

HISTORY OF ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

THE ROMANS IN BRITAIN

55 B. C.—410 A. D.

1. **The Romans first hear of Britain.**—About half a century before the birth of Christ, a great Roman general named Julius Cæsar set out to subdue the various tribes living in the country then called Gaul, and now called France. The people nearest to Dover Strait resisted him longest, and he concluded that some one must be helping them. Who could it be? The tribes on three sides of them would not dare to oppose him, and on the fourth side was the ocean. At last Cæsar conquered these people and went through their land to the sea. On the north-west there were dim, white cliffs far out on the horizon. As he stood looking at them, he remembered the aid that had come to his foes from some mysterious source. "That is it," he said to himself, "and if I am to hold the land that I have won, I must conquer that country afar off in the ocean."

2. **Cæsar attempts to learn about Britain.**—Probably all that Cæsar knew about the country was that it was thought to be an island, that it was called Britain, and that somewhere in Britain there were mines of tin. He questioned the people whom he had subdued, but they said that they knew nothing of it, except that merchants sometimes went back and forth between the two countries. Then Cæsar sent for the merchants and questioned them. They also could give him no information, as they went only to the coast of Britain, and they knew nothing at all about what was inland. Cæsar