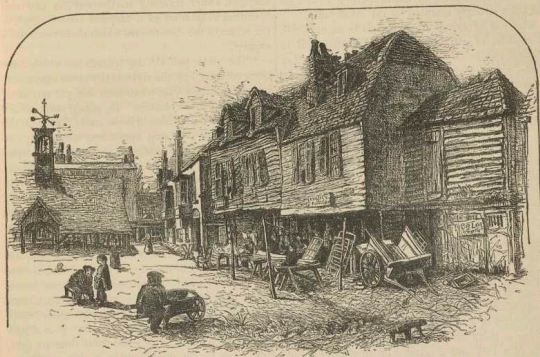


In spite of the general opinion that Julius Cæsar, in his second invasion of England, crossed the Thames, at the Coway Stakes, near Shepperton (as we shall presently see), there are not wanting those who consider that it is more probable that the scene of that passage was much nearer to London, and the Rev. Henry Jenkins, in the "Journal of the British Archaeological Association" for June, 1860, maintains at some length his belief that it was at Old Brentford that the emperor crossed his army. We learn from Gibson's edition of Camden's

since it allowed the Britons more space to fortify them with stakes, and, at the same time, afforded the Romans a fairer opportunity of plying their engines over the heads of their own men as they entered the river, and of striking the enemy posted on the topmost verge of the opposite side. Thus, whilst the cavalry, sent in advance to cross higher up the stream, were threatening the flank, the main body of the legions pressing forward in front, and sheltered, as it were, by the military engines, made good the passage of the river. Cæsar's words are



THE STABLES OF THE "THREE PIGEONS," BRENTFORD. (See p. 31.)
(From an Etching by W. N. Watkins, 1842.)

"Britannia," that at Old Brentford the Thames was annually fordable with great ease, and was so still in Bishop Gibson's time, as now, there being at low ebb not above three feet of water in the bed of the river. "Here," writes Mr. Jenkins, "on many accounts, I am inclined to place the passage of Cæsar. Its British name, Brentford—*i.e.*, Breninford—the king's road or way,* favours this supposition; for the name, even if it should not apply personally to Cæsar, establishes the fact that this part of the Thames was known to, and used by, the Britons as a ford. The height of the banks also at this place is an important consideration,

præmissis equitatu. By this I understand that the cavalry were sent in advance to attempt passage higher up the stream, at Kingston, Walton, or elsewhere, in order to distract the enemy's attention, and to draw off a part of his forces, whilst the infantry pressed forward to the ford directly in their front. The cavalry and infantry did not cross the stream together and at the same place. Such a plan would have caused inextricable confusion."

So far Mr. Jenkins, who considers that as soon as the emperor had brought together all his forces on the north side of the river at Old Brentford, he marched straight east. "His first and chief object, after he had crossed the Thames, must have been to have led his army into Essex, and form a junction with the Trinobantes;" and this he did, keeping between the river on his right and the forest on his

* This derivation entirely sets aside the derivation given above, which makes Brentford to have been so called from the ford across the Brent. It is not usual for towns, which, of course, are after-growths, to give names to rivers; the converse is almost always the case.