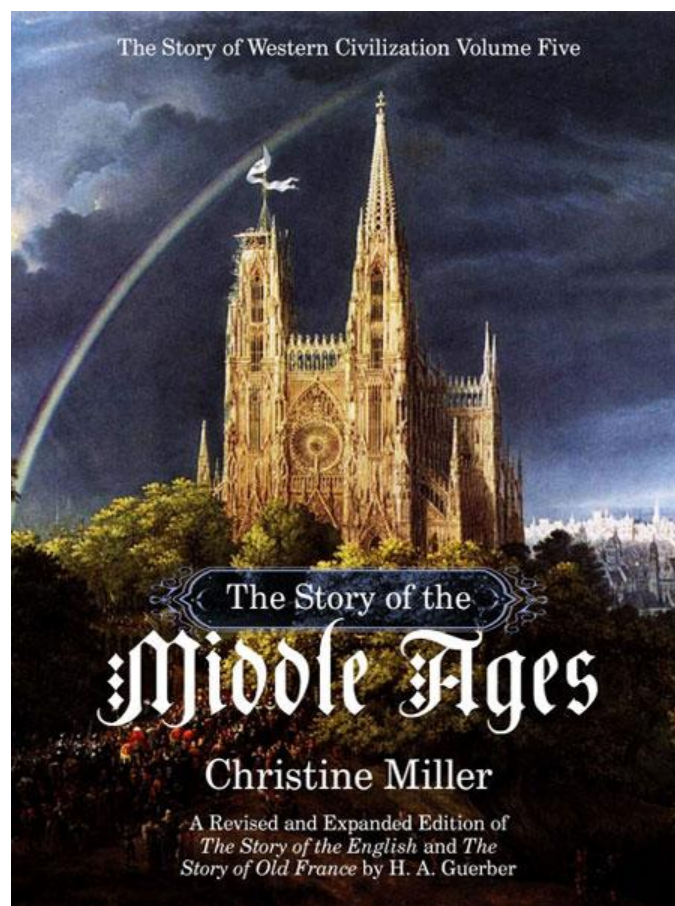


The Story of the

Middle Ages

Front Matter & First Three Chapters



The Story of Western Civilization Volume Five

The Story of the
Middle Ages

Christine Miller

A Revised and Expanded Edition of

The Story of Old France

and

The Story of the English

by

H. A. Guerber



Nothing New Press

Sarasota, Florida

The Story of the Middle Ages by Christine Miller

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That which has been is that which will be,
And that which has been done is that which will be done.
So, there is nothing new under the sun.
Ecclesiastes 1:9

P r e f a c e .



THIS elementary history of the Middle Ages is intended as a child's first exposure to the history of the times between the Fall of the Roman Empire of the West and the advent of our Modern Era beginning with the Renaissance. As such, it is chiefly concerned with the stories of the people that figure prominently during that thousand year sweep, when the principles of Christianity so informed Western Civilization that Europe was known as "Christendom."

The Story of the Middle Ages is chiefly a compilation of two books written by H. A. Guerber in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: *The Story of Old France* and *The Story of the English*. These two books cover the whole scope of history from man's beginning through the modern era, and, since events in France and England often overlapped in medieval times, many chapters in each book were nearly identical.

Therefore I have woven the histories of these countries together, taking my source material from Guerber, combining elements from both books, where necessary, into a single, harmonious narrative. In addition, as other nations also figure in medieval history, I have included chapters from Charlotte M. Yonge's *A Young Folks' History of Germany* and *The Story of the Christians and Moors of Spain*. The material from Yonge's histories has been integrated with that from Guerber's histories, where appropriate, and in some cases whole chapters from Yonge's histories have been re-written in Guerber's own style.

Some material, additionally, is entirely of my own composition, which has also been woven into the narrative and worded as nearly alike to Guerber's style as I could manage. My purpose in doing this has been to provide as complete a history of the Middle Ages as possible, in an enjoyable and unbroken style. Maintaining the continuity of the whole narrative was my prime consideration throughout.

Rather than clutter the narrative with footnotes, indicating which sections were from which books—as that would sometimes mean that several references would be present in a single sentence, as one phrase might be from one Guerber history, and one from another, and a third from Yonge, with the connecting tissue of the sentence my own work—I listed my resources in the bibliography in the back of the book.

In general, however, this scheme was followed: The chapters dealing chiefly with English history were taken nearly verbatim from *The Story of the English*, the chapters dealing chiefly with French history from *The Story of Old France*, and the chapters dealing chiefly with German, Italian, and Spanish history were taken, although not verbatim, from Yonge. Chapters in which English, French, Spanish, German, or Italian history intersect were nearly always a compilation from Guerber's and Yonge's histories.

In addition, I took the liberty of rephrasing several of Guerber's comments in the beginning of her histories where she discusses the origin of the Celts, Germans, and other European tribes. Her histories take the view that man developed slowly, through long ages of civilization, from a savage to a rational human being. Although the historical record supporting this view is non-existent, it was the common one of her day.

However, I have chosen to restore to the narrative the origin of these tribes as ancient records relate it. Each of the European tribes kept their own genealogies and king-lists, which all record the descent of their royal families from the sons of Noah, other independent and outside sources confirming their records. These changes only affect the first several chapters dealing with the origin of the settlers of Europe and the advent of the various tribes. The academic works upon which I have drawn are listed in the bibliography.

The illustrations are from Guerber and Yonge, with many others additionally included from *History of Europe, Ancient and Medieval* by Robinson and Breasted, and *A History of England* by Larned, as listed in the bibliography. As with the Guerber histories previously republished by Nothing New Press, *The Story of the Greeks* and *The Story of the Romans*, the first time a personal or place name is mentioned in the text the pronunciation is marked, and a comprehensive index concludes the book.

It is my hope that this history will fill a vital need in educating today's school children, by giving them an understanding of what has happened in the world before them. As "what has been is what will be," this knowledge is indispensable, yet nearly every history of the Middle Ages available today for children deals primarily with how knights fought or how castles were built, but tells them nothing of the actual events and people, the heroes and villains, of our past. This is my attempt to fill that void and provide that necessary familiarity.

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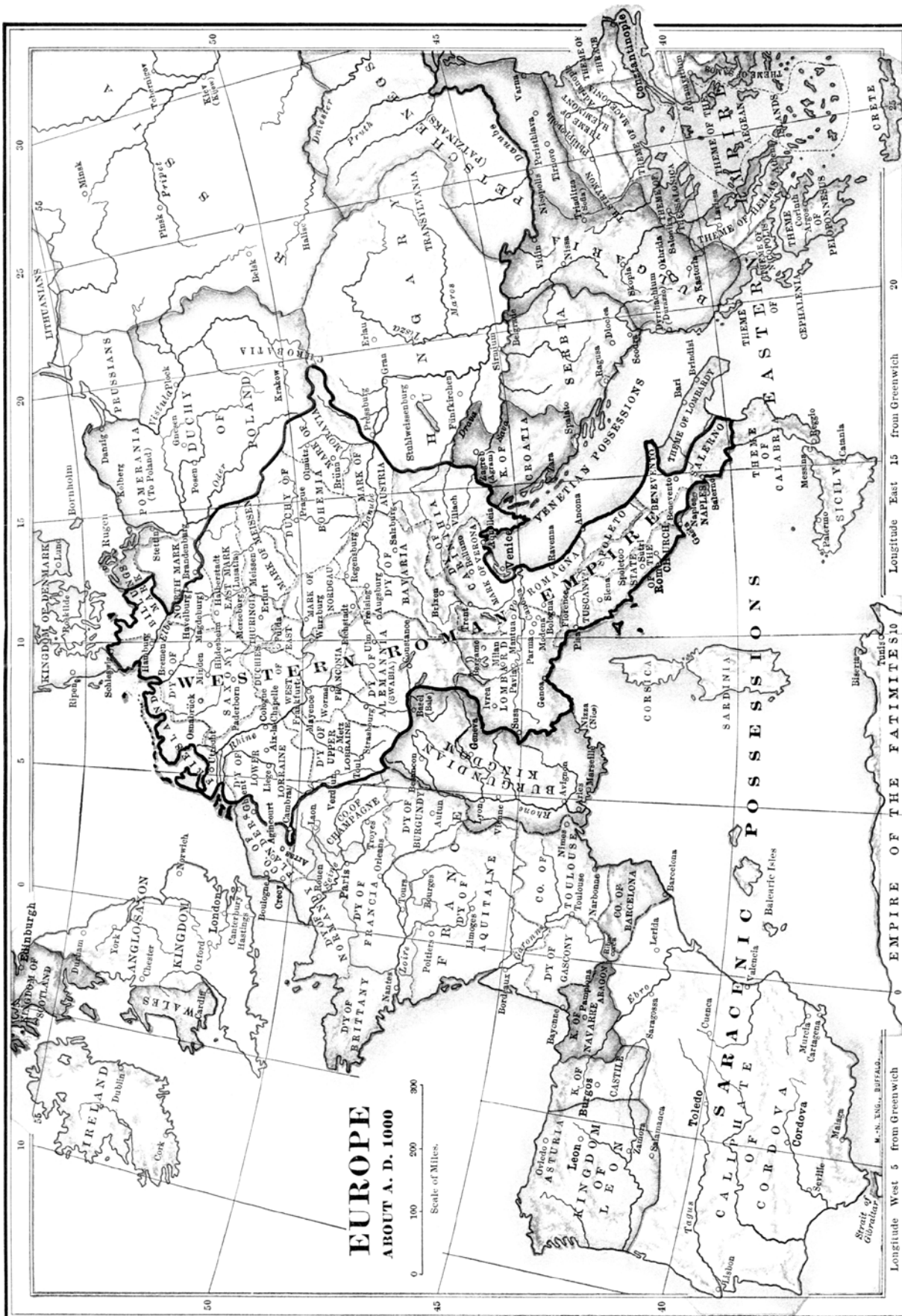
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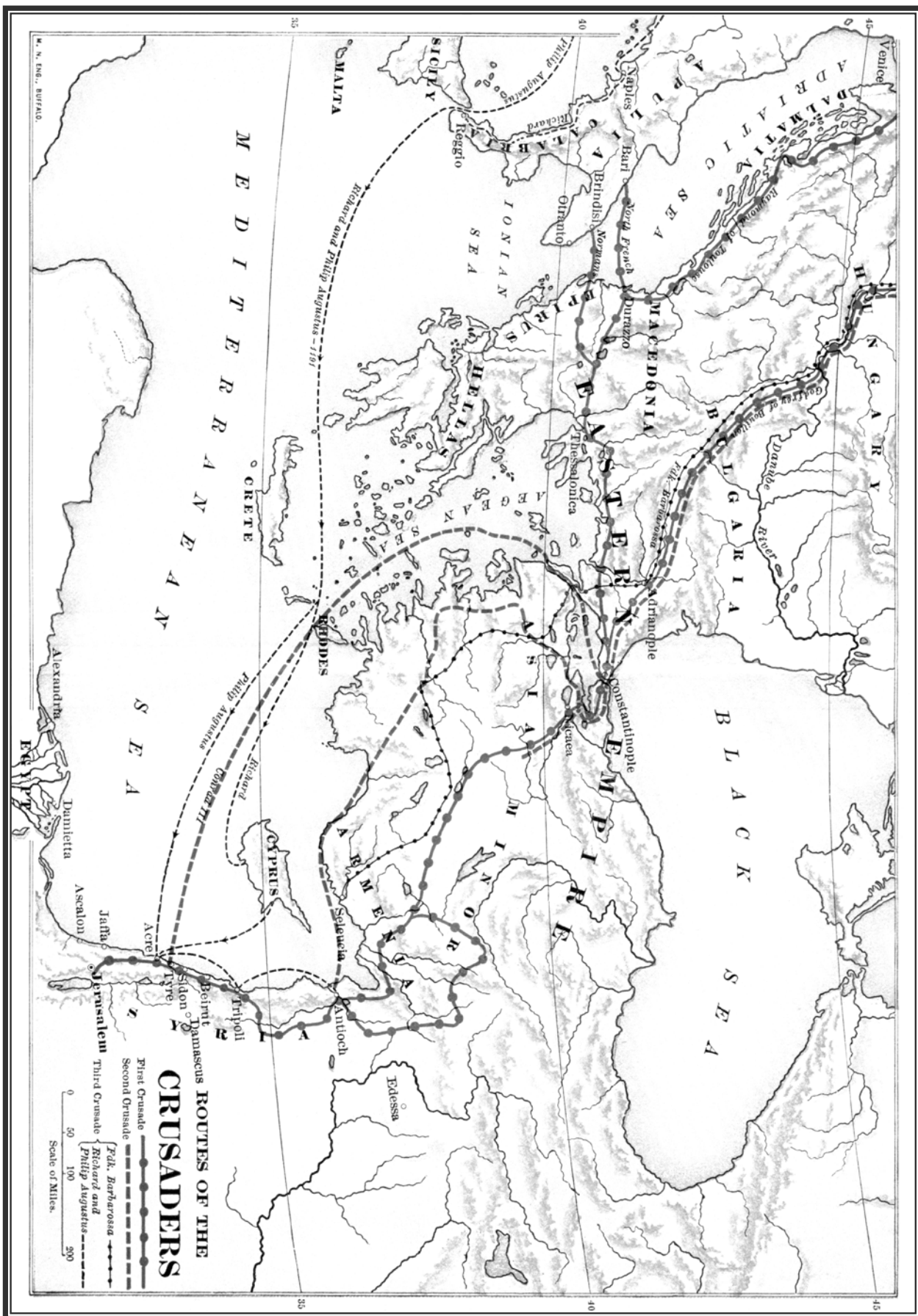
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The Story of the Middle Ages.



i. Europe Long Ago.

YOU will now hear the story of the times between the fall of the old Roman Empire of the West and our own modern times that began with the rebirth of science and learning known as the Renaissance. These in-between times are commonly called the Middle Ages, because they came between classical antiquity, a time of high civilization and learning, and the Renaissance, which was fancied to be a return to the civilization of that earlier era. The medieval times, or times of the Middle Ages, are chiefly concerned with the lands and peoples of the former Roman Empire of the West, which is to say France, Germany, Britain, Spain, and Italy. It is to these lands and peoples that we now turn.

The beautiful stretch of land bounded by the Elbe, the Alps, the Mediterranean, the Pyrenees, and the Atlantic Ocean was once a wild extent of forests and marshes, with ranges of hills in which large rivers rose and straggled, widening down to their swampy mouths. The woods were full of game—bears and wolves, elk and buffalo—and the rivers and streams were alive with fish. Almost all the settlers of this land, who were to form the nations of Europe, seem to have come out of western Asia, one tribe after another, the fiercest driving the others farther and farther westward before them. Very ancient records place these tribes, who were all descended from Japheth—one of the sons of Noah, as you are no doubt aware—in the lands surrounding the Black and Caspian Seas, following the dispersal of the peoples from Babel.

As they grew in numbers, from time to time tribes of them were forced to leave their home to seek new hunting and fishing grounds, or better pasture for their cattle. Some

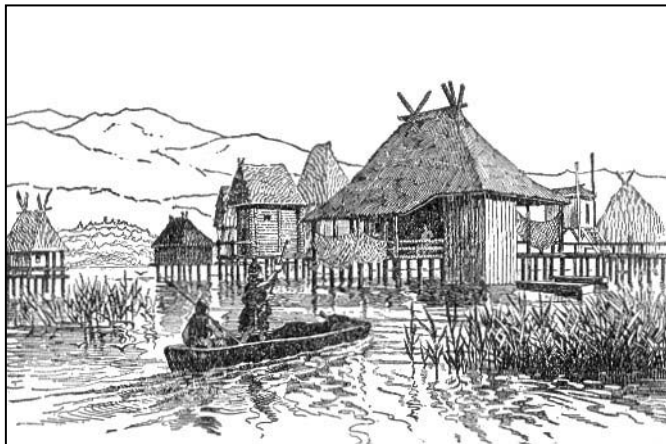
of the first settlers of the land we now call Europe were the dark-haired I-be´ri-ans. The Iberians were descended from Tu´bal, one of the sons of Japheth, and made their home in Spain long before the Phoe-ni´cians of Car´thage colonized it.

Fair-haired Celts and Gauls followed soon after. These related tribes encompassed a great family of peoples, who were said to be descended from Go´mer, another son of Japheth, from whom they derive their name. The ancient Greeks called the Celts “Cimmer´i-ans,” which, as you can see, also comes from the name of Gomer.

Thus at a very early period some of these Celts made their way to the land between the Rhine and the Atlantic, which they disputed with the Iberians, while others settled in the British Isles.

These Iberians and Celts knew how to plant, keep cattle, and make pottery, as well as work metals and weave cloth. They were divided into many great families, each of which formed a little nation by itself. As each tribe wished to have the best fishing and hunting grounds, and the best pastures, all its members were ready to fight any one else so as to win and keep them.

These early peoples had a religion of their own, and believed in life after death. Therefore they buried their dead in caves or rough stone tombs, placing beside them the



Stone Age Settlement in Switzerland (reconstruction).

weapons, ornaments, and clothing which they thought the dead would need in their new life. They also left in the tombs supplies of food in earthen vessels, so that the dead might have provisions enough for their journey to a better world, and be able to begin their new lives there comfortably. Of course most of the bodies thus buried fell in

time into dust; but a few were laid in such dry caves or tombs that their remains were found hundreds of years later, still well preserved.

Human skeletons, bones of animals and fishes, stone and bronze weapons, bone combs, earthen vessels, ornaments, and shreds of cloth garments have been discovered in such places. As these early inhabitants used stone and bronze weapons, their times

are generally known as the Stone and Bronze Ages. Such articles are now carefully treasured in museums, where you can see them today, although the people who once used them have been dead for thousands of years.



ii. Early Times in England.

IF you look at a map of Europe, you will notice two large islands and many small ones at a short distance west of the mainland. As you can see, the islands are so small that no matter how far inland you travel, you are never more than one hundred miles away from the water which hems them in on all sides. On the north and west there is the Atlantic Ocean, on the south the Eng'lish Chan'nel, and on the east the North Sea.

These islands are now called the U-ni'ted King'dom of Great Britain and Ire'land, and they form one of the foremost countries of the world. Great Britain includes Eng'land, Scot'land, and Wales, besides many little islands near by; and as the language, laws, and customs of Great Britain are mostly English, you will find that you will hear more about England than about the other parts of the realm.

Ancient legends and histories, having been carefully preserved from one generation to the next, relate that Bru'tus, a descendant of the same Ae-ne'as that gave rise to the Romans, was forced by necessity to flee Italy. Upon reaching Greece, he found some descendants of the Tro'jan soldiers that had been enslaved by the Greeks at the end of that famous war, and, securing their freedom, Brutus and his new followers set sail looking for a land that they could settle and there dwell in peace.

Sailing along the coast of the Mediterranean, they could not find anywhere a place that would welcome them, and so passed through the Strait of Gi-bral'tar and along the coast of the land already inhabited by the Iberians. They eventually landed at the island we call England, perhaps some eleven or twelve centuries before the birth of Christ, as their early records relate. Possibly tribes of the Celts were already there, but however that may be, soon all were joined into one nation, called Britain, and into one tribe, the Brit'ons, whose name had been taken from the name of Brutus, their first chief.

The British Isles are far out in the ocean, and being very fertile, the people found that they had all they needed, and at last had found the home for which they had long sought. This wonderful fertility is owing principally to the mist which rises from the sea, which keeps the grass in England green nearly all the year round, and the ocean currents which keep it warmer than other countries at the same latitude.

Brutus had three sons, named Lo-crin´us, Kam´ber, and Al-ban-ac´tus. Upon his fa-



Geography of England and Ireland.

ther's death, Locrinus founded the kingdom of Britain, which was then called Lo-eg´ri-a after him; Kamber founded the kingdom of Wales, which was then called Cam´bri-a after him; and Albanactus founded the kingdom of Scotland, which was then called Al´ban-y after him. You may still sometimes find these ancient names for the three kingdoms in poetry. They were long ruled by the descendants of Brutus' three sons, one of whom was King Lear, made famous by an interesting play of Shake´speare by the same name, which you will no doubt like to read. The kings of Scotland, Wales, and Britain founded many of the

important cities of the island, and the three kingdoms enjoyed a long history, which you will one day read with interest in *History of the Kings of Britain* by Geoffrey of Monmouth (jef´ry mon´muth).

On bright, clear days, when there is no mist at all, people standing on the coast of what is now called France, at the spot where the English Channel is narrowest, can just see the tall white chalk cliffs on the southern coast of England. These cliffs are so dazzlingly white that the people who lived in France used to call England the White Land. This name was translated into Latin by the Romans, who called the country Al´bi-on, a name which you will still sometimes find in poetry, but rarely in prose.

The early inhabitants of France, the Gauls, were also attracted to the beautiful island, and sometimes waged war with the Britons, as their early legends relate. Some of these Gauls eventually settled in Britain and were absorbed into their nation. The Gauls

spoke a language of their own, of which there are many traces in the Gae'lic and Welsh tongues, languages which are still spoken in Wales and some parts of Ireland and Scotland, but which are very unlike English.



iii. How the Gauls Came into Europe.

SINCE the Gauls are the principal people of early France and England, you will want to know something about them. You have already heard how the first Iberians and Celts settled in Europe. At a later period, still many centuries before Christ, they were followed by younger tribes of Celts, known as Gauls. As these newcomers were better armed than the earlier settlers, they soon gained possession of the best parts of the country.

These Gauls were also stronger than the earlier Celts and the Iberians, and were taller and fairer, with lighter skin, blue eyes, and long hair. They were fierce and active and afraid of nothing. They spoke in harsh tones, and often boasted loudly of the deeds they had done or were going to do.

They knew how to work metals, and to spin and weave, so they owned good tools and weapons, and wore breeches, shirts, and cloaks woven from the wool of their sheep. They liked gay colors and pretty ornaments, and therefore fastened their plaid garments with bright metal clasps, some of which still exist, to show that they were no mean artists. Besides some horses, they owned sheep, cows, and great droves of pigs.

The Gauls generally went bareheaded, their long hair being gathered together and tied on top of their heads, whence it streamed loose in the breeze, like a horse's tail. All the warriors took special pride in the length and thickness of their hair, which they carefully combed and often rubbed with rancid butter, so as to keep it thick and glossy. As they shaved off their beards and wore long mustaches, they looked very fierce when they brandished their bronze spears and battle-axes, and uttered their blood-curdling war cry, "Off with their heads!"

The Gauls believed that the souls of brave men passed after death into new, strong bodies; and therefore they rushed into battle without any fear. When one of their chiefs



The Funeral of a Chief.

fell, his body was placed on a huge funeral pyre, where it was burned with his horse, his dogs, his weapons, garments, ornaments, utensils, and booty. Sometimes some of his slaves were killed and burned with him, so that the chief should have servants to wait upon him in his new life. The Gauls fancied, too, that the souls of cowards passed after death into the bodies of vile animals. Each father, therefore, taught his sons to be fearless so that he should be honored here on earth, and be happy hereafter.

The women were nearly as tall and strong as the men, but even more handsome, and were greatly respected. They wore long linen gowns, and dyed their hair red—a color they much admired. They

were so brave that they not only encouraged their husbands, sons, and brothers to fight, but often went into battle themselves, side by side with the men.

Most of the warriors went from place to place and fought on foot; but the bravest and richest rode fine horses, around whose necks they hung ghastly necklaces, made of the skulls of the enemies they had slain in battle. A few also drove in war chariots, which had sharp scythes fastened to their wheels. These dashed into the enemy's ranks, mowing them down like ripe grain, if they did not turn and run away in sudden terror.



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