

**ENGLISH HISTORY
READING BOOK;
OLD STORIES FROM
BRITISH HISTORY**

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English History Reading Book: Old Stories from British History by F. York Powell

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OLD STORIES
FROM
BRITISH HISTORY

BY

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*Remember the days of old'

'Not to know what has happened before one's own
days is to remain a child for ever'

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PREFACE.

THESE TALES, several of which have not been Englished before, are drawn from original sources. The writer has chosen such stories as he thought would amuse and please his readers, and give them at the same time some knowledge of the lives and thoughts of their forefathers. To this end he has not written solely of great folk—kings and queens and generals—but also of plain people and children, aye, and birds and beasts too. Moreover, this wider range of subject best befits a Reader, from the greater store of simple terms which must needs be used. Long phrases and out-of-the-way words have been carefully eschewed; and such plain, homely English as has been

kept to throughout will not be beyond the reach of those whom the writer hopes will be his most numerous, though not his only readers—the children of this country and the Greater Britain over seas.

This, the third, edition has been revised throughout, the longer paragraphs have been broken up into shorter pieces, new stories have been added and fresh pictures, in the wish to make the little book more useful and pleasant to those that use it.

This book now contains 57 lessons and over 120 pages of reading matter, in accordance with the instructions to Her Majesty's inspectors.

OLD STORIES
FROM
BRITISH HISTORY.

LESSON 1.

The English People in Old Times.—Nearly fifteen hundred years ago the English people first came to Britain, and took part of it from the Welsh, and lived in it, and called it England after their own name. The Welsh were Christians, as the Romans had taught them to be.

But for some time after the English came here they were heathens, like some of the black people you read about, who live in foreign lands beyond the sea. And, like them, they worshipped many gods, and believed many strange stories about them.

These stories are such as we should now call fairy tales, and tell to children to amuse

them ; but in those days even wise, grown-up people thought they were true. For you must not think that the English, at the time we are talking of, were foolish in other ways because of their strange beliefs.

They were not wise enough to learn from their enemies, the Welsh, it is true. But there were good sailors and brave soldiers, hard-working farmers and skilful smiths and carpenters, among them. And they could take care of themselves, and hold their own whether at work or play.

Their Guesses at the Truth.—But they had no books, so they did not know much that wise men in other lands had already found out. And they had never set their own minds to work to find out the truth about many of the wonderful things that go on in the world.

They were quite content, when they did not understand a thing, to guess at a reason for it, and they never took much care to see whether their guess was right or wrong. And so they went on doing their daily work and earning their daily bread for many a long year, without knowing much that in our time nearly every little child learns at school.

There is only room here to tell you a few

of the beliefs that our forefathers held before they became Christians, and before they learnt what was written in the wise books of learned men of other nations.

The Sun.—They could hardly help thinking about the sun, which makes the day, and gives the light by which we see. But their thoughts about it seem strange enough to us, though it is not very long ago that we have really found out something about the sun, and what it is made of.

They used to think then that the sun was a fair goddess, who was drawn across the sky every day in a chariot by two horses called Early and Swift. So bright and glowing was she, that the other gods put a large round shield in front of her, for fear her burning rays should make the seas boil and the rocks melt. And that, they said, is why the sun looks round and bright like a polished shield; for you cannot see the face of the goddess herself.

Eng'-lish	Brit'-ain	Welsh	Eng'-land
heath'-ens	for'-ain	wor'-ship-ped	be-lieve'-d
stor'-ies	fai'-ry	a-muse'	be-liefs'
en'-e-mies	sold'-iers	al-read'-y	fore'-fath-ers
na'-tions	god'-dess	Christ'-ian	shield