



CLASSIC LIVING BOOK

OUR ISLAND STORY

H.E. Marshall

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

COLOR EDITION

Our Island Story

H.E. MARSHALL



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CHAPTER 1

THE STORIES OF ALBION AND BRUTUS

ONCE upon a time there was a giant called Neptune. When he was quite a tiny boy, Neptune loved the sea. All day long he played in it, swimming, diving, and laughing gleefully as the waves dashed over him.

As he grew older he came to know and love the sea so well that the sea and the waves loved him too, and acknowledged him to be their king. At last people said he was not only king of the waves, but god of the sea.

Neptune had a very beautiful wife who was called Amphitrite. He had also many sons. As each son became old enough to reign, Neptune made him king over an island.

Neptune's fourth son was called Albion. When it came to his turn to receive a kingdom, a great council was called to decide upon an island for him.

Now Neptune and Amphitrite loved Albion more than any of their other children. This made it very difficult to choose which island should be his.

The mermaids and mermen, as the wonderful people who live in the sea are called, came from all parts of the world with news of beautiful islands. But after hearing about them, Neptune and Amphitrite would shake their heads and say, "No, that is not good enough for Albion."

At last a little mermaid swam into the pink and white coral cave in which the council was held. She was more beautiful than any mermaid who had yet come to the council. Her eyes were merry and honest, and they were blue as the sky and the sea. Her hair was as yellow as fine gold, and in her cheeks a lovely pink came and went. When she spoke, her voice sounded as clear as a bell and as soft as the whisper of the waves, as they ripple upon the shore.

"O Father Neptune," she said, "let Albion come to my island. It is a beautiful little island. It lies like a gem in the bluest of waters. There the trees and the grass are green, the cliffs are white and the sands are golden. There the sun shines and the birds sing. It is a land of beauty. Mountains and valleys, broad lakes and swift-flowing rivers, all are there. Let Albion come to my island."

"Where is this island?" said Neptune and Amphitrite both at once. They thought it must indeed be a beautiful land if it were only half as lovely as the little mermaid said.

"Oh, come, and I will show it to you," replied she. Then she swam away in a great hurry to show her beautiful island, and Neptune, Amphitrite, and all the mermaids and mermen followed.

It was a wonderful sight to see them as they swam along. Their white arms gleamed in the sunshine, and their golden hair floated out over the water like seaweed. Never before had so many of the sea-folk been gathered together at one place, and the noise of their tails flapping through the water brought all the little fishes and great sea monsters out, eager to know what was happening. They swam and swam until they came to the little green island with the white cliffs and yellow sands.

As soon as it came in sight, Neptune raised himself on a big wave, and when he saw the little island lying before him, like a beautiful gem in the blue water, just as the mermaid had said, he cried out in joy, "This is the island of my love. Albion shall rule it and Albion it shall be called."

So Albion took possession of the little island, which until then had been called Samothea, and he changed its name to Albion, as Neptune had said should be done.

For seven years Albion reigned over his little island. At the end of that time he was killed in a fight with the hero Hercules. This was a great grief to Neptune and Amphitrite. But because of the love they bore to their son Albion, they continued to love and watch over the little green island which was called by his name.

For many years after the death of Albion the little island had no ruler. At last, one day there came sailing from the far-off city of Troy a prince called Brutus. He, seeing the fair island, with white cliffs and golden sands, landed with all his mighty men of war. There were many giants in the land in those days, but Brutus fought and conquered them. He made himself king, not only over Albion, but over all the islands which lay around. He called them the kingdom of Britain or Britannia after his own name, Brutus, and Albion he called Great Britain because it was the largest of the islands.

Although after this the little island was no longer called Albion, Neptune still loved it. When he grew old and had no more strength to rule, he gave his scepter to the islands called Britannia, for we know—"Britannia rules the waves."

This is a story of many thousand years ago. Some people think it is only a fairy tale. But however that may be, the little island is still sometimes called Albion, although it is nearly always called Britain.

In this book you will find the story of the people of Britain. The story tells how they grew to be a great people, till the little green island set in the lonely sea was no longer large enough to contain them all. Then they sailed away over the blue waves to far-distant countries. Now the people of the little island possess lands all over the world. These lands form the empire of Greater Britain.

Many of these lands are far, far larger than the little island itself. Yet the people who live in them still look back lovingly to the little island, from which they or their fathers came, and call it "Home."

CHAPTER 2

THE COMING OF THE ROMANS

HUNDREDS of years passed after Brutus conquered Albion and changed its name to Britain, during which time many kings and queens reigned over the island. Our great poet Shakespeare has written about one of these kings who was called King Lear. Some day you must read his story.

There were many good and wise rulers among these ancient British kings. But it would take too long to tell of them, so we must pass on to the time when another great warrior heard of the little lonely island and came to conquer it.

The name of this great warrior was Julius Cæsar. He was a Roman. At that time the Romans were a very powerful people. They called themselves the masters of the world.

It is true they were very clever. They had taught themselves how to fight, how to make swords and armor, and how to build fortresses, better than any of the peoples who lived then. So it happened that the Romans generally won the victory over all who fought against them.

But they were a very greedy people and, as soon as they heard of a new country, they wanted to conquer it and call it part of the Roman Empire.

Julius Cæsar had been fighting in Gaul, or France as we now call it. While there, he heard of the little island with white cliffs over the sea. He was told that the people were very big and brave and fierce. He also heard that it was a rich land full of tin, lead, and other useful metals, and that the shores were strewn with precious pearls. So he resolved to conquer this land and add it to the Roman Empire.

Cæsar gathered together about eighty ships, twelve thousand men, and a great many horses. These he thought would be enough with which to conquer the wild men of Britain. One fine day he set sail from France and soon came in sight of the island. The Britons in some way or other had heard of his coming and had gathered to meet him. As he drew near, Cæsar saw with surprise that the whole shore was covered with men ready for battle. He also saw that the place which he had chosen for landing was not good, for there were high, steep cliffs upon which the Britons could stand and shower darts upon his soldiers. So he turned his ships and sailed along the coast until he came to a place where the shore was flat.

The Roman ships were called galleys. They had sails, but were also moved by oars. The rowers sat in long lines down each side of the galley. Sometimes there were two or three tiers of them sitting one above the

other. These rowers were generally slaves and worked in chains. They were often soldiers who had been taken prisoner in war, or wicked men who were punished for their misdeeds by being made to row in these galleys.

It was a dreadful life. The work was very hard, and in a storm if the vessel was wrecked, as often happened, the poor galley slaves were almost sure to be drowned, because their heavy chains prevented them from swimming.

As the Roman galleys sailed along the coast, the British warriors with their horses and war chariots followed on land.

The war chariots of the British were very terrible. They were like light carts and held several men; one to drive the horses and the others to fight. On either side, from the center of the wheels, swords stuck out. As the wheels went round these swords cut down, killed, or wounded every one who came within reach. The Britons trained their horses so well, that they would rush madly into battle or stand stock still in a moment. It was a fearful sight to see these war chariots charge an enemy.

After sailing along the coast a little way, Cæsar found a good place at which to land, and turned his vessels inshore. But the great galleys required so much water in which to sail that they could not come quite close to land.

Seeing this, Cæsar told his soldiers to jump into the water. But the soldiers hesitated, for the Britons had rushed into the water to meet them and the Romans did not like the idea of fighting in the sea.

Although the Romans were very good soldiers, they were not such good sailors as might have been expected. They did not love the water as the Britons did.

These fierce "barbarians," as the Romans called the Britons, urging their horses into the waves, greeted the enemy with loud shouts. Every inch of the shore was known to them. They knew exactly where it was shallow and where it was deep, so they galloped through the water without fear.

Suddenly a brave Roman, when he saw how the soldiers hesitated, seized a standard and leaped overboard crying, "Leap forth now, soldiers, if you will not betray your ensign to the enemy, for I surely will bear myself as is my duty."

The Romans did not have flags such as we have in our army. Their standard was an eagle which was carried upon a pole. The eagle was of gold, or gilded to look like gold. Wherever the eagle led, there the soldiers followed, for it was the emblem of their honor, and they fought for and guarded it as their most precious possession.

So now, when the Roman soldiers saw their standard in the midst of the enemy, they followed with all haste. Their fear was great lest it should be taken. It was counted as a terrible disgrace to the Romans if they returned from battle without their standard. Death was better than disgrace, so they leaped into the water to meet the fierce Britons.

A fearful fight followed. The Romans could not keep their proper or-

der, neither could they find firm footing. Weighted down with their heavy armor, they sank in the sand or slipped upon the rocks. All the while the Britons showered darts upon them and struck at them fiercely with their battle-axes and swords.

The Britons were very brave, but they had not learned the best ways of fighting as the Romans had. So after a terrible struggle the Romans reached the land. On shore they formed in close ranks and charged the Britons.

The Britons in their turn charged the Romans with their war chariots. The horses tore wildly along, neighing and champing their bits, and trampling underfoot those who were not cut down with the swords on the wheels. As they galloped, the fighting men in the cars threw darts and arrows everywhere among the enemy. When they were in the thickest of the fray the horses would suddenly stand still. Then the soldiers, springing out of the chariot, would fight fiercely for a few minutes with their battle-axes, killing every one within reach. Again they would leap into the cart, the horses would start forward and once more gallop wildly through the ranks of the enemy, leaving a track of dead behind them wherever they passed. But in spite of all their wild bravery the Britons were beaten at last and fled before the Romans.

Thus Cæsar first landed upon the shores of Britain. But so many of his soldiers were killed and wounded that he was glad to make peace with these brave islanders.

He sailed away again in such of his ships as had not been destroyed. For fierce storms had arisen a few days after his landing and wrecked many of his vessels.

Cæsar did not gain much glory from this fight. Indeed, when he went away, it seemed rather as if he were fleeing from a foe than leaving a conquered land.

'THE SHORE WAS COVERED WITH MEN READY FOR BATTLE.'



CHAPTER 3

THE ROMANS COME AGAIN

CÆSAR must have felt that he had not really conquered the Britons for, as soon as he arrived safely in France, he began to gather together another army. In the spring of the following year, he again sailed over to Britain. He came now not with eighty, but with eight hundred ships and many thousands of men. But this time there was no one to meet him when he landed. The Britons indeed had heard of his coming, and had gathered in great force to resist him. But, when they saw such a huge number of ships, their hearts were filled with fear, and they fled into the forests and hills to hide.

It must have been a wonderful sight, in the eyes of the ancient Britons, to see so many ships sailing on the sea all at once. They knew scarcely anything of the great lands which lay beyond the blue sea surrounding their little island. They had not even dreamed that the whole world contained as many ships as they now saw. So it was not surprising that at first they were afraid and fled. But they did not lose courage for long. They soon returned and many battles were fought.

The Romans seemed to think that they won all these battles, but the Britons were not at all sure of it. Certainly a great many people on both sides were killed. If the Britons had been less brave than they were, they would have been very badly beaten, for the Romans wore strong armor and carried shields made of steel, while the Britons had little armor, if any at all, and their shields were made of wood covered with skins of animals. The Roman swords too were strong and sharp, while those of the Britons were made of copper. Copper is a very soft metal, and swords made of it are easily bent and so made useless.

The Britons at this time were divided into many tribes, each following their own chief. They often used to quarrel among themselves. Now, however, they joined together against their great enemy and chose a brave man, called Cassivellaunus, to be their leader.

Cassivellaunus led the Britons so well, and Cæsar found it such a difficult task to conquer them, that at last he was glad to make peace again and sail back to his own country.

He did not like to go away as if he had been defeated, so he sent messengers to the British chief, saying, "If you let me take some of your warriors back to Rome as a sign that you are now Roman subjects and will not rebel against me, I will go away."

The Britons were only too glad to be rid of Cæsar and his soldiers at

any price. They gave him some British soldiers to take back to Rome, and even promised to pay him a certain sum of money every year.

But it almost seemed as if Neptune had been doing battle for his beloved Albion with his winds and waves. For while Cæsar had been fighting the Britons, such fierce storms arose that his ships were thrown upon the rocky shore and many of them dashed to pieces. Indeed so few of his ships remained fit to put to sea again that Cæsar could not take all his soldiers away at one time. As many went as could, and the ships came back again for the others.

Cæsar did not leave any soldiers in Britain at all, so it does not seem as if he had really conquered the land. These things happened in the year 54 B.C., that is, fifty-four years before Christ was born. All Christian lands count time from the year in which Christ was born, because His coming is the most wonderful thing which has ever happened. Anything that took place before Christ was born is said to be in such and such a year B.C. Everything which has taken place since then is said to be A.D. or Anno Domini, which means, "in the year of our Lord."

HOW CALIGULA CONQUERED BRITAIN AND HOW CARACTACUS REFUSED TO BE CONQUERED

AFTER the second coming of Cæsar, years passed during which the Romans left the Britons in peace. But they had by no means forgotten about the little green island in the blue sea.

Julius Cæsar had been dead many years when a Roman emperor called Caligula said he would go to Britain and thoroughly conquer the island. He did not mean to land and fight in one small part of it as Julius Cæsar had done. He meant to march over the island, north, south, east, and west, and bring it all under the power of Rome. That is what he said he was going to do. What he really did was something quite different.

He gathered a great army and marched from Italy right through France till he reached the coast. There news came to him that Gunderius, the king of Britain, had heard of his coming and had also gathered his soldiers together.

Caligula must have been afraid when he heard that the brave Britons were ready to fight him, for this is how he conquered Britain.

He drew his soldiers up in battle array upon the shore. Then he himself went into his galley and told his sailors to row him out to sea. After they had rowed him a short way he told them to return. When he had landed again he climbed into a high seat like a pulpit, which he had built on the sands. Then he sounded a trumpet and ordered his soldiers to advance as if to battle.

But there was no enemy there. In front of the soldiers there was nothing but the blue sea and the sandy shore covered with shells. They could not fight against the waves and the sand, and the brave Britons, whom they had come to fight, were far away on the other side of the water and quite out of reach.

So the soldiers stood and wondered what to do. Then Caligula ordered them to kneel down upon the sand and gather as many shells as they could.

The first thing a Roman was taught, was to obey. So now the soldiers did as their general commanded and gathered the cockle shells which lay around in hundreds.

It must have been a curious sight to see all these strong soldiers, armed with sword, shield, and helmet, picking up shells upon the sea-shore.

When they had gathered a great quantity, Caligula made a speech.

He thanked the soldiers as if they had done him some great service. He told them that now he had conquered the ocean and the islands in it, and that these shells were the spoils of war. He praised the soldiers for their bravery, and said that the shells should be placed in the temples of Rome in remembrance of it. Then he rewarded them richly and they marched home again.

That was how Caligula conquered Britain.

After the death of Caligula, another Roman called Claudius tried to conquer Britain. He sent generals and came himself, but he could not thoroughly subdue the Britons. A few chiefs indeed owned themselves beaten, but others would not. They would rather die than be slaves of Rome, they said.

Among those who would not yield was a brave man called Caractacus. A great many of the Britons joined him and fought under his orders. Caractacus and his men fought well and bravely, but in the end the Romans defeated them.

After many battles Caractacus chose for his camp a place on the top of a hill on the borders of Shropshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire. There he made a very strong fortress surrounded by three walls and a deep ditch. The walls were so well built that after all these long years they can still be seen quite plainly to-day.

When the Roman soldiers came to the foot of the hill, Caractacus prepared for battle. He called his soldiers together and made a speech to them. "Show yourselves to be men," he said. "To-day is either the beginning of Liberty or of eternal bondage. Remember how your forefathers fought against Julius Cæsar, and fight now for your homes, as they did for theirs."

Then all the Britons called out, "We will die for our country." The noise of their shouts was carried by the wind to the camp of the Romans. It sounded to them as if the Britons were rejoicing. The Romans feared Caractacus. They knew how brave he and his men were. They knew that it would be very difficult to take his strong fortress. Yet they felt quite sure of taking it in the end, and they wondered what cause the Britons had for rejoicing.

And it happened as the Romans expected. After fierce fighting and great slaughter on both sides the camp was taken. Caractacus, his wife and daughter, and all his brothers were made prisoner and led in chains to Rome, and there was great sorrow in Britain.

Whenever a Roman emperor returned from battle and victory, he used to have what was called a Triumph. Every one in Rome had a holiday; the streets were gay with flowers and green wreaths. The conqueror, dressed in beautiful robes and wearing a crown of bay leaves, rode through the streets. He was followed by his soldiers, servants, and friends. Then came a long train of the captives he had made during the war, with the armor,

weapons, jewels, and other riches he had taken from the conquered people.

After the war with Britain was over Claudius had a Triumph. The fame of Caractacus had already reached Rome, and when it became known that he had been taken prisoner and would walk in the Triumph there was great excitement. The people crowded into the streets eager to see this brave warrior. And although in chains he looked so proud and noble that many even of the Romans were sorry for him.

When he was brought before the Emperor and Empress, Claudius and Agrippina, he did not behave like a slave or a captive, but like the freeborn king and Briton he was.

“I am as nobly born as you,” he said proudly to Claudius. “I had men and horses, lands and great riches. Was it wonderful that I wished to keep them? You fight to gain possession of the whole world and make all men your slaves, but I fought for my own land and for freedom. Kill me now and people will think little of you: but if you grant me my life, all men will know that you are not only powerful but merciful.”

Instead of being angry, Claudius was pleased with the proud words of Caractacus. He was so pleased that he set him at liberty with his wife and all his family. But whether Caractacus ever returned to his dear country, or whether he died in that far-off land, we do not know. We do not hear anything more about him.

THE STORY OF A WARRIOR QUEEN

ALTHOUGH the Britons had lost their great general Caractacus, still they would not yield to the Roman tyrants.

Soon another brave leader arose. This leader was a woman. Her name was Boadicea, and she was a queen. She ruled over that part of the country which is now called Norfolk and Suffolk.

As I said before, the Romans were a very greedy people. They wanted to take away the freedom of Britain and make the island into a Roman province. They also wanted to get all the money and possessions which belonged to the Britons for themselves.

The husband of Boadicea knew how greedy the Romans were, and when he was about to die he became very sad. He was afraid that the Roman Emperor would rob his wife and daughters of all their money, when he was no longer there to take care of them. So, to prevent this, he made the Emperor a present of half of his money and lands, and gave the other half to his wife and children. Then he died happy, thinking that his dear ones would be left in peace.

But the greedy Romans were not pleased with only half of the dead king's wealth. They wanted the whole. So they came and took it by force. Boadicea was a very brave woman. She was not afraid of the Romans, and she tried to make them give back what they had stolen from her.

Then these cruel, wicked men laughed at her. And because she was a woman and had, they thought, no one to protect her, they beat her with rods and were rude to her daughters.

But although the Romans were clever, they sometimes did stupid things. They thought very little of their own women, and they did not understand that many of the women of Britain were as brave and as wise as the men, and quite as difficult to conquer.

After Boadicea had been so cruelly and unjustly treated, she burned with anger against the Romans. Her heart was full only of thoughts of revenge. She called her people together, and, standing on a mound of earth so that they could see and hear her, she made a speech to them. She told them first how shamefully the Romans had behaved to her, their Queen. Then, like Caractacus, she reminded them how their forefathers had fought against Julius Cæsar, and had driven the Romans away for a time at least. "Is it not better to be poor and free than to have great wealth and be slaves?" she asked. "And the Romans take not only our freedom but our wealth. They want to make us both slaves and beggars. Let us rise. O brothers and

sisters, let us rise, and drive these robbers out of our land! Let us kill them every one! Let us teach them that they are no better than hares and foxes, and no match for greyhounds! We will fight, and if we cannot conquer, then let us die—yes, every one of us—die rather than submit.”

Queen Boadicea looked so beautiful and fierce as she stood there, with her blue eyes flashing, and her golden hair blowing round her in the wind, that the hearts of her people were filled with love for her, and anger against the Romans. As she spoke, fierce desires for revenge grew in them. They had hated their Roman conquerors before, now the hatred became a madness.

So, when Boadicea had finished speaking, a cry of rage rose from the Britons. They beat upon their shields with their swords, and swore to avenge their Queen, to fight and die for her and for their country.

Then Boadicea, leaning with one hand upon her spear, and lifting the other to heaven—prayed. She prayed to the goddess of war, and her prayer was as fierce as her speech, for she had never heard of a God who taught men to forgive their enemies.

As she stood there praying, Boadicea looked more beautiful than ever. Her proud head was thrown back and the sun shone upon her lovely hair and upon the golden band which bound her forehead. Her dark cloak, slipping from her shoulders, showed the splendid robe she wore beneath, and the thick and heavy chain of gold round her neck. At her feet knelt her daughters, sobbing with hope and fear.

It was a grand and awful moment, and deep silence fell upon the warriors as they listened to the solemn words. Then, with wild cries, they marched forward to battle, forgetful of everything but revenge.

The battles which followed were terrible indeed. The words of Queen Boadicea had stirred the Britons until they were mad with thoughts of revenge, and hopes of freedom. They gave no mercy, and they asked none. They utterly destroyed the towns of London and of St. Albans, or Verulamium as it was then called, killing every one, man, woman and child.

Again and again the Romans were defeated, till it almost seemed as if the Britons really would succeed in driving them out of the country. Boadicea herself led the soldiers, encouraging them with her brave words. “It is better to die with honor than to live in slavery,” she said. “I am a woman, but I would rather die than yield. Will you follow me, men?” and of course the men followed her gladly.

At last the Roman leader was so downcast with his many defeats that he went himself to the British camp, bearing in his hand a green branch as a sign of peace. When Boadicea was told that an ambassador from the Romans wished to speak to her, she replied proudly, “My sword alone shall speak to the Romans.” And when the Roman leader asked for peace, she answered, “You shall have peace, peace, but no submission. A British heart will choose death rather than lose liberty. There can be peace only if

you promise to leave the country.”

Of course the Romans would not promise to go away from Britain, so the war continued, and for a time the Britons triumphed.

But their triumph did not last long. The Roman soldiers were better armed and better drilled than the British. There came a dark day when the Britons were utterly defeated and many thousands were slain.

When Boadicea saw that all hope was gone, she called her daughters to her. “My children,” she said sadly, as she took them by the hand and drew them towards her, “my children, it has not pleased the gods of battle to deliver us from the power of the Romans. But there is yet one way of escape.” Tears were in her blue eyes as she kissed her daughters. She was no longer a queen of fury but a loving mother.

Then taking a golden cup in her hands, “Drink,” she said gently.

The eldest daughter obeyed proudly and gladly, but the younger one was afraid. “Must I, mother?” she asked timidly.

“Yes, dear one,” said Boadicea gently. “I too will drink, and we shall meet again.”

When the Roman soldiers burst in upon them, they found the great queen dead, with her daughters in her arms.

She had poisoned both herself and them, rather than that they should fall again into the hands of the Romans.



‘WILL YOU FOLLOW ME, MEN?’

THE LAST OF THE ROMANS

CARACTACUS was dead, Boadicea was dead, many other brave British leaders were dead, but the Britons still continued to give the Romans a great deal of trouble.

At last Vespasian, who was then Emperor of the Romans, sent a general called Julius Agricola to see if he could subdue the people and govern the island of Britain.

Julius Agricola was a very clever soldier and a wise man. When he had gained one or two victories over the Britons, he tried what kindness would do. This was something the Romans had never done before.

Julius Agricola tried to understand the people. He was just and fair. He not only took away many of the heavy taxes which the Romans had made the British pay, but he built schools and had the people taught to read and write. For up to this time the Britons had had no teachers and no schools. None of them could read or write, and perhaps there was not a single book in the whole island.

Of course, books in those days were quite different from what they are now. There was no paper, and printing was unknown, so when people wanted to make a book they wrote upon strips of parchment, which was made from the skins of animals. These strips were then rolled up, and looked very much like the maps we hang upon the wall, only they were smaller.

Besides building schools, Agricola built public halls and courts where the people might come and ask for justice, whenever they had been wronged. He taught the Britons what obedience, law and order meant, and in every way tried to make them live good lives.

Soon the Britons began to understand that the Romans could give them some things which were worth having. So there was much more peace in the land.

Julius Agricola also built a line of forts across the island from the Forth to the Clyde. He did this to keep back the wild Picts and Scots, or people of the north. For as they could not be brought under Roman rule nor tamed in any way, he thought it was better to try to shut them into their own country. Later on an emperor, called Antonine, built a great wall along the line of Agricola's forts for the same purpose.

But while Julius Agricola was doing all this good work in Britain, the emperor who had sent him died, and another ruled instead.

This emperor was jealous of Agricola because he managed the people of Britain so well. He was so jealous that he told Agricola to come back to

Rome, and sent another man to govern Britain instead of him.

It was very foolish of a great emperor to be angry with his general because he did his work well. He ought rather to have been glad.

The people of Britain soon showed him how foolish he had been, for they once more rebelled against Roman rule.

Later on another great emperor who was called Hadrian reigned, and he himself came to Britain. He found the wild people of the north very troublesome, so he built a wall across Britain from the Tyne to the Solway. He did not try to drive these wild people so far north as Agricola had done. The wall which Hadrian built is still called by his name, and is still to be seen to this day; so you can imagine what a very strong wall it was and what a fierce people they were who lived beyond it.

Hadrian was wise as Agricola had been. He taught the Britons many things which were good and useful to know. But very soon after he left the island, the people rebelled again.

And so it went on until, at last, nearly five hundred years after the first coming of Julius Cæsar, the Romans gave up and left Britain altogether. That was about the year 410 A.D. The wonder is that they had stayed so long, for the Britons had certainly given them a great deal of trouble.

But after all, although the Britons always fought against the Romans, they had learned many things from them.

Before the Romans came, the Britons had been very ignorant and wild. In many parts of the country they wore no clothes at all. Instead, they stained their bodies blue with a dye called woad. Their houses were only little round huts, with a hole in the middle of the roof which let some light in and the smoke of the fire out. There were no schools, and little boys and girls were taught nothing except how to fish and hunt, and how to fight and kill people in battle.

There were hardly any roads and there were no churches.

The ancient Britons were heathen. They worshiped the oak-tree and the mistletoe.

The British priests were called Druids. It is said that they received their name from Drui, who was a very wise king of Albion in far-off times.

The Druids were the wisest people in the land. When any one was in doubt or difficulty he would go to them for advice. They were very solemn and grand old men with long white beards and beautiful robes. There were no churches, as I said, but the people worshiped in dark hollows in the woods and in open spaces surrounded by great oak-trees. Some of the teaching of the Druids was very beautiful, but some of it was very dreadful, and they even killed human beings in their sacrifices.

But the Romans taught the Britons many things. They taught them how to build better houses and how to make good roads, how to read and write, and much more that was good and useful. And presently priests came

from Rome, bringing tidings of a new and beautiful religion.

They came to tell the people of Britain how the Son of God came to earth to teach men not to hate and kill each other, but to love each other, and above all to love their enemies.

It is difficult to understand what a wonderful story this must have seemed to the wild island people. For they were a people who were born and who lived and died among wars and hatred. Yet many of them believed and followed this new religion. Gradually the Druids disappeared, and the priests of Christ took their place.

Although the religion of Christ came from Rome, the Romans themselves were nearly all pagans. And one of the last Roman emperors who tried to rule Britain hated the Christians very much. He forbade the worship of God and Christ, and killed and tortured those who disobeyed his orders.

But the people who had once become Christian would not again become heathen. They chose rather to die. A person who dies for his religion is called a martyr.

In the next chapter is the story of the first Christian martyr in Britain.