

The History of England in One Hundred Lines.

ROMAN PERIOD. B.C. 55—A.D. 410.

At Deal, to Caesar Britons bowed—Before Christ fifty-five ;
'Gainst Rome in A.D. 43 Caractacus did strive.
Suetonius seized Britain's queen and hoary Druids' seat ;
Agricola, who tilled the ground, made Roman rule complete.
By Emperors next the northern parts were fortified and walled ;
'Twas After Christ four hundred years ere Rome her arms recalled.

SAXON PERIOD. A.D. 410—A.D. 1066.

Poor Britons then, o'errun by foes, sought sea-king Saxon aid,
But Hengist, who dispersed the Scots, with Kent himself repaid.
Twelve battles won o'er these new foes gave British Arthur fame,
But Saxons soon raised seven thrones, the Heptarchy by name.
All England next, a Christain land, owned Egbert's firm advance.
Good Ethelwolf paid Peter's pence, and chose a wife from France.
Bold Ethelbald and Ethelbert with Danes maintained fierce strife,
But Ethelred, by Norsemen slain, at Merton lost his life.
Hope rose again when Alfred's reign saw Guthrum captive stand,
Good laws enforced, all foes o'ercome, and peace on sea and land.
The elder Edward warred with Wales and slew his uncle's son.
O'er Scots and Danes great Athelstan a splendid victory won.
Five boroughs Edmund freed of Danes, but died by Leolf's knife.
The monks ruled Edred as they chose, and banished Edwy's wife.
Good Edgar cleared the wolf from Wales, built ships and ruled the flood,
A second mother's cruel knife next shed young Edward's blood.
Weak Ethelred slew hordes of Danes—yes, woman, man and child !—
Revengeful Sweyn seized England's throne—his reign was brief but wild.
Good Canute gave to Ironsides the counties south of Thames ;
He also founded monast'ries endowed with gold and gems.
Three years feet Harold Harefoot reigned, base Hardicanute died.
Confessor Saxon Edward's rule was marked by Norman pride.
At Stamford Harold bravely broke proud Norway's serried ring ;
At Hastings William's Normans slew this last bold Saxon king.

NORMAN PERIOD. 1066—1154.

With Norman lords on English lands came William's curfew bell ;
Of kindred slain, of Yorkshire wastes, his Saxon slaves could tell.
For Second William's glittering gold Duke Robert sold his claims,
Because he thought beneath the Cross to set the East in flames.
Young Henry chose a Saxon wife, Duke Robert next he bound,
And lastly ruled as king and duke—alas ! his son was drowned.
At Lincoln Stephen bowed to Maud, who under Gloucester's care
At length made king and barons, too, proclaim her son as heir.

PLANTAGENET PERIOD. 1154—1399.

Bold Second Henry, Becket's foe, by penance showed his grief ;
He also ruled as Erin's king and held the Scots in fief.
Then Richard First, whose lion heart won fame on Syria's plains,
By English gold, though long confined, was freed from German chains.
Prince Arthur slain, an interdict and Magna Charta signed,
Left false King John no lands in France, and England's crown resigned.
The barons seized weak Henry Third, which roused young Edward's ire ;
At Evesham, where great Leicester fell, this brave prince freed his sire.
Crusading Edward, who subdued Llewellyn, Prince of Wales,
O'ercame those Scots whom Wallace led and burned their odes and tales.
At Bannockburn the Scots disgraced the Second Edward's name,