

volume was issued in 1782. His principal work, "The Task," in 1785. Cowper, in addition to his fame as a poet, is said to have been the best of English letter-writers. He died in 1800, having during the last years of his life, received a pension of £300 a year.

Have a map of the Eastern hemisphere before the class while studying this poem. Trace on it the possessions of the Roman Empire at that time, about A.D. 60, noting carefully the position of Gaul, now France, with respect to Britain—how separated, and at what distance. Give a short account of the religions of the Romans, the Gauls, and the Britons. State why the Romans visited Britain, in what state they found the country, to what extent they improved it, and why they left it.

Stanzas 1, 10 and 11 give a vivid picture of the wrongs the British queen, Boadicea, suffered at the hands of her oppressors, her superstitious belief in the wisdom and power of her country's gods and her bold, dashing valor in war.

Stanzas 2 and 9 represent the aged Druid chief, with locks long since silvered, sitting under the seared oak, doubtless with a mistle too growing on it, and receiving his inspiration chiefly from the sacredness of his surroundings, pouring forth burning words of rage against the enemies of his country, the Romans.

The other stanzas are the prophetic words of the Sage, which are rendered doubly solemn and awful, being accompanied by the lyre, a kind of harp which was the peculiar instrument of Apollo, the presiding deity of archery, prophecy and music.

*British Warrior-queen.*—Buddug, whose name was improved by the Romans into Boadicea (Boadicé-a), was the widow of the king of the Norfolk and Suffolk people. She is generally mentioned as the warrior-queen of the Iceni, a tribe inhabiting the Eastern coast of Britain in the time of the Romans. Her husband at his death, in the hope of saving his kingdom from oppression, left his wealth to the Roman Emperor, Nero, and his own two daughters. The Roman soldiery, taking advantage of the defenceless condition of the country, plundered it unscrupulously. Boadicea was scourged, that is whipped with rods, by order of Catus, a Roman officer, her two daughters shamefully insulted in her presence, and the noblest of the Iceni sold as slaves.

*Indignant mien.*—Gildas, who wrote a history of those times, calls her "a deceitful lioness," and her people "crafty foxes," but he no doubt wrote to please the Romans. She was evidently a great heroine, who being publicly whipped with the Roman rods, resented the wrong and the cruelty with all the indignation of her fiery nature.

*Country's gods.*—The Druids. The Britons had a strange and terrible religion, called the "Religion of the Druids." It seems to have been brought over in very early times, from France, then called Gaul, and to have had mixed up with it the worship of the serpent, the sun, the moon, the running stream, and many of the gods and goddesses of surrounding countries.

Most of the services were kept secret by the Druids, who pretended to be enchanters, and who carried magicians' wands, and wore, each of them, about his neck, what he told the ignorant people was a serpent's egg in a golden case. They sacrificed human victims, and on particular occasions burned alive, in immense wicker cages, a number of men and animals together. They met together in dark woods, called sacred groves, to instruct young men in their mysterious art and for meditation.

*Spreading oak.*—The oak was held in great reverence by the Britons, and especially one with the sacred mistletoe growing on it. Whenever the mistletoe was found on an oak tree there was a grand ceremony. A solemn procession was formed, two white bulls were sacrificed, and the sacred plant cut with a knife of gold.

*Sat the Druid.*—The hoary chief, is here represented as being in his most sacred retreat, under the spreading oak.

*If our aged eyes weep, &c.*—An admission that grave wrongs existed among his people, which even the Druids were unable to remove.

*Resentment ties all the terrors.*—Perhaps the resentment was on the part of the queen or the people in not offering freely enough, even their sons and daughters, to the gods. Or it may be that the rage and grief in his own breast, unfitted him to have power with the gods.

*Rome shall perish.*—A threat, hence *shall* instead of *will*. The Western Roman Empire fell in 476, and the Eastern more than a thousand years later.

*Deep in ruin as in guilt.* The guilt was *matchless*, hence the ruin is to be *unequalled*.

*Far renowned.*—The whole of the then known world, except the Parthian Empire, was embraced within the Roman dominions.

*Tramples on a thousand states.*—Rules them without regard to justice. At this time Rome had subdued all the countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

*Kiss the ground.*—Be humbled.

*The Gaul is at the gate.*—No doubt Alaric is meant. He was a Visigoth of noble race and Christian faith, and was the first to lead a hostile force into Rome, 410. The Visigothic kingdom, at one time embraced the whole of Spain, and all of Gaul south of the Loire and west of the Rhone. The present tense is used here with a future meaning.

*Other Romans shall arise.*—Probably the Italians, who excel in music, sculpture, &c.

*Sounds not arms.*—Music and the fine arts, not military glory.

*Progeny that springs.*—Ships, built of the English oak.

*Thunder-wings.*—Cannon, sails.

*Wider world.*—The seas. Perhaps their possessions and influence throughout the world may also be included. Her Queen is Empress of India, and Britain has long since been "Mistress of the Seas."

Point out her possessions on the Map of the World and contrast them with those of Rome, especially in the sense of being a *wider world*. See map of ancient world for the Roman possessions.

*Regions Caesar never knew.*—The new world. Canada and the United States. This stanza may refer altogether to the United States; the last stanza including all the colonies.

*Eagles.*—The eagle was an Assyrian symbol. It was adopted by the Persians and by the Romans. It is also in the Coat of Arms of the United States.

*Invincible as they.*—Referring to the great strength and wealth of the United States.

*Bards.*—The Druids were the priests, teachers, historians, and musicians or bards.

*Felt them, &c.*—She perhaps misunderstood the prophecy, at least as to the time of its fulfilment.

*Rushed to battle.*—Boadicea's wrongs roused the Britons. They rose in all their might and rage. They laid waste the Roman possessions in the south and east of Britain and slew 70,000 in a few days. The fates of war soon turned. The Britons were defeated, and 80,000 killed. The Queen, overwhelmed with despair, rather than fall into the hands of her enemies, poisoned herself.

*Ruffians.*—(Ruf'-yans).—The Queen's estimate of the Romans.

*Heaven awards the vengeance.*—She still had faith in the words of her gods. The empire did suffer the vengeance here predicted, before its final and hopeless overthrow, from the Goths under Alaric, the Huns under Attila, the Vandals under Genseric, and