

harrassed the invaders by a desultory warfare, for which the country was highly favorable. But even this system proved vain. Having attempted to dispute the passage of the Thames at Wallingford, they were defeated ; and Cæsar advancing into the country, burnt Verulam the capital of Cassi. elannus. The Britons, thereupon, prayed for peace, which was granted to them on condition of paying a yearly tribute to Rome. Cæsar had not contemplated a permanent conquest of Britain ; and consequently, on the submission of the natives, he immediately withdrew his forces to the continent. His victories were not attended with any useful result, and the island was left unmolested for almost a century.

2. At the period of this, the first Roman invasion, Britain, like the opposite coast of Gaul was chiefly, if not wholly, inhabited by the race called Celts or Kelts, who are thus described by Cæsar in his celebrated Commentaries : —“ Among the Gauls the multitude are in a state of servile dependence upon the equestrian and sacerdotal orders. Most of them indeed, for the sake of exemption from taxes, or deliverance from debt, or protection against danger have enslaved themselves to the nobility whose power over them is as absolute as that of a master over his slaves. The Druids have the care of education ; they alone cultivate knowledge, they conceal from the vulgar the secret doctrines in which their pupils only are initiated. Their sacred duties privilege them from taxes and from military service ; they determine the greatest part of litigated questions ; it is their business to allot rewards and punishments.