

Norman Conquest. It is this dual character, this combination of native and foreign, of innate and exotic elements, which accounts for the wealth of our English language and literature. To see it in concrete form, we should read in succession *Beowulf* and *Paradise Lost*, the two great epics which show the root and the flower of our literary development.

### III. CHRISTIAN WRITERS OF THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

The literature of this period falls naturally into two divisions, — pagan and Christian. The former represents the poetry which the Anglo-Saxons probably brought with them in the form of oral sagas, — the crude material out of which literature was slowly developed on English soil; the latter represents the writings developed under teaching of the monks, after the old pagan religion had vanished, but while it still retained its hold on the life and language of the people. In reading our earliest poetry it is well to remember that all of it was copied by the monks, and seems to have been more or less altered to give it a religious coloring.

The coming of Christianity meant not simply a new life and leader for England; it meant also the wealth of a new language. The scop is now replaced by the literary monk; and that monk, though he lives among common people and speaks with the English tongue, has behind him all the culture and literary resources of the Latin language. The effect is seen instantly in our early prose and poetry.

**Northumbrian Literature.** In general, two great schools of Christian influence came into England, and speedily put an end to the frightful wars that had waged continually among the various petty kingdoms of the Anglo-Saxons. The first of these, under the leadership of Augustine, came from Rome. It spread in the south and center of England, especially in the kingdom of Essex. It founded schools and partially educated the rough people, but it produced no lasting literature



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#### THE MANUSCRIPT BOOK

After the painting by John W. Alexander

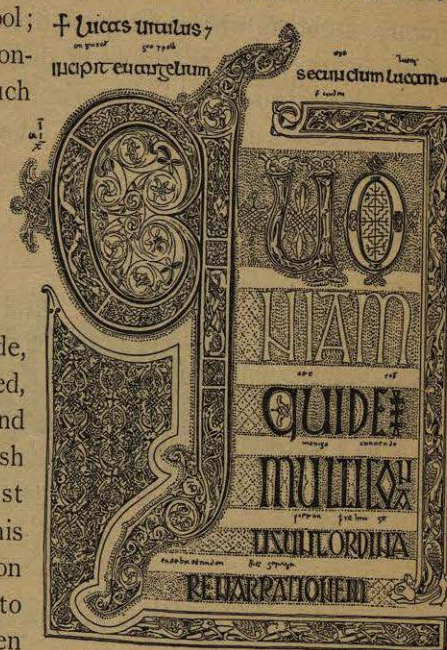
The other, under the leadership of the saintly Aidan, came from Ireland, which country had been for centuries a center of religion and education for all western Europe. The monks of this school labored chiefly in Northumbria, and to their influence we owe all that is best in Anglo-Saxon literature. It is called the Northumbrian School; its center was the monasteries and abbeys, such as Jarrow and Whitby, and its three greatest names are Bede, Cædmon, and Cynewulf.

#### BEDE (673-735)

The Venerable Bede, as he is generally called, our first great scholar and "the father of our English learning," wrote almost exclusively in Latin, his last work, the translation of the Gospel of John into Anglo-Saxon, having been unfortunately lost. Much to our regret, therefore,

his books and the story of his gentle, heroic life must be excluded from this history of our literature. His works, over forty in number, covered the whole field of human knowledge in his day, and were so admirably written that they were widely copied as text-books, or rather manuscripts, in nearly all the monastery schools of Europe.

The work most important to us is the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. It is a fascinating history to read even now, with its curious combination of accurate scholarship and immense credulity. In all strictly historical matters Bede

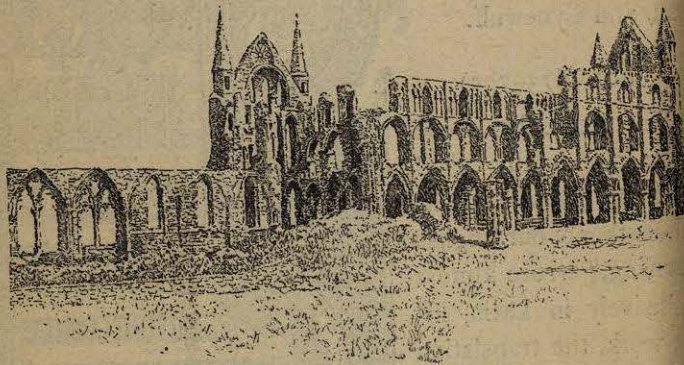


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is a model. Every known authority on the subject, from Pliny to Gildas, was carefully considered; every learned pilgrim to Rome was commissioned by Bede to ransack the archives and to make copies of papal decrees and royal letters; and to these were added the testimony of abbots who could speak from personal knowledge of events or repeat the traditions of their several monasteries.

Side by side with this historical exactness are marvelous stories of saints and missionaries. It was an age of credulity and miracles were in men's minds continually. The men of

The First  
History of  
England



RUINS AT WHITBY

whom he wrote lived lives more wonderful than any romance and their courage and gentleness made a tremendous impression on the rough, warlike people to whom they came with open hands and hearts. It is the natural way of all primitive peoples to magnify the works of their heroes, and so deeds of heroism and kindness, which were part of the daily life of the Irish missionaries, were soon transformed into the miracles of the saints. Bede believed these things, as all other men did, and records them with charming simplicity, just as he received them from bishop or abbot. Notwithstanding its errors, we owe to this work nearly all our knowledge of the eight centuries of our history following the landing of Cæsar in Britain.

### CÆDMON (Seventh Century)

Now must we hymn the Master of heaven,  
The might of the Maker, the deeds of the Father,  
The thought of His heart. He, Lord everlasting,  
Established of old the source of all wonders:  
Creator all-holy, He hung the bright heaven,  
A roof high upreared, o'er the children of men;  
The King of mankind then created for mortals  
The world in its beauty, the earth spread beneath them,  
He, Lord everlasting, omnipotent God.<sup>1</sup>

If *Beowulf* and the fragments of our earliest poetry were brought into England, then the hymn given above is the first verse of all native English song that has come down to us, and Cædmon is the first poet to whom we can give a definite name and date. The words were written about 665 A.D. and are found copied at the end of a manuscript of Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*.

**Life of Cædmon.** What little we know of Cædmon, the Anglo-Saxon Milton, as he is properly called, is taken from Bede's account<sup>2</sup> of the Abbess Hilda and of her monastery at Whitby. Here is a free and condensed translation of Bede's story:

There was, in the monastery of the Abbess Hilda, a brother distinguished by the grace of God, for that he could make poems treating of goodness and religion. Whatever was translated to him (for he could not read) of Sacred Scripture he shortly reproduced in poetic form of great sweetness and beauty. None of all the English poets could equal him, for he learned not the art of song from men, nor sang by the arts of men. Rather did he receive all his poetry as a free gift from God, and for this reason he did never compose poetry of a vain or worldly kind.

Until of mature age he lived as a layman and had never learned any poetry. Indeed, so ignorant of singing was he that sometimes, at a feast, where it was the custom that for the pleasure of all each guest should sing in turn, he would rise from the table when he saw the harp coming to him and go home ashamed. Now it happened once that he did this thing at a certain festivity, and went out to the stall to care for the horses, this duty being assigned to him for that night. As he slept at

<sup>1</sup> "Cædmon's Hymn," Cook's version, in *Translations from Old English Poetry*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, IV, xxiv.

the usual time, one stood by him saying: "Cædmon, sing me something." "I cannot sing," he answered, "and that is why I came hither from the feast." But he who spake unto him said again, "Cædmon, sing to me." And he said, "What shall I sing?" and he said, "Sing the beginning of created things." Thereupon Cædmon began to sing verses that he had never heard before, of this import: "Now should we praise the power and wisdom of the Creator, the works of the Father." This is the sense but not the form of the hymn that he sang while sleeping.

When he awakened, Cædmon remembered the words of the hymn and added to them many more. In the morning he went to the steward of the monastery lands and showed him the gift he had received in sleep. The steward brought him to Hilda, who made him repeat to the monks the hymn he had composed, and all agreed that the grace of God was upon Cædmon. To test him they expounded to him a bit of Scripture from the Latin and bade him, if he could, to turn it into poetry. He went away humbly and returned in the morning with an excellent poem. Thereupon Hilda received him and his family into the monastery, made him one of the brethren, and commanded that the whole course of Bible history be expounded to him. He in turn, reflecting upon what he had heard, transformed it into most delightful poetry, and by echoing it back to the monks in more melodious sounds made his teachers his listeners. In all this his aim was to turn men from wickedness and help them to the love and practice of well doing.

[Then follows a brief record of Cædmon's life and an exquisite picture of his death amidst the brethren.] And so it came to pass [says the simple record] that as he served God while living in purity of mind and serenity of spirit, so by a peaceful death he left the world and went to look upon His face.

**Cædmon's Works.** The greatest work attributed to Cædmon is the so-called *Paraphrase*. It is the story of Genesis, Exodus and a part of Daniel, told in glowing, poetic language, with power of insight and imagination which often raises it from paraphrase into the realm of true poetry. Though we have Bede's assurance that Cædmon "transformed the whole course of Bible history into most delightful poetry," no work known certainly to have been composed by him has come down to us. In the seventeenth century this Anglo-Saxon *Paraphrase* was discovered and attributed to Cædmon, and his name is still associated with it, though it is now almost certain that the *Paraphrase* is the work of more than one writer.

Aside from the doubtful question of authorship, even a casual reading of the poem brings us into the presence of a poet rude indeed, but with a genius strongly suggestive at times of the matchless Milton. The book opens with a hymn of praise, and then tells of the fall of Satan and his rebel angels from heaven, which is familiar to us in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Then follows the creation of the world, and the *Paraphrase* begins to thrill with the old Anglo-Saxon love of nature.

Here first the Eternal Father, guard of all,  
Of heaven and earth, raised up the firmament,  
The Almighty Lord set firm by His strong power  
This roomy land; grass greened not yet the plain,  
Ocean far spread hid the wan ways in gloom.  
Then was the Spirit gloriously bright  
Of Heaven's Keeper borne over the deep  
Swiftly. The Life-giver, the Angel's Lord,  
Over the ample ground bade come forth Light.  
Quickly the High King's bidding was obeyed,  
Over the waste there shone light's holy ray.  
Then parted He, Lord of triumphant might,  
Shadow from shining, darkness from the light.  
Light, by the Word of God, was first named day.<sup>1</sup>

After recounting the story of Paradise, the Fall, and the Deluge, the *Paraphrase* is continued in the Exodus, of which the poet makes a noble epic, rushing on with the sweep of a Saxon army to battle. A single selection is given here to show how the poet adapted the story to his hearers:

Then they saw,  
Forth and forward faring, Pharaoh's war array  
Gliding on, a grove of spears; — glittering the hosts!  
Fluttered there the banners, there the folk the march trod.  
Onwards surged the war, strode the spears along,  
Blickered the broad shields; blew aloud the trumpets. . . .  
Wheeling round in gyres, yelled the fowls of war,  
Of the battle greedy; hoarsely barked the raven,  
Dew upon his feathers, o'er the fallen corpses —  
Swart that chooser of the slain! Sang aloud the wolves  
At eve their horrid song, hoping for the carrion.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Genesis, 112-131 (Morley).

<sup>2</sup> Exodus, 155 ff. (Brooke).

Besides the *Paraphrase* we have a few fragments of the same general character which are attributed to the school of Cædmon. The longest of these is *Judith*, in which the story of an apocryphal book of the Old Testament is done into vigorous poetry. Holofernes is represented as a savage and cruel Viking, reveling in his mead hall; and when the heroic Judith cuts off his head with his own sword and throws it down before the warriors of her people, rousing them to battle and victory, we reach perhaps the most dramatic and brilliant point of Anglo-Saxon literature.

#### CYNEWULF (Eighth Century)

Of Cynewulf, greatest of the Anglo-Saxon poets, excepting only the unknown author of *Beowulf*, we know very little. Indeed, it was not till 1840, more than a thousand years after his death, that even his name became known. Though he is the only one of our early poets who signed his works, the name was never plainly written, but woven into the verses in the form of secret runes,<sup>1</sup> suggesting a modern charade, but more difficult of interpretation until one has found the key to the poet's signature.

**Works of Cynewulf.** The only signed poems of Cynewulf are *The Christ*, *Juliana*, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elen*. Unsigned poems attributed to him or his school are *Andreas*,

<sup>1</sup> Runes were primitive letters of the old northern alphabet. In a few passages Cynewulf uses each rune to represent not only a letter but a word beginning with that letter. Thus the rune-equivalent of C stands for *cene* (keen, courageous), Y for *yfel* (evil, in the sense of wretched), N for *nyd* (need), W for *wyn* (joy), U for *ur* (our), L for *lagu* (lake), F for *feoh* (fee, wealth). Using the runes equivalent to these seven letters Cynewulf hides and at the same time reveals his name in certain verses of *The Christ* for instance:

Then the *Courage-hearted* quakes, when the King (Lord) he hears  
Speak to those who once on earth but obeyed Him weakly,  
While as yet their *Yearning pain* and their *Need* most easily  
Comfort might discover. . . . Gone is then the *Winsomeness*  
Of the earth's adornments! What to *Us* as men belonged  
Of the joys of life was locked, long ago, in *Lake-flood*.  
All the *Fee* on earth.

See Brooke's *History of Early English Literature*, pp. 377-379, or *The Christ of Cynewulf*, ed. by Cook, also by Gollancz.

the *Phœnix*, the *Dream of the Rood*, the *Descent into Hell*, *Guthlac*, the *Wanderer*, and some of the Riddles. The last are simply literary conundrums in which some well-known object, like the bow or drinking horn, is described in poetic language, and the hearer must guess the name. Some of them, like "The Swan"<sup>1</sup> and "The Storm Spirit," are unusually beautiful.

Of all these works the most characteristic is undoubtedly *The Christ*, a didactic poem in three parts: the first celebrating the Nativity; the second, the Ascension; and the third, "Doomsday," telling the torments of the wicked and the unending joy of the redeemed. Cynewulf takes his subject-matter partly from the Church liturgy, but more largely from the homilies of Gregory the Great. The whole is well woven together, and contains some hymns of great beauty and many passages of intense dramatic force. Throughout the poem a deep love for Christ and a reverence for the Virgin Mary are manifest. More than any other poem in any language, *The Christ* reflects the spirit of early Latin Christianity.

Here is a fragment comparing life to a sea voyage,—a comparison which occurs sooner or later to every thoughtful person, and which finds perfect expression in Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar."

Now 't is most like as if we fare in ships  
On the ocean flood, over the water cold,  
Driving our vessels through the spacious seas  
With horses of the deep. A perilous way is this  
Of boundless waves, and there are stormy seas  
On which we toss here in this (reeling) world  
O'er the deep paths. Ours was a sorry plight

<sup>1</sup> My robe is noiseless while I tread the earth,  
Or tarry 'neath the banks, or stir the shallows;  
But when these shining wings, this depth of air,  
Bear me aloft above the bending shores  
Where men abide, and far the welkin's strength  
Over the multitudes conveys me, then  
With rushing whirl and clear melodious sound  
My raiment sings. And like a wandering spirit  
I float unweariedly o'er flood and field.

(Brougham's version, in *Transl. from Old Eng. Poetry*.)

Until at last we sailed unto the land,  
 Over the troubled main. Help came to us  
 That brought us to the haven of salvation,  
 God's Spirit-Son, and granted grace to us  
 That we might know e'en from the vessel's deck  
 Where we must bind with anchorage secure  
 Our ocean steeds, old stallions of the waves.

In the two epic poems of *Andreas* and *Elene* Cynewulf (if he be the author) reaches the very summit of his poetical art. *Andreas*, an unsigned poem, records the story of St. Andrew, who crosses the sea to rescue his comrade St. Matthew from the cannibals. A young ship-master who sails the boat turns out to be Christ in disguise. Matthew is set free, and the savages are converted by a miracle.<sup>1</sup> It is a spirited poem, full of rush and incident, and the descriptions of the sea are the best in Anglo-Saxon poetry.

*Elene* has for its subject-matter the finding of the true cross. It tells of Constantine's vision of the Rood, on the eve of battle. After his victory under the new emblem he sends his mother Helena (Elene) to Jerusalem in search of the original cross and the nails. The poem, which is of very uneven quality might properly be put at the end of Cynewulf's works. He adds to the poem a personal note, signing his name in runes, and, if we accept the wonderful "Vision of the Rood" as Cynewulf's work, we learn how he found the cross at last in his own heart. There is a suggestion here of the future Sir Launfal and the search for the Holy Grail.

**Decline of Northumbrian Literature.** The same northern energy which had built up learning and literature so rapidly in Northumbria was instrumental in pulling it down again. Toward the end of the century in which Cynewulf lived, the Danes swept down on the English coasts and overwhelmed Northumbria. Monasteries and schools were destroyed; scholars and teachers alike were put to the sword, and libraries that

<sup>1</sup> The source of *Andreas* is an early Greek legend of St. Andrew that found its way to England and was probably known to Cynewulf in some brief Latin form, now lost.

had been gathered leaf by leaf with the toil of centuries were scattered to the four winds. So all true Northumbrian literature perished, with the exception of a few fragments, and that which we now possess<sup>1</sup> is largely a translation in the dialect of the West Saxons. This translation was made by Alfred's scholars, after he had driven back the Danes in an effort to preserve the ideals and the civilization that had been so hardly won. With the conquest of Northumbria ends the poetic period of Anglo-Saxon literature. With Alfred the Great of Wessex our prose literature makes a beginning.

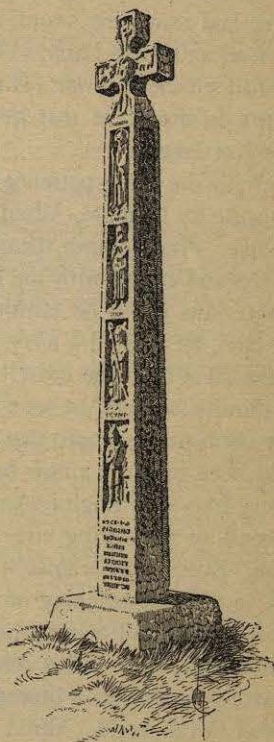
#### ALFRED (848-901)

"Every craft and every power soon grows old and is passed over and forgotten, if it be without wisdom. . . . This is now to be said, that whilst I live I wish to live nobly, and after life to leave to the men who come after me a memory of good works."<sup>2</sup>

So wrote the great Alfred, looking back over his heroic life. That he lived nobly none can doubt who reads the history of the greatest of Anglo-Saxon kings; and his good works include, among others, the education of half a country, the salvage of a noble native literature, and the creation of the first English prose.

<sup>1</sup> Our two chief sources are the famous Exeter Book, in Exeter Cathedral, a collection of Anglo-Saxon poems presented by Bishop Leofric (c. 1050), and the Vercelli Book, discovered in the monastery of Vercelli, Italy, in 1822. The only known manuscript of *Beowulf* was discovered c. 1600, and is now in the Cotton Library of the British Museum. All these are fragmentary copies, and show the marks of fire and of hard usage. The Exeter Book contains *the Christ, Guthlac, the Phoenix, Juliana, Widsith, The Seafarer, Deor's Lament, The Wife's Complaint, The Lover's Message*, ninety-five Riddles, and many short hymns and fragments, — an astonishing variety for a single manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> From Alfred's *Boethius*.



CEDMON CROSS AT WHITBY ABBEY

**Life and Times of Alfred.** For the history of Alfred's times, and details of the terrific struggle with the Northmen, the reader must be referred to the histories. The struggle ended with the Treaty of Wedmore, in 878, with the establishment of Alfred not only as king of Wessex, but as overlord of the whole northern country. Then the hero laid down his sword, and set himself as a little child to learn to read and write Latin, so that he might lead his people in peace as he had led them in war. It is then that Alfred began to be the heroic figure in literature that he had formerly been in the wars against the Northmen.

With the same patience and heroism that had marked the long struggle for freedom, Alfred set himself to the task of educating his people. First he gave them laws, beginning with the Ten Commandments and ending with the Golden Rule, and then established courts where laws could be faithfully administered. Safe from the Danes by land, he created a navy, almost the first of the English fleets, to drive them from the coast. Then, with peace and justice established within his borders, he sent to Europe for scholars and teachers, and set them over schools that he established. Hitherto all education had been in Latin; now he set himself the task, first, of teaching every free-born Englishman to read and write his own language, and second, of translating into English the best books for their instruction. Every poor scholar was honored at his court and was speedily set to work at teaching or translating; every wanderer bringing a book or a leaf of manuscript from the pillaged monasteries of Northumbria was sure of his reward. In this way the few fragments of native Northumbrian literature, which we have been studying, were saved to the world. Alfred and his scholars treasured the rare fragments and copied them in the West-Saxon dialect. With the exception of Cædmon's Hymn, we have hardly a single leaf from the great literature of Northumbria in the dialect in which it was first written.

**Works of Alfred.** Aside from his educational work, Alfred is known chiefly as a translator. After fighting his country's battles, and at a time when most men were content with military honor, he began to learn Latin, that he might translate the works that would be most helpful to his people. His important translations are four in number: Orosius's *Universal History and Geography*, the leading work in general history

for several centuries; Bede's *History*,<sup>1</sup> the first great historical work written on English soil; Pope Gregory's *Shepherds' Book*, intended especially for the clergy; and Boethius's *Consolations of Philosophy*, the favorite philosophical work of the Middle Ages.

More important than any translation is the *English or Saxon Chronicle*. This was probably at first a dry record, especially of important births and deaths in the West-Saxon kingdom. Alfred enlarged this scant record, beginning the story with Cæsar's conquest. When it touches his own reign the dry chronicle becomes an interesting and connected story, the oldest history belonging to any modern nation in its own language. The record of Alfred's reign, probably by himself, is a splendid bit of writing and shows clearly his claim to a place in literature as well as in history. The *Chronicle* was continued after Alfred's death, and is the best monument of early English prose that is left to us. Here and there stirring songs are included in the narrative, like "The Battle of Brunanburh" and "The Battle of Maldon."<sup>2</sup> The last, entered 991, seventy-five years before the Norman Conquest, is the swan song of Anglo-Saxon poetry. The *Chronicle* was continued for a century after the Norman Conquest, and is extremely valuable not only as a record of events but as a literary monument showing the development of our language.

**Close of the Anglo-Saxon Period.** After Alfred's death there is little to record, except the loss of the two supreme objects of his heroic struggle, namely, a national life and a national literature. It was at once the strength and the weakness of the Saxon that he lived apart as a free man and never joined efforts willingly with any large body of his fellows. The tribe was his largest idea of nationality, and, with all our admiration,

<sup>1</sup> It is not certain that the translation of Bede is the work of Alfred, though it is generally attributed to him.

<sup>2</sup> See *Translations from Old English Poetry* or Tennyson's "Battle of Brunanburh."

we must confess as we first meet him that he has not enough sense of unity to make a great nation, nor enough culture to produce a great literature. A few noble political ideals repeated in a score of petty kingdoms, and a few literary ideals copied but never increased, — that is the summary of his literary history. For a full century after Alfred literature was practically at a standstill, having produced the best of which it was capable, and England waited for the national impulse and for the culture necessary for a new and greater art. Both of these came speedily, by way of the sea, in the Norman Conquest.

**Summary of Anglo-Saxon Period.** Our literature begins with songs and stories of a time when our Teutonic ancestors were living on the borders of the North Sea. Three tribes of these ancestors, the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, conquered Britain in the latter half of the fifth century, and laid the foundation of the English nation. The first landing was probably by a tribe of Jutes, under chiefs called by the chronicle Hengist and Horsa. The date is doubtful; but the year 449 is accepted by most historians.

These old ancestors were hardy warriors and sea rovers, yet were capable of profound and noble emotions. Their poetry reflects this double nature. Its subjects were chiefly the sea and the plunging boats, battles, adventure, brave deeds, the glory of warriors, and the love of home. Accent, alliteration, and an abrupt break in the middle of each line gave their poetry a kind of martial rhythm. In general the poetry is earnest and somber, and pervaded by fatalism and religious feeling. A careful reading of the few remaining fragments of Anglo-Saxon literature reveals five striking characteristics: the love of freedom; responsiveness to nature, especially in her sterner moods; strong religious convictions, and a belief in Wyrd, or Fate; reverence for womanhood; and a devotion to glory as the ruling motive in every warrior's life.

In our study we have noted: (1) the great epic or heroic poem *Beowulf*, and a few fragments of our first poetry, such as "Widsith," "Deor's Lament," and "The Seafarer." (2) Characteristics of Anglo-Saxon life; the form of our first speech. (3) The Northumbrian school of writers. Bede, our first historian, belongs to this school; but all his extant works are in Latin. The two great poets are Cædmon and Cynewulf. Northumbrian literature flourished between 650 and 850. In the year 867 Northumbria was conquered by the Danes, who destroyed the monasteries and the libraries containing our earliest literature. (4) The beginnings of English prose writing under Alfred (848-901). Our most important prose work of this age is the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which was revised and enlarged by Alfred, and which was continued for more than two centuries. It is the oldest historical record known to any European nation in its own tongue.

**Selections for Reading.** *Miscellaneous Poetry.* The Seafarer, Love Letter (Husband's Message), Battle of Brunanburh, Deor's Lament, Riddles, Exodus, The Christ, Andreas, Dream of the Rood, extracts in Cook and Tinker's *Translations from Old English Poetry*<sup>1</sup> (Ginn and Company); Judith, translation by A. S. Cook. Good selections are found also in Brooke's *History of Early English Literature*, and Morley's *English Writers*, vols. 1 and 2.

*Beowulf.* J. R. C. Hall's prose translation; Child's *Beowulf* (Riverside Literature Series); Morris and Wyatt's *The Tale of Beowulf*; Earle's *The Deeds of Beowulf*; Metrical versions by Garnett, J. L. Hall, Lumsden, etc.

*Prose.* A few paragraphs of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in Manly's *English Prose*; translations in Cook and Tinker's *Old English Prose*.

**Bibliography.<sup>2</sup> History.** For the facts of the Anglo-Saxon conquest of England consult first a good text-book: Montgomery, pp. 31-57, or Cheyney, pp. 36-84. For fuller treatment see Green, ch. 1; Traill, vol. 1; Ramsey's *Foundations of England*; Turner's *History of the Anglo-Saxons*; Freeman's *Old English History*; Allen's *Anglo-Saxon England*; Cook's *Life of Alfred*; Asser's *Life of King Alfred*, edited by W. H. Stevenson; C. Plummer's *Life and Times of Alfred the Great*; E. Dale's *National Life and Character in the Mirror of Early English Literature*; Rhys's *Celtic Britain*.

**Literature.** *Anglo-Saxon Texts.* Library of Anglo-Saxon Poetry, and Albion Series of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English Poetry (Ginn and Company); Belles Lettres Series of English Classics, sec. 1 (Heath & Co.); J. W. Bright's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*; Sweet's *Anglo-Saxon Primer*.

**General Works.** Jusserand, Ten Brink, Cambridge History, Morley (full titles and publishers in General Bibliography).

**Special Works.** Brooke's *History of Early English Literature*; Earle's *Anglo-Saxon Literature*; Lewis's *Beginnings of English Literature*; Arnold's *Celtic Literature* (for relations of Saxon and Celt); Longfellow's *Poets and Poetry of Europe*; Hall's *Old English Idyls*; Gayley's *Classic Myths*, or Guerber's *Myths of the Northlands* (for Norse Mythology); Carlyle's *Essay, The Hero as Divinity*.

*Beowulf*, prose translations by J. R. C. Hall, Earle, Morris and Wyatt; metrical versions by Garnett, J. L. Hall, Lumsden, etc. The Exeter Book (a collection of Anglo-Saxon texts), edited and translated by Gollancz. The Christ of Cynewulf, prose translation by Whitman; the same poem, text and translation, by Gollancz, and by Cook. Cædmon's Paraphrase, text and translation, by Thorpe. Garnett's *Elene*, *Judith*, and other Anglo-Saxon Poems. Translations of Andreas and the Phoenix, in Gollancz's Exeter Book. Bede's *History*, in Temple Classics; the same with the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (one volume) in Bohn's Antiquarian Library.

<sup>1</sup> This is an admirable little book, containing the cream of Anglo-Saxon poetry, in free translations, with notes. Translations from *Old English Prose* is a companion volume.

<sup>2</sup> For full titles and publishers of general reference books, and for a list of inexpensive texts and helps, see General Bibliography at the end of this book.



**Suggestive Questions.**<sup>1</sup> 1. What is the relation of history and literature? Why should both subjects be studied together? Explain the qualities that characterize all great literature. Has any text-book in history ever appealed to you as a work of literature? What literary qualities have you noticed in standard historical works, such as those of Macaulay, Prescott, Gibbon, Green, Motley, Parkman, and John Fiske?

2. Why did the Anglo-Saxons come to England? What induced them to remain? Did any change occur in their ideals, or in their manner of life? Do you know any social or political institutions which they brought, and which we still cherish?

3. From the literature you have read, what do you know about our Anglo-Saxon ancestors? What virtues did they admire in men? How was woman regarded? Can you compare the Anglo-Saxon ideal of woman with that of other nations, the Romans for instance?

4. Tell in your own words the general qualities of Anglo-Saxon poetry. How did it differ in its metrical form from modern poetry? What passages seem to you worth learning and remembering? Can you explain why poetry is more abundant and more interesting than prose in the earliest literature of all nations?

5. Tell the story of *Beowulf*. What appeals to you most in the poem? Why is it a work for all time, or, as the Anglo-Saxons would say, why is it worthy to be remembered? (Note the permanent quality of literature, and the ideals and emotions which are emphasized in *Beowulf*.) Describe the burials of Scyld and of Beowulf. Does the poem teach any moral lesson? Explain the Christian elements in this pagan epic.

6. Name some other of our earliest poems, and describe the one you like best. How does the sea figure in our first poetry? How is nature regarded? What poem reveals the life of the scop or poet? How do you account for the serious character of Anglo-Saxon poetry? Compare the Saxon and the Celt with regard to the gladness of life as shown in their literature.

7. What useful purpose did poetry serve among our ancestors? What purpose did the harp serve in reciting their poems? Would the harp add anything to our modern poetry?

8. What is meant by Northumbrian literature? Who are the great Northumbrian writers? What besides the Danish conquest caused the decline of Northumbrian literature?

9. For what is Bede worthy to be remembered? Tell the story of Cædmon as recorded in Bede's History. What new element is introduced in Cædmon's poems? What effect did Christianity have upon Anglo-Saxon literature? Can you quote any passages from Cædmon to show that Anglo-Saxon character was not changed but given a new direction? If you have read Milton's *Paradise Lost*, what resemblances are there between that poem and Cædmon's *Paraphrase*?

<sup>1</sup> The chief object of these questions is not to serve as a review, or to prepare for examination, but rather to set the student thinking for himself about what he has read. A few questions of an advanced nature are inserted, which call for special study and research in interesting fields.

10. What are the Cynewulf poems? Describe any that you have read. How do they compare in spirit and in expression with *Beowulf*? with Cædmon? Read *The Phoenix* (which is a translation from the Latin) in Brooke's History of Early English Literature, or in Gollancz's Exeter Book, or in Cook's Translations from Old English Poetry, and tell what elements you find to show that the poem is not of Anglo-Saxon origin. Compare the views of nature in *Beowulf* and in the Cynewulf poems.

11. Describe the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. What is its value in our language, literature, and history? Give an account of Alfred's life and of his work for literature. How does Anglo-Saxon prose compare in interest with the poetry?

## CHRONOLOGY

HISTORY	LITERATURE
449(?). Landing of Hengist and Horsa in Britain	
477. Landing of South Saxons	
547. Angles settle Northumbria	547. Gildas's History
597. Landing of Augustine and his monks. Conversion of Kent	
617. Eadwine, king of Northumbria	
635-665. Coming of St. Aidan. Conversion of Northumbria	664. Cædmon at Whitby 673-735. Bede 750(cir.). Cynewulf poems
867. Danes conquer Northumbria	
871. Alfred, king of Wessex	860. Anglo-Saxon Chronicle begun
878. Defeat of Danes. Peace of Wedmore	
901. Death of Alfred	991. Last known poem of the Anglo-Saxon period, The Battle of Maldon, entered in Anglo-Saxon Chronicle
1013-1042. Danish period	
1016. Cnut, king	
1042. Edward the Confessor. Saxon period restored	
1049. Westminster Abbey begun	
1066. Harold, last of Saxon kings. Norman Conquest	