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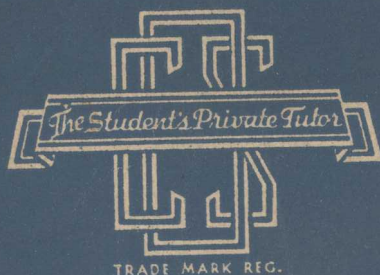
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# OUTLINE-HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

Volume I: To Dryden

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OTIS and NEEDLEMAN



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COLLEGE OUTLINE SERIES

OUTLINE - HISTORY OF  
ENGLISH  
LITERATURE

Volume 1: To Dryden

BY

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## PREFACE

It is hoped that the OUTLINE-HISTORY will not be regarded as merely another summary of English literature. The OUTLINE-HISTORY covers the field, we believe, with an eclectic adequacy not attempted by any other manual. In matters of selection and interpretation the authors always have remembered the probable and the practical needs of both the undergraduate college student making his first long excursion into English literature and the majoring or even the graduate college student desiring a comprehensive handbook in compact form.

To make the volume primarily usable it has been found necessary to deviate from the conventional plan of most textbooks. The following are some of the departures:

1. The OUTLINE-HISTORY brings the treatment of the subject abreast of modern research and criticism. Where opinion contrary to that of the traditional is prevalent, the authors call attention to the fact by notes usually so specific in reference that the teacher or the student can check the statements made and correct any errors of judgment. While indicating where counsels are divided, an endeavor is made to avoid both antiquated opinions and crotchety modern preferences.

It is a cause for regret that we can not discharge completely our indebtedness to earlier source-studies. Were one able to ferret out the borrowed ideas and to assign to each scholar his particular contribution to the field, such citation of authorities would still be prohibitive because of a number of considerations, chiefly the limitation of space. On the one hand, our general plan of stating matters of common knowledge without recording our indebtedness has meant that in not a few cases outstanding sources of information are mentioned only scantily, or not at all. But it is that very restriction that has made possible a fuller acknowledgment of our obligations in the more specialized instances.

2. The OUTLINE-HISTORY gives representation to all aspects of the field. For example, the diversified scope of the content provides for the allotment of considerable space to significant minor writers who too frequently have been neglected. A knowledge of these lesser contemporaries is essential to any real understanding of the temper and spirit of an age. In addition, more than cursory attention is accorded the earlier periods of our literature. The conviction that such material should be more generally accessible accounts for putting as much emphasis upon Chaucer and Spenser, for example, as upon Shakespeare and Milton. Even in its discussion of the fifteenth century in English literature, one usually dealt with fragmentarily or skipped altogether, the OUTLINE-HISTORY's fuller re-statement gives that period its long due.

If the OUTLINE-HISTORY should be considered over-minute in its analysis, it will at least have avoided in the main the mere tabulation of the names of authors and the titles of their works, and also the general barrenness of scrimped accounts and one-sided interpretations. College students might well be expected to approach the field of English literature from a mature point of view much in that spirit with which for many years they have been expected to approach the field of mathematics or physics or biology or chemistry.

3. The OUTLINE-HISTORY lends itself to immediate use for further study. Cross-references, footnotes, and other editorial aids have been utilized at strategic points so as to reduce to a minimum the necessity of directing students to other books. The footnotes themselves while stimulating the student's interest in specific literary problems are a concise, up-to-date bibliography. It should be apparent that the OUTLINE-HISTORY has been made, so far as space limitations would permit, a single unit, yet also a point of departure for supplementary readings and explorations.

4. The OUTLINE-HISTORY indicates foreign as well as native influences upon English literature. Occasionally, it is true, a textbook or two will indicate by a chart that, for example, Machiavelli wrote his *Prince* and Castiglione his *Cortegiano* at approximately the time More wrote his *Utopia*. But the OUTLINE-HISTORY makes the point of contact more immediate and more specific: thus, for example, it records the influence of Machiavelli's *Prince* upon Elyot's *The Boke named the Governour* and upon Spenser's *Veue of the Present State of Ireland*, and that of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* upon Spenser's *Fowre Hymnes* and Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*. As for Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, the OUTLINE-HISTORY indicates the obligation to Amerigo Vespucci's account of his voyages, to Plato's *Republic*, St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei* (upon which More once lectured), and Erasmus's *Institutio Principis Christiani*.

5. The OUTLINE-HISTORY has further departures from the usual textbook. A case in point is its attempt at correlation. Thus, in evaluating the most original portion of Anglo-Saxon poetry (*Deor*, *The Wife's Lament*, *The Husband's Message*, *The Ruin*, *The Wanderer*, and the like), the OUTLINE-HISTORY points out that those lyrical or elegiac poems anticipate the dramatic monologue, a form of which the ultimate master is Robert Browning; in outlining Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*, the OUTLINE-HISTORY states that one of the most recent analogues occurs in Kipling's *Second Jungle Book*. When examining William Godwin's *Enquiry concerning Political Justice*, the OUTLINE-HISTORY (Volume II) refers the student to various ideal commonwealths previously encountered, such as Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, Bernard de Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees*, and also looks forward to Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race*, Butler's *Erewhon*, Morris's *News from Nowhere*, H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia*, and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

While designed, therefore, primarily for the college undergraduate and the majoring or even the graduate student, it is felt that the OUTLINE-HISTORY is useful as well for all who do not have access to adequately equipped libraries or who may find it convenient to have in succinct form a representative discussion of English literature.

The OUTLINE-HISTORY doubtless will call for revision. All criticisms will be welcome. Suggestions that may improve the handbook's usefulness will be incorporated, if possible, in succeeding editions. Kindly address the authors in care of Barnes and Noble, Inc., New York City.

W. B. O. — M. H. N.

### Acknowledgments

In the preparation of AN OUTLINE-HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE To DRYDEN we have been assisted by many scholars, both friends and strangers, who have volunteered valuable suggestions for improving the manuscript. Our obligations to all of these can not, for lack of space, be specifically acknowledged here; but for generous aid we must express our special gratitude to Professor A. C. Baugh of the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Alexander Boecker of Brooklyn, New York; Professor Haldeen Braddy of Sul Ross State Teachers College; Professor Carleton Brown of New York University; Professor Joseph George Cohen of Brooklyn College; Professor Emeritus Morris Raphael Cohen of The College of the City of New York; Professor R. D. Havens of The Johns Hopkins University; Professor Florence Hilbish of Cedar Crest College; Professor Karl J. Holzknecht of New York University; Professor T. H. Johnson of the Hackley School; Dr. Paul Klapper, President of Queens College; Professor Dawn Logan of Waynesburg College; Professor T. O. Mabbott of Hunter College; Professor Emeritus Lewis Freeman Mott of The College of the City of New York; Professor Vincent H. Ogburn of Leland Stanford University; Professor Charles G. Osgood of Princeton University; Professor J. J. Parry of the University of Illinois; Professor A. W. Secord of the University of Illinois; Dr. Samuel A. Tannenbaum, Editor of *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*; Professor Homer A. Watt of New York University; and Professor Donald G. Whiteside of Brooklyn College. To Professors Charles F. Horne, Alfred D. Compton, Bird Stair, Arthur Dickson, and Ralph Gordon we must also acknowledge our indebtedness, as well as to Messrs. Donald A. Roberts, Maximilian G. Walten, Arthur K. Burt, Warren B. Austin, and John C. Thirlwall, Jr., all of the English department; also to Professors Samuel B. Heckman and J. Salwyn Shapiro, of The College of the City of New York. We owe a special debt of gratitude to the Honorable Francis J. Sinnott, Postmaster of Brooklyn, New York, and to Claire and Lee Howard, of Brooklyn, New York, without whose assistance the book would have been delayed considerably. For general guidance and detailed help in the preparation of the work we are deeply obligated to Mr. A. W. Littlefield, Editor of the COLLEGE OUTLINE SERIES.

W. B. O. — M. H. N.

## PRELIMINARY

### AN APPROACH TO THE COLLEGE SURVEY COURSE

English literature is a required study for all college students, yet there is a dearth of investigation as to the proper materials for teaching the subject at college levels. Even in the secondary school, where much emphasis has been placed upon subject-matter and educational procedures, the authorities are not agreed as to aims in the study of literature. Accordingly, the usual survey course in the college is narrow; it seems to lack the omnibus material that might lend itself to various points of view and methods.

A condition contributing much to the difficulty of determining the scope and methods of teaching the subject at the college level, is the ineffective articulation between the secondary school and the college. Frequently a more or less helter-skelter and shallow survey course of English literature has been required before students entered college and another such course often fails to stimulate a new enthusiasm. The partly known territory traversed may hold out no hope of discoveries because the instruction often falls below the level of college standards. In other courses, such as history and mathematics, the method is frequently imposed by the content, but this is less true, if true at all, of English literature. Whereas in the secondary school the recognized criterion in selecting reading material is the interests of the students, here in the college the cultivation of a taste for reading too commonly yields in importance to a more intensive study (usually through the over-worked lecture method) of literature as a "knowledge subject." This may not in itself be a discouraging approach, but tends to be made so by formalization. Moreover, what are social and political values to the student are lost when textbooks of literary history and consorting anthologies are dependent upon conventional and traditional ideas.

What, therefore, should be the educational procedures in the teaching of English literature to college students? If there is a consensus it is, first, that the main aim should be to relate the literature to life, vitalizing ideas and ideals, and integrating broad intellectual and philosophical connections. It is not good for literature, any more than it is for man, to be alone; and a periphery course, or preferably, an orientation course, can perform an important service. Second, a first college course should be designed in a fashion permitting adjustment to the needs of *all* students, both those who purpose to go no further than the first course and those who plan to go beyond. Third, the method in



each case should grow out of both the problems of the subject and the nature of the student. The textbook itself should avoid undue stress on material apparently intended to yield entertainment suitable for adolescents rather than to provoke thinking on an adult level. If a choice is offered it should favor intellectually stimulating ideas rather than factual matter barren of ideas.

These main procedures have energized the growth of the *OUTLINE-HISTORY* until it has assumed the present proportions. Our convictions are that abstract account and dogmatic presentation deserve at the collegiate level a smaller place than they usually receive, and that divergent ideas are to be included for the purpose of putting before the students material that stimulates reflection and calls for solution of problems. To the suggestion that difficulties could be diminished by consigning the notes to an appendix, we would say that their neglect might thereby be encouraged. Moreover, it is not difficult, when advisable, to disregard the footnotes. If we have erred, we have preferred to do so on the side of fullness, for the reasons stated and also in the expectation that the instructor or the instructor and students will select the material to be studied.

Selective choice by the users of this handbook—that is the basis of the approach. It is obvious that the instructor or the instructor and students should have a large measure of freedom in planning and carrying on the course. The ideal approach would be to test the entering students and then group them according to their abilities and needs, as revealed by the placement tests, into first courses at differing levels of achievement. However, most classes include students of varying abilities. Containing more material than any specific survey course may require, the *OUTLINE-HISTORY* can be adapted to any class. It is expected that more or less of the material will be omitted. Specific minimal requirements should, however, be prescribed for each class. Some units will merit further consideration and some will be skimmed or even skipped in preparation for class. Specific study-guides with organizing questions might well include not alone the general assignment but also the supplementary work for successive levels. Some classes might even follow the procedure of the *OUTLINE-HISTORY* in basing apportionment of space, not upon conventional treatment elsewhere but upon the omnibus needs of a course planned to inform, interest, and stimulate varied groups of intellectually mature students. However, those who wish some minimal signposts may give heed to the works marked by an obelisk (†); those who wish to enrich the minimal requirements may make the reference notes the basis of additional work; and, finally, those who plan to do graduate work may follow up for themselves the various problems raised throughout the *OUTLINE-HISTORY*.

Selection, therefore, is imperative for the instructor, or the instructor and students together. This manual is not a substitute for thinking.



It must not supplant personal contact with the literature itself. Indiscriminate mastery of the material in the OUTLINE-HISTORY is not the desideratum. The student is not to work for the memorization of biographical facts, dates of literary works, or even critical judgments, except in a naturally subordinate degree. Were the OUTLINE-HISTORY not meant for heterogeneous classes of college students, its array of reference notes might be construed as exemplifying vivisection or over-annotation of literature, but in view of the specific purpose of the book the footnotes can be developed into a body of stimulating aids to the proper interpretation of the literature from which the OUTLINE-HISTORY itself has developed. Especial emphasis is to be placed upon the study of historical, intellectual, and aesthetic backgrounds of the literature, and upon the study of masterpieces rather than of literary types. By planning larger units designed for a more intensive study of individual authors and of specific works most representative of a particular period, the connections of literature with that period's social, political, and intellectual movements can be established effectively.

Whether in a first-year class where only two or three of Chaucer's *Canterbury tales* or of Shakespeare's plays may be assigned, or in a majoring class where a dozen or so may be required, or even in a graduate class where possibly all the tales or plays may be prescribed, the OUTLINE-HISTORY in each case provides a graduated editorial apparatus that can be utilized as an energizing guide to ideas and ideals according to the varying abilities and selective needs of a particular class or student. As a final caution may we again urge that in no case should the purpose of the college survey course be merely to supply aesthetic occupation or a like kind of relief after the work in other subjects in the curriculum; in all cases the instructor should keep in mind the needs, interests, purposes, capacities, or experiences of the students either as individuals, distinctive groups, or varied classes.

AN OUTLINE-HISTORY OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Volume I: TO DRYDEN

## ON THE USE OF THIS HANDBOOK

### I

It is essential to read both the *Preface* (pages v-vii) and the *Preliminary* (pages vii-x) in order to comprehend the plan and scope of the OUTLINE-HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, and to make full and proper use of it. The *Table of Contents* and the *Index* have their obvious uses, although it should be remembered that the latter does not include the *Supplementary List of Writers* (pp. I-XIII).

### II

The main text of this manual is set in ten-point type. The original intention of utilizing a reduced type to indicate the works of minor writers, the lesser works of major writers, and like matters, had to be abandoned when it was found that the contemplated frequent use of a smaller font would be a definite strain on the eyes. Unwilling, however, to forego entirely the plan of indicating subordination, it was decided not only to restrict the use of a reduced type but also to mark the more important works as indicated below.

#### KEY TO SYMBOLS

- † The dagger-mark or obelisk denotes the more important works.
- \* The asterisk indicates additional information alphabetically arranged in *Appendix B* (pages XIV-XXXII).
- <sup>1</sup> The raised number refers to the note at the bottom of the page.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE . . . . .	v
PRELIMINARY. AN APPROACH TO THE COLLEGE SURVEY COURSE . . . . .	viii
ON THE USE OF THIS HANDBOOK . . . . .	xiv
From the Beginnings to the Norman Conquest	
INTRODUCTION. THE FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE	1
I THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD . . . . .	5
From the Norman Conquest to the Sixteenth Century	
II THE ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD . . . . .	22
III THE ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD: THE MEDIEVAL ROMANCE	39
IV THE AGE OF CHAUCER . . . . .	50
V THE AGE OF CHAUCER: GEOFFREY CHAUCER . . . . .	62
VI THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY . . . . .	82
VII THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: POPULAR LITERATURE . . . . .	100
The Renaissance and The Reformation	
VIII THE RENAISSANCE: THE BEGINNINGS . . . . .	110
IX THE BEGINNINGS OF THE RENAISSANCE: EDMUND SPENSER	124
X THE RENAISSANCE: THE AGE OF ELIZABETH . . . . .	137
XI THE RENAISSANCE: THE AGE OF ELIZABETH: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE . . . . .	160
XII THE RENAISSANCE: THE DECLINE . . . . .	227
XIII THE AGE OF MILTON . . . . .	249
XIV THE AGE OF MILTON: JOHN MILTON . . . . .	277
Appendices	
A. SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF WRITERS . . . . .	I
B. ALPHABETICAL GUIDE TO MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION . . . . .	XIV
INDEX . . . . .	XXXIII

## INTRODUCTION

### THE FORMATION OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE

#### I. THE PRE-CELTIC INHABITANTS

##### A. The Paleolithic Man

Ages ago, when attached to the European continent, England was probably inhabited by the stunted Paleolithic man.

##### B. The Neolithic Man

Centuries passed; England took on its existing insular form; and there appeared the swarthy-complexioned Neolithic man or Iberian.<sup>1</sup>

#### II. THE COMING OF THE CELTS

##### A. Two Main Branches of the Celtic Race

1. *Goidels (Gaels)*. In west and north. Language, customs, and ethnic qualities were profoundly altered by contact with the aboriginal inhabitants. Survive in Ireland and West Scotland.

2. *Brythons (Britons or Cymri)*. In southwest. Much less modified by external ethnic influences. Survive in Wales and Cornwall.

##### B. Religion of the Celts: Druidism

1. A hierarchy of gods resembling that of the pagan Greeks and Romans, but under different appellations. Worshipped a multitude of local deities.

2. The practice of human sacrifices; the belief in the transmigration of souls. Sanctified the oak (while reverencing the mistletoe when growing on the oak)—an emblem of the diuturnity of the Supreme Being.

##### C. Celtic Influence upon English Literature

1. Contributed to the language less than a dozen words; e. g., *bannock*, *dun* (color), and river-names like *Avon* and *Thames*.

2. Contributed to the literature: (a) the *lais*, either lyrics or short verse romances (p. 46); and (b) *The Mabinogion*, a compilation of Welsh tales (p. 41).

#### III. THE ROMAN OCCUPATION

##### A. Invasions

1. B. C. 55 and 54. Two invasions by Julius Caesar. Led to Roman Conquest and civilization.

<sup>1</sup> This identification is little more than conjecture.

2. A. D. 43—84. Invasion by Aulus Plautius, under Emperor Claudius. Occupied the country south of the Severn and Avon. Successive governors (Ostorius Scapula, Aulus Didus, Veranius, Suetonius Paulinus, and particularly Cneius Julius Agricola) completed conquest by A. D. 84.

3. A. D. 401—410. Roman legions gradually withdrawn to protect Rome from barbarian attacks. Finally (410) Emperor Honorius renounced Rome's sovereignty over Britain.

#### B. Roman Influence upon English Literature

1. Contributed to the language a small number of Latin words; e. g., *mile*, *street*, and the suffixes “-caster” or “-chester” and “-wich” or “-wick” in such names as Lancaster, Winchester, Greenwich, Berwick.

2. Contributed very little to the literature.

### IV. THE ANGLO-SAXON CONQUEST

#### A. Invasions

1. A. D. 449. Withdrawal of the Romans left the Celts a prey to the barbarians. Upon the invitation, it is said, of Vortigern, a British (Celtic) chief, who wished assistance against the invasions of the Picts and Scots, a band of Jutes (from Jutland?) under Hengist and Horsa(?) dragged its boats up the beach at Ebbsfleet in the Isle of Thanet. At first the Jutes—a branch of the Teutonic race composed of three tribes, the other two being the Saxons and the Angles, and all three, according to prevailing opinion, living “somewhere on the Continent between Hamburg and the topmost point of the Jutish peninsula,”<sup>1</sup>—were loyal to their pledges; but, recognizing the helplessness of the Britons, soon took possession of the surrounding country. Settled in the southeast in Kent and on the Isle of Wight. Celts were absorbed, exterminated, or driven to the west and north, to Wales, Devonshire, and Cornwall.

2. A. D. 477. Saxons (from Schleswig?) under Ella marauded the shore west of Kent. Settled on the south and east coasts, in Sussex, Essex, and later in Wessex.

3. A. D. 547. Angles (from Holstein?) under Ida invaded the east and north. Settled north of the Humber. Founded the Kingdom of Bernicia (North Northumbria). From the Angles, who were the most numerous, the country became known as Angle-land, or England, the land of the Angles.

#### B. Language

1. Language at first called *Englisc*, because the Angles were the ascendant tribe; afterward, when mixed with Norman, called *Saxon*; and, finally, *Anglo-Saxon*. Is a Low-German, West-Germanic, Indo-European language. Nearest relatives are Old Frisian and Low German

<sup>1</sup> Langenfelt, Gösta, “Notes on the Anglo-Saxon Pioneers,” *Englische Studien*, LXVI (1931-1932), p. 165 (pp. 161-244).

(*Plattdeutsch*). Many scholars (Freeman, Sweet, Cook) prefer to use the possibly ambiguous term *Old English* or *Oldest English* rather than *Anglo-Saxon*. Differs from later periods of English by reason of a relatively full inflectional system and of practically a unilingual vocabulary.

2. Four main dialects: (a) *Kentish*—spoken in the counties of Kent and the major part of Surrey (Jutes); (b) *West Saxon*—spoken in the rest of the territory south of the Thames (Saxons); (c) *Mercian* or *Midland*—spoken in the region between the Thames and the Humber (southern Angles); and (d) *Northumbrian*—spoken between the Humber in England and the Firth of Forth in Scotland (remaining Angles). While the surviving literature is almost all in West Saxon, the important dialect for to-day is the Mercian, from which more of modern English is derived.

#### C. Religion of the Anglo-Saxons: Polytheism

1. Chief gods included Woden, Thor, Loki, Tiw (or Tiu). Memory of some gods preserved in the days of the week; *e. g.*, Tuesday (Tiw's or Tiu's day), Wednesday (Woden's day), Thursday (Thor's day), Saturday (Saturn's day).

2. Even the gods were subject to the decrees of the dread goddess Wyrd, or Fate. The "Wierd Sisters" of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* derive from the Wyrd, by whom the thread of destiny is spun.

#### D. Advent of Christianity

1. Christianity, introduced by the Roman Occupation, had been practically wiped out by the Anglo-Saxons; but not before converted Celts had carried the Creed to Ireland (St. Patrick, *c.* 432—461) and to Scotland. Christian missionaries again reached England, this time from two directions. From Ireland came Aidan, who converted the North Anglians to a Celtic form of Christianity, with the seat of his episcopate at the island-promontory of Lindisfarne; and from Rome, sent by Pope Gregory the Great, came Augustine (597), who converted Kent, with the center at Canterbury.

2. Celtic and Roman churches differed on certain matters—*e. g.*, the form and shape of the tonsure, and the time of the celebration of Easter. Finally, at the Synod of Whitby (664), King Oswy gave his decision in favor of the Roman party. For the next nine centuries England submitted to papal domination.<sup>1</sup>

3. The re-introduction of Christianity exerted an important influence upon literature; *e. g.*, it not only contributed to the language many ecclesiastical terms, such as *alb*, *clerk*, *creed*, *martyr*, *verse*, but also stimulated contact with a richer culture and provided haven for literary composition as well as for the copying of manuscripts.

<sup>1</sup> For some time after the Council of Whitby, however, Celtic Christianity not only survived, but was in the ascendant. See Meissner, J. L. G., *The Celtic Church in England* (1929).



**E. Anglo-Saxon Influence upon English Literature**

1. Made important contributions to the language. Vocabulary pertains to the common feelings and sights, to the simple modes and elementary arts of life, and to that which is essential to the construction of an English sentence—*e. g., man, sun, land, red, white, gold, silver; cat, horse, cow, sheep; go, eat, bark, bleat, love, hate, fear*; the verb “to be” in all its parts; and pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and articles.

2. Made many contributions to the literature. See subsequent pages.

## CHAPTER I

### THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD TO A. D. 1066

#### ANGLO-SAXON CHARACTERISTICS

1. Stern, barbarous life. Subjected by nature to rude turmoil.
2. Mixtures of savagery, sentiment, and nobility.
3. Religious feeling, its philosophy being instinct with fatalism.
4. Responsiveness to Nature. Particularly did love of the sea inspire their poetry: the sea is the *water-street*, the *swan-road*, the *whale-path*; the ship, the *foamy-necked floater*, the *wave-skimmer*, the *sea-stallion*.

5. Common sense, power of endurance, and seriousness of thought characterize the Anglo-Saxons, as against the elfish mockery, ironic introspection, emotional temperament, bold imagination, sensitive nature, rainbow-like fancy, and violent but mercurial feelings of the Celts. These two racial strains imbue Anglo-Saxon literature. (The third racial strain—the Norman—came later, contributing to the English people and their literature an easy suppleness and prismatic wit. See p. 22 ff.)

#### ANGLO-SAXON IDEALS

1. Love of glory is the ruling motive of every noble life.
2. Allegiance to lord or king is the social virtue most extolled.
3. Reverence for womanhood. Higher than was usual even among more enlightened peoples.
4. Love of personal freedom. Did not conflict with the fidelity, even unto death, of thane to lord.
5. Open-handed hospitality of lord to thane.
6. Honoring of truth.
7. Repression of sentiment.

#### I. THE AGE OF BEOWULF AND THE BEGINNINGS (to 828)

##### General View of the Literature

The Age of Beowulf and the Beginnings, embracing the so-designated Bookless Age (to 597, when St. Augustine brought Christianity to the Anglo-Saxons) and the Age of Poetry in the North (to 828,