

A short
history of
england

CONTENTS

PAGE

CHAPTER I. THE GEOGRAPHY OF ENGLAND 1

The British Isles. The Coasts and Rivers of England. Surface and Climate. Forests and Swamps. Natural Products.

CHAPTER II. PREHISTORIC AND CELTIC BRITAIN 12

Prehistoric Races. Cæsar's Invasion and Description of Britain. The Celtic Races.

CHAPTER III. ROMAN BRITAIN 20

The Roman Conquest. Romanizing of the Province. Growth of Roman Towns in Britain. Roman Building. Rural Life. Roads and Industries. Language and Religion. Decay of Roman Britain. Summary of the Roman Period.

CHAPTER IV. EARLY SAXON ENGLAND (400-830) 36

Settlements of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The Early Kingdoms. The New Race, Language, Religion, and Government. Barbarism. The Mission of Augustine. The Conversion of Northumbria and the Scottish Missions. The Synod of Whitby. Organization of the Christian Church in England. Revival of Civilization. Internal Strife of the Kingdoms. Northumbria and Mercia. West-Saxon Overlordship. Summary of the Early Saxon Period.

CHAPTER V. LATER SAXON ENGLAND (830-975) 59

The Incursions of the Danes. Formation of the Danelaw. The Danes as Traders. King Alfred and his Reforms. Alfred's Interests and Character. Closer Union of England. Winning Back of the Danelaw. Rural Life in England in the Tenth Century. Town Life in the Tenth Century. Literature and Learning in the Tenth Century. Dunstan. Political Organization. Classes and Ranks. Summary of the Late Saxon Period.

CHAPTER VI. THE DANISH AND THE NORMAN CONQUESTS
(975-1071) 85

Renewed Invasion of the Danes. Danegeld. Reign of Cnut. Connection of England with Normandy. The Reign of Edward the Confessor. Duke William and Earl Harold. Invasion by William. The Battle of Hastings or Senlac. The Conquest of England. Summary of the Period of Conquest.

CHAPTER VII. ENGLAND UNDER THE NORMANS (1066-1154) 102

The Norman Aristocracy. Military Services. Bishops and Abbots. The Common People. The Norman French Language. Reign of William I. William and the Papacy. Old and New Customs under the Normans. Domesday Book. William II. Lanfranc and Anselm. Henry I. Conflicts with the Church and the Barons. Reforms in Government. The Succession. King Stephen. The Mediæval Castle. Feudalism. Succession of Henry of Anjou. Literature of the Norman Period. Architecture and Building. Summary of the Norman Period.

CHAPTER VIII. THE FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONAL UNITY
(1154-1216) 145

Accession and Character of Henry II. Henry's Dominions. Lack of Unity in England. Restoration of Order. The Jury System. The Common Law. The Assize of Arms. Feudal Taxation. The Church. Thomas Becket. New Revolt of the Baronage. Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. The Literary Revival under Henry II. Richard I and the Crusades. King John. Loss of the Continental Provinces. Struggle with the Church. The Great Charter. Summary of the Period from 1154 to 1216.

CHAPTER IX. THE FORMATION OF A UNITED ENGLISH
NATION (1216-1337) 186

Accession of Henry III. Architecture. The Universities. Writers. The Scriptorium of a Monastery. The Friars. The Towns in the Thirteenth Century. The Gilds. Fairs. Country Villages. Serfs and Freeman. Written Records. Reign of Henry III. Papal Representatives in England. Italian Holders of English Church Positions. Growth of the Power of the Great Council. Simon of Montfort and the Provisions of Oxford. Accession of Edward I. Parliament. Statutes. The Confirmation of the Charters. The Jews. The Conquest of Wales. The Conquest of Scotland. Edward II. The Minority of Edward III. Summary of the Period from 1216 to 1337.

CHAPTER X. THE FIRST HALF OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR (1338-1399)	230
---	-----

Outbreak of the Hundred Years' War. The Battles of Sluys and Crécy. The English Long-bow. The Organization of the English Army. The Capture of Calais. The Black Prince. Knighthood. The Battle of Poitiers. Peace of Bretigny. Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire. The Black Death. The Statutes of Laborers. Improvement in the Position of Villeins. Renewal of the Long War. Parliamentary Agitation. The Poll Taxes. The Peasants' Insurrection of 1381. Wycliffe and the Lollards. Increasing Use of the English Language. *Piers Plowman*. Chaucer. Reign of Richard II. Summary of the Period from 1338 to 1399.

CHAPTER XI. THE HOUSES OF LANCASTER AND YORK (1399-1485)	264
--	-----

Reign of Henry IV. Rebellion of Owen Glendower. Joan of Arc. Wars of the Roses. Edward IV. Towns in the Fifteenth Century. Foreigners in England. Richard III and Henry VII. Summary of the Period from 1399 to 1485.

CHAPTER XII. THE EARLY TUDOR PERIOD (1485-1558)	278
---	-----

Henry VII. Court of Star Chamber. Strong Monarchy. The Merchant Adventurers. The New World. The New Learning and the Invention of Printing. Henry VIII. Wolsey, Foreign Wars, and the Amicable Loan. The Divorce Question and the Fall of Wolsey. Submission of the Clergy. Foundations of the Reformation. The Reformation Statutes. The Dissolution of the Monasteries. Destruction of Relics and Shrines. Execution of More and Fisher. Pilgrimage of Grace. Ireland. Stages of the Reformation. The King's Marriages. Succession to the Crown. The Protectorate. The Completion of the Reformation. The Dissolution of the Chantries. Schools. Inclosures. Fall of Somerset. The Debasement of the Coinage. Close of the Reign of Edward VI. The Plot for the Succession of Lady Jane Grey. Queen Mary and the Catholic Reaction. The Spanish Marriage. Loss of Calais. The Restoration of the Papal Control. Mary's Declining Health and Happiness. Summary of the Period from 1485 to 1558.

CHAPTER XIII. THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH (1558-1603) . 330

The New Queen. The Religious Settlement. The Catholics and the Puritans. The Political Settlement. The Social Settlement. Restoration of the Coinage. The Statute of Apprentices. Pauperism. Elizabeth's Court. Mary Stuart. The Reformation in Scotland. Mary and Elizabeth. The Murder of Darnley. Expulsion of Mary from Scotland. Elizabeth's Marriage Plans. Increase of Puritanism. The Counter Reformation and the Jesuits. Political Danger from the Catholics. England and the Continent. The Parties which favored Elizabeth. Industrial and Commercial Growth. Attempted Settlements in America. The Search for a Northwest Passage. Hawkins's Voyages. Francis Drake. The Channel Freebooters. Babington's Plot. Trial and Execution of Mary Queen of Scots. The Spanish Armada. The Successful Period of Elizabeth's Reign. The Elizabethan Poor Law. Increasing Wealth of England. Dress, Eating, and Building. Royal Progresses. Elizabethan Literature. Shakespeare and the Elizabethan Drama. The Close of the Reign. Summary of the Period of Elizabeth.

CHAPTER XIV. THE PERSONAL MONARCHY OF THE EARLY STUARTS (1603-1640) 383

James I. The Established Church and the Puritans. The Royalist and Parliamentary Ideal of Government. The Hampton Court Conference. The New Version of the Scriptures. The Gunpowder Plot. The Proposed Union of the Two Kingdoms. The Spanish and French Marriage Negotiations. The King's Favorites, Somerset and Buckingham. Raleigh. Raleigh's Last Expedition and Death. Settlements in America. The Pilgrim Fathers and the Puritans. The East India and Other Companies. Discord between the King and the Nation. Discord between the King and Parliament. Close of the Reign of James I. Charles I. Wars with Spain and France. Charles and Parliament. The Petition of Right. Disputes on Religion and Taxation. Personal Government of Charles. Punishment by Star Chamber and High Commission. The Metropolitan Visitation. The Declaration of Sports. Distrainment of Knighthood, Monopolies, and the Forests. Ship Money. The Earl of Strafford the Principal Minister. Summary of the Period from 1603 to 1640.

CHAPTER XV. THE GREAT REBELLION AND THE COMMON-WEALTH (1640-1660) 431

The Scottish Rebellion. The Short Parliament. The Long Parliament. Execution of Strafford. Constitutional Reform. The Grand Remonstrance. The Religious Question. The Irish Rebellion. Attempted Seizure of the Five Members. The Militia. The Civil War. The Solemn League and Covenant. Oliver Cromwell. Presbyterians and Independents. The New Model Army. Defeat of the King at Naseby. Negotiations with the King. The Second Civil War. Pride's Purge. The Trial and Execution of the King. The Commonwealth. Conquest of Ireland and Scotland. The Navigation Acts and the Dutch War. Expulsion of the Long Parliament by Cromwell. The Little Parliament. The Protectorate. Summary of the Period from 1640 to 1660.

CHAPTER XVI. THE RESTORATION AND THE REVOLUTION OF 1688 (1660-1689) 466

The Declaration of Breda. The Action of Parliament. The Dissenters. The Declarations of Indulgence. Titus Oates and the Popish Plot. The Exclusion Bills and the Succession to the Crown. Dread of Civil War. Execution of Russell and Sidney. The Triple Alliance. Subserviency of Charles II to France. Third War with the Dutch. Charles and his Ministers. Clarendon and the Cabal. Recognition of the Power of Parliament. Growth of Political Parties. The Attack on the Charters. Creation of the Standing Army. Milton. Bunyan. The Habeas Corpus Act. The Plague and the Great Fire. Architecture and Painting. Science. Chocolate, Coffee, and Tea. Newspapers. Death of Charles II. Accession of James II. Invasion of the Duke of Monmouth. The Bloody Assizes. Use of the Dispensing Power. The Two Declarations of Indulgence. Petition of the Seven Bishops. Birth of a Prince. Invasion of William of Orange. William and Mary elected to the Throne. The Revolution of 1688. The Bill of Rights. Annual Taxes and the Mutiny Act. The Toleration Act. Liberty of the Press. Summary of the Period from 1660 to 1689.

CHAPTER XVII. FOUNDATION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (1689-1763) 516

Battle of the Boyne. Reconquest of Ireland. Massacre of Glencoe. England and France. Personal and Political Position

of William. Party Government. The Cabinet. The National Debt and the Bank. The Act of Settlement. War of the Spanish Succession. The Grand Alliance. Marlborough. The Great Victories of the Wars. The Treaty of Utrecht. English Naval Supremacy. Union with Scotland. Ireland in the Eighteenth Century. Political Parties under Queen Anne. Accession of George I. Jacobite Rising of the Earl of Mar. The South Sea Bubble. Ministry of Walpole. Rising of the Young Pretender. Rise of the Methodists. The Evangelical Clergy. William Pitt and the Young Patriot Party. War with Spain. War of the Austrian Succession. Colonization of Nova Scotia. Reform of the Calendar. French and English in America. India and Clive. The Peace of Paris. Summary of the Period from 1689 to 1763.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION (1763-1815) 576

George III. The New Ministry. The Industrial Revolution. Roads and Canals. Coal and Iron. Inclosures. John Wilkes. The Junius Letters. Grievances in America. The Stamp Act. American and English Ideas of Representation. The Declaration of Independence. Pitt, Burke, and Fox. The American War. Home Rule in Ireland. Close of Personal Rule of George III. William Pitt and the New Tory Party. Defects of the Representation. The Lord George Gordon Riots. The Reform of Parliament. The French Revolution. War between England and France. Close of Revolutionary Agitation in England. The Irish Revolution and the Union. Resignation of Pitt. Abolition of the Slave Trade. Renewal of War with France. War of 1812 with the United States. Close of the Wars of Napoleon. Summary of the Period from 1763 to 1815.

CHAPTER XIX. THE PERIOD OF REFORM (1815-1852) . . . 617

The Early Years of the Peace. The Manchester Massacre. George Canning and Moderate Toryism. Reform of the Penal Code. Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Catholic Emancipation. Opposition to the Reform of Parliament. The Reform Bill of 1832. Abolition of Slavery in the Colonies. The Factory Act of 1833. Reform of the Poor Law. Municipal Corporations Reform Act. Cheap Postage. Liberals and Conservatives. Steamboats, Railroads, and Telegraphs. Trade Unions. Chartism. Affairs of Ireland. The Corn Law League. Introduction of Free Trade. Victoria. The Crystal Palace. Summary of the Period from 1815 to 1852.

CHAPTER XX. THE GROWTH OF DEMOCRACY (1852-1904) 646

The Crimean War. The Sepoy Rebellion. Petty Wars. The Civil War in America. Lord Palmerston. Gladstone and Parliamentary Reform. Disraeli and the Reform Bill of 1867. Reform Administration of Gladstone. Imperial Policy. Reform Bill of 1884-1885. Reforms in Local Government. Irish Home Rule. British Colonies and Dependencies. Canada. Australia and New Zealand. South Africa. The Boer War. Imperial Federation. Summary of the Period from 1852 to 1904.

CHAPTER XXI. SOCIAL CHANGES AND THE GREAT WAR 680

The Conservative-Liberal Unionist Party. The Liberal Party and its Allies. Workmen's Compensation. Trade Union Legislation. Old Age Pensions. Labor Exchanges. Minimum Wages. National Insurance. Factory Legislation. New Taxes. Reform of the House of Lords. The Parliament Bill. Payment of Members. Reform of Parliament. Women's Suffrage. Militancy. Labor Unrest. Great Strikes of 1911-1912. New Unionism. Socialism. Syndicalism. Disestablishment of the Welsh Church. Irish Home Rule. Accession of George V. Imperial Federation. Army and Navy Extension. The Triple Entente. The Japanese Alliance. The Great War. The Western Front. Other Fields of War. Maritime and Aërial Warfare. Entrance of New Belligerents. Internal Changes Due to the War. Ireland. Defeat of Germany and her Allies. Treaty of Versailles. Reform Bill of 1918. Changes in Industrial Life. Summary of the Period from 1905 to 1919.

TABLE OF ENGLISH KINGS 749

INDEX i

A SHORT HISTORY OF ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE GEOGRAPHY OF ENGLAND

1. **The British Isles.** — The British Isles are cut off from the rest of Europe by the waters of the English Channel and the North Sea, and their people have therefore lived a life much apart from that of the other nations of Europe. The sea forms their natural frontier and has given as much independence to their history as it has detachment to their geographical position. Although in early times there were frequent invasions from the continent, as time has gone on and national unity been more completely attained, the island home of the English people has proved to be especially easy to defend. At several critical times good fortune has transformed the narrow seas¹ into a stormy and impassable barrier, and saved the island from conquest or from a difficult struggle on its own soil.

In the few instances in which successful invasions and settlements have taken place they have been more gradual in their progress than they would have been if the invaders had come by land. The country has had time to absorb Saxon, Dane, and

¹ "The narrow seas," or "the British seas," is an expression applied to the English Channel and that part of the North Sea which lies between England and Holland. England formerly claimed to have control over these waters.

Norman, and transform them into its own island race. The same is true of more peaceful influences. Many customs lying in the realms of language, law, trade, agriculture, and manufactures have been borrowed or learned by the English from foreigners. But they have received all these things slowly and gradually, and have thus assimilated them to their own national customs.

Yet this isolation of England and its detachment from the continent must not be exaggerated. The width of the intervening waters is not great. The Strait of Dover where it is narrowest is but twenty-one miles wide; the Channel but one hundred and twenty and the North Sea but three hundred miles where they are broadest. From a point about half way along the southern coast of England to another more than one third of the way along the eastern coast there is a stretch in which the British and the continental shores are so near to one another that in all but the most unfavorable weather a few hours' sailing will bring a boat from one coast to the other.

From a geological point of view it is only in recent ages that the British Isles have been separated by water from the continent of Europe. The ancient edge of the continent lay far to the westward of the present coast, and the seas around Great Britain and Ireland are comparatively shallow waters which have in a late geological period overspread the lower-lying lands. The earliest inhabitants of Britain came in all probability by land, not by water. It is scarcely more than an accident that the coasts of France, Belgium, and Holland are separated from those of England by a shallow sea rather than by a level plain. Both coasts are comparatively low and provided with numerous harbors. Hence the countries on the two sides of the narrow seas have always been easily accessible to one another. They are natural neighbors, much alike in the character of their coast, surface, productions, and even population.

There has been much besides these geographical features through all the later centuries of history to bring about intercourse between

England and the mainland. Scarcely any great influence that affected the continental countries failed to make at least some impression on England. As its history is studied it will be found that along with its distinctiveness and marked national peculiarities it has had much in common with the other countries of Europe and has been constantly influenced by them.

Within the group of the British Isles the geographical formation tends to separate Scotland, Ireland, and Wales from England and from one another. The long, narrow shape of the principal island made union of all its inhabitants into one nation difficult. The English and Scotch at its two ends naturally grew up into two separate peoples, and the mountains of Wales long kept the race which inhabited that region separate. The Irish Sea and St. George's Channel separated Ireland and its inhabitants from all of these.

Of these four principal divisions of the islands England is marked out by nature to be the most important. Its territory is a continuous, unbroken stretch, filling far the largest part of the larger island; it is provided with a greater variety of natural resources; and it is nearer to the continent of Europe. England has therefore always been in advance of the other divisions of the British Isles, and their history has been largely dependent on hers.

In ancient times and the middle ages the situation of England was on the distant verge of the world as it was then known. Since the discovery of America and of sea routes around the world, her position has been much more central and advantageous. In early times, therefore, England was a comparatively inconspicuous country in Europe; in modern times she has played a vastly more important part. Her position as an island and her location in the far northwest of Europe have given her a particularly favorable opportunity to develop commerce and to found a colonial empire.

Yet England is a small country. Its area, with Wales, is 58,320 square miles,—about equal to Scotland and Ireland.

together, somewhat larger than the state of Pennsylvania, and almost exactly the same as the state of Michigan. It is 365 miles in length from north to south, and 280 miles in its greatest breadth from east to west.

2. **The Coasts and Rivers of England.** — That part of the coast of England which lies nearest to the continent is made conspicuous by the long line of white chalk cliffs that face the sea. They rise two or three hundred feet above the narrow strip of stony strand at the edge of the water, and extend for many miles along the southeastern and southern coast. These white cliffs are visible in clear weather from the opposite shore where the Channel is narrowest, and from far out at sea where the waters are wider. They have served as a landmark to friend and foe in all ages, and the old poetic name of Albion¹ is said to be due to the white front which Britain turns toward the continent.

Although much of the coast is cliff-bound, there are at least equal stretches of low-lying shore, especially on the eastern coast. Both the cliffs and the low shores are cut by many bays and harbors. Most of these are the mouths of rivers which have been converted into estuaries by the gradual sinking of the coast which has been in progress for long ages.² This subsidence has allowed the sea to flow part way up the courses of the rivers, filling with its waters the lower reaches of their valleys.³ Harbors are therefore as numerous as the rivers; there is in fact no considerable stretch on the whole coast of England without its harbor. Especially is

¹ From Latin *albus*, white. Shakespeare describes England as

that pale, that white-faced shore,
Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides
And coops from other lands her islanders.

King John, Act II, sc. 1.

² Even within the last few centuries several hundred square miles of territory, including the sites of some thirty-five towns and villages, have gradually crumbled and slipped into the sea or been submerged by the advancing tides.

³ See illustration of a small harbor on p. 11.

this true of the southern and eastern coasts, although even on the more rugged western seaboard the deep and broad mouths of the Severn and the Mersey make possible such fine harbors as those of Bristol and Liverpool.

The rivers not only form harbors at their mouths but give access by water far into the interior of the country. At least they did so in earlier times when vessels were small. Of several of them the lower courses are navigable even by the larger vessels of the present day. The Thames, the Severn, and the Trent are long rivers draining the very center of the country. With their tributaries and with the smaller rivers, they make a complete network of water courses. This abundance of streams has been used in modern times to feed a canal system intersecting the country in all directions. The more rapid streams also provide water power.

3. Surface. — The cliffs which line so much of the coast give a false impression of the land that lies behind them. Much the greater part of England is a level or but slightly hilly country. It may be divided, as far as its surface is concerned, into three regions, — the southeast, the center, and the north and west. The first of these, covering almost two thirds of England, is undulating though intersected by several ranges of soft rounded chalk hills about five hundred or six hundred feet high. This was the earliest part of Britain to be inhabited by man, and until the last two centuries continued to be by far the most populous, wealthy, and influential. The level and slightly rolling lands which make up the greater part of it are fertile and in the main devoted to agriculture. Its open, treeless hills, downs or wolds, covered with soft, springy turf, are generally utilized for sheep pasture.

If a traveler passes from this region of smooth surfaces, gentle slopes, and moderate ridges northward or westward, he descends into the midlands or "great central plain" of England. This plain extends from the Bristol Channel northward to Liverpool and northeastward through the vale of York to the coast at Durham, broken only here and there by a few groups of rugged hills. In

early times it was thinly populated and backward compared with the region already described. It is now, except the region surrounding London, the richest, most active, and vastly the most populous part of England. Around its edges lie the coal fields; in it are the great manufacturing towns; it includes Liverpool and other great seaports, and contains stretches of country famous for their grazing and dairy products. Its rivers have been connected by canals; it is traversed in all directions by railroads and tunneled by mines; and in many parts its large towns almost touch one another. A district lying west of Birmingham in this region is known as the "black country." It lies upon a coal field, and is dotted with iron furnaces and manufacturing establishments, overspread with cinder heaps, blackened by smoke, and almost stripped of its vegetation by the fumes and soot. It is one great workshop, where labor goes on day and night, above ground and below. Other sections are devoted to equally active but less smoky industries, and not far away rich dairying districts form a peaceful contrast to the manufacturing towns.

Beyond this central plain rise the mountainous districts, — the high moors of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall in the southwest; Wales in the west; the Lake District in the northwest; and the Pennine Chain, rising from the midlands and extending north into Scotland. The population of the moors and mountain valleys is necessarily sparse and their industries are simple. But on the edge of the mountain ranges where they drop to the plain or the shore, the greater number of the mines of tin, copper, and lead lie, and here there are several large cities and a thicker population.

4. Climate. — The aspect of England compared with the continental countries is remarkably green. It is made so by the rich growth of grass and other herbage, and by the verdure and undergrowth of the woods. This luxuriance of growth is due to two causes, — the frequent rains and fogs and the mild climate.

There is often a superabundance of wet weather, especially in the west; a drought is very unusual. The weather is seldom very hot in summer or very cold in winter, although England is in the same latitude as Labrador in America and as central Russia on the continent of Europe. Plowing can be done in much of England as early as February and as late as November. These two conditions, the large rainfall and the mild and equable climate, are due to the position of the British Isles. They lie in the path of a current of southwest winds which blow more than half the days of the year. These winds give the surface waters of the ocean a set toward the northeast, and bring the warmer waters of southern latitudes to the western and southern shores of Great Britain and Ireland. The southwest winds also carry this warmth and the moisture of the ocean far inland, moderating the cold of winter and causing frequent rains and fogs.¹

The reputation of England as a "foggy isle" is, however, partly due to the peculiar climate of London, which is situated in the valley of the Thames and particularly subject to fogs. Foreigners who spend most of their time there get a false idea of the whole country. The downs and uplands are often bathed in clear sunshine and blown over by crisp breezes while the river valleys are covered with a mantle of fog. On the moors and mountains the weather is often severe, notwithstanding the moderating influences just mentioned; and all over the island there are occasional though seldom prolonged periods of snow and freezing in winter. The weather is changeable from day to day, and the coasts are liable to sudden and violent storms.

5. Forests and Swamps. — In primeval times a large part of the island was covered with thick forests. They stretched dark and impenetrable over much of the great central plain; and even

¹The warmer waters which bathe the shores of the British Isles are sometimes described as an extension of the Gulf Stream; but this is a mistake. The Gulf Stream disappears by the time it reaches the middle of the Atlantic.

in the more open eastern rolling country many of the upland regions and most of the river valleys were wooded. Whole sections of the country were separated from the rest by these forests. The largest forest in England covered the district known as the Weald, and stretched from Kent almost one third of the way across the island to the westward. The word "Kent," as well as the syllable "Win" in Winchester, is a Celtic word meaning an opening in the forest. Sherwood, where Robin Hood and his merry men hunted the deer; Arden, where Rosalind walked; and

many other forests of later times were only surviving fragments of these wild, primitive woodlands.



An Old Oak still standing in Sherwood Forest

Great swamps filled the lower courses of many of the rivers. The "Fens" formed a broad, marshy expanse of several hundred square miles in the east of England. They were scarcely above the level of

the sea, and formed a wilderness practically impassable and uninhabitable, except here and there where low hills of gravelly soil rose above the water. This region and several similar morasses were even wilder and more impenetrable than the forests.

Thus in early times but a small part of the land was open to habitation. Strips along the seacoast, steep hillsides bordering the river courses, bare moors and hilltops, occasional open stretches of the rolling country, formed the only dwelling places for early men. Even these open districts were divided from one another, hemmed in and bounded by the vast forests and swamps. The existence of the widespreading forests and fens exercised a deep influence on the early history of the country, and affected it strongly even in later times. The clearing and draining of the



Forests and Swamps of Early England