



AS-35665 **CSL**

FOR CONSULTATION ONLY

**035665** PREFACE.

THIS Work is designed to supply a long acknowledged want in our School and College Literature,—a STUDENT'S HISTORY OF ENGLAND in a volume of moderate size, free from sectarian and party prejudice, containing the results of the researches of the best modern historians, tracing more particularly the development of the Constitution, and bringing out prominently the characters and actions of the great men of our country. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the manifold difficulties of such an undertaking; difficulties which the Editor of the present Work would have deemed insuperable, if he had not been able to avail himself of the clear narrative and matchless style of Hume.

It has lately been the fashion in some quarters to under-rate the merits and exaggerate the faults of Hume; but the most competent judges have generally been among the first to render homage to his greatness as an historian. Thus Mr. Hallam remarks that the domestic transactions in the reign of Edward I. have been "extremely well told by Hume, the first writer who had the merit of exposing the character of Edward I.;" and a recent critic has observed, "that Hume's account of our English annals is still, with all its defects, the best history of the period over which it extends."\* Indeed, the History of Hume will probably long remain unrivalled. It is not mere learning and the poring over records that con-

\* *The Times*, April 1, 1838.



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stimulus and historian. A writer may be accurate in his facts, but most erroneous in his deductions from them. With the best materials he may completely misrepresent history from want of the ability to trace the connexion of events, and to reason from them correctly: above all, he may lack that power of historical narration without which the facts of history will ever remain mere annals—dry bones, devoid of form and flesh, and vital motion. In all the great qualities of an historian, Hume was pre-eminently excellent. His perception was the most acute; his judgment, except when occasionally warped by prejudice, the most sound; his historical views the largest and most enlightened. But the principal charm of his work lies in his inimitable style, the ease and grace of which inspired even so great a writer as Gibbon with “a mixed sensation of delight and despair.”

It is not intended, however, to ignore or extenuate Hume's defects. The Editor of the present Work has carefully compared the historian's statements with the best and most recent authorities, retaining his language as far as was practicable, but at the same time introducing into the text numerous corrections and additions. Hume's political principles, as is well known, led him to uphold the royal prerogative against the popular element in our constitution: and this bias may be observed, not only in the colouring of his narrative, and the tone of his reasonings, but occasionally also, it must be added, in an unfair use of his authorities. The effect of these principles is most conspicuous in that portion of his work which he first published; namely, the history of James I. and Charles I. In the lives of the two following Stuarts there is not much to which any lover of constitutional freedom would be reasonably inclined to object; but with the view apparently of exculpating Charles I., the great hero of his work, in his maintenance of those principles which cost him his





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row and his life, the historian has been led to represent the royal prerogative under the Plantagenets and Tudors as greater and more absolute than the facts will justify. These views it has been the duty of the present Editor to modify and correct from later and more unprejudiced writers.

Another defect in Hume's History is the carelessness with which he has treated the earlier portion, and especially the Anglo-Saxon period. This arose from two causes: his philosophical indifference for a people whom he considered little better than barbarians; and the want of authentic materials for his narrative. This want has been supplied in the present century by the impulse given to antiquarian research, and by the revival of the study of the Anglo-Saxon language and literature. The works of Turner, Palgrave, Lappenberg, and Kemble have thrown an entirely new light upon this period of our annals; and accordingly the early History down to the time of the Norman Conquest has been in a great measure rewritten by the Editor.

-As much prominence as possible is given in the present Work to the rise and progress of the Constitution; but in order to economise space, and at the same time not interrupt the narrative, much important information upon this subject is inserted in a smaller type in the "Notes and Illustrations," where the student will find an account of the "government, laws, and institutions of the Anglo-Saxons," of the "Anglo-Norman constitution," of the "origin and progress of Parliament," and of other matters of a similar kind. Several constitutional documents, such as the Petition of Right and the Bill of Rights, are printed at length. These Notes and Illustrations, which contain discussions on various other historical and antiquarian subjects, have been drawn up mainly with the view of assisting the student in further inquiries; and with the same object a copious list of authorities is appended.





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The continuation from the reign of James II., which it has been necessary to compress into narrow limits, has been compiled from the best authorities, among which Lord Mahon's History deserves to be particularly mentioned, on account of the valuable assistance which has been derived from it in this portion of the work. All that could be attempted in so limited a space was a succinct narrative of the principal events; and it is hoped that no facts of any great importance have been omitted.

Another work which has been of great service to the Editor is the 'Historic Peerage of England,' by the late Sir Harris Nicolas. As a peer is usually mentioned in history by his title, and the same title has often been borne by different families, the student frequently experiences no small difficulty in ascertaining the family to which a title belongs, and supposes a relationship between persons who are in no way connected. Sir Harris Nicolas has removed all difficulties of this kind; and accordingly the Editor of the present Work has taken pains to distinguish in the Notes between families bearing the same title, and to specify the times when titles of historical importance were created and became extinct. It is believed that such information, which is given for the first time in a History of this description, will guard the student against many mistakes.

All the coins and medals figured in the work have been drawn from originals in the Medal Room of the British Museum; and the Editor desires to express his obligations to Mr. Hawkins and Mr. R. Stuart Poole for their advice and judgment in the selection of them.

LONDON, November, 1858.



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Coin of the Emperor Hadrian, p. 11.

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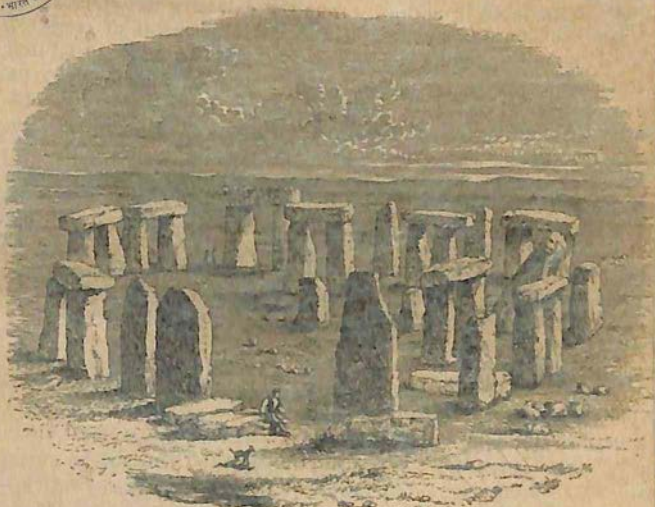
Mitre of Thomas à Becket. Cathedral at Sens.





# HISTORY OF ENGLAND

# CSL



Stonehenge.

## BOOK I.

### THE BRITONS, ROMANS, AND ANGLO-SAXONS.

B.C. 55—A.D. 1066.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### THE BRITONS AND ROMANS.

§ 1. Earliest notices of Britain. § 2. The earliest inhabitants of Britain were Celts of the Cymric stock. § 3. Religion of the Britons. § 4. Knights and bards. § 5. Manners and Customs of the Britons. § 6. British tribes. § 7. Caesar's two invasions of Britain. § 8. History till the Invasion of Claudius. § 9. Caractacus. § 10. Conquest of Mona; Boudicca. § 11. Agricola. § 12. The Roman walls between the Solway and the Tyne, and the Clyde and the Forth. § 13. Saxon pirates; Carausius. § 14. Picts and Scots. § 15. Final departure of the Romans. § 16. Condition of Britain under the Romans. § 17. Christianity in Britain.

§ 1. THE south-western coasts of Britain were known to the Phœnician merchants several centuries before the Christian era. The



Phœnician colonists of Tartessus and Gades in Spain were attracted to the shores of Britain by its abundant supply of tin, a metal of great importance in antiquity from the extensive use of bronze for the manufacture of weapons of war and implements of peace. It would seem that the Phœnicians originally obtained this metal from India, since the Grecian name for tin is of Indian origin, and must have been brought into Greece by the Phœnicians, together with the article itself.\* Accordingly, when these traders found tin in the Scilly Isles, they gave them the name of the Cassiterides or the Tin-islands, an appellation by which they were known to Herodotus† in the fifth century before the Christian era. Aristotle, however, is the first writer who mentions the British islands by name. He says, "In the ocean beyond the Pillars of Hercules are two very large islands, called Britannic, namely, Albion and Ierne;"‡ the former being England and Scotland, the latter Ireland. The origin of the name of Britain is very uncertain,§ but that of Albion is perhaps derived from a Celtic word signifying white, a name probably given to the island by the Gauls, who could not fail to be struck with the chalky cliffs of the opposite coast. Himilco, a Carthaginian navigator, whose diary was extant in the fifth century of our era, and who is repeatedly quoted as an authority by Festus Avienus in his geographical poem called *Ora Maritima*, touched near Albion at the Tin Islands, which he calls *Oestrymnides*. But the oldest writer who gives any account of the inhabitants is Pytheas, a Massilian, fragments of whose journal have been preserved by Strabo and other writers. By these means some knowledge of the British islands became gradually diffused among the natives of the Mediterranean. They had excited the curiosity and inquiries both of Polybius and Scipio as early as the second century before the Christian era.||

In addition to the Phœnician merchants, the Greek colonists of Massilia (Marseilles) and Narbo (Narbonne) carried on a trade at a very early period with the southern parts of Britain, by making overland journeys to the northern coast of Gaul. The principal British exports seem at that time to have been tin, lead, skins, slaves, and hunting-dogs, of which the last were used by the Celts in war; but at a later period, when the Britons became more civilized, corn and cattle, gold, silver, and iron, and an inferior kind of pearl, may be

\* The Greek name for tin is *kassiteros* (*κασσίτερος*), which evidently comes from the Sanscrit *kastira*.

† iii. 115.

‡ De Mundo, c. 3.

§ Many writers derive it from a Celtic word, *brith* or *brit*, "painted," because the inhabitants stained their bodies with a blue colour extracted from woad. In the early Welsh poems we find the island called *Frydain*, which is clearly the same as Britain; but whether this is a genuine Celtic word, or borrowed from the Romans, cannot be determined.

|| Polyb. iii. 57.





## EARLIEST INHABITANTS CYMRY.

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added to the list. An interesting account of the British tin-trade is given by Diodorus Siculus.\* This writer relates that the inhabitants near the promontory of Belerium (Land's End), after forming the tin into cubical blocks, conveyed it in waggons to an island named Ictis,† since at low tides the space between that island and Britain became dry. At Ictis the tin was purchased by the merchants, who carried it across to Gaul.

§ 2. Nothing is known of the history of Britain till the invasion of the island by Julius Cæsar in B.C. 55. The fabulous tale of the colonization of the island by Brute the Trojan, the great-grandson of Æneas, and of his long list of descendants, does not require any serious refutation. The only certain means by which nations can indulge their curiosity in researches concerning their remote origin is to consider the language, manners, and customs of their ancestors, and to compare them with those of the neighbouring nations. There can be no doubt that the first inhabitants of Britain were a tribe of Celts, who peopled the island from the neighbouring continent. Their language was the same; their manners, their government, their superstition,—varied only by those small differences which time or a communication with the bordering nations must necessarily introduce. The Celts are divided into two great branches, the Gael and the Cymry, of whom the former now inhabit Ireland and the Highlands of Scotland, and the latter the principality of Wales. It has been vehemently debated whether the ancient Britons belonged to the Gaelic or Cymric stock of the Celtic race; but we may safely acquiesce in the conclusion of the most cautious modern inquirers, that both the Britons and the Gauls of the continent were Cymry, and that the Welsh may be regarded as the descendants of the ancient inhabitants. In proof of this it may be sufficient to mention that the Celtic words which still exist in the English language are clearly to be referred to the Cymric and not to the Gaelic dialect.

The Gallic origin of the ancient Britons is expressly stated by Cæsar, who says‡ that the maritime parts of the island were inhabited by Belgic Gauls, who had crossed over from the mainland for the sake of plunder. He adds, it is true, that the inhabitants of the interior were said by tradition to have sprung from the soil; from which we can only infer that the earlier immigrations of the Celts took place long before the memory of man. Tacitus, who derived his information from his father-in-law Agricola, supposed §

\* v. 22.

† This island has been identified with the Isle of Wight on account of the resemblance of its name to Vectis; but its proximity to the tin country, and the circumstance of the intervening space between this island and Britain being dry at the low tides, favour its identification with St. Michael's Mount.

‡ Bell. Gall. v. 12.

§ Agricola, c. 11.





that the red hair and large limbs of the Caledonians indicated a German origin; and that the dark complexion of the Silures, their curly hair, and their position opposite to Spain, furnished grounds for believing that they were descended from Iberian settlers from that country; but these were evidently mere conjectures, to which Tacitus himself seems not to have attached much importance, since he adds that upon a careful estimate of probabilities we must believe that the Gauls took possession of the neighbouring coast.

§ 3. The connexion of the Britons with the Celts of Gaul is shown by their common religion. Cæsar, indeed, was of opinion that Druidism had its origin in Britain, and was transplanted thence into Gaul; and it is certain that in his time Britain was the chief seat of the religion and the principal school where it was taught. But this circumstance only shows that the common faith of the Celtic tribes had been preserved in its greatest purity by the remotest and most ancient of them, who had been driven by the tide of emigration to the western parts of the island.

The religion of the Britons was one of the most considerable parts of their government, and the Druids, who were their priests, possessed great authority among them. Besides ministering at the altar and directing all religious duties, they presided over the education of youth; they enjoyed an immunity from war and taxes; they possessed both the civil and criminal jurisdiction; they decided all controversies, among states as well as among private persons, and whoever refused to submit to their decrees was exposed to the most severe penalties. The sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him; he was forbidden access to the sacrifices or public worship; he was debarred all intercourse with his fellow-citizens; he was refused the protection of the law; and death itself became an acceptable relief from the misery and infamy to which he was exposed. Thus the bands of government, which were naturally loose among that rude and turbulent people, were happily strengthened by the terrors of their superstition.

No species of superstition was ever more terrible than that of the Druids. Besides the severe penalties which it was in the power of the priests to inflict in this world, they inculcated the eternal transmigration of souls. They practised their rites in dark groves or other secret recesses; and in order to throw a greater mystery over their religion, they communicated their doctrines only to the initiated, and strictly forbade the committing of them to writing, lest they should at any time be exposed to the examination of the profane vulgar. In the ordinary concerns of life, however, they employed writing, their characters being either the Greek or a sort of hieroglyphics formed from the figures of plants. Of the nature of their rites, except their veneration for the oak and mistle-

toe, we know but little. If a mistletoe was discovered growing upon an oak, a priest severed it with a golden knife; on which occasion a festival was held under the tree, and two milk-white bulls were offered as a sacrifice. The Druids worshipped a plurality of gods, to which Caesar, after the Roman fashion, applies the names of the deities of his own country. The attributes of the god chiefly worshipped appear to have resembled those of Mercury. The stupendous ruins of Stonehenge, situated in Salisbury Plain, are probably the remains of a Druidical temple, but it is not mentioned by any ancient writer.\* The principles which the Druids inculcated were piety towards the gods, charity towards man, and fortitude in suffering. They taught their disciples astronomy, or rather perhaps astrology, and magic, and trained them to acuteness in legal distinctions; and a term of twenty years was commonly devoted to the acquisition of the knowledge which they imparted. They chose their own high-priest, but the election was frequently decided by arms.

Human sacrifices formed one of the most terrible features of the Druidical worship. The victims were generally criminals, or prisoners of war, but, in default of these, innocent and unoffending persons were sometimes immolated; and in the larger sacrifices immense figures made of plaited osier were filled with human beings and then set on fire. The spoils of war were often devoted by the Druids to their divinities; and they punished with the severest tortures whoever dared to secrete any part of the consecrated offering. These treasures they kept in woods and forests, secured by no other guard than the terrors of their religion; and this steady conquest over human avidity may be regarded as more signal than their prompting men to the most extraordinary and most violent efforts. No idolatrous worship ever attained such an ascendant over mankind as that of the ancient Gauls and Britons; and the Romans, after their conquest, finding it impossible to reconcile those nations to the laws and institutions of their masters while it maintained its authority, were at last obliged to abolish it by penal statutes; a violence which had never in any other instance been practised by those tolerating conquerors.

§ 4. After the Druids, the chief authority was possessed by the equestrian order. The British bards were closely connected with the Druids. They sung the genealogies of their princes, and possessed lyric poetry as well as epic and didactic, accompanying their songs with an instrument called the *chrotta*.

§ 5. The south-eastern parts of Britain had already before the age of

\* In the compound word *Stone-henge*, the latter half, *henge*, probably signifies the inpost, which is suspended on two uprights, and consequently the word might be used in any case in which one stone was suspended on two or more others.—Guest, in *Proceedings of Philological Society*, vol. vi. p. 33.





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Cæsar made the first and most requisite step towards a civil settlement, and the Britons, by tillage and agriculture, had there increased to a great multitude. The other inhabitants of the island still maintained themselves by pasture: they were clothed with skins of beasts: they dwelt in round huts constructed of wood or reeds, which they reared in the forests and marshes with which the country was covered: they shifted easily their habitation when actuated either by the hopes of plunder or the fear of an enemy: the convenience of feeding their cattle was even a sufficient motive for removing their seats; and as they were ignorant of all the refinements of life, their wants and their possessions were equally scanty and limited.\*

The Britons tattooed their bodies and stained them blue and green with woad; customs which were long retained by the Picts. They wore checkered mantles like the Gauls or Scottish highlanders; the waist was circled with a girdle, and metal chains adorned the breast. The hair and mustachio were suffered to grow, and a ring was worn on the middle finger, after the fashion of the Gauls. Their arms were a small shield, javelins, and a pointless sword. They fought from chariots (*essedæ*, *covini*) having scythes affixed to the axles. The warrior drove the chariot, and was attended by a servant who carried his weapons. The dexterity of the charioteers excited the admiration of the Romans. They would urge their horses at full speed down the steepest hills or along the edge of precipices, and check and turn them in full career. Sometimes they would run along the pole, or seat themselves on the yoke, and instantly, if necessary, regain the chariot. Frequently after breaking the enemy's ranks they would leap down and fight on foot; meanwhile the chariots were withdrawn from the fray, and posted in such a manner as to afford a secure retreat in case of need; thus enabling them to combine the rapid evolutions of cavalry with the steady firmness of infantry. The Britons had no fortresses, and their towns, if such a name can be applied to mere clusters of huts, were defended by their position in the centre of almost impenetrable forests, and by being surrounded with a deep ditch, and a fence or wall of felled trees.

§ 6. The Britons were divided into many small nations or tribes; and being a military people, whose chief property was their arms and their cattle, it was impossible, after they had acquired a relish for liberty, for their princes or chieftains to establish any despotic authority over them. Their governments, though monarchical, were free, as well as those of all the Celtic nations; and the common

\* Cæsar's story of their having their wives in common probably arose from some misconception respecting their method of dwelling together in small societies, as the custom is not mentioned by Diodorus Siculus.



people seem to have enjoyed more liberty among them than among the nations of Gaul from whom they were descended. Each state was divided into factions within itself: it was agitated with jealousy or animosity against the neighbouring states: and while the arts of peace were yet unknown, wars were the chief occupation, and formed the chief object of ambition, among the people.

The British tribes with whom the Romans became acquainted by Cæsar's invasion were mainly the following, though their precise boundaries cannot of course be laid down:—

The *Cantii*,\* under four princes, inhabited Kent.

The *Trinobantes* were seated to the north of the Thames, and between that river and the Stour, in the present counties of Middlesex and Essex, having London, already a place of considerable trade, for their capital.

The *Genimagni*, perhaps the same as the Icenii of Tacitus, dwelt in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire.

The *Segontiaci* inhabited parts of Hants and Berks.

The *Ancalites* and *Bibroci* inhabited parts of Berks and Wilts.

The position of the *Cassi* is uncertain.

§ 7. Cæsar, taking advantage of a short interval in his Gallic wars, invaded Britain with two legions in the year B.C. 55. The natives, informed of his intention, were sensible of the unequal contest, and endeavoured to appease him by submissions, which, however, retarded not the execution of his design. After some resistance, he landed, as is supposed, at Deal;† and having obtained several advantages over the Britons, and obliged them to promise hostages for their future obedience, he was constrained by the necessity of his affairs, and the approach of winter, to withdraw his forces into Gaul. The Britons, relieved from the terror of his arms, neglected the performance of their stipulations; and that haughty conqueror resolved next summer (B.C. 54) to chastise them for this breach of treaty. He landed, apparently at the same spot, and unopposed, with above 20,000 men, and pitched his camp a little above Sandwich, near Richborough; and though he found a more regular resistance from the Britons, who had united under Cassivelaunus, or Caswallon, one of their petty princes, he discomfited them in every action. He advanced into the country and passed the Thames in the face of the enemy at a ford, probably in the neighbourhood of Kingston, in spite of the piles which Caswallon had caused to be driven into the bed of the river, considerable remains of which are said to have existed in the time of Beda, seven centuries later. The valiant defence of Caswallon was frustrated by the treacherous submission of the Trinobantes and other tribes. Cæsar took and

\* The Cantii derived their name from the Celtic *Caint*, or open country

† See Notes and Illustrations (A).

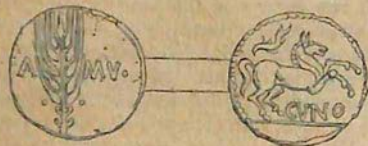


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burnt his forest fortress at Verulamium, the modern St. Albans; established his own ally, Mandubratius, in the sovereignty of the Trinobantes; and having obliged the inhabitants to make him new submissions, he returned with his army into Gaul, and left the authority of the Romans more nominal than real in this island.

§ 8. The civil wars which ensued, and which prepared the way for the establishment of monarchy in Rome, saved the Britons from the yoke which was ready to be imposed upon them. Augustus, apprehensive lest the same unlimited extent of dominion, which had subverted the republic, might also overwhelm the empire, recommended it to his successors never to enlarge the territories of the Romans; and Tiberius, jealous of the fame which might be acquired by his generals, made this advice of Augustus a pretence for his inactivity. Almost a century elapsed before a Roman force again appeared in Britain; but the natives during this period kept up some intercourse with Rome, though on a completely independent footing. Hence, as well as through their commerce with Gaul, where the Roman power had been completely established, they appear to have derived some tincture of Roman civilization; and the coins of Cynobelin, the Cymbeline of Shakespeare, and a successor

of Caswallon, as well as those of Tasciovanus, probably his father, display the influence of Roman art, and a knowledge of the Latin alphabet. The mad sallies of Caligula, in which he menaced Britain with an invasion, served only to expose himself and



Gold Coin of Cynobelin or Cunobelinus.

Obverse: [A. M. V.] (Camulodunum); ear of corn.  
Reverse: C. VNO (Cunobelinus); horse to right.

the empire to ridicule; but at length a British exile named Peric instigated the emperor Claudius to undertake the reduction of the island, and Aulus Plautius was despatched thither at the head of four legions, together with Gallic auxiliaries, A.D. 43. The first great victory and the honour of a triumph was achieved by Cn. Osidius Geta. Vespasian, the future emperor, likewise distinguished himself in this campaign, and at the head of the second legion fought thirty battles, took twenty places, and subdued the Isle of Wight. Claudius himself, finding matters sufficiently prepared for his reception, made a journey into Britain and received the submission of several British states, the Cantii, Atrebates, Regni, and Trinobantes, whom their possessions and more cultivated manner of life rendered willing to purchase peace at the expense of their liberty. Claudius entered the city of Camulodunum (either Maldon or Colchester), where a colony of veterans was subsequently esta-



lished, and the south-eastern parts of Britain were gradually moulded into a Roman province.

§ 9. The other Britons, under the command of Caractacus, or Caradoc, a son of Cynobelin, still maintained an obstinate resistance, and the Romans made little progress against them till Ostorius Scapula was sent over to command the Roman armies (A.D. 47). Under this commander, Roman camps were established on the



Aureus of Emperor Claudius.

Obverse: TI. CLAVD. CAESAR AVG. P.M. TRP. VIII. IMP. XVI. (Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Pontifex Maximus, Tribunicia Potestate VIII. Imperator XVI.); head, laureate, right. Reverse: Triumphal arch, on which equestrian figure and two trophies, inscribed DE BRITANN (De Britannis).

Avon and Severn; the Iceni\* were reduced after a desperate and brilliant struggle; the league of the Brigantes† was surprised and dispersed by the rapid march of Ostorius, and the Roman eagles pervaded the greater part of Britain. But the Silures and Ordovices‡ still held out, and it was not till after many years of warfare that Caer Caradoc, the residence of the British leader, seated on a hill in Shropshire near the confluence of the Coln and Teme, was captured by the Romans, and with it his wife and family. Caradoc himself sought shelter at the court of his step-mother Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes, whom he had formerly befriended, but by whom he was basely and treacherously surrendered to the Romans (A.D. 51). Caradoc was conveyed to Rome, where his magnanimous behaviour procured him better treatment than those conquerors usually bestowed on captive princes. But even after the capture of their leader the Silures still held out, and offered so determined a resistance that Ostorius is said to have died of vexation.

§ 10. The Romans seem to have done little towards the further subjugation of the island till the appointment of Suetonius Paulinus to the command, in the reign of Nero, A.D. 59. After two years of peaceful administration, he resolved on reducing the island of Mona, or Anglesey, the chief seat of the Druids, which afforded a shelter to the disaffected Britons. The strait was crossed by the infantry in shallow vessels, whilst the cavalry either waded or swam. The Britons endeavoured to obstruct their landing on this sacred island, both by the force of their arms and the terror of their religion. The women and priests were intermingled with the soldiers upon the

\* People of Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire. Probably, as already stated, the Cenimagni.

† People between the Humber and the Tyne.

‡ The Silures inhabited South Wales; the Ordovices North Wales.





shouting and running about with flaming torches in their hands, and losing their dishevelled hair, they struck greater terror into the astonished Romans by their howlings, cries, and execrations than the real danger from the armed forces was able to inspire. But Suetonius, exhorting his troops to disregard the menaces of a superstition which they despised, impelled them to the attack, drove the Britons off the field, burned the Druids in the same fires which those priests had prepared for their captive enemies, destroyed all the consecrated groves and altars; and having thus triumphed over the religion of the Britons, he thought his future progress would be easy in reducing the people to subjection. But he was disappointed in his expectations. The Britons, taking advantage of his absence, were all in arms; and, headed by Boadicea, queen of the Iceni, whose daughter had been defiled and herself scourged with rods by the Roman tribunes, had already attacked with success several settlements of their insulting conquerors. Suetonius hastened to the protection of London, which was already a flourishing Roman colony; but he found on his arrival that it would be requisite for the general safety to abandon that place to the merciless fury of the enemy. London was reduced to ashes; such of the inhabitants as remained in it were cruelly massacred; the Romans and all strangers, to the number of 70,000, were everywhere put to the sword without distinction; and the Britons, by rendering the war thus bloody, seemed determined to cut off all hopes of peace or composition with the enemy. But this cruelty was revenged by Suetonius in a great and decisive battle (A.D. 62), where 80,000 of the Britons are said to have perished; and Boadicea herself, rather than fall into the hands of the enraged victor, put an end to her own life by poison. Nero soon after recalled Suetonius from a government where, by suffering and inflicting so many severities, he was judged unfit for composing the angry and alarmed minds of the inhabitants.

§ 11. After some interval Cerealis received the command from Vespasian (A.D. 71), and by his bravery propagated the terror of the Roman arms. Julius Frontinus succeeded Cerealis both in authority and reputation; but the general who finally established the dominion of the Romans in this island was Julius Agricola, who governed it seven years (A.D. 78-85), in the reigns of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, and distinguished himself in that scene of action.

This great commander formed a regular plan for subduing Britain, and rendering the acquisition useful to the conquerors. After subduing the Ordovices, and again reducing Mona, which had revolted, he carried his victorious arms northwards. In the third year of his government he marched as far as the Tay, where he established garrisons; and in the following year he erected a line of fortresses between the firths of Clyde and Forth. He extended his conquests

along the western shores of Britain, and even meditated an expedition to Ireland. In the sixth and seventh years of his administration he made two incursions into Caledonia, in the latter of which he gained a great and decisive victory over the inhabitants under their leader Galgacus, at the foot of the Grampian hills. One of the last acts of his government was to cause his fleet to sail round Britain, starting from, and returning to, the Portus Trutulensis, or Sandwich.

During these military enterprises he neglected not the arts of peace. He introduced laws and civilization among the Britons, taught them to desire and raise all the conveniences of life, reconciled them to the Roman language and manners, instructed them in letters and science, and employed every expedient to render those chains which he had forged both easy and agreeable to them. The inhabitants, having experienced how unequal their own force was to resist that of the Romans, acquiesced in the dominion of their masters, and were gradually incorporated as part of that mighty empire.

§ 12. This was the last durable conquest made by the Romans; and Britain, once subdued, gave no further disquietude to the victor. Caledonia, alone, defended by its barren mountains and by the contempt which the Romans entertained for it, sometimes infested the more cultivated parts of the island by the incursions of its inhabitants. The better to secure the frontiers of the empire, Hadrian, who visited this island, built an earthen rampart between the river Tyne and the Solway firth, which has been called the Picts' Wall, and of which there are still considerable remains. Subsequently Lollius Urbicus (A.D. 140), under Antoninus Pius, erected another between the firths of Forth and Clyde, along the same line where formerly Agricola had established his fortresses, which was called the wall of Antoninus, and is now known by the name of Graham's Dyke. But these fortifications did not prove adequate to check the incursions of the Mæatae and Caledonians, who at length became so formidable, that the proprætor, Virius Lupus, was not only obliged to buy off their attacks, but even to solicit the presence of the aged emperor Severus himself. Severus accordingly came, attended by his two sons, Caracalla and Geta; and although so afflicted with the gout that it was necessary to carry him in a litter, Severus proceeded through an almost impassable country to the extremity of the island, but with the loss of 50,000 men. Having made a treaty with the natives, by which they agreed to cede a considerable portion of their territory, he returned to York, where he shortly afterwards expired, A.D. 211. As Severus caused the fortification constructed by Hadrian to be repaired and strengthened with a wall, it commonly bore his name.\* Immediately after his

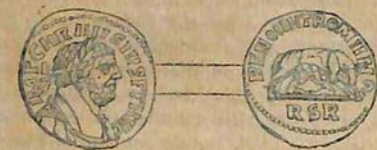


deceased son Caracalla, eager to grasp the empire, entered into a treaty with the northern tribes, and hastened back to Rome.

§ 13. Except, however, on its northern frontier, Britain under the Roman dominion enjoyed profound tranquillity, till in the third century of our era it began to be disturbed by new enemies. These were the Saxon pirates, whose descents upon the eastern coast at last became so troublesome, that the emperors Diocletian and Maximian were obliged to appoint a special officer for its defence, who at a later period obtained the name of "Comes littoris Saxonici," or Count of the Saxon shore. His jurisdiction appears to have extended from Branodunum, or Brancaster, on the coast of Norfolk, to the Portus Adurni, perhaps Pevensey in Sussex.\* Carausius, however, the first officer of this kind (A.D. 286), fortifying the great power with which he was thus invested by an alliance with the Saxons themselves, asserted his own supremacy in Britain, and compelled Maximian to acknowledge him as his associate in the empire. In 293 Carausius was assassinated by his own officer Allectus, who in turn usurped the imperial title and retained it till 296, when he was defeated by the army which Constantius had sent against him: after

which period Britain remained in tranquil obedience till the termination of the Roman sway.

§ 14. The last emperor who resided in Britain was Constantius Chlorus, whose consort Helena is said to have been the relative of a British prince. He died at York in 306, where his son, Constantine



Aureus of the Emperor Carausius.

Obverse: IMP CARAVSIVS PP AVG (Imperator Carausius Pius Felix Augustus); bust, laureate, right. Reverse: RENOVAT ROMANO (Renovatio Romanorum); wolf and twins. In the Exergue R. S. R.

the Great, assumed the title of Caesar. In the early times of the Roman dominion in Britain, the northern parts of the island were inhabited by the Caledonians and Mæatae, but in the beginning of the fourth century we find them supplanted by the Picts and Scots, wild and savage tribes, whose destructive inroads were long a terror to southern Britain. The origin of these celebrated names has given rise to the most vehement disputes. With respect to the Scots, it is now generally admitted that they were an Irish tribe, who crossed over to Britain from the sister island. The ancient writers agree in representing Ireland as the proper home of the Scots; and for several centuries that island bore the name of Scotia. We cannot pronounce with equal certainty upon the origin of the Picts; but the most

\* See Notes and Illustrations (C).





probable opinion is that they were those ancient Caledonian tribes who preserved their independence under the Romans, and maintained possession of the northern parts of the island till the invasion of the Irish Scots.\*

In the year 368, under the reign of Valentinian I., the Scots and Picts penetrated as far as London, but were repulsed by Theodosius, father of the emperor of the same name; who also recovered the district between the walls of Severus and Antoninus, which he named Valentia, in honour of his master. Under the emperor Theodosius, Maximus, a member of a distinguished British family, gained great reputation in fighting against the Picts and Scots, was saluted emperor by his soldiers, established a Western Roman empire at Trèves and was even acknowledged by Theodosius; but he was subsequently taken prisoner at Aquileia and put to death, A.D. 388. Under Maximus a colony of British warriors is said to have been established in Armorica, the subsequent Brittany. But this colonization helped to weaken Britain, which now began to be more and more infested by the Scots, Picts, and Saxons. Stilicho afforded temporary succour in 396; but soon afterwards, Gaul being already occupied by the Alani, Suevi, and Vandals, Honorius was compelled to withdraw his legion from Britain, which, being thus relinquished by the Romans, was seized upon by rebellious tyrants, who assumed the title of emperor.

§ 15. At the prayer of the Britons, the island was visited once more (A.D. 418) by the Roman legions, on the occasion of a new inroad by the Picts and Scots; but after repulsing the enemy, repairing the British fortresses, and instructing the natives how to make and to use the arms necessary for their defence, they took their final leave. The incursions of the northern barbarians were not renewed. Led by the Gaulish bishop, St. Germain of Auxerre, the Britons appear to have gained a victory over them in 429, which from the cry of onset was called the Hallelujah victory. But it was unavailing, and in 446 the unhappy Britons had again recourse to Rome. Aëtius the patrician sustained at that time, by his valour and magnanimity, the tottering ruins of the empire, and revived in a moment among the degenerate Romans the spirit, as well as discipline, of their ancestors. The British ambassadors carried to him the letter of their countrymen, which was inscribed *the Groans of the Britons*. The tenor of the epistle was suitable to its superscription. "The barbarians," say they, "on the one hand chase us into the sea; the sea on the other throws us back upon the barbarians and we have only the hard choice left us of perishing by the sword or by the waves." But Aëtius, pressed by the arms of Attila, the most terrible enemy that ever assailed the empire, had no leisure to attend

to complaints of allies whom generosity alone could induce him to assist. At length the despairing Britons, guided, it is said by the counsels of Vortigern, a powerful prince in the south of Britain, and by the example of the Armoricans, resolved on calling in the aid of the piratical Saxons, and thus repelling the Picts and Scots by means of tribes almost as barbarous.

§ 16. Under the Roman dominion\* Britain had assumed an aspect of great prosperity. Agriculture was carried to such a pitch, that the island not only fed itself, but also exported large quantities of grain to the northern provinces of the empire. Its builders and artisans were in request upon the continent. The country was traversed by four excellent roads, which, however, were probably not originally constructed by the Romans, but merely improved by them. These were the Watling Street, leading from the Kentish coast, by Rhutupia and London, to Caernarvon; Ikenild or Rikenild Street, proceeding from Tynemouth, through York, Derby, and Birmingham, to St. David's; Irmin or Hermin Street, running from St. David's to Southampton; and the Foss, between Cornwall and Lincoln. Roman civilization in Britain was more complete than is commonly supposed, though its traces have now almost completely vanished. Bede speaks of the Roman towns,ighthouses, roads, and bridges existing in his time; and many remains of Roman buildings were visible in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, which have now disappeared. York, Chichester, Chester, and Lincoln retain portions of Roman walls; and the circuses of Dorchester, Cirencester, and Silchester are still visible. The remote Caerleon (Isca Silurum), as well as Bath, had its theatres, temples, and palaces. Westminster Abbey was the site of a temple of Apollo, whilst on that of St. Paul's stood another of Diana. Even now, in London and other places once occupied by the Romans, if the spade of the workman penetrates to an unusual depth below the soil, fragments of pottery, tessellated pavements, and other objects, are frequently discovered, which testify the presence of its former owners. Thus, when the Saxons established themselves in Britain, they must have dwelt within Roman walls, and feasted their eyes with the magnificent works of Roman art.

But at the same time it must be recollected that the Roman occupation of Britain was purely military, and that the country was never completely Romanised like the provinces of Gaul and Spain. The natives continued to speak their own language; the number of Latin words which found a permanent place in the Welsh language is comparatively small; and the only traces of the Roman occupation subsisting in the English language are con-

\* See Notes and Illustrations (E).



defined to the termination *chester, caster, &c.* (from *castra*), which appears in Manchester, Lancaster, &c.; to *coln* (*colonia*), which is found in Lincoln; and to the word *street*, from *stratum* or *strata*. The condition of England under the Romans has been well compared by a modern writer with that of Ireland as it existed under English rule in the 17th century. "The towns were entirely peopled by the conquerors: they alone were capable of holding municipal privileges or power: and the country was covered with the houses of gentry and landholders who were all either descended from the old conquerors or new settlers. The peasantry only were British—that class who were in ancient times equally slaves under one race of rulers or another, and who were only spurred into insurrection by political agitators or by foreign invasions. Still, as in Ireland, the peasantry, having no attachment to their lords, were easily excited to revolt; and a successful inroad of the Caledonians would always be attended by a corresponding agitation among the Britons."\*

§ 17. Christianity was introduced into Britain at an early period, in all probability, however, not through Rome, but from the East, by means of the Mediterranean commerce carried on through Gaul. It is known that the latter country had numerous Christian congregations in the 2nd century. The most probable tradition ascribes the adoption of Christianity in Britain, as an established religion, to Prince Lucius, or Lever Maur (the Great Light), who flourished some time in the second half of the 2nd century. Under Diocletian, Britain reckons the martyrdom of St. Alban at Verulam, and of Aaron and Julius, two citizens of Caerleon. At the first council of Arles, in 314, three British bishops appeared, namely, Eborius of York, Restitutius of London, and Adelfius, probably of Lincoln; whose tenets are said to have differed from those of the Romish church. The monastery of Bangor, near Chester, was founded at an early period; its name, literally *ban gor*, or the great circle, was a generic one for a congregation or monastery, and thus we find more than one Bangor in Britain. The Bible was translated into the British tongue, and some of the British ecclesiastics were famous for their learning and acuteness. Pelagius, the opponent of St. Augustine, and founder of the sect which bore his name, is said to have been a Briton whose real name was Morgan, whilst his disciple Celestius was an Irishman. St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, bishop of Troyes, were sent over to Britain by Pope Celestine to confute the Pelagians; and the expulsion of those heretics by Severus, bishop of Trèves, and by St. Germain, in a second visit in 446, was one of the last acts of Roman power in this island.

\* Edinburgh Review, vol. xciv. p. 200.





## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF REMARKABLE EVENTS.

B.C.

55. Caesar's first invasion of Britain.

54. Caesar's second invasion.

A.D.

43. Claudius sends an expedition to Britain.

51. Caractacus subdued and conveyed to Rome.

62. Defeat and death of Boadicea.

78-85. Administration of Agricola.

121. Hadrian visits Britain, and constructs a rampart.

140. Lollius Urbicus raises a rampart

A.D.

between the firths of Forth and Clyde.

208. Severus visits Britain; builds a wall.

286-293. Usurpation of Carausius.

293-306. Usurpation of Allectus.

306. Death of Constantius at York.

368. The Scots and Picts penetrate to London.

429. The Hallelujah victory.

446. The Britons supplicate Aëtius for assistance.

## NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

## A. CÆSAR'S VOYAGES TO BRITAIN.

The subject of Cæsar's two voyages to Britain has given rise to much controversy. In his first voyage Cæsar merely says that he sailed from the country of the Morini, without specifying the exact spot; but there can be little doubt that he started from the same place as in his second expedition, namely, the Portus Itius, which is supposed by D'Anville, who has been followed by most modern writers, to be Wissant, about halfway between Boulogne and Calais. In his first expedition Cæsar must have landed on the 26th or 27th of August, since he tells us that it was full moon on the fourth day after his arrival in Britain; and it has been calculated by Dr. Halley the astronomer that this full moon was on the night of the 30th of August (*Philosophical Transactions*, abridged to the end of the year 1700 by John Lowthorpe, vol. iii. p. 412). Dr. Halley maintained that Cæsar landed at Deal, and his opinion has been adopted by almost all subsequent writers; but Mr. Airy, the Astronomer-Royal, has lately started an entirely new hypothesis. He supposes that Cæsar sailed from the estuary of the Somme and landed at the beach of Pevensey, on the coast of Sussex, near the same spot where William the Conqueror disembarked nearly 11 centuries afterwards. The reader will find the arguments of Mr. Airy in the *'Archæologia,'* vol. xxxiv. p. 231, *seq.*

## B. THE ROMAN WALL.

The Roman fortification, which crosses England from the Solway Firth to the River Tyne, consists of a stone wall and an earthen rampart running parallel with one another, generally at the distance of 60 or 70 yards. Dr. Bruce maintains, in his work on the "Roman Wall," that the stone wall and the turf vallum both belong to one and the same fortification, and that they were erected by the emperor Hadrian at one and the same time, the former to check the Mæates and Caledonians, the latter to repress any hostile attempts of the southern Britons. It is impossible to discuss this subject in the limits of this note, but we see no sufficient reason to abandon the generally received opinion that, as the vallum of Hadrian was not sufficient to check the Caledonians, it was strengthened, or rather superseded, by the wall of Severus. The same line was naturally adopted, the only difference being in the method of engineering, by adopting a lofty and strong wall carried over heights instead of low mounds running through the valleys. This new wall was made to start from the stations which already existed, and thus the trouble and expense of erecting new stations were saved. This will also account for the circumstance of inscriptions being found in them bearing the name of Hadrian.

# THE COMES LITTORIS SAXONICI.

Lapenberg, Kemble, and several modern writers maintain that this officer derived his name, not from defending the coast which was exposed to the invasions of the Saxon pirates, but from his commanding the Saxons who were settled along the coasts of Britain before the arrival of Hengist and Horsa in 450. But there seems no objection to the ordinary interpretation which has been adopted in the text. Dr. Guest correctly remarks that, as the Welsh marches in Shropshire and the Scotch marches in Northumberland were so called, not because they were inhabited by Welshmen or Scotchmen, but because they were open to the incursions of these two races, and were provided with a regular military organization for the purpose of repelling their incursions, so, for precisely similar reasons, the south-eastern coast of Britain was called the Saxon Shore, or Frontier. In the *Notitia* the Saxon Shore is also called the Saxon Frontier (Limes Saxonicus).

## D. THE SCOTS AND PICTS.

From the second to the eleventh century the Scots are mentioned as the inhabitants of Ireland, and that island bore the name of Scotia. This is clearly proved by the authorities collected by Zeuss, *Die Deutschen und die Nachbarstämme*, p. 568. Thus Claudian says—  
“*Scotiarum cumulo levit glaciæ lerne.*”  
*De 1<sup>a</sup> Cons. Hon. 53.*

“*Me juvit Stilicho, totam enim Scotus lernem Movit.*”  
*De Laud. Stilich. 8. 231.*

The Gaelic spoken by the Scotch Highlanders is the same language as the Erse spoken by the Irish, and there can be no doubt that it was brought into Britain by the Irish Scots.

That the Picts were Celts, and akin to the Welsh rather than to the Gael, appears from the names of their kings, of whom a genuine list, from the fifth century downwards, has been preserved. Almost the only Pictish word given as such by an ancient writer is *Pen val*, the name given by the Picts to the eastern termination of the vallum of Antoninus. *Pen* is decidedly Welsh. The name of the *Ochil* hills in Perthshire, in the country of the Picts, is to be explained from the Welsh *uchel*, “high.” Again, the Welsh prefix *aber* in local names in the Pictish territory was

changed into the Gaelic *inver* after the occupation of the country by the Gaelic Scots: thus *Inverin* and *Invernethy* were previously *Aberin* and *Abernethy*.—See Garnett, *Transactions of the Philological Society*, vol. i. p. 119.

## E. GOVERNMENT AND DIVISIONS OF BRITAIN UNDER THE ROMANS.

Britain, like the other distant provinces of the empire, was under the immediate superintendence of the emperor, and not of the senate. It was formed into a Roman province by the emperor Claudius after the campaign of A.D. 43, and was governed at first by a Legatus of consular rank: its financial affairs were administered by a procurator. It was subsequently divided by Septimius Severus into two parts, *Britannia Superior* and *Inferior*, each governed by a *Præses*.

The later organization of Britain is contained in the *Notitia Imperii*, a document compiled about A.D. 400. When Diocletian divided the empire into four *Præfectures*, Britain formed the third great diocese in the *præfecture* of the Gauls, of which the *Præfectus Prætorio* resided, first at Trêves, and afterwards at Arles. Britain was governed by a *Vicarius*, who resided at Eboracum (York), and was subdivided into four provinces, *Britannia Prima*, *Britannia Secunda*, *Maxima Caesariensis*, *Flavia*: to which a fifth, *Valentia*, was added by Theodosius in A.D. 369. The situation of these provinces is to some extent uncertain, and rests mainly upon the authority of Richard of Cirencester, a monk of the 14th century, whose testimony must be received with suspicion.

I. *BRITANNIA PRIMA*, governed by a *Præses*, the country south of the Thames and Bristol Channel.

II. *BRITANNIA SECUNDA*, governed by a *Præses*, the country between the Severn and the Dee,—Wales, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, and parts of Shropshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire.

III. *FLAVIA CAESARIENSIS*, governed by a *Præses*, the country north of the Thames, east of the Severn, south of the Mersey and the Humber.

IV. *MAXIMA CAESARIENSIS*, governed by a *Consularis*, north of the Mersey and the Humber to the wall of Severus.





AGENTIA OF VALENTIANA, governed by a Consularis, the country between the wall of Severus and the rampart of Antoninus, the south part of Scotland, Northumberland, and part of Cumberland.

The country north of the rampart of Antoninus was never long in the power of the Romans. Richard of Cirencester gives the name of VESPASIANA to the district subdued by Agricola between the rampart and a line drawn from the Moray Firth to the mouth of the Clyde.

ROMAN TOWNS. The following is the list of Richard of Cirencester.—1. MUNICIPIA, two in number. *Eboracum*, York. *Verulamium*, St. Albans.

2. COLONIE, colonies of Roman citizens, nine in number. *Londinium*, with the surname of *Augusta*, London. *Camalodunum*, Colchester or Maldon. *Rutupia*, Richborough. *Therma* or *Aque Solis*, Bath. *Isca Silurum*, Caerleon. *Deva*, Chester. *Glevum* or *Claudia*, Gloucester. *Lindum*, Lincoln. *Camborium*, either Cambridge or Chertford, or Icklingham, in Suffolk.

3. CIVITATES LATIO JURE DONATÆ,\* ten in number. *Durnomagus* or *Durobria*, Castor on Nene, or Water Newton. *Calarractonum*, Catterick in Yorkshire. *Cambodunum*, Slack in Yorkshire. *Coccium*, Ribchester in Lancashire. *Lugwallium*, Carlisle. *Pterolon*, Burgh head in Morayshire, Scotland. *Victoria*, Dealgin Ross in Perthshire. *Corinium*, Cirencester. *Sorbidunum*, Old Sarum.

4. STIPENDIARIE CIVITATES, twelve in number. *Venta*† *Belgarum*, Winchester. *Venta* *Icenorum*, Caister, near Norwich. *Venta* *Silurum*, Caerwent, or Caer-gwent, in Monmouthshire. *Segontium*, Caer-Seiont, near Caernarvon.

\* These cities possessed nearly the same privileges as colonies. On the distinction between them, see Smith's *Dict. of Antiquities*, art. *Colonia*.

† *Venta* comes from the Celtic word *Gwent*, a champagne country, of which there are several in Britain. The Romans obtained their name for many of the capital towns by turning *Gwent* into a feminine substantive (*Venta*), and then adding the name of the race which inhabited the district. The Saxons also used the name as a feminine substantive, *Winte*, gen. *Wintan*; and they called the capital of each district *Wintan ceaster*, "the city of the Wintan." Sometimes, instead of this genitive form, they used the compound *Wintan ceaster*, whence *Winchester*. See Guest's *On the Early English Settlements in South Britain*, published in the 'Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute' held at Salisbury, 1842.

*Muridunum*, Seaton, near Colyton, Devon. *Ragæ*, Leicester. *Cantiopolis*, or *Durovernum*, Canterbury. *Durinum*, or *Dunium*, Dorchester. *Isca*, Exeter. *Bremenium*, Riechester, Northumberland. *Vindonum*, near Andover, Hants. *Durobrica*, Rochester.

ROMAN MILITARY COMMANDERS. The military forces were originally under the command of the Legatus, but after the separation of the civil and military administration of the provinces by Diocletian, they were placed under three chief military officers, who bore the titles of *Comes Britanniarum*, *Comes Littoris Saxonici per Britanniam*, and *Dux Britanniarum*. The title of *Comes*, or *Companion*, was the highest, and the *Comes Britanniarum* had the chief command of the military forces in Britain. The *Comes littoris Saxonici* has been already spoken of. The *Dux Britanniarum* had charge of the wall of Severus, and the command of the troops in the northern part of the province. At the time of the Notitia the Roman army in Britain consisted of 20,000 men.

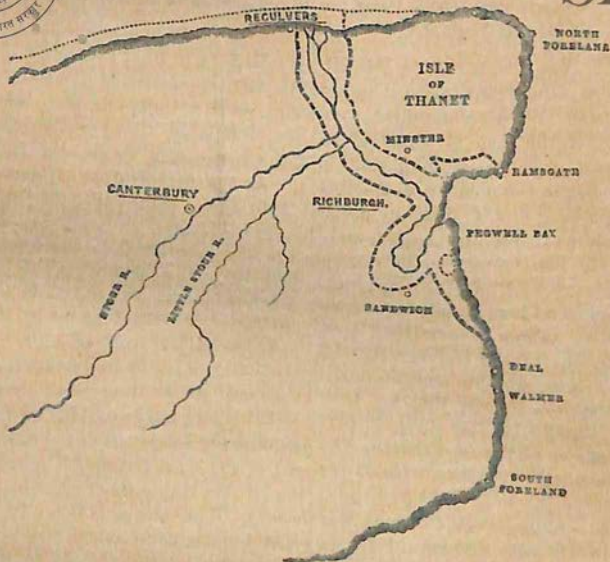
## P. AUTHORITIES.

Some of the classical authorities respecting the early history of Britain have been alluded to in the preceding pages, and all the passages bearing on the subject in the Greek and Latin writers, as well as in the ancient English authors, will be found collected in the 'Monumenta Historica Britannica,' vol. i. 1848. The most important modern works on Roman Britain are:—Camden's *Britannia*; Horsley's *Britannia Romana*; Stukely's *Stonehenge*; Whitaker's *History of Manchester*; Lappenberg's *History of England*, translated by Thorpe; Algonon Herbert's *Britannia under the Romans*; Bruce's *Roman Wall*; Böcking's *Notes on the Notitia Dignitatum*, vol. ii. p. 496; Guest's *On the Early English Settlements in South Britain*, published in the Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute held at Salisbury, 1849; the article *Britannia* in the *Penny Cyclopædia*; and an article in the *Edinburgh Review*, vol. xlv. p. 177 seq., on the condition of Britain under the Romans.





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Map of the Isle of Thanet at the time of the landing of the Saxons.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ANGLO-SAXONS TILL THE REIGN OF EGBERT.

- § 1. The Saxons, Angles, and Jutes. § 2. Manners and religion of the Anglo-Saxons. § 3. Their ships and arms. § 4. First settlement of the German invaders—in Kent. British traditions. § 5. Saxon account. § 6. Second settlement of the German invaders—in Sussex. § 7. Third settlement of the German invaders—in Wessex. § 8. Fourth settlement of the German invaders—in Essex and Middlesex. § 9. Fifth settlement of the German invaders—in Norfolk and Suffolk. § 10. Sixth settlement of the German invaders—in Northumbria. § 11. The kingdom of Mercia. § 12. The Heptarchy. British States. § 13. The Bretwaldas, Ella of Sussex, Ceawlin of Wessex. § 14. Ethelbert of Kent, third Bretwalda. Introduction of Christianity. § 15. Death of Ethelbert. Redwald of East Anglia, fourth Bretwalda. Adventures of Edwin of Northumbria. § 16. Edwin, fifth Bretwalda. His conversion to Christianity. § 17. History of Northumbria. Oswald, sixth Bretwalda. § 18. Oswy of Northumbria, seventh Bretwalda. Decline of the kingdom of North



§ 19. History of Wessex. Ina and Egbert. § 20. History of Ethelbald and Offa. § 21. Conquests of Egbert, who becomes sole King of England.

§ 1. THE people now called in by the Britons to their assistance, and who ultimately succeeded in establishing themselves in the country which they were required to defend, were a Germanic race, who, under the general name of Saxons, inhabited the north-western coast of Germany from the Cimbric Chersonesus, or present Denmark, to the mouths of the Rhine. At the period of which we are speaking, we find them divided into three principal tribes, the Saxons proper, the Angles, and the Jutes.

I. *The Saxons.\**—This people are first mentioned in the second century by Ptolemy, who places them upon the narrow neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus, and in three islands opposite the mouth of the Elbe. From thence their power extended westward as far as the mouths of the Rhine. Among the tribes subject to them were the Frisians, who probably formed the majority of the Saxon invaders of England, though they are only mentioned under the general name of Saxons.† The southern parts of the island were occupied by the Saxons proper or Frisians, who founded the kingdoms of the South Saxons (South-saxe, whence *Sus-sax*), of the West Saxons (*Wes-sax*), and of the East Saxons (*Es-sax*), the last including the territories of the Middle Saxons (whence *Middle-sax*). The Germanic tribes have always been divided into two great branches, to which modern writers have given the name of *High German* (the people in the interior or higher parts of Germany) and *Low German* (the people in the lower parts of the country near the coast). The Saxons belonged to the Low Germanic branch, and their language was closely allied to that of the modern Dutch.

II. *The Angles or Engle*, who accompanied or followed the Saxons, seem to have been a more numerous and powerful race, as they peopled a larger district of Britain, and at length gave their name to the whole land.‡ They settled in *East Anglia*, or the eastern counties, north of Essex; *Mercia*, or the midland counties; and *Northumbria*, or all the counties north of the Humber. They are first mentioned by Tacitus§ among the obscure tribes of the

\* Their name is usually derived from the short sword, *sax* or *sax*, which they carried. Some critics connect their name with that of the *Saxæ* in the East; while others maintain that the word meant nothing more than *seamen*.

† See Notes and Illustrations (A).

‡ The Saxon kingdom of Wessex afterwards obtained the political supremacy, and hence the name of Anglo-Saxon was given to the whole nation; but it must be borne in mind that this title does not mean the Angles and Saxons, but the Saxons of England, as distinguished from the Saxons of the Continent.

§ Germania, c. 40.



Suevic race, and they are placed by Ptolemy on the western bank of the Elbe near the Lower Saale. Thence they migrated north of the Elbe to the Cimbric Chersonesus, where they inhabited a district called *Angeln*, which lay between the Saxons and the Jutes. There is still a district which bears this name between the river Elbe and the Flensborger Fiord; but anciently it must have comprised a much larger territory. The Angles, like the Saxons, were originally a low Germanic race; but as their first settlements were upon the upper part of the Elbe in the neighbourhood of High German tribes, and their second seats were in the proximity of the Danes, their language appears to have been affected to some extent by their neighbours, and several peculiarities in the northern dialects of England bear traces of the High German and Danish languages.

III. *The Jutes*.—These invaders were not so numerous even as the Saxons, and possessed only Kent, the Isle of Wight, and part of Hampshire. They came from the peninsula of Jutland, which is now inhabited by the Danes; but it is probable that the possessions of the Germans, who people at present the southern part of the peninsula, extended further north in ancient times, and there are some reasons for believing that the Jutes were Goths, who, like the Saxons and Angles, were also a low Germanic race.

§ 2. The German races who invaded Britain were Pagan barbarians. Their religion, which was common to them with the Scandinavians, seems to have been a compound between the worship of the celestial bodies and that of deified heroes. This fact will best appear from the names they applied to the days of the week, which custom has still retained among us. Thus *Sunnandæg* and *Monandæg*, Sunday and Monday, were named after the two great luminaries; but it must be observed that the sex of those deities was the reverse of that ascribed to them by the Greeks and Romans, the sun being considered by the Germans as feminine and the moon as masculine. The name of Tuesday is by some derived from *Tiw*, probably the same as the *Tuisco* of Tacitus, the national and eponymous deity of the Teutons, whilst others identify it with *Tyr*, one of the twelve companions of Odin. *Wodnesdæg*, or Wednesday, was sacred to Woden or Odin, the god of war, common to all the Teutonic and Scandinavian races. That he must have been a deified hero and king appears from the circumstance that those leaders, whose kindred formed the royal houses among the Anglo-Saxons, for the most part derived their descent from Woden. *Thorsdæg*, or Thursday, was named after the god Thor, the thunderer, equivalent to the Greek Zeus, and the Roman Jove, who wielded a hammer instead of a thunderbolt. *Freya-dæg*, or Friday, was sacred to the goddess Freya, the consort of Woden and northern Venus. Lastly, Saturday derived its





named from *Sætes*, who, from the attributes with which he is represented, viz. a fish and a bucket, appears to have been a water-god. Besides these, the Anglo-Saxons had many other deities. They believed in the immortality of the soul and the existence of a supernatural world; but their worship, though fanciful and superstitious, was not tainted with so much cruelty as disfigured that of the Druids. Their sensual ideas of a future state were calculated, like those of the Mahometans, to inspire them with a contempt of death. They believed that if they obtained the favour of Woden by their valour (for they made less account of the other virtues) they should be admitted after their death into his hall; and, reposing on couches, should satiate themselves with ale from the skulls of their enemies whom they had slain in battle. Incited by this idea of paradise, which gratified at once the passion of revenge and that of intemperance, the ruling inclinations of barbarians, they despised the dangers of war, and increased their native ferocity against the vanquished by their religious prejudices.

§ 3. The ships, or keels (*ceolas*), of the Saxons appear at an ancient period to have been rudely constructed of a few planks surmounted with wattled osiers and covered with skins; and in these frail vessels they fearlessly trusted themselves without a compass to the winds and waves of the stormy ocean which washed their shores. We may infer, however, from the number of men which they conveyed to Britain, that in the 5th century their ships must have been much enlarged in size and improved in solidity of construction. The arms of the Anglo-Saxons were targets worn on the left arm, spears, bows and arrows, swords, battle-axes, and heavy clubs furnished with spikes of iron. Sidonius, the bishop of Clermont, has described the terror which these barbarians inspired. "We have not," he says, "a more cruel and dangerous enemy than the Saxons. They overcome all who have the courage to oppose them. They surprise all who are so imprudent as not to be prepared for their attack. When they pursue, they inevitably overtake: when they are pursued, their escape is certain. They despise danger: they are inured to shipwreck: they are eager to purchase booty with the peril of their lives. Tempests, which to others are so dreadful, to them are subjects of joy. The storm is their protection when they are pursued by the enemy, and a cover for their operations when they meditate an attack. Before they quit their own shores, they devote to the altars of their gods the tenth part of the principal captives; and when they are on the point of returning, the lots are cast with an affectation of equity, and the impious vow is fulfilled."\* Such were the barbarians who were now approaching the British shores.

\* Sidon. viii. 6, quoted by Lingard, i. p. 73.



§ 6. *Second settlement of the German invaders, A.D. 477.*—In the year 477, and therefore during the lifetime of Hengist, Ella (Ella), with his three sons, Cymen, Wlencing, and Cissa, landed with a body of Saxons from three ships at the place afterwards called Cymen's ora, upon the eastern side of Chichester harbour in Sussex; but the Britons were not expelled till defeated in many battles by their warlike invaders. After the capture of the old Roman town of Anderida, or Andredes-ceaster (Pevensey), in 490, when the whole British garrison was put to the sword, Ella assumed the title of king of the *South-Seaxe* or *Sussex*, and extended his dominion over the modern county of Sussex and a great part of Surrey. Ella is said to have died between 514 and 519, and was succeeded by his son Cissa; in whose line the kingdom of Sussex remained for a long period, though we know not even the name of any of his successors. The capital of this kingdom was Chichester, which derives its name from Cissa (Cissa-ceaster, the chester or city of Cissa). To these German invaders is due the division of Sussex into *rapes*, which again are divided into *hundreds*.

§ 7. *Third settlement of the German invaders, A.D. 495.*—The third body of German invaders were, like the last, also Saxons. They landed in 495 under the command of Cerdic and his son Cynric, at a place called Cerdic's ora, which was probably at the mouth of the Itchin river along the eastern side of the Southampton Water. None of the invaders met with such vigorous resistance, or exerted such valour and perseverance in pushing their conquests. Cerdic did not make much progress till six years later, after calling in from Germany the aid of Port; from whom the town of Portsmouth is said to derive its name, as being the place where Port landed and defeated the Britons. In 514 Cerdic was reinforced by the arrival of his nephews, Stuf and Wihtgar, who are also represented as Jutish leaders. Cerdic's power now became more formidable; many districts were conquered, and among them the Isle of Wight, which Cerdic bestowed on his nephews. It was not, however, till his great victory over the Britons at Cerdices-ford (or Charford, in Hampshire) in 519 that Cerdic assumed the royal title and erected the kingdom of the *West-Seaxe* or *Wessex*. Cerdic's further progress towards the west was checked by a great defeat which he received in the following year at Mount Baden\* from Arthur, prince of the Damnonii, whose heroic valour now sustained the declining fate of his country. This is that Arthur so much celebrated in the songs of British bards, and whose military achievements have been blended with so many fables as even to give occasion for entertaining

\* Mount Baden is usually identified with Bath; but Dr. Guest adduces strong reasons for believing it to be Badbury in Dorsetshire. (*U. supra*, p. 63.)





a doubt of his real existence. But poets, though they disfigure the most certain history by their fictions, and use strange liberties with truth where they are the sole historians, as among the Britons, have commonly some foundation for their wildest exaggerations.

Cerdic died in 534, leaving his dominions to his son Cynric, who ruled till his death in 560, and considerably extended his kingdom, the capital of which was Winton-ceaster, or Winchester, the ancient Venta Belgarum. Cynric was succeeded by his son Ceawlin.

§ 8. *Fourth settlement of the German invaders, A.D. 527.*—These invaders were also Saxons. They founded the kingdom of the *East-Sexe* or *Essex*, to which the *Middle-Sexe* or *Middlesex* also belonged. *Æscwine* or *Ercemvine* was the first king of Essex; but his son *Slada*, who married a daughter of *Ethelbert* of Kent, appears as a subject of his father-in-law; and Essex, though styled a kingdom, was always to have been subject to the neighbouring kings.

*Fifth settlement of the German invaders.*—The four previous invasions had been made by the Jutes and Saxons; but the two settlements consist of Angles. Towards the middle or the 6th century, for the exact date is unknown, some Angles, apparently divided into two tribes, the *North-Folk* and the *South-Folk*, founded the kingdom of East Anglia, comprising the modern counties of *Norfolk* and *Suffolk*, and parts of *Cambridgeshire* and *Huntingdonshire*. Hardly anything is known of the history of East Anglia. *Uffa* is said to have been the first king, and his descendants were styled *Uffingas*, just as the race of Kentish kings were called *Æscingas*.

§ 10. *Sixth settlement of the German invaders, about A.D. 547.*—The country to the north of the Humber had been early separated into two British states, namely, *Deifyr* (*Deora rice*), extending from the Humber to the Tyne, and *Berneich* (*Beorna rice*), lying between the Tyne and the Forth. These names, afterwards Latinised into *Deira* and *Bernicia*, were retained till a late period. The two countries were separated by a vast forest occupying the district between the Tyne and the Tees, or the modern bishopric of Durham. According to some traditions, *Hengist* had penetrated as far as these countries, and founded states there for his son *Octa*, and for *Ebusa* the son of *Horsa*; but it seems more probable that his expeditions were not carried beyond Lincolnshire. It cannot be doubted, however, that the Angles were settled in parts of Northumbria at an early period; though it was not till the arrival of *Ida*, who landed at *Flamborough Head* in 547, with a powerful body of Anglian warriors, that the Angles obtained the supremacy in the north of the island. *Ida* became king of *Bernicia*, and transmitted his power to his son; and a separate Anglian kingdom was founded in *Deira* by *Ella*. These two kingdoms remained for some years in a state of hostility



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with one another; but they were united in the person of Ethelrith Edelfrid, grandson of Ida, who had married a daughter of Ella and who expelled her infant brother Edwin. It was not, however, till the accession of Edwin in 617 that the united kingdoms seem to have assumed the name of Northumbria, which was long the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon states.

§ 11. The country to the west of East Anglia and Deira was known by the name of the *March* or boundary, and was conquered by Anglian chieftains, who were for some time subject to the kings of Northumbria. It was erected into an independent state by Penda about 626, under the name of the *March* or *Mercia*, which was subsequently extended to the Severn, and comprised the whole of the centre of England. It was divided by the Trent into North and South Mercia.

§ 12. Thus after a century and a half was gradually established in Britain what has been called the *Heptarchy*, or seven Saxon kingdoms, namely Kent, Sussex, Wessex, Essex, East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria. But this term is incorrect: there were never exactly seven independent kingdoms coexistent; and if the smaller and dependent ones are reckoned, the number must be considerably increased. The Britons, or ancient Celtic inhabitants, had been driven into the western parts of the island, and formed several small states. In the extreme south-west lay *Damnonia*, called also *West Wales*, the kingdom of Arthur, occupying at first the present counties of Cornwall and Devonshire, but limited at a later period, after the separation of Cernau, or Cornwall, to Dyvnaint, or Devonshire. In Somersetshire, Wiltshire, and Dorsetshire, which had been occupied by the Saxons at an early period, a large native population still maintained its ground, as was likewise the case in Devonshire long after its occupation by the Saxons; whence the inhabitants of that district obtained the name of the "Welsh kind." *Cambria*, or *Wales*, was divided into several small kingdoms or principalities. The name of Welsh (*Walsch*), it may be observed, is the Saxon term for foreigners, and is still applied by the Germans to the Italians. The history of the Celts, who dwelt in *Cumbria*, to the north of Wales, is involved in obscurity. *Cumbria*, or Cumberland, properly so called, included, besides the present county, Westmoreland and Lancashire, and extended into Northumbria, probably as far as the modern Leeds. *Caerleol*, or *Carlisle*, was its chief city. North of *Cumbria*, between the two Roman walls, and to the east of the kingdom of *Bernicia*, were situated two other British kingdoms: *Reged*, in the southern portion of the district, nearly identical perhaps with *Annandale*, in Dumfriesshire; and *Strathclyde*, embracing the counties of Dumbarton, Renfrew, and Dumfries, and probably also those of Peebles, Selkirk, and



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Map of Britain, showing the Settlements of the Anglo-Saxons.

Lanark. These kingdoms were sometimes united under one chief, or Pendragon, called also Tyern, or *tyrannus*, who, like other British princes, regarded himself as the successor, and even as the descendant, of Constantine or Maximus.

Besides those Britons who found shelter in these western and mountainous regions from the fury of the Saxon invaders, great numbers of them, under the conduct of their priests and chieftains, abandoned altogether their native shores, and settled in Armorica, on the western coast of France, which from them derived its subsequent name of Bretagne, or Brittany.



Nothing can more evidently show the completeness of the conquest made by the Anglo-Saxons than the fact that their language forms to this day the staple of our own; but with regard to their treatment of the conquered land, and their relations towards the natives, we are almost entirely in the dark. It is usually stated that the Saxons either exterminated the original population, or drove it into the western parts of the island; but there are good reasons for believing that this was not completely the case; and we may conclude from the Welsh traditions, and from the number of Celtic words still existing in the English language, that a considerable number of the Celtic inhabitants remained upon the soil as the slaves or subjects of their conquerors.\*

§ 13. To detail the obscure and often doubtful history of the several Anglo-Saxon states would afford neither amusement nor instruction, and we shall therefore content ourselves with selecting the more remarkable events that occurred down to the time when all the kingdoms were united under the authority of Egbert. The dignity of *Bretwalda*, that is, supreme commander or emperor of Britain, which was often the subject of contention among the different Anglo-Saxon sovereigns, affords some slight bond of connexion to their histories, and it is to this point that we shall first direct our attention.†

The institution of a *Bretwalda* among the Anglo-Saxons was probably neither derived from their native customs, nor an assumption of the Roman imperial power before exercised in the island, but rather a measure sometimes adopted from the necessity of uniting under a common chief against the Britons, the Picts, and the Scots. The dignity was perhaps an elective one. The first who held the office, according to Beda, was Ella, king of the South Saxons; but we know not on what account, nor by what means, he obtained the dignity. Ceawlin, king of the West Saxons, or Wessex, the grandson of Cerdic, was the second *Bretwalda*. The Æscing, Ethelbert of Kent, disputed the title with him, but was overthrown in a great battle at Wibbandun (Wimbledon in Surrey). Ceawlin was a conqueror, and united many districts to his kingdom; but from some unknown cause, the termination of his reign was singularly unprosperous. His own subjects, and even his own relations, united against him with the Britons and Scots; he was defeated in a great battle at Wodnesbeorg, in the year 591, and died in exile two years afterwards.

\* This subject is more fully discussed in the Notes and Illustrations (C).

† The existence of the Bretwaldas, at least in the earlier times, is disputed by Mr. Hallam and Mr. Kemble. But they are expressly mentioned by Beda, who calls their dignity *ducatus* or leadership, in the Saxon Chronicle, where these princes are termed Bretwaldas, and in charters.



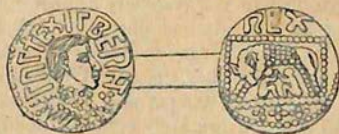


14. After the expulsion of Ceawlin, Ethelbert of Kent obtained the dignity of *Bretwalda*, to which he had for so many years aspired. The most memorable event of his reign was the introduction of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons, for the reception of which faith the mind of Ethelbert had been prepared through his marriage with the Christian princess Bertha, daughter of Caribert, king of Paris. But the immediate cause of its introduction was a casual incident which occurred at Rome. It happened that Gregory, who, under the title of the Great, afterwards occupied the papal chair, had observed in the market-place of Rome three Saxon youths exposed to sale, whom the Roman merchants, in their trading voyages to Britain, had bought of their mercenary parents.\* Struck with the beauty of their fair complexions and blooming countenances, Gregory asked to what country they belonged; and being told they were *Angles*, he replied that they ought more properly to be denominated *angels*: it were a pity that the prince of darkness should enjoy so fair a prey, and that so beautiful a frontispiece should cover a mind destitute of internal grace and righteousness. Inquiring further concerning the name of their province, he was informed that it was Deira, a district of Northumbria. "Deira," replied he, "that is good! They are called to the mercy of God from his anger (*de ira*). But what is the name of the king of that province?" He was told it was *Ælla*, or *Alla*. "Allelujah!" cried he; "we must endeavour that the praises of God be sung in their country." Moved by these allusions, which appeared to him so happy, he determined to undertake himself a mission into Britain, and, having obtained the Pope's approbation, prepared for the journey; but his popularity at home was so great, that the Romans, unwilling to expose him to such dangers, opposed his design; and he was obliged for the present to lay aside all further thoughts of executing that pious purpose.

After his accession to the pontificate, Gregory, anxious to convert the British Saxons, pitched on Augustine, a Roman monk, and sent him, with forty associates, to preach the gospel in this island. These missionaries, terrified with the danger which might attend their proposing a new doctrine to so fierce a people, of whose language they were ignorant, stopped some time in France, and sent back Augustine to lay the hazards and difficulties before the Pope, and crave his permission to desist from the undertaking. But Gregory exhorted them to persevere in their purpose; and Augustine, on his arrival in Kent in the year 597, found the danger much less than he had apprehended. Ethelbert, already well disposed

\* The celebrated story is told by Bede (ii. 89), and is copied from him, with slight variations, by all other medieval writers. It is related more fully and accurately by Mr. Stanley (*Historical Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 7, seq.), than by any other modern writer.

owards the Christian faith, assigned him a habitation in the Isle of Thanet, and soon after admitted him to a conference. Augustine, encouraged by his favourable reception, and seeing now a prospect of success, proceeded with redoubled zeal to preach the gospel to the Kentish Saxons. Numbers were converted and baptized, and the king himself was persuaded to submit to the same rite. Augustine was consecrated archbishop of Canterbury, was endowed by Gregory with authority over all the British churches, and received the pall, a badge of ecclesiastical honour, from Rome. Christianity was soon afterwards introduced into the kingdom of Essex, whose sovereign, Sæberht, or Sebert, was Ethelbert's nephew; and through the influence of Ethelbert, Mellitus, who had been the apostle of Christianity in Essex, was appointed to the bishopric of London, where a church dedicated to St. Paul was erected, on the site of a former temple of Diana. Sebert also erected on Thorney Island, which was formed by the branches of a small river falling into the Thames, a church dedicated to St. Peter, which is now Westminster Abbey. In Kent the see of Rochester was founded by Augustine, and bestowed upon Justus.



Silver Penny of Ethelbert II. King of Kent and Bretwalda.

Obv. EDILBERT . . . ; bust right. Reverse: REX; wolf and twins. (This coin, if genuine, is an evident imitation of those of Rome: compare the coin of Carausius, p. 12.)

§ 15. The marriage of Ethelbert with Bertha, and, much more, his embracing Christianity, begat a connexion of his subjects with the French, Italians, and other nations on the continent, and tended to reclaim them from that gross ignorance and barbarity in which all the Saxon tribes had been hitherto involved. Ethelbert also enacted, with the consent of the states of his kingdom, a body of laws, the first written laws promulgated by any of the northern conquerors; and his reign was in every respect glorious to himself and beneficial to his people. He governed the kingdom of Kent 50 years, and, dying in 616, left the succession to his son Eadwald. But he possessed neither the abilities nor the authority of his father; and the Saxon princes refused to acknowledge him as *Bretwalda*. That dignity passed to Redwald, king of the East Angles, who holds the fourth place in the series of these princes. The protection afforded by Redwald to young Edwin, the rightful heir of the kingdom of Deira, brought him into collision with Ædelfrid, king of Northumbria. It has been already mentioned that Ædelfrid had united Deira with





Bertha by seizing upon it at the death of Ella, whose daughter he had married, and expelling her infant brother Edwin. Redwald invaded the kingdom of Northumbria, and fought a battle with Aedelfrid on the banks of the Idle in Nottinghamshire, in which that monarch was defeated and killed; his sons, Eanfrid, Oswald, and Oswy, yet infants, were carried into Scotland, and Edwin obtained possession of the crown.

§ 16. Edwin subsequently became the fifth *Bretwalda*, and all the Anglo-Saxon states, with the exception of Kent, acknowledged his supremacy. He distinguished himself by his influence over the other kingdoms, and by the strict execution of justice in his own dominions. He reclaimed his subjects from the licentious life to which they had been accustomed; and it was a common saying that during his reign a woman or child might openly carry everywhere a purse of gold without any danger of violence or robbery. There is a remarkable instance transmitted to us of the affection borne him by his servants. Cuichelme, king of Wessex, was his enemy; but, finding himself unable to maintain open war against so gallant and powerful a prince, he determined to use treachery against him, and he employed one Eumer for that criminal purpose. The assassin, having obtained admittance by pretending to deliver a message from Cuichelme, drew his dagger and rushed upon the king. Lilla, an officer of his army, seeing his master's danger, and having no other means of defence, interposed with his own body between the king and Eumer's dagger, which was pushed with such violence, that, after piercing Lilla, it even wounded Edwin; but before the assassin could renew his blow he was despatched by the king's attendants.

This event, as well as the birth of a daughter about the same time, is said to have hastened Edwin's conversion to Christianity. After the death of his first consort, a Mercian princess, Edwin had married Ethelburga, the daughter of Ethelbert, king of Kent. This princess, emulating the glory of her mother Bertha, who had been the instrument for converting her husband and his people to Christianity, carried Paulinus, a learned bishop, along with her; and besides stipulating a toleration for the exercise of her own religion, which was readily granted her, she used every effort to persuade the king to embrace it. Her exertions, seconded by those of Paulinus, were successful. Edwin was baptized on Easter-day, A.D. 627, at York, in a wooden church hastily erected for the occasion, and dedicated to St. Peter. Subsequently York was erected into an archbishopric; Paulinus was appointed the first northern metropolitan, and a handsome church of stone was built for his cathedral. From hence as a centre Christianity was propagated, though not without some vicissitudes, in the neighbouring Anglo-Saxon countries.

§ 17. Evil days were now approaching for Northumbria. Edwin





was slain in battle by Penda, the powerful king of Mercia. Northumbria was divided into two separate kingdoms, and the people, with their monarchs, relapsed into Paganism. At length in 634 Oswald, the son of Ædelfrid, again united the kingdoms of Northumbria, and restored the Christian religion in his dominions. Oswald was also acknowledged as the sixth *Bretwalda*, and reigned, according to the expression of Beda, over the four nations of Britain, the Angles, the Britons, the Picts, and the Scots. His reign, however, was short. He became involved in a war with Penda, A.D. 642, and, like Edwin, was defeated and slain. His corpse was treated with great brutality by Penda; but he was canonized by the church as a saint and martyr; his scattered members were collected as relics, and were held to be endowed with miraculous powers. Penda penetrated as far as Bamborough, the residence of the Northumbrian princes on the coast of Yorkshire, but after a fruitless siege was obliged to retire and evacuate the kingdom.

§ 18. On the death of Oswald his brother Oswy succeeded to his kingdom and to the dignity of *Bretwalda*. He defeated and slew the formidable Penda in a great battle fought near Leeds in 656.

The reign of Oswy was rendered memorable by a most destructive pestilence called the *yellow plague*, which commencing in 664 ravaged the whole island twenty years with the exception of the Highlands of Scotland. Oswy died in 670, and with him expired for a time the dignity of *Bretwalda*.

It is unnecessary to pursue the obscure and uninteresting reigns of Oswy's successors in the kingdom of Northumbria, which, for the most part, present little more than a series of seditions, usurpations, and murders. Agriculture was neglected, the land was desolated by famine and pestilence, and, to fill up the measure of its calamities, the Northmen landed in 793 on Lindisfarne, and in the following year at Egferth's-Minster (probably Wearmouth), and plundered and destroyed the churches and monasteries at those places. After the death of Ethelred (A.D. 795) universal anarchy prevailed in Northumbria; and the people, having by so many fatal revolutions lost all attachment to their government and princes, were well prepared for subjection to a foreign yoke. This was finally imposed upon them by Egbert, king of Wessex; to the history of which kingdom, as finally swallowing up all the rest, we must now hasten.

§ 19. The history of the kings of Wessex presents nothing remarkable till we arrive at the reign of Ina, who ascended the throne in 688, and who was remarkable for his justice, policy, and prudence. He treated the Britons of Somersetshire and the adjoining districts (the *Wealas*, or Welsh kind), whom he had subdued, with a humanity hitherto unknown to the Saxon conquerors. He allowed the



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precursors to retain possession of their lands, encouraged marriages and alliances between them and his ancient subjects, and gave them the privilege of being governed by the same laws. These laws he augmented and ascertained; and though he was disturbed by some insurrections at home, his long reign of 37 years may be regarded as one of the most glorious and most prosperous reigns of the Anglo-Saxon princes. In the decline of his age he made a pilgrimage to Rome, where he shut himself up in a cloister. The year of his death is unknown.

Egbert was the fourth in descent from Ingild, Ina's brother; and being a young man of the most promising hopes, gave great jealousy to Brithric, the reigning prince, both because he seemed by his birth better entitled to the crown, and because he had acquired to an eminent degree the affections of the people. Egbert, sensible of his danger from the suspicions of Brithric, secretly withdrew into France, where he was well received by Charlemagne. By living in the court and serving in the armies of that prince, the most able and most generous that had appeared in Europe during several ages, he acquired those accomplishments which afterwards enabled him to make such a shining figure on the throne.

It was not long ere Egbert had opportunities of displaying his natural and acquired talents. Brithric was accidentally killed by partaking of a cup of poison which his wife Eadburga, daughter of Offa, king of Mercia, had mixed for a young nobleman who had acquired her husband's friendship, and had on that account become the object of her jealousy. Egbert was now recalled from France by the nobility of Wessex, and ascended the throne of his ancestors in the last year of the 8th century. The royal families had at this period become extinct in all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms except that of Wessex, and Egbert was the sole descendant of those first conquerors who subdued Britain, and who enhanced their authority by claiming a pedigree from Woden, the supreme divinity of their ancestors. But, though his lineage might have afforded a pretence to make attempts on the neighbouring Saxons, he gave them for some time no disturbance, and rather chose to turn his arms against the Britons in Cornwall and Wales, whom he defeated in several battles. He was recalled from these conquests by an invasion of his dominions by Beornwulf, king of Mercia. But in order to explain that event, and to close the history of the other Anglo-Saxon states, we must here take a retrospective glance at that of Mercia.

§ 20. After the death of Penda the history of Mercia presents little of importance till we arrive at the long reign of Ethelbald (716-755). That sovereign appears to have possessed as much power as any of the Bretwaldas, though he did not enjoy that title. He distinguished himself by many successful conflicts with the Britons,





against whom he united under his standard East Anglia, Kent, Wessex, and for a while also Wessex. At one period he asserted his supremacy over all England south of the Humber, and in a charter of the year 736 signs himself "King of Britain." But he was subsequently defeated in two battles against the West Saxons; in the latter of which he fell (A.D. 755). Ethelbald, after a short period of usurpation by Beornred, was succeeded by Offa, the most celebrated of all the Mercian princes. After gaining several victories over the other Anglo-Saxon princes, this monarch turned his arms against the Britons of Cambria, whom he repeatedly defeated. He settled all the level country to the east of the mountains, between the Wye and the Severn, with Anglo-Saxons; for whose protection he constructed the mound or rampart between the mouth of the Dee and that of the Wye, known as Offa's Dyke; traces of which may be still discerned. The king of Mercia was now become so considerable, that the emperor Charlemagne entered into an alliance and friendship with him. That emperor being a great lover of learning and learned men, Offa, at his desire, sent Alcuin to him, a clergyman much celebrated for his knowledge, who received great honours from Charlemagne, and even became his preceptor in the sciences. Charlemagne, on his side, made Offa many costly presents, which seem to have chiefly consisted of the spoils which that emperor had taken from the Huns. But the glory and successes of Offa were stained by the treacherous murder of Ethelbert, king of the East Angles, whilst sojourning at his court, and by his violent seizing of that kingdom in the year 792. Overcome by remorse, Offa endeavoured to atone for his crime by liberality to the church. He gave the tenth of his goods to the clergy, and engaged to pay the sovereign pontiff a yearly donation for the support of an English college at Rome: for which purpose he imposed the tax of a penny on each house possessed of thirty pence a year. Offa's liberality, however, was perhaps only a confirmation of that of Ina, king of the West Saxons, who is also said to have founded a school at Rome, and to have laid for its support a tax of one penny, under the name of *Rom-feoh*, or Rome-scot, on every house in the kingdom. This imposition, being afterwards levied on all England, was commonly denominated *Peter's-pence*: and though conferred at first as a gift, was afterwards claimed as a tribute by the Roman pontiff.

Offa died in 796. The reigns of his successors on the Mercian throne, who were all either murdered or violently deposed, deserve not to arrest our attention. Mercia, instead of continuing to be the leading state among the Anglo-Saxons, was, through its internal dissensions, falling fast into decay, and was thus easily reduced by the arms of Egbert, to whose history we must now return.

§ 21. Egbert had already possessed the throne of Wessex nearly a quarter of a century, when the invasion of his dominions before





reference to, by Beornwulf, king of Mercia, took place. Egbert defeated the invaders, and subdued with facility the tributary kingdoms of Kent and Sussex, while the East Angles, from their hatred to the Mercian government, immediately rose in arms, and put themselves under the protection of Egbert. In order to engage the Mercians more easily to submission, he allowed Wiglaf, their countryman, to retain the title of king, while he himself exercised the real power of sovereignty. The anarchy which prevailed in Northumbria, as already related, tempted him to carry still further his victorious arms; and the inhabitants, unable to resist his power, and desirous of possessing some established form of government, were forward, on his first appearance, to send deputies, who submitted to his authority, and swore allegiance to him as their sovereign. Egbert, however, still allowed to Northumbria, as he had done to Mercia and East Anglia, the power of electing a king, who paid him tribute and was dependent on him. These three subordinate kingdoms remained under their own sovereigns, as vassals of Egbert, till they were swallowed up by the Danish invasion. Egbert and his successors, down to Alfred the Great, commonly assumed only the title of Kings of Wessex, and Alfred's son, Edward the Elder, seems to have been the first who regularly adopted the title of "Rex Anglo-rum," or King of the English.

Thus all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were nominally united into one state, nearly 400 years after the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain. This event is placed in the year 827.

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### CHRONOLOGY OF REMARKABLE EVENTS.

A.D.	A.D.
450. First arrival of the Saxons in England under Hengist and Horsa.	617. Kingdom of Northumbria under Edwin.
477. Ella lands in Sussex.	626. Kingdom of Mercia founded by Penda.
495. Cerdic lands in Hampshire.	627. Conversion of Edwin. Church at York.
519. Cerdic founds the kingdom of Wessex.	664. Yellow plague.
527. The Saxons land in Essex.	793. The Northmen land on Lindisfarne.
547. The Angles under Ida settle in Bernicia.	800. Accession of Egbert in Wessex.
597. Augustine preaches Christianity in Kent.	827. Egbert unites all the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms.

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### NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

#### A. THE FRISIANS TOOK PART IN THE SAXON INVASION OF BRITAIN.

This appears from the following facts:—1. Procopius says (Bell. Goth.

iv, 20) that Britain was inhabited in his time (the 6th century) by three races, the Angles, Frisians, and Britons. The omission of the Saxons, and the substitution of the Frisians, can be accounted for only on the supposition that



### B. THE ISLE OF THANET.

The Isle of Thanet was in Anglo-Saxon times, and long afterwards, separated from the rest of Kent by a broad strait, called by Bede the *Wantsumu*. The Stour, instead of being a narrow stream, as at present, was then a broad river, opening into a wide estuary between Sandwich and Deal, in the direction of Pegwell Bay. Ships coming from France and Germany sailed up this estuary, and through the river, out at the other side by Reculver. Ebb's Fleet is the name given to a farm-house on a strip of high ground rising out of Minster Marsh (Stanley, *Memorials of Canterbury*, p. 13). *Thanet* is the German name of the island. The Welsh name was *Ruim*, which probably signified a foreland, and is still preserved in the compound *Ramsgate*. In East Kent the gaps in the line of cliff which lead down to the shore are called gates; hence *Ramsgate* is the gate or pass leading into *Ruim* (Guest, in *Proceedings of the Archaeological Institute* for 1849, p. 32).

C. CELTIC WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Mr. Davies, in the valuable paper already referred to, remarks: "The stoutest assertor of a pure Anglo-Saxon or Norman descent is convicted by the language of his daily life of belonging to a race that partakes largely of Celtic blood. If he calls for his coat (*W. cola*, Germ. *rock*), or tells of the *basket* of fish he has caught (*W.*

basgawd, Germ. korb), or the cart he employs on his land (W. cart, from car, a drag or sledge, Germ. wagen), or of the pranks of his youth or the prancing of his horse (W. prank, a trick; prancio, to frolic), or declares that he was happy when a gownsman at Oxford (W. hap, fortune, chance; Germ. glück; W. gwn), or that his servant is pert (W. pert, spruce, dapper, insolent), or, descending to the language of the vulgar, he affirms that such assertions are balderdash, and the claim a sham (W. baldordus, idle, prating; siom, from shom, a deceit, a sham), he is consciously maintaining the truth and would deny. Like the M. Jourdain of Molière, who had been talking French all his life without knowing it, he has been speaking very good Celtic without any suspicion of the fact."

A long list of Celtic words in the English language will be found in Mr. Davies's essay, and also in another valuable paper by the late Mr. Garnett, likewise published in the 'Transactions of the Philological Society' (vol. i. p. 171). It appears that a considerable proportion of the English words relating to the ordinary arts of life, such as agriculture, carpentry, and in general indoor and outdoor service, come from the Celtic. The following, which might be multiplied almost indefinitely, may serve as samples :—

<i>English.</i>	<i>Welsh.</i>
basket	basgwd.
bran	bran (a skin of wheat),
crook, crockery	crochan (a pot),
drill	rhill (a row).
flannel	gwlanen (from gwlan, wool)
gown	gwn (a robe),
hem	hem (a border).
lath	liath (a rod).
mattock	matog.
pail	pasol.
peck	peg.
pitcher	piar (a jug).
ridge	rhic, rhig.
solder	sawdriaw (to join, cement)
tackles	taci (instrument, tool).

Mr. Davies also calls attention to the fact that in the Lancashire dialect (and the same holds good of other dialects) many low, burlesque, or obscene words can be traced to a Celtic source, and this circumstance, together with the fact that no words connected with law, or government, or the luxuries of life, belong to this class, is distinct evidence that the Celtic race was held in a state of dependence or inferiority.





The Raising of Lazarus. Scripture of the IXth or Xth century from Selsey, now in Chichester Cathedral.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE ANGLO-SAXONS FROM THE UNION OF ENGLAND UNDER EGBERT TILL THE REIGN OF CANUTE THE DANE.

- § 1. State of the kingdom. § 2. Invasion of the Danes. Death of Egbert.  
 § 3. Reign of Ethelwolf. His journey to Rome. § 4. Revolt of Ethel-  
 bald. § 5. Reigns of Ethelbald, Ethelbert, Ethelred. Continued invasions  
 of the Danes. § 6. Accession of Alfred. Successes of the Danes. Flight  
 of Alfred. § 7. Alfred defeats the Danes. Their settlement in East Anglia.  
 The Danelagh. § 8. Wise regulations of Alfred. New Danish war. Death  
 of Alfred. § 9. His character. His love of learning. § 10. His policy  
 and legislation. § 11. Reign of Edward the Elder. § 12. Reign of Athel-  
 stane. His conquests, power, and foreign connexions. § 13. Reign of  
 Edmund I. His assassination. § 14. Reign of Edred. St. Dunstan; his




character and power. § 15. Reign of Edwy. His quarrel with St. Dunstan. § 16. Reign of Edgar. His good fortune. § 17. Reign of Edward. His assassination. § 18. Reign of Ethelred II. Invasion of the Danes. Danegelt. § 19. Massacre of the Danes. § 20. Conquest of England by Sweyn. Flight of Ethelred. § 21. Death of Sweyn and return of Ethelred. Invasion of Canute. Death of Ethelred. § 22. Division of England between Canute and Edmond Ironside. Murder of the latter.

1. EGBERT, A.D. 827-836:—Although England was not firmly cemented into one state under Egbert, as is usually represented, yet the power of this monarch and the union of so many provinces opened the prospect of future tranquillity; and it appeared more probable that the Anglo-Saxons would thenceforth become formidable to their neighbours, than be exposed to their inroads and devastations. Indeed in the following year Egbert led his victorious army into North Wales, laid waste the country as far as Snowdon, penetrated into Denbighshire, and reduced the isle of Anglesey to subjection. Of all the territory that had been comprised in Roman Britain, Strathclyde and Cumbria alone were free from vassalage to the crown of Egbert. But these flattering views were soon overcast by the appearance of the Northmen, who during some centuries kept the Anglo-Saxons in perpetual disquietude, committed the most barbarous ravages upon them, and at last reduced them to grievous servitude.

§ 2. These pirates and freebooters inhabited the Scandinavian kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; and the hordes which plundered England were drawn from all parts of the Scandinavian peninsula. It was, however, chiefly the Danes who directed their attacks against the coasts of England; the Norwegians made their descents for the most part upon Scotland, the Hebrides, and Ireland; while the Swedes turned their arms against the eastern shores of the Baltic. These Scandinavians were in race and language closely connected with the Anglo-Saxons. The languages of all the Scandinavian nations differ only slightly from the dialects of the Germanic tribes; and both races originally worshipped the same gods, and were distinguished by the same love of enterprise and freedom. But, while the Anglo-Saxons had long since abjured their ancient faith, and had acquired the virtues and vices of civilization, their Scandinavian kinsmen still remained in their savage independence, still worshipped Odin as their national god, and still regarded the plunder of foreign lands as their chief occupation and delight. In the ninth century they inspired the same terror which the Anglo-Saxons had done in the fifth. Led by the younger sons of royal houses, the Vikings\* swarmed in all the harbours and rivers of the surrounding countries. Their course was marked by fire and bloodshed. Build-

\* *Viking* is in Danish a naval warrior, a pirate.



ings red and profane were burnt to the ground; and great numbers of peace were murdered or dragged away into slavery. The terrified inhabitants fled at their approach, and beheld in them the judgment of God foretold in the prophets. Their national flag was the figure of a black raven, woven on a blood-red ground, from whose movements the Northmen augured victory or defeat. When it fluttered its wings, they believed that Odin gave them a sign of victory; but if the wings hung down, they imagined that the god would not prosper their arms. Their swords were longer and heavier than those of the Anglo-Saxons, and their battle-axes are mentioned as formidable weapons.

These terrible Northmen appeared at the same time upon the coasts of England, France, and Russia. They wrested from the French monarch one of his fairest provinces, which was called Normandy after them; and they founded in Russia a dynasty which reigned over the country above 700 years. Their first appearance upon the English coasts is placed in the Saxon Chronicle under the year 787; but it was not till the latter part of Egbert's reign that they commenced their regular and systematic ravages of the country. At first they merely made brief and rapid descents upon the coasts, returning to their northern homes with the plunder they had gained; but they soon began to take up their abode in England for the winter, and renewed their devastations in the spring. While England was trembling at this new evil, Egbert, who alone was able to provide effectually against it, unfortunately died (A.D. 836), and left the government to his son Ethelwolf.

§ 3. ETHELWOLF, 836-858.—This prince had neither the abilities nor vigour of his father, and was better qualified for governing a convent than a kingdom. He began his reign with making a partition of his dominions, and delivering over to his eldest son, Athelstane, the newly conquered provinces of Essex, Kent, and Sussex. But no inconvenience seems to have arisen from this partition, as the continual terror of the Danish invasions prevented all domestic dissension. These incursions now became almost annual, and, from their sudden and unexpected nature, kept the English in continual alarm. The unsettled state of England hindered not Ethelwolf from making a pilgrimage to Rome, whither he carried his fourth and favourite son, Alfred, then only six years of age. He passed there a twelvemonth in exercises of devotion, and in acts of liberality to the church. Besides giving presents to the more distinguished ecclesiastics, he made a perpetual grant of 300 *manuses*\* a year to that see; one-third to support the lamps of St. Peter's, another those of St. Paul's, a third to the Pope himself. But that Ethelwolf

\* The *mancus* was a silver coin of about the weight of a half-crown.



most established tithes in England, as is maintained by some writers, seems to be founded on a misinterpretation of some ancient charters. Tithes were most probably earlier instituted in this country; but Ethelwolf appears to have established the first poor-law, by imposing on every ten hides of land the obligation of maintaining one indigent person.

§ 4. On his return from Rome Ethelwolf married Judith, daughter of the French king Charles the Bald, though she was then only twelve years of age; but on his landing in England he met with an opposition which he little looked for. His eldest son, Athelstane, being dead, Ethelbald, his second son, who had assumed the government, formed, in concert with many of the nobles, the project of excluding his father from a throne which his weakness and superstition seem to have rendered him so ill qualified to fill. The people were divided between the two princes, and a bloody civil war, joined to all the other calamities under which the English laboured, appeared inevitable; when Ethelwolf had the facility to yield to the greater part of his son's pretensions. He made with him a partition of the kingdom; and taking to himself the eastern part, which was always at that time esteemed the least considerable, as well as the most exposed to invasion, he delivered over to Ethelbald the sovereignty of the western half.



Golden Ring of Ethelwolf in the British Museum. It is decorated with a blueish-black enamel, firmly incorporated into the metal by fusion.

§ 5. **ETHELBALD, ETHELBERT, and ETHELRED, A.D. 858-871.**—Ethelwolf died about 858. He was succeeded by his sons Ethelbald and Ethelbert, whose short reigns present nothing of importance. On the death of the latter, Ethelred, another son of Ethelwolf, ascended the throne in the year 866. Under these monarchs the Danes continued their ravages with renewed vigour, and penetrated into the very heart of the country. In the course of their devastations they defeated and took prisoner Edmund, the king of East Anglia (871), to whom they proposed that he should renounce the Christian faith and rule under their supremacy. But Edmund having rejected this proposal with scorn and horror, the Danes bound him naked to a tree, scourged and shot at him with arrows, and finally beheaded him. The constancy with which Edmund met his death caused him to be canonised as a saint and martyr: the place where his body was buried took the name of Bury St. Edmund's, and a splendid monastery was erected there in his honour.

§ 6. **ALFRED, 871-901.**—Ethelred died of a wound received in





against the Danes (871), and was succeeded by his brother Alfred. This monarch, who was born at Wantage in 849, and was now 22 years of age, gave very early marks of those great virtues and shining talents by which he saved his country from utter ruin and subversion. His genius was first roused by the recital of Saxon poems: he soon learned to read those compositions, and proceeded thence to acquire the knowledge of the Latin tongue. In his twentieth year he first took the field along with his brother against the pagan invaders of his country, and it was owing to his intrepidity and courage that the Saxons gained a signal victory over the Danes at Ashdune (perhaps Aston in Berkshire). On the death of Ethelred soon afterwards, he was called to the throne in preference to his brother's children, as well by the will of his father as by the vows of the whole nation and the urgency of public affairs.

The first seven years of his reign were spent in incessant struggles against the Danes, over whom he gained some victories; but fresh swarms of Northmen continually poured into the kingdom, and Alfred, overpowered by superior numbers, was at length obliged (878) to relinquish the ensigns of his dignity, to dismiss his servants, and to seek shelter in the meanest disguises from the pursuit and fury of his enemies. He concealed himself under a peasant's habit, and lived some time in the house of a neat-herd, who had been intrusted with the care of some of his cows. The wife of the neat-herd was ignorant of the condition of her royal guest; and observing him one day busy by the fireside in trimming his bow and arrows, she desired him to take care of some cakes which were toasting, while she was employed elsewhere in other domestic affairs. But Alfred, whose thoughts were otherwise engaged, neglected this injunction, and the good woman on her return, finding her cakes all burnt, rated the king very severely, and upbraided him that he always seemed very well pleased to eat her warm cakes, though he was thus negligent in toasting them.

§ 7. By degrees, Alfred, as he found the search of the enemy become more remiss, collected some of his retainers and retired into the centre of a bog formed by the stagnating waters of the Thone and Parret, in Somersetshire. He here found two acres of firm ground, and, building a habitation on them, rendered himself secure by its fortifications, and still more by the unknown and inaccessible roads which led to it, and by the forests and morasses with which it was every way environed. This place he called Æthelingay, or the Isle of Nobles; and it now bears the name of Athelney.\* He

\* A beautiful gold enamelled jewel found at this spot, and now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, has the inscription "Ælfred mee heht gewurcan" (Alfred ordered me to be wrought). According to the testimony of his biographer, Asser, Alfred encouraged goldsmiths.



Alfred made frequent and unexpected sallies upon the Danes, who often felt the vigour of his arm, but knew not from what quarter the blow came. He subsisted himself and his followers by the plunder which he acquired; he procured them consolation by revenge; and from small successes he opened their minds to hope, that, notwithstanding his present low condition, more important victories might at length attend his valour. But before he would assemble them in arms, or urge them to any attempt which, if unfortunate, might in their present despondency prove fatal, he resolved to inspect himself the situation of the enemy, and to judge of the probability of success. For this purpose he entered their camp under the disguise of a harper, or *glee-man*, and passed unsuspected through every quarter. He so entertained them with his music and facetious humours, that he met with a welcome reception, and was even introduced to the tent of Guthrum, their prince, where he remained some days. He remarked the supine security of the Danes, their contempt of the English, their negligence in foraging and plundering, and their dissolute wasting of what they gained by rapine and violence. Encouraged by these favourable appearances, he secretly sent emissaries to the most considerable of his subjects, and summoned them to a rendezvous, attended by their warlike followers, at Brixton, on the borders of Selwood forest. The English, who had hoped to put an end to their calamities by servile submission, now found the insolence and rapine of the conqueror more intolerable than all past fatigues and dangers; and at the appointed day they joyfully resorted to their prince. He instantly conducted them to Ethandun (perhaps Eddington, near Westbury), where the Danes were encamped; and taking advantage of his previous knowledge of the place, he directed his attack against the most unguarded quarter of the enemy. The Danes, surprised to see an army of English, whom they considered as totally subdued, and still more astonished to hear that Alfred was at their head, made but a faint resistance, notwithstanding their superiority of number, and were soon put to flight with great slaughter. The remainder of the routed army, with their prince, was besieged by Alfred in a fortified camp to which they fled; but being reduced to extremity by want and hunger, they had recourse to the clemency of the victor, and offered to submit on any conditions. The king gave them their lives, and even formed a scheme for converting them from mortal enemies into faithful subjects and confederates. He knew that the kingdom of East Anglia was totally desolated by the frequent inroads of the Danes, and he now proposed to repopulate it by settling there Guthrum and his followers, who might serve him as a rampart against any future incursions of their countrymen. But before he ratified these mild conditions with the Danes, he required that they should





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gave him the pledge of their submission, and of their inclination to incorporate with the English, by declaring their conversion to Christianity. Guthrum and thirty of his officers had no aversion to the proposal, and without much instruction, or argument, or conference, they were all admitted to baptism (A.D. 878). The king answered for Guthrum at the font, gave him the name of Athelstane, and received him as his adopted son. The success of this expedient seemed to correspond to Alfred's hopes, and the greater part of the Danes settled peaceably in their new quarters. The Danes had for some years occupied the towns of Derby, Leicester, Stamford, Lincoln, and Nottingham, and were thence called the *Fif* or *Five Burghers*. Alfred now ceded a considerable part of the kingdom of Mercia, retaining however the western portion, or country of the Hiwccas. It would, however, be an error to suppose that the Danes became really the subjects of Alfred. On the contrary they continued to form an independent state down to the latest times of the Anglo-Saxon monarchy. The general boundary between the Danes and Saxons was the old Roman road called Watling Street, which ran from London across England to Chester and the Irish Channel, the province of the Danes lying to the north and east of that road, which was hence called *Danelagh*, the Danes' community. The Danes continually received fresh accessions of numbers from their own country, and were able to bid defiance to all the efforts of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs to reduce them to subjection.

§ 8. After the treaty with Guthrum, Alfred enjoyed tranquillity for some years. He employed this interval in restoring order to the state, which had been shaken by so many violent convulsions; in establishing civil and military institutions; in composing the minds of men to industry and justice; and in providing against the return of like calamities. After rebuilding the ruined cities, particularly London, which had been destroyed by the Danes in the reign of Ethelwolf, he established a regular militia for the defence of the kingdom. He increased his fleet both in number and strength, and trained his subjects in the practice as well of sailing as of naval action. He improved the construction of his vessels, which were higher, swifter, and steadier than those of the Danes, and nearly double the length, some of them having more than 60 rowers. A fleet of 120 ships of war was stationed upon the coast; and being provided with warlike engines, as well as with expert seamen, both Frisians and English—for Alfred supplied the defects of his own subjects by engaging able foreigners in his service—maintained a superiority over those smaller bands with which England had so often been infested. But in the year 893 the northern provinces of France, into which Hasting, the famous Danish chief, had penetrated, being afflicted with a grievous famine,



the Danes set sail from Boulogne with a powerful fleet under the command of Hasting, landed upon the coast of Kent, and began to commit the most destructive ravages. It would be tedious to narrate the events of this new Danish war, which occupied the attention of Alfred for the next few years. It is sufficient to relate that, after repeated defeats in different parts of the island, the small remains of the Danes either dispersed themselves among their countrymen in Northumberland and East Anglia, or had recourse again to the sea, where they exercised piracy under the command of Siegfried, a Northumbrian; and that Alfred finally succeeded in restoring full tranquillity in England. He died (A.D. 901) in the vigour of his age and the full strength of his faculties, after a glorious reign of 29 years and a half, in which he deservedly attained the appellation of Alfred the Great, and the title of Founder of the English Monarchy.

§ 9. The merit of this prince, both in private and public life, may with advantage be set in opposition to that of any monarch or citizen which the annals of any age or any nation can present us. His civil and his military virtues are almost equally the objects of our admiration; excepting only that the former, being more rare among princes, as well as more useful, seem chiefly to challenge our applause. Nature also, as if desirous that so bright a production of her skill should be set in the fairest light, had bestowed on him every bodily accomplishment, vigour of limbs, dignity of shape and air, with a pleasing, engaging, and open countenance. When Alfred came to the throne he found the nation sunk into the grossest ignorance and barbarism, proceeding from the continued disorders in the government, and from the ravages of the Danes. The monasteries were destroyed, the monks butchered or dispersed, their libraries burnt; and thus the only seats of erudition in those ages were totally subverted. Alfred himself complains that on his accession he knew not one person south of the Thames who could so much as interpret the Latin service; and very few in the northern parts who had reached even that pitch of erudition. But this prince invited over the most celebrated scholars from all parts of Europe; he established schools everywhere for the instruction of his people; and he enjoined by law all freeholders possessing two hydes of land, or more, to send their children to school for their instruction. The foundation, or, at least, the restoration, of the University of Oxford, has sometimes been ascribed to him, but for this pretension there seems to be no satisfactory evidence. But the most effectual expedient employed by Alfred for the encouragement of learning was his own example, and the assiduity with which, notwithstanding the multiplicity and urgency of his affairs, he employed himself in the pursuits of knowledge. He usually divided his time into three equal portions: one was employed in sleep and the





recreation of his body by diet and exercise; another in the despatch of business; a third in study and devotion; and that he might more exactly measure the hours, he made use of burning tapers of equal length, which he fixed in lanterns, an expedient suited to that rude age, when the geometry of dialling and the mechanism of clocks and watches were totally unknown. And by such a regular distribution of his time, though he often laboured under great bodily infirmities, this martial hero, who fought in person 56 battles by sea and land, was able, during a life of no extraordinary length, to acquire more knowledge, and even to compose more books, than most studious men, though blessed with the greatest leisure and application, have, in more fortunate ages, made the object of their uninterrupted industry. He translated into Saxon the histories of Orosius and of Bede; to the former of which he prefixed a description of Germany and the north of Europe, from the narratives of the travellers Wulfstan and Ohthere. He also executed a version of Boethius' 'Consolation of Philosophy,' besides several other translations which he either made or caused to be made from the Confessions of St. Augustine, St. Gregory's Pastoral Instructions, Dialogues, &c. Nor was he negligent in encouraging the more vulgar and mechanical arts. He invited from all quarters industrious foreigners to repeople his country, which had been desolated by the ravages of the Danes. He introduced and encouraged manufactures; and no inventor or improver of any ingenious art did he suffer to go unrewarded. He prompted men of activity to betake themselves to navigation, to push commerce into the most remote countries, and to acquire riches by propagating industry among their fellow-citizens. He set apart a seventh portion of his own revenue for maintaining a number of workmen, whom he constantly employed in rebuilding the ruined cities, castles, palaces, and monasteries. Hence, both living and dead, Alfred was regarded by foreigners, no less than by his own subjects, as the greatest prince after Charlemagne that had appeared in Europe during several ages, and as one of the wisest and best that had ever adorned the annals of any nation.

§ 10. The great reputation of Alfred, however, has caused many of the institutions prevalent among the Anglo-Saxons, the origin of which is lost in remote antiquity, to be ascribed to his wisdom: such as the division of England into counties, hundreds, and tithings; the law of frankpledge; trial by jury, &c.; some of which were probably anterior, and others subsequent, to the time of Alfred. Even the code of laws which he undoubtedly promulgated was little more than a new collection of the laws of Ethelbert, Offa, and Ina; into which, with the assistance of his *witan*, or council, he inserted only a few enactments of his own. The great



merit of Alfred as a ruler lies not so much in his legislation as in his strict and vigorous administration of the laws which already existed.

§ 11. Alfred had by his wife, Ealhswith, daughter of a Mercian earl, three sons and three daughters. The eldest son, Edmund, died without issue in his father's lifetime. The third, Ethelward, inherited his father's passion for letters, and lived a private life. The second, Edward, succeeded to his power, being the first of that name who sat on the English throne.

EDWARD, 901-925.—Immediately on his accession, Edward, usually called Edward the Elder, had to contend with Ethelwold, son of king Ethelred, the elder brother of Alfred, who, insisting on his preferable title to the throne, armed his partisans and took possession of Winburne. On the approach of Edward, however, Ethelwold fled first into Normandy and thence into Northumberland, where the people declared for him; and having thus connected his interests with the Danish tribes, he went beyond sea, and, collecting a body of these freebooters, excited the hopes of all those who had been accustomed to subsist by rapine and violence. He was also joined by the East Anglian Danes and the Five Burghers; but Edward overthrew them in several actions, recovered the booty which they had made, and compelled them to retire into their own country. All the rest of Edward's reign was a scene of continued and successful action against them, in which he was assisted by the activity and prudence of his sister Ethelfleda, widow of Ethelbert, earl of Mercia. Edward died in the year 925, and was succeeded by Æthelstane, his natural son—his legitimate children being of too tender years to rule a nation so much exposed both to foreign invasion and to domestic convulsions.

§ 12. ÆTHELSTANE, 925-940.—This monarch likewise gained numerous victories over the Danes, and is justly regarded as one of the ablest and most active of the Anglo-Saxon princes. He passed many good laws, which for the most part were really new enactments, and not, like many of those of preceding kings, mere repetitions from older customs or codes. Among them was the remarkable one, that a merchant who had made three long voyages on his own account should be admitted to the rank of a thane or gentleman. This shows that commerce was now more honoured and encouraged than it had formerly been, and implies at the same time that some of the English cities had reached a considerable pitch of prosperity and importance. At the same time a more extensive intercourse existed with the continent, as displayed by the manifold relations of Æthelstane with foreign courts. Several foreign princes were intrusted to his guardianship and educated at his court, among whom was his own nephew Louis, son of his sister Edgiva and Charles the Simple, king of France. The latter,






his long residence in England, obtained the name of *Louis the Pious*. Besides his sister married to the king of France, Athelstane had also bestowed the hand of three others on foreign princes. Eadchild, or Ethilda, was married to Hugo the Great, count of Paris, the founder of the Capetian dynasty; another, Edgitha, became the consort of Otho, emperor of Germany; and a third, Elgiva, espoused Louis, duke of Aquitaine.

§ 13. EDMUND I., called the Elder, 940-946.—Athelstane died in the year 940, and was succeeded by his second brother, Edmund. According to some accounts, Athelstane had caused the death of Edwin, the eldest of his legitimate brothers, whom he suspected of aspiring to the crown, by sending him out to sea in an old crazy boat without oars, and accompanied only by his armour-bearer. Whatever may be the truth of this story, it is at all events certain that Edwin perished at sea.

The short reign of Edmund I. is distinguished by two important events. In order to insure tranquillity, he used the precaution of removing the Five Burghers from the towns of Mercia, because it was always found that they took advantage of every commotion, and introduced the rebellious or foreign Danes into the heart of the kingdom. He also conquered Cumberland from the Britons, and conferred that territory on Malcolm, king of Scotland, on condition that he should do him homage for it, and protect the north from all future incursions of the Danes. Edmund was assassinated in the year 946, by Leofu, a notorious robber, whom he had sentenced to banishment, but who had the boldness to enter the hall where he himself dined, and to sit at table with his attendants. On his refusing to leave the room when ordered, the king leaped on him, and seized him by the hair; but the ruffian, pushed to extremity, drew his dagger, and gave Edmund a wound of which he immediately expired.

§ 14. EDRED, 946-955.—Edmund left male issue, but so young that they were incapable of governing the kingdom; and his brother Edred was elected to the throne by the *witan*. The reign of this prince, as those of his predecessors, was disturbed by the rebellions and incursions of the Danes. After subduing them, Edred, instructed by experience, took greater precautions against their future revolt. He fixed English garrisons in their most considerable towns, and placed over them an English governor, who might watch all their motions, and suppress any insurrection on its first appearance.

Edred, though not unwarlike nor unfit for active life, had blindly delivered over his conscience to the guidance of Dunstan, commonly called St. Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury, whom he advanced to the highest offices, and who covered, under the appearance of sanctity, the most violent ambition. Dunstan was born of noble



participated in the West of England ; and, being educated under his uncle Aldhelm, then archbishop of Canterbury, had betaken himself to the ecclesiastical life, and had acquired some character in the court of Edmund. He was, however, represented to that prince as a man of licentious manners ; and, finding his fortune blasted by these suspicions, his ardent ambition prompted him to repair his indiscretions by running into an opposite extreme. He secluded himself entirely from the world ; he framed a cell so small that he could neither stand erect in it nor stretch out his limbs during his repose ; and he here employed himself perpetually either in devotion or in manual labour. By these solitary occupations his head was filled with chimeras which might almost pass for insanity. But we may perceive, from many examples, the intimate connexion that exists between fanaticism and cunning ; and Dunstan's future life shows that there was at least considerable method in his madness. Supported by the character obtained in his retreat, Dunstan appeared again in the world, and gained such an ascendant over Edred, as made him not only the director of that prince's conscience, but his counsellor in the most momentous affairs of government. Finding that his advancement had been owing to the opinion of his austerity, he professed himself a partisan of the rigid monastic rules. A mistaken piety had produced in Italy a new species of monks, called Benedictines, who excluded themselves entirely from the world, renounced all claim to liberty, and made a merit of the most inviolable chastity. Their practices and principles, which superstition at first engendered, were greedily embraced and promoted by the policy of the court of Rome, which perceived that the celibacy of the clergy could alone break off entirely their connexion with the civil power, and, depriving them of every other object of ambition, engage them to promote, with unceasing industry, the grandeur of their own order. Dunstan, after introducing that reformation in the convents of Glastonbury and Abingdon, endeavoured to render it universal in the kingdom.

The progress of the monks was somewhat retarded by the death of Edred, their partisan, who expired in 955, after a reign of nine years. His children being infants, his nephew Edwy, son of Edmund, was elected to the throne.

§ 15. EDWY, 955-958.—Edwy, at the time of his accession, was not above sixteen or seventeen years of age, was possessed of the most amiable figure, and was even endowed, according to authentic accounts, with the most promising virtues. He would have been the favourite of his people had he not unhappily at the commencement of his reign been engaged in a controversy with the monks, who have pursued his memory with the same unrelenting vengeance which they exercised against his person and dignity during his short and unfortunate reign. There was a beautiful princess of the royal blood, called





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Edwya, who had made impression on the tender heart of Edwy; and he had ventured, contrary to the advice of his gravest counsellors, to espouse her, though she was within the degrees of affinity prohibited by the canon law. On the day of his coronation, his nobility were assembled in a great hall, and were indulging themselves in that riot and disorder which, from the example of their German ancestors, had become habitual to the English, when Edwy, attracted by his fondness for his wife, retired into the queen's apartment. Dunstan conjectured the reason of the king's retreat; and carrying along with him Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, over whom he had gained an absolute ascendant, he burst into the apartment, upbraided Edwy with his absence, probably bestowed on the queen the most opprobrious epithet that can be applied to her sex, and, tearing him from her arms, pushed him back in a disgraceful manner into the banquet of the nobles. Edwy, though young, and opposed by the prejudices of the people, found an opportunity of taking revenge for this public insult. He questioned Dunstan concerning the administration of the treasury, at the head of which he had been placed by his predecessor; a reckoning which Dunstan deemed it advisable to evade by flying to Ghent.

In these transactions it is impossible not to see more than the history of a mere personal quarrel between the young king and the abbot of Glastonbury. A revolution was evidently in progress—a struggle between the high church or Roman party, who wished to seize the supreme power in the state, and introduce a new system of ecclesiastical discipline, and those who were for abiding by the old order of things. Dunstan and his party, who were the innovators, sought support in the Danish parts of the kingdom, which were the most ignorant and uncivilised, and always discontented with the government; and having excited a rebellion in Mercia and East Anglia, and shortly afterwards in Northumberland, they proclaimed Edgar, the younger brother of Edwy, as king. Dunstan now returned into England, and took upon himself the government of Edgar and his party. With the consent of a witenagemot assembled at Bradford, Dunstan received from the hands of Edgar the sees of London and Worcester, and had the effrontery, or rather the profanity, to justify this violation of the canons by the examples of St. John and St. Paul. Even in the southern provinces, the ecclesiastical party now gained the ascendancy. Archbishop Odo sent into the palace a party of soldiers, who seized the queen, and, having burned her face with a red-hot iron, in order to destroy that fatal beauty which had seduced Edwy, they carried her by force into Ireland, there to remain in perpetual exile. Edwy, finding it in vain to resist, was obliged to consent to his divorce, which was pronounced by Odo; and a catas-

royal still more dismal awaited the unhappy Elgiva. That amiable princess, being cured of her wounds, and having even obliterated the scars with which Odo had hoped to deface her beauty, returned into England, and was flying to the embraces of the king, whom she still regarded as her husband, when she fell into the hands of a party whom the primate had sent to intercept her. Nothing but her death could now give security to Odo and the monks, and the most cruel death was requisite to satiate their vengeance. She was hamstrung, and expired a few days after at Gloucester, in the most acute torments. The unhappy Edwy himself, who had been excommunicated, died shortly afterwards at the same place (A.D. 958), whether naturally or through the machinations of his enemies is uncertain; and thus the triumph of the clergy and Benedictines was complete. He was succeeded by his brother Edgar.

§ 16. EDGAR, 958-975.—One of the first acts of Edgar after his accession was to promote Dunstan to the archbishopric of Canterbury. In fact, Edgar, who was only about sixteen years of age at the time of his accession, was completely governed by Dunstan and the monks, who had placed him on the throne, and who, by their pretensions to superior sanctity and purity of manners, had acquired an ascendant over the people. Of the first five years of his reign we have no memorials, except of his passive co-operation in the ecclesiastical revolution then in progress. To please the monks he depreciated and degraded the secular clergy; he favoured their scheme for dispossessing the secular canons of all the monasteries; and he bestowed preferment on none but their partisans. Above forty Benedictine convents are said to have been founded by Edgar. These merits have procured him the highest panegyrics from the monkish historians, and he is transmitted to us not only under the character of a consummate statesman and an active prince, but also under that of a great saint and a man of virtue.

If we consider Edgar's fortunate reign, he may perhaps be in some degree entitled to the former portion of this eulogy. His reign was undisturbed by any domestic tumult or foreign invasion of the Danes; a result which was probably in part owing to the large armament, both military and naval, which he constantly kept on foot, and also to the fact that the Danes had now obtained establishments in the north of France, which it required all their superfluous population to people and maintain. Being thus freed from disturbance on this side, Edgar was enabled to employ his vast armaments against the neighbouring sovereigns; and the king of Scotland, the princes of Wales, of the Isle of Man, of the Orkneys, and even the Northmen in Ireland, were reduced to pay submission to so formidable a monarch. But Edgar was arrogant and vain-glorious, and abused his prosperity by degrading and insulting his





conquered foes. On the annual occasion of his voyage round the island, he once appointed eight vassal kings to attend him at Chester, and to row his barge upon the Dee to the abbey of St. John the Baptist, he himself acting as the steersman; whence, after offering up their prayers, they returned in the same order.

The saintly part of Edgar's character he appears to have owed to the unscrupulous gratitude of the monks towards their benefactor: for his conduct was licentious in the highest degree, and violated every law, human and divine. Among other feats of the same kind, he broke into a convent, and carried off Editha, a nun, by force.

It is stated that the extirpation of wolves in England was effected in this reign by converting the money payment imposed upon the Welsh princes into an annual tribute of 300 wolves' heads; but these animals were found in the island at a much later period.

§ 17. Edgar died in the year 975, in the thirty-third year his age, leaving two sons: Edward, aged thirteen, whom he had had by his first wife, Ethelfleda; and Ethelred, his offspring by Elfrida, then only seven. There can be no doubt that the former had the best claim to the succession; and though Elfrida attempted to raise her son to the throne, Edward was crowned at Kingston by the vigorous policy of Dunstan.

EDWARD II., called the MARTYR, 975-979.—The kingdom was now again divided into two parties, and the short reign of Edward presents nothing memorable except the struggles between Dunstan and the Benedictines on the one hand, and the secular clergy on the other, who in some parts of Mercia succeeded in expelling the monks. To settle this controversy several synods were held, in which Dunstan is said to have worked sundry miracles.

The death of young Edward was memorable and tragical. He was hunting one day in Dorsetshire, and being led by the chase near Corfe-castle, where his step-mother, Elfrida, resided, he took the opportunity of paying her a visit, unattended by any of his retinue, and thereby presented her with the opportunity which she had so long wished for. After he had mounted his horse he desired some liquor to be brought him: while he was holding the cup to his mouth, a servant of Elfrida approached and gave him a stab behind. The prince, finding himself wounded, put spurs to his horse; but becoming faint by loss of blood, he fell from the saddle, his foot stuck in the stirrup, and he was dragged along by his unruly horse till he expired. Being tracked by the blood, his body was found and was privately interred at Wareham by his servants. The youth and innocence of this prince, with his tragical death, obtained him the appellation of "Martyr," though his murder had no connexion with any religious principle or opinion.

§ 18. **ETHELRED II.**, 979-1016.—Ethelred II., the son of Elfrida,

Called by historians "the Unready," now ascended the throne, at the early age of ten. Dunstan put the crown on the young monarch's head at Kingston; but pronounced, it is said, a curse instead of a blessing. The haughty prelate lived ten years longer, still retaining the dignity of primate, but without so much influence as he had formerly enjoyed. A period, however, was approaching, in which the heat of ecclesiastical disputes gave place to a more important question respecting the very existence of the nation. Two or three years after Ethelred's accession, the Danes and Northmen, who could no longer disburthen themselves on Normandy, began to renew their incursions in England; and Ethelred's long reign presents little else than a series of struggles with those piratical invaders. He adopted the foolish and shameful expedient of buying off their attacks, and thus only excited the hopes of the Danes of subduing a people who defended themselves by their money, which invited assailants, instead of by their arms, which repelled them. In the year 993 the northern invaders, having by their previous incursions become well acquainted with the defenceless condition of England, made a powerful descent under the command of Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olave, king of Norway; and sailing up the Humber, spread on all sides their destructive ravages. In the following year they ventured to attack the centre of the kingdom, and, entering the Thames in 94 vessels, laid siege to London, and threatened it with total destruction. But the citizens, alarmed at the danger, and firmly united among themselves, made a bolder defence than the nobility and gentry; and the besiegers, after suffering the greatest hardships, were finally frustrated in their attempt. They then carried their devastations into other quarters, till they were bought off with 16,000 pounds of silver. But in a few years they again returned, and in 997, and the following year, committed dreadful devastations in various parts, till bought off again with the payment of 24,000 pounds. This tribute gave rise to an odious and oppressive impost, which, under the name of *Danegelt*, or Dane-money, continued to be levied on the laity long after the occasion for its imposition had ceased. Observing the close connexions maintained among all the Danes, however divided in government or situation, Ethelred, being now a widower, made his addresses to Emma, sister to Richard II., duke of Normandy, in the hope that such an alliance might serve to check the incursions of the Northmen. He succeeded in his suit: the princess came over to England and was married to Ethelred in 1001.

§ 19. Shortly after this marriage, Ethelred, from a policy incident to weak princes, formed the cruel resolution of murdering the Danes throughout his dominions. But though almost all the ancient historians speak of this massacre as if it had been universal,



thing representation of the matter is absolutely impossible, as the Danes were almost the sole inhabitants in the kingdoms of Northumberland and East Anglia, and were very numerous in Mercia. The animosity between the inhabitants of English and Danish race had, from repeated injuries, risen to a great height; and especially through the conduct of those Danish troops which the English monarchs, from the superiority of their military qualities, had long been accustomed to keep in pay. These mercenaries, who were quartered about the country, and committed many violences, had attained to such a height of luxury, according to the old English writers, that they combed their hair once a day, bathed themselves once a week, and changed their clothes frequently. Secret orders were given to commence the massacre on the festival of St. Brice (November 13th, 1002). The rage of the populace, excited by so many injuries, sanctioned by authority, and stimulated by example, spared neither sex nor age, and was not satiated without the tortures as well as death of the unhappy victims. Even Gunilda, sister to the king of Denmark, who had married earl Paling, and had embraced Christianity, was seized and condemned to death by Ethelred, after seeing her husband and children butchered before her face. This unhappy princess foretold in the agonies of despair that her murder would soon be avenged by the total ruin of the English nation.

§ 20. Never was prophecy better fulfilled, and never did barbarous policy prove more fatal to its authors. Sweyn and his Danes appeared the next year off the western coast, and took full revenge for the slaughter of their countrymen; and Ethelred was twice reduced to the infamy of purchasing a precarious peace. At length, towards the close of 1013, Sweyn being virtually sovereign of England, and the English nobility everywhere swearing allegiance to him, Ethelred, equally afraid of the violence of the enemy and of the treachery of his own subjects, fled into Normandy, whither he had sent before him queen Emma and her two sons Alfred and Edward.

§ 21. The king had not been above six weeks in Normandy when he heard of the death of Sweyn, who expired at Gainsborough before he had time to establish himself in his newly acquired dominions. The English prelates and nobility, taking advantage of this event, sent over a deputation to Normandy inviting Ethelred to return, with which he complied, and was joyfully received by the people, in the spring of 1014. On his deathbed at Gainsborough, Sweyn, with the approbation of the assembled Danes, named his son Canute,\* who had accompanied him in the expedition, as his successor. But on the approach of Ethelred, who displayed on this occasion an unwonted celerity, Canute embarked with his forces for Denmark.

\* Knut is the proper orthography of the name. Canute is a corruption, and should be pronounced with the accent on the last syllable.



A ray of hope seemed now to dawn on England, but it was only transient. Ethelred soon relapsed into his usual incapacity and indolence; and the government became a scene of internal feud, treachery, and assassination. In 1015 Canute returned with a large fleet and landed in the west of England. Edmond, the king's eldest son, made some fruitless attempts to oppose his progress; but not being supported by his father and the nation, was obliged to disband the greater part of his army, and to retire with the remainder to London, where Ethelred had shut himself up. Hither also Canute directed his course, in the hope of seizing Ethelred's person; but the king expired before his arrival, after an unhappy and inglorious reign of 35 years.

§ 22. EDMOND IRONSIDE, 1016.—By the small party who had remained faithful to the royal cause, Edmond was now elected king, whose hardy valour procured him the name of Ironside. Meanwhile Canute had arrived at London, where, as the bridge impeded his operations, he caused a canal to be dug on the south bank of the river, through which he conveyed his ships; and also surrounded the city on the land-side with a deep trench, thus hoping to cut off all the supplies. But these measures, as well as a general assault, having failed, Canute proceeded into the western districts, where Edmond was engaging the Danes with considerable success. At length the Danish and English nobility, equally harassed with these convulsions, obliged their kings to come to a compromise, and to divide the kingdom between them by treaty. Canute obtained Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumberland, which he had entirely subdued; the southern parts were left to Edmond. This prince was murdered about a month afterwards on the 30th of November, through the machinations of Edric, the duke of Mercia, who thereby made way for the succession of Canute the Dane to the crown of all England.

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#### CHRONOLOGY OF REMARKABLE EVENTS.

A.D.

- 867. Descent of the Danes.
- 871. Accession of Alfred.
- 878. Alfred's treaty with the Danes.
- 901. Death of Alfred.
- 958. Dunstan, archbp. of Canterbury.

A.D.

- 993. Descent of the Danes under Sweyn and Olave.
- 1002. Massacre of the Danes.
- 1016. Canute shares the kingdom with Edmond Ironside.





## GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE HOUSE OF CERDIC

Cerdic, the ancestor of the kings of England of the Saxon Line, and the ninth in descent from Woden, founded the kingdom of Wessex A.D. 519. Cerdic died in 534; and from him Egbert, the first king of England, is descended as follows:—1. Cynric, king of Wessex (r. 534-560). 2. Ceawlin, king of Wessex (r. 560-591). 3. Cuthwine, 4. Cutha. 5. Ceolwald. 6. Cenred. 7. Ingild. 8. Eoppa. 9. Eafa. 10. Eathmund, king of Kent, whose son Egbert was elected to succeed Brihtic in the kingdom of Wessex A.D. 800. The line then proceeds as follows:—

EGBERT,  
r. 800-836.  
m. Raedburh.

ETHELWOLF,  
r. 836-858.  
m. 1. Osburh.  
2. Judith.

Athelstane, (k. of S.E. of Eng. d. 854).  
ETHELWOLF, r. 858-860.  
ETHELBERT, r. 860-866.  
ETHELRED, r. 866-871.  
Ethelwyth, r. 871-901.  
m. Ealhswith.

EDWARD the ELDER, r. 901-925.  
5 other children.

m. 1. Ecgwyn. 2. Elffeda. 3. Edgiva.  
By his three marriages Edward left 15 children, by 3 of whom he was succeeded.

ATHELSTANE, (by Ecgwyn), r. 925-940.  
EDMUND, (by Edgiva), r. 940-946.  
m. 1. Elgiva.  
2. Ethelfleda.  
EDRED, (by Edgiva), r. 946-955.  
EDWY, r. 955-958.  
EDGAR, r. 958-975.  
m. 1. Ethelfleda.  
2. Elfrida.

EDWARD the MARTYR, (by Ethelfleda), r. 975-979.  
ETHELRED, (by Elfrida), r. 979-1016.

m. 1. Elffeda. 2. Emma of Normandy.  
By these two marriages Ethelred had 14 children, of whom it will here be necessary only to mention 3, viz., Edmund, his eldest son by Elffeda; Alfred, his eldest son by Emma, murdered by Earl Godwin; and Edward, surnamed the Confessor, his second son by the same wife.

EDMOND IRONSIDE, (by Elffeda), r. April to Nov. 1016.  
m. Alfhitha.  
(The succession interrupted by the Danish Line.)  
Alfred, (by Emma), ob. 1036.  
EDWARD the CONFESSOR, (by Emma), r. 1042-1066.  
m. Edgitha.

Edmond, m. Agatha (d. 1057).  
Edward, m. Margaret, of Scotland.  
Christina, (a nun.)  
Edgar Atheling, (in whom the male Saxon line became extinct).  
m. Maudita, m. HENRY I. K. of England  
(thus uniting the Saxon and Norman lines).



Seal of Edward the Confessor. (British Museum.)

SIGILLVM EADWARDI ANGLORVM BASILEI; King seated with sceptre and sword.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DANES AND ANGLO-SAXONS FROM THE REIGN OF CANUTE TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

§ 1. Accession of Canute. First acts of his reign. Marries Emma of Normandy. § 2. Rise of earl Godwin. § 3. Canute's devotion. His reproof of his courtiers. § 4. He reduces the king of Scotland. His death. § 5. Division of the kingdom. Reign of Harold Harefoot. § 6. Reign of Hardicanute. § 7. Accession of Edward the Confessor. § 8. Influence of the Normans. Revolt and banishment of earl Godwin. § 9. William duke of Normandy visits England. Return of earl Godwin: his death. Rise of Harold. § 10. Siward restores Malcolm, king of Scotland. § 11. Edward invites his nephew from Hungary. § 12. Harold's visit to Normandy. § 13. Harold reduces Wales; condemns his brother Tosti. Aspires to the succession. Death of Edward. § 14. His character. § 15. Accession of Harold. William assembles a fleet and army. Invasion of Tosti and of Harold Hardrada. Battle of Stanford Bridge. § 16. Norman invasion. Battle of Hastings. Death of Harold.

§ 1. CANUTE, 1016-1035.—Edmond Ironside left a brother, Edwy, who died in 1017, and two half-brothers, Alfred and Edward, the sons of Ethelred by his second wife, Emma of Normandy; as





as two infant sons of his own, Edmond and Edward. But immediately after his death, Canute convened a general assembly of the states at London, and, having suborned some nobles to declare that Edmond had never designed his kingdom to pass to his brothers, and had appointed himself to be tutor to his children, the states put him in possession of the government. Canute sent Edmond's children to his half-brother Olave, king of Sweden, it is said with a secret request to put them to death; but Olave, too generous to comply, transmitted them to Stephen, king of Hungary, to be educated at his court.

In order to secure his elevation, Canute had been obliged to gratify the chief of the nobility by bestowing on them the most extensive governments and jurisdictions. He also found himself compelled to load the people with heavy taxes in order to reward his Danish followers: he exacted from them at one time the sum of 72,000 pounds, besides 11,000 which he levied on London alone. But, like a wise prince, being determined that the English should be reconciled to the Danish yoke by the justice and impartiality of his administration, he sent back to Denmark as many of his followers as he could safely spare: he restored the Saxon customs in a general assembly of the states: he made no distinction between Danes and English in the distribution of justice: and he took care, by a strict execution of law, to protect the lives and properties of all his people.

Alfred and Edward, who were protected and supported by their uncle Richard, duke of Normandy, still gave Canute some anxiety. In order to acquire the friendship of the duke, he paid his addresses to queen Emma, sister of that prince, and promised that he would leave the children whom he should have by that marriage in possession of the crown of England. Richard complied with his demand, and sent over Emma to England, where she was soon after married to Canute, notwithstanding that he had been the mortal enemy of her former husband.

§ 2. When Canute had settled his power in England beyond all danger of a revolution, he appears in 1019 to have made a voyage to Denmark; and the necessity of his affairs caused him frequently to repeat it, in order to make head against the Wends,\* as well as against the kings of Sweden and Norway. On one of these occasions, earl Godwin, observing a favourable opportunity, attacked the enemy in the night, drove them from their trenches, and obtained a decisive victory over them. Next morning, Canute, seeing the English camp entirely abandoned, imagined that those disaffected troops had deserted, and was agreeably surprised to find that they were engaged in pursuit of the discomfited enemy. He was so

\* The name of *Wends* is given by the Germans and Scandinavians to their Slavonic neighbours.



passed with this success, and with the manner of obtaining it, that he bestowed his daughter in marriage upon Godwin, and treated him ever after with entire confidence and regard.

§ 3. This semi-barbarous monarch, who had committed numberless murders and waded through slaughter to a throne, but who had nevertheless many of the qualities of a great sovereign, sought to regain the favour of Heaven by employing himself in those exercises of piety which the monks represented as most meritorious. He built churches, endowed monasteries, and even undertook a pilgrimage to Rome. It appears, from a letter which he addressed to the English clergy, that he must have been in that city in the year 1027, when Conrad, emperor of Germany, was also there for the purpose of his coronation. He appears from the same letter to have obtained some privileges for English pilgrims to Rome, and an abatement of the large sums exacted from the archbishops for their palls; but on the other hand he enforced a strict payment of St. Peter's pence and other ecclesiastical dues.

Canute's celebrated reproof of his courtiers exhibits more moral elevation. Some of his flatterers, breaking out one day in admiration of his grandeur, exclaimed that everything was possible for him; upon which the monarch, it is said, ordered his chair to be set on the sea-shore while the tide was rising, and as the waters approached he commanded them to retire, and to obey the voice of him who was lord of the ocean. He feigned to sit some time in expectation of their submission; but when the sea still advanced towards him, and began to wash him with its billows, he turned to his courtiers, and remarked to them that every creature in the universe was feeble and impotent, and that power resided with one Being alone, in whose hands were all the elements of nature, who could say to the ocean, *Thus far shalt thou go and no farther*; and who could level with his nod the most towering piles of human pride and ambition.



Silver Penny of Canute.

Obverse: CNVT REX; bust, left, with a triangular flag, seen on other coins of Danish kings. Reverse: BRITRED ON LVE, cross.

§ 4. The only memorable action which Canute performed after his return from Rome was an expedition against Malcolm, king of Scotland, and his nephew, Duncan, king of Cumberland, whom he reduced to subjection (1030). Canute died at Shaftesbury in 1035, leaving by his first marriage two sons, Sweyn and Harold, and by Emma another son, named, from his bodily strength, Hardi-Canute. To the last he had given Denmark; on Sweyn he had bestowed Norway; and Harold was in England at the time of his death.





**HAROLD I. HAREFOOT, 1035-1040.**—According to Canute's marriage contract with Emma, Hardicanute should have succeeded him on the English throne; but the absence of that prince in Denmark, as well as his unpopularity among the Danish part of the population, caused him to lose one-half of the kingdom. Leofric, earl of Mercia, asserted the pretensions of Harold, whose presence in England was of great service to his cause, whilst the powerful earl Godwin embraced that of Hardicanute. A civil war was, however, averted by a compromise: it was agreed that Harold should enjoy, together with London, all the provinces north of the Thames, while the possession of the south should remain to Hardicanute; and till that prince should appear and take possession of his dominions, Emma fixed her residence at Winchester, and established her authority over her son's share of the partition.

Alfred and Edward, Emma's sons by Ethelred, still cherished the hope of ascending the throne. Edward sailed with 40 ships from Barfleur, and made a descent at Southampton, but meeting with no sympathy from the people was obliged to return. Alfred subsequently landed in Kent at the head of about 600 followers; but being deceived by earl Godwin, who pretended to espouse his cause, was by him decoyed to Guildford, where nearly all his followers were murdered in the most cruel manner, he himself was taken prisoner, his eyes were put out, and he was conducted to the monastery of Ely, where he died soon after. This is the only memorable action performed in the reign of Harold, who, from his agility, apparently his only accomplishment, obtained the name of *Harefoot*. He died on the 17th March, 1040.

§ 6. **HARDICANUTE, 1040-1042.**—On the intelligence of his brother's death, Hardicanute immediately proceeded to London, where he was acknowledged king of all England without opposition. He was a poor intemperate sot, without any generous and regal, or even manly, qualities. His first act was to disinter the body of his brother Harold, with whom he was enraged for depriving him of his share of the kingdom: the corpse, after decapitation, was thrown into the Thames; but being found by a fisherman, was buried by the Danes of London in their cemetery at St. Clements. Little memorable occurred in the short reign of Hardicanute. He renewed the imposition of *Danegelt*, and obliged the nation to pay a great sum of money to the fleet which brought him from Denmark. The discontents in consequence ran high in many places, and especially at Worcester, which was set on fire and plundered by the soldiers. Hardicanute died suddenly about two years after his accession, whilst in the act of raising the cup to his lips at a marriage festival at Lambeth (A.D. 1042).

§ 7. **EDWARD THE CONFESSOR, 1042-1066.**—The death of Hardi-

It seemed to present to the English a favourable opportunity for recovering their liberty, and for shaking off the Danish yoke. Prince Edward was in England on his half-brother's demise; and though the children of Edmond Ironside were the true heirs of the Saxon family, yet their absence in so remote a country as Hungary appeared a sufficient reason for their exclusion, to a people like the English, so little accustomed to observe a regular order in the succession of their monarchs. The claims of Edward were supported by earl Godwin, who only stipulated that Edward should marry his daughter Editha, which he afterwards performed. Edward was crowned king with every demonstration of duty and affection; and, by the mildness of his character, he soon reconciled the Danes to his administration.

One of the first acts of Edward was to strip his mother Emma, the queen dowager, of the immense treasures which she had amassed. He confined her, during the remainder of her life, in a monastery at Winchester, but carried his rigour against her no further. He had hitherto lived on indifferent terms with that princess, whom he accused of neglecting himself and his brother during their adverse fortune; and as she was unpopular in England, the king's severity, though exposed to some censure, met not with very general disapprobation.

§ 8. But, though freed from the incursions of the Danes, the nation was not yet delivered from the dominion of foreigners. The king had been educated in Normandy, and had contracted many intimacies with the natives of that country, as well as an affection for their manners. The court of England was soon filled with Normans, who, being distinguished both by the favour of Edward, and by a degree of cultivation superior to that which was attained by the English in those ages, soon rendered their language, customs, and laws fashionable in the kingdom. Above all, the church felt the influence of those strangers; several were appointed to prelaties and other high dignities, and Robert, a Norman also, was promoted to the see of Canterbury. Thus the subsequent Norman conquest was in a great degree facilitated. These proceedings excited the jealousy of the English, and particularly of earl Godwin. This powerful nobleman, besides the southern parts of Wessex, had the counties of Kent and Sussex annexed to his government. His eldest son, Sweyn, possessed the same authority in the northern part of Wessex, or the counties of Oxford, Berks, Gloucester, Somerset, and Hereford; and Harold, his second son, was duke of East Anglia, and at the same time governor of Essex. The great authority of this family was supported by immense possessions and powerful alliances; and the abilities, as well as ambition, of Godwin himself, contributed to render it still more dangerous.





was not long before his animosity against the Norman favourites broke into action. Eustace, count of Boulogne, having paid a visit to the king, passed by Dover in his return; one of his train, being refused entrance to a lodging which had been assigned him, attempted to make his way by force, and in the contest wounded the master of the house. The inhabitants flew to assist the wounded man; a tumult ensued, in which nearly 20 persons were killed on each side; and Eustace, being overpowered by numbers, was obliged to save his life by flight from the fury of the populace. On the complaint of Eustace, the king gave orders to Godwin, in whose government Dover lay, to punish the inhabitants; but Godwin, who desired rather to encourage than to repress the popular discontents against foreigners, refused obedience, and endeavoured to throw the whole blame of the riot on the count of Boulogne and his retinue. Edward, touched in so sensible a point, saw the necessity of exerting the royal authority, and threatened Godwin, if he persisted in his disobedience, to make him feel the utmost effects of his resentment.

Whatever may have been the faults or crimes of Godwin, he had the good fortune, or rather perhaps the good policy, to appear in the present conjuncture as the patriotic defender of the English cause against the foreign predilections of the sovereign. He had now gone too far to retreat, and therefore he and his sons, Sweyn and Harold, assembled their forces for the purpose of overawing the king, and enforcing redress of the grievances of the nation. But, besides the Godwin family, England was divided by two other mighty earls, or dukes: \* Leofric, whose government embraced the ancient kingdom of Mercia; and Siward, whose sway extended over the kingdom of Northumberland. These powerful noblemen, from jealousy of Godwin, embraced the king's cause, and assembled a numerous army; and when the southern earl and his sons approached London with their forces to attend the *witena-gemot* appointed to be held there, they found themselves outnumbered. Sweyn was declared an outlaw by the *witan*; Godwin and Harold were summoned to take their trial, but, refusing to appear unless hostages were given for their safety, they were ordered to leave the country within five days. Baldwin, earl of Flanders, gave protection to Godwin and his three sons, Sweyn, Gurth, and Tosti, the last of whom had married the daughter of that prince: Harold and Leofwin, his two other sons, took shelter in Ireland. The estates of the father and sons were confiscated; their governments were given to others; Queen Editha was confined in a monastery at Warewel; and the greatness of this family, once so formidable, seemed now to be totally supplanted and overthrown (1051).

§ 9. The Norman influence was now again in the ascendant; and

\* At this period the Latin title *dux* alternates with the Danish *jarl* (earl)



before the end of the year, William, duke of Normandy, paid a visit to Edward with a large retinue. But Godwin had fixed his authority on too firm a basis, and he was too strongly supported by alliances both foreign and domestic, not to occasion further disturbances, and make new efforts for his re-establishment. Having fitted out a fleet in the Flemish harbours, and being joined at the Isle of Wight by his son Harold with a squadron collected in Ireland, he entered the Thames, and, appearing before London, where the people seemed favourably disposed towards him, threw everything into confusion (1052). The king alone seemed resolute to defend himself to the last extremity; but the interposition of the English nobility, many of whom favoured Godwin's pretensions, made Edward hearken to terms of accommodation, and it was agreed that hostages should be given on both sides. At this news the Frenchmen fled in various directions: the archbishop of Canterbury, and bishops of London and Dorchester, succeeded in escaping into Normandy. At a great *witena-gemot* held outside the walls of London, Godwin and his sons were declared innocent of the charges laid against them, and were restored to their honours and possessions; and thus the authority of the crown was almost entirely annihilated. Godwin's death, which happened soon after while he was sitting at table with the king, prevented him from further establishing the authority which he had acquired, and from reducing Edward to still greater subjection. His son Sweyn had died on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem; and Godwin was therefore succeeded in his governments and offices by his son Harold, who was actuated by an ambition equal to that of his father, and was superior to him in address, in insinuation, and in virtue. By a modest and gentle demeanour he acquired the goodwill of Edward, and, gaining every day new partizans by his bounty and affability, he proceeded in a more silent, and therefore a more dangerous, manner to the increase of his authority.

§ 10. The death of Siward, duke of Northumberland, in 1055, made the way still more open to his ambition. Siward, besides his other merits, had acquired honour to England by his successful conduct in the only foreign enterprise undertaken during the reign of Edward. Duncan, king of Scotland, the successor of Malcolm, was a prince of a gentle disposition, but possessed not the genius requisite for governing a country so turbulent, and so much infested by the intrigues and animosities of the great. Macbeth, the chief thane, and nearly allied to the crown, not content with curbing the king's authority, carried still further his pestilent ambition: he put his sovereign to death; chased Malcolm Kenmore, his son and heir, into England; and usurped the crown. Siward, whose daughter was married to Duncan, embraced, by Edward's orders, the protection of this distressed family: he marched an army into Scotland; and





having defeated and killed Macbeth in battle, together with several Norwegians who had taken refuge with him, he restored Malcolm to the throne of his ancestors. Soon after this achievement Siward died; and as his son, Waltheof, appeared too young to be intrusted with the government of Northumberland, Harold's influence obtained that dukedom for his own brother Tosti.

§ 11. Meanwhile Edward, feeling himself far advanced in the decline of life, began to think of appointing a successor, and sent a deputation to Hungary to invite over his nephew Edward, called the "Outlaw," son of his elder brother, Edmond Ironside, the only remaining heir of the Saxon line. That prince, whose succession to the crown would have been easy and undisputed, came to England with his children, the atheling Edgar, Margaret, and Christina; but his death, which happened a few days after his arrival (1057), threw the king into new difficulties. He saw that the great power and ambition of Harold had tempted him to aspire to the throne, and that Edgar, on account of his youth and inexperience, was very unfit to oppose the pretensions of so popular and enterprising a rival. In this uncertainty he secretly cast his eye towards his kinsman, William, duke of Normandy, as the only person whose power, and reputation, and capacity, could support any destination which he might make in his favour, to the exclusion of Harold and his family.

§ 12. According to some accounts, Edward chose Harold himself as his ambassador to communicate to William the designs which he entertained in his favour, and to deliver a sword and a ring as pledges of his intention; but though we may gather in general that Harold paid a visit to the court of the duke of Normandy, the circumstances attending it, and even the date, are involved in the greatest obscurity.

William employed this opportunity to extort from Harold a promise that he would support his pretensions to the English throne, and made him swear that he would deliver up the castle of Dover, and all the other strongholds in his earldom then garrisoned by Norman soldiers; and in order to render the oath more obligatory he employed an artifice well suited to the superstition of the age. He secretly conveyed under the altar, on which Harold agreed to swear, the reliques of some of the most revered martyrs; and when Harold had taken the oath, he showed him the reliques, and admonished him to observe religiously an engagement which had been ratified by so tremendous a sanction. The English nobleman was astonished; but, dissembling his concern, he renewed the same professions, and was dismissed with all the marks of confidence by the duke of Normandy, who promised to maintain him in all his possessions, and also to give him his daughter Adeliza in marriage.

§ 13. In what manner Harold observed this oath, which had been



thwarted from him by fear, and which, if fulfilled, might be attended with the subjection of his native country to a foreign power, we shall presently see. Meanwhile, he continued to practise every art of popularity; and fortune threw two incidents in his way by which he was enabled to acquire general favour and to increase the character, which he had already attained, of virtue and abilities. The first of these was the reduction of Wales. The second related to his brother Tosti, who had been created duke of Northumberland, but had acted with such cruelty and injustice that the inhabitants, led by Morcar and Edwin, grandsons of the great duke Leofric, rose and expelled him (1065). To Harold, who had been commissioned by the king to reduce and chastise the Northumbrians, Morcar made so vigorous a remonstrance against Tosti's tyranny, accompanied with such a detail of well-supported facts, that Harold found it prudent to abandon his brother's cause; and, returning to Edward, he persuaded him to pardon the Northumbrians and to confirm Morcar in the government to which they had elected him. He even married the sister of that nobleman; and by his interest procured Edwin, the younger brother, to be elected into the government of Mercia. Tosti in rage departed the kingdom, and took shelter in Flanders with earl Baldwin, his father-in-law.

By this marriage almost all England was engaged in the interests of Harold; and as he himself possessed the government of Wessex, Morcar that of Northumberland, and Edwin that of Mercia, he now openly aspired to the succession. Edward, broken with age and infirmities, saw the difficulties too great for him to encounter; and though his inveterate prepossessions kept him from seconding the pretensions of Harold, he took but feeble and irresolute steps for securing the succession to the duke of Normandy. While he continued in this uncertainty he was surprised by sickness, which brought him to his grave on the 5th of January, 1066, in the 65th year of his age and 25th of his reign. By some authorities he is said, on his deathbed, to have appointed Harold his successor.

§ 14. This prince, who about a century after his death was canonized with the surname of "the Confessor," by a bull of pope Alexander III., was the last of the Saxon line that ruled in England. Though his reign was peaceable and fortunate, he owed his prosperity less to his own abilities than to the conjunctures of the times. The Danes, employed in other enterprises, attempted not those incursions which had been so troublesome to all his predecessors, and so fatal to some of them. The facility of his disposition made him acquiesce under the government of Godwin and his son Harold; and the abilities, as well as the power, of these noblemen enabled them, while they were intrusted with authority,