

**CHAMBER'S EDUCATIONAL  
COURSE. A SHORT HISTORY  
OF ENGLAND TO THE DEATH  
OF GEORGE THE THIRD**

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Chamber's Educational Course. A Short History of England to the Death of George the Third by Anonymous

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*CHAMBERS'S EDUCATIONAL COURSE*

A  
SHORT  
HISTORY OF ENGLAND

TO THE  
*DEATH OF GEORGE THE THIRD*



W. & R. CHAMBERS  
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1880

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# CONTENTS.

## PART I

CHAP.	PAGE
I. BRITAIN UNDER THE ROMANS.....	3
II. THE ENGLISH CONQUEST.....	8
III. CONVERSION OF THE ENGLISH.....	11
IV. THE ENGLISH KINGDOMS BEFORE THE UNION UNDER EGBERT.....	14
V. THE DANES.....	17
VI. THE HOUSE OF ALFRED.....	22
VII. THE DANISH KINGS.....	26
VIII. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.....	28

## PART II

INTRODUCTION.....	35
I. WILLIAM I.....	36
II. EFFECTS OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST—CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.....	38
III. WILLIAM II.....	40
IV. HENRY I.....	41
V. STEPHEN.....	43
VI. HENRY II.....	45
VII. RICHARD I.....	49
VIII. JOHN.....	51
IX. HENRY III.....	54
X. EDWARD I.....	57
XI. EDWARD II.....	59
XII. EDWARD III.....	61
XIII. RICHARD II.....	65
XIV. CHANGES IN THE CONDITION OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE.....	67
XV. HENRY IV.....	69
XVI. HENRY V.....	71
XVII. HENRY VI.....	73
XVIII. EDWARD IV.....	76
XIX. EDWARD V.....	78
XX. RICHARD III.....	79

## PART III.

*HOUSE OF TUDOR.*

CHAP.	PAGE
I. HENRY VII.....	83
II. HENRY VIII.....	86
III. THE REFORMATION.....	89
IV. EDWARD VI.....	92
V. QUEEN MARY.....	94
VI. QUEEN ELIZABETH.....	97
VII. STRUGGLE WITH SPAIN.....	99
VIII. SOCIAL CONDITION DURING THE TUDOR PERIOD.....	103

*HOUSE OF STUART.*

I. JAMES I.....	108
II. CHARLES I.....	111
III. CIVIL WAR AND THE COMMONWEALTH (MAP).....	116
IV. CHARLES II.....	122
V. JAMES II.....	128
VI. WILLIAM AND MARY.....	128
VII. QUEEN ANNE.....	131
VIII. SOCIAL CONDITION UNDER THE STUARTS.....	134

*HOUSE OF HANOVER.*

I. GEORGE I.....	137
II. GEORGE II.....	140
III. GEORGE III.—	
BEGINNING OF HIS REIGN.....	146
IV. REVOLT AND SEPARATION OF THE AMERICAN COLONIES.....	149
V. FRENCH REVOLUTION.....	153
VI. WAR AGAINST NAPOLEON.....	156



# HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

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## CHAPTER I.

### BRITAIN UNDER THE ROMANS.

1. **The Ancient Britons.**—England takes its name from the Angles, a people from Germany, who crossed the North Sea, and took possession of the country. But they were not the first inhabitants; they slew or drove out another people called the Britons. These Britons were a brave and warlike people, belonging, like the inhabitants of ancient France (Gaul), to the Celtic race. The Welsh of the present day are descendants of the Britons, and to the same race belong the Highlanders and Irish.

2. **Condition of the Ancient Britons.**—These ancient Britons, when we first hear of them, had not made much progress in civilisation. They did not cultivate the soil very much, and grew very little corn, most of the country being covered with forest and moor. Their chief food was milk and flesh; they kept large flocks and herds; and there were many wild animals which they slew in the chase. They knew little about the weaving of cloth, and so clad themselves in skins. Pieces of brass or iron of a fixed weight were the only money they had. Their dwellings were miserable huts; the roads, where they had any, were very bad. Kent was the most civilised part; here were towns, a great many people, and fields of corn.

3. **War and Religion.**—The ancient Britons spent a very great part of their time in war; they were divided into many tribes, which were continually fighting with each other. They stained themselves blue with a plant called *woad*, that they might look more terrible in battle. They had war-chariots, which they drove with great skill, leaping out and in, and moving about with great boldness and dexterity. The Britons believed in

many gods, to whom they sometimes offered human sacrifices. They had priests, called Druids, who were also their men of learning, and had great power; and they had bards, who sang the mighty deeds of their forefathers.

#### THE ROMANS.

4. **Julius Cæsar.**—The history of England begins with the invasion by the Romans under Julius Cæsar fifty-five years before the birth of Christ. It is from the Romans that we have learned all we know about the Britons. The Romans were the most powerful nation of the world at that time. They had subdued all the countries round the Mediterranean Sea, and indeed all the people of the known world. They were wise, brave, and laborious; so skilled and strong in battle, that no nation could stand before them. Julius Cæsar was the greatest Roman of that time. After conquering the whole of Gaul or ancient France, he resolved to invade Britain, because he said the inhabitants had sent help to his enemies on the other side of the straits.

5. **Julius Cæsar invades Britain (55 B.C.).**—He landed near the modern town of Deal. The Britons saw the strange ships coming over the sea, and gathered an army to resist him; but they were defeated, and obliged to submit. That year Cæsar did not stay long, and did not advance far into the country. Next year he returned with a far larger army. The Britons fought bravely under their king, Cassivelaunus (Caswallon); but they were defeated in every battle. Cæsar crossed the Thames, and compelled them to submit and to promise to pay tribute. After subduing only a small part of the country, he returned to Gaul.

6. **Invasion under Claudius (43 A.D.).**—After the departure of Julius Cæsar the Britons saw no more of the Romans for about one hundred years, and they did not pay the tribute they had promised. With the invasion under the Emperor Claudius the permanent occupation of Britain by the Romans begins—that is to say, the Romans subdued a great part of it, kept an army in it, made the Britons pay taxes, and ruled it by a governor, whom the Emperor sent from Rome. The Emperors themselves even often visited Britain. In other words, Britain became a *province* of the great Roman Empire.

7. **Caractacus and Boadicea.**—But the Britons were a brave people, who loved freedom, and they did not yield to the Romans without a severe struggle. Their great fault was that

they were never united among themselves. One of their heroes was Caradoc, called by the Romans Caractacus, who was king of the Silures in South Wales. He fought long against the Romans, but being overcome in a great battle, was carried captive to Rome. When he saw the magnificence of the city, he asked the Emperor how it was that people who had such wealth and grandeur at home should covet his poor cottage in Britain. Claudius admired the courage of the British chief, and gave him his freedom. Again, while Suetonius, the Roman commander-in-chief, was absent on an expedition to the island of Mona (Anglesey), Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, rose against them. She had been cruelly injured by the Romans, and resolved to have revenge. She burned London, Camulodunum, and other Roman towns, killing all the inhabitants, and defeating a Roman army. At last, the Roman general, Suetonius Paulinus, returned from Mona, and defeated Boadicea with dreadful slaughter. Rather than fall into the hands of her cruel enemies, the British queen poisoned herself (61 A.D.).

8. Agricola (78-85 A.D.).—The true conqueror of Britain was the great general Julius Agricola, who was not only a brave soldier, but a wise and good man. He saw that the best way to make the Britons content with the rule of Rome was to treat them kindly and justly. He introduced good laws and the Roman ways of living, which the natives soon found were much better than their own. So the Britons adopted the dress of their conquerors; they got good houses, roads, farms, and grew fond of the comforts and luxuries of Roman life, forgetting their former fierceness and their old freedom. Agricola was also a great warrior. In seven campaigns he advanced as far as the Grampians. He drew a line of forts from the Firth of Forth to the Firth of Clyde; and defeated the Caledonian chief Galgacus at Mons Grampius (84 A.D.). He sent a fleet round the north coast, and discovered that Britain was an island. From the Mull of Galloway he saw the coast of Ireland.

9. The Roman Walls.—The Romans never conquered the northern part of Britain. There lived the Caledonians in their mountain fastnesses. They could not beat the Romans in open battle, but at every opportunity they rushed down upon the plains, burning and plundering and slaying. To keep them in check and protect the settled parts of the country, the Emperor Hadrian built a wall from the Tyne to the Solway Firth (121 A.D.). The Emperor Antonine raised a wall from the