



KINGS AND THINGS

H. E. MARSHALL

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by

HENRIETTA E. MARSHALL





Henry VI. in his Cradle.

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DEDICATED TO

PAMELA

ROBIN

BRIAN AND ROGER

NATALIE

JANET AND ANDREW

MARTIN AND CAROLINE

JOHN

VENETIA

SIMON

JENNIFER

CLAUDINE, ROSEMARY,

JONATHAN AND SUSANNAH

PETER

ALISON AND SANDY

The sons and daughters of the children for whom
Our Island Story was written.

PREFACE

THESE stories of English history have been written in the hope that Mothers and Nannies and other great Potentates of Nursery Land will read them to their obedient Subjects in the Story Hour which so often precedes the tragic necessity of “going to bed.” In such an hour small people are often beguiled with fairy-tales, with myths and legends. But the most interesting story of all—the story of their own Country—is not infrequently neglected. It is so neglected because it is thought to be a story too frightening or too difficult for the very young person’s understanding.

In this Outline of English history, therefore, I have not dwelt on horror or on the glory of bloodshed. But ours is a rough story, and when such matters could not altogether be avoided they have been passed over as lightly as possible.

The style I may add is copied largely from that of some very young friends who have been in the habit of telling me stories. I hope that it will appeal to others of a like age.

There are no dates throughout the text. A few are given at the end of the book as a slight guide to the “Grown Ups” in the event of uncomfortable questions being asked.

H. E. MARSHALL.

Chapter I

ROMAN CONQUERINGS

THE VER and ever so long ago there was a Very Important King kind of person called Julius. He lived in Rome and ruled all the Romans. He was a very Conquering kind of person too. So he began to conquer all the people he knew, for their own good. Because he said: “The Romans know far more than anyone else and are far more clever than the others, so it will do them good to be conquered and taught things. Besides when we have conquered them we can make them work for Us and we can take all their gold and things, so we will have a lot more money and fun too.” So Julius went out Conquering.

Now one day when he was Conquering he heard of a little Island called Britain across the Sea and he thought he would go and conquer it. But the Romans were not fond of going on the Sea, so someone said: “Do you think it is Worth While? The people are just wild savages.”

“Yes,” said someone else, “they are wild savages, but they have lots of gold and pearls and things just lying round in heaps. And as they can’t really know anything about fight-

ing, it would be quite easy to conquer them and get lots of Treasure.

“So Julius said: “Well let’s go and Find Out.” Then one day the Britons saw lots and lots of boats come rowing toward the shore, and they didn’t like the look of them.

“Here are a lot of Conquering People coming to fight us,” they said; “let’s get ready.”

So they hung their best gold chains round their necks and put on their best fur coats (they didn’t have many cloth clothes in those days), and got out their War Carriages which had wheels all stuck round with Sharp Knives ready to cut the Foe to pieces.

So when Julius landed he got the kind of Welcome he didn’t expect. The Britons fought like anything and lots of people got killed.

Julius didn’t like it much, and after a bit he sailed away.

But a Roman does not like to Give Up, and so next year Julius came back again with lots more ships and lots more men, for he had learned his Lesson. And that was: That Britons Are Not Easy To Beat.

There were lots and lots of Battles and Fightings and goings on. Then Julius took some prisoners and went away. He can’t have thought it Worth While because he didn’t come back any more.

For about a Hundred Years after this the Britons were left in Peace. So they had plenty of time for fighting battles among themselves. Then another Important King kind of person thought he would do some more Conquering in Britain. His name was Claudius. There was a lot of fighting, and Claudius found the Britons just as Hard to Beat as Julius had done. One of the Hardest-to-Beat was a great Prince called Caractacus. He was a very Brave Man and perhaps he wouldn’t have been

beaten at all. Only, he was Betrayed by a Friend, so it was easy for Claudius to take him and his wife and children prisoners and carry them off to Rome.

When he got home, to make people believe that he had conquered Britain (he had conquered only a little bit of it), Claudius decided to have a Grand Show, like a Lord Mayor's Show, which he called a Triumph. And he made Caractacus walk in the Procession with handcuffs on his wrists and clanking iron chains round his ankles.

When the Show was over Claudius sent for Caractacus and said: "Now you see what you get for fighting against me. I've conquered you and you are my slave."

But Caractacus answered as Bold as anything: "You haven't conquered me. You had me Betrayed and I'm not your slave, for Britons Never, Never Will Be Slaves. You think you are a Very Important Person. But I was an Important Person too in my Own Country until you came conquering and getting me betrayed. I'm better than you. *You* were just Conquering but I was fighting for My Own Land. Kill me if you like; you can't make me a slave."

Instead of getting into a Towering Rage Claudius was quite pleasant. Instead of saying "Off with his head," he said: "Off with those iron chains." And Caractacus was once more a Free Man. But whether he got back to his dear Britain or not I don't know. I rather suspect that he died of a Broken Heart in a Foreign Land.

As well as Brave Men who fought against the Romans there were Brave Women too. And one of the Bravest was Queen Boadicea. She gathered her people together and spoke to them in such Proud, Brave Words that they became as bold as Lions and eager to fight for their Queen and Country. So they fought and fought and very nearly beat the Romans.

But of course they couldn't quite. For there were far more Romans, and their swords were far sharper, and they had been taught how to fight, while the Britons were just Brave Men fighting to keep their Own Country Free. So at last there was a great Big Fight when hundreds and hundreds of Britons were killed. And when only about the Last Man was left standing Boadicea was very sad. "But I won't walk through the streets of Rome with Clanking Chains on my hands and feet," she said. So she took a cup and filled it up with Poison and drank it. And when the Roman soldiers burst into her tent they found the Lovely Lady lying dead.

But there seemed No End of Romans and they kept coming and coming and Conquering and Conquering until they had conquered a good bit of the Island. Then they built grand houses and did all the Ruling and were the Most Important Persons.

That went on for hundreds of years. Then the Romans began to have a lot of Bothers at Home. So they said: "Well, with all these Bothers at Home it isn't Worth While staying here trying to rule these Savages. They won't be obedient. They are more trouble than they are worth. We have to have such a lot of soldiers here to keep them in order and we need all our soldiers at Home. We had much better go Home and take all our soldiers with us." And off they went.

The Britons were jolly glad to see the last of them. All the same the Romans had Taught them a lot of things—how to make good roads, and build stone houses, and cut their Hair and take Baths, and learn Latin, and a lot of other things. But the Britons weren't a bit grateful. It just seemed Hard Lines to have to be taught as well as conquered. So they said Good Riddance of Bad Rubbish.

Chapter II

SAXON CONQUERINGS

THE Britons sang with Joy when the Romans went, but they soon changed their Tune.

There were terrible Wild Men called Picts and Scots who lived in the North parts of the Island. The Romans had built a great, big Wall to keep them out. But now that there were no Romans to guard the Wall, these Picts and Scots came climbing over it like anything, stealing things and smashing everything they could lay hands on.

They were such a Bother that the Britons actually sent a messenger to the Romans and asked them to come back again. But the Romans said: "No, thank you. We have quite enough Botherers at Home. You must just look after yourselves now."

Then all the most Important People among the Britons began quarrelling. Ever so many of them wanted to be King. First one would say: "Now I'm King. You've got to obey me." Then another would say: "No, you're not. I'm King. You must obey me." There would be ever so many Kings at one time and things got into a jolly fine Mess.

At last one of them got to be a bit more Important than

the others. So he said: "We can't have all these Goings-On. We can't have these Picts and Scots raging round how they like. The Romans won't help us so let's get someone else. There are some people called Saxons who live across the sea. I'm told that they are lawfully good at fighting. Let's send and ask them to give us a hand. I'm sure they will if we say we'll pay them well."

And all the other Important People said: "Yes, let's."

So they asked the Saxons to come, and the Saxons said: "Thank you very much. We'd like nothing better." Then two of their Important People gathered their soldiers together and sailed over to Britain. One of these Important People was called Hengist and the other was called Horsa, and both their names mean Horse, so I expect they were as strong as horses.

They gave the Picts and Scots a good Licking, and the Britons paid them and said: "Thank you very much," and expected them to go Home again.

But Hengist and Horsa didn't go. "This is a jolly fine Country," they said, "let's stay here."

So they said to the King Person who had asked them to come: "Give us a lot of land so that we can build a House on it. We would like to live here."

"Oh, I couldn't do that," said the King Person; "you're not Britons."

"Well give us just a teeny bit, just as much as a leather strap will go round," they said.

"Well," thought the King Person, "there can't be much harm in *that*."

So he said: "Yes, you can have that much."

But he didn't know what cheats Hengist and Horsa were.

They got a big Bull and killed it, and took its skin and cut it round and round into ever such a long strap. And when

it was all stretched out it went round a piece of land large enough to build a big Castle on.

The King Person was very angry when he saw how he had been Taken In. But he couldn't do anything, for Hengist and Horsa were too strong for him. Besides they had sent home and got a lot more Soldiers. And as Hengist meant to live in Britain now, he told his daughter Rowena to come too. Now Rowena was a most Beautiful Lady, and when the King Person saw her he thought that she was the most beautiful Lady he had ever seen, and he liked her so much that he married her.

“Ha! Ha said Hengist then. “My Daughter is a Queen now and I can make myself a Most Important Person.”

And he did, and Rowena helped him. Because although she was Beautiful she was Bad and she did a lot of Betrayings and Killings.

Then more and more people came from over the sea, Saxons and Angles and Jutes, and they went Rampaging and Conquering all over the Island. At last the poor Britons had hardly any place left where they could be safe, and they had to live in among the mountains and in wild places where the Saxons and Angles and Jutes couldn't get at them easily.

The Saxons, however, didn't find it an Easy Job to conquer the Britons. There were lots and lots of Fightings and Battles all over the place. And there was one special Famous King called Arthur who beat them over and over again and kept them at Bay.

Arthur was fifteen when he began being King. He was as Brave as a Lion and as Gentle as a Lamb. But although he could fight like anything, and thought that people should be Brave, he liked them to have Good Manners too. So he was shocked at the way the most Important People behaved

at table. For in those days, in spite of all the Romans had tried to teach them, the Britons were pretty rough and rude.

“Look, “he said, “you needn’t be rude although you are strong. If you are you will just become Big Bullies and I won’t have Big Bullies in my Army. And you mustn’t be Sneaks either and Tell Tales about each other for I won’t listen to them. And you mustn’t fight with women and girls but be gentle and respect them. And never Tell Lies.”

Then, so that they couldn’t fight about a little thing like getting the Best Place at Table, he made a Big Round Table for all his Best Knights to sit at so that no knight could say he had a Better Place than another.

Arthur was Gentle like that in Peace Time. But in War he was Terrible. When he had girt on his Sword Excalibur, and taken in hand his great Spear Ron, the Heathen Saxons fled before him. For Arthur, like lots of the Britons, was a Christian and the Saxons were Heathens.

But at length Arthur was killed, and all the other British Kings who fought against the Saxons were killed too, and then Britain became England. For the Saxon Conquerings were not like the Roman Conquerings.

The Romans came and conquered people for their Own Good (so they said) and taught them all sorts of Good Things. And they let them live on their own land so long as they were obedient and let themselves be ruled. But the Saxons weren’t clever like the Romans. They couldn’t teach anybody anything except fighting, and the Britons knew how to do that themselves pretty well already. They didn’t want the British always hanging round, and they just killed them or chased them away and took the land for themselves. So when the Saxons had finished their Conquerings the people weren’t Britons any longer but English.

Chapter III

ENGLAND CONQUERED FOR CHRIST

WHEN the Romans first came to Britain they were Pagans and so were the Britons; because Jesus Christ hadn't been Born into the World by then. So of course they couldn't know about Him. It wasn't until years and years and years later that they knew anything about Him.

Then someone came and told them the Wonderful Story and lots and lots of Britons became Christians, and they built Churches and said their Prayers and learned their Catechism. But after a bit an Important Person in Rome began to hate the Christians and wanted to kill them all. And he sent messages to his soldiers in Britain telling them to do it. So the Soldiers began doing it.

One day they were going to kill a poor Old Man because he was a Christian, but he ran away to the House of a kind Gentleman he knew.

"Oh, hide me, hide me!" he cried; "the soldiers are after me and want to kill me."

“What Wickedness have you been up to?” asked the Gentleman, whose name was Alban.

“I haven’t done anything Wrong,” said the poor man. “I’m just a Christian.”

“Oh well,” said Alban, “I never heard that it was a Wicked Thing to be a Christian so I’ll hide you.”

For a long time the Old Man was quite Safe, for the Soldiers never thought of looking for him in the Rich Gentleman’s House.

Alban liked the Poor Man and used to talk to him a lot. And the Poor Man told him all the Wonderful Story about Christ. And Alban liked it so much that one day he said: “I think I’ll be a Christian too. It seems a Good Thing to be.”

Then there was a great knocking at the Gate, and a servant came with a white face and said to him: “Sir, Sir, the soldiers are here. They have come for the Poor Man.”

At that the Poor Man got up and said: “Good-bye, Kind Gentleman, now I must go and die.”

But Alban said: “Oh no, you needn’t. Give me your cloak and take mine. My servant will show you out the back way and you can run away to another Safe Place.”

So they changed cloaks and Alban wrapped himself up in the Poor Man’s one and just sat and waited until the soldiers got in. Of course they thought that Alban was the Poor Man seeing him all wrapped up in an old cloak, and they dragged him off to the Judge. When they got there Alban threw off his cloak, and of course the Judge saw at once that it wasn’t the Poor Christian, but Alban the Rich Gentleman, and he was very angry.

“What do you mean by it?” he asked. “You, a perfectly good Pagan, helping Wicked Christians to run away. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Well now, I’m just going to do some

Sacrifices to the Gods, and to show that you are sorry you'd better do some too."

"Oh no," said Alban, "I couldn't do that."

"And why not, I should like to know?"

"Because," said Alban, "I don't believe in these gods any more. They are nothing but silly bits of wood and stone. I believe now in Jesus Christ, He is my Lord and my God."

Then the Judge got into a Towering Rage. "Did ever you hear such Wickedness " he cried; "you deserve to die. And so you shall. Here, soldiers, take him outside and cut off his Head!"

Then the soldiers took Alban outside and cut off his head. So Alban became the first British Saint and Martyr, and the place where he died is called St. Albans.

When the Romans went away lots and lots of Britons had become Christians. Then the Saxons and Angles and Jutes came, and *they* were all Heathens who knew nothing about Jesus Christ and the True God. So they robbed the Churches and pulled them down and burned them up until the Wonderful Story was forgotten in all England and the Name of Christ unknown. Only in the Mountains and Difficult Places where the Britons had taken Refuge was It remembered.

Then one day a Good Man called Gregory was walking through the Market at Rome when he saw some children put there to be sold for Slaves. For in those times they used to sell people as we do sheep and cows.

These children had fair hair, rosy cheeks, and blue eyes, and Gregory thought he'd never seen such pretty boys.

"Where do those children come from?" he asked.

"From England," said the Man who was selling them; "they are Angles."

"Oh," said Gregory, "they shouldn't be called Angles, but Angels, they are so Pretty."

Then he asked more about them and was told that they were little Heathens and that all the People of England were Heathens too.

“Oh, what a pity,” said Gregory; “I must buy them and teach them to be Good Christians.” So he bought them.

When Gregory had taught the children to be Good Christians they told him lots about England. And Gregory liked it so much that he said: “I must really go to England and teach them to be Good Christians like I have these boys.”

So he asked the Pope: “Can I go to England and teach the People there to be Good Christians?”

And the Pope said: “Yes, you may go.”

But the People at Rome were Awfully Fond of Gregory, and they made such a Fuss that the Pope said: “I think you’d better not go.”

Gregory wanted to go ever so much, but when the Pope told him not he gave it up, because he was always obedient. But he thought about it ever such a lot.

Then one day Gregory being such a Good Man and the people at Rome being so Fond of him they made him Pope.

“Now,” thought Gregory, “as I’m made Pope I can’t ever go to England. I must stay at Rome and look after Things here, but I can send someone else to teach them to be Good Christians.”

So he told a Good Man called Augustine to go and to take a lot of other Good Men with him to help him.

And Augustine started to go. But when he had gone as far as France, people told him such Awful Stories about the Bad, Cruel Angles and Saxons that he got frightened and went back to Rome.

Gregory, however, sent him right back again. “How dare you be such a coward!” he said. “Do as you are told. Never mind if they do kill you.”

So Augustine started off again and this time he got to England.

Now at this time England wasn't all under one King as it is now. The Angles and Saxons and Jutes had chopped it all up into bits and there were about seven Kings all ruling in England at one time, each having his own Little Bit.

The first Kingdom Augustine came to was the Kingdom of Kent. He found that the people weren't half so Fierce and Cruel as he had been told. They were quite kind to him and his men, and didn't seem to want to kill him. So he stopped there for a bit, and baptized the King and made him a Good Christian, and lots of the people too. Then they went on to the other Kingdoms and taught them. And as years and years went on lots and lots more Good Men came to help them. So at last all England belonged to the Church of Christ.

Chapter IV

DANISH CONQUERINGS

AFTER the Angles and Saxons and Jutes had finished all their Conquerings, and got nearly all the south of Britain and changed it into England, and become Good Christians, they thought they'd rest a bit and have some Peace and Quiet. But it just didn't happen like that. For across the Sea there were more fierce Wild Men called Danes. They were all Heathens and just as fierce and wild as the Angles and Saxons had been when they first came Conquering, and before they had learned some Manners and how to Behave Properly.

Just as the Romans had done, these Wild Danes heard that England was a fine Rich Country. So they said: "Come on. Let's go and get some gold and silver and things."

Then they got into their Long Boats and came dashing over the Sea to England. When they got there they just killed some people, stole everything they could lay hands on, set fire to the houses, and dashed away again. They didn't come like the Romans to teach people anything, or like the Saxons to

find New Homes. They came just for the Fun; it was like an Outing or a Weekend Party for them.

Over and over again the Danes came, and more and more of them came. When they wanted things they just came to England and took them. It was just like Going Shopping only they didn't pay. Then some of them said: "What's the good of going backwards and forwards across the Sea? England is a fine Country, let's stay."

So they stayed. They turned some of the English out of their homes and treated them like Dirt beneath their feet and were Very Proud and Haughty.

But the English didn't take it all quietly. "These Danes are a Perfect Nuisance," they said, "we must Do Something." So they got out their swords and things and fought like anything. There were lots and lots of battles and lots and lots of Danes got killed. But it didn't seem to make much difference, for more and more came sailing over the sea.

So it went on for years and years. Ever so many Kings one after the other came to the throne and ruled and died. They all fought against the Danes, but none of them managed to get rid of them altogether.

At last the English got a very clever King called Alfred, and he said to himself: "This has got to Stop. I will not have these Danes coming and Conquering and Plundering."

So he gathered all his men together and fought a great Big Battle. The English fought and fought until there was only about One Man left Standing. And when there's only One Man left Standing you can't go on fighting, so Alfred went away and lived in a Cow-man's cottage till he could Think Things Out. And he said to the Cow-man: "Don't tell anyone who I am, for I don't want the Danes to know till I've Thought Things Out."

The Cow-man was a Faithful Follower, so he didn't even tell his wife that the Friend who had come to stay with him was the King. Of course a King doesn't know anything about Sweeping and Dusting and Helping in the House. Besides Alfred had lots to do Thinking. But the Wife didn't know that and she just thought that Alfred was a Lazy Fellow sitting there all day long doing nothing and making a Lot More Work for her to do. So she grumbled like anything.

One day she was very busy. She had baked some scones and had Lots of other things to do. "Well," she said to herself, "I've only One Pair of Hands and I can't do Everything. Surely this Lazy Fellow could make himself useful for Once." Then out loud she said: "Here, just you look after my scones while I'm gone, and don't let them burn."

"All right," said the King; "I'll look after them."

But as soon as the Wife had gone he forgot all about them and went on with his Thinking. And when the Wife came back her scones were burned to cinders. She was so angry that she boxed his ears and scolded him like anything. She was still scolding when the Cow-man came in. He was shocked at her!

"Hold your tongue, Woman!" he shouted. But she still went on. "Shut up won't you," he cried out at last; "don't you know you're talking to the King!"

The King! Well! That did shut her up.

At last the King had done his Thinking and gathered his Faithful Followers again. Then they fought the Danes like anything, and in a Big Battle Alfred conquered them altogether. Alfred didn't banish all the Danes who had come to Stay. But he made them all live in one place and Behave Properly and not treat the English like Dirt under their Feet. And there was Peace in the Land.

After being a grand Fighter Alfred became a Great Ruler.

He made Good Laws and saw that people Obeyed them. He built schools, he built ships, and kept the Good Peace. He was Great and Good and Never told Lies, so everybody loved him till one day he died.

That was a sad day for England, for as soon as the Danes heard the news they said: "Come on, King Alfred's dead. Let's go and do some more plundering in England."

So it all began over again, and all the English Kings, good ones and bad ones, had to fight them for years and years. But even the Best Kings weren't as good at fighting them as Alfred, and the bold, bad Danes got bolder and badder.

Then the English had a Stupid King called Ethelred the Unready, because he never could make up his mind about anything. He got frightened of the Danes and ran away to France, and things went on getting worse and worse. At length some of the English said: "It's No Use fighting these Danes any longer. We may as well Give In and have Peace." So they went to a Very Clever Dane called Canute and said: "You can be King if you like and we won't fight against you anymore." Then they put a Gold Crown on his head and made him King.

But others wouldn't have Canute, and they chose an English King called Edmund. He was such a strong man that he was called Edmund Ironsides. So there were a lot of Battles between Edmund's men and Canute's men.

At last Edmund got tired of having such a lot of his Fine Men killed. So he said to Canute: "Look here, what's the good of all this Killing? It isn't Sense. It would be far better if you and I had a fight between ourselves. If you kill me then you can be King and if I kill you then I'll be King."

And Canute said "Yes, let's. That's a Good Idea."

So they began their Fight. But Edmund was a Great, Big, Strong Man and Canute was just Ordinary, and Canute soon