

Vine Street  
Cromwell Lane  
Old Brompton  
16 March 1837.

Dear Sir,

The portion of the Historical History of England which we hope you will agree to undertake is the sketch of the history of the Language, which will form part of the Fifth Chapter of each book.

The entire title of the Fifth Chapter is "The History of Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts"; and the history of the Language will form the natural introduction to the amount of the Learning and literary productions of each period, the leading & most important division of the Chapter. —

We begin to the II., or Saxon & Danish Period, however, we wish you would, in addition to the account of the Language, furnish us with a rapid review of the native Learning & Literature, including notices of the most remarkable Saxon works as well as of their productions. Of course only the more remarkable can be noticed. The works in Latin, such as Boetius & Alcuin, are already in hand — as well as the Science & Fine Arts of the Period. —

I wish we could afford you more space than I fear we shall be able to do both for the Saxon

detail, & for the subsequent portions of the history of the  
 language. - But we shall all of us be obliged to write  
 throughout under the pressure of a rather severe state  
 of limitation. The great cost of a great book (or a large  
 one, rather) makes it expedient that the history should  
 be contained in three volumes of about 720 double  
 columned pages each - the column containing on  
 both two thirds of the quantity of letter-press con-  
 tained in a column of the Penny Cyclopaedia.  
 Subtracting about a fifth for cuts, headings of chap-  
 ters, &c. the whole quantity of letter-press in the  
 book will amount to only about 3500 columns,  
 being equal to about 2300 cols. of the Cyclopaedia.  
 Each period is divided into seven chapters;  
 and it is proposed that the first volume, con-  
 taining little more than 1100 full columns (or  
 three of woodcuts &c.) shall bring down the story  
 to the accession of Elizabeth - in the six following  
 periods: -

- I. - British and Roman (B.C. 54 - A.D. 449)
- II. - Saxon and Danish (A.D. 449 - 1066)
- III. - Conquest to end of John (A.D. 1066 - 1216)
- IV. - to end of Rich. 2<sup>d</sup> (A.D. 1216 - 1399)
- V. - to end of Rich. 3<sup>d</sup> (A.D. 1399 - 1485)
- VI. - to end of Henry (A.D. 1485 - 1558)

The passages here indicated seem to be the most  
 natural & convenient, upon the best consideration  
 I have been able to give to the subject in all  
 its selections. Of course, however, the successor has  
 the better ground 1798-1806.

been principally formed upon the limit of the first &  
 military records, or what is more properly (or at  
 least more commonly) understood by the history of  
 the Kingdom. -

This scheme allows only about 180 columns for  
 each period - on an average. If the 7 chapters  
 of the Period (or book) were all of equal length,  
 each might therefore turn on an average to be  
 about 25 cols.; but the first or historical chap-  
 ter will almost always considerably exceed that pro-  
 portion - & for that reason we shall not be  
 able to allow to each of the sub periods more than  
 about 20 cols. on an average. Such therefore will  
 be the average length of the whole (A.D. 1066) chapter,  
 with the history of literature, science, & the fine arts - of  
 which the history of the language will form a sub-  
 division.

In some cases, however, we must continue to  
 get over the subject in the fewer columns, & for  
 in order to obtain the necessary room for the  
 more important parts of it. Thus, I should say,  
 that the Saxon language & literature - the first  
 coming from the old Saxon into the middle English  
 language of our modern English - the Norman-French in-  
 fluence - the growth of the first dialect of the Saxon  
 period - the rise of the French - the fixation  
 of the English in essentially its present form - would  
 all be points requiring somewhat more liberal  
 disposition. On the other hand, under some of the  
 periods, there might not be much to say upon

Your particular subject. So, you might be brief in one  
place to enable you to enlarge in another. -

The whole, or nearly the whole, of the Saxon Period  
will have to be published by the 1<sup>st</sup> of May - and  
I feel therefore I must ask you to let me have a  
sketch of the Saxon language & literature at  
the very latest within three weeks from the present  
date - and if it were convenient for you to let  
me have it in a fortnight that would suit us still  
better. It is just possible that the Chapter, being the  
first in order, may not be required for our  
third part. -

Our 6<sup>th</sup> Chapter in each Period, entitled *History of  
Manors & Customs*, is a very miscellaneous one.  
A general notion of its contents may be got from Henry's  
Chapter of the same title. Some heads of it are already  
assigned - particularly the costume civil & military, and  
the furniture; - but perhaps there might be some others  
in regard to which you might be inclined to favour  
us with your valuable assistance. Will you let me  
know should any occur to you? - I hope indeed we  
shall not want your occasional advice & sug-  
gestions - to keep us right. - Whenever you think we  
require them.

Dear Sir,

Yours very truly

Robt. Baskin

To Henry's Office

1221 Geo Little Craik  
1798-1866  
Author + Historian

1222 John Conybeare  
1779-1824  
Author Professor  
of Poelun &c. et

1223 Austin Cooper  
Author