

HISTORY.

In the REVIEW for February we called the attention of our readers to the subject of the teaching of history. We offered some remarks upon the importance of this branch of instruction, and made a few suggestions which might serve to render the history lesson attractive and permanently useful. We had then neither time nor space to illustrate the method we would recommend, but now purpose to do so, and to take as our subject that chapter in English history which embraces the period of the Roman occupation.

But at the outset we must insist upon what is a necessary condition of all sound and successful teaching in any department of instruction—careful and intelligent preparation. The teacher should not only be familiar with the facts of his lesson, but he ought to have them so systematised that there would be, if possible, an interdependence of the various parts upon each other. In such a case the pupil, young or advanced, would find it not only easy but interesting to follow the subject as it is opened up to him, and derive pleasure from dwelling upon the recollection of it. And we doubt not that in proportion to the degree in which the teacher has secured the sympathy of the pupil will be his chance of arousing his desire to extend his reading beyond the school book and to acquire information for himself.

I need not say that, in the following scheme, the teacher must use his own judgment as to the degree of minuteness with which the lessons on this period are to be given. Not that the distinction between the work of a junior class and that of one more advanced is to depend upon the elaboration of details, but in the number of distinct topics which are attended to. Young pupils will more readily attend to, and remember, a few points placed before them in a skilful manner with considerable minuteness, than if mainly dry facts were presented to their minds, without any effort being made to stimulate their fancy and rouse their curiosity.

In the first place, the teacher should sketch on the blackboard a map of Great Britain, and write in the names of the leading British tribes; the Cantii, the Trinobantes, the Iceni and the Silures. He should then approximate to Cæsar's landing place, and the route which he followed in 54 B. C., when he crossed the Thames a few miles above London, and advanced upon and took the capital of Cassivelaunus, the chief of the Trinobantes. Here may very properly be introduced the materials which are available for an account of the ancient Britons.

1st. Commerce.—The Britons, from very early times, traded with the Carthaginians in tin, the point

at which they touched being the Cassiterides (probably the Scilly islands). More recently they exported tin, lead, skins, hunting dogs and slaves to the mainland, and, as they advanced in civilization, corn, cattle, gold, silver, iron and pearls.

2d. The Race.—The Britons were Celts, of whom there were two branches in Britain—the Gael and the Cymry. The former are now represented by the Highlanders of Scotland and the Irish, the latter by the people of Wales and Cornwall. The Britons were chiefly of the Cymric stock.

3rd. Religion.—The following are the chief peculiarities of Druidism: The Britons were taught to believe in a plurality of Gods, whom they propitiated with sanguinary rites. They were urged by their instructors to be charitable toward men and to endure suffering with fortitude. The services of their religion were performed in the depths of the forests, and we know that the oak and the acorn were objects of veneration. The Druids were the priests. They enjoyed many immunities and possessed the civil and criminal jurisdiction. Closely connected with the Druids were the bards.

4th. Civilization.—Their commercial intercourse with foreigners had improved the condition of the tribes along the shore of the English channel, but in the interior of the country the people were shepherds and herdsmen, tattooed their bodies, and were much addicted to war. Their fortresses were clearings in the forest, in which their huts were built, surrounded by a ditch and a breastwork of felled timber. Their chiefs fought from chariots armed with scythes, whilst their followers were equipped with shield and sword and javelin.

I may remark that each of the above sentences may be regarded as a heading, and may be said to constitute a guide in arranging the materials which have been collected by the teacher.

Not till nearly a century afterwards did the Romans effect a permanent settlement in the country. The emperor Claudius, in person, landed, and was able to reduce the country from Essex to Hampshire, which became a Roman province. The British hero who led the army opposed to the Romans, who fought many battles in the south and centre of the country, and disputed with them the possession of southern Wales, was Caractacus. Whilst "the British warrior queen," Boadicea, in the eastern part of the country, emulated his fame by placing herself at the head of her oppressed countrymen and carrying fire and sword through the Roman settlements which had been planted within the conquered territory. This rising was quelled by Suetonius Paulinus, whom it had recalled from the slaughter of the Druids in the island