



Echoes of Empires: From Rome to Anglo-Saxon Times

Our antiquarians often find The relics which they left behind; A Villa here and pavement there, Coins galore and Roman ware. Anglo-Saxons A.D. AND so we run our flippant rhymes Right on to Anglo-Saxon times. Hengist and Horsa with their men Came from their Jutish pirate den, Jutes And paid us visits in their ships Bent on their ruthless looting trips. And Angles landing in the Humber Gave that district little slumber. They plundered morning, noon, and night, Were rough, uncouth, and impolite, No 'By your leave' or 'S'il vous plait' They came to rob, remained to prey.

Horsa Horsa was slain in, Leaving Hengist still alive To live out his allotted term, Surviving partner of the Firm. King Arthur Time has many a fable wound About King Arthur's table round, Where Knights quaffed cordials, wines and ales, And told their little fairy tales. Augustine About hundred years A.D. To teach us Christianity Came Augustine. Wondrous Story; Canterbury's Pile his glory. Heptarchy Called 'Heptarchy' the seven Saxon States each other made attacks on; After four hundred years they'd striven They coalesced in.

IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Alfred OF good King Alfred we've all heard How when hiding he incurred A lady's anger for not taking Care of Cakes which she was baking. (Most probably she left the King While she went out agossiping.) Before he died in, Old England's Navy had begun. He laid a tax on every town To aid his fleet to gain renown. He was the best of Saxon Kings And did a lot of useful things; Built Oxford with its noble spires And mapped out England into Shires. Danes IN seven-eight-three first came the Danes Who caused the Saxons aches and pains. They sailed right up our rivers broad, Putting the natives to the sword. "Danegeld" For centuries our sadly fated Towns by them were devastated. Etheldred the 'Unready Toff' By 'Danegeld' tries to buy them off.

IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Canute TWO hundred years the raiding Danes Came over. Then their Canute reigns. We'll merely mention that he tried An object lesson with the tide. Hardicanute Hardicanute, sad to confess, Died from drinking to excess. He couldn't conquer love of wine And with him went the Danish line. Edward the Confessor EDWARD the Confessor staid The Saxon line renewed. Remade At Westminster the Abbey grand, And signed the first 'Will' in this land. And since his time ('tis not refuted) Scores of Wills have been disputed.

Ah! legal quibbles such as these Mean Lawyers waxing rich on fees. Harold HAROLD last of the Saxon line At Hastings made an effort fine And lost his life—it was to be, Crushed by the men of Normandy. From Scandinavia they'd come, And made fair Normandy their home; William the Conqueror Whence spying out our shore, Oliver-Twist-like, wanted more. In he won the day In that tough fight out Hastings way. Of course, no record in our reach, Depicts 'ole Bill' thus on the beach.

GOODE NYGHTE the Conquerer BUT one thing's certain. Camera men, If only they'd existed then, Would have journeyed many a mile To 'snap' King happy smile. They made him King and schoolbooks say He ruled with arbitrary sway; Demanding with sharp battle axes Instant payment of big taxes. Curfew And p'raps it's just as well to tell He introduced the Curfew Bell; So at the early hour of eight Each doused his glim, raked out his grate. In bed at eight P.M. each day Life was but sombre, dull and grey; No cutting fancy ball room capers, No Cinemas or evening papers. He was a bully it is true, But to allow him his just due He made reforms; he also took In hand the bulky Doomsday book.

IN time we're glad to write People began to be polite; Ladies curtseyed to their beaux, Who smartly raised their gay chapeaux. The Jews The Jews he introduced from Spain Bringing much knowledge in their train Of Arts and Science; but 'Longshanks' Expelled them with no word of thanks. Feudalism These were the well known Feudal days, Tenants were slaves in many ways To mighty Lords who owned the land And ruled them with an iron hand. Not free from duties were the Lords, The King could call upon their swords And men to fight in time of need.

So feudal laws of old decreed. Rufus Rufus or the 'Red' In ten-eight-seven ruled instead; This may be; but we know, alack, Though he was red his deeds were black. Crusades The first Crusade in, A million men, a very hive, Swarm to the East, the Holy plain From the Mohammedans to gain. HENRY the First, of wisdom rife, Saxon Matilda makes his wife, Saxon and Norman line uniting, A learned chap who loved not fighting. Stephen STEPHEN of Blois ascends the throne And 'gainst Matilda holds his own.

Grandson of the Conqueror; Died in. HENRY the Second claims our rhyme 'The hardest worker of his time'; A wiser King we never had Nor father with his sons so bad. Becket This the first 'Plantagenet' King With Becket strove like anything; Church v. Crown Which should be Master, Church or Crown Pull-King Pull-Bishop; both went down. Thomas was murdered by four Knights On steps of Altar —Sorry wights: With bleeding feet the King atones By pilgrimage to Becket's bones. Despite his struggles with the Church He knocked the barons off their perch, hundred Castles razing In a manner quite amazing.

Law Trial by jury further grows; The King's Court in this reign arose; Our Parliaments from this proceed And all our other Courts indeed. Linen Linen's first used in Woollens alone in vogue before. Glass Windows In nought first came to pass The novelty of window glass. And doubtless playful little boys Full of children's simple joys, Cracked as our youngsters often do With stones or ball a pane or. Richard Cœur de Lion Cœur de Lion from one Crusade Returning was a prisoner made. But Blondel played an Air he knew, The King joined in; Voilà the clue. This catchy tune in a pleasant key Opened the door to liberty.

IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic AND so we'll quickly journey on Until we reach the reign of John; A King whose list of crimes was heavy; He treated badly his young 'Nevvy'. Magna Charta He signed the Magna Charta. Yes; In, but we may guess With much ill grace and many a twist; For King John wrote an awful fist. loses Normandy to France And by this beneficial chance In England comes amalgamation; Normans and Saxons form one Nation Robin Hood And now we come to Robin Hood, The Forest bandit of Sherwood, A popular hero much belauded But not by folks whom he'd defrauded.

There's no need to descant upon His boon companion 'Little'; Or 'Friar Tuck' so overblown He tipped the scale at fifteen stone. AND what of Henry number Three, The King who suffered poverty? It's very awkward we must own To be 'hard up' when on a Throne; IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic To have to scrape up an amount To pay the butcher on account, Or ask a dun in Kingly way To kindly call some other day. Coinage In it is stated Gold was coined and circulated.

Ha'pence and farthings just before; In those times worth a great deal more. Langton Died The Bible which from over seas Had no chapters and no verses Was by Archbishop Langton's skill Divided as we use it still. IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Why was it. allowed At court a huge rapacious crowd To drain his coffers nearly dry Flattering with cajolery?

Astrology MANY simple folk, (it's queer) Used to patronise the seer And pay cash down for magic spell Perchance a Horoscope as well. Or open wide at special rate That musty tome the Book of Fate; Or seek the Philtre's subtle aid To win the hand of some fair maid. We mus'nt miss the Troubadours Who went forth on their singing tours, Twanging harps and trilling lays To maids of medieval days. And Oh! the right good merry times With Maskers, Mummers and the Mimes, Hobby horses gaily prancing, Bats and Bowls and Maypole dancing. When folks would take a lengthy journey To see the Knights at Joust or Turney: Or watch the early English 'Knuts' Show their skill at Archery butts. Then come gloomy History pages On torture of the Middle ages; The clanking fetters grim and black, The thumbscrew and the awful rack, The horrors of the dungeon deep Beneath the moat or castle keep, Rusty locks and heavy keys And—let us change the subject, please.

First House of Commons, At Westminster they all arrive. Simon de Montfort Simon de Montfort was the man Who 'engineered' this useful plan. And we can picture these M.P.s Newly fledged and ill at ease Doing their level best to try To catch the embryo speaker's eye. IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Edward I. EDWARD First 'Longshanks' nicknamed For his lengthy stride far-famed. Here he is in twelve-seven-two Bounding along with much ado. A Soldier, Statesman and a King His lofty ideals picturing That England, Scotland, Wales all three, United should one country be. IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic First Prince of Wales In annexes Wales; Where afterwards no strife prevails. He promised a Prince with English So gave his new-born speechless son.

IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Edward I. (continued) NEXT Scotland Edward tries to tackle No easy task the Scotch to shackle; Wallace and Bruce resistance make, The King dies ere he gains the stake. In Edward's reign some author writes They first used candle dips for lights.

And coal came in about this date Mixed (as to-day) with lots of slate. IRON JELLOIDS So Monarchs, Barons, Dukes and Knights Warmed their toes with Derby Brights; But those in hovels had the smuts Arising from cheap Kitchen Nuts. Roger Bacon Roger Bacon Versed was in arts of alchemy; Gunpowder's composition knew; And many another chemic brew. Many Mortmain Acts are passed; centuries these efforts last To stop the hungry Hierarchy Devouring all the Squirearchy. Lollards Lollards in thirteen-seven arose Popish rituals to oppose; Wycliffe gives to old and young The Bible in the vulgar tongue. With of Gaunt's protection strong He dared to preach 'gainst cleric wrong; Precursor of the Reformation To liberal thought attuned the nation. EDWARD the Second with his minions Governs badly these dominions. His son a man of different mould Was Edward Three, both wise and bold. Through clinging to their French domains Our Kings are French through many reigns And Edward fighting in this cause Commenced a hundred years of Wars.

A century's struggle. For our pains Only Calais town remains. French Wars A century after this 'twas lost, In Mary's reign. Oh! what a frost. Weaving In thirteen-three-one England's taught Weaving by men from Flanders brought. Ryghte goode cloth with lots of 'body' The world was then not up to 'shoddy.' Blanket of Bristol in this year Invented blankets for our cheer; And since that time its been our boast Our beds have been as warm as toast. Edward 'Black Prince' A brave and noble warrior, 'licks' Crecy The valiant French in Crecy's fray; Cannon first used upon this day, Causing panic with their rattle; But the Yeomen win the battle, For, flicking arrows from their bows They 'filled the air as when it snows.' Thereon the English Calais seize And of the channel hold the keys; The Spanish pirates bend the knee Then Edward III's 'King of the sea.'

Parliament Lords and Commons from this date Have their meetings separate, The Commons first a Speaker make The Chancellors the Woolsack take. Ten lady members have the Lords But doubtless fearful of their words, Or thinking it not orthodoxy, They only let them vote by proxy. While Church and Barons have their squabbles The House of Commons more power nobbles; On laws and taxes dares speak out And give the Pope the right-about. Kinge Rychard Ye quarrelinge withe hysse People Leasing LEASING or Farming.

We are taught, Was introduced 'bout; The Feudal system's weakened and The Tenants 'usufruct' the land. On various counts the serfs go free And work for wages . The Black Death and the foreign wars In labour ranks commotion cause; Strikes and craftsmen's combination Then arise among the nation; These movements preached by one John Ball, Who, born too soon, was hanged withal. Richard. NOW comes the Second Richard's reign. It is recorded very plain That he was full of discontent Quarrelling with his Parliament.

"By my Halidom I'll not pay it" Poll Tax With his taxes super-sated The peasants grew exasperated; They threw their spades and pitchforks down And marched as rebels into town. Poll taxation Puts equal tax on all the nation; Lays thousand peasants dead; Wat Tyler and Jack Straw at head. Præmunire Præmunire Act is passed To check the Papal Bulls at last. Chaucer Chaucer the Poet this same year Makes Pilgrimage to Becket's bier. FORTES FORTUNA JUVAT. Age of Chivalry This was the age, aye verily, Of ryghte goode noble chivalry, When Knights went forth through storm and stress To rescue beauty in distress.

IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Or sallied out in valiant way A monster dragon for to slay, Or with lance or trusty blade Defend from harm the hapless maid. HENRY Four, called 'Bolingbroke' In Richard's wheel puts many a spoke; Compels him to resign the throne Which thereupon he makes his own. Through John of Gaunt, Lancastrian famed, His title to the crown he claimed; The Parliament confirms his right And thus he's king without a fight. Lollards In this reign persecution's turned Against the Lollards—Cobham's burned. Incredible!

The records show A statute 'de Comburondo.' FROM Henry Five, For many years with France did strive; His Widow founds the Tudor House By taking Owen for her spouse. HENRY next in our rhymes, For years had troublous times; Wars of Roses, Wars with France, The poor man never had a chance. Joan of Arc Joan of Arc the peasant Maid Inspired the French with Mystic aid; Disunited, we make peace, All France but Calais we release. Constantinople Constantinople's seized by Turks Causing Greek Scholars (with their works) To fly to Italy; and thence Learning's reborn—'The Renaissance.' Edward. IN Edward Fourth, The House of York obtains the Throne. He wins at Towton's bloody fray, No quarter given on that day. Guy, Earl of Warwick in these frays Was always turning different ways.

Barnet On Barnet Field he met his doom The Rose of York's now well abloom. The Barons, Church and Commons fall, The King emerges Boss of all. Benevolences he exacts, An early form of Super Tax. Earl of Warwick 'Kingmaker' was Earl Warwick styled With his manner scarcely mild He set Kings up and bowled them down Playing at ninepins with the Crown. IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Wars of Roses White and Red Rose warring madly Bled the country very sadly, years contending; At Bosworth Field we see the ending. Printing First in We print from type in this Countree. Now it is that time's first measured By monster watches greatly treasured. Parr this centurie His years did see; But, so 'tis said, In age was seventeen years ahead. Hoary patriarchs were these Retaining p'raps their faculties; What a comfort 'tis to mention Neither drew the old age pension.

Ye Bookeworme burninge ye Midnyghte Oile PRINTING started through the Nation A taste for higher education; Here is a citizen at home; Note his very brainy Dome. RICHARD (Crookback) in fateful hour Smothered his nephews in the Tower, He murdered them the Crown to gain; A heavy price for three years' reign. The Scutcheon's blotted terribly Of this King Richard number Three, For it seems his recreation Was ordering decapitation.

On Bosworth Field when sorely pressed He made a bid th'uncommonest 'My kingdom for a horse' he cried; No offers coming, there he died. LANCASTRIAN Richmond wins the fight And to make his title right Elizabeth of York espouses, Thus uniting the two Houses. This Henry of Tudor line To misers' habits did incline; millions stated to possess, A tidy little fortune! Yes! Star Chamber Much he managed to extort By means of a Star Chamber Court From the rich nobles; A new wile For adding to the kingly pile.

With cash in hand he could attain His wish as Autocrat to reign; As sole possessor of the guns The King no risk from rebels runs. Skyscrape Flats to be erected here; Buy Hustles chewing gum; Avenue Columbus COLUMBUS, full of travellers' lore, By going West sought India's shore; But found America's wondrous land; His 'exes' paid by Ferdinand. Of voyagers we've now a lot Vasco da Gama and Cabot, Who sailed from Bristol, whence it grew Bristolians claim this fine cuckoo. Henry VIII Pops the Question NOW Henry Eight comes on the screen, A stalwart youth, æstat. eighteen; With youthful hope the nation's buoyed; Only, alas! to be destroyed.

Ye Eighth Thynkyng offe Ye Past (continued) THIS King Henry number Eight times tried the married state; And certainly of all the Kings Spent the most on wedding rings. But to search through old Archives For tales of and his wives And all their little tiffs to trace We cannot spare the time or space. Yet there are some who fain would sing The praises of this rotund King; But as a husband we're afraid His category's lowest grade. He wielded harsh the despot's power, And packed his wives off to the Tower; Consigned them to a fate most dreaded; Two, alas! he had beheaded.

IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic HAIL NOW TO THEE OUR GOOD QUEEN BESS! (continued) Reformation MARTIN Luther, Sows his Reformation leaven; It finds a culture medium here In the 'New Learning's' atmosphere. Of this New Learning More's the chief, Utopia's Author, He's 'mid grief Beheaded, saying cool and calm, 'Cut not my beard, that's done no harm.' His friend Erasmus, Logic's Master, Trimmed his sails and 'scaped disaster.

A third, Colet who St. Paul's School London into being calls. Wolsey In Wolsey great, A Cardinal and Man of State, From Butcher's son had risen high. Reader! consult your Shakespeare nigh. Blamed by some; by others praised; He fell; but still the pile he raised Most nobly graces Hampton Court. Give Wolsey then a tender thought. His main ambition that the King Should be supreme in everything; Cromwell And Thomas Cromwell followed suit To make his master absolute Head of the Church within his realm.

These two most able at the helm; But not with skill enough endued To 'scape their King's ingratitude. Despotical the King's power grew. He's England's Pope by Act of Supremacy; as, to gain divorce, The foreign Pope is banned perforce. Now Bluff King Harry gives the Monks A series of most awful funks; thousand odd of their domains He 'collars' for his Courtiers' gains. EDWARD to the throne succeeds A pious youth of goodly deeds; One, well known in the Capital, The Blue Coat School (Christ's Hospital).

Mary QUEEN Mary One, in Smithfield Square, At Oxford, Gloucester and elsewhere, Burned poor Martyrs by the score; The Romish faith she would restore. Elizabeth HAIL now to thee our good Queen Bess, Garbed in the puffed and padded dress, Farthingale and starched up frills, Meaning heavy laundry bills. Od's Bodikins; what monstrous ruffs, What gowns of rich embroidered stuffs Piped and scolloped, trimmed with furs, And shaped like huge gasometers.

Now we've warfare of the Creeds, For their thoughts all Europe bleeds; Each party seeks by force to make The other side its faith forsake. Spain the Great Power of those days In these contentions first part plays. Plymouth Hoe Bowling Club Drake Drake at bowls on Plymouth Hoe Left his game to meet this foe And came home laden we are told With seachests full of Spanish gold. Armada In Armada strong From Spain to squash us comes along; Which Howard, Frobisher and Drake And stormy weather overtake.

GLOBE THEATRE TONYGHTE Ye Tragedye offe Hamlette by AND in these epoch making days Shakespeare wrote and staged his plays; Weaving a thread whose magic strands Entwine all English-speaking lands. Scots' Queen Mary Lost her head through fate contrary. When Henry Eight had robbed the Church 'Twas found the poor were in the lurch; Poor Law A law was passed about this date To place the poor upon the rate. IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Sir Walter Raleigh SIR Walter Raleigh, best of Knights, The first to taste the keen delights Of the enchantress so serene, The Ryghte Goode Ladye Nicotine. No information's yet to hand Concerning Raleigh's favourite brand; Tobacco Was it coarse-cut shag which burns The tongue, or birdseye or returns?

Queen Elizabeth Good Queen Bess we understand Had crowds of suitors for her hand; And here we beg to give a view Of suitors waiting in a queue. IRON JELLOIDS The Great Tonic Queen Elizabeth (continued) AS time rolled on this Good Queen Bess Lost somewhat of her sprightliness; She got into a nervous state Was mopish and disconsolate. Now, as everyone will own, Had 'Iron Jelloids' been but known In Bess's time; why, it's conceded 'Twas just the Tonic that she needed. East India Company The great 'Comp'ny' now began Its fine career without a plan. Great! The Elizabethan Age. In History's book a glorious page. Somewhere or other we've heard snuff Came in the days of frill and ruff; And here's a noble ill at ease Giving the first recorded sneeze. James I. JAMES of Scotland, miscalled a 'fule' As James One of England comes to rule. Gramercy! 'tis a canny thing To be a 'double-barrelled' King. The son of Mary Queen of Scots Of learning he had lots and lots, Writing sundry ponderous books 'Gainst 'bacca, witches and their spooks. James thought his kingly power divine And, loathing Puritanic 'whine,'.

He vowed to make them all comply Or else he'd 'know the reason why.' Pilgrim Fathers His persecution to escape Some Zealots in the 'Mayflower' shape Their course for an uncharted world Where Freedom's Flag could be unfurled. These 'Pilgrim Fathers' found a state 'New England,' blessed with happy fate. Folks have called the first King James Most uncomplimentary names; To wit 'a sloven' and 'a glutton'; Perhaps his weakness was Scotch Mutton.

And as to gluttony, 'Gadzooks'! If what we read in History books Is true, they all were trenchermen; There were no diet faddists then. It startles us, one must declare, To read their breakfast bill of fare; All 'Kynes' of ale, some highly spiced And divers meats, roast, boiled and sliced. In James' reign a man could get For money down a coronet And titles with the greatest ease Like folks to-day buy soap and cheese.

Harvey Yet a learned time; for Harvey shows That blood's not stagnant, but it flows; Lord Bacon 'Experiment!' Lord Bacon cries 'There is no progress otherwise.' Model of the notorious Guy Fawkes which however is not considered historically accurate th November OF troubles James had quite a lot, For instance the Gunpowder Plot. It fizzled out but left to-day A liking for Firework display. The First Cracker So rockets with their sweeping curves, Crackers which upset the nerves And squibs with their infernal din To this date owe their origin. HIS son Charles One we understand Ruled England with a grasping hand; For he was never loth to levy Taxes burdensome and heavy. He moved in an expensive set, Was always heavily in debt; In fact this monarch with his frills Was snowed up to the neck with bills.

He was courtly, graceful, distingué, And when the scaffold came his way 'He nothing common did or mean Upon that memorable scene.' He had a very taking way And made his taxed up subjects pay; And over taxing it is said This Monarch fairly lost his head. Petition of Right—The 'Petition of Right' a famous Act, The Commons from the King exact; Giving the subject on his own A remedy against the throne. First Newspaper In Our first news-sheet began its run; For twenty years 'twas going strong Then the first Censor came along. This journal cribbing from the Dutch Lacked the smart journalistic touch; And also photographic views, 'Sporting pars' and 'Stoppress News.'