

Julius Caesar, *Gallic Wars*¹

Julius Caesar was a Roman politician. He was elected consul in 59 BCE, and sent himself as the commander of a military expedition to conquer Gaul (present-day France and Germany); he spend 58-51 BCE in Gaul and successfully conquered it, as well as Britain. His military success was helpful as a political asset against his rivals. He returned to Rome in 49 BCE and refused to disband his army; this led to civil war in which he successfully seized power. He was assassinated in 44 BCE.

*The Gallic Wars was written by Julius Caesar himself (even though it refers to him in the third-person) and was published during his lifetime, probably as a form of political self-promotion. The text seems to have been adapted from his original dispatches sent back to the Senate while the campaigns were going on.*²

Book 2 - (57 B.C.)

[2.1]While Caesar was in winter quarters in Hither Gaul, as we have shown above, frequent reports were brought to him, and he was also informed by letters from Labienus, that all the Belgae, who we have said are a third part of Gaul, were entering into a confederacy against the Roman people, ...

...[2.16]After he had made three days march through their territories, he discovered from some prisoners, that the river **Sambre** was not more than ten miles from his camp; that all the Nervii had stationed themselves on the other side of that river, and together with

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<http://www.chieftainsys.freemove.co.uk/caesar.htm>

² Introduction adapted from H.J. Edwards, transl. and ed., "Introduction" to Julius Caesar, *The Gallic War* (Loeb Classical Library, 1917); http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Caesar/Gallic_War/Introduction*.html

the Atrebates and the Veromandui, their neighbors, were there awaiting the arrival of the Romans; for they had persuaded both these nations to try the same fortune of war [as themselves]: that the forces of the Aduatuci were also expected by them, and were on their march; that they had put their women, and those who through age appeared useless for war, in a place to which there was no approach for an army, on account of the marshes.

[2.17]Having learned these things, he sends forward scouts and centurions to choose a convenient place for the camp. And as a great many of the surrounding Belgae and other Gauls, following Caesar, marched with him; some of these, as was afterwards learned from the prisoners, having accurately observed, during those days, the army's method of marching, went by night to the Nervii, and informed them that a great number of baggage-trains passed between the several legions, and that there would be no difficulty, when the first legion had come into the camp, and the other legions were at a great distance, to attack that legion while under baggage, which being routed, and the baggage-train seized, it would come to pass that the other legions would not dare to stand their ground. It added weight also to the advice of those who reported that circumstance, that the Nervii, from early times, because they were weak in cavalry, (for not even at this time do they attend to it, but accomplish by their infantry whatever they can,) in order that they might the more easily obstruct the cavalry of their neighbors if they came upon them for the purpose of plundering, having cut young trees, and bent them, by means of their numerous branches [extending] on to the sides, and the quick-briars and thorns

springing up between them, had made these hedges present a fortification like a wall, through which it was not only impossible to enter, but even to penetrate with the eye. Since [therefore] the march of our army would be obstructed by these things, the Nervii thought that the advice ought not to be neglected by them.

[2.18]The nature of the ground which our men had chosen for the camp was this: A hill, declining evenly from the top, extending to the river Sambre, which we have mentioned above: from this river there arose a [second] hill of like ascent, on the other side and opposite to the former, and open for about 200 paces at the lower part; but in the upper part, woody, (so much so) that it was not easy to see through it into the interior. Within these woods the enemy kept themselves in concealment; a few troops of horse-soldiers appeared on the open ground, along the river. The depth of the river was about three feet.

[2.19]Caesar, having sent his cavalry on before, followed close after them with all his forces; but the plan and order of the march was different from that which the Belgae had reported to the Nervii. For as he was approaching the enemy, Caesar, according to his custom, led on [as the van] six legions unencumbered by baggage; behind them he had placed the baggage- trains of the whole army; then the two legions which had been last raised closed the rear, and were a guard for the baggage-train. Our horse, with the slingers and archers, having passed the river, commenced action with the cavalry of the enemy. While they from time to time betook themselves into the woods to their companions, and again made an assault out of the wood upon our men, who did not dare to follow them in their retreat further than the limit to

which the plain and open parts extended, in the mean time the six legions which had arrived first, having measured out the work, began to fortify the camp. When the first part of the baggage train of our army was seen by those who lay hid in the woods, which had been agreed on among them as the time for commencing action, as soon as they had arranged their line of battle and formed their ranks within the woods, and had encouraged one another, they rushed out suddenly with all their forces and made an attack upon our horse. The latter being easily routed and thrown into confusion, the Nervii ran down to the river with such incredible speed that they seemed to be in the woods, the river, and close upon us almost at the same time. And with the same speed they hastened up the hill to our camp, and to those who were employed in the works.

[2.20]Caesar had every thing to do at one time: the standard to be displayed, which was the sign when it was necessary to run to arms; the signal to be given by the trumpet; the soldiers to be called off from the works; those who had proceeded some distance for the purpose of seeking materials for the rampart, to be summoned; the order of battle to be formed; the soldiers to be encouraged; the watchword to be given. A great part of these arrangements was prevented by the shortness of time and the sudden approach and charge of the enemy. Under these difficulties two things proved of advantage; [first] the skill and experience of the soldiers, because, having been trained by former engagements, they could suggest to themselves what ought to be done, as conveniently as receive information from others; and [secondly] that Caesar had forbidden his several lieutenants to depart from the works

and their respective legions, before the camp was fortified. These, on account of the near approach and the speed of the enemy, did not then wait for any command from Caesar, but of themselves executed whatever appeared proper.

[2.21]Caesar, having given the necessary orders, hastened to and fro into whatever quarter fortune carried him, to animate the troops, and came to the tenth legion. Having encouraged the soldiers with no further speech than that "they should keep up the remembrance of their wonted valor, and not be confused in mind, but valiantly sustain the assault of the enemy ;" as the latter were not further from them than the distance to which a dart could be cast, he gave the signal for commencing battle. And having gone to another quarter for the purpose of encouraging [the soldiers], he finds them fighting. Such was the shortness of the time, and so determined was the mind of the enemy on fighting, that time was wanting not only for affixing the military insignia, but even for putting on the helmets and drawing off the covers from the shields. To whatever part any one by chance came from the works (in which he had been employed), and whatever standards he saw first, at these he stood, lest in seeking his own company he should lose the time for fighting.

[2.22]The army having been marshaled, rather as the nature of the ground and the declivity of the hill and the exigency of the time, than as the method and order of military matters required; while the legions in the different places were withstanding the enemy, some in one quarter, some in another, and the view was obstructed by the very thick hedges intervening, as we have before remarked, neither could proper

reserves be posted, nor could the necessary measures be taken in each part, nor could all the commands be issued by one person. Therefore, in such an unfavorable state of affairs, various events of fortune followed.

[2.23]The soldiers of the ninth and tenth legions, as they had been stationed on the left part of the army, casting their weapons, speedily drove the Atrebates (for that division had been opposed to them,) who were breathless with running and fatigue, and worn out with wounds, from the higher ground into the river; and following them as they were endeavoring to pass it, slew with their swords a great part of them while impeded (therein). They themselves did not hesitate to pass the river; and having advanced to a disadvantageous place, when the battle was renewed, they [nevertheless] again put to flight the enemy, who had returned and were opposing them. In like manner, in another quarter two different legions, the eleventh and the eighth, having routed the Veromandui, with whom they had engaged, were fighting from the higher ground upon the very banks of the river. But, almost the whole camp on the front and on the left side being then exposed, since the twelfth legion was posted in the right wing, and the seventh at no great distance from it, all the Nervii, in a very close body, with Boduognatus, who held the chief command, as their leader, hastened toward that place; and part of them began to surround the legions on their unprotected flank, part to make for the highest point of the encampment.

[2.24]At the same time our horsemen, and light-armed infantry, who had been with those, who, as I have related, were routed by the

first assault of the enemy, as they were betaking themselves into the camp, met the enemy face to face, and again sought flight into another quarter; and the camp-followers who from the Decuman Gate, and from the highest ridge of the hill had seen our men pass the river as victors, when, after going out for the purposes of plundering, they looked back and saw the enemy parading in our camp, committed themselves precipitately to flight; at the same time there arose the cry and shout of those who came with the baggage-train: and they (affrighted), were carried some one way, some another. By all these circumstances the cavalry of the Treviri were much alarmed, (whose reputation for courage is extraordinary among the Gauls, and who had come to Caesar, being sent by their state as auxiliaries), and, when they saw our camp filled with a large number of the enemy, the legions hard pressed and almost held surrounded, the camp-retainers, horsemen, slingers, and Numidians fleeing on all sides divided and scattered, they, despairing of our affairs, hastened home, and related to their state that the Romans were routed and conquered, [and] that the enemy were in possession of their camp and baggage-train.

[2.25]Caesar proceeded, after encouraging the tenth legion, to the right wing; where he perceived that his men were hard pressed, and that in consequence of the standards of the twelfth legion being collected together in one place, the crowded soldiers were a hinderance to themselves in the fight; that all the centurions of the fourth cohort were slain, and the standard-bearer killed, the standard itself lost, almost all the centurions of the other cohorts either wounded or slain, and among them the chief centurion of the legion P. Sextius Baculus, a

very valiant man, who was so exhausted by many and severe wounds, that he was already unable to support himself; he likewise perceived that the rest were slackening their efforts, and that some, deserted by those in the rear, were retiring from the battle and avoiding the weapons; that the enemy [on the other hand] though advancing from the lower ground, were not relaxing in front, and were [at the same time] pressing hard on both flanks; he also perceived that the affair was at a crisis, and that there was not any reserve which could be brought up, having therefore snatched a shield from one of the soldiers in the rear (for he himself had come without a shield), he advanced to the front of the line, and addressing the centurions by name, and encouraging the rest of the soldiers, he ordered them to carry forward the standards, and extend the companies, that they might the more easily use their swords. On his arrival, as hope was brought to the soldiers and their courage restored, while every one for his own part, in the sight of his general, desired to exert his utmost energy, the impetuosity of the enemy was a little checked.

[2.26]Caesar, when he perceived that the seventh legion, which stood close by him, was also hard pressed by the enemy, directed the tribunes of the soldiers to effect a junction of the legions gradually, and make their charge upon the enemy with a double front; which having been done, since they brought assistance the one to the other, nor feared lest their rear should be surrounded by the enemy, they began to stand their ground more boldly, and to fight more courageously. In the mean time, the soldiers of the two legions which had been in the rear of the army, as a guard for the baggage-train, upon the battle being

reported to them, quickened their pace, and were seen by the enemy on the top of the hill; and Titus Labienus, having gained possession of the camp of the enemy, and observed from the higher ground what was going on in our camp, sent the tenth legion as a relief to our men, who, when they had learned from the flight of the horse and the sutlers in what position the affair was, and in how great danger the camp and the legion and the commander were involved, left undone nothing [which tended] to dispatch.

[2.27]By their arrival, so great a change of matters was made, that our men, even those who had fallen down exhausted with wounds, leaned on their shields, and renewed the fight: then the camp-retainers, though unarmed, seeing the enemy completely dismayed, attacked [them though] armed; the horsemen too, that they might by their valor blot the disgrace of their flight, thrust themselves before the legionary soldiers in all parts of the battle. But the enemy, even in the last hope of safety, displayed such great courage, that when the foremost of them had fallen, the next stood upon them prostrate, and fought from their bodies; when these were overthrown, and their corpses heaped up together, those who survived cast their weapons against our men [thence], as from a mound, and returned our darts which had fallen short between [the armies]; so that it ought not to be concluded, that men of such great courage had injudiciously dared to pass a very broad river, ascend very high banks, and come up to a very disadvantageous place; since their greatness of spirit had rendered these actions easy, although in themselves very difficult.

[2.28]This battle being ended, and the nation and name of the Nervii being almost reduced to annihilation, their old men, whom together with the boys and women we have stated to have been collected together in the fenny places and marshes, on this battle having been reported to them, since they were convinced that nothing was an obstacle to the conquerors, and nothing safe to the conquered, sent ambassadors to Caesar by the consent of all who remained, and surrendered themselves to him; and in recounting the calamity of their state, said that their senators were reduced from 600 to three; that from 60,000 men they [were reduced] to scarcely 500 who could bear arms; whom Caesar, that he might appear to use compassion toward the wretched and the suppliant, most carefully spared; and ordered them to enjoy their own territories and towns, and commanded their neighbors that they should restrain themselves and their dependents from offering injury or outrage [to them].

...[2.35]These things being achieved, [and] all Gaul being subdued, so high an opinion of this war was spread among the barbarians, that ambassadors were sent to Caesar by those nations who dwelt beyond the Rhine, to promise that they would give hostages and execute his commands...

End of Book 2

Book 7 - (52 B.C.)

[When Caesar was called back to Italy, the various tribes of the Gauls assembled and decided to rebel under the command of Vercingetorix, the son of a Gaul chieftain, hoping to keep Caesar from rejoining his army.]

...[7.36]Caesar, in five days' march, went from that place to **Gergovia**, and after engaging in a slight cavalry skirmish that day, on viewing the situation of the city, which, being built on a very high mountain, was very difficult of access, he despaired of taking it by storm, and determined to take no measures with regard to besieging it before he should secure a supply of provisions. But Vercingetorix, having pitched his camp on the mountain near the town, placed the forces of each state separately and at small intervals around himself, and having occupied all the hills of that range as far as they commanded a view [of the Roman encampment], he presented a formidable appearance; he ordered the rulers of the states, whom he had selected as his council of war, to come to him daily at the dawn, whether any measure seemed to require deliberation or execution. Nor did he allow almost any day to pass without testing in a cavalry action, the archers being intermixed, what spirit and valor there was in each of his own men. There was a hill opposite the town, at the very foot of that mountain, strongly fortified and precipitous on every side (which if our men could gain, they seemed likely to exclude the enemy from a great share of their supply of water, and from free foraging; but this place was occupied by them with a weak garrison): however, Caesar set out from the camp in the silence of night, and dislodging the

garrison before succor could come from the town, he got possession of the place and posted two legions there, and drew from the greater camp to the less a double trench twelve feet broad, so that the soldiers could even singly pass secure from any sudden attack of the enemy.

[There is internal political quarreling among the Aedui, a tribe that had submitted to Roman rule. Caesar leaves the army and goes to settle the dispute and choose the native leader for the Aedui, because he's afraid if there is civil war, one faction will appeal to Vercingetorix for help. Some of the Aedui troops try to desert to Vercingetorix, but Caesar catches them and keeps them from doing so. He is still away and on his way back to Gergovia]

[7.41]...after giving three hours of the night to his army for his repose, directed his march to Gergovia. Almost in the middle of the journey, a party of horse that were sent by Fabius stated in how great danger matters were, they inform him that the camp was attacked by a very powerful army, while fresh men were frequently relieving the wearied, and exhausting our soldiers by the incessant toil, since on account of the size of the camp, they had constantly to remain on the rampart; that many had been wounded by the immense number of arrows and all kinds of missiles; that the engines were of great service in withstanding them; that Fabius, at their departure, leaving only two gates open, was blocking up the rest, and was adding breast-works to the ramparts, and was preparing himself for a similar casualty on the following day. Caesar, after receiving this information, reached the camp before sunrise owing to the very great zeal of his soldiers.

...[7.44]While he was considering these things an opportunity of acting successfully seemed to offer. For, when he had come into the smaller camp for the purpose of securing the works, he noticed that the hill in the possession of the enemy was stripped of men, although, on the former days, it could scarcely be seen on account of the numbers on it. Being astonished, he inquires the reason of it from the deserters, a great number of whom flocked to him daily. They all concurred in asserting, what Caesar himself had already ascertained by his scouts, that the back of that hill was almost level; but likewise woody and narrow, by which there was a pass to the other side of the town; that they had serious apprehensions for this place, and had no other idea, on the occupation of one hill by the Romans, than that, if they should lose the other, they would be almost surrounded, and cut off from all egress and foraging; that they were all summoned by Vercingetorix to fortify this place.

[7.45]Caesar, on being informed of this circumstance, sends several troops of horse to the place immediately after midnight; he orders them to range in every quarter with more tumult than usual. At dawn he orders a large quantity of baggage to be drawn out of the camp, and the muleteers with helmets, in the appearance and guise of horsemen, to ride round the hills. To these he adds a few cavalry, with instructions to range more widely to make a show. He orders them all to seek the same quarter by a long circuit; these proceedings were seen at a distance from the town, as Gergovia commanded a view of the camp, nor could the Gauls ascertain at so great a distance, what certainty there was in the maneuver. He sends one legion to the same

hill, and after it had marched a little, stations it in the lower ground, and conceals it in the woods. The suspicion of the Gauls are increased, and all their forces are marched to that place to defend it. Caesar, having perceived the camp of the enemy deserted, covers the military insignia of his men, conceals the standards, and transfers his soldiers in small bodies from the greater to the less camp, and points out to the lieutenants whom he had placed in command over the respective legions, what he should wish to be done; he particularly advises them to restrain their men from advancing too far, through their desire of fighting, or their hope of plunder, he sets before them what disadvantages the unfavorable nature of the ground carries with it; that they could be assisted by dispatch alone: that success depended on a surprise, and not on a battle. After stating these particulars, he gives the signal for action, and detaches the Aedui at the same time by another ascent on the right.

[7.46]The town wall was 1200 paces distant from the plain and foot of the ascent, in a straight line, if no gap intervened; whatever circuit was added to this ascent, to make the hill easy, increased the length of the route. But almost in the middle of the hill, the Gauls had previously built a wall six feet high, made of large stones, and extending in length as far as the nature of the ground permitted, as a barrier to retard the advance of our men; and leaving all the lower space empty, they had filled the upper part of the hill, as far as the wall of the town, with their camps very close to one another. The soldiers, on the signal being given, quickly advance to this fortification, and passing over it, make themselves masters of the separate camps. And

so great was their activity in taking the camps, that Teutomarus, the king of the Nitiobriges, being suddenly surprised in his tent, as he had gone to rest at noon, with difficulty escaped from the hands of the plunderers, with the upper part of his person naked, and his horse wounded.

[7.47]Caesar, having accomplished the object which he had in view, ordered the signal to be sounded for a retreat; and the soldiers of the tenth legion, by which he was then accompanied, halted. But the soldiers of the other legions, not hearing the sound of the trumpet, because there was a very large valley between them, were however kept back by the tribunes of the soldiers and the lieutenants, according to Caesar's orders; but being animated by the prospect of speedy victory, and the flight of the enemy, and the favorable battles of former periods, they thought nothing so difficult that their bravery could not accomplish it; nor did they put an end to the pursuit, until they drew nigh to the wall of the town and the gates. But then, when a shout arose in every quarter of the city, those who were at a distance being alarmed by the sudden tumult, fled hastily from the town, since they thought that the enemy were within the gates. The matrons begin to cast their clothes and silver over the wall, and bending over as far as the lower part of the bosom, with outstretched hands beseech the Romans to spare them, and not to sacrifice to their resentment even women and children, as they had done at Avaricum. Some of them let themselves down from the walls by their hands, and surrendered to our soldiers. Lucius Fabius a centurion of the eighth legion, who, it was ascertained, had said that day among his fellow soldiers that he was excited by the

plunder of Avaricum, and would not allow any one to mount the wall before him, finding three men of his own company, and being raised up by them, scaled the wall. He himself, in turn, taking hold of them one by one drew them up to the wall.

[7.48]In the mean time those who had gone to the other part of the town to defend it, as we have mentioned above, at first, aroused by hearing the shouts, and, afterward, by frequent accounts, that the town was in possession of the Romans, sent forward their cavalry, and hastened in larger numbers to that quarter. As each first came he stood beneath the wall, and increased the number of his countrymen engaged in action. When a great multitude of them had assembled, the matrons, who a little before were stretching their hands from the walls to the Romans, began to beseech their countrymen, and after the Gallic fashion to show their disheveled hair, and bring their children into public view. Neither in position nor in numbers was the contest an equal one to the Romans; at the same time, being exhausted by running and the long continuation of the fight, they could not easily withstand fresh and vigorous troops.

[7.49]Caesar, when he perceived that his soldiers were fighting on unfavorable ground, and that the enemy's forces were increasing, being alarmed for the safety of his troops, sent orders to Titus Sextius, one of his lieutenants, whom he had left to guard the smaller camp, to lead out his cohorts quickly from the camp, and post them at the foot of the hill, on the right wing of the enemy; that if he should see our men driven from the ground, he should deter the enemy from following too

closely. He himself, advancing with the legion a little from that place where he had taken his post, awaited the issue of the battle.

[7.50]While the fight was going on most vigorously, hand to hand, and the enemy depended on their position and numbers, our men on their bravery, the Aedui suddenly appeared on our exposed flank, as Caesar had sent them by another ascent on the right, for the sake of creating a diversion. These, from the similarity of their arms, greatly terrified our men; and although they were discovered to have their right shoulders bare, which was usually the sign of those reduced to peace, yet the soldiers suspected that this very thing was done by the enemy to deceive them. At the same time Lucius Fabius the centurion, and those who had scaled the wall with him, being surrounded and slain, were cast from the wall. Marcus Petreius, a centurion of the same legion, after attempting to hew down the gates, was overpowered by numbers, and, despairing of his safety, having already received many wounds, said to the soldiers of his own company who followed him: "Since I can not save you as well as myself, I shall at least provide for your safety, since I, allured by the love of glory, led you into this danger, do you save yourselves when an opportunity is given." At the same time he rushed into the midst of the enemy, and slaying two of them, drove back the rest a little from the gate. When his men attempted to aid him, "In vain," he says, "you endeavor to procure me safety, since blood and strength are now failing me, therefore leave this, while you have the opportunity, and retreat to the legion." Thus he fell fighting a few moments after, and saved his men by his own death.

[7.51]Our soldiers, being hard pressed on every side, were dislodged from their position, with the loss of forty-six centurions; but the tenth legion, which had been posted in reserve on ground a little more level, checked the Gauls in their eager pursuit. It was supported by the cohorts of the thirteenth legion, which, being led from the smaller camp, had, under the command of Titus Sextius, occupied the higher ground. The legions, as soon as they reached the plain, halted and faced the enemy. Vercingetorix led back his men from the part of the hill within the fortifications. On that day little less than seven hundred of the soldiers were missing.

[7.52]On the next day, Caesar, having called a meeting, censured the rashness and avarice of his soldiers, "In that they had judged for themselves how far they ought to proceed, or what they ought to do, and could not be kept back by the tribunes of the soldiers and the lieutenants;" and stated, "what the disadvantage of the ground could effect, what opinion he himself had entertained at Avaricum, when having surprised the enemy without either general or cavalry, he had given up a certain victory, lest even a trifling loss should occur in the contest owing to the disadvantage of position. That as much as he admired the greatness of their courage, since neither the fortifications of the camp, nor the height of the mountain, nor the wall of the town could retard them; in the same degree he censured their licentiousness and arrogance, because they thought that they knew more than their general concerning victory, and the issue of actions: and that he required in his soldiers forbearance and self-command, not less than valor and magnanimity."

[7.53]Having held this assembly, and having encouraged the soldiers at the conclusion of his speech, "That they should not be dispirited on this account, nor attribute to the valor of the enemy, what the disadvantage of position had caused;" entertaining the same views of his departure that he had previously had, he led forth the legions from the camp, and drew up his army in order of battle in a suitable place. When Vercingetorix, nevertheless, would not descend to the level ground, a slight cavalry action, and that a successful one, having taken place, he led back his army into the camp. When he had done this, the next day, thinking that he had done enough to lower the pride of the Gauls, and to encourage the minds of his soldiers, he moved his camp in the direction of the Aedui. The enemy not even then pursuing us, on the third day he repaired the bridge over the river Allier, and led over his whole army. [The Romans were ultimately unable to take Gergovia]

...[7.68] Vercingetorix led back his troops in the same order as he had arranged them before the camp, and immediately began to march to **Alesia**, which is a town of the Mandubii, and ordered the baggage to be speedily brought forth from the camp, and follow him closely. Caesar, having conveyed his baggage to the nearest hill, and having left two legions to guard it, pursued as far as the time of day would permit, and after slaying about three thousand of the rear of the enemy, encamped at Alesia on the next day. On reconnoitering the situation of the city, finding that the enemy were panic-stricken, because the cavalry in which they placed their chief reliance, were beaten, he

encouraged his men to endure the toil, and began to draw a line of circumvallation round Alesia.

[7.69]The town itself was situated on the top of a hill, in a very lofty position, so that it did not appear likely to be taken, except by a regular siege. Two rivers, on two different sides, washed the foot of the hill. Before the town lay a plain of about three miles in length; on every other side hills at a moderate distance, and of an equal degree of height, surrounded the town. The army of the Gauls had filled all the space under the wall, comprising a part of the hill which looked to the rising sun, and had drawn in front a trench and a stone wall six feet high. The circuit of that fortification, which was commenced by the Romans, comprised eleven miles. The camp was pitched in a strong position, and twenty-three redoubts were raised in it, in which sentinels were placed by day, lest any sally should be made suddenly; and by night the same were occupied by watches and strong guards.

[7.70]The work having been begun, a cavalry action ensues in that plain, which we have already described as broken by hills, and extending three miles in length. The contest is maintained on both sides with the utmost vigor; Caesar sends the Germans to aid our troops when distressed, and draws up the legions in front of the camp, lest any sally should be suddenly made by the enemy's infantry. The courage of our men is increased by the additional support of the legions; the enemy being put to flight, hinder one another by their numbers, and as only the narrower gates were left open, are crowded together in them; then the Germans pursue them with vigor even to the fortifications. A great slaughter ensues; some leave their horses, and

endeavor to cross the ditch and climb the wall. Caesar orders the legions which he had drawn up in front of the rampart to advance a little. The Gauls, who were within the fortifications, were no less panic-stricken, thinking that the enemy were coming that moment against them, and unanimously shout "to arms;" some in their alarm rush into the town; Vercingetorix orders the gates to be shut, lest the camp should be left undefended. The Germans retreat, after slaying many and taking several horses.

[7.71]Vercingetorix adopts the design of sending away all his cavalry by night, before the fortifications should be completed by the Romans. He charges them when departing "that each of them should go to his respective state, and press for the war all who were old enough to bear arms;...that upon making a calculation, he had barely corn for thirty days, but could hold out a little longer by economy." After giving these instructions he silently dismisses the cavalry in the second watch, [on that side] where our works were not completed; ...In this manner he prepares to await the succors from Gaul, and carry on the war.

[7.72]Caesar, on learning these proceedings from the deserters and captives, adopted the following system of fortification; he dug a trench twenty feet deep, with perpendicular sides, in such a manner that the base of this trench should extend so far as the edges were apart at the top. He raised all his other works at a distance of four hundred feet from that ditch; [he did] that with this intention, lest (since he necessarily embraced so extensive an area, and the whole works could not be easily surrounded by a line of soldiers) a large number of the

enemy should suddenly, or by night, sally against the fortifications; or lest they should by day cast weapons against our men while occupied with the works. Having left this interval, he drew two trenches fifteen feet broad, and of the same depth; the innermost of them, being in low and level ground, he filled with water conveyed from the river. Behind these he raised a rampart and wall twelve feet high; to this he added a parapet and battlements, with large stakes cut like stags' horns, projecting from the junction of the parapet and battlements, to prevent the enemy from scaling it, and surrounded the entire work with turrets, which were eighty feet distant from one another.

[7.73]It was necessary, at one and the same time, to procure timber [for the rampart], lay in supplies of corn, and raise also extensive fortifications, and the available troops were in consequence of this reduced in number, since they used to advance to some distance from the camp, and sometimes the Gauls endeavored to attack our works, and to make a sally from the town by several gates and in great force. Caesar thought that further additions should be made to these works, in order that the fortifications might be defensible by a small number of soldiers. Having, therefore, cut down the trunks of trees or very thick branches, and having stripped their tops of the bark, and sharpened them into a point, he drew a continued trench every where five feet deep. These stakes being sunk into this trench, and fastened firmly at the bottom, to prevent the possibility of their being torn up, had their branches only projecting from the ground. There were five rows in connection with, and intersecting each other; and whoever entered within them were likely to impale themselves on very sharp stakes.

The soldiers called these "cippi." Before these, which were arranged in oblique rows in the form of a quincunx, pits three feet deep were dug, which gradually diminished in depth to the bottom. In these pits tapering stakes, of the thickness of a man's thigh; sharpened at the top and hardened in the fire, were sunk in such a manner as to project from the ground not more than four inches; at the same time for the purpose of giving them strength and stability, they were each filled with trampled clay to the height of one foot from the bottom: the rest of the pit was covered over with osiers and twigs, to conceal the deceit. Eight rows of this kind were dug, and were three feet distant from each other. They called this a lily from its resemblance to that flower. Stakes a foot long, with iron hooks attached to them, were entirely sunk in the ground before these, and were planted in every place at small intervals; these they called spurs.

[7.74]After completing these works, having selected as level ground as he could, considering the nature of the country, and having inclosed an area of fourteen miles, he constructed, against an external enemy, fortifications of the same kind in every respect, and separate from these, so that the guards of the fortifications could not be surrounded even by immense numbers, if such a circumstance should take place owing to the departure of the enemy's cavalry; and in order that the Roman soldiers might not be compelled to go out of the camp with great risk, he orders all to provide forage and corn for thirty days.

[7.76]...[The Gauls] collected eight thousand cavalry, and about two hundred and forty thousand infantry... All march to Alesia, sanguine and full of confidence: nor was there a single individual who

imagined that the Romans could withstand the sight of such an immense host: especially in an action carried on both in front and rear, when [on the inside] the besieged would sally from the town and attack the enemy, and on the outside so great forces of cavalry and infantry would be seen.

[7.77]But those who were blockaded at Alesia, the day being past, on which they had expected auxiliaries from their countrymen, and all their corn being consumed ignorant of what was going on among the Aedui, convened an assembly and deliberated on the exigency of their situation. After various opinions had been expressed among them, some of which proposed a surrender, others a sally, while their strength would support it...

[7.78]When different opinions were expressed, they determined that those who, owing to age or ill health, were unserviceable for war, should depart from the town, and that themselves should try every expedient before they had recourse to the advice of Critognatus: however, that they would rather adopt that design, if circumstances should compel them and their allies should delay, than accept any terms of a surrender or peace. The Mandubii, who had admitted them into the town, are compelled to go forth with their wives and children. When these came to the Roman fortifications, weeping, they begged of the soldiers by every entreaty to receive them as slaves and relieve them with food. But Caesar, placing guards on the rampart, forbade them to be admitted.

[7.79]In the mean time, Commius and the rest of the leaders, to whom the supreme command had been intrusted, came with all their

forces to Alesia, and having occupied the entire hill, encamped not more than a mile from our fortifications. The following day, having led forth their cavalry from the camp, they fill all that plain, which, we have related, extended three miles in length, and drew out their infantry a little from that place, and post them on the higher ground. The town Alesia commanded a view of the whole plain. The besieged run together when these auxiliaries were seen; mutual congratulations ensue, and the minds of all are elated with joy. Accordingly, drawing out their troops, they encamp before the town, and cover the nearest trench with hurdles and fill it up with earth, and make ready for a sally and every casualty.

[7.80]Caesar, having stationed his army on both sides of the fortifications, in order that, if occasion should arise, each should hold and know his own post, orders the cavalry to issue forth from the camp and commence action. There was a commanding view from the entire camp, which occupied a ridge of hills; and the minds of all the soldiers anxiously awaited the issue of the battle. The Gauls had scattered archers and light-armed infantry here and there, among their cavalry, to give relief to their retreating troops, and sustain the impetuosity of our cavalry. Several of our soldiers were unexpectedly wounded by these, and left the battle. When the Gauls were confident that their countrymen were the conquerors in the action, and beheld our men hard pressed by numbers, both those who were hemmed in by the line of circumvallation and those who had come to aid them, supported the spirits of their men by shouts and yells from every quarter. As the action was carried on in sight of all, neither a brave nor cowardly act

could be concealed; both the desire of praise and the fear of ignominy, urged on each party to valor. After fighting from noon almost to sunset, without victory inclining in favor of either, the Germans, on one side, made a charge against the enemy in a compact body, and drove them back; and, when they were put to flight, the archers were surrounded and cut to pieces. In other parts, likewise, our men pursued to the camp the retreating enemy, and did not give them an opportunity of rallying. But those who had come forth from Alesia returned into the town dejected and almost despairing of success.

[7.81]The Gauls, after the interval of a day and after making, during that time, an immense number of hurdles, scaling-ladders, and iron hooks, silently went forth from the camp at midnight and approached the fortifications in the plain. Raising a shout suddenly, that by this intimation those who were besieged in the town might learn their arrival, they began to cast down hurdles and dislodge our men from the rampart by slings, arrows, and stones, and executed the other movements which are requisite in storming. At the same time, Vercingetorix, having heard the shout, gives the signal to his troops by a trumpet, and leads them forth from the town. Our troops, as each man's post had been assigned him some days before, man the fortifications; they intimidate the Gauls by slings, large stones, stakes which they had placed along the works, and bullets. All view being prevented by the darkness, many wounds are received on both sides; several missiles, are thrown from the engines. But Marcus Antonius, and Caius Trebonius, the lieutenants, to whom the defense of these parts had been allotted, draughted troops from the redoubts which were

more remote, and sent them to aid our troops, in whatever direction they understood that they were hard pressed.

...[7.83]The Gauls, having been twice repulsed with great loss, consult what they should do; they avail themselves of the information of those who were well acquainted with the country; from them they ascertain the position and fortification of the upper camp. There was, on the north side, a hill, which our men could not include in their works, on account of the extent of the circuit, and had necessarily made their camp in ground almost disadvantageous, and pretty steep. Caius Antistius Reginus, and Caius Caninius Rebilus, two of the lieutenants, with two legions, were in possession of this camp.

The leaders of the enemy, having reconnoitered the country by their scouts, select from the entire army sixty thousand men, belonging to those states, which bear the highest character for courage; they privately arrange among themselves what they wished to be done, and in what manner; they decide that the attack should take place when it should seem to be noon. They appoint over their forces Vergasillaunus, the Arvernian, one of the four generals, and a near relative of Vercingetorix. He, having issued from the camp at the first watch, and having almost completed his march a little before the dawn, hid himself behind the mountain, and ordered his soldiers to refresh themselves after their labor during the night. When noon now seemed to draw nigh, he marched hastily against that camp which we have mentioned before; and, at the same time, the cavalry began to approach the fortifications in the plain, and the rest of the forces to make a demonstration in front of the camp.

[7.84]Vercingetorix, having beheld his countrymen from the citadel of Alesia, issues forth from the town; he brings forth from the camp long hooks, movable pent-houses, mural hooks, and other things, which he had prepared for the purpose of making a sally. They engage on all sides at once and every expedient is adopted. They flocked to whatever part of the works seemed weakest. The army of the Romans is distributed along their extensive lines, and with difficulty meets the enemy in every quarter. The shouts which were raised by the combatants in their rear, had a great tendency to intimidate our men, because they perceived that their danger rested on the valor of others: for generally all evils which are distant most powerfully alarm men's minds.

[7.85]Caesar, having selected a commanding situation, sees distinctly whatever is going on in every quarter, and sends assistance to his troops when hard pressed. The idea uppermost in the minds of both parties is, that the present is the time in which they would have the fairest opportunity of making a struggle; the Gauls despairing of all safety, unless they should succeed in forcing the lines: the Romans expecting an end to all their labors if they should gain the day. The principal struggle is at the upper lines, to which as we have said Vergasillaunus was sent. The least elevation of ground, added to a declivity, exercises a momentous influence. Some are casting missiles, others, forming a testudo, advance to the attack; fresh men by turns relieve the wearied. The earth, heaped up by all against the fortifications, gives the means of ascent to the Gauls, and covers those

works which the Romans had concealed in the ground. Our men have no longer arms or strength.

[7.86]Caesar, on observing these movements, sends Labienus with six cohorts to relieve his distressed soldiers: he orders him, if he should be unable to withstand them, to draw off the cohorts and make a sally; but not to do this except through necessity. He himself goes to the rest, and exhorts them not to succumb to the toil; he shows them that the fruits of all former engagements depend on that day and hour. The Gauls within, despairing of forcing the fortifications in the plains on account of the greatness of the works, attempt the places precipitous in ascent: hither they bring the engines which they had prepared; by the immense number of their missiles they dislodge the defenders from the turrets: they fill the ditches with clay and hurdles, then clear the way; they tear down the rampart and breast-work with hooks.

[7.87]Caesar... he marches in the direction in which he had sent Labienus, drafts four cohorts from the nearest redoubt, and orders part of the cavalry to follow him, and part to make the circuit of the external fortifications and attack the enemy in the rear. Labienus, when neither the ramparts or ditches could check the onset of the enemy, informs Caesar by messengers of what he intended to do. Caesar hastens to share in the action.

[7.88]His arrival being known from the color of his robe, and the troops of cavalry, and the cohorts which he had ordered to follow him being seen, as these low and sloping grounds were plainly visible from the eminences, the enemy join battle. A shout being raised by both sides, it was succeeded by a general shout along the ramparts and

whole line of fortifications. Our troops, laying aside their javelins, carry on the engagement with their swords. The cavalry is suddenly seen in the rear of the Gauls; the other cohorts advance rapidly; the enemy turn their backs; the cavalry intercept them in their flight, and a great slaughter ensues...and few out of so great a number return safe to their camp. The besieged, beholding from the town the slaughter and flight of their countrymen, despairing of safety, lead back their troops from the fortifications. A flight of the Gauls from their camp immediately ensues on hearing of this disaster, and had not the soldiers been wearied by sending frequent reinforcements, and the labor of the entire day, all the enemy's forces could have been destroyed. Immediately after midnight, the cavalry are sent out and overtake the rear, a great number are taken or cut to pieces, the rest by flight escape in different directions to their respective states. Vercingetorix, having convened a council the following day, declares, "That he had undertaken that war, not on account of his own exigences, but on account of the general freedom; and since he must yield to fortune, he offered himself to them for either purpose, whether they should wish to atone to the Romans by his death, or surrender him alive. Embassadors are sent to Caesar on this subject. He orders their arms to be surrendered, and their chieftains delivered up. He seated himself at the head of the lines in front of the camp, the Gallic chieftains are brought before him. They surrender Vercingetorix, and lay down their arms.