at such speed, in order to come to close quarters to fight. Therefore, the ambassadors offered to surrender to Cæsar if he would not deprive the people of their arms, because all their neighbors were unfriendly to them and if they were obliged to give up their weapons they could not defend themselves.

Cæsar replied that he would spare their people, not because they deserved it, but in accordance with his custom, before the battering-rams should touch the walls. He insisted, however, that the arms should be given up, but promised that he would command their neighbors not to do them any injury after their surrender, as he had done in the case of the Nervii.

The ambassadors returned to the town to consult their people, coming back to reply that they would yield to Cæsar's terms. Immediately, the beleaguered garrison commenced to throw their spears and shields from the walls of the town into heaps that reached nearly to the top of the wall.

Then the gates were opened and the Roman legionaries entered the town under strict orders

not to plunder nor to molest the people. At nightfall the Romans returned to their own camp.

The Aduatuci acted treacherously and did not deliver up all their arms, concealing in their houses at least a third of their weapons and hastily making new wicker shields during the night.

Towards morning, the enemy made a sudden sally from the town with all their forces in a furious attack upon the Roman fortifications. The legionaries were alert and had signal fires in readiness. These were lighted at the first alarm, quickly bringing reinforcements to the point of attack, the enemy being repulsed with great loss.

After daylight, the battering-ram was brought up to break down the gates, the Roman soldiers entered and captured the town and sold the whole of it as spoil, taking 53,000 prisoners, who were sold into slavery as a warning to the other tribes who might feel inclined to resist the Roman conqueror.

The month of September had come. In a short summer campaign Cæsar and his legions had subdued the powerful tribes of the Bel-

gian confederacy and spread the fear of the Roman troops through the northern part of Gaul. At the same time that final defeat was inflicted on the Aduatuci, Crassus returned to headquarters with the seventh legion to report to Cæsar that his mission to the coast had been successful and that the maritime tribes along the Atlantic Ocean had submitted to the Roman power.

Thus in two short and brilliant campaigns, in two successive years, all Gaul had been subdued and Cæsar was free early in the fall to return to the provinces in Italy of which he was proconsul. His soldiers in Gaul learned later that on his return to Rome a thanksgiving of fifteen days was decreed in honor of his victory, an unusually long period of celebration. Well might the Roman people celebrate, for another rich and extensive province had been added to their dominion, never again to pass from their control until, centuries later, the Roman empire fell. The countries we now call France and Belgium had become part of the territory ruled by Rome.

The main body of the Roman troops in Gaul was sent into winter quarters close to the scene

of the summer campaign, so that the recently conquered tribes might not rebel. One legion, under Servius Galba, with a detachment of the Gallic cavalry to assist it, was ordered to go on a special mission to the Alps near Lake Geneva and the River Rhone.

The passes through the mountains at this point were dangerous to travel because of the attacks on merchants who brought their goods through them. If this region could be restored to peace and order, all Gaul would be tranquil. New territories had been opened up to the growing commerce of the Roman people.

CHAPTER IX

IN THE PASSES OF THE ALPS

“LOOK, the mountains are covered with snow already,” remarked Julius, as the legion marched along the dusty highway.

“Of course they are,” said Titus. “Some of the peaks have snow on them all the year around.”

“Tough climbing, if we have to scale them,” Julius continued.

“Oh, never fear, we won’t have to do that,” said his cousin. “Our work is only in the passes. The roads are good enough, they say.”

The twelfth legion was approaching the Alps, whose towering snow-capped summits were visible in the clear autumn air. With Servius Galba in command, it had been sent by Cæsar on the special mission of opening up the Alpine passes leading to Lake Geneva, while the rest of the troops were quartered for the winter among the tribes on the north coast that the summer’s campaign had brought into submission.

The general, on his departure for Italy to spend the winter, ordered Galba to take a legion to the Alps to make safe for commerce one of the best roads through the mountains. This road ran from the valley of the Po in northern Italy to the Rhone valley in Gaul through passes that were easy to travel, but which were infested by marauding tribes which robbed travelers and merchants passing through, or subjected them to heavy payments if allowed to pass through unmolested.

“This expedition reminds me of our first passage through the Alps,” said Titus. “Although we are traveling through a different part of the mountains, we shall have the same sort of native tribes to fight we did then.”

“Pshaw, they can’t cause much trouble, can they?” inquired Julius.

“Probably not,” the young officer replied, “but their way of fighting is a nuisance. We shall have to chase small parties of the enemy and overcome them. These mountain natives never get together in large bands, but it takes more time to bring them to terms than it does a whole army which we can meet in one big battle.”

“Likely as not,” said Julius, “you will have to command some of the skirmishes. If we get sent out in small detachments, you sub-centurions will be in charge of us when the higher-ranking centurions are not around.”

“I suppose I shall,” said Titus. “It will be new work. I hope I shall know what to do.”

“Oh, you will be all right, I know,” his companion answered cheerfully. “You can talk with Baculus to get pointers. He has been in every sort of fighting there is.”

“Yes, I have done that already. Baculus is fine about giving his time to instructing the young officers. He is a big help to all of us, and I am mighty glad he is our chief centurion.”

The camp that night was pitched in the foothills of the Alps in the country of the Helvetians. The next day was a day of rest after several days of marching and, as Titus had predicted, Baculus gave instructions to the younger and less-experienced officers about the duties they might be called upon to perform.

Julius, his camp duties done, sought out his

old friend, the trader Scæva, who had accompanied the legion on the expedition to sell the soldiers supplies their army rations did not include.

“Have you ever been in this part of the country before?” he asked.

“Not enough to make me at all familiar with it,” answered the trader. “I have been through the pass we are headed for once, but I never would go again.”

“Why not?”

“It’s too dangerous. The robbers are everywhere.”

“Yes, I know,” said Julius. “That’s what our army has been sent here for, to clear out the marauding tribes.”

“An army,” sniffed Scæva, in a contemptuous tone. “Do you call one legion an army?”

“Sure, it’s a big-enough force to do all we are sent to do, isn’t it?”

“I’m not so certain of that.”

“Oh, you old croaker. Why didn’t you stay behind in the winter quarters of the other legions if you think we can’t protect you?”

“I have to take a chance, the same as you

soldiers do," replied the merchant. " Besides, I may get back something of what is due me from the robbers."

" Were you held up by them? "

" Indeed I was. It is about five years ago now. I was with a fairly good-sized caravan, too, but they took all we had. We were lucky to get out alive."

" Tell me about it," said Julius.

" We had collected a lot of merchandise in Gaul and wanted to get to Italy to sell it as quickly as possible, so we chose this route, which is the shortest. We saw the chief of the Nantuates, one of the principal mountain tribes, and he guaranteed that we should be free from trouble if we paid him a big sum of money. There were ten of us merchants in the party, with a number of servants and our horses and carts and the drivers. Since the goods were valuable, we offered him a good big lump sum from all of us."

" Perhaps you offered him too much and made him greedy for more," suggested Julius.

" It may have been that. I don't know. Anyway, we got through his country all right, but I can't say whether or not he had informed

the tribes farther on about us. We were way-laid when we were almost through the Alps and practically everything we had was taken from us. They even took our horses and we had to beg hard for permission to have left to us enough horses and carts to carry the men along. I thought they were going to make us complete our journey on foot."

"Hard luck," said Julius, sympathetically. "I hope you get even. Are these tribes very savage?"

"They are rough enough, you'll see. But the ones I met did not offer any cruelty. We made no resistance, so they did not do us any violence, except to take our possessions away."

"Why didn't you fight? You had a numerous force, you say."

"If we had, we should have been murdered to a man. Let me give you one piece of advice. While we are in this country, don't let yourself get separated from companions. These people like nothing better than to attack a single man."

The legion passed by Lake Geneva on its march and proceeded on into the mountain

country. Victorious in several small combats, without loss to his men, Galba called the leaders of the neighboring tribes together and proposed terms of peace.

To this the chiefs agreed, sending hostages to the Roman camp.

In the town of Octodorus, which was cut into two parts by the River Rhone, the Romans prepared a camp to spend the winter. Across the river from this camp lay a camp occupied by the Gauls, not strongly fortified, but maintained, nevertheless, as a military post. Galba had not thought it wise to ask for a surrender of arms on the part of the mountain tribesmen. He did, however, order the Gauls to vacate the portion of the town in which his camp was located.

The winter season was fast approaching and it was necessary to lay in supplies of food. Accordingly, scouting parties were sent out into the country to procure wheat, which was grown on farms scattered about among the mountain valleys. An occasional small town had larger supplies that had been stored up. The fact that they were obliged to provision the Roman army during its winter occupancy

of the region aroused some resentment among the people.

“Take a force of fifty legionaries with you, Centurion Colenus,” ordered the first centurion, Baculus, “and go to the next town up the valley beyond this town of Octodorus. A supply of wheat is there which has been promised us, enough for ten cart-loads. Start at once and make haste, for it is a long journey and you should be back by nightfall.”

Titus, pleased to receive his first commission to command a small expedition with no higher officer over him, selected his men with care, including Julius, of course, and started on the march.

The trip to the town was uneventful and the supply of wheat was obtained without difficulty. The carts were loaded, and the band set out on its return journey shortly after midday.

Titus led the advance, with about a quarter of his small force, while a rear-guard was set behind the provision-train and other legionaries were ordered to march beside the carts. No chances were taken of a surprise attack by hostile tribesmen.

To the young officer's dismay, he suddenly found the road completely blocked for the passage of the carts as he came to a narrow part of the highway where it was hemmed in by steep slopes that enclosed a small ravine. A mass of earth and rocks had fallen down the hillside and filled the roadway. There was no way to pass around it. To get the carts over the obstruction seemed impossible.

Titus halted his command and went forward to examine the obstruction.

"An avalanche," declared a soldier with him, gazing at the mass of earth.

"The road is blocked, surely enough," said the young centurion. "I wonder, though, whether it was done by nature or by man. We have had no rain recently to loosen the earth."

"They tell me avalanches are common in these mountains," said the soldier. "There are no men about here, are there?"

"We shall see," said Titus.

Fearing treachery on the part of the natives, although, as the soldier had said, no men were to be seen about, Titus decided to make an investigation of the situation and ordering his force to collect in one place to resist an attack,

he scaled the hillsides on both sides of the ravine with a few legionaries. No natives were seen.

Hastening back to the road, he ordered the carts partly unloaded. Then with great difficulty, assisted by the soldiers, the horses were able to pull them over the rough pile of stones and earth brought down by the landslide.

The bags of grain that had been taken off the carts were lugged across the obstruction on the backs of the men and placed on the carts again. The work was done as fast as possible, but more than an hour of precious time had been lost. The short afternoon was already far spent.

“We must hasten on, men,” ordered Titus. “Push the horses all you can. No halts at all, now, till we get in sight of the camp.”

“Do you think the landslide was natural?” asked Julius.

“I do not know,” answered Titus. “There is nothing to show what may have started it. But I have a feeling that there is treachery in this. We must be on the alert against an attack.”

An hour’s hurried marching brought them to a place where the road crossed a brook. The

bridge, solid in the morning when they passed over it, allowed the first cart to pass safely, but broke under the weight of the second, letting it down into the water. The vehicle overturned and the grain was ruined.

An examination of the structure showed it had been tampered with.

No great delay was caused by the accident, for the Roman soldiers were trained to turn their hands to anything and bridge-building was no new thing. The broken structure was quickly repaired, the loads passed over it and the legionaries marched on, more alert than ever and with growing anxiety.

Titus ordered some of his men to march through the woods beside the road, keeping a sharp lookout for enemies, but no other human beings were seen except the band of soldiers.

The road led again through a ravine like the one in which the landslide had been encountered. On one side of the defile were thick woods, on the other a bare slope, gravelly and filled with great boulders. On the top of the slope were seen other boulders, apparently poised as if about to roll down.

Suddenly they did begin to roll. Down

upon the carts they crashed, breaking wheels and injuring horses. At the same moment came a shower of stones thrown by hand. Savage faces showed at the top of the slope and arrows began to fly, as well as stones.

“Leave the carts. Rally here to me,” shouted Titus.

The legionaries formed quickly at his command. How many men they had to face they could not see, for the foe suddenly slunk out of sight again behind the rocks.

“Leave your javelins here. This is sword work,” ordered the young officer.

Titus led his men down the road till a place was found where they could scramble up the slope. Gaining the top, they fell upon the enemy, who put up a stubborn resistance, but were finally driven back. Titus dared not follow them into the woods, lest his men should become scattered. There might be hundreds of the enemy in the neighborhood.

The attack disposed of and the nature of their hindrances being learned, it became necessary to hasten back to the shelter of the camp as soon as possible. It had begun to grow dark.

Some of the carts had to be abandoned because their wheels had been broken. The grain was loaded on others and the whole supply for which the expedition had been sent was taken along, with the exception of the one cartload that had fallen into the river when the bridge broke.

No other ambush was laid for the party and no further obstruction was placed in their way. Titus led his weary soldiers into camp as the stars began to appear. He hastened to headquarters to report. That duty must not be delayed.

Galba listened to the story of the day's march and remarked, "You have done well, my boy. You showed good judgment and I am pleased that you brought back almost all the grain. How are your men?"

"We had only a few men slightly wounded in the skirmish, sir, and all could walk back to camp."

"Well done," commented Galba. "You may go to your quarters."

Baculus, who had been present while Titus made his report to the commander, accompanied the boy as he left the headquarters.

“Are you sure you brought back all the men?” he asked.

“I thought so. Why? I did not see any legionaries fall and no one made a report of any being missing.”

“I counted as you came in the gate and made out only forty-nine. You set out with fifty men. Did you call the roll after the action?”

“No, I did not,” replied Titus. “I should have done so, I know, but it was all confusion. We had to reload the carts and get on our way back to camp as quick as we could. I forgot to call the roll.”

“Let us go and quietly check up among the men,” advised the older officer. “I have a list of the men detailed to go.”

“I’ll find Julius,” said Titus. “Perhaps he’ll know if any are missing. By the way, I wonder where he is. I don’t remember having seen him since the fight on the hillside. Can it be ——”

He set out on a run.

“Julius!” he called, bursting into the hut in which his cousin was quartered. “Oh, Julius!”

“He is not here,” said a legionary. “I have not seen him since he left this morning.”

The man had not been on the expedition Titus had led.

“Call the cohort together,” suggested Baculus.

This was done and all the men answered to their names as the roll was called, but Julius was not with them.

“Has any one seen him?” inquired Titus, frantically, of the men who had been with him during the day. “Did he fall in the fighting? Who saw him last?”

“I don’t know whether or not I saw him last,” spoke up a soldier who was a close chum of Julius. “We were together when we made our attack on the enemy. We both pushed on in pursuit into the woods a short distance. I came back when you ordered the pursuit to cease. I can’t say whether he fell or not. I don’t remember seeing him after that.”

Titus dismissed his men and turned sadly to Baculus, saying, “What can we do? He is lost—killed, perhaps. Oh, why didn’t I call the roll before we took up the march again! What can we do?”

“Nothing to-night,” said Baculus, laying his hand on the shoulder of the young centurion, who had burst into tears. “Calm yourself. He is only missing. We shall find him, never fear.”

“Find his dead body, you mean. Oh, Julius, Julius, dead and all through my fault!”

Titus burst into uncontrolled weeping.

CHAPTER X

CAPTURED BY THE ENEMY

JULIUS felt a heavy kick in his side. The pain roused him to consciousness and he opened his eyes.

“One Roman dog is left us,” he heard a voice say in the Gallic tongue. “We shall have to bury him, I think.”

“No, he lives,” said another voice. “He is opening his eyes. Get up and come with us.”

The last remark was addressed to Julius, who had risen to his elbow. Although the dialect the men used was somewhat different from the Gallic speech he understood fairly well by this time, some instinct told the boy not to let the men know he could understand them at all.

“Water,” he begged in Latin. “I am hurt. Give me water.”

“He doesn’t talk our language,” said another Gallic soldier, coming up to the two who had found Julius lying wounded. “Shall we take him on to camp? Perhaps we can get him

to tell us something of the Roman plans when we get him where some one of our men can talk with him in Latin."

"No, finish him here," urged another. "We don't want prisoners."

"We won't do murder," stated the first Gaul in a tone of authority. "They fight well enough to deserve to be well used, and, however much we hate them, we must admit they give our prisoners good treatment."

"Good treatment indeed," scornfully remarked the man who had discovered Julius. "Good treatment! To make slaves of those who surrender! We'll do the same with him. No good to kill him, to be sure. But I'll take him if he is worth saving. He's mine. I found him first."

The others assented to this proposition and Julius was picked up and carried, gently enough, on an improvised stretcher, to a village that lay some distance away from the place where the fight had taken place. His head ached terribly and by feeling of it he discovered a swollen and tender spot, made by a stone that had struck him.

The stone had been hurled by one of the

fleeing Gauls, and Julius had fallen among the bushes, stunned by the blow, out of sight of any of his companions.

His captors placed him in a low hut built against the mountainside. It had one large room in front and at the rear a tiny space leading off from it, which had no windows and was evidently used for storage. The men laid him on a cot of skins placed upon the floor.

The boy had fully recovered his senses and was not disabled by his wound, although it throbbed painfully. As he was carried along by the men, he had decided that his chances for a possible escape would be better if he pretended to be badly hurt, so he made no attempt to walk or stand and appeared to swoon away again when he was laid upon the cot.

The mistress of the house soon came into the dark room with a blazing pine knot for a light. She bathed and bandaged his head, which brought him grateful relief. In a short time she appeared again with a bowl of broth.

Refreshed by this, Julius lay back on his cot, listening to the voices he heard in the room beyond, the tones coming clearly to him through the bearskin that hung across the

doorway. After a few hours, more men came into the cottage and an animated discussion began. To hear it better, Julius crawled cautiously close to the doorway.

“I tell you, we can’t fail,” he heard a voice say. “We have men enough to swamp them completely. Before three sunsets have come, there will not be a Roman left in the mountains.”

“How many soldiers have we?” inquired another.

“Twenty thousand have already been assembled from the mountain tribes, and ten thousand more are on the way and are expected in to-morrow.”

“When will the attack be made?”

“Day after to-morrow, if these additional tribesmen get here. I tell you that not one Roman shall live to see that sunset.”

“Have you ever fought against the Romans?” another voice inquired.

“No, but what odds does that make?” the boaster answered. “They are not so much better than we are. The trouble with you men is that you are afraid of them. Look what you did to-day. You had a hundred or more sol-



THE MISTRESS OF THE HOUSE SOON CAME INTO THE DARK ROOM.—Page 121.

diers and you couldn't stop that little band of fifty Romans who guarded the load of grain. Just one young officer in command, too."

"We blocked their way three times and our ambush was almost a success," maintained the second speaker. "We had them in a trap and should have killed them all if they had not charged up the mountainside so quickly."

The first Gaul's tone was more scornful than before as he replied, "If! If! Always making excuses. You had your chance and missed it."

"Well, you weren't there yourself, so what have you to say?" was the retort.

"No, I was away to bring in some braver fighters than the people in this valley. You shall see when the attack is made on the Roman camp how tribesmen ought to fight."

"It ought to be easy to overcome them," spoke up another man. "They have divided their forces. Two cohorts are away down the river among the Nantuates. That leaves about four thousand legionaries in the camp. If only our men will keep up the attack. That's the trouble, we get discouraged too easily and stop fighting too soon."

Julius listened for an hour or more to the conversation, but learned nothing further of the plans for the attack on the Roman position. The mountaineers, constantly quarreling among themselves, discussed their grievances against their enemies more than plans for overcoming them. They were extremely bitter that so many of their children were held as hostages in the Roman camp, and all feared that their tribes would be put under a stern Roman yoke unless they made a desperate stand.

Crawling back to his cot, Julius lay still till the visitors had departed and he felt sure the members of the household were sound asleep. Then he began to explore his prison chamber cautiously.

It was a bright moonlight night outside, as he could tell by the beams of light that came through some cracks in the log walls. Feeling all about the room, he discovered no outlet except the doorway to the main room. His captors, thinking he could not possibly escape, had not bound him. Not one of them had been into his room since they first put him in it.

Julius wondered whether he could move

noiselessly enough through the front room to avoid detection. He resolved to try it.

Laying aside his armor, he stepped into the main room. None of the sleepers stirred. He crossed stealthily to the door. It was heavily barred. He feared to try to open it, for to remove the fastenings might make a noise.

Julius cautiously tiptoed his way alongside the wall to a window. He had almost reached it when he stumbled over some object lying on the floor. One of the sleepers turned over on his cot of skins and began to utter audible sounds, but in a low tone.

The prisoner's heart was in his mouth. He hardly dared to breathe. Was the Gaul awake?

No, the man was still sleeping soundly, breathing heavily. Something was disturbing his rest, but he had heard no sound of any one moving about the room.

Julius reached the window. It had a light covering of skin over it to keep out the cold. Slowly and stealthily he removed the window-covering. He drew himself noiselessly to the sill and slipped down upon the other side.

He was free. His escape had been unnoticed.

The boy stole silently along the street of the sleeping village, not daring to put on his boots till he was well beyond the last of the houses. He wished he had dared to take his armor, for with only his soldier's tunic, he began to shiver in the cool air of the autumn night. One thing he was thankful for, that the moon gave light enough to travel by.

Now, how should he find the camp? A curious, lost feeling came over him. Although the night was bright and it was easy to find the points of the compass by the stars, he had not the slightest notion of the direction in which the camp lay, or how far off it was. He had been carried several miles through the woods by his captors and had lost all sense of direction.

This was the most bewildering sensation he had ever felt, not to have the faintest idea of where he was. He knew his destination, the Roman camp, but how to reach it was the problem.

“Well, I must start along some track,” he said to himself. “Perhaps I shall locate myself by and by.”

He soon came to a small brook. “Down-

stream, of course," he thought. "This must lead to a river somewhere."

Sure enough, after he had tramped several miles along its bank, he found that it did join a larger stream. Following down-stream, he came at length to the River Rhone, but in a spot he never remembered having seen before.

The mountain peaks towering in the distance had a familiar look, but to save his life he could not tell on which side of the camp they lay. Should he go east or west, up-stream or down?

"How curious," he said to himself, then laughed. "I'm not lost, but the camp is. Come, camp, I must find you. If you are not in one direction, you must be in the other. I have a couple of hours yet before the natives will be moving about."

He set out up the stream and found to his joy that he had taken the right course. Familiar landmarks came into view, and just as dawn was breaking he approached the camp gates.

A squad of soldiers was coming out, led by Sub-Centurion Titus Colenus and First Centurion Publius Baculus.

“What, ho!” called Julius, merrily. “Why such an early start?”

“To look for you,” shouted Titus. “Where on earth have you been? We thought you had been killed.”

“I have done a little scouting for myself,” replied Julius, “and have learned some important news. The barbarians knocked me out and took me prisoner, but didn’t lock me up very tight. I just walked away.”

“By Jove, you don’t know what a night I’ve had,” declared Titus, wringing his cousin’s hand till he winced. “Such a relief to see you!”

“I must report to Galba at once,” continued Julius. “Then I will tell you my experiences. Our camp is to be attacked day after to-morrow by thirty thousand of the enemy.”

“I’m not surprised to learn that,” said Baculus. “Things had begun to take on an ugly look. I feared we were in for trouble.”

Galba immediately called a council of his officers and debated the situation the information Julius brought showed they had to face. The tribunes and the leading centurions un-animously agreed to hold the position and de-

fend the camp. To march away in the face of the enemy would be at least as hazardous as to wait the attack and such procedure was not in keeping with Roman traditions.

The incomplete fortifications were hastily strengthened and all available weapons were made ready. Scouting parties sent out brought back the information that all the passes were held by the barbarians. There was nothing to do but wait.

The attack came on the appointed time, beginning early in the morning. The first assault was easily repulsed, but the enemy came back again and again. The legionaries were moved from place to place about the walls, as one point after another was attacked. Even the wounded were obliged to keep their places in the ranks, for every man was needed.

For six hours the series of attacks was kept up, wave after wave of barbarians advancing against the Roman position. As each storming party was repulsed, another, composed of fresh troops, took its place, till the legionaries were exhausted. There were no relief troops or fresh forces for them to hurl into the combat. Even behind fortifications, four thousand

men, even Romans, were too few to meet thirty thousand.

“How goes it, Baculus?” asked Galba, making a tour of the ramparts.

“Well, sir, we have driven them back so far,” replied the veteran centurion, “but all our javelins have been thrown. We must fight it out with the sword from now on.”

“There is only one thing left for us,” volunteered a military tribune, Caius Volusenus. “We must make a sally and disperse the enemy.”

“That is easier said than done,” remarked the commander of the legion. “They still far outnumber us, in spite of the slaughter we have caused. If we move out from our fortifications, they will entirely surround us.”

“They do so, for that matter, now,” said Baculus. “If we meet them on the open ground with the sword, we shall stand a better chance. I have been thinking of a sally, myself, sir. It is the only thing to do. Let us strike from all the gates at once and take them by surprise.”

“It shall be done,” said Galba.

He immediately ordered that all the enemy’s

darts that had fallen within the camp should be collected. The darts would do very well for missiles, even if not so perfect as the Roman javelins. The iron hail of javelins formed no small part of the vigor of the blow delivered by a charging Roman legion, sometimes breaking the enemy's ranks before an attack was delivered at close quarters with the sword.

The legion was divided into four equal parts, Baculus being assigned to lead one of them, with Titus and Julius close beside him, and at a given signal the men of the twelfth dashed out against their enemies.

The barbarians, surprised by the sudden attack, in place of the surrender they had been expecting at any moment, gave way at all points, fleeing in a panic without stopping to fight.

The sudden turn in the tide of battle gave heart to the weary legionaries and they made a relentless pursuit, assisted by the allied cavalry. The enemy were completely routed and scattered, over a third of their number falling before the Roman attack.

Another council of war was held and the

Roman officers agreed with Galba that the wisest move would be to retire to a less exposed position. From the hostile population of the mountain region no sure and sufficient supply of provisions could be secured, while the roads would be impossible to move the army over during the winter and spring.

The camp was broken up and the legionaries marched back over the route they had come, picking up the two cohorts that had been left among the Nantuates. The valley was devastated before they left, as a punishment for the treacherous attack of the mountain tribes.

The legion wintered among the friendly Allobroges in the Province.

CHAPTER XI

A LETTER HOME

“ To my father, Publius Colenus, my mother and brothers and sisters, not forgetting all my other relatives and friends, I, Julius Colenus, sub-centurion in the army of Caius Julius Cæsar in Gaul, send greetings.

“ To let you know that Titus and I are well and prospering, I take this opportunity to send you this letter by a messenger, who is to leave the camp to return to Italy. We shall soon break up our winter quarters and take the field again for operations I shall tell you more of later.

“ The big news I have put in my salutation. Your son and brother has become an officer. Tell Grandpa of it and all of 'Titus' folks. I am so proud I hardly know what to do, but I have been raised in rank and now have my sub-centurion's staff, just as Titus has. I don't know what I have done to earn the honor, for I did not show any distinguished conduct in battle above the other soldiers, as Titus did when he was promoted, but it doesn't matter how it came about. I am an officer and I shall do my best to deserve the promotion.

“ I think our good friend Baculus had a

great deal to do with it, for I know his recommendations have weight with the higher officers of the legion and he is about the best friend we have in the army and is ever so good to us. Titus and I are extremely lucky we fell in with him at the start of our army life. We do not see so much of good Gametius now, for he is with the tenth legion, you know, while we are still with the twelfth. I am glad of that, to remain in this legion, I mean, for I know these men so well and they do not seem displeased to have so young an officer over them, even though some of them have been in the army longer than I have.

“It is a great responsibility, but I am determined to make good. I won't write any more about it, lest you think I am vain. I know that you will be glad to hear of this honor that has come to me. We have quite a number of new subordinate officers and several of them have been transferred to other legions or other cohorts. I am still with the same cohort I have been with all summer, a fine body of men. It is the first cohort, you know, and leads the legion.

“Titus is well on the road to becoming a full-ranking centurion. He is a wonder in commanding the men, a strict disciplinarian—and that is what we need in the army. We have both studied up on the work we have to do as officers and on the drill regulations and I think it has paid us to do so. Some of the

soldiers just loaf and have a good time in their free hours, but we are anxious to get ahead. Titus ought to be a centurion soon, especially if we have such losses in the field as we did last summer. Don't be scared because I write you that, for we are not in any more danger than we were before, but some good men must fall in every battle.

“The gods have taken care of us so far, and I am sure our good fortune will remain with us. I am not sorry I joined the army. On the contrary, I am glad of it, for it is really a wonderful work we are doing here in Gaul under Cæsar's leadership. We are making the Roman empire larger and safer. I can't go into particulars about it, for that would make too long a letter, but when I get home I will tell you all about it. The Roman people will realize some day, if they do not now, what great results our campaigns are bringing.

“We shall soon start for the western sea-coast, way out by the Atlantic Ocean, where some tribes are in revolt against the Roman authority, after having submitted to Cæsar and given hostages. It will mean a march clear across the country again and will lead us into new fields, farther than we have ever been before.

“We covered quite a bit of country last summer in our marches, our own twelfth legion especially, for, as I wrote you before, we came back to the Alps after campaigning against

the Belgians near the northern coast. Crassus took the seventh legion among the maritime tribes in the northwest and brought all those remote peoples under the Roman sway. We hold almost all of Gaul and it is a big territory.

“No wonder the citizens of Rome gave Cæsar a public thanksgiving of fifteen days when he returned to the city last fall. It was the longest ever celebrated for any conqueror. He deserved it. You cannot realize, unless you have been over the ground yourself, the vastness and richness of this new part of the Roman dominions, almost unknown till we came into it. The fame of Cæsar’s army has spread far and wide beyond the borders of Gaul and even the German tribes that live beyond the Rhine have sent ambassadors to tender their submission.

“Our general’s surprising energy and the speed at which his army traveled from place to place were simply overwhelming to our enemies. We did not have to do a great deal of fighting last season, when you consider the tremendous number of people in the hostile tribes we conquered.

“It was our leader’s careful planning and his superior strategy that helped us win, more than the fighting we legionaries had to do. That is all the more to Cæsar’s credit, I think. To be sure, we did have a few tough battles, but think what it would have meant if we had

had to fight all those hordes of barbarians at one time. Instead, we divided them up, took them separately and conquered them one after another, chiefly because of our quick movements. We had an awful lot of marching to do, but your son is good at that, and Titus and I never fell out of the ranks or straggled a single time. Maybe that is one reason we got promotions. It wouldn't look very well to have the common soldiers beat out the centurions.

“It is really wonderful to be with Cæsar when he is in the thick of the campaign and to see how resourceful and far-sighted he is. I have had the opportunity, you know, to be at his headquarters quite a bit of the time. I hope I shall see some service on his staff this year also.

“To go back again to our marches. It is something of a disgrace for a soldier to fall out of the line and have to straggle in at evening with the baggage-train and the traders' wagons, but some do it on practically every hard march. I was so nearly exhausted one hot day when we were making an unusually long march, that I was tempted to sit down and rest and let the troops go on. If it had not been my birthday I should have done so, but I just would not quit that day.

“As for what is ahead of us for this coming spring and summer, I do not know much about it, except in a general way, judging by the

reports we hear. Cæsar will return soon and then things will start. There is not much to write about of our winter here in camp.

“The Lieutenant Crassus was sent out last fall to take up winter quarters with one of the legions among the Andes, a tribe near the Atlantic Ocean on the north shore of the Bay of Biscay. The Veneti are the strongest tribe in that region. They own all the important harbors on the coast and have a big commerce with Spain and Britain, having a large number of ships. By the way, I hope I shall go to Britain some day and I think there is a good possibility that we may do so. This expedition against the coast tribes may be a preparation for that sort of trip.

“Britain is reported to be a large and rich island a little distance away from the mainland. It is near enough so that the Gauls have considerable commerce with the Britons, especially certain of the coast tribes, the Veneti, for example. The Britons are like the Gauls, only wilder.

“Well, these Veneti have violated the laws of nations and must be punished. All our soldiers are greatly aroused over the stories that have come to us. Crassus sent some of his officers out among the tribes in the vicinity of his winter quarters to make arrangements for a supply of provisions. The Veneti persuaded the other tribes to enter into an alliance against us and they seized our officers and still

hold them as prisoners, demanding in return for them the hostages these tribes have given Cæsar as a pledge for the fulfillment of the treaty of submission they have made with us.

“ This seizure of ambassadors without warning, in time of peace, is without precedent, even among nations that do not make any claim to a high degree of civilization. Cæsar has sent us orders to make preparations for an immediate expedition to punish the Veneti for their treachery. I know very well indeed two of the officers who have been taken prisoner, Quintus Velanius and Titus Silius. I hope they come to no harm at the hands of the barbarians.

“ We shall need ships in this coming campaign and a large fleet is being built on the River Loire, to be supplied with rowers, sailors and pilots from the Mediterranean coast of the Province. We hear that the revolting tribes, knowing that they committed an unpardonable breach of the law of nations, have fortified the coast towns and provisioned them to stand a siege. All the tribes along the coast are involved in the revolt, under the leadership of the Veneti, and it is rumored that they have sent to Britain for men and ships, too.

“ Our army and navy will probably work together. Decimus Brutus has been given command of the fleet. Cæsar has sent orders to divide up the army to some extent. Labienus has taken a large part of the cavalry

among the tribes near the Rhine to assist our allies, the Remi, and to keep the Belgian tribes quiet. There is no telling when some of these barbarians may rise up in revolt in our rear. Then, too, we need to guard the German frontier, for there is always danger from that source, both to the Gauls and ourselves.

“ Crassus has come back from the coast and has been sent to Aquitania, a part of Gaul that lies in the southwest corner, near Spain. He has some cavalry and twelve legionary cohorts with him, probably a large enough force to keep the Aquitanians in order and to prevent them from joining with the Veneti. Sabinus has been sent with a strong force to the tribes on the coast opposite Britain, north of the Veneti, to prevent an insurrection in that quarter.

“ Thus we have three legions north of the River Loire, one legion and two cohorts in Aquitania, and two full legions and eight cohorts in the main army that Cæsar will take personal command of when he comes. This may seem to you like splitting up the army a good deal, but our different forces are not far apart, so we could easily get together, and we split up the barbarian forces, too, by the manner in which our troops are disposed.

“ One legion, we understand, is to be with the fleet. I hope it will be ours, for I should like to see some service on the water. It looks to me as if this campaign will be on sea more

than on land. Some war galleys have been sent from the Mediterranean, but most of our fleet was built along the navigable rivers here. The ships have to be made on a somewhat different model from the vessels our people are accustomed to using, in order to be able to stand the storms of the ocean, which is at times very rough, far different from the Mediterranean sea.

“What a long letter I have written you! I have outlined as well as I could what our next campaign will be. Do not fear for my safety, but pray the gods to take care of your soldier boy.

“You know my love is constant for you all. My cousin Titus sends his greeting.

“Written by my own hand at the Roman winter camp.

“JULIUS COLENUS, *sub-centurion*
of the first cohort of the twelfth legion.”

CHAPTER XII

CAMPAIGNING ON THE COAST

“OUR part of the dike is completed, sir,” reported Centurion Titus Colenus to his superior officer.

The Knight Mamurra, chief engineer of Cæsar’s forces, looked up from the plans which he was studying, spread out upon his knees as he sat in his tent. “Very good,” he said. “How is the dike on the other side of the works progressing?”

“I do not know, sir,” answered Titus. “I came at once to report as soon as my men had finished their task.”

“Then all is in readiness for the attack as soon as the other dike is completed. You may call off your men from the fortifications and let them prepare for an attack. You have done well.”

Titus saluted and started to leave the officer’s tent.

“Wait a moment,” Mamurra ordered. “I want to talk with you. Be seated.”

“Young man,” he continued, as the youthful centurion obeyed, “how long have you held the rank of centurion?”

“About a year, sir.”

“Only a year! You do surprising work. Let me see, this is the fourth town we have attacked in this manner, by building dikes up to it, is it not?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And how many times have you been in charge of the construction work?”

“This is the second time, sir.”

“And another time, I believe, you were the first of the supervisors to report to me that you had finished the task assigned.”

“I do not know, sir.”

“I think I can verify the fact.” Mamurra searched among some parchments he had stored with his personal baggage, for he was a methodical man and kept notes of the progress of the engineering works of which he had charge. He soon found the record he was looking for.

“Here it is,” he said, “the plan of the approaches thrown up against the town of Vilana. Yes, here is the marginal note I was looking for. ‘First report of completion of work made

by Cent. T. Colenus. Watch his work.' I thought so."

He looked at Titus steadily, till the young officer began to blush.

"You enjoy this engineering work, I think," Mamurra continued.

"Yes, sir, I do," replied Titus.

"You are a skilful and a rapid worker. I am pleased. In the attack on Vilana I am sure we should have captured the inhabitants of the town if we had been able to attack the afternoon before. You had your side of the works all finished long before nightfall. But one of the parallel dikes that led to the town was not finished till next morning. The result was that all the Veneti took to their boats and made off, so we captured only the empty town."

"They have escaped from us several times in that way," said Titus. "What can we do to prevent it?"

"I do not know, except to push our works with more speed. That is the great difficulty of this campaign, to throw up dikes and mounds against their towns at a great cost in labor and time only to have the enemy escape our clutches. We must study up a different

way of approach. I want some bright young officers of the army to make a special study with me. You are one. I shall ask Cæsar to assign you and a few others to my headquarters to be with me all the time till we have mastered this baffling problem."

"I thank you, sir," exclaimed Titus. "It is what I have most desired."

The campaign against the Veneti was not progressing favorably. The summer was already almost gone and the revolting tribes were as far from being subdued as at the beginning of the operations against them.

Their towns were difficult of access. Generally built on points of land, they were inaccessible at high tide except by boats. When the tide receded, a narrow strip of dry land made a connection with the mainland, but when the tide went out it would leave the Roman boats stranded and helpless.

The main body of the Roman fleet had not yet arrived, the building of it having been greatly delayed, and Cæsar's army had with it only a few small vessels picked up from among the coast tribes to assist with the operations against the Veneti.

The Knight Mamurra, one of Cæsar's most skilful engineers, had devised a plan for attacking the towns. It consisted of building two parallel dikes from the mainland to the town walls, often as high as the walls themselves. These dikes shut off the waters of the sea and left a space between them to bring up engines and men for the assault.

But the barbarians, well supplied with boats, and knowing every inlet and bay along the coast, did not wait within their towns to be attacked, but escaped by means of their boats, taking all their people and supplies with them. Their flat-bottomed boats could be navigated in very shallow water along the shore and up the estuaries of the rivers.

This shifting of the Veneti from place to place, from one fortified stronghold to another, was baffling to the Romans. Town after town had been captured, to be sure, but no definite results were secured by these captures, for the Veneti remained as numerous and well-supplied as before. They would not risk a general engagement with the legionaries, but appeared to be planning to tire the Romans out with fruitless operations.

Cæsar, therefore, decided to cease his land operations and risk the outcome of the war on the result of a naval battle. The army was placed in camp on the heights of St. Gildas, on the east of the bay of Quiberon, in which all the warships of the Veneti had been assembled.

“The orders have been given,” shouted Julius, rushing into Titus’ tent. “Our twelfth legion is to be placed upon the fleet. Now, don’t you wish you had not been picked for the engineering job? We are the ones that will do the work. The fleet is going to make the attack and I shall be with it. You may stick to your picks and shovels. What have you accomplished this summer so far?”

“We’ve done as well as could be expected,” responded Titus, nettled by the taunt. “It is not our fault we have not succeeded in conquering the Veneti. We should have had the fleet earlier to coöperate with our land forces. That is the only way to get after these people, they are such slippery customers.”

“Watch us now, and see what we do,” boasted Julius.

“I wish you luck,” said Titus. “Be a

marine if you like. I shall stay with the forces on land.”

“ I shall be in the fighting, though,” replied his cousin. “ The whole twelfth legion is to be placed aboard the vessels. We legionaries will make up the boarding parties.”

“ You’ll need all the skill in climbing that you have,” declared Titus. “ Have you noticed how high the Venetian ships are compared with ours? Why, even our turrets on the decks of our ships are not as high as the sterns of their vessels.”

“ We outmatch them in speed, though,” said Julius. “ Our ships all have oars and theirs depend wholly on sails. We can manœuver better than they can.”

“ Well, we shall watch you,” said Titus. “ From these heights the whole army can have a splendid view of the bay. The battle will be in plain sight.”

The Roman ships were cleared for action and the religious ceremonies that preceded the sailing to battle were carried out. First, the rowers went aboard and took their places at the oars. Then the legionaries who had been assigned to the fleet marched on the decks,

with centurions detailed as commandants of marines on each vessel.

The helmsmen took their places at the steering oars, with pilots beside them who knew the channels and currents along the ocean shore. The chief of the rowers took his station beside his gong, on which he beat blows with a hammer to mark time for the oarsmen.

Decimus Brutus, commander of the fleet, gave orders to fling to the breeze from the mast-head of his ship the admiral's red flag, the signal for the battle to begin. A trumpet blast rang out from each vessel and the fleet set forth, the crews chanting the battle-hymn.

To Julius and his fellow legionaries of the twelfth, everything was strange. It was new experience for every one of them, and they felt an added thrill of expectation in going into the first battle on the ocean in which the Roman troops had ever been engaged, for all previous naval battles of the Romans had been fought in Mediterranean waters.

As the fleet moved up the bay against the waiting ships of the enemy, new equipment was given out to the legionaries on board. Their familiar short swords were exchanged

for longer boarding-swords of special pattern, such as were used by the marines on regular duty with the Roman fleets. Battle-axes were issued to all, and also a special type of lance, with a curved, scythe-shaped blade.

The fleet of Decimus Brutus advanced in battle order, the red battle-flag flying. When it came in sight, the Veneti set sail with their two hundred and twenty vessels, outnumbering the Roman ships about two to one.

“How high they are,” remarked a legionary. “How shall we ever board them?”

“Never fear,” replied his young centurion, Julius Colenus. “We shall find a way. We can’t lose this battle, with all our comrades watching us from yonder hills.”

Julius was busily engaged in observing the equipment with which his soldiers had to work, studying how the strange new weapons might be most advantageously employed. He had been stationed on the commander’s ship in the center of the line. The vessel was provided with a number of grappling-hooks, similar to those used in pulling stones from walls when besieging fortified towns.

A sudden inspiration seized Julius. He ap-

proached Brutus, the commander, and respectfully saluted.

“ I have an idea, sir,” he said, “ that may be of use to us to-day.”

“ What is it? ” queried the admiral.

“ Those grappling-hooks, sir.”

“ Well? ”

“ Are they to be used? ”

“ Very likely, when we come to close quarters. Each ship has a supply of them. What do you suggest? ”

“ Well, sir, it struck me that they might be slung to the masts by means of poles and be used to catch the rigging of the enemy’s ships. If we can cut the rope, the main cable, or whatever it is called, that holds up the yard and sail of their ships, then their ships will be helpless, for they move only by the use of sails and have no oars. At least, few of their craft appear to be equipped with oars.”

“ A fine idea; we will use it! ” exclaimed Decimus Brutus.

Orders were hurriedly sent about the fleet to attach the grappling-hooks to the masts, with special rigging by which they could be controlled, and instructions were given to the

commander of each vessel for the use of this tackle when his ship approached the enemy.

The two fleets soon came to close quarters and the engagement began. Rowing alongside the Venetian ships, the Roman sailors hooked the enemy's rigging with their new devices. Then the oarsmen were directed to pull vigorously. The cables snapped, the sails fell and the Venetian ships were helpless, at the mercy of wave and tide.

The Roman vessels, navigated skilfully by their pilots, were able to move about at will, propelled in any direction by the oars. They attacked the helpless ships of the enemy as they chanced to find them, sending on boarding-parties. Every ship of the enemy that was attacked was overpowered.

By noon, nearly half the Venetian ships had been captured, their crews fighting courageously, but in vain, against the trained legionaries who swarmed on board the boats. The rest, seeing the battle was lost, set sail to make their escape.

But fortune favored the Romans. A dead calm came on. The Venetian sails hung idly from the yards. The vessels, becalmed and

helpless, fell easy victims to the active Roman galleys.

The unequal contest lasted till nearly sundown. The entire Venetian fleet was captured in full view of Cæsar and his army. Few of the members of the crews escaped.

The whole strength of the Veneti in fighting men had been assembled on their fleet. In the disastrous defeat, all their youth and strength were lost. Without men or ships, the remaining people had no means of defense left. The nation surrendered to Cæsar unconditionally.

A cruel fate befell them as punishment for their treachery in detaining the Roman ambassadors. The entire nation was sold into slavery.

CHAPTER XIII

THROUGH VAST FORESTS

HARDLY had the triumph over the Veneti been accomplished when Cæsar and his legionaries received word from Sabinus that he had won a victory in the northern part of the country, the commander and his lieutenant hearing of each other's success at about the same time. Viridovix, an outlaw chieftain who had gathered under his banner a large number of robbers and discontented men, had aroused the Unelli to revolt, but had been subdued by Sabinus and his troops. These two victories broke up the federation that had been formed among the seacoast tribes.

Meanwhile, Publius Crassus had been successful in his operations in Aquitania, to the south, overcoming the tribes in that section of the country and securing their submission to the Roman authority.

There remained only the tribes of the Morini and Menapii of all the tribes of Gaul who

had not submitted to Cæsar. These peoples had their abode along the coast from the mouth of the Rhine in a southwesterly direction to the lands of the Unelli, among whom Sabinus had been sent, a low-lying, marshy country, much cut up by streams. It is the land the Dutch later in history reclaimed from the sea by building dikes.

The Morini and the Menapii had never sent ambassadors to Cæsar and now, unawed by his triumphs over the other Gauls, they sent him a message of defiance. The Roman general at once set out on an expedition against the defiant tribes, taking all his forces with him.

The enemy, taught a lesson by the defeats of the other tribes which had faced Cæsar's army, declined to meet the legionaries in battle, but withdrew into the forests and morasses along the coast. This was no particular hardship to them, as they were accustomed to living in tents and caves, rather than in dwelling-houses in permanent towns, for they were less civilized than the other Gauls. Such dwellings as they had were for the most part widely scattered about in the country.

Their leaving of their homes made their in-

surrection a hard one to deal with, since there were no large organized bodies of fighting men for the legionaries to meet, nothing resembling an army to engage in combat with. Dense forests bordered the seacoast, having no well-marked roads, but only paths and byways through the wilderness, known only to the inhabitants of the region. Few scouts or traders could be found who had penetrated that part of the country to serve as guides.

The method of fighting these tribesmen used was to cut off small foraging or scouting parties of the Roman forces, to harass the rear of the marching columns, and to lay ambushes. The only attacks in force made on the legionaries were while they were engaged in fortifying their camps.

“This kind of fighting is not to my liking,” declared Julius.

“Nor mine, either,” agreed Titus.

“Why don’t they stand and fight?” inquired another legionary soldier. “This hunting around in the woods may be good sport if you’re out to hunt for game, but I thought we were out on a military campaign.”

“Their tactics are annoying, to be sure,”

said Titus, "but you must give the enemy some credit for thinking of them. They are succeeding in bothering us, anyway, are they not?"

"Yes, if you put it that way," said Julius. "But if they want trouble, let them come on. We'll give them all the trouble they want if they will only stand and fight."

"Their way gives them a chance of fighting a longer time," said Titus, with a laugh. "They have the advantage of us at present."

"Let them run. I shall not run after them very far," declared the companion Titus and Julius were talking with, thoroughly disgusted. "I am sick of this style of warfare and I don't care who knows it."

"They are causing us some losses, too," continued Titus, "with this guerrilla style of fighting, and they make it difficult to get provisions. I wonder what they live on, anyway. It doesn't seem to me this country is worth capturing."

The chief engineers with Cæsar's forces, the Knight Mamurra and L. Cornelius Balbus, devised a novel plan for protecting the column on its march. The forest trees along the line

of march were cut down and piled up along each side in ramparts as the army moved along.

In this work Titus played a leading part. He skilfully directed the men under him so that they lost no time or effort in cutting down and moving into place the huge forest giants. The trees were felled in such a way that they had to be moved but a short distance to get them into position on the walled highway that was being built. The young centurion earned the praise of Mamurra for his energetic direction of the men under his command.

The progress of the army was necessarily slow because of the labor of chopping the trees, but plenty of men were available to work in relays, and tools suitable for the work were at hand. The barbarians, who possessed only rude tools and to whom the felling of one large tree appeared to be a colossal task, were surprised at the speed at which the forests were leveled and the protected roadway was built into the heart of their country.

After advancing far into hitherto unpenetrated country and after having taken for supplies for his army all the cattle left behind by the retreating tribesmen, Cæsar retired to his

base because the lateness of the season would make it impossible to conduct operations in such a country. The legions were put in winter quarters between the Seine and Loire rivers and Cæsar himself, as his custom was, returned for the winter to Cisalpine Gaul.

The winter brought disquieting news from the eastern frontier again. Always restless and on the move, more German tribes had crossed the Rhine and were threatening to take possession of the lands of the Gauls. This time it was some tribes of the nation of the Ubii, the Usipetes and the Tencteri. They had crossed the Rhine with 430,000 people, men, women, and children, and had advanced as far as the River Meuse.

This sizable migration had alarmed the Gauls. Protests were received by Cæsar from several tribes that had entered into alliance with him. The invaders were reported to have devastated the land of the Menapii with great slaughter.

Rejoining his legions in early spring, Cæsar set out at once on an expedition eastward to meet the new German threat and protect his Gallic allies. The leaders of the Gallic tribes

were called together in conference at his headquarters. They agreed to furnish provisions for the Roman army and to provide it with a fine body of native cavalry, numbering five thousand.

Early in May, the legionaries and their allies began the eastward march. They moved rapidly through the country of the Nervii, once enemies, but now glad of the protection of the Roman soldiers. They reached the River Meuse, and there Cæsar began negotiations with the roving German tribes.

The latter made request that Cæsar authorize them to retain the lands in Gaul they had already conquered. To this he would not consent, but insisted that they go back across the Rhine, where some of the German tribes, at his request, would be willing to grant them a place to settle.

The ambassadors of the roving Germans made excuses for delay in the negotiations, claiming that they must secure the consent of their people to any terms they made. In reality, their object in delay was to give time for a large part of their cavalry, which had gone on a raiding expedition, to return to the

main body of the army, which was reported by the Gallic scouts to number a hundred thousand fighting men.

The Roman legions advanced steadily through the country, with the allied Gallic cavalry out in front as a vanguard to meet any sudden assault that might be made on the column and to do general scouting duty.

Titus was with the legionary vanguard to select a camp-site for the night. His progress as an engineer had been so rapid that he was often detailed for the duty of selecting the camp-site and laying out its walls and streets. Julius was with him with a selected body of legionaries to set up stakes to mark the outline of the camp walls.

“There,” said Titus, halting his command, “this slope will make an ideal camp-site. The view of the surrounding country is good, and there is an abundant water supply. Lay out the line of stakes from this point.”

He indicated the direction he wished the wall to follow. The legionaries ran to set the stakes and mark off the proper distances, Titus watching till they came into the line he had selected.

“Look,” he exclaimed suddenly, pointing his arm higher to indicate a spot on the horizon several miles distant. “What is that cloud of dust rising?”

“Sure enough,” said Julius. “There is a lot of dust. The cavalry are riding hard. Perhaps they have met some of the Germans in a skirmish.”

The surmise was correct, as was soon learned from the Gallic cavalrymen, who came fleeing back to the protection of the Roman foot-soldiers. The German horsemen had suddenly attacked them and driven them back defeated.

“Why did you flee?” asked Titus, sternly, of a Gallic horseman he knew well, as the frightened man drew rein on reaching the centurion and his small outpost force.

“They attacked so suddenly they spread a panic among us,” the horseman declared.

“H’m,” sneered Titus, “you boast of your horsemanship and the superiority of your Gallic cavalry. I don’t see that you do much when you get into action. You should be ashamed to let these untrained German wild men scare you off. Did you stand and make a fight of it?”

“Yes, at first,” the Gaul replied, “but it was useless. The Germans had the most peculiar tactics. They threw our men into confusion. The riders use no saddles or bridles and they fight on foot as well as on horseback. They jump off their horses and stab our horses in the belly, then mount their steeds, which have come to a standstill to wait for them. What can you do against fighters like that? They do not make cavalry charges as we do. There is no clash of opposing bodies of troops, just a series of individual combats. If we charge on them, they flee. Then they turn and spring from their horses and go at us on foot.”

Other fleeing Gauls brought back the same tales of wild disorder in their ranks made by the savage horsemen of the enemy. The defeat of the Gauls was complete, although they outnumbered their attackers. Their retreat was not stopped until they reached the shelter of the Roman infantry.

The attack had been made during the progress of a truce, while the German ambassadors were considering Cæsar's proposition. He resolved to take no further chances with the

treacherous enemy and to place no more reliance on his allied cavalry, but to put the legions into action at once.

Early next morning the legions were marshaled in three lines, in column of cohorts, and moved against the enemy, who were in camp eight miles away. The cavalry was stationed in the rear.

The country over which they had to move was densely wooded, difficult ground to travel, but the legionaries had no baggage with them, but only the arms needed in battle. The woods sheltered their movements from the enemy, who had no scouts and did not learn of the movement against them.

The pace was quickened as the legionaries left the open ground about the camp and they were urged along at a jog-trot that quickly carried them over the eight miles separating their camp from the enemy's. A short rest was given in the woods just before the German camp was reached and then the legionaries dashed with fury upon the enemy.

Taken entirely by surprise, the Germans put up only a short and weak resistance. Most of them threw down their arms and fled at once.

A panic spread among them, all seeking safety in flight, scattering as they went.

The Gallic cavalry, anxious to make good for their defeat of the day before, pursued the fugitives and cut them down without mercy. Penned in between the Rhine and the Meuse rivers, the defeated Germans had no place to which to flee to safety. Those who did not fall by the sword perished in attempting to swim the rivers. Their whole army was routed with terrific slaughter.

“What a difference between this battle and the one in which we first met the Germans, under Ariovistus,” remarked Titus to Julius.

“I should say so,” his cousin replied. “We have hardly a man wounded, even, and none killed.”

“Our losses have been slight indeed. It was the shortest battle I was ever in and the most one-sided. I don’t feel tired at all.”

“It is a good thing we didn’t have to take part in the pursuit,” Julius continued. “Now we are fresh for whatever the next move may be.”

“Do you remember how we feared the Germans the first time we met them?” asked Titus.

“I’ll say I do,” replied Julius. “I shall never forget it in my life. The first big battle we were in, when we were green recruits, too, came near being the last for most of us.”

“We both have scars of wounds to remember it by,” said Titus.

“Did you receive a single scratch in to-day’s combat? I didn’t,” said Julius.

“Not one.”

“Do you know, it seems to me our campaigns are getting easier, instead of harder, as we go along.”

“That’s true,” said Titus. “It’s natural enough, though. We are getting more experienced.”

“But that isn’t all there is to it,” persisted Julius. “It is a result of Cæsar’s leadership. There is such a dash and snap to his movements it takes the enemy off their guard and makes the work so much easier for us.”

“You are right,” assented Titus.

The next move of their leader was swift and unexpected, nothing less than an invasion of the German territory across the Rhine. Although this movement was wholly unlooked for by friends and enemies alike, the occasion was

propitious and Cæsar, with his usual decisiveness, seized the opportunity.

The chief motive that moved him was the desire to strike further terror of the Roman arms into the hearts of the restless German tribes, who so constantly threatened inroads on the territory of the Gauls. The Germans had learned by two disastrous defeats that they could not invade nations under the protection of the Romans while Cæsar was near at hand, but they believed themselves to be invincible in their own territory.

No Roman army had ever crossed the Rhine. No serious threat of invasion by any hostile power had ever been made against the Germans and they had become insolent in their dealings with other nations. The message sent by Cæsar demanding the surrender of the raiders who had left the main part of their army before the defeat he had just inflicted on it, and who had taken refuge with a friendly German tribe, was answered in this fashion:

“The Rhine bounds the empire of the Roman people. If Cæsar did not think it just for the Germans to pass over into Gaul against his consent, why did he claim that anything

beyond the Rhine should be subject to his dominion or power? ”

Invasion of German territory decided on, the Roman general received immediate offers of assistance from one of the tribes beyond the Rhine, the Ubii, who felt themselves oppressed by their neighbors, the Suevi, another German tribe. The Ubii asked his aid against their mutual enemy and promised a sufficient number of boats to transport his forces across the river.

This offer was declined. Cæsar decided it was not consistent with his dignity or that of the Roman people to accept the proffered aid. He would make the crossing without assistance. It was not safe, in his judgment, to use the boats. A way to retreat in case of necessity must be provided.

On towards the Rhine the Roman army moved by steady stages.

Titus, assigned to duty with Mamurra and his assistant engineers, began to wonder what the plans were. No word had come from the commander to his soldiers, whom he usually kept well-informed of plans for the operations of the immediate future, believing he secured

better coöperation from his men by taking them into his confidence.

“How shall we ever cross the wide river?” the boy asked Mamurra. “I hear rumors in the camp that the offer of boats has been declined. What is Cæsar’s plan?”

“He has not informed me,” replied the knight, “but what other way is there but to build a bridge?”

Still in the dark as to their leader’s plans, the legionaries reached the bank of the Rhine, to which no other military force of Rome had ever penetrated. Its farther shore was fully a quarter of a mile away. Its turbulent current swept with mighty force between the banks.

CHAPTER XIV.

BEYOND THE RHINE

“COME, Centurion Colenus,” ordered the Knight Mamurra. “We are to go to a conference with our general this morning.”

Titus instantly stopped the work at which he was engaged, of polishing his weapons, and hastened with the chief engineer to Cæsar’s headquarters. L. Cornelius Balbus and other officers of Cæsar’s engineering force were present, as well as several of the centurions, like Titus, who had shown aptitude for this line of work.

The officers found their general seated in his tent with plans spread out before him. The commander-in-chief lost no time in preliminaries, but came at once to the subject uppermost in his mind.

“The bottom of the river here is suitable for driving piles,” he said. “I propose to build a bridge across at this point. How long do you estimate it will take?”

The officers remained silent, for the task

seemed a tremendous one. The stream, between four and five hundred yards wide, ran with a swiftly flowing current and a large volume of water. There was, to be sure, plenty of timber at hand readily available in the woods for the structure, but there was no equipment of heavy machinery with the army. To make speed in the march against the Germans, the baggage-train taken along was a light one. Superfluous equipment had been left behind. In fact, to bridge so large a river easily, would take more special machinery than Cæsar had with him in Gaul.

Cæsar continued his questioning. "You have built bridges before. Will no one venture a guess as to how many days the work will consume? What do you say, Mamurra?"

"Have you devised your plan, sir?" the knight inquired. "A heavy bridge will take longer than a light one. We should build strongly here, I think."

"Yes, the work must be firmly built," said Cæsar. "Here is what I have in mind. Let us prepare stout piles, say a foot and a half thick, sharpened at the ends. These should be fastened together in pairs about two feet apart

to make supports for heavy beams to be laid upon.”

The general held up a sketch he had drawn.

“They will look something like this,” he said, “when they have been joined together. We shall drive one pair of piles down into the river-bed with rammers, setting them not perpendicularly, but obliquely, their tops sloping slightly in the direction in which the current is flowing. Then just opposite the first pair, but down-stream, we shall place a second pair, with their tops sloping up-stream and against the current. When these two pairs of piles are firmly cross-braced, the force of the current will hold them together even more securely. As supports for the floor-work of the bridge we shall use beams two feet in thickness. This weight will force the supporting piles more deeply into the river-bottom. The second set of piles, farther out in the river, we shall build in a similar fashion, and so proceed across the stream, making the length of the piles according to the depth of the water.”

“Excellent,” exclaimed the Knight Mammurra, with enthusiasm. “I grasp the plan in all its details. It is entirely feasible. We

can begin at once. Our chief difficulty will be to get the piles set in position, for the current is strong. Once they are in place, the building of the superstructure on them will be simple. How far apart do you wish the sets of braced piles to be?"

"Let us make a roadway forty feet across. There is plenty of tall timber hereabouts. Set your piles at distances of forty feet from each other."

"Good," commented Mamurra. "We shall begin immediately. Do you others all understand the details of how we are to go about building the bridge?" he inquired of his assistant engineers.

They assented. But some looked skeptical, thinking no doubt that it was easy enough to talk about forty-foot braces and beams two feet in thickness, but to prepare these great timbers and set them in place might prove more difficult than was anticipated.

"How much time will be required for the work?" continued Cæsar. "What do you say, Balbus?"

"It is hard to estimate," replied the engineer. "Much heavy timber is required.

Three weeks, perhaps. We might do it in two weeks if the current does not hinder our operations too much."

Cæsar frowned, but said nothing.

"Let us not estimate the time," suggested Mamurra, "but push the work with all possible speed. I think it can be done in less time than Balbus estimates."

"Take full charge, then, Mamurra," ordered Cæsar. "Begin at once and let there be no delay."

The conference broke up and the engineers departed to give directions to the lower officers about the work to be assigned to the various groups of men who would have charge of the different operations of the construction work.

Titus lingered as the men began to file out from Cæsar's tent, remaining to look at the sketches the general had made. These were complete in every detail, the drawings showing how the cross-beams and the flooring of the bridge were to be put above the supports Cæsar had described to his engineers. When Cæsar gave his attention to the study of a plan, not the smallest detail of it escaped his

notice. He had in this case prepared full working plans.

“What are these for, sir?” inquired the boy, pointing to a diagram that showed the construction of the pile-work that was to support the bridge.

“Another set of piles braced together and placed on the up-stream side of each set of the supporting piles. You see, the current may bring down floating *débris* that will weaken the bridge if it strikes it with force. These additional piles will turn floating logs aside and send them through the open spaces between the bridge supports.”

“The enemy may try to interrupt our work, too,” suggested Titus.

“Yes, I have thought of that,” said Cæsar. “It is possible that they will try to turn loose boats to dash against the bridge, but these protecting piles will break the force of the blow. Is there anything you think of that might be an improvement? I have not given long study to this plan.”

The boy studied the diagrams intently, marveling at the skill his leader had shown.

“Possibly some additional buttresses might

be placed at the down-stream side of each set of piles, sir," he ventured.

"Show me what you mean," directed Cæsar.

"Another log could be driven down into the river-bed a few feet below the pile, with the top braced against the first pile, slanting at a greater angle than the first one. Fastened securely to the whole work, such buttresses would give additional strength. We had a bridge at home that was built in this fashion across a mountain torrent, and it stood against all the spring freshets."

"A good idea," declared Cæsar, pleased with the suggestion. "We will do it. Go inform Mamurra that I wish to have this done."

The work was started at once. The whole Roman encampment became a huge construction camp; legionaries and allied soldiers, servants and camp followers and all, were set at work. Some felled the trees and shaped the timbers. Others hauled them to the spot where they were to be used. Others, more skilful in construction work, set them in place.

Mamurra, given the supervision of the task, was everywhere and under his watchful eye it was pushed along at top speed. No three

weeks were spent at the work, as the doubters had suggested, not even two weeks passed from the time the first tree was felled till the last floor plank was laid, but on the evening of the tenth day Mamurra reported to Cæsar:

“The bridge is finished, sir. The army may cross to-morrow.”

“Well done. Your men have shown surprising speed.” The general was cordial in his praise.

“They all did well,” said the knight, “but some seemed to take particular interest in seeing in how short a time we could do the work. None more so than that young centurion, Titus Colenus.”

“I have my eye on that young man,” said Cæsar. “He is a promising youth.”

“Promising? Yes, but he is a performer, too, and a good one,” declared Mamurra.

It so happened that the opinion his leaders had of him was brought to Titus, for Julius had overheard the conversation between Cæsar and Mamurra.

Julius had been given special work at Cæsar’s headquarters while Titus was busy with the engineering work at which he did so well.

The Roman general, constant in his oversight of the construction work and thereby stimulating his men to greater efforts, still found time to begin another work.

“I have a special task for you, Colenus,” said the general, when Julius had entered his tent in answer to a summons to report there. “Your knowledge of the campaigns will be of value in what I propose to do. I shall be glad of any suggestion you may have to make as we proceed with the writing.”

“Writing?” The boy looked puzzled.

“Yes. I have a few days’ leisure while the bridge work is going on and I am starting a project I have had in mind for some time—to write a series of commentaries on the campaign we are waging in Gaul, to send to Rome, so that my friends and enemies in the city may know what we are doing. I propose to give a straightforward chronicle of events from the beginning of the struggle. I have written letters to my friends in Rome before, you know, telling of the various battles. You have written some of them for me. But now I propose to write a connected narrative. I have enemies in Rome who distort the facts that reach the

city from the front. They draw conclusions that are not true and they try to injure my standing with the Senate and the people. I shall give them a plain recital of the facts, note down the conferences we have with the barbarian leaders and state the terms we make with conquered tribes, perhaps describing also the territories we explore.”

CHAPTER XV

NEW PLANS

JULIUS made ready his writing materials to take down the narrative Cæsar dictated. The story began with the beginning of the Gallic war.

“Gaul as a whole is divided into three parts,” it ran, “one of which the Belgæ inhabit, the Aquitani another, those who in their own language are called Celts, in ours Gauls, the third. All these differ from each other in language, customs and laws. The River Garonne separates the Gauls from the Aquitani, the Marne and the Seine separate them from the Belgæ. Of all of these, the Belgæ are the bravest, because they are the farthest from the civilization and refinement of our Province and merchants least frequently resort to them and import those things which tend to effeminate the mind. They are the nearest to the Germans, who dwell beyond the Rhine and with whom they are continually waging war, for which reason the Helvetii also surpass the rest of the Gauls in valor, as they contend with the Germans in almost daily battles, when they

either repel them from their own territories or themselves wage wars on their frontiers.

“ One part of these divisions, which it has been said the Gauls occupy, takes its beginning at the River Rhone. It is bounded by the River Garonne, the ocean and the territories of the Belgæ. It borders, too, on the side of the Sequani and the Helvetii, upon the River Rhine and stretches towards the north. The Belgæ rise from the extreme frontier of Gaul, extend to the lower part of the River Rhine and look towards the north and the rising sun. Aquitani extends from the River Garonne to the Pyrenees mountains and to that part of the ocean which is near Spain. It looks between the setting of the sun and the north star.”

Julius was thrilled with the new work of assisting his leader with the story of the exploits they had been through. As it progressed, the tale brought back vivid recollections of his own experiences. He saw more clearly than ever before the meaning of the series of events in which he himself had taken part.

In clear-cut, vigorous language Cæsar developed the narrative of his exploits, presenting a series of word-pictures that fascinated his young centurion. The boy wrote on and on as his leader dictated. It was interesting

work. He noticed that his leader did not take all the credit of his successes to himself, but mentioned his officers by name and commended them for the part they had played. Julius took special pleasure in recording the deeds of the comrades he knew well, among them his beloved centurion, "P. Sextius Baculus, a very valiant man," mentioned more than once for bravery.

A message from Mamurra that the bridge had been completed put an end temporarily to the writing of the commentaries, for the time for active operations had come again.

Julius was sent back to his place with his cohort. The army was marshaled in marching order and led across the bridge to begin the invasion of German soil. A strong guard was left behind to protect the bridge.

Frightened by the defeats that the Gallic and German tribes had met who tried to oppose Cæsar's army, the Germans put up no resistance, but fled from the approach of the Roman forces far into the interior of their country.

Several nations at once sent ambassadors to tender their submission. The Suevi, who had



THE ARMY WAS LED ACROSS THE BRIDGE.—Page 182.

Note the four representative figures, accurately shown to smallest detail:
Centurion in front; Standard-Bearer following; Legionary next in line;
Tribune mounted.

been threatening the Ubii with destruction, returned to strongholds in the deep woods far from the Rhine. Having given this protection to the friendly Ubii and having accomplished his purpose of striking terror into the Germans, Cæsar decided to retire from the German territory, in which he had spent eighteen days.

The army was led back across the bridge and the structure was destroyed. The wonder of the barbarians at its size and the speed with which it had been built would long remain.

“There will be a tale to tell of this exploit,” thought Julius, “when we come to the proper place in the commentaries to tell about it.”

The writing of the narrative of the Gallic war was continued by Cæsar on the return march from the Rhine. Even on the journey he would call Julius to him and dictate as they rode along, leaving their horses and being carried in riding-chairs borne on the shoulders of the servants.

The general was displaying the most surprising energy in this season's operations, the boy thought. What a mind he had! He could, and undoubtedly did, plan out his next bold

stroke while directing the daily movements of his troops and at the same time was relating his experiences of the past two years.

“What do you think the latest plan is?” Julius asked Titus one evening when the boys were alone together.

“I don’t know. What is it?”

“We are to cross the water to the island of Britain to explore it.”

“Are you sure?” asked Titus.

“Yes, Cæsar has ordered one of the tribunes to take a war galley and make a scouting expedition along the coast of the island to find out what harbors there are.”

“Who is it?”

“Caius Volusenus. He was with us, you know, when we were attacked in Galba’s camp in the Alps. He is a bold fellow, a good one for such an adventure.”

“Is the fleet being assembled to take our troops to Britain?”

“Yes,” replied Julius. “Orders have gone out to have the ships we used against the Veneti sent to Port Itius, one of the harbors of the Morini. Other ships from our allies are to be collected from all directions.”

“What is the idea of this trip to Britain?” asked Titus. “Isn’t it rather late in the year to begin a campaign now?”

“The distance is not great. It is only a few hours’ sail. I do not know how far Cæsar plans to march into the territory of the Britons, but it will be a help to him if we only enter the island, so that we may get a knowledge of the harbors and the landing-places and find out something about the people of the island, their character and customs, and their methods of war.”

“The Britons have given aid to the Gauls in their campaign against us,” said Titus. “We can, at any rate, impress them with a display of our forces. It is so near winter, I don’t believe we shall make any extended campaign in the island.”

“Perhaps not,” said Julius, “but won’t it be great to make such a trip? I am wild to go, aren’t you?”

“I’m not so enthusiastic as you appear to be,” replied his cousin, “but it will be a new adventure. We may see strange sights. Nobody seems to know much about the Britons or their country.”

“I think it is strange we can’t learn any more,” said Julius. “Cæsar has had lots of the Gauls visit him at his headquarters and he has asked them to tell all they know about the country. He has questioned the merchants, too, but he can’t find out much. Either they do not want to tell, or else they do not get very far into the country. Perhaps they only make a landing to pick up what merchandise they can and come right back again.”

The Roman army reached the coast at Port Itius, the modern Boulogne, and found the harbor full of activity. Many ships had assembled and were being put in order for the voyage. Supplies for the expedition were being assembled.

The Britons had in some way learned of the plans for the expedition and when Cæsar reached the harbor he found ambassadors from the Britons waiting for him with offers to submit to his authority.

The ambassadors were courteously received and Comius was sent back with them to their country on their return. Comius was a Gallic chief whom Cæsar’s influence had made king of the Atrebates. His reputation was high

among the leading Britons. His orders from Cæsar were to visit as many of the British tribes as he could, to inform them of Cæsar's exploits, to tell what sort of people the Romans were, to satisfy them that the newcomers would be friends and to let the Britons know that Cæsar in person would shortly arrive among them.

Meanwhile Volusenus returned from his exploring trip, having been gone only five days. He had not made a landing on the island, catching only a glimpse of the coast. He had seen and could tell but little.

The transports in the harbor numbered eighty, enough to carry two legions, together with a number of war galleys to serve as escorts. The tenth legion under Labienus and the seventh under Galba were selected for the expedition. The rest of the army was to be left in Gaul under command of Titurius Sabinus and Arunculeius Cotta to keep in restraint the Morini and Menapii, who might cause trouble in the rear while Cæsar was away. The garrison left in the harbor was placed in command of Sulpicius Rufus.

Great was Julius' disappointment at being

left behind on land. He had counted on being in on the great adventure across the water.

“Why did Cæsar choose to take the seventh legion with him?” he lamented. “He knows our twelfth legion is a lot better in every way.”

“Oh, never mind,” said Titus. “You won’t be seasick here on land. See how rough the water is in the channel. They say it is a terribly hard voyage, even if it is a short one. Cæsar has had to wait now several days for this gale to cease, but the wind comes up again every few days. I am content to stay here.”

“But I am not,” rejoined Julius. “I want to go to Britain. I want to be on the first expedition, too.”

Orders came to the men of the seventh and tenth legions to be ready to embark on the transports at the first favorable wind.

CHAPTER XVI

INTO UNKNOWN SEAS

ALL was bustle and seeming confusion aboard the transports. The confusion, however, was more apparent than real, for the well-trained soldiers of the tenth and seventh legions marched aboard the waiting ships with the precision that comes from long experience.

It was a bright morning late in August. The wind blew towards the shores of Britain and sailing orders had come. The sailors stood at their posts, ready to cast off as soon as the legionaries had embarked.

“Well, Gametius,” said a centurion of the tenth legion to its veteran standard-bearer, “here we are in the lead, as usual. Cæsar never fails to take his favorite tenth legion with him when there are new fields to conquer, does he?”

“We’re always first,” replied the standard-bearer. “I can’t say that I anticipate much pleasure from this trip, though.”

“Why not? New worlds to conquer, you know.”

“Conquer? Perhaps so, later. How much of a conquest do you think two legions can make?”

“We shall probably only explore the country to begin with,” said the centurion. “Come, let’s stand in the bow of the vessel. Who will be the first to sight the new land? It is only a short voyage, a few hours if the wind holds good.”

“I will join you in a moment,” said Gametius. “I want to look after my baggage in the hold.”

The standard-bearer left the deck and went below. Finding his baggage arranged to suit him, he was turning to climb on deck again when he thought he heard his name called.

“What?” he said.

“Gametius, is it you?”

“Yes. Who is there? Who wants me?”

“It is I,” said Julius, coming out from his hiding-place, deep in the hold.

“What, Julius!” exclaimed Gametius, in surprise. “How did you get here? What are you doing?”

“Going with you to Britain, of course,” said the boy. “I came on board with the rest of you.”

“Why, you are foolish,” said the veteran. “You’ll be disciplined for this. Your place is with your own cohort. You may lose your rank.”

“I don’t care. It is worth it. I was dying to take part in this expedition into unknown seas. I just came along without saying anything to any one.”

“I thought so,” said Gametius. “Well, they can’t put you off the ship now, anyway. Come on deck and let the officers know you are on board. It is lucky you didn’t get on Cæsar’s ship. He might have ordered you dropped overboard.”

They went on deck and Julius reported his presence to a centurion of the tenth legion. The officer made little comment and Gametius and his young companion made their way to the side of the ship that looked out upon the sea. The points of vantage near the prow were already occupied, but they found a position at the rail near the waist of the ship.

The water in the channel was made rough by

a brisk wind. Short, choppy waves made the vessels pitch in an alarming manner. The helmsmen had hard work to keep their craft upon the course, for cross currents were encountered as they sailed on.

“Look, what a sight our fleet makes!” exclaimed Julius, with enthusiasm. “And we are out of sight of land already. I have never been so far upon the water before. Isn’t it glorious?”

“It’s glorious to be young,” remarked Gametius. “I wish I could feel as you do.”

“Why, what’s the matter? You look pale,” said the boy, gazing at his older companion.

“I don’t know,” replied Gametius. “I don’t feel well. Something I have eaten must have disagreed with me.”

Gametius was not the only soldier on whom the tossing waves were beginning to have their effect. Scores of others were experiencing the same feeling of seasickness and before long a good portion of the legionaries were in misery.

Those among them who proved themselves better sailors still clung to their posts by the rail to watch for land, but as the hours wore on, they became more and more in the minority,

while their companions with weak stomachs lay upon the decks or in the holds, wishing their ends would come, a seasick, miserable lot of men.

Julius kept his place upon the deck, moving forward as room was made by those who had to lie down, till he worked his way to the very prow of the boat. At length the shore of Britain came into view. High, white cliffs appeared as the Roman ships sailed on.

The sea washed about the very base of the chalk cliffs, and seeing there was no fit place for a safe landing here, Cæsar ordered his fleet to sail along the coast. After some three hours' sail, the Roman vessels rounded a lofty promontory and came to a spot where there was a shelving, sandy beach.

The landing was not to be unopposed, for the Britons had assembled on the shore in great numbers. They were fully armed and it could be seen that they expected to make an attack as soon as the legionaries had landed. Some did not even wait for a landing to be made, but advancing into the water, began to hurl spears upon the ships. The transports drew too much water to get close to shore on the shelving

beach. It would be difficult for the legionaries, laden with their heavy armor, and obliged to carry their camp supplies, to reach the shore if they were to have to fight an active and light-armed enemy in waist-deep water.

To create a diversion, Cæsar ordered some of the accompanying war galleys to row into a cove near by, where a flank attack could be made on the Britons, and from that position to sling stones and shoot arrows into their ranks with the engines carried on the galleys.

This manœuver made the Britons retire some distance up the beach, out of range of the Roman artillery. Still the legionaries showed little disposition to make a landing. Worn out with the rough voyage across the channel and most of them still suffering the effects of their seasickness, the soldiers were far from displaying their usual vigor in the face of the enemy.

“This is strange fighting,” exclaimed Julius, standing beside Gametius on the deck. “It’s neither a fight on land nor a naval battle. I never saw the like.”

“But we must land and make a fight of it,” declared Gametius. “What ails our men, I

wonder? They seem afraid. The gods will be with us. I must seek their aid.”

With an excitement that was strange in him, the veteran standard-bearer uttered a supplication to his gods that the affair might turn out well for the legion, then raising his voice so that all on his ship and on others near by might hear, he cried out:

“Leap, fellow-soldiers, unless you wish to betray your eagle to the enemy. I, for my part, will perform my duty to the commonwealth and to my general.”

He leaped into the sea, bearing aloft the cherished standard, and made his way towards the beach. “Come, Julius,” he shouted. “Remember your soldier’s oath. Will you come with me?”

The boy plunged in instantly after his friend, shouting to others to come on.

“Follow Gametius,” ordered a centurion. “Will you let this disgrace come on us? Will you permit your eagle to fall into the hands of the enemy?”

Encouraging each other to take the risk and show the stuff they were made of, the legionaries who had been fellow-passengers with

Gametius and Julius leaped overboard as one man and followed after them. Those on other vessels, seeing them wade boldly on, plunged into the water after them.

The footing was treacherous. The slipping sand made the heavily-weighted men stumble, while the water impeded their movements. Once the men in the rear saw Gametius almost fall, the eagle-crowned standard dipping in the waves, but Julius caught his arm and steadied him.

The enemy dashed at the struggling men in the water, not only the unmounted Britons, but their horsemen as well, the animals apparently being trained to go into the water. The Britons had charioteers with them also, who rode in their chariots at the harassed Romans. Acquainted with all the shallows along the coast, the Britons had great advantage, while the legionaries had to struggle on as best they might towards shore, not knowing whether the water was deep or shallow.

It was impossible to maintain ranks. In confused disorder the legionaries pushed on. As scattered groups reached shallow water where they could maintain their footing, they

were charged upon by the horsemen and the charioteers, who tried to surround them and cut them off. Meanwhile, the infantry of the enemy showered the legionaries with darts, attacking on their exposed flank. The battle was pressed with vigor on both sides.

Seeing the distress of his landing party, Cæsar ordered up the war galleys to the assistance of his men. These vessels, new to the Britons, and carrying strange engines, created consternation among the enemy. At length a sufficient body of legionaries reached dry ground to make a charge, driving back the enemy.

Pursuit of the fleeing Britons could not be kept up, however, because the cavalry that accompanied the expedition had not arrived. Embarked on eighteen transports, this body of four hundred and fifty cavalry had sailed from a different port from the one at which Cæsar started with the legionaries. Starting late, they had been delayed by headwinds and had not been able to keep up with the rest of the transports. Later it was learned that they had returned to Gaul, having encountered a storm that nearly wrecked

the vessels. Cæsar ordered the war galleys to be drawn up upon the beach, while the eighty transports on which the legionaries had sailed were anchored off the shore opposite the spot where Gametius had led the landing-party, being too heavy to be beached easily.

Upon a height near by the Romans fortified a camp.

CHAPTER XVII

ON BRITAIN'S SHORES

THE same night of the landing, Cæsar called his officers to him and conferred with them about the plans for the campaign against the Britons.

“Who was the soldier who led the men from the ships to the shore?” the general inquired of one of his tribunes, Caius Volusenus. “Was it the standard-bearer of the tenth legion? It looked to me as if he bore the eagle.”

“It was,” replied the tribune. He then related the exploit of Gametius, praising him for his boldness when his fellow-soldiers hung back.

“Have him brought here to me,” ordered Cæsar, “and have the soldier who was with him come, too. I saw two struggling on through the water together in advance of the rest.”

The order was carried out and Gametius and Julius were soon in Cæsar's presence.

“Why, Colenus,” the general exclaimed in

surprise, as he saw his young aide-de-camp enter the tent with the aged standard-bearer, "I am astonished to see you here with the tenth legion. Who sent you aboard the transport?"

"No one, sir," replied the boy, hanging his head in shame, expecting a reprimand. "I went aboard of my own accord when the troops embarked."

"And it was you who led the advance up the beach with Gametius?" inquired Cæsar.

"It was, sir," broke in Gametius. "He was the first one overboard. He followed me when all the rest hung back."

"Then you both shall share in the reward I have to give," Cæsar went on. "The example you two set to the other soldiers deserves a special present."

The gifts were purses of gold. Gametius and Julius, overwhelmed at their leader's generosity, stammered out their thanks and turned to leave the tent.

"Wait, Colenus," said Cæsar. "As long as you are here, I will attach you to my staff again. You may report to me at headquarters to-morrow."

“There, Gametius,” said Julius, when they had left Cæsar’s tent, “you guessed wrong. You said Cæsar would throw me overboard or take away my rank. Look at what he has given to us.”

Gametius weighed with his hand the heavy purse of gold. “It’s more wealth than I ever had in my life before at one time,” he said. “You must not jump overboard again with this weight on you. You would surely sink.”

“Never you fear,” said Julius. “I shall take good care of it. What a weight of gold! How generous Cæsar is to those who win his favor.”

Julius shared Gametius’ tent with him that night, reporting in the morning to the general’s headquarters, as he had been ordered.

The next few days were busy ones for the headquarters staff. The defeated tribes of the Britons sent ambassadors to sue for peace. With them came Comius, the Gallic chief whom Cæsar had sent to Britain ahead of him. The Britons had seized him and put him in chains, but now the leading men of the tribes near the coast attempted to excuse their conduct, saying the people were responsible for

the violence to Comius, against the wishes of the leaders.

Cæsar, knowing full well that the chieftains of the Britons had power enough to compel their people to do whatever they wished, considered it to be wise under the circumstances to conciliate the British chiefs, so he accepted their excuses and made terms of peace. Some hostages were delivered to him and more were promised. In four days after the landing an agreement of peace had been made with the tribes on the shores of Kent.

It was the season of full moon and the tides were high along the coast. A gale of wind sprang up, raising heavy seas that dashed the Roman ships against each other as they lay in their anchorage offshore. While the storm was at its height the crews of the transports could do nothing to prevent the damage, and many of the ships were nearly wrecked. All lost sails and rigging. The high seas rolled far up on the beach and filled the war galleys that had been drawn up on it.

The two legions, fortunately, had many expert shipwrights in their ranks. The damage was quickly repaired, taking the seasoned tim-

ber and metal from the worst-wrecked vessels to repair the others. Only twelve remained unfit for further use. A ship was sent back to Gaul for extra rigging to replace what had been lost.

“Do you know, Gametius,” said Julius, “that we are in a ticklish position? The Britons are beginning to suspect that we are helpless here, with such a small army, so far from our base of supplies and not much of a store of provisions with us. They are starting to leave the camp and probably are beginning to stir up mischief among their people. They have delayed about bringing in the required hostages.”

“I realize that we are in considerable danger,” said Gametius. “The men in the ranks are beginning to be disturbed. Think what a plight we should be in if a bigger storm came up and wrecked all our ships. I wish we had a force of cavalry with us. They would be very useful in scouting, to learn what is going on in the country back from the coast. I fear there is trouble brewing.”

“I know there is,” declared Julius.

Their fears were realized, for the Britons

soon made an attack. Thinking that the opportunity was favorable to crush the small body of Romans, who might never again come to their island if once repulsed, they secretly assembled fighting men in the vicinity of the camp. The outward signs of peace were kept up and there was a daily coming and going of the inhabitants of the island to the Roman camp.

Suspecting the designs of the Britons, although he had no positive information about them, Cæsar saw to it that the discipline among his soldiers was rigidly enforced and that everything was in readiness for an attack. Further than this he could do nothing.

One day when the seventh legion had gone out to forage for wheat, a surprise attack was made upon its men while they were scattered, filling the sacks with grain. The legionaries promptly rallied in a central point to resist the attack, finding themselves penned in on all sides.

The Britons were out in numbers. Their infantry kept at a safe distance and discharged spears and arrows at the legionaries, keeping up a prodigious shouting. Their chariots

dashed about the line of battle, now and then making a furious onslaught on the Roman ranks, then wheeling suddenly and retiring. The charioteers displayed the most amazing skill in checking their horses when charging at full speed, running out along the pole, fighting on foot for a time and then springing back again to their chariots.

The wheels of their vehicles had projecting from the hubs long, curved scythe-blades. Terrible weapons of execution these blades looked. What would happen in the ranks, thought the legionaries, if the charioteers should dash through them, mowing down men in swaths like standing grass? These engines of destruction could open wide gaps in the close formation of the legion's ranks. But the fears of the Romans were not realized, for the Britons did not drive their wicked-looking chariots to close quarters among them. The sight was awe-inspiring, however, as the skilful drivers whirled about the battle-front, now coursing up and down the line at top speed, now driving straight towards it with a fearful clatter, then wheeling sharply to retreat, all the while the bright metal of the scythe-blades

flashing in the sunlight. Both sound and sight of these chariots of the Britons were terrifying.

The suddenness of the attack, the constant shouting and the tactics of the charioteers, against whom the legionaries were unaccustomed to fighting, nearly caused a panic among the men of the seventh legion. They were on the point of being overpowered when Cæsar came to their relief.

Noticing from the camp that great clouds of dust were rising, the Roman general suspected that something was wrong. He ordered the cohorts of the tenth legion which were on duty at the camp to go with him and hastened to the field of battle.

Led by Cæsar in person, the reinforcements made a sharp attack upon the enemy and drove them back. The seventh legion, which had suffered heavy losses, was escorted back to camp, where the fortifications were strengthened and everything was made ready to resist a prolonged attack.

Bad weather came on, heavy rains preventing any activity by either army for several days. When the sun shone again, the Britons

appeared in force before the camp and Cæsar led his legions out to offer battle.

The Britons pressed on to attack, but were not able to penetrate the steady Roman lines. They fled and were pursued by the legionaries. Cæsar, wishing to save his men, did not allow them to pursue far, but ordered a return to the camp.

The Britons sued for peace again. After doubling the number of hostages they were to give, Cæsar agreed to make peace, demanding that the hostages be sent to him in Gaul, to which he was to return. The autumn equinox had come, and with it the usual stormy weather might be expected.

The two legions were embarked upon the transports and a return voyage was made to the continent.

The Romans had made a stay of three weeks in Britain.

The return voyage was made in safety, but two ships were carried farther down the coast than the rest and three hundred men who had sailed on them were attacked while on the march to join the main army. Six thousand warriors of the Morini surrounded the little

band for four hours, till dispersed by a force of cavalry sent out by Cæsar.

The two legions that had been in Britain, the tenth and seventh, were sent on an expedition to punish the Morini for this attack. After the rebellious tribe had been brought to terms, the legions were quartered there for the winter, among the Belgians.

The winter months were spent in building ships for another expedition to Britain. Cæsar himself gave directions for the construction of the new boats on a somewhat different model, to make them better adapted to the use to which they were to be put. They were laid out with a broader beam than the transports used in the first crossing of the channel and with lower sides, so that cavalry and heavy camp supplies could be loaded and unloaded more easily. The draft was less, so that the ships might approach closer to the shore. The new vessels were fitted with both sails and oars.

The legionaries proved themselves capable shipwrights and before Cæsar returned from his winter duties in his provinces they had constructed a fleet of six hundred transports and

twenty-eight war galleys, all ready for launching.

To the new and old transports and warships were added a number of private sailing vessels used by the friendly Gauls in their commercial enterprises, so that the Roman fleet numbered eight hundred vessels in all when spring came.

“We have a big enough fleet now,” said Titus, who had been engaged in the supervision of the shipbuilding enterprise.

“Yes,” said Julius. “We can transport the whole army to Britain this year.”

CHAPTER XVIII

A DIFFICULT CAMPAIGN

“THE wind is favorable to-day,” said Julius. “We shall probably get sailing orders soon.”

“Yes,” said Titus, “our long wait of twenty-five days is ended, I do believe. It is the first morning for nearly a month that the breeze has been from the right quarter.”

The boys were astir at daylight, as usual, and it had become their habit to look for the direction of the wind the very first thing they did on getting up. Both were anxious to have the fleet sail and were annoyed at the delay, Titus because it would be his first trip across the channel to Britain, and Julius, because he was eager to see more of the island to which he had made the exploring trip the previous autumn.

The month of June was nearly ended. Most of it had been spent by Cæsar in a march with four legions against the Treveri, near the River Rhine, who had risen in revolt against the

Roman authority and were threatening serious trouble.

The revolt had been stirred up by Indutiomarus, a noble of the Treveri, who had engaged in a contest for the leadership of the tribe with his son-in-law, Cingetorix, a great friend of Cæsar. The former collected an army and prepared to fight, after placing all the old men, women, and children in the vast Ardennes forest, where they would be safe in time of war.

But just before open war had begun, many of the lesser chiefs who had attached themselves to Indutiomarus began to fear the outcome of a struggle, hearing that Cæsar was marching towards them, and deserted the rebel leader. When the Roman army arrived, it was found that Indutiomarus had decided to submit. Cæsar ordered the chief power to be given to Cingetorix.

This solution of the trouble brought peace for the time being, but it roused the deep resentment of Indutiomarus and made him a bitter enemy of the Romans, a circumstance that was to lead to more serious trouble later, for there were other Gallic chieftains, who,

deprived of power, were growing restive under the Roman rule and were biding their time to join forces together in a common uprising against Cæsar.

Titus and Julius, hearing of the strife between the leaders of the Treveri, sought out Baculus to ask him what its meaning might be, for the centurion was well informed on political affairs among the Gauls and could usually explain circumstances that looked puzzling.

“It is easy to see that the strife among the Gauls will continue,” he said. “They are jealous of each other and are always quarreling, frequently engaging in civil war. Cæsar is trying to stop this practice and bring about a more orderly government in the country. Of course, to do this, he has to take sides between contending chieftains, although he disturbs the local government of the tribes just as little as he can.”

“And that makes bitter enemies of some of the leading nobles,” remarked Titus.

“Exactly,” said Baculus. “That is just what has happened now. Cingetorix and his supporters are pleased, of course, and will be

loyal to us, but Indutiomarus must be watched in the future. He may stir up other tribes to revolt. It doesn't take much of a blaze to kindle a great conflagration when conditions are right. We may see revolt flame up all over the land some day."

"The Æduans have always been friendly to us," said Julius, "but even among them there are some leaders who are decidedly hostile. There's Dumnorix, for example."

"Yes," continued Baculus. "Dumnorix is a trouble-maker with considerable influence. He has been ordered to go on this coming trip to Britain with us, just as a large number of the Gallic chieftains have. I think it is because Cæsar fears what they may do in his absence if he leaves them behind, rather than because they will be of any special help to us in Britain."

"They are really taken along as hostages for the good behavior of their people, instead of as allies," said Titus.

"It amounts to just about that," said Baculus. "It has made some of them quite angry, too. I saw Dumnorix yesterday and he looked ugly enough for anything."

Dumnorix, aiming at the leadership of the Æduan nation, held by his brother, Divitiacus, had a great stake to play for, because the Æduans held the supremacy over all the other tribes in Gaul. The one who ruled over the Æduans had as complete authority over all the tribes of Gaul as any man could have in the loosely-knit union of the Gallic nations.

To be able to work out his political schemes unhindered while Cæsar was away, Dumnorix used all the influence he could to persuade the Roman general to leave him behind. Cæsar was firm in his refusal and the Æduan noble, angered, rode away from camp with all the Æduan cavalry, of which he was in command.

This open defiance of his authority could not be overlooked and Cæsar sent his horsemen in pursuit at once, with orders to bring Dumnorix back, alive or dead. The fugitives were overtaken and Dumnorix was slain.

To maintain order in Gaul, Labienus was left behind with three legions and four thousand cavalry. The lieutenant was directed, also, to keep the army in Britain supplied with provisions. Cæsar embarked with five legions

and two thousand cavalry on the transports and set sail for the shore of Britain.

The start was made at sunset the twentieth day of July. The fleet of eight hundred vessels was favored with a southwest breeze till midnight. Then the wind died down, but by rowing, the transports made the coast of Britain in the morning.

The ships had been carried by the wind somewhat off their course, too far to the north, so they were rowed back along the shore and about midday a landing was made at a favorable spot.

This time the landing was unopposed by the Britons, who were frightened to see the enormous number of vessels in the Roman armada. No such fleet had ever visited their shores before.

After disembarking his troops in safety, Cæsar stationed a guard of ten cohorts, two from each legion, and three hundred horsemen with the ships and taking the rest of his army with him, he marched by night towards a place, twelve miles distant, where prisoners had told him the enemy lay encamped.

The advance-guard of the enemy, chariots

and horsemen, was met at a ford on a small stream and was easily defeated. Pushing on, the Roman army reached the enemy's fort in the early morning hours. An attack by the seventh legion captured it.

Next day, a pursuit after the enemy was ordered in force. Three legions had marched out of the camp and the twelfth was just on the point of marching out through the gate when a mounted messenger from the camp on the coast dashed up.

“What tidings?” asked Julius, the first centurion the horseman approached.

“Another terrible storm has wrecked our ships,” the man replied.

“How many are destroyed?” inquired Julius.

“Forty are so badly damaged I do not think they can be repaired, and hundreds of others have been rendered useless for the time being,” was the reply.

The messenger rode on to report to Cæsar, who immediately called off the pursuit of the enemy and hastened back to the coast with all his forces.

The damage to the fleet of transports had

not been overestimated by the messenger. The ships were a sorry sight, with rigging torn and planking smashed, as the vessels that had been riding at anchor were dashed against each other by the furious storm.

The legionaries were set at work to haul all the ships up on the beach, out of reach of the waves, and a strong line of earthworks was thrown up about them. This task occupied ten days and nights of ceaseless toil. Orders were sent to Labienus in Gaul to have additional ships built, while the shipwrights with Cæsar's army were set at work to repair the broken transports.

After the delay caused by the disaster to the fleet, Cæsar marched again against the Britons in the interior of the country. The barbarians had assembled at the River Thames a strong army under Cassivelaunus, one of the ablest of their chieftains.

Success was gained by the Roman forces in the small battles by which the campaign was fought and soon the Britons began to desert their leader. Several tribes returned to their homes and sent ambassadors to Cæsar to make terms of peace.

Cassivelaunus, with a force of four thousand charioteers and a small body of infantry, kept up the war. Not being strong enough to meet the legions in battle, he made skilful use of his forces in retreat, taking all the non-combatants, cattle, and provisions to places of safety, and harassing the Roman columns on the march by ambuscades and sudden attacks by his warriors in their chariots.

The Gallic horsemen that Cæsar had with him proved no match for the charioteers in the numerous small engagements they had. These charioteers did not act in large bodies, but in small squads, relying upon their individual horsemanship, which was superb. Their bravery in the face of superior numbers was such that it won the admiration of the Romans. Although always checked in their attacks before they could win a decisive victory, the British warriors always made good their escape when pursued.

Such skirmishes were kept up all summer, the tactics of the enemy making it difficult for the Romans to forage for provisions, because any small bodies of cavalry or infantry sent out were sure to be attacked. Against the

legions in force the Britons refused to make a stand.

The end of August had come. No decisive battle had been fought and no clear-cut victory had been gained by the Romans, even though they had penetrated quite deeply into the enemy's territory. However, Cassivelaunus had been weakened by the submission to Cæsar of several of the most powerful tribes in the southeast section of the island.

The leader of the Britons in the field retired still farther into the interior of the country and sent messengers to the tribes in Kent to urge them to attack the Roman camp on the coast and destroy the transports.

Titus and Julius had taken little part in the fighting of the summer's campaign, for they had been stationed most of the time with the fortified camp that protected the fleet. Titus, assisting the other engineers in the strengthening of the fortifications and the repairs on the ships, had plenty to do, but Julius found the time hanging heavy on his hands.

"I wish we might get into action," he said. "This job of guarding the camp all summer isn't to my liking."

“We can’t choose our work,” said Titus. “It is important enough to protect the rear, even if we don’t get into the fighting. Think what a disaster it would be if the enemy should burn up our ships and leave us stranded here on the island.”

“Yes, I realize all that,” replied his cousin, “but why shouldn’t Cæsar change the legions about more and give us our chance to see the country? Here we’ve been for a solid month in camp and all we know about what is going on at the front is what we learn from the wounded who are sent back.”

“You ought to be proud of the reliance Cæsar places on our twelfth legion,” said Titus. “He leaves us all alone to guard this big camp against attack. He thinks we are good enough to do the work he detached two full legions for in the early part of the summer.”

The conversation of the two young centurions was interrupted by a cry of alarm from a sentry on the camp walls.

“What is it?” they shouted, running up to the guard.

“Look there,” the sentry exclaimed, pointing to the woods a half-mile distant.

“Armed forces,” declared Titus. “The woods are full of them. We are to be attacked. Spread the alarm.”

Before the words were out of his mouth, Julius was off on a run to find Baculus, the first centurion.

“Blow the trumpets,” he shouted. “We are attacked.”

The peaceful camp awoke instantly to feverish activity. Sharp blasts rang out from the trumpets, calling the legionaries to arms. They hastened from the tents or from the ships at which they were at work.

Baculus took command and quickly marshaled his men in ranks. The attack had been begun upon the southwest corner of the long line of fortifications that surrounded the beached transports and war galleys, extending more than a mile along the shore. Six cohorts with nearly full ranks were quickly formed by Baculus, who ordered some men to close the gates and others to mount the camp walls to meet the enemy's attack.

No tribunes were at hand when the first onslaught was made, for they happened to be at the farther extremity of the fortifications.

But Baculus, not waiting for orders from any superior officer, planned the movements for defense.

Mounting on one of the towers on the walls, he surveyed the scene of action. The enemy's force was large, how large could not be determined at first glance, for the Britons were still pouring from the woods. The first arrivals had begun an assault on the walls. The Roman guards upon the walls had been reinforced and were meeting the attack with vigor.

“We must make a sally,” said Baculus. “We must disperse this mob before it gets any larger and sweeps over the ramparts.”

Rushing from the nearest gate, the legionaries hurled themselves upon the flank of the attacking column. Surprised by this counter-attack, the foe gave way. In hand-to-hand combat on the level ground the Britons were no match for the trained legionaries. They were routed with heavy losses.

The pursuit was ordered by the Roman infantry and by the small force of cavalry in the camp, and in the pursuit the Romans captured Lugotorix, a renowned leader of the Britons.

The failure of the attack on the camp dis-

heartened the Britons. Their opposition to Cæsar collapsed all at once and all the lesser chieftains hastened to surrender. Cassivelaunus, the most successful of the leaders of the Britons, sent Comius, the Gaul, to ask Cæsar for his terms of peace.

The news that some of the tribes in Gaul were in revolt made the Roman commander anxious to return to the mainland, so arrangements were quickly made with the Britons for the ending of the war. They were required to give hostages and to pay an annual tribute to the Romans.

Cæsar further directed that the chieftains should make peace among themselves and he forbade Cassivelaunus to attack the tribes which had first submitted to his authority. It appeared that the task of bringing order to Britain would be quite similar to that in Gaul. The various chieftains must, if possible, be kept from quarreling among themselves and from constant civil warfare, while all would be asked to acknowledge the authority of the Roman government.

The return to Gaul with all the Roman army, the hostages, and the prisoners taken in

battle was made in the early part of September. With more men to transport than when he sailed to Britain and with fewer ships, for not all had been repaired since the storm, Cæsar was obliged to make the return voyage in two trips. All the army was returned to Gaul without the loss of a man.

An assembly of all the Gallic tribes was called at Samarobriva, (Amiens) for during Cæsar's two-months' absence in Britain, serious trouble had arisen in Gaul.

The season had been dry and the harvests had been insufficient because of the drought. The problem of feeding the large Roman army, in addition to the native population, was acute. The Gauls were more restive under Roman authority than they had ever been before. Some of the leaders openly talked of revolt.

CHAPTER XIX

GAUL IN REVOLT

BECAUSE of the scanty crops, the legions were widely scattered for the winter quarters, no two in the same place. All were in the northwest section of Gaul, where the tribes that had been most recently subdued seemed most likely to revolt, but a distance of three hundred miles lay between the two camps that were at the extremes of a long line.

Titus and Julius marched with the twelfth legion to the country of the Nervii, where one camp, near the present site of Charleroi, had been placed in command of Quintus Cicero, brother of the famous orator, who had recently joined Cæsar's army as a lieutenant. Not far away was a camp on the River Meuse under the command of Sabinus and Cotta, who had the legion that had been most recently raised in Cisalpine Gaul and five additional cohorts.

Having received word from his quæstors towards the end of October that the winter

quarters had been established and arrangements made for provisioning the troops, Cæsar prepared to leave for Cisalpine Gaul, as usual, to spend the winter. Outwardly Gaul was quiet, but underneath the surface strong fires of resentment against the Romans were burning among its people. The legionaries, although they did not realize it, were camped over a volcano that was ready to break forth in an eruption at any moment.

The tribes of Gaul believed themselves fearfully mistreated. The tribute exacted by the conquering Romans had left them poor, many of the local chiefs had been deprived of their authority, and all the Gauls, of whatever station or rank, felt indignant that they were compelled to submit to the Roman authority. They were a proud race and submission to any authority was galling. Conquerors and conquered were about to lock in a death struggle.

Indutiomarus of the Treveri, cowed into submission before Cæsar left on his second expedition to Britain, but not by any means brought to a frame of mind in which he was ready to submit indefinitely to the Roman dominion, had craftily used the time during which

Cæsar was absent to stir up the Gallic nobles to revolt.

He succeeded in persuading the Eburones that they might win their freedom by revolt. This tribe lived near the confluence of the Meuse and Rhine rivers. Keeping up an appearance of friendliness, they brought in a supply of provisions to the camp of Sabinus and Cotta, as requested.

But suddenly the Eburones rose in rebellion under the leadership of two of their chief men, Ambiorix and Cativolcus, making an attack on a party of the Romans who were out to gather wood.

The attack was repulsed with some difficulty, the legionaries finally reaching their camp in safety. Ambiorix immediately sent word to Sabinus and Cotta that he wished to confer with them. The Roman lieutenants granted the request for an interview and were informed by the Gallic leader that the very next day had been set for an uprising throughout Gaul.

Attacks, he stated, were to be made simultaneously on all the scattered legions, to crush the Roman forces once and for all. Posing as Cæsar's friend, Ambiorix promised the Roman

forces a safe-conduct if they would retire from their position. He claimed that a large force of Germans was approaching to attack the Roman camp and was only two days' march away.

The Roman officers debated the question of whether to retire or defend the camp. Cotta, backed by many of the tribunes and centurions, favored holding on. They argued that they had plenty of rations, that the camp was well located and strongly fortified. They could defend it against all the Germans who could be brought up against it. If their position became dangerous, Cæsar would send reinforcements to their aid. Why should they give up the advantages they had because of the approach of any enemy?

Sabinus held the contrary view. He had been persuaded by Ambiorix that the only safety for the legion lay in a quick retreat to join Cicero's legion in the nearest camp, sixty miles away.

He argued that if the information about the movements of the Germans did come from an enemy, it would be better to act upon it as if true, rather than to wait for the possible ar-

rival of barbarian hordes. He maintained that Cæsar had probably started for Italy already and that each commander must do what he thought best for the safety of his men.

The stormy council of war lasted till late at night and the arguments grew hot between the Roman officers. At last Sabinus became angry and raising his voice so that all the soldiers in the camp might hear, he declared passionately to his fellow officers:

“Prevail, if you wish it. I am not the person among you who is most alarmed by the danger of death. These men are aware of it and if anything disastrous occurs to us, they will demand a reckoning at your hands, these men who, if permitted by you, might join our nearest winter quarters in three days and there experience the common fortune of war all together, and not, if separated from the rest, perish either by the sword or famine.”

Cotta was about to make an angry reply to the lieutenant with whom he shared the command of and the responsibility for the safety of the legion, but the other officers sought to bring harmony, declaring that if all agreed in council on the best measures to be taken, safety

would follow, but if they were divided, disaster would surely overtake all.

At length the counsel of Sabinus prevailed and it was decided to start for Cicero's camp at daybreak. The rest of the night was spent in preparations for the march, each legionary selecting from his baggage the personal belongings he valued most, for not all the baggage could be carried on the trip. Safety appeared to lie in moving in light marching order as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the Gauls had learned from the commotion in the Roman camp that preparations were being made for a retreat. The treacherous Ambiorix, gloating over the fact that his lying words had been accepted as truth, made preparations for an ambush for the Romans on their march.

Two miles from the camp the road ran through a defile that was heavily wooded. A small stream ran between two hills. The Gauls posted their forces to command the entrance and the exit of the ravine and stationed men upon the heights.

A signal for the beginning of the attack was arranged for.

Cæsar was at Samarobriva (Amiens). His departure for Italy had been delayed. It proved a fortunate circumstance for his scattered legions that the commander-in-chief was still in the country.

The volcano was in eruption. The smouldering fires had broken forth. Gaul was in revolt.

A messenger reached Cæsar's camp at four o'clock one afternoon with word that Cicero's camp had been attacked and that he and his twelfth legion were in danger of being annihilated by superior forces of the enemy. The messenger was a Nervian who had deserted from his tribe and taken refuge with the Romans.

He brought the news that the attack on Cicero's camp had been in progress several days. He had succeeded in getting through the lines of his countrymen to bring the news. Although not the first messenger sent out by Cicero, he was the first to reach Cæsar's camp. All the others had been captured.

Cæsar acted instantly. Swift couriers were despatched to all his lieutenants with orders. Crassus, the nearest officer, was on the alert and marched with his legion at once, covering a distance of twenty-five miles and joining forces with Cæsar at ten o'clock next morning.

Trebonius' legion, in camp at Cæsar's headquarters, had been sent to reinforce Cicero as soon as his danger was learned. A force of only four hundred cavalry was at hand, but with these and the two legions the Roman general set out to Cicero's relief.

It appeared to Cæsar that to strike quickly was his only chance. To wait for more troops might be fatal. He had as yet received no word of the attack by Ambiorix on the troops of Sabinus and Cotta.

Labienus, with the tenth legion, had camped among the Remi, near the Treveri. Cæsar's orders to him were to march at once to join his general, but the lieutenant, nearer to the scene of the revolt of the Eburones and knowing that the Treveri were ready at any time to join the rapidly spreading rebellion, remained where he was to prevent danger from that

quarter. Later events proved his judgment in the matter to have been sound.

The Roman general marched on with the small force he had, covering one hundred and ten miles in five days over winter roads, and camped near the Gallic army that had surrounded Cicero's winter quarters.

A trusty Gaul was sent with a message to the besieged Roman lieutenant, with orders how to get it into the camp. He was instructed to tie the parchment on which the message was written to a javelin or an arrow, to be shot into the camp enclosure, where the besieged legionaries might get it.

For additional precaution lest his message fall into the hands of the enemy, Cæsar wrote it in Greek.

“Courage. Expect succor,” it read.

The daring Roman general marched on with his hastily collected force of 8,000 men. Hearing of his coming, the Gauls, who had been besieging the twelfth legion in its camp, detached part of their forces and sent 60,000 men against him.

CHAPTER XX

A DESPERATE SITUATION

“ I HAD a strange dream last night,” said Titus.

“ What was it? ” asked Julius.

“ I don't remember the first part of it,” replied his cousin. “ You know how dreams are. All of a sudden our legion seemed to be in the midst of an attack. It was the most vivid experience imaginable. We were surrounded and we were fighting for our lives.”

“ Who were our enemies? ”

“ I don't know. It was the Gauls we were fighting, but what tribe it was, I can't imagine.”

“ You were dreaming of some of our former battles, I think,” said Julius.

“ No, it did not seem like any battle we have been in before. I think it is an omen of coming trouble.”

“ Trouble? Why, all this country is at peace now.”

“ We seem to be at peace, but you know the

Gauls are restless this winter and there is much talk of revolt."

"Oh, well," said Julius, "they are always talking of revolt, but nothing serious ever comes of it. Everything has been peaceful this fall. We haven't heard a word about trouble anywhere."

"I know it," continued Titus. "That is what makes my dream so strange. I can't understand it. It was certainly a desperate situation we were in. I woke up all in a sweat. It seemed to be this camp of ours that was attacked."

"Never mind it," advised Julius. "It was only a bad dream, and dreams go by contraries, you know."

"Not always," declared Titus.

The subject was then dismissed from their conversation, but his night's experience troubled the young centurion all day and his thoughts continually kept reverting to his dream-fight.

The work of fortifying the camp of which Cicero was in charge had not been completed. The walls had been finished, but no towers had been erected on them. The timber for

their construction had been cut, however, and was piled up inside the camp.

As the afternoon sun was setting and twilight had begun to come, a sudden attack was made on the camp. Without warning, armed forces of the Gauls appeared and delivered an energetic assault.

The legionaries rushed to arms and manned the walls. Cicero, although sick, rose from his bed and took personal charge of repelling the attack.

The enemy were repulsed, but instead of retreating from the vicinity of the camp, fortified a camp of their own.

“It looks to me as if we were in for a siege,” remarked Baculus to a group of centurions, among them Titus and Julius. “The barbarians did not succeed in surprising us and capturing the camp, but they have surrounded us and apparently they have raised a big army from somewhere.”

“Can we get reinforcements?” asked Julius.

“Cicero has sent messengers to Cæsar for help,” Baculus replied, “but I do not know whether or not they will be able to get through the enemy’s lines. If this insurrection of the

Gauls is widespread, they may have all the roads blocked. I wish our camps were located nearer together.”

Baculus' guess was right, for the enemy intercepted Cicero's first messages to his commander-in-chief telling of the attack upon the camp.

The men of the twelfth legion worked all night to prepare their defenses. Fortunately the timber had been made ready, so that by hard work the legionaries built one hundred and twenty towers on the ramparts in one night's labor. Even the sick and the wounded were compelled to assist in the task, Cicero himself setting the example, although urged by his officers to spare himself, for his illness had taxed his strength.

The towers, hastily built, were sufficient for the purpose of defense. From these elevated battlements the Romans were able next day to repulse the assault which the enemy made in force.

Attacks by the Nervii continued at intervals for several days, with no success, until finally Ambiorix, the leader of the rebels, sent word that he wished to confer with Cicero.

The commander of the legion was told by Ambiorix when they met that one camp had already been captured and that the legion and a half that manned it had been destroyed almost to a man. The same fate, he predicted, would befall Cicero and his men unless he would agree to terms.

The news that the force with Sabinus and Cotta had been annihilated was a surprise to the Roman lieutenant, who had not heard of the attack on the camp that lay next to his. So well had the barbarians kept their plans secret that no word of the uprising had reached the scattered Roman camps.

It was no idle boast that Ambiorix made to Cicero, for his troops had conquered the legionaries led by Sabinus and Cotta, as he stated. Boasting that he had captured the Roman standards, he informed the leader of the twelfth legion that his victory had been complete, that both Sabinus and Cotta had been killed and their legion wiped out of existence, only a handful of the Roman soldiers escaping.

It was the worst disaster that had befallen Cæsar's forces in Gaul, and Cicero realized full

well the significance of the victory of Ambiorix, but unafraid, he returned a soldier's answer. No Roman ever entered into negotiations with a foe in arms, he said. If Ambiorix would lay down his arms and would present his case as a suppliant, he would be heard.

The rebel leader had claimed that the cause of the war was the burden laid on the Gauls by the fact that the Romans were wintering regularly in the country and consuming the grain needed by the people. To this Cicero replied that if Ambiorix would state his case to Cæsar, he no doubt would receive ample justice.

The rebel chief discovered that he could not alarm the commander of the twelfth legion, as he had alarmed Sabinus and Cotta, with his story of a general uprising among the Gauls. Failing to draw his enemy into a trap by crafty suggestions, as he had done with the other commanders, he began a siege of the camp in earnest.

The Nervii then began to throw up earthworks to hem the Romans in, constructing a rampart eleven feet high and a ditch thirteen feet deep. Adopting the method the Romans

used in their siege operations, the barbarians turned against their conquerors what they had learned by observation.

Lacking the tools that helped the legionaries to do fast work in their siege operations, the barbarians were forced to cut turf with their swords and to move the loose dirt with their hands or by using their cloaks for baskets, but they had so many men with them that in about three hours they had thrown up a line of earthworks three miles long about the Roman camp.

Next day the enemy built towers, mantlets, and galleries and prepared mural hooks with which to tear down the walls of the Roman camp. The legionaries succeeded in repelling all attacks.

The seventh day of the siege a high wind blew. The Gauls prepared heated balls of clay and blazing javelins. When these missiles were hurled into the camp, they set fire to the thatched roofs of the huts the legionaries had built for winter quarters.

While the fire was at its hottest, the enemy delivered a vigorous attack. To repel this, every legionary was needed on the walls and

the Romans were obliged to let all their baggage be burned without trying to fight the flames.

Deeds of valor were performed by many of the legionaries that day. Disputes among the centurions as to who was the bravest could be settled in the sight of all their comrades. Two of the centurions, who were approaching the highest ranks to which they might be promoted, were among those who sought to distinguish themselves for their conduct in battle, Pulvio and Varenus by name.

When the fight before the fortifications was raging hottest, Pulvio exclaimed to his rival officer:

“Why do you hesitate, Varenus? What better opportunity of showing your valor do you seek?”

With these words, he leaped from the walls and rushed to the spot where the enemy appeared to be attacking in greatest numbers. Varenus followed him.

Single-handed, the two officers, each taking a separate course, attacked groups of the enemy, who closed in about them. Pulvio had his shield pierced by a javelin, which also

caught in his belt, preventing him from drawing his sword.

Seeing the difficulty his fellow officer was in, Varenus rushed up to him. Their enemies, thinking that Pulvio had been pierced by the javelin, all turned upon Varenus. The other centurion, freeing himself from his entanglements, in turn came to the aid of Varenus, who had lost his footing and had fallen in a hollow.

The two officers, fighting side by side, put the enemy to flight and killed several of them. Before the Gauls could rally in overwhelming numbers to overpower them, they returned to the shelter of the fortifications amid the cheers of the legionaries, who had to declare that honors were even between the two centurions.

Thus the siege went on, with almost daily combats, which reduced the number of the Romans, for they did not escape losses in killed and wounded. The numerous messengers sent to Cæsar for relief were captured, some of them being tortured to death in sight of the Roman camp. Finally, a Nervian, who had deserted to the Romans before the fight began, succeeded in getting through the lines of his coun-

trymen and brought word of the attack to the Roman general.

“You must rest to-day, Julius,” insisted Titus. “There are centurions enough. Give your wound a chance to heal. If you don’t, you will be laid up for good.”

“I don’t care,” said Julius. “I’m going on duty just the same. I can stand it as well as the rest of the wounded officers and men.”

“Do take just to-day off,” pleaded his cousin. “Save your strength. You may be needed more to-morrow. One day’s rest will do you lots of good.”

“Rest yourself. You’re wounded, too.”

“But not so badly as you.”

Baculus looked in upon the boys, hearing their voices raised in argument, their tones carrying beyond the walls of the half-burned hut in which they made their quarters.

“What’s all this debate about?” he asked. “You’re as bad as Pulfio and Varenus.”

“I’m telling Julius he should rest a bit,” said Titus. “He is so exhausted he can hardly stand. He’s not fit to mount the walls to-day. Is he?”

“Every man will have to judge for himself

whether he is fit for duty or not," replied the first centurion of the legion.

Baculus himself, pale from loss of blood, showed in his movements no trace of weakness, but his many bandages told the story of how many times he had sustained wounds in the desperate fighting. In spite of Titus' entreaties, Julius took his post on the ramparts for the day.

The attacks of the enemy had grown less vigorous, but they were moving their siege line nearer every day. They felt confident of final victory, believing it a question of only a few days before the exhausted twelfth legion would surrender.

Julius dragged himself to one of the towers, limping painfully from a badly wounded leg. He mounted the tower and looked about the field. The Romans' supply of weapons had been running short and Julius, noticing a javelin that had stuck in the outside of the tower, pulled it out. Unnoticed until then by any of the Romans, the weapon had been there two whole days.

"This javelin is all right to use," he said. "The bent shaft can be straightened."



HE UNROLLED THE PARCHMENT AND READ: "COURAGE.
EXPECT SUCCOR."—Page 245.

He examined the weapon more closely.

“Why, what is this?” he exclaimed suddenly, looking at the shaft. “Here’s something bound around this with a thong. It looks like a parchment. It is some sort of message thrown into the camp.”

Hastily untying the leather thong, he unrolled the parchment and read:

“Courage. Expect succor.”

The boy hastened to Cicero’s quarters.

“A message, sir,” he shouted. “It is written in Greek. I think it is from Cæsar. He is on the way to our relief.”

“Thank the gods!” exclaimed the leader of the legion. “We could not hold out many days longer.”

CHAPTER XXI

CRUSHING THE REVOLT

CÆSAR, advancing to Cicero's relief, came upon the Nervian forces Ambiorix had detached from his army that was besieging Cicero's camp to attack the Roman general. The cavalry met in a skirmish and the Roman allies, acting on Cæsar's orders, hastily retreated in confusion.

Cæsar's camp lay on a hilltop above a small stream. The camp had been built on a much smaller scale than usual, to make it appear that the Roman forces were less numerous than they really were.

Upon the approach of the Nervii, orders were given to the legionaries to act as if confused and alarmed. They began to strengthen the fortifications, hastily barricading the gates and giving every indication of a panic-stricken army. Not a sentry was posted on the walls and the enemy, riding up their horses close to the camp, could look over the walls into it

and notice the panic its defenders appeared to be in.

The trick succeeded. The advance-guards of the enemy rode back to Ambiorix and reported that the Romans were unprepared and afraid and that they would fall easy victims to a swift attack.

The Nervii came on in careless fashion. Sure of having already bagged their game, they pressed forward in disorder to the Roman fortifications, on which not a legionary was to be seen. The defenders of the camp seemed afraid to fight. Taunts were hurled at the legionaries. A herald approached and read a proclamation offering safety to any one who would desert from the Roman camp before the attack began.

The herald returned to Ambiorix and the barbarian hordes began to cross the stream and march up the slope. Some of the enemy advanced against the camp walls to scale them. Others made their way towards the gates, at which they could see the hastily thrown up barricades of sod, behind which no defenders were to be seen.

Cæsar, keeping up his pretense of fear, held

his legionaries well in hand. Not a weapon was thrown at the enemy until they had surrounded the camp and the boldest of them had begun to swarm over the walls.

Then the signal to attack was given. The legions, marshaled in close formation, broke into a yell and charged from all the gates at once. Throwing down the sod barricades, which had not been intended to bar the gates securely, the Romans hurled themselves at the foe.

So sudden and unexpected was the counter attack that the Nervii fled in dismay. Those nearest the gates were swept off their feet by the irresistible onslaught of the solid Roman cohorts. Those farther away took fright and fled.

The legionaries pursued, slaying the fleeing enemy by hundreds. The country was much cut up by small streams and thick woods, so that pursuit of the scattered Nervii was difficult, and Cæsar soon ordered the legions back to camp.

The march to Cicero's camp was continued and at three o'clock next afternoon Cæsar joined forces with his lieutenant. The enemy

who had been besieging the camp had all fled.

News of Cæsar's victory spread rapidly through the countryside. Before midnight, the Treveri, sixty miles away, had heard of it. Indutiomarus, leader of the Treveri, was about to attack the camp of Labienus, but on hearing the news, he dispersed his forces. The Remi, among whom Labienus was encamped, and who still remained friendly to the Romans in spite of the growing revolt among the Gauls, raised a shout of joy. This informed Labienus of the success of his commander-in-chief.

The news traveled in all directions with the same rapidity and any plans the barbarians had under way for attacks on other camps were given up. Cæsar's boldness in marching with his small forces straight into the heart of the enemy's country had won the day for him again.

The general found the twelfth legion in Cicero's camp full of courage after its gallant stand against its attackers, but the little garrison had been sadly treated by the terrific punishment of the long siege. The legion had numbered close to five thousand men at the

beginning of the siege. Now over four thousand had been wounded and four hundred had been killed. On marshaling the gallant twelfth in review, Cæsar found that only one legionary in ten had escaped without wounds.¹

Commending Cicero in highest terms for his brave stand, Cæsar made inquiries about the conduct of the other officers, distributing rewards among the bravest. The commander-in-chief bestowed on each officer his gift in person and with it gave a word of praise for gallant conduct.

“Centurion Baculus,” he said, “you well deserve this gift. Cicero has told me of your brave deeds. The tribunes of this legion praise you to the skies. It seems to me that I never hear of some special bit of valor on the part of this legion but that I find Baculus is in the thick of it. Take care of yourself. We need you, stout-hearted Baculus.”

The general passed on to the next man. “And who is this beside you? You do not need to tell me. Centurion Titus Colenus, by your untiring work the first night of the siege,

¹ A loss of ten per cent in killed and wounded is considered enough to put most military units wholly out of action for the time being.

I learn, the defenses were made strong enough to resist the attack. The chief engineer tells me he never could have succeeded in holding the tired men to the task except for your assistance. All this and more I've heard of you, your heroism in repairing breaches in the walls while under fire. Take this with my sincerest thanks."

The general pressed his gift into Titus' hands and passed along the line.

"Centurion Julius," he said, smiling with keen delight to see the boy who had been so often with him at his headquarters on staff duty now singled out with other officers for honorable mention for duty well performed, "you, too, have my special thanks for the service you have rendered. It was you, I find, who discovered my message and took it to Cicero just when the last hope of relief seemed to have vanished. Your tribunes have told me how courageously you stuck to your post in spite of wounds. Your bravery earns this reward. You ——"

The boy fell at his feet in a faint. The pain of his wounds, the fatigue of his long exertions, the excitement of the moment, proved too

much for him and he collapsed. He was tenderly carried to his hut, where he was given the attention he so badly needed.

Cæsar ordered his scattered forces concentrated in four camps, establishing his own headquarters at Samarobriva and deciding to remain all winter in Gaul, so unsettled were the conditions. Labienus was left in his camp among the Remi.

Open revolt had been quelled by prompt action, but its smouldering embers remained to be quenched. Gaul was far from tranquil. The Remi and the Ædui were the only tribes that remained entirely loyal to Cæsar. All the others needed a firm hand to keep them in subjection.

Indutiomarus, chief of the Treveri, was the head of the insurrection. He tried to get the Germans to come across the Rhine to assist the Gauls in their revolt against the Roman authorities, but having conceived a hearty dread of Cæsar's power because of their previous defeats, the Germans remained in their own land.

The rebel leader did not cease his efforts. He succeeded in getting some of the smaller

tribes to join him and the Aduatuci and the Nervii seemed ready to help. His army was composed largely of outlaws, criminals, and discontented persons, who had pledged allegiance neither to the Gallic chiefs nor to the Romans.

Calling an armed assembly of the chiefs, Indutiomarus succeeded in rallying more followers to his standard and advanced against Labienus to attack his camp. This officer, profiting by the tactics Cæsar had successfully employed in defeating the Nervii under Ambiorix, pretended to be afraid and kept his troops behind the shelter of their ramparts.

Labienus had quietly recruited a good body of Gallic cavalry from the faithful Remi, quartering them in his camp. When Indutiomarus' army advanced against the stronghold in which he was entrenched, the Roman lieutenant made no sally against the threatened attack. Towards evening the enemy withdrew, planning to deliver in the morning an assault they felt sure would result in the capture of the camp and its garrison.

The Gauls, as they retired from the immediate vicinity of the fortifications, shouted

taunts at the legionaries for their cowardice in refusing to fight, conducting the withdrawal in careless fashion. This was Labienus' opportunity. Throwing open the two main gates of his camp, he sent out his cavalry to attack, followed by the cohorts of his tenth legion.

The sudden attack surprised the Gauls so that they were unable to resist it. They were scattered in disorder and Indutiomarus was killed.

This victory and the death of the chief plotter made the Gauls more cautious. The Nervii, the Eburones, and the other tribes who had joined the revolt, dispersed to their homes. The Treveri ceased their threats against Labienus in his exposed position and the country again appeared restored to order.

Afraid openly to attack the Roman forces, the Gauls held secret meetings at night, in which revolution was planned. Emissaries were sent out to all the tribes to rouse the spirit of revolt, so that when a favorable opportunity came the Gauls might rise as one man against the invaders.

CHAPTER XXII

AN EARLY SPRING CAMPAIGN

BACULUS was engaged in conversation with a group of his centurions.

“ I cannot see it that way,” he declared. “ It seems to me that we are in more danger than ever before.”

“ The rebel armies are dispersed, are they not? ” inquired Centurion Varenus, who had been arguing with him. This officer had maintained that the Gauls had been thoroughly humbled by their many defeats, that their spirit had been broken and that no more insurrections might be expected.

“ It is true that there are no armed forces in the field against us,” continued Baculus, “ but you cannot tell at what moment an insurrection will break out again. What warning did we have of the attack on us in Cicero’s camp? If they raised an army of sixty thousand men on short notice then, they can do it again.”

“ You’re right, Baculus,” Titus broke in.

“The Gauls have not forgotten that they conquered one Roman legion. The fact that they overcame Sabinus and Cotta and destroyed fifteen cohorts of our army will encourage them to think they can do it again if a good chance comes. They no longer fear our legions as they used to.”

“Cæsar has replaced those fifteen cohorts with thirty cohorts. We have three full legions instead of the one and a half that was lost,” said Julius.

The young man was inclined to agree with Varenus that there was little danger that the Gauls would rise again and try to drive the legions from the country. Cæsar had promptly made good the loss to his army in Gaul brought about by the defeat of Sabinus and Cotta. He had borrowed one legion from Pompey, the first legion, which had seen service in Spain, and had raised two more in Cisalpine Gaul. One of these two newly-recruited legions that had been called to the eagles was the fourteenth, taking the name and place of the one lost at Aduatuca, the other being called the fifteenth. Cæsar's Gallic army now numbered ten full legions, and losses in the ranks of his

veteran cohorts had been made up by new recruits.

“I think the adding to our forces confirms the view I hold,” continued Baculus. “Cæsar has not only showed the Gauls that Rome has power to send two soldiers for every one they kill, but I believe he also thinks it is necessary to have his army up to full strength. I know he realizes how acute the danger of a general uprising is.”

“Perhaps you are right,” admitted Julius. “While I was on duty at headquarters this winter for a short period, I noticed that he gave more careful attention than usual to the placing of his forces. He was impatient, too, for the new troops to arrive.”

Cæsar, contrary to his usual custom, had spent the whole winter in Gaul with his troops. While the cold weather kept the army inactive in winter quarters, the general had been busy with negotiations with the Gallic tribes, trying to conciliate them and induce them to be loyal to him. In this he did not have uniform success.

After the death of Indutiomarus, the Treveri had elected a new chief from his family,

who tried to get the German tribes to aid him. Ambiorix, against whom Cæsar had sworn vengeance because of the slaughter of his legionaries at Aduatuca, took refuge with them.

Several other tribes were more or less openly hostile, most active among them being the Senones and the Carnutes. The Nervii, in spite of their defeat at Cæsar's hands, were still in arms and so were the Aduatuci and the Menapii.

Anticipating trouble with these tribes, which had placed themselves under the leadership of the Nervii, and knowing that they were constantly trying to get the Germans to make another invasion, Cæsar decided to strike quickly. In early spring, before the roads were wholly settled, he opened his campaign, marching with four legions against the Nervii. He swept over their country before they could rally to resist him, devastating the land and carrying off plunder and provisions.

The sudden attack produced its effect, making the Nervii ready to give hostages for their good behavior. Cæsar then returned to his winter quarters and called an assembly of all the Gauls.

The tribes all sent representatives to the assembly except the Treveri, the Senones and the Carnutes. Transferring the assembly to Lutetia (Paris) in the country of the Parisii, Cæsar sent forces from there against the Senones and Carnutes and compelled them to give hostages. The assembly was then adjourned, with Central Gaul in a fairly tranquil state. Cæsar could now turn his attention to the rebellious Ambiorix, former leader of the Eburones, who had now become an outlaw chief.

Knowing that the Menapii, the next tribe to the Eburones on the north, were friendly to Ambiorix, the Roman general decided to invade their country and detach them from their allegiance to the rebel leader. They were the only tribe that had never sent ambassadors to Cæsar. So long as they remained unsubdued, Ambiorix would have a refuge in the woods and morasses of their country, near the mouths of the River Rhine.

Five legions in light marching order were taken on the expedition against the Menapii. All the heavy baggage of the army and the remaining legions were sent to Labienus, who

was still at his camp on the borders of the Treveri.

The campaign was short and decisive. Moving rapidly through the country and devastating it, as he had done the land of the Nervii, Cæsar soon compelled the Menapii to sue for peace and give hostages. They did not have time to gather forces to resist his wholly unexpected invasion.

Meanwhile, Labienus inflicted defeat upon the Treveri with the half of the Roman army which was under his command. The German tribes that had been reported to be coming over into Gaul turned back in dismay. Cingetorix, always faithful ally of the Romans, was put at the head of the Treveri, the position once held by Indutiomarus.

Cæsar, victorious over the Menapii, was marching up the Rhine to join Labienus when he heard of his lieutenant's victory. He halted his army near the place where his first bridge had been built across that river and made preparations to invade the German territories again.

Another bridge was built, a little above the spot where the first one had been. The troops

were marched over the Rhine and soon came among the Ubii. These people proved to Cæsar that they had been faithful in their allegiance to him and that it had been the Suevi who had promised aid to Ambiorix.

The Suevi, it was learned, fearing punishment for their actions, had retreated far into the interior of the country, driving off their flocks and herds. Not desiring to take time to pursue this roving people, Cæsar returned to Gaul, breaking down part of the bridge at the German end. Fortifications, including towers four stories high, were built to defend the bridge-head on the Gallic side and a guard of twelve cohorts was stationed there to hold them.

Cæsar himself, with the rest of his forces, marched through the forest of Ardennes against Ambiorix. But the rebel leader took to hiding and could not be found. Once he was surrounded in a hut in the forest, but his bodyguard put up a stiff fight and detained the band of Cæsar's Gallic horsemen until Ambiorix had time to mount his horse and escape. The rebel chieftain, seeing that resistance by armed force was useless, released

all his allies from allegiance to him, giving notice that each rebel chieftain must look out for his own safety. This action roused the fury of the other rebel leaders at Ambiorix, but he had faithful followers among his countrymen who kept his place of refuge secret and he escaped capture.

Cativolcus, king of the Eburones, committed suicide in his despair. The other tribes that had enrolled themselves in the rebellion led by Ambiorix either laid down arms and begged mercy from Cæsar or fled to distant parts of the country.

The Eburones had been responsible for the treacherous attack upon Sabinus and Cotta when these lieutenants accepted in good faith the pledge of safe conduct given by Ambiorix. It was the Eburones who had slaughtered the fifteen Roman cohorts. The destruction of the whole nation was accordingly decreed by Cæsar, who forbade any of the tribes which had yielded to him to harbor any of the Eburones. The neighboring tribes, by offers of booty, were induced to aid in hunting down the scattered people.

The Gauls, not slow to seize the chance to

plunder and to pay off old scores against their neighbors, turned out to join the pursuit. The German tribes across the Rhine heard of the affair and supposing that Cæsar's offer of the spoils of war applied to them also, the German tribe of the Sugambri raised a force of two thousand horsemen and crossed the Rhine in boats, some thirty miles below Cæsar's bridge.

The invading Germans began to drive off cattle and to plunder indiscriminately any villages and scattered dwelling houses they came upon. Their greed for plunder led them also to make a daring attack upon a Roman legion, which they had heard was in camp alone at Aduatuca, under command of Cicero.

Cæsar had divided his forces in his expedition against the Eburones, sending out three columns in different directions with orders to rendezvous at Aduatuca on a specified day, when rations were to be issued to the army, such rations for the legionaries being given out every two weeks.

The difficulties of the campaign kept the marching legions away for a longer time than had been expected and neither Cæsar nor his

lieutenants who had the command of the other two columns reached Cicero's camp on the appointed day.

The legions on the march could forage for provisions on their way, but the twelfth legion, left to guard the camp where headquarters had been established at Aduatuca, could not find supplies so easily. Their rations were running short and the men began to appeal to Cicero to let them go on a foraging expedition.

Cicero, acting under orders of the general, had kept the men close to camp, but unaware that the German horsemen were approaching and realizing that the soldiers must replenish their stock of provisions in some way, he allowed five cohorts to set out to forage, leaving five in camp to guard it. This lack of precaution came near causing a disaster like that which had overtaken Sabinus and Cotta at the same spot, the camp at Aduatuca.

"Do a good job at the foraging, Titus," urged Julius, as the cohorts selected for the expedition prepared to leave the camp.

"We surely will," replied his fellow-centurion. "We'll bring in enough, never fear.

I don't like this business of running short of rations any better than you do."

Rejoicing at the chance to take part in active work instead of enduring the close confinement of the camp, Titus set out in high good humor for the foraging trip. The members of all five cohorts, officers and men alike, were glad to go, joking at their comrades who had been left behind as a guard.

Julius, for once, was glad that his duty was not to be an active one, for wounds recently received had not wholly healed and he welcomed the opportunity to rest. He sought out Baculus to visit with him and cheer him up, for the first centurion had been desperately wounded a month before and was not yet strong enough for active duty. He had been unable to take substantial food for five days because of fever.

"Well, the foraging party has left," said Julius entering Baculus' tent.

The wounded officer, pale and weak, lifted himself partially from his bed to inquire, "What foraging party? I did not know about it."

"Why, yesterday was the day appointed for

the legions to return to camp and also the day for issuing new rations. But the troops did not return and our supplies are almost gone, so the men began to beg Cicero to let them go foraging to-day and he gave his consent."

"It is strictly against orders," said Baculus.

"I know that," replied Julius, "but what odds? Cæsar has not returned himself and Cicero had to use his own judgment. You don't want us to starve, do you, just because you are not very hungry yourself because of your illness?"

"Orders are orders," said Baculus, "and they are given to be obeyed. How many of the legionaries are left in camp?"

"Five cohorts."

"Only five cohorts! That's hardly enough to man the walls. What if we should be attacked?"

"You don't really expect us to be, do you?" inquired Julius.

"You never can tell," said the veteran centurion. "It's best to be prepared for anything."

When the unexpected attack was made by the raiding German cavalry, Cicero's camp was

wholly unprepared. The horsemen rode up so suddenly to the main gate that the traders were surprised in their booths outside the walls and the small guard of legionaries at the gate had barely time to run inside and barricade the entrance.

Shouts of alarm rang out.

Julius hurried to the gate, towards which he saw legionaries rushing from all directions.

“What’s up?” he inquired, breathless.

“The enemy is on us again,” replied a legionary. “See that troop of horsemen—thousands of them. Cæsar has been defeated, perhaps.”

The man was in a panic.

“No such thing,” said Julius, roughly. “Man the walls.”

The camp was in disorder, no one seeming to know what to do. A panic had seized the legionaries and their customary readiness in emergency was lacking. The weakest cohorts had been left behind. The boldest had gone on the foraging expedition.

In spite of the efforts of a few of the centurions who kept cool, like Julius, the panic spread. Instead of obeying orders to form

ranks, the legionaries ran wildly about the camp, more than half of them not armed.

What did the attack mean? Who were the enemy? Had the Roman army been defeated and was it now the turn for the remnant of the twelfth legion to be annihilated?

The confusion grew worse and worse.

“What can we do, Varenus?” asked Julius, in alarm. “The men are in a panic. How can we stop it?”

“Let them run, the cowards,” said Centurion Varenus, savagely. “We can do our bit, anyway. On to the gate.”

The two centurions, aided by a handful of the steadier legionaries, rushed into the breach at the gate, which the German horsemen were already threatening to enter. Had the Germans known the situation inside the camp and had they pressed their first attack more boldly, they might have gained an entrance and perhaps a victory.

While the confusion was at its height, Baculus appeared upon the scene. The badly wounded officer seized his weapons and ran about the camp streets, rallying the panic-stricken men, compelling them to take arms,

sending them to the ramparts and exhorting them to do their duty.

Spurred on by his example and stung into action by his bitter words, the legionaries rallied. The ranks were formed, and the walls were manned by defenders who had once more taken courage.

“You’ve saved us, Baculus,” exclaimed Julius. “We never could have got the men in line without you.”

Baculus fainted dead away.

Meanwhile, the enemy had retired a short distance from the wall to take counsel how they might best press their attack. They had found the camp even less strongly defended than they had anticipated. Its capture seemed easy to them, but they wished to make it with the least possible loss to themselves. Deciding to starve the defenders out, they proceeded to surround the camp on all sides, making no assault upon it for the moment. They had been told that it contained all the Romans’ wealth of treasure.

The foraging parties of the legion, sent out under various officers, began to return to camp by different roads, arriving near it at about

the same time. To their dismay, they found that in their absence it had been besieged, a circle of the enemy cutting them off from an approach to it.

“Centurion Colenus,” said the Knight Trebonius, addressing Titus, “call the other centurions here to me.”

Titus made his way about the ranks of his own and one other cohort, which had approached the camp together, summoning the officers to the hastily called council of war.

Trebonius, one of the lieutenants, finding that the tribunes did not agree with him as to the best course to pursue to reach camp, desired the centurions to have their say also. No officer had been placed in supreme command for the day and the lack of central authority was having its bad effects on the men outside the camp, as well as those inside.

“There are many counsels,” said Trebonius, when all the centurions had been assembled. “Some are urging this move, others that. We must decide on something quickly and do it. If we fail to act we are lost. I propose this measure. Let us charge forward and cut our way into camp. What say you?”

“That’s the spirit.”

“We can do it.”

“Surely, forward all together.”

The centurions eagerly assented to his plan. A few tribunes advised waiting to determine the numbers of the enemy, but Trebonius cut them short.

“A vote. At once. All who favor cutting our way into camp raise your swords.”

Eager hands seized the hilts of trusty swords, the weapons were snatched from the scabbards and the bright blades flashed in air.

“Take command, sir,” urged Pulvio, the senior centurion of the group. “We are all with you. Lead us on.”

“Right!” shouted Titus, while the other centurions chorused their assent.

Placing in the center the camp-followers and servants who had gone out with the legionaries, Trebonius ordered the armed men marshaled in a triangular formation. Leading on this flying wedge, the knight drove its steady ranks straight through the masses of the enemy and reached the camp in safety, with all the supplies that had been secured, with few losses among the men.

Another group of cohorts, not so well led, made a stand against the enemy on a low, round hill and had drawn up in a circle to defend themselves. Seeing the success of Trebonius' method, they, too, formed into a flying wedge and started for the camp gates.

But, unfortunately for this group of legionaries, the enemy were ready for the manoeuvre and swarmed savagely at them. These cohorts contained more of the new recruits, who showed less steadiness than those led by Trebonius. They allowed their ranks to be broken, but eventually reached the shelter of the camp, after sustaining heavy losses.

"It has been a bad day," exclaimed Titus, when at length he found his cousin Julius.

"It has, indeed. Almost a disaster."

"Well, we are safe at last."

"We are lucky, that's all there is to it," declared Julius. "Wait till I tell you how close we came to having the camp captured."

And he related the heroism of the wounded Baculus in rallying the panic-stricken legionaries.

The Roman army reassembled its scattered units and the remaining weeks of the summer

were spent in a vain attempt to find and punish Ambiorix, but he succeeded in eluding capture. Some said he fled to Britain.

The conspiracy of the Senones and Carnutes was punished and their leader, Acco, had the death penalty pronounced upon him. The other leaders of the rebellion fled from the country and Cæsar placed his army in winter quarters.

This season the troops were quartered nearer together than they had been the preceding winter. Two legions were camped on the frontiers of the Treveri, two were placed among the Lingones, who were friendly, and the remaining six wintered in one camp in the country of the Senones.

The supplies of food were abundant and Cæsar thought it safe for him to return to Italy.

Before he left, he again made rewards among his officers for gallant conduct during the campaign, Baculus in particular receiving a generous gift and high praise from his commander for his distinguished service in saving the garrison at Aduatuca from disaster.

In private conversation with the gallant

centurion Cæsar said, "Baculus, it seems to me the twelfth legion has had more than its share of hard service this year."

"It has been badly cut up, sir, several times, but we have at least kept our eagles."

"Thanks to you, Baculus."

"Not to me alone," replied the centurion. "We have some valiant officers in our ranks. Could you spare us a few more recruits to fill up our ranks once more?"

"That reminds me," said the general, "that before I leave Gaul I must promote some of the lower officers. You need some additional centurions, do you not, to replace losses?"

"Yes, sir."

"There are some that for their services should be given full rank. I have in mind especially Pulvio and Varenus. Do you suggest others who should rank among the first?"

"There are the two Colenus boys. They are young, I know, but they measure up to the responsibility, and since you ask for a suggestion, I make bold to ask that Centurion Titus Colenus and Centurion Julius Colenus be given highest rank."

"It shall be done," said Cæsar.

CHAPTER XXIII

OLD FRIENDS. A NEW ENEMY

“ SHALL I ever make a good soldier, do you think? ” asked young Lucius Colenus.

“ Why, of course you will, ” said his older brother, Centurion Titus Colenus, encouragingly. “ You are coming along finely. ”

Titus was instructing his brother in the tactics the young legionary was supposed to know to keep his place in the ranks as they manœuvered from one formation to another. The younger boy had only recently joined the Roman army, called into service in a levy of new troops that Cæsar had made to recruit his legions to full strength.

Lucius and other new men had been added to the ranks of the twelfth legion and it was a great pleasure to Titus to have his brother with him, while Julius also was pleased to have his young cousin with the eagles.

“ Never mind your awkwardness, ” said Julius. “ You don’t act half so green, Lucius,

as Titus and I did when we first entered the army. I know just how you feel, for we all have to go through the same experience till we become veterans. You'll learn soon enough. Really, I think you are coming along finely."

"Thanks for that," said Lucius. "Maybe I'll become a centurion in time, as you have."

"I surely hope you will," said Titus.

"It's fine of you to give me this instruction," continued Lucius. "I was a little afraid when I first knew I was to be put in your cohort that I might get it all the worse because I had my brother for an officer."

"What made you think that, you young scamp?" retorted Titus. "You wait and see. If you don't obey orders I'll see that you get well disciplined."

"Did you have some one to teach you, too, when you first joined the army?" asked Lucius.

"We did that," answered Titus. "A fine man he was, too, Gametius. He is now the standard-bearer of the tenth legion. I must have you get acquainted with him."

The Colenus boys had not seen so much of their old friend Gametius during the last cam-

paign as they had in some of their first army experiences. Their own increased duties as they rose in rank, and the fact that the legions had been more or less separated had prevented them from meeting often.

However, during the present winter the legions were more concentrated, the tenth and twelfth, with four others, being in the large camp among the Senones, and Titus and Julius had seen a great deal more of their former instructor. Gametius took the greatest pride in the promotions that had come to his young charges.

The legions were having an easy winter in camp and the country for the time being, at least, seemed free from danger of insurrection.

Cæsar had gone to Rome. His six years' campaigns in Gaul had borne good fruit. Gaul, to all appearances, had been subdued, while its neighbors, the Britons and the Germans, had been taught not to interfere with the affairs of Cæsar's new province. Some German tribes, indeed, had been so far subdued that they were paying tribute to Cæsar and were pledged to send forces to his army if he needed help from them.

In Rome, political disturbances had reached an acute point. The factional contests among the different leaders had brought about serious disorders, and after the murder of Clodius, all the youth of Rome had been ordered to take the military oath and join the eagles of some legion. Civil war seemed about to break out. Cæsar, although his provinces were distant from the scene of the trouble, thought it well to have a full army in case he should be drawn into the trouble. Accordingly, he ordered a general draft in Cisalpine Gaul and the Province.

News of the disturbances in Rome reached Transalpine Gaul, arousing a spirit of revolt again among the Gallic nobles. With all the warfare the unhappy country had experienced, it was not yet fully tranquillized and another struggle to throw off the Roman yoke was about to begin.

As soon as Cæsar's back was turned, new plotting against him began. The conspirators met in secret to discuss their grievances, the payment of tribute, the support of the Roman legions in their country, the devastation of the land during the wars and other troubles that

they considered burdensome. Most of all, they felt that they were losing their liberty.

The rebellious Gallic chieftains bound themselves with a solemn oath to die if need be in defense of their rights. The plan was made to attack, or at least to blockade, the Roman camps before Cæsar could return to his army in Gaul and to try to waylay the commander himself on his return.

Open revolt began among the Carnutes, who took a most solemn oath on their military standards and pledged resistance to the end if the other tribes would sustain them. The Carnutes assembled an army and, on an appointed day, they fell upon the town of Genabum (Orleans) and massacred all the Romans, mostly traders, who were in the place. Among the slain was a distinguished Roman knight, Caius Fusius Cita, who was acting as the head of the service of supply for the army.

News of this outbreak traveled like lightning through the country. Intelligence of it went, partly by signal fires, from Genabum to Gergovia, a hundred and sixty miles, between sunrise and the middle of the forenoon.

At Gergovia lived a young chief, Vercinge-

torix, son of Celtillus, the Arvernian, who had been put to death for aspiring to the sovereignty of all Gaul. The young man had his father's ambition and, not deterred by his father's fate, he boldly determined to become the leader of an insurrection that should drive the Romans out of Gaul.

Older chieftains of his tribe did not think the moment opportune for an uprising. Vercingetorix was expelled from Gergovia, the chief stronghold of the Arverni, who had long been the faithful allies of the Romans.

But the young Gallic noble was not to be turned from his purpose. He called to his standard all the poor and desperate. Many of the young and ambitious nobles joined him with their followers and he soon became so strong that he drove out the other chiefs, establishing himself at Gergovia. Hailed as king, he drew to his allegiance most of the tribes of Central Gaul, the Æduans alone declining to take part in the uprising.

A new enemy had arisen. In the young Arvernian noble, Vercingetorix, Cæsar was to face the most formidable foe he had met in all his campaigns. The army of the rebels grew

by leaps and bounds. The Gauls were divided into pro-Roman and anti-Roman parties, as they had been, for that matter, ever since the Roman occupation. Vercingetorix did not hesitate to march against his own countrymen who did not favor his plan for a general uprising.

Cæsar heard of these movements while in Italy and hastened to the front. On reaching Cisalpine Gaul, he soon saw that he was in a serious dilemma. The Gallic chiefs had been shrewd in their plans and in the timing of the revolt, taking Cæsar at a disadvantage.

He could not send for his legions to come to him. He could neither send messengers to them nor direct their movements, for the enemy lay between him and his troops. Isolated as they were, the legions might be cut to pieces if they attempted to move from their fortified camps. So general had become the dissatisfaction in Gaul, even where the tribes were not in open revolt, that it was not safe for Cæsar to attempt to reach his legions by a march through the enemy's country.

News came that the Province, the territory along the Mediterranean seacoast in Gaul,

long a tranquil Roman dominion, was threatened with an attack. The rebellious leaders of Transalpine Gaul were planning to capture the seaport of Narbo, whose citizens, both Romans and natives, became greatly frightened at the rumor.

Cæsar immediately proceeded to Narbo, garrisoned the city and raised an army in the Province from new recruits. His coming restored confidence. The inhabitants of the Province were protected by sufficient forces so that no successful invasion of the country could be made, and Cæsar hastened to the territory of the Helvetians, where he had ordered the new recruits from Cisalpine Gaul to be assembled.

This movement was designed to draw the attention of Vercingetorix to the Roman general and prevent the rebel leader from attacking the legions in their winter quarters in Northern Gaul, far from the scene of the beginning of the revolt and the threatened attack on the Province.

Cæsar began his campaign with a bold, sensational stroke. Although the snow was six feet deep, he marched his troops with in-

credible hardships across the Cebenna mountains, down the Loire valley and into the country of the Arverni. His cavalry was then sent out to devastate the country in a wide swath.

Astonished to see an army emerge unexpectedly from that part of the Alps, through which no individual, even, to say nothing of a body of troops, had ever crossed in winter, the Arverni sent a hurried call to Vercingetorix for aid. Dumfounded that their land had been made the scene of war, instead of the Province, which they had expected to wrest from Cæsar's grasp, the Gauls moved by forced marches from the south to pursue Cæsar. Vercingetorix was drawn away from the region where he could best direct the cause he had embarked on. Instead of taking the initiative, he was compelled to act on the defensive.

Cæsar moved rapidly along the River Rhone, marching northward through the land of the Ædui to that of the Lingones, where two of his legions were in winter quarters, and ordered two other legions that had been among the Treveri to concentrate with him.

With four legions under his direct command and with no hostile army to oppose his move-

ments, he could easily join his remaining six legions among the Senones. His advance had been so rapid that he kept ahead of the pursuit made by Vercingetorix. His swift and well-planned movement puzzled the Gauls, making them wonder where his next blow might fall. It forestalled any attacks those tribes might make which had not yet been fully pledged to the revolt.

Vercingetorix withdrew from his pursuit of Cæsar and marched against the capital of the Boii, who had remained faithful to Rome. Cæsar, leaving two legions to guard his camp, took two legions in a rapid winter march across the country to relieve the Boii, capturing rebel towns as he went and laying the country waste.

Disappointed again in his plans for detaching loyal tribes from their allegiance to Cæsar or from capturing territory held by the Romans, Vercingetorix gave up his operations against the Boii and called an assembly of the Gallic tribes at his own capital.

He informed the chiefs who were allied with him that in order successfully to resist the Romans, the Gauls must adopt a system of guerrilla warfare. He urged them to harass

the legions whenever opportunity offered and to cut them off from rations and from forage for their animals, thus rendering Cæsar's cavalry useless. To meet the steady Roman legions in pitched battle, he declared, was hopeless. Past experience had taught the Gauls that their enemies were always victorious in battle; the only way to resist the Romans successfully was to burn their own farmhouses and villages and to destroy all provisions that could not be taken to fortified strongholds. This plan might bring victory.

In short, his plan was to render the country waste, hoping to starve the Romans out, no matter what hardships this course would bring the Gauls themselves, then finally to fall upon the legions when they were obliged to scatter to forage for supplies. To this hard course the rebel leaders agreed. They were willing to make supreme sacrifices to gain an ultimate victory.

The Bituriges, through whose country it was believed Cæsar would march next, burned twenty of their towns in one day, sparing only Avaricum because it had exceptional advantages for defense, placing in it a strong gar-

rison. Vercingetorix withdrew with the bulk of his army to watch the Roman operations.

Cæsar lost no time in attacking Avaricum, and captured it after a long siege. It was so vigorously defended that once the Roman general, careful of the welfare of his troops, was on the point of giving up his attack. He made the offer to the legionaries to raise the siege if they were suffering too great hardships in the wet, cold weather of the early spring, but from his soldiers came a prompt, emphatic "No." The legionaries would avenge the death of their slaughtered comrades at any cost.

Gaul and Roman were thoroughly aroused. The struggle went on with a bitterness no previous campaign had seen.

Avaricum fell before the Roman attack, but instead of losing heart, the Gauls continued their revolt with even greater determination. By skilful appeals to neighboring tribes Vercingetorix replaced all troops lost in the siege, reinforcements coming to swell his army to larger numbers than before. He advised the Gauls to copy the Roman method and fortify their camps in the field. The war was to go on.

In Avaricum Cæsar found a large store of provisions, which were badly needed by his army. The legionaries were given a much-needed rest.

Spring was well-advanced, and the time for active operations on a wider scale had come.

Labienus was sent with four legions to the River Seine against the Senones and Parisii, who had been roused to revolt by Vercingetorix, while Cæsar, with six legions, marched on Gergovia in the land of the Arverni. The Arverni, although they had for years been the faithful allies of the Romans, were now the center of the rebellion. The Æduans, also, appeared to be on the point of repudiating pledges of long standing and joining the revolt.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE REBELLION SPREADS

“WELL, Lucius,” remarked Julius, at the close of a hard day’s journey, “are you getting all the marching you want on your first campaign?”

“More than enough,” replied his young cousin. “Shall we have to tramp day after day all summer like this?”

“Can’t tell,” said his brother Titus, laconically.

“There will be more rather than less before the campaign is over,” said Julius. “You may be sure of that. Why, we have marched clear across Gaul and back again, I don’t know how many times.”

The twelfth legion had been one of the four taken by Cæsar’s able lieutenant, Titus Labienus, on his expedition against the Parisii. Reaching their chief town, Lutetia (Paris), located on an island in the Seine, he found it well defended and had been obliged to do con-

siderable manœuvering for a favorable position.

The Parisii burned all bridges leading to their town, and in addition to having a strong garrison inside the walls they maintained an army outside to follow Labienus' movements. Before a decisive battle had been fought, disquieting news came to the Roman lieutenant.

Cæsar had been unsuccessful in his attempt to capture the stronghold of Gergovia, capital of the Arverni, his assault being repulsed with heavy losses. The Æduans had joined the growing revolt and the Bellovaci, hearing of this, assembled troops for war.

The Gauls who brought these tidings added details from their imagination designed to frighten the forces of Labienus, saying that Cæsar had been forced to fall back on the Province after his defeat, failing to secure enough provisions for his army.

Labienus, cut off from his base of supplies by the rising of the Bellovaci, resolved to retreat and join forces with his general, for, single-handed, neither of them could suppress the growing insurrection. To retreat, it was necessary for him to reach the opposite bank of

the Seine, no small task in the face of an hostile army. He determined on a ruse.

Calling his officers together in council, the lieutenant outlined his plan and gave directions about what each unit of his forces must do. The boats that he had with his army he ordered to be taken down the river quietly at night. Five of the steadiest cohorts of one legion were left in camp, while its other five cohorts were instructed to take some small boats and proceed up the river in a noisy manner, so that the enemy might think that they were marching away in that direction.

Leading his three remaining legions downstream, Labienus succeeded in getting all across the river safely in the waiting boats. A stormy night aided them in the movement, the few outposts of the enemy that were encountered having taken shelter from the storm. All opposition was easily overcome.

The enemy, learning that the Roman lieutenant had divided his force into three detachments, but not knowing his purpose in doing so, split up into three divisions themselves and attempted to surround the retreating Romans and cut them off.

“There, daylight will soon break,” said Titus. “Then we can see better what we are doing.”

“Are all our legionaries over the stream?” inquired Julius.

“Yes, the last boatload has arrived. It was my work to check up on that.”

Baculus came up to where his young officers were standing.

“Draw up your men in ranks, now,” he ordered. “We are to make an attack on the enemy at daybreak.”

The charge of the legionaries was met with boldness by the enemy. The seventh legion succeeded in breaking the ranks of the barbarians who were opposed to them, forcing the foe to flee, but the twelfth legion, on the left flank, found themselves opposed to stubborn enemies, who, fighting under the eye of their commander-in-chief, put up a resistance that could not be overcome. The seventh legion, after its success on the right of the battle line, charged upon the enemy on their flank and threw their ranks into confusion.

The Gauls fought bravely, but were overwhelmed and cut to pieces, their leader being

killed. The Roman cavalry were sent in pursuit, dispersing all the Gauls that were in the vicinity.

What had been meant only as a movement to cover the retreat of the legionaries resulted in a great victory for the Romans.

Then Labienus' forces were reunited and all together they marched back again to rejoin Cæsar before more hostile tribes could close in about him. The two parts of the Roman army met at the central base of supplies at Agendicum. Once again the Gauls had failed permanently to divide the Roman forces.

But the revolt was spreading daily as the summer progressed. All Gaul was aflame with it. To a council called at Bibracte came all the tribes but three, the Remi, the Lingones, and the Treveri. Here, the leader of the Æduans claimed the chief command of the rebel army as his right, but it was given to Vercingetorix after a stormy debate among the Gallic chiefs.

“What think you, Baculus?” inquired Gametius. “We are facing a tremendous struggle with the Gauls. Don't you fear so?”

The standard-bearer of the tenth legion was conversing with a group of the centurions of

the twelfth. Baculus, the first centurion, did not immediately reply, but scribbling something on a wax tablet, he handed it to one of his sub-centurions with the words:

“Balbus, take this to the tribune who is in command of the legion for to-day. It is a report he asked me for. When you have delivered it, you may go to your quarters. Stop at Pulvio’s tent on your way and ask him to come here to me at once.”

The officer obeyed. The other members of the group left in the tent watched Baculus closely, guessing by his serious manner that he had something on his mind.

The veteran centurion did not speak till Pulvio had come, bringing with him another centurion.

“Gametius,” he began, “you have asked a question that is bothering many of us. Of the steadfastness of your own tenth legion, there is not the slightest doubt. All its officers and most of its men are veterans of many campaigns. They will be steady in any emergency.”

“So is your legion a veteran one,” said Gametius. “Do you doubt its steadiness?”

“No, I do not doubt it,” replied Baculus, “but I think as you do that the most tremendous struggle we have ever been in is coming. The reason I sent Balbus away,” he said, turning to the centurions about him, “is because he is less experienced than the rest of you. There are other officers in our legion, and in others, too, who are going to be put to a hard test to keep their men in line. We shall need to give the best leadership that is in us and that is why I want a little conference with some of you on whom there is going to be a heavy responsibility if fortune does not favor us as it has done in the past.”

“You can count on me,” declared Pulvio, without the least trace of his former boastfulness.

“Yes, I know I can,” continued the first centurion. “On you, too, Varenus. You centurions of the first rank have shown your worth on many occasions. You, Titus, and you, Julius, have come up to the first rank because of your bravery and your ability to lead your men well in tight places.”

He went on to speak to other officers by name, telling them that they must keep close

watch on all the sub-centurions and encourage them in every way.

“I want this legion,” he concluded, “to show its mettle. Let us equal the tenth legion, whose men have followed the eagles into many a tough battle and have never broken ranks in the face of the enemy. I want you to see to it that the same may be said of the twelfth when this season’s work is ended.”

The conversation drifted to the odds against the Roman army.

“Vercingetorix has ordered a general levy of cavalry from all the Gallic tribes, I hear,” said one centurion.

“Yes,” spoke up another, “he has asked hostages of all the allied tribes. He has devastated his own country to render it useless to us. Now, he evidently proposes to kill the hostages if any of his allies waver in their allegiance. It is said that he has put to death with cruel torture some deserters from his army whom he recaptured.”

“There is no question,” said Titus, “but that he is the ablest leader that has ever risen against us in Gaul.”

“He has plenty of infantry,” said Julius,

“more than he can use, in fact, to good advantage. I think that is why he has ordered out more cavalry to add to the fifteen thousand he already has. He can let some of the foot soldiers go home to harvest the crops if he has the more mobile horsemen to send against us.”

“Cæsar will have more cavalry, too,” commented Baculus. “He has ordered the friendly German tribes to send us some additional horsemen, you know.”

“This guerrilla warfare that Vercingetorix has been waging will come to an end very soon, I think,” declared Gametius. “Then will come the final test of strength. It is Roman against Gaul in one last finish fight.”

“The last stand of the Gauls?” inquired Julius.

“Yes, young man,” said Baculus, earnestly, “the last stand, if you and the others do your part. If not, it may be their final victory and our last stand in Gaul. Remember that. Don’t ever let your men get out of hand.”

“That’s good advice,” said Gametius. “We came near meeting disaster at the siege of Gergovia because the troops pressed on after they had been recalled. The officers could not

control the men. The soldiers took things into their own hands and their rashness came close to causing a defeat for our whole army.”

The rebel army under Vercingetorix, some 80,000 strong, was stationed at Bibracte to intercept Cæsar's march to his base of supplies. The Roman general had with him his ten legions, numbering about 50,000, with some 25,000 additional light-armed troops as auxiliaries, including the 5,000 cavalry from the German tribes and the few Gallic tribes who remained faithful.

Cæsar could not march directly south to the Province, for between him and it lay the country of the Æduans, now fully pledged to the rebellion. He therefore headed towards Vesontio, where he had a good base of supplies, following the same route he had pursued when going to meet the German king, Ariovistus, in his first campaign in Gaul. His ultimate purpose was to cut his way through the lines of the enemy to reach the Province, where he could establish a new base of supplies.

It began to look as if the general must begin all over again in his conquest of Gaul, starting as he did at first, six years before, from

the Roman Province. The result of six hard years' work had apparently been wiped out, the gains of his brilliant campaigns had been swept away and the new rebel leader had reunited his countrymen in a resistance to the Roman that seemed likely to be crowned with success. Vercingetorix was proving that he was well named. His name means literally "chieftain of a hundred heads," signifying a great captain.

The rebel leader's position on the heights of Sacquenay was a strong one. At a junction of the main roads in that part of the country, it commanded three of the possible routes of march Cæsar might follow. On each of three easily defended heights Vercingetorix placed a third of his army.

He called a council of war and declared to the chiefs who were allied with him that the moment had come to strike the decisive blow that would drive the hated Roman from the land. If Cæsar reached the Province, he predicted, he would return with larger forces and Gaul would be subdued. If his army were attacked on the march and destroyed, no Roman would ever return.

The Gallic cavalry, the flower of its army, was encouraged to put forth its best efforts. These picked troops, made up of members of the nobility and the most daring young men of the country, took a vow that every soldier should be forever deprived of all his rights if he did not ride twice through and through the Roman army.

On marched the Roman columns, into the plain before the heights of Sacquenay.

The Gallic cavalry was divided into three bodies, each of which had received its orders from Vercingetorix. One was to attack the head of the Roman column, the two others were to attack on both flanks.

The head of the Roman column came in sight. The waiting Gallic horsemen hurled themselves upon it.

Taking in the situation at a glance, Cæsar had ordered his troops into formation to meet the onslaught on the head of his column, when he saw other bodies of horsemen appear on each flank. Three lines of legions were formed in hollow square, the baggage-trains, as they came up from the rear, were marched inside the square for protection and the Roman cav-

alry were quickly deployed as skirmishers in advance of the lines of the legionaries.

When his horsemen were hard-pressed as the battle went on, Cæsar sent his infantry forward to their support. Vercingetorix did not put his infantry into action. The Roman general divided his cavalry into three bodies, to meet the attacks threatened on three sides by the rebel cavalry. His German horsemen proved their mettle, and, supported by the steady legions, they held their ground against all attacks.

At length, one body of German cavalry, on the right wing of the battle line, gained the top of a hill, and, dislodging the Gallic cavalry, pressed it back to the river on which Vercingetorix had stationed his infantry. The rest of the Gallic horse, disheartened at this reverse, took flight, forgetting their boasted promise to ride through and through the Roman ranks.

Their retreat became a rout, the battle never getting farther than the cavalry skirmish with which it opened. Cæsar's horsemen boldly followed up their success, slaughtering the fleeing Gauls. Several of the highest 'Æduan nobles and many lesser chiefs were taken

prisoners, among them Cotus, who commanded the Æduan cavalry, and Cavarillus, who commanded the infantry.

The hopes of the Gauls were dashed to the ground and Vercingetorix retired from his strong position on the heights to the fortress of Alesia, ordering all his baggage to follow. His infantry was stationed within the walls of the stronghold. His cavalry had been scattered in the action and three thousand of them were slain.

Cæsar, following up the advantage gained by the valor of his German cavalry, left two legions in camp to guard the baggage-train and set out in immediate pursuit of Vercingetorix. Arriving at Alesia, he found the enemy had become panic-stricken because their cavalry, on which they had placed their chief reliance, had been beaten. He encouraged his legionaries to further exertion, beginning at once to throw up earthworks about Alesia to besiege it.

“That battle yesterday was easy enough,” said young Lucius Colenus. “We legionaries hardly had to fight at all. The cavalry did all the work.”

“True enough,” said his brother Titus, “but

your work is coming now. Get busy with your shovel. You are going to see how we build siege-works about a big town.”¹

“The old fox, Vercingetorix, is in his hole,” declared Julius. “We’ll dig him out. He’s cornered at last.”

¹The siege of Alesia is one of the most notable ones of ancient times.

CHAPTER XXV

THE LAST STAND OF THE GAULS

ALESIA, chief town of the tribe of the Mandubii, lay on an isolated hill (Mount Auxois), or, rather, an oval plateau, a mile and a quarter long east and west and a half-mile wide at the center from north to south. It rose five hundred feet above the surrounding valleys, two rivers flowing by the base of the plateau.

In front of the town to the west was a plain some three miles in length from north to south, cut in two by a small brook. Around the town on the other three sides, at a distance of a mile from the plateau, was a line of hills of about the same height as Mount Auxois, separated from each other by smoothly sloping valleys. The grade leading to the plateau was easy, but at the top was a wall of rock, very steep, and impracticable to assault. There were springs and wells on the summit, furnishing an abundant water supply.

The Gauls were encamped on the east of the town, under the walls, and had dug a

trench and built a stone wall six feet high as a defense. Vercingetorix had with him as a garrison some eighty thousand men, both infantry and cavalry.

Titus, placed again in direction of part of the siege-works as an assistant engineer, was busy day and night with the labor of throwing up entrenchments to surround the fortress. To invest the place thoroughly it was necessary to maintain a line of fortifications eleven miles long.

Twenty-three strong redoubts were built by the Romans, four of them strongly fortified infantry camps for the legions, and as many more for the allied cavalry, chiefly Germans. These were located at strategic points to prevent the enemy from making a sally from the town. As the work progressed, the camps and the smaller redoubts were connected with a line of earthworks.

Before the siege-works were completed, Vercingetorix sent out his cavalry on the open plain at the west of the town. There they met the cavalry of the Romans in a skirmish which at first went unfavorably for Cæsar's forces, but the legionaries were sent up to the support

of the horsemen. Then the Gauls retired in confusion, pursued to the gates of their entrenchments.

The rebel leader withdrew from the plain to the top of the plateau on which the town was located, seeing that a siege was inevitable. In order that there might be more provisions for his infantry, he sent all his fifteen thousand cavalry away by night. This force made its escape up the river valley before the Romans had completed their line of entrenchments. The Gallic horsemen were sent out with orders to ride about the country and spur the Gauls on to raise an army to attack Cæsar in the rear and compel him to raise the siege.

“How goes the work, Centurion Colenus?” asked Cæsar, as on one of his daily trips of inspection about the lines he came to the place where Titus was at work directing his men.

“It goes well, sir,” replied the young man. “I never saw the legionaries toil with better spirit. They are accomplishing wonders.”

“Indeed, they are,” said the general, heartily. “Just forty days ago we began these vast works, and I believe that in three days more we shall have them all finished.”

“They are a marvel of completeness, sir,” said Titus. “Even your chief engineer, the Knight Mamurra, who, as you know, is hard to please, is satisfied that the enemy can never break through our lines.”

“I am glad to know he is satisfied,” commented Cæsar. “We have spent many hours together planning our works and inventing the new devices we have made to hold the foe in check. I have heard from Rome that my enemies there are silenced for once. They are saying in Rome that such a work as we are building could scarcely be imagined by a mortal man, while only a god could execute it. That favorable report comes from my friends, of course.”

The completeness of the preparations for defense might indeed cause amazement, not only to the soldiers who were at work on them, but to all who heard of them. They were built as much with a view to defense as for the operation against the besieged town, for Cæsar knew that the enemy would rally to relieve Alesia. To defend himself against attack from the rear, the general ordered a second line of earthworks to be built, two hundred yards dis-

tant from the first, this second line extending fourteen miles in circumference.

At the west side of the town, where from the nature of the ground it appeared most likely that the garrison of Alesia might attempt a sally to break through the Roman lines, Cæsar had ordered an additional trench dug four hundred feet in front of the main line of his earthworks facing the town. This trench was twenty feet wide and twenty feet deep, with perpendicular sides. All the earth taken from this enormous trench was piled up behind it.

In front of the main line of earthworks were also two other trenches, the first one fifteen feet wide and deep, on low ground, so located that one of the streams which flowed by the town could be diverted into it. Back of this was a dry ditch of the same dimensions. These ditches continued half a mile south of the river up the slope of the hill south of the town.

Back of these was the main rampart, with a wall twelve feet high, surmounted by a parapet of wicker hurdles and battlements made of pronged sticks, "like stags' horns," the legionaries said. The prongs projected outward

and downward to hinder any one who might attempt to scale the wall.

At intervals along the wall were towers eighty feet high, on the platforms of which large numbers of archers and slingers could be stationed. This part of the works extended a mile and a half in length.

Not all parts of the long line of eleven miles of the inner works were so strongly fortified, for in many places the nature of the ground made attack difficult. The twenty-three camps and redoubts were so stationed that they commanded a good view of the plain and the forces in them could be despatched quickly to any part of the line to resist a threatened attack.

Such attacks were made at intervals while the siege-works were being built, the enemy trying to hinder the progress that was being made to blockade them, attempting to destroy the works, but all attacks were repulsed. Ver-
cingetorix made no determined effort to cut his way out of his stronghold, believing that he had provisions enough for a long siege and hoping that before his supplies were exhausted, the Gallic chieftains who were allied with him would come to his relief with a huge army.

This, indeed, they did. The Gauls called a general assembly of the tribes at Bibracte and ordered a levy of troops from all, two hundred and forty thousand foot-soldiers and eight thousand horsemen. Even the tribes which Cæsar had treated best joined in the common attack on him. The huge army of relief was placed in command of Comius, the Atrebatian, the man who as Cæsar's friend had been signally honored and had had his tribe exempted from taxation. He had once been sent to Britain to negotiate with the Britons as Cæsar's ambassador.

But times had changed, and the Gauls, thoroughly aroused, had resolved to stake all on one last desperate undertaking. Their army assembled in the country of the Æduans and marched towards Alesia, believing that the Romans could not withstand such a multitude, especially when sallies should be made from Alesia at the time the army of relief attacked.

“ I thought this building of siege-works and defenses was over,” complained Lucius to his brother Titus. “ Will our work of digging entrenchments never end? ”

“ Don't complain,” said Titus. “ We all

must work. You'll be glad when the attack comes that we have strong defenses. With an army inside the town fully as large as our own and a tremendous mob of the enemy gathering in our rear, we shall need as strong works as it is possible to build, if we are to turn back their attack."

The Roman engineers had never ceased for a moment the task of adding to their defenses every possible contrivance to make them difficult of approach. The cleverness of some of these inventions excited the admiration of the legionaries, even while they grumbled at the extra work they brought.

The nickname "lilies" was given to the wolf-pits in which pointed stakes were driven in the ground, circular pits, sloping to a point at the center. These conical pits, three feet across, were dug out in a checker-board pattern over the ground in front of the Roman walls and were concealed with coverings of interlaced twigs and small branches of trees. Before them, rows of stakes were driven close together, armed with iron spurs, the contrivance resembling a huge fishing-tackle.

Five rows of slanting trenches five feet in

depth were dug, and in them was set an abatis of interlaced branches. These, never before constructed by even those legionaries of longest and most varied service in the army, were called "cippi" by the men, meaning "boundary stones." Behind them lay eight rows of the wolf-pits.

"I should like to see any force of the enemy try to break through this line of entanglements," said Titus. "We should have an easy time mowing them down with our arrows and our stone-throwing artillery."

"I don't believe they will try it," said the Knight Mamurra. "We engineers have done our part, haven't we? It is up to the legionaries now to defend the works."

"We'll do it, never fear," said Julius.

Comius and his great army at length arrived, camping on the heights to the southwest of the Roman position. Next day the army of relief was led out to attack, covering the entire plain. Vercingetorix, able to see every movement from the high plateau on which he was surrounded, ordered the garrison of Alesia to assault the Roman earthworks.

The assaulting columns of the besieged

reached the twenty-foot ditch and began to fill it up. They were repulsed by a shower of Roman missiles and could not make their way to the entanglements that barred the near approaches to the legionaries' fortifications.

On the plain the battle lasted from noon till sundown. When night fell, Comius withdrew his army of relief to his camp, unable to make headway against the Roman cavalry and light-armed troops sent out to meet him. Few of the legionaries were sent into action, those who did get into the battle being sent as reinforcements to any light-armed troops which had become hard-pressed at any point.

Next day but one the army of relief again attacked, having in the meantime prepared great quantities of hurdles to fill up the ditches, together with scaling ladders with which to mount the ramparts.

Midnight was chosen for the zero hour for making the attack. The place was on the western plain.

The Gauls came on with a prodigious shouting, this time supplementing their attack with showers of arrows and sling-stones from their own light-armed troops. Vercingetorix heard

the noise and, sounding a signal with trumpets, he gathered his garrison together and led it forth again in a sally.

Each legionary knew his post. The walls were quickly manned and reinforcements were hurried to the point of attack from the nearest redoubt, to both the inner and the outer line of earthworks.

A desperate combat in the darkness ensued, which brought heavy losses to both sides, lasting till daylight came. Then the Gauls retired, beaten for the second time.

Comius resolved to make one more effort to break through the Roman lines and bring relief to Vercingetorix. This time he went to work in a systematic fashion to discover the weakest spot. On the northwest of the town was a hill which the Roman engineers had not included in their line of earthworks because of its great extent. The wall had been run to the foot of the hill through comparatively low ground. An outpost held the summit.

Back of this hill the Gauls assembled sixty thousand of their best warriors, sending them secretly to the spot by night. The hour of the attack was set for noon.

The attack was sudden and severe. It swept the outpost from the hill. The Gauls pressed on to whatever part of the wall seemed weakest, displaying the greatest bravery. The brunt of the assault fell on the northwest Roman camp, where from the high ground above, the barbarians could most effectively hurl their missiles.

The attack became general all along the line, Vercingetorix leading his forces again out from Alesia to attack the inner fortifications. When the struggle reached its height, the Roman general found he had to meet two infantry armies at once, each as large as his own entire force.

But Cæsar was equal to the emergency. Stationing himself on an elevation from which he could survey the whole field of battle, he sent reinforcements as needed to each spot where the legionaries seemed to be most in distress.

“Baculus,” the general ordered, “take four cohorts of your legion and rush them to the northwest camp. Labienus and the tenth legion appear to be having difficulty there and need relief.”

“Forward, on the run!” shouted the first centurion of the twelfth legion.

“Forward, on the run!” repeated Varenus, Titus, and Julius.

Baculus with his first cohort and the other three officers with the second, third, and fourth, rushed to the threatened point. They arrived none too soon, for the hard-pressed legionaries of the tenth had used all their missiles and the enemy had begun to swarm over the walls.

“I am sent to your relief with four cohorts, Lieutenant Labienus,” panted Baculus, out of breath with his rapid advance. “Where do you wish them put?”

“Anywhere along the wall,” said the lieutenant, grimly. “Place them in anywhere with my men. This attack is a nasty one. The enemy are determined.”

Even with these reinforcements, Labienus could not drive the enemy back. As soon as one attack was repulsed, the barbarians rallied and returned to storm the walls with renewed vigor. On they came again and again. The ferocity of their charges had never been equaled.

Cæsar sent young Brutus with six cohorts as

additional reinforcements, then Caius Fabius, his lieutenant, with seven more. No further reinforcements could be spared for this northwest camp for the moment, because of trouble in another part of the field, where Vercingetorix and his besieged army had nearly broken through the lines at one point.

To the relief of this part of his army Cæsar rushed in person. His presence, in his brilliant general's cloak, encouraged his hard-pressed men. The wavering legions rallied and charged upon the enemy with the sword, driving Vercingetorix back into Alesia.

Cæsar called into action his cavalry, which up to this time had not taken part in the battle, ordering a large body of it to make a circuit of the walls and fall upon the rear of the force that was pressing the northwest camp so hard. The general himself, as soon as Vercingetorix's attack had been beaten off, took with him the rest of the cavalry and four more cohorts and hastened to Labienus' relief.

"There the Gauls come again," shouted Titus.

"Steady, men. Aim every javelin you throw," ordered Julius.

Another wave of barbarians swept towards the Roman rampart. The ditches by this time had been nearly filled. Over the rough ground and right up to the foot of the ramparts the Gauls pressed in savage fury, making a seemingly irresistible attack.

“What shall we do, sir?” asked Titus, addressing Labienus. “Our supply of weapons is nearly exhausted. The men can’t stand this much longer without more help. They are falling by hundreds. I have had more than half my cohort put out of action.”

“We must use the sword, then,” declared the commander of the tenth legion.

He made his way to where Gametius stood with the eagle-crowned standard of the legion. The veteran standard-bearer’s right wrist had been shattered by a stone. He steadfastly refused to leave his post to have the wound dressed. Discarding his shield from his left arm, Gametius held the standard firmly with his left hand, raising it now and then so that all the men might see.

“Forward, Gametius! Lead a charge,” shouted Labienus.

Together the lieutenant and the standard-

bearer leaped from the ramparts, the men following.

An arrow struck Gametius in the forehead, just below his helmet. It cut a gash the full length of the forehead, the blood filling both his eyes.

The legionaries of the tenth and twelfth broke into a yell as they charged after the eagle at Labienus' command. Down from the ramparts they hurled themselves, and fell upon the advancing enemy in a furious attack with the sword.

The wounded Gametius staggered and almost fell.

"What's the trouble, Gametius?" asked Julius, rushing to his side. "Are you hit?"

"My eyes. I can't see. They are filled with blood," answered the standard-bearer. "My right hand is useless. Wipe my eyes out, will you, or lead me on."

"Let me have the standard. I'll carry it for you." Julius tried to wrench the standard from his grasp. The charging legionaries swept by them on the run.

"No, it's mine to carry," asserted Gametius. "I will not give it up."

An enemy spear, hurled from the hill above, struck him full in the throat.

As he fell, Julius tore the standard from his hand. "Take it," he ordered a legionary by his side. "Lead on the charge."

The new standard-bearer grasped the standard and rushed into the thickest of the fighting.

While Julius stooped to attend to his wounded friend, the legionaries rushed by him in their impetuous charge, raising a mighty shout as they bore down upon the foe. The decisive moment of the long conflict had come.

At this moment, the German cavalry, having completed their roundabout journey unobserved, charged sharply on the left rear of the attacking Gauls.

Cæsar, in his general's cloak, having forced Vercingetorix to fall back, arrived with his four reserve cohorts and a squadron of cavalry and hurled them into the fray to supplement Labienus' counter-charge. Spurred on by their commander's presence, the attack of the legionaries was not to be denied.

The hosts of the enemy were crumpled up by the fierceness of the onslaught. A moment

before, the Gauls seemed on the threshold of victory. Then they had been pressing the attack, forcing back step by step the crack legion of the Roman army, the tenth, crushing it by weight of numbers, mowing down its ranks with savage onslaughts. The rebel army of relief had almost penetrated the Roman line. Once inside that line, the barbarians would have had the legionaries at their mercy.

That moment passed without the coveted penetration of the Roman defense. The next, the Gauls found themselves on the defensive. The Roman reinforcements hurled into the breach just at the decisive moment turned the tide of battle that had threatened to engulf the struggling legions, caught between the two jaws of a vise, with foes in front and in the rear.

The vigor of the Gauls' attack slackened. Now it was their turn to be pressed hard. The German cavalry dashed at their rear. The battered tenth legion and its reinforcements pressed them relentlessly on the front. They turned and fled, routed and pursued.

Vercingetorix, seeing that the army sent to his relief had failed to bring the promised help,

retired with his own army to the refuge of his fortress on the plateau of Alesia, dejected, hopeless. Nothing remained for him but to surrender.

The slackened pressure on his front line permitted Cæsar to draw troops from those defenses to hurl against the Gallic army of relief. He followed up with vigor his success at the northwest redoubt.

The Gauls who had not been in the fighting caught the spirit of panic and withdrew from the field. Cæsar ordered his cavalry to attack all along the line, scattering the Gauls in all directions. The retreat became a rout, seventy-four of the Gallic standards were captured and their great army was reduced to a mob of fugitives, cut down by thousands by the pursuing cavalry and legionaries. Not until weeks later would the scattered remnant of the Gallic soldiers reach the territories of their own tribes.

Julius raised Gametius in his arms.

“Nobly done, old hero,” he said.

There was no response.

“Do you hear me, Gametius? It is Julius. Look up. I’ll stay by you and help you to the rear.”

The charging cohorts of Labienus passed by them. The fresh relief force brought by Cæsar came up and rushed, yelling, by the young centurion and the veteran standard-bearer, on into the desperate encounter that brought victory.

“Look, Gametius,” whispered Julius. “We are winning now. The charge you led has turned the tide of battle. The enemy are yielding. Yes, they’ve turned to flee. They’re routed.”

He wiped the red flood tenderly from Gametius’ eyes, caressed his blood-stained face and fixed his own clear gaze on the veteran’s familiar features.

“Gametius,” he implored, tears springing to his eyes, “can’t you realize? The victory is ours.”

Gametius’ eyes would never see again. His hand would never again grasp the staff of the eagle-crowned standard. The veteran had fought his last fight.

The young centurion laid the body on the ground and, broken-hearted, made his way to take his place in the exultant Roman ranks.

CHAPTER XXVI

A TALE RETOLD

“AND that, I think, was the hardest fight I was ever in,” concluded Centurion Julius Colenus.

“But you haven’t finished,” pleaded the boy at his knee. “Tell me more about the battle of Alesia. I want to hear how Vercingetorix surrendered.”

Young Titus Colenus looked pleadingly up at his father.

“You tell the story yourself. You know it well enough by this time,” replied the veteran soldier.

Centurion Julius, long ago honorably discharged from the army, had indeed related, time and time again to his son, the story of his exploits in Cæsar’s army in the Gallic campaign. But the boy never tired of hearing the well-known tale and his chief delight was to listen to his father’s recital of the siege of Alesia.

“It was like this,” the little boy began.

“After the German cavalry had charged into the rear of the Gallic line, Cæsar and the Roman legionaries fell on them and the enemy ran away. My father and my Uncle Titus led their men on and the Gauls could not resist them. Then Vercingetorix had to surrender because all his soldiers had run away.”

“And what happened then?” questioned his father.

“The rebel chief put on his best armor, took his best horse and rode out to Cæsar’s camp. He rode his horse clear ’round the general in a circle. Then he jumped down from the horse and took off all his armor and sat down at Cæsar’s feet and waited there till they led him away a prisoner.”

“What happened then?” inquired the veteran soldier.

“Oh, my father and the other Roman soldiers took lots of prisoners,” replied the boy.

“What became of the other chiefs?”

“They all ran away, but some of them the Romans never caught. Ambiorix, the old rascal, who made them so much trouble chasing after him, got away over to Britain, I guess.”

“Why do you call him an old rascal?”

“That’s what you call him, Father.”

“Yes, I know I do, sometimes, when I tell you about the campaigns, but I don’t think we ought to. He was a brave and able leader, and so was Vercingetorix. You must remember they were fighting for their liberty and the liberty of their people.”

“He lost his own liberty, didn’t he?” continued the boy.

“Yes, if you mean Vercingetorix. He was led in chains through the streets of Rome in Cæsar’s triumph.”

“And you were there to see him, Father?”

“No, we legionaries remained in Gaul. I went to Rome later, when the Civil War came on.”

“Didn’t the Gauls bother you any more after their defeat at Alesia?”

“Not very much. They never rose all together in revolt again. We had some small insurrections to put down, but that was all. It was hard work, to be sure, but nothing like having eighty-five tribes put a quarter of a million men in the field against us all at once.”

“Where did you first meet Mark Antony?” inquired the boy, after a moment’s silence.

“Don’t you remember? I have told you many times. He was at the siege of Alesia and was commander at our headquarters the winter following. He became a quæstor in the army later.”

“Why did you stay in camp that winter? The other legions were out fighting, were they not?”

“Yes, all but one of them. We had been so cut to pieces in the terrible battle that we needed rest and our ranks had been sadly reduced by our heavy losses.”

“Was that the battle in which my Uncle Titus was so badly wounded?”

“Yes, he almost lost his life, but he recovered and so did your Uncle Lucius, who was badly wounded, too.”

“And Gametius?”

“You know the story,” said his father sadly. “Gametius died in my arms.”

THE END

