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| **Roman Invasion** | | |
|  | **The Roman Emperor Julius Caesar carried out two expeditions in 55 and 54 BC, neither of which led to immediate Roman settlement in Britain. Caesar's summer expeditions were a failure. Almost a century later in 43 AD Emperor Claudius sent his legions over the seas to occupy Britain. The occupation was to last more than three centuries and the Romans saw their mission of civilizing the country. The British were not conquered easily. There was a resistance in Wales and the Romans destroyed the Druids, a class of Celtic priests (or witchdoctors) as their rituals alledgedly involved human sacrifice.**  **There was a revolt in East Anglia, where Queen Boadicea (Boudicca) and her daughters in their chariots were fighting against Roman soldiers and were defeated. The Roman occupation was spread mainly over England, while Wales, Scotland and Ireland remained unconquered areas of the Celtic fringe — preserving Celtic culture and traditions.**  **The Romans were in Great Britain for over 350 years, they were both an occupying army and the rulers. They imposed Pax Romana,— Roman peace — which stopped tribal wars, and protected Britain from the attacks of outsiders — Picts in the North, Saxons from overseas.**  **London is a Celtic name, but many towns that Romans built along their roads — Lancaster, Winchester, Chichester, etc. have the Latin component "castra"— a camp, a fortified town.**  **London was the centre of Roman Rule in Britain, it was walled, the Thames was bridged; and straight paved roads (Roman Roads,— that are as straight as a die) connected London with garrison towns.**  **Under the Emperor Hadrian in 120 AD a great wall was built across Britain between the Tyne and the Solway to protect the Romans against the attacks of Scots and Picts.**  **Hadrian's wall was a vast engineering project and is a material monument of the Roman times alongside with roads, frescoes and mosaics on the villas and baths (in the city of Bath).**  **The Romans also brought Christianity to Britain and the British Church became a strong institution.**  **The native language absorbed many Latin words at that time.**  **By the fifth century the Roman Empire was beginning to disintegrate and the Roman legions in Britain had to return back to Rome to defend it from the attacks of the new waves of barbaric invaders. Britain was left to defend and rule itself.**  **According to the writing of Venerable Bede, an English monk, barbaric teutonic tribes of Angles, Saxons and Jutes were making raids against the British throughout the fifth and sixth centuries. The British Celts tried to check the Ger­manic tribes, and that was the period of the half-legendary King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table who defended Christianity against the heathen Anglo-Saxons.**  **JULIUS CESAR AND THE BRITONS**  **The great Roman soldier, Julius Caesar, came to Britain. When he lived the people who lived in Rome were fighting against many other countries, and generally won the battles. Julius Caesar had heard about the Britons, who had helped the people in France to fight against him, and he made up his mind to come and see the country, and if he could, win it for the Roman "people. He came across the sea with soldiers in big ships called galleys, and the Britons went down to the seashore to try to keep them away. They had helmets on their heads, and big shields made of basketwork covered with animals' skins. They threw stones and sharp things at the Romans when they tried to get on shore. At first the Romans were afraid, but one of them, who carried a pole with an eagle on it (which the Romans had as we have our flag), jumped into the water and waded to the shore. They fought bravely, and so did the Britons, but the Romans won. Caesar went away again, but came back next year.**  **CARACTACUS, A BRAVE BRITON**  **Julius Cassar came a second time to Britain, but he did not really get it for Rome. Nearly a hundred years afterwards the Emperor Claudius sent soldiers from Rome to fight against the Britons. One of the bravest of the British kings, named Caractacus, fought for many years against the Romans, but at last his stepmother gave him up to them. They took him in chains to Rome. When he saw the big houses and beauti ful streets of Rome, which was the greatest city in the world, he wondered why the Romans had come to take his own poor country from him. When he was taken to see the Emperor Claudius, Caractacus told the Emperor what he was thinking. The Emperor thought him such a brave and great man that he told the soldiers to let him go free. So Carac tacus was set free, but we do not know whether he ever came back to his own country again.**  **BOADICEA, THE  BRITISH  QUEEN**  **It took the Romans many years to win Britain quite for themselves, for the British kings, and sometimes the queens, fought so bravely. The bravest queen of all was Boadicea, a beautiful woman, with golden hair and blue eyes. The Romans had actually whipped her, and been very rough with her two daughters. Boadicea was terribly angry, and she went about telling the other Britons and begging them to fight their hardest against the Romans. She herself fought in a great battle, riding in a little chariot, or carriage, with small horses, which the Britons used when they were fighting. But in the middle of the fight she saw that the Romans were winning. Rather than be taken prisoner by them she killed herself by drinking poison.**  **THE FIRST ENGLISHMEN IN  BRITAIN**  **In the end the Romans got Britain for themselves, and some of them came to live here. There were Romans in Britain for nearly 400 years," but by that time the people of Rome were having a great deal of trouble, and had to fight many battles. They wanted their soldiers from Britain and took them away, and so the Britons were free once more. But they no longer knew how to fight well, and when some people called Picts and Scots from Scotland came to fight against the Britons, they had to ask help from other people. The British King, Vortigern, asked two kings who used to fight on the sea to come to help him. They were called Englishmen, and they were the first Englishmen to settle down and live in Britain. They were named . Hengist and Horsa. When they had helped the Britons they would not go away again, and many more Englishmen came from the country across the sea where they lived, and after a time they won the country from the Britons, and so Britain became England.** |  |