King Arthur in History and Legend

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Title: King Arthur in History and Legend

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The Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature

KING ARTHUR
IN HISTORY AND LEGEND
PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

THIS little book is an attempt to trace, in as
clear and summary a form as possible, the
origin and growth of King Arthur's historical and
literary renown, and follows, largely, the lines of
a chapter contributed by me to the first volume
of The Cambridge History of English Literature.
Although I have had, necessarily, to refer to much
literary matter which is purely mythological, I
have not sought to give any account of the specula-
tions of those who in our own time have endeavoured
to reconstruct and interpret the myths and beliefs
of pre-historic Celtic heathendom. Nor have I
made more than the briefest allusion to the subsidiary
legends which, mainly through the agency of French
romantic scribes, came to be associated with Arthur's
name, and to be included in "the matter of Britain"
as it emerged out of the age of high romance. The
book deals, all but exclusively, with King Arthur
himself, as he is known to chroniclers, romancers
and poets.

My obligations to particular writers will be found
recorded in the paginal notes. I must, however, express here my special indebtedness to the writings of Sir John Rhys and the late Mr Alfred Nutt. To Mr Nutt, in particular, whose tragic and untimely death last year was a grievous loss to Celtic scholarship, I owe much private help and suggestion.

In one or two chapters of the book—the second and the third, more especially—I have reproduced, almost verbatim, a few short passages from articles of mine which have appeared in The Quarterly Review, and in the Transactions of the London Gymnioderion Society.

W. LEWIS JONES.

Bangor,
July 1911.

PREFATORY NOTE TO SECOND EDITION

In this edition a few slight changes and corrections have been made in the text. The "Additional Notes" at the end of the book (pp. 138-140) supply a few omissions apparent in the first edition, some of which were pointed out to the author by his reviewers.

W. L. J.

July 1914.
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KING ARTHUR IN HISTORY
AND LEGEND

INTRODUCTORY

"It is notoriously known through the universal world," writes Caxton in his preface to Malory's
Morte Darthur, "that there be nine worthy" kings
"and the best that ever were," and that the "first
and chief of the three best Christian and worthy"
is King Arthur. Caxton, however, finds it a matter
of reproach that so little had been done in his own
country to perpetuate and honour the memory
of one who "ought most to be remembered amongst
us Englishmen tofore all other Christian kings."
Thanks mainly to Caxton's own enterprise, and to
the poets who have drawn their inspiration from
Malory's book, there is no longer any cause to accuse
Englishmen of indifference to Arthur's name and
fame. No literary matter is more familiar to them
than "what resounds in fable or romance of Uther's
son." And yet nothing is more "notoriously
known" than that authentic historical records of the