

**A SKELETON OUTLINE OF THE  
HISTORY OF ENGLAND, BEING AN  
ABRIDGMENT OF A HANDBOOK IN  
OUTLINE OF THE POLITICAL  
HISTORY OF ENGLAND**

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BEING AN ABRIDGMENT OF  
A HANDBOOK IN OUTLINE  
OF THE  
POLITICAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND

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*A. H. Dyke Acland*

## P R E F A C E

**T**HIS book is an abridged edition of the Authors' larger Handbook of English Political History. It is intended for the use of the middle and lower forms of schools and for pupil teachers. A few words of explanation have been added here and there which are not in the larger Handbook, but in almost all respects the important features of the two books are the same, so that in passing from the smaller to the larger book the pupil need not be confused. Should the teacher find the notes and additional matter in the larger book useful in illustrating his lessons, it is believed that the similarity of the two books will enable this to be easily done.

The amount of matter omitted from the larger book is considerable at certain points. We have especially abridged the history of the last fifty years, which for school purposes is not so important. But we have tried to preserve the thread of the story, and some important political events are given nearly as fully in the smaller as in the larger book.

The general purpose of the book can be as well indicated



## PREFACE.

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by the following extract from the Preface to the larger Handbook as in any other way:—

“We have been led to believe, from the encouragement given us by various teachers, and from use made in teaching of part of the work privately printed, that the book may be found useful as a kind of syllabus, or outline for building upon, in lecturing and class-teaching. It would appear that of late oral teaching by means of simple lectures has gained ground, as a method of instruction, in our Public Schools and High Schools, in preference to the method of only asking questions upon a previously prepared portion of a text-book.

“For many reasons it might be desired that the course of history-teaching in higher schools should be wider than it is at present, that it should be more European, less insular, and that ancient, mediæval, and modern history should be taught as parts of one continuous whole. The outlines of ‘world history’ may be taught very early in the course of a child’s education, first in their simplest form, conveying perhaps little more than an idea of the distance of events from one another. As time goes on these outlines may be more and more filled in. That the value of such a system is considerable, the results of much of the higher school teaching in France and Germany show.

“But in any case it would seem that the method of teaching the whole outline from the beginning, and steadily

## PREFACE.

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and systematically filling in that outline in its various parts, is to be preferred as a method to that of stimulating interest in various isolated portions of the history, without being first sure that the general outline of the 'before and after' has been grasped.

"While a multitude of histories of persons and periods, excellently written, are put into the hands of young people, the dry bones of history are rather at a discount. The old unintelligent schoolroom drill, which involved learning strings of dates, had, with many disadvantages, at least some advantages. And a boy or girl may be better prepared to take an intelligent interest in history in the future if they know, so that they will never forget them, the dates of the Kings of England, of some leading events, and of the Prime Ministers from Walpole to the present time, than if they had been prematurely interested in the detail of special periods, to the exclusion of a knowledge of the general outlines. If the outlines have been insisted on and intelligently taught, the interest in private reading of history, for its own sake, will be increased rather than lessened.

"At present English history is the only part of modern history which is largely taught in schools. One of the main advantages for teaching purposes of English history is its continuity. If this continuity is lost sight of it is a great disadvantage to the learner. The *grammar*, or con-

## *PREFACE.*

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tinnous outline of English history, may be taught while the memory is fresh and strong, and on this foundation the knowledge of the whole constitutional and political history may be gradually built up. Our aim, however inadequately carried out, has been to keep this principle of continuity in view; not to encourage 'cram,' except so far as this sometimes misused word may include accurate and well-arranged knowledge."