

**ALTEMUS' YOUNG
PEOPLE'S
LIBRARY. A CHILD'S
HISTORY OF ENGLAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649751280

Altemus' Young People's Library. A Child's History of England by Charles Dickens

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CHARLES DICKENS

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Faultproof
Charles Dickens

ALTEMUS' YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIBRARY

A CHILD'S
HISTORY OF ENGLAND

BY
CHARLES DICKENS

Arranged for Young Readers

WITH EIGHTY ILLUSTRATIONS

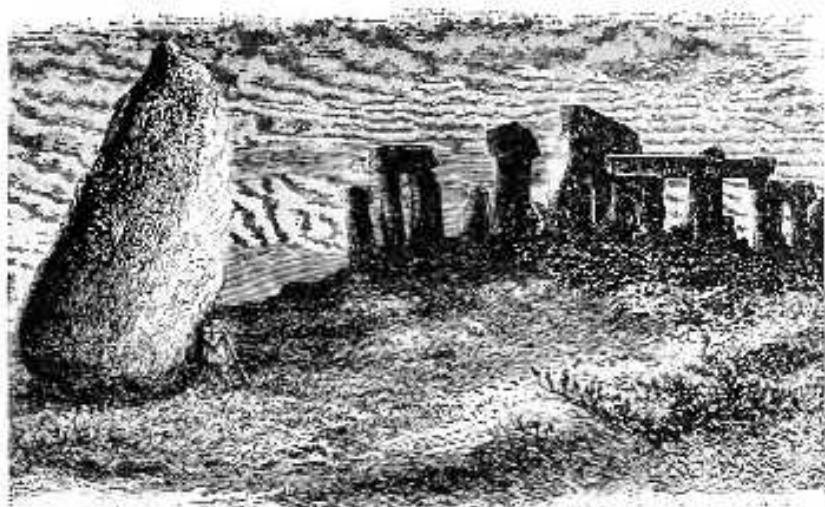
PHILADELPHIA
HENRY ALTEMUS

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A CHILD'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND.



STONEHENGE.

CHAPTER I.

ANCIENT ENGLAND AND THE ROMANS.

You will see on the map of the world, in the left-hand upper corner of the Eastern Hemisphere, two islands lying in the sea. They are England and Scotland, and Ireland. England and Scotland form the greater part of these islands. Ireland is next in size. The little islands look-

ing like dots are chiefly bits of Scotland, broken off, in the course of time, by the power of the restless water.

In the old days, long ago, the sea roared round them just as it roars now. But the sea was not alive then with great ships sailing to and from all parts of the world. The winds and waves brought no adventurers to the islands, and the savage islanders knew nothing of the rest of the world, and the rest of the world knew nothing of them.

It is supposed that the Phœnicians came in ships to these islands, and found that they produced tin and lead—both very useful things, produced upon the sea-coast. The most celebrated tin-mines in Cornwall are still close to the sea. One of them is hollowed out underneath the ocean, and the miners say that in stormy weather they can hear the noise of the waves thundering above their heads.

The Phœnicians traded with the islanders for these metals, and gave other things in exchange. The islanders were poor savages, going almost naked, or dressed in the rough skins of beasts. But the Phœnicians, sailing over to the opposite coasts of France and Belgium, and saying to the people there, "We have been to those white cliffs across the water, which you can see in fine weather, and from that country, which is called Britain, we bring this tin and lead," tempted some of the French and Belgians to come over also. These people settled themselves on the south coast of England, which is now called Kent, and, although they were a rough people, too, they taught the savage Britons some useful arts, and improved that part of the islands. It is probable that other people came over from Spain to Ireland and settled there. Thus strangers became mixed with the islanders, and the savage Britons grew into a wild, bold people—almost savage still, but hardy, brave and strong.

The whole country was covered with forests and swamps. The greater part of it was misty and cold. There were no roads, bridges, streets nor houses. A town was only a

collection of straw-covered huts, hidden in a thick wood, with a ditch all round and a low wall made of mud, or the trunks of trees placed one upon another. The people planted little or no corn, but lived upon the flesh of their flocks and cattle. They made no coins, but used metal rings for money. They were clever in basket-work, and they could make a coarse kind of cloth and some very bad earthenware. But in building fortresses they were clever.

They made boats of basket-work, covered with the skins of animals, but seldom ventured far from the shore. They made swords of copper mixed with tin, but they were so soft that a heavy blow would bend one. They made light shields, short, pointed daggers, and spears which they jerked back, after they had thrown them at an enemy, by a long strip of leather fastened to the stem. The butt-end was a rattle, to frighten an enemy's horse. The ancient Britons, being divided into as many as thirty or forty tribes, each commanded by its own little king, were constantly fighting with one another, and they always fought with these weapons.

They were very fond of horses. The standard of Kent was the picture of a white horse. They could break and manage them well. Indeed, the horses, though they were rather small, were so well taught in those days that they can scarcely be said to have improved since, though the men are so much wiser. They obeyed every command, and would stand still, in all the din and noise of battle, while their masters went to fight on foot. The Britons could not have succeeded in their most remarkable art without the aid of these sensible animals. The art I mean is the construction and management of war-chariots, for which they have ever been celebrated in history. Each of the best sort of these chariots, not quite breast-high in front and open at the back, contained one man to drive and two or three others to fight—all standing up. The horses who drew them were so well trained that they