

THE HISTORY

OF

THE ANGLO-SAXONS

FROM

THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE
NORMAN CONQUEST.

BY

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P R E F A C E

TO

THE SIXTH EDITION.

THE increasing prosperity of the British nation, and the expansion of its empire by the new colonies which are issuing from it, and are forming, as they settle and enlarge, new branches of dominion to it in the distant regions of our globe, make its first rudiments and humble beginnings more interesting to us. To represent these faithfully, and to collect from the perishing or neglected memorials of former times every circumstance that could exhibit them, before it became impossible to do so from the disappearance of the ancient documents, and from the overwhelming flood of modern events, revolutions, and diversified knowledge, which have made the last fifty years so memorable, was the favourite object of the author, when in his youthful days he conceived the idea and attempted to execute it in the following work.

That he should have lived to revise its sixth edition was more than he expected: for it is now thirty-seven years since he published its first volume. This is pleasing; but it is still a greater gratification to observe, that so much of the attention of the public continues to be directed to the transactions, remains, and language of their Anglo-Saxon ancestors, and that so many able men still apply themselves to illustrate this truly national

subject by various and valuable publications. It was one of his earnest wishes that men of talent and industry should be induced to do so, that what he could not but leave imperfect on several points, might be completed by subsequent research. This has been creditable to themselves, and just to our forefathers; and will now rescue our most important antiquities from future oblivion.

The Anglo-Saxons were deficient in the surprising improvements which their present descendants have attained; but unless they had acquired and exercised the valuable qualities, both moral and intellectual, which they progressively advanced to before their dynasty ceased, England would not have become that distinguished nation which, after the Norman graft on its original Saxon stock, it has since been gradually led to be.

Cottage, Winchmore Hill, July 4, 1836.

PREFACE

TO

THE THIRD EDITION.

THE first edition of this work was published, in successive parts, between the years 1799 and 1805. When the first volume appeared, the subject of the Anglo-Saxon antiquities had been nearly forgotten by the British public; although a large part of what we most love and venerate in our customs, laws, and institutions, originated among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. A few scholars in a former century had cultivated the study, and left grammars, dictionaries, and catalogues for our use; but their labours had been little heeded, and no one had added to the information which they had communicated. The Anglo-Saxon MSS. lay still unexamined, and neither their contents nor the important facts which the ancient writers and records of other nations had preserved of the transactions and fortunes of our ancestors had been ever made a part of our general history. The Quida, or death-song, of Ragnar Lodbrog first led the present author to perceive the deficiency, and excited his wish to supply it. A series of careful researches into every original document that he had the opportunity of examining was immediately begun, and steadily pursued, till all that was most worth preserving was collected from the Anglo-Saxon MSS. and other ancient books. The valuable information thus obtained the author endeavoured to give to the public,

in a readable form, in this work, of which two-thirds have not appeared in English history before. His favourite desire has been fulfilled—a taste for the history and remains of our Great Ancestors has revived, and is visibly increasing.

Many writers have since followed in the same path. Their publications have spread the useful taste, and contributed to obtain for our venerable forefathers the attention of their enlightened posterity. To gratify more fully this patriotic curiosity, some additional portions of original matter, from the Anglo-Saxon remains, have been inserted in the present edition. The most important of these consist of the following additions :

On reading our Alfred's Anglo-Saxon translation of Boetius, the author observed passages which were not in the original. Struck with this curious fact, he compared the king's work carefully with the Latin of Boetius, and found that Alfred had frequently taken occasion to insert his own thoughts and reasonings in various parts, forming so many little essays, dialogues, and imitated tales, of our venerable sovereign's own composition. Some of the most important of these have been selected and translated, and inserted in the second volume of the present edition.

Since the author called the attention of the public, in 1805, to the neglected, and indeed unknown Saxon heroic poem on Beowulf, Dr. Thorkelin has printed it at Copenhagen, in 1815. This valuable publication has assisted the author in giving a fuller analysis of this curious composition in the third volume.

On the composition of the Anglo-Saxon parliament, or *witena-gemot*, many have desired more satisfactory information than the author had incorporated in the preceding editions. He has inserted, in the present, all the facts that he found, which seemed to have an actual relation to this interesting subject, and has added such remarks as they have suggested to a mind wishing to be correct and impartial.

The author has added a statement of the great principles of the Anglo-Saxon Constitution and Laws, as far as an attentive consideration of our most ancient documents has enabled him to discriminate them.

He has been long since requested to give some detail of the Anglo-Saxon population. The Conqueror's Record of Domesday afforded good materials for this subject. It has been examined, with this object in view; and the reader will find, in the third volume, an enumeration of the different classes and numbers of people whom it records to have been living in England about the time of the Norman conquest.

Some pains have been taken to make the work, in its other parts, as improved and as complete as a careful diligence could secure, and at the same time to comprise the whole within the compass of three octavo volumes. This object has been attained without the sacrifice of any material information, although, to accomplish it, some parts have been necessarily printed in a smaller type, and others as appendices. But the convenience to the public of compressing this history into two volumes seemed to outbalance the disadvantage of a partial alteration of the printed letter. As it now stands, it presents the reader with the History of England from the earliest known period to the time of the Norman conquest.

It would have been desirable, for the gratification of the curious student, that the original Anglo-Saxon of the various passages that are cited and given in English should have been added; but this would have extended the work into a fourth volume, and have made it more expensive than the author desired. The public may rely on his assurance, that he has endeavoured to make the translations literally faithful, in order that the style, as well as the sense, of the Anglo-Saxon writer may be perceived.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

The early Division of Mankind into the civilized and Nomadic Nations.—The most ancient Population of Britain proceeded from the Nomadic.

Population of Europe disputed,	25
The Keltic distinguished from the Gothic tribes,	26
Dr. Percy's table of their different languages,	26
Three great streams of population in Europe,	27
All population the result of emigration from one race,	27
Its slow progress, and from the East,	28
Mankind always in two great classes,	29
General description of the civilized class,	30
Nomadic, or barbaric class,	32
The first civilized nations,	36
Our ancestors from the Nomadic class,	36

CHAPTER II.

That the Kimmerian and Keltic Nations were the earliest Inhabitants of the West of Europe.—A brief Outline of their Migrations and Expeditions.—Settlement of their Colonies in Britain.—Welsh Traditions on this subject.

Three genera of languages in Europe,	38
The Kimmerian, or Keltic,	38
The Gothic, Scythian, or Teutonic,	38
The Sarmatian, or Slavonic,	38
Kimmerians the earliest inhabitants of Europe,	39
Their movements when attacked by the Scythians,	39
Their progress to the German Ocean,	41
The Cimbri were Kimmerians,	41
Kimmerians and Cymry in Britain,	43
Hw Cadarn,	44
Manners of the Kimmerians and Cimbri,	45
The Kelts sprang from the Kimmerians,	47
The Kelts in the west of Europe—Their movements,	48
The Kelts enter Britain,	51

CHAPTER III.

Phœnicians and Carthaginians in Britain.

Phœnicians in Spain and Britain	- - - - -	53
The Cassiterides,	- - - - -	54
These islands the Scilly isles, and Cornwall,	- - - - -	54
Welsh traditions,	- - - - -	56
Carthaginians acquainted with Britain,	- - - - -	57

CHAPTER IV.

On the Knowledge which the Greeks had of the British Islands; and on the Tradition of the Trojan Colony.

The Grecian knowledge of Europe gradual,	- - - - -	57
Britain known to the Greeks,	- - - - -	58
Voyage of Pytheas,	- - - - -	58
Traditions of Grecian intercourse,	- - - - -	59
Story of Brutus and his Trojans,	- - - - -	60

CHAPTER V.

The Manners of the ancient Britons.—The Druids.

Forty-five tribes in Britain,	- - - - -	62
State of the country,	- - - - -	63
Persons and dress of the Britons,	- - - - -	63
Their houses and customs,	- - - - -	64
Their war-chariots,	- - - - -	64
Their religion,	- - - - -	65
Their Druids,	- - - - -	66

CHAPTER VI.

Invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar.—Its final Conquest by the Romans.

Cæsar's great projects,	- - - - -	68
His first expedition to Britain,	- - - - -	69
His second,	- - - - -	69
Successes of the Emperor Claudius,	- - - - -	71
Vespasian and Titus in Britain,	- - - - -	71
Boudicca's struggle for independence,	- - - - -	72
Agricola's conquest and improvements,	- - - - -	72
The walls built by the Romans,	- - - - -	74

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

The Origin of the Saxons.

A. C.		
141.	Saxons first mentioned by Ptolemy,	- - - - - 76
	not noticed by Tacitus,	- - - - - 76
	Other tribes omitted by Tacitus,	- - - - - 77
	The Scythian, or Gothic, population of Europe,	- - - - - 78
	The Anglo-Saxons a branch of this,	- - - - - 79
	Existing works in the ancient languages from the Gothic stock,	- - - - - 79
	Scythians in Asia,	- - - - - 80

CONTENTS.

xiii

A. C.		
6-700.	Scythians enter Europe,	81
	The Sakai-suna probably the Saxons,	82
	Ancient Scythian language,	83
	And deities,	83
	The Slavonians, or Sarmatic branch,	85
	Their chronological succession,	86

CHAPTER II.

Description of the Country inhabited by the Saxons near the Elbe, before they occupied Britain.

	The three Saxon islands,	86
	Northstrandt,	86
	Busen,	87
	Heilig-island, the most celebrated,	87
	Continental territory of the Saxons,	90
	Ditmarsia,	90
	Stormaria,	91
	Holsatia,	91

CHAPTER III.

Circumstances favourable to the increase of the Saxon Power on the Continent.

	Progress of the Romans to the Elbe,	92
	Cæsar's invasion of Germany,	93
	Augustus subdues its districts to the Rhine,	94
	His operations towards the Danube,	94
	Progress of Drusus to the Elbe,	95
	Patriotic exertions of Arminius,	95
	Sanguinary victories of Germanicus,	97
	Repulse of the Romans to the Rhine,	99
	Growth of the nations between the Rhine and the Elbe,	100
235-240.	Maximin's invasion of Germany,	101
	Origin of the Franks,	102
	Their use to the Saxons,	102

CHAPTER IV.

The Application of the Saxons to Maritime Expeditions.

	Naval exertions of the nations between the Rhine and Elbe,	103
	Voyage of Franks from the Euxine,	104
	Its effects on the Saxons,	105
	Usurpation of Carausius,	105
287.	He teaches the Saxons the naval art,	106
	Magnentius allies with them,	106

CHAPTER V.

The League of the Saxons with other States; and their Continental Aggrandizement.

	Their league with the nations between the Rhine and Elbe,	107
	The Jutes,	109
	The Angles,	109

CHAPTER VI.

Sequel of their History to the period of the Anglo-Saxon Invasion.

A. C.		
368.	The Saxons attack Britain, - - - - -	110
	Are defeated by Theodosius, - - - - -	110
370.	Defeated by the Romans on the Continent, - - - - -	111
	Their diffusion on the Continent, - - - - -	111
	Their colonies in Hungary and Transylvania, - - - - -	112

CHAPTER VII.

The History of Britain elucidated, from the Death of Maximus, in 388, to the final Departure of the Romans.

	Bede's chronology of this period erroneous, - - - - -	114
383-388.	Rise and fall of Maximus, - - - - -	114
	Rise and actions of Alaric, - - - - -	116
	Progress of the Goths, - - - - -	117
	Gildas compared with the imperial writers, - - - - -	119
	Movements of the legions in Britain, - - - - -	122
	Germans excited by Stilicho to invade Gaul, - - - - -	123
406.	Revolt of the troops in Britain; Constantine chosen their emperor, - - - - -	124
	He leaves Britain, - - - - -	124
	His officer, Gerontius, confounded by Jeffry with Vortigern, - - - - -	125
409.	The barbaric nations attack Britain, - - - - -	126
	Britons assert their independence, - - - - -	126

CHAPTER VIII.

The History of Britain between the Departure of the Romans and the Invasion of the Saxons.

410.	British independence continues, - - - - -	128
	Discontented state of the Roman provinces, - - - - -	130
	They favour the Gothic invaders, - - - - -	130
	The Civitates of Britain, - - - - -	132
	Civil discord in the island, - - - - -	134
	Many kings in Britain, - - - - -	135
	Roman improvements in the country, - - - - -	136
	Gildas's picture of their moral state, - - - - -	137

APPENDIX TO BOOK II.

THE MANNERS OF THE SAXONS IN THEIR PAGAN STATE.

CHAPTER I.

Character and persons of the most ancient Saxons, - - - - -	140
---	-----

CHAPTER II.

Their government and laws, - - - - -	144
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER III.

A. C.

Religion of the Saxons in their Pagan state, - ' - - -	147
Their idols, - - - - -	153
Their Irminsula, - - - - -	154
Principles of their ancient paganism, - - - - -	158
Their traditions on the end of the world, - - - - -	159

CHAPTER IV.

On the Menology and Literature of the Pagan Saxons.

The Saxon months, - - - - -	164
On their alphabetical characters, - - - - -	165
The Voluspa translated, - - - - -	170

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

The Arrival of Hengist.—His Transactions and Wars with the Britons, and final Settlement in Kent.

Gwrtheryn or Vortigern, - - - - -	180
449. Arrival of Hengist, - - - - -	181
Saxons make peace with the Picts, - - - - -	185
His battles with Guortimer, - - - - -	185
His conquest of Kent, - - - - -	187

CHAPTER II.

Ella arrives in Sussex, and founds a Kingdom there.—Cerdic invades the South Part of the Island, and establishes the Kingdom of Wessex.—Battles of his Successors with the Britons.

477. Arrival of Ella, - - - - -	189
495. Invasion of Cerdic, - - - - -	190
534. His son Cynric, - - - - -	192
560. Ceawlin's great successes, - - - - -	193

CHAPTER III.

Ancient British Accounts of the Battles with the West Saxons; and the authentic History of Arthur.

530. Battle of Llongborth, - - - - -	194
on the Llawen, - - - - -	195
of Bath, - - - - -	195
Probable history of Arthur, - - - - -	195
His birth, - - - - -	196
His actions, - - - - -	196
How mentioned in the Welsh bards, - - - - -	198
542. His death, - - - - -	199
His death concealed, - - - - -	200
1189. His remains discovered, - - - - -	201

CHAPTER IV.

Establishment of the Anglo-Saxons in East Anglia, Mercia, and Essex.—Arrival of Ida in Northumberland.—Battles with the Britons.—Kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira.

A. C.			
527.	First arrivals in East Anglia,	- - - - -	203
530.	Kingdom of Essex founded,	- - - - -	203
547.	Ida arrives in Bernicia,	- - - - -	204
	State of the North of Britain,	- - - - -	204
	Urien of Reged,	- - - - -	205
	Battle of Argoed Llyfain,	- - - - -	206
	Gwenystrad,	- - - - -	206
	Llywarch Hen's elegy on Urien,	- - - - -	207
	Owen, the son of Urien,	- - - - -	208
	Battle of Cattraeth,	- - - - -	209
	The Gododin of Aneurin,	- - - - -	210
	Slow progress of the Angles,	- - - - -	215
550.	Ida's death,	- - - - -	215
	Frisians in England,	- - - - -	216
	Settlements of the Jutes and Anglo-Saxons,	- - - - -	217

CHAPTER V.

History of the Anglo-Saxon Octarchy, and its further successes against the Britons, to the beginning of the Seventh Century.

560.	An octarchy established,	- - - - -	219
	Restoration of the Britons predicted by their bards,	- - - - -	220
	Anglo-Saxons war with each other,	- - - - -	222
568.	Ethelbert invades Ceawlin,	- - - - -	222
591.	Ceawlin's death,	- - - - -	223
603.	Successes of Ethelfrith,	- - - - -	224
607.	Bangor destroyed,	- - - - -	225
610.	Tewdric defeats Ceolwulph,	- - - - -	225
614.	Cynegil's victory over the Britons,	- - - - -	226

CHAPTER VI.

The Introduction of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons in Kent and Essex.—Ethelbert's reign in Kent.

	Pope Gregory's desire to convert the Anglo-Saxons,	- - - - -	227
596.	He sends Augustin on the mission,	- - - - -	229
597.	Augustin addresses Ethelbert,	- - - - -	230
	The king becomes a Christian,	- - - - -	230
604.	Christianity introduced into Essex,	- - - - -	232

CHAPTER VII.

Expedition of the East Anglians to the Rhine.—Edwin's Asylum in East Anglia.—Redwald's Defeat of Ethelfrith.—Edwin's Reign in Northumbria; and the Introduction of Christianity into that Province.

534-547.	East Anglians land on the Rhine,	- - - - -	233
617.	Ethelfrith expels Edwin from Northumbria,	- - - - -	234
	Redwald of East Anglia protects Edwin,	- - - - -	235
	defeats Ethelfrith,	- - - - -	235
	Edwin's reign in Northumbria,	- - - - -	236

A. C.				
625.	His meditations on Christianity,	-	-	237
	Discussions on it in his witenagemot,	-	-	238
628.	Edwin and his nobility baptized,	-	-	240
633.	His death, -	-	-	242
	Cadwallon's victories and defeat,	-	-	243

CHAPTER VIII.

The Reign, Actions, and Death of Penda.—History of the Anglo-Saxon Octarchy to the Accession of Alfred of Northumbria.

627-684.	Rise of Penda, -	-	-	244
634.	Oswald's reign in Northumbria, and death,	-	-	245
643.	Penda attacks Wessex and East Anglia,	-	-	246
655.	His fall, -	-	-	248
	Penda introduces Christianity into Mercia,	-	-	248
	His assassination, -	-	-	249
659.	Sigeberht restores Christianity in Essex, -	-	-	251
670.	Oswy's death, -	-	-	252
674.	Ecgfrid in Northumbria, -	-	-	253
684.	slain against the Picts, -	-	-	255

CHAPTER IX.

Reign of Alfred of Northumbria and his Successors.—History of Wessex to the Death of Ina.

684-728.	Alfred the Wise in Northumbria, -	-	-	256
	Encourages literature, -	-	-	257
	Ceadwalla in Wessex, -	-	-	259
688.	Ina's accession and reign, -	-	-	260
721.	He abdicates, and goes to Rome, -	-	-	264
731.	Anglo-Saxon kings at this period, -	-	-	264

CHAPTER X.

The History of the Octarchy from the Death of Ina to the Accession of Egbert in the year 800.

725.	Ethelheard in Wessex, -	-	-	265
	Ethelbald in Mercia, -	-	-	266
752.	His war with Cuthred, -	-	-	267
755.	Revolutions of Northumbria, -	-	-	269
774.	Offa reigns in Mercia, -	-	-	271
	His correspondence with Charlemagne, -	-	-	272
784.	Cynewulf of Wessex assassinated, -	-	-	275
	Vices of Queen Eadburga, -	-	-	275

CHAPTER XI.

The Reign of Egbert and Ethelwulf.

800.	Egbert accedes, -	-	-	277
819.	Rivalry of Wessex and Mercia, -	-	-	279
923.	Egbert subdues Kent and Wessex, -	-	-	280
	Conquers Mercia, -	-	-	281

A. C.		
827.	Invades Northumbria, - - - - -	281
832.	Attacked by the Danes, - - - - -	282
836.	His death, - - - - -	282
	Doubts as to his being crowned king of England, - - - - -	282

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

The Political State of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, in the Eighth Century.

State of Norway, - - - - -	284
of Sweden, - - - - -	286
of Denmark, - - - - -	287

CHAPTER II.

The Sea-kings and Vikingr of the North.

The sea-kings, - - - - -	290
Northern piracy, - - - - -	292
The vikingr, - - - - -	293
The berserkir, - - - - -	294

CHAPTER III.

Comparison between the Histories of Saxo-Grammaticus and Snorre.—The first Aggression of the Northmen on the Anglo-Saxons.—The Rise, Actions, and Death of Ragnar Lodbrog.

Saxo-Grammaticus, - - - - -	296
The Icelandic writers, - - - - -	298
Snorre's history, - - - - -	299
On the unprovided population of the North, - - - - -	300
Ragnar Lodbrog's actions, - - - - -	303
His Quida, or death-song, - - - - -	307

CHAPTER IV.

The Reign of Ethelwulph.—Invasion of the Northmen.—Birth of Alfred the Great—His Travels.—Ethelwulph's Deposition.

836-856.	Ethelwulph's reign, - - - - -	312
849.	Birth of Alfred the Great, - - - - -	313
	Northmen's invasion, - - - - -	314
853.	Alfred sent to Rome, - - - - -	316
	Ethelwulph's charter on the tithes, - - - - -	317
	His presents to the Pope, - - - - -	318
856.	Marriage with Judith the French princess, - - - - -	319
	Deposition, - - - - -	320

CHAPTER V.

The Reigns of Ethelbald and Ethelbert.—Alfred's Education.

A. C.		
856.	Ethelbald's accession, - - - - -	320
	Judith's third marriage, - - - - -	321
860.	Ethelbert succeeds, - - - - -	321
	Alfred's youth and education, - - - - -	322

CHAPTER VI.

The Accession of Ethelred, the third Son of Ethelwulph.—The Arrival of the Sons of Ragnar Lodbrog in England.—Their Revenge on Ella.—Conquests and Depredations.—Ethelred's Death.

866.	Arrival of the Northern Confederacy, - - - - -	327
	The Northmen defeat Ella at York, - - - - -	329
867.	Alfred's marriage, - - - - -	330
868.	The Northmen advance to Croyland, - - - - -	332
870.	Invade East Anglia, - - - - -	336
	Death of Edmund, - - - - -	338
	Wessex attacked, - - - - -	339
	Ethelred dies, - - - - -	340

CHAPTER VII.

The Reign of Alfred from his Accession to his Retirement.

871.	Alfred accedes, - - - - -	341
	His defeat and first peace, - - - - -	343
874.	Northmen conquer Mercia, - - - - -	343
	And Bernicia, - - - - -	344
876.	They attack Alfred—his second peace, - - - - -	344
877.	Alfred's naval successes, - - - - -	345

CHAPTER VIII.

Alfred becomes a Fugitive.—Misconduct imputed to him.

878.	Northmen enter Wilts, - - - - -	346
	Alfred's flight, - - - - -	346
	Its cause investigated, - - - - -	348
	Misconduct imputed to him, - - - - -	348
	The probable cause, - - - - -	352
	Alfred deserted by his subjects, - - - - -	352

CHAPTER IX.

His Conduct during his Seclusion.

	His retreat in the cottage described, - - - - -	354
	His munificence to the peasant, - - - - -	357
	Ubbo's attack in Devonshire, - - - - -	358
	Exertions of Alfred before he discovered himself to his people, - - - - -	359
	His charity, - - - - -	361

CHAPTER X.

The Battle which produced Alfred's Restoration.

A. C.	He visits the Danish camp, - - - - -	361
	Battle at Ethandune, - - - - -	363
	Its success, - - - - -	364

CHAPTER XI.

Review of the Causes and Consequences of the Northman Invasion.—The Actions of Hastings, and his Invasion of England.—Alfred's Death.

	Alfred's treaty with Godrun, - - - - -	366
	Another attempt of the Northmen, - - - - -	367
893.	Invasions of Hastings, - - - - -	368
	Alfred improves his ships, - - - - -	379
897.	Hastings finally expelled, - - - - -	380
900.	Alfred's death, - - - - -	381

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

Alfred's Intellectual Character.

	He learns to read, - - - - -	382
	State of the Anglo-Saxon mind, - - - - -	383
	Illiteracy of the clergy, - - - - -	386
	Alfred's self-education, - - - - -	386
	subsequent instructors, - - - - -	388
	His invitation of Asser, - - - - -	388
	And of Grimbald, - - - - -	389
	His attainment of the Latin language, - - - - -	390
	His preface to Gregory's Pastorals, - - - - -	391

CHAPTER II.

Alfred's Translation of Boetius's Consolations of Philosophy.—Alfred considered as a Moral Essayist.—His Thoughts, Tales, and Dialogues on various subjects.

	His Translation of Boetius, - - - - -	394
	His feeling of connubial felicity, - - - - -	395
	His story of Orpheus and Eurydice, - - - - -	396
	His thoughts on wealth and liberality, - - - - -	397
	His thoughts on a good name, - - - - -	398
	On the value of jewels, - - - - -	398
	On the advantages of the rich, - - - - -	399
	On power, - - - - -	401
	On the mind, - - - - -	401
	On the principles of government, - - - - -	402
	Alfred on the Golden Age, - - - - -	402
	His thoughts on glory, - - - - -	403
	On adversity, - - - - -	405
	On friendship, - - - - -	405
	His ideas of the system of nature, - - - - -	406

CONTENTS.

xxi

A. C.

His story of Ulysses and Circe, - - - -	407
His thoughts on the Supreme Good, - - - -	408
On wisdom, - - - -	408
On real greatness, - - - -	409
On birth, - - - -	410
On kings, - - - -	412
On the benefits of adversity, - - - -	415
His philosophical address to the Deity, - - - -	417
His metaphysics, - - - -	419
His thoughts on chance, - - - -	420
On the freedom of will, - - - -	420
Why men have freedom of will, - - - -	420
On the Divine Providence, - - - -	421
On human nature and its best interests, - - - -	423
On the Divine Nature, - - - -	424

CHAPTER III.

Alfred's Geographical, Historical, Astronomical, Botanical, and other Knowledge.

His translation of Orosius, - - - -	429
His geographical knowledge, - - - -	429
Alfred's Notitia of Germany, - - - -	430
Othter and Wulfstan's voyage, - - - -	431
Alfred's historical knowledge, - - - -	434
His translation of Bede, - - - -	434
His astronomy, - - - -	435
His botanical knowledge, - - - -	435
His translation of Gregory's Pastorals, - - - -	436
Werefrith's Dialogues of Gregory, - - - -	437
Alfred's selections from St. Austin, - - - -	438
His Psalter, - - - -	438
His Bible, - - - -	439
His Æsop, - - - -	439
His taste in the arts, - - - -	441
Architecture, - - - -	441
Ship-building, - - - -	441
Workmanship in gold, - - - -	441

CHAPTER IV.

Alfred's Poetical Compositions.

From Boetius on serenity of mind, - - - -	443
On the natural equality of mankind, - - - -	444
On tyrants, - - - -	446
On covetousness, - - - -	448
On self-government, - - - -	448
On the excursiveness of mind, - - - -	449
His picture of futurity, - - - -	451
His address to the Deity, - - - -	453

CHAPTER V.

Alfred's Moral Character.

His education of his children, - - - -	457
His arrangement of officers, - - - -	459

A. C.	His management of his time, - - - - -	460
	His piety, - - - - -	462
	Extracts from his translation of St. Austin's Meditations, -	464
	Character of St. Neot, - - - - -	467
	Alfred surnamed the Truth-teller, - - - - -	468

CHAPTER VI.

Alfred's Public Conduct.

	His efforts to improve his countrymen, - - - - -	469
	His embassy to India, - - - - -	471
	His laws, - - - - -	474
	His police, - - - - -	474
	His administration of justice, - - - - -	476
901.	His illness and death, - - - - -	477
	Antiquity of Oxford and Cambridge, - - - - -	478

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

The Reign of Edward the Elder.

901.	Edward chosen by the nobles, - - - - -	480
905.	Ethelwold by the Northmen, - - - - -	480
	Edward's conflict with the Danes, - - - - -	481
924.	His death and character, - - - - -	484

CHAPTER II.

The Reign of Athelstan.

924.	Athelstan's accession, - - - - -	485
	His sister's marriage to Sigtryg, - - - - -	487
	Anlaf's formidable invasion, - - - - -	487
	He visits Athelstan's camp, - - - - -	489
	The night attack, - - - - -	490
934.	The main battle at Brunanburh, - - - - -	490
	Athelstan first monarch of England, - - - - -	494
	His connections with Bretagne, - - - - -	494
	with France, - - - - -	495
	Louis, king of France, - - - - -	496
	His friendship with England, - - - - -	497
	His connection with the emperor Henry I. - - - - -	497
	Otho marries Athelstan's sister, - - - - -	499
	Athelstan's transactions with Norway, - - - - -	499
	He educates Haaco, - - - - -	501
	Athelstan's books, - - - - -	503
	His character, - - - - -	503

APPENDIX TO THE REIGN OF ATHELSTAN.

BOOK VI. CHAPTER II.

Sketch of the Ancient History of Bretagne, and Athelstan's Reception of its Chiefs.

A. C.	Bretagne, - - - - -	505
	Armorica, - - - - -	506
513.	Britons emigrate to Armorica, - - - - -	508
	Armorican Cornwall, - - - - -	513
	Bretons fly to Athelstan, - - - - -	516

CHAPTER III.

The Reign of Edmund the Elder.

941.	Edmund succeeds, - - - - -	516
	Anlaf's struggles with him, - - - - -	516
946.	Edmund's assassination, - - - - -	518

CHAPTER IV.

The Reign of Edred.

946.	Edred's accession, - - - - -	519
	War with Eric, - - - - -	520

CHAPTER V.

The Reign of Edwin.

955.	Edwin succeeds, - - - - -	522
	The Benedictine order, - - - - -	523
	Life of Dunstan, - - - - -	525
	He insults the king and queen, - - - - -	534
	Flies from court, - - - - -	535
	Cruel persecution of Elgiva, - - - - -	536
959.	Edwin's death, - - - - -	536

CHAPTER VI.

The Reign of Edgar.

959.	Edgar's accession, - - - - -	538
	Dunstan prosecutes the monastic reformation, - - - - -	539
	His friends Oswald and Ethelwold, - - - - -	539
969.	Edgar supports the monks, - - - - -	541
	His character, - - - - -	542

CHAPTER VII.

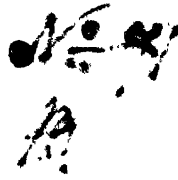
Reign of Edward the Martyr, or Edward the Second of the Anglo-Saxon Kings.

A. C.							
975.	Edward succeeds,	-	-	-	-	-	545
	Contests of the monks and clergy,	-	-	-	-	-	545
976.	Edward assassinated,	-	-	-	-	-	548

CHAPTER VIII.

Review of the State and History of Denmark and Norway at the Accession of Ethelred, and of the Last Stage of the Northern Piracy.

State of Denmark,	-	-	-	-	-	-	548
City of Jomsburg,	-	-	-	-	-	-	548
Svein's reign,	-	-	-	-	-	-	550
Norway—Haco's reign,	-	-	-	-	-	-	550
Life of Olaf Tryggva's son,	-	-	-	-	-	-	553
Last stage of northern piracy,	-	-	-	-	-	-	556



THE HISTORY
OF
THE ANGLLO-SAXONS.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

The early Division of Mankind into the Civilized and Nomadic Nations.—
The most ancient Population of Britain proceeded from the Nomadic.

No subject has been more disputed by antiquarian writers, than the origin of the population of Europe; and no discussions have been more fanciful, more ill-tempered, or more contradictory. As vehement and pertinacious have been the controversies on the peopling of Great Britain. Few topics would seem to be more remote from the usual currents of human passions, than the inquiry from what nations our primeval ancestors descended: and yet the works of our historical polemics, on investigations so little connected with any present interest or feeling, abound with all the abusive anger that irritability can furnish, as well as with all the dogmatism, confusion, errors, dreams, and contradictions, that egotism could generate, or wranglers and adversaries pursue.

It is not intended in this work to renew disputations so interminable and so useless. But in order to present the reader with a complete view of the History of England, from the earliest period to the Norman Conquest, when the Anglo-Saxon dynasty ceased, the first book of this history will be devoted to collect, from an impartial consideration of the original and ancient

writers, that series of facts and those reasoned inferences, which most deserve the attention and belief of an enlightened age. The authentic will be distinguished from the conjectural; and the nearest approach to unbiassed judgment and to historical truth, that can be effected on periods so obscure, because so remote, will be dispassionately attempted.

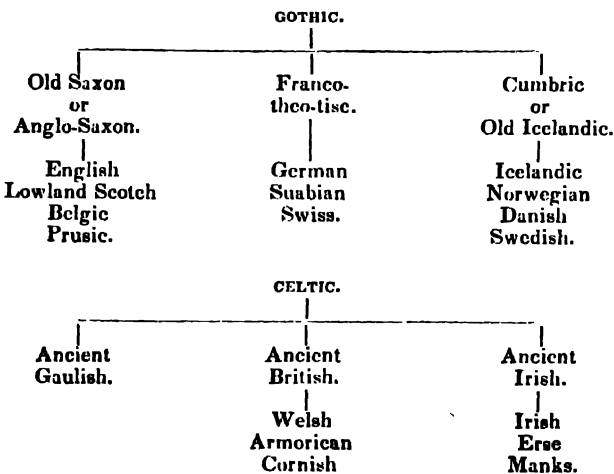
After a succession of controversies, which only increased the labyrinths of investigation, and made the doubtful more uncertain, Dr. Percy, in 1770, struck out a clear and certain path, by distinguishing the Keltic from the Gothic tribes; and by arranging the principal languages of Europe, under these two distinct genera, with specimens of the Lord's prayer in each.*

He did not pursue his subject farther. But this clear separation of the Gothic from the Keltic tribes, whom most reasoners on the origin of the continental nations have confounded, and some still confound, laid the foundation for the true history of ancient Europe.

Mr. Pinkerton, in his dissertation on the Scythians and Goths, endeavoured to verify the idea of the Bishop of Dromore, by quotations from ancient authorities; but disfigured his work by an abuse of the Keltic nations; by attempting to add unauthorized chronologies; by some wrong citations; and by several untenable opinions and digressions, with which he embarrassed Dr. Percy's simple and judicious discrimination.

To the two genera of languages pointed out by Dr. Percy, a

* Dr. Percy's genealogical table was thus composed :



third must be added, which prevails in the eastern regions of Europe; the Slavonian or Sarmatian. These three present us with the three great stocks, from which, the nations of the western regions of Europe, have chiefly derived their various population.

The most authentic facts that can be now gleaned from ancient history, concur with the most probable traditions, to prove, that Europe has been peopled by three great streams of population from the East, which have followed each other, at intervals so distinct, as to possess languages clearly separable from each other. The earliest of these, we shall find to have comprised the Kimmerian and Keltic race. The second consisted of the Scythian, Gothic, and German tribes; from whom most of the modern nations of continental Europe have descended. The third, and most recent, comprehends the Slavonian and Sarmatian nations, who were bordering on the second race, as they spread over Germany; and who have now established themselves in Poland, Bohemia, Russia, and their vicinities. It is from the two first genera of the European population, that the ancient inhabitants of England descended.

Two fanciful, but unscientific opinions have, at different times, been started, on the origin of mankind. One, that men have sprung fortuitously from the earth: the other, that there have been several aboriginal races. The first was a vulgar error of antiquity, arising from its ignorance of natural history, which philosophy has long since exploded, both from the animal and vegetable kingdoms. The other misconception is also yielding to our increasing knowledge of physiology and geography. The doubts on this subject have arisen from imperfect information.

That population has been, everywhere, the result of emigration from some primeval residence, is the belief of the most intelligent and impartial inquirers. We can trace, from historical documents, the colonization of many parts of the world; and the traditions of other nations sufficiently assure us, that they have been effusions from more ancient sources. Where history and tradition fail, we discern the same kind of origin, from the impressive attestations of analogous manners and languages. The unnecessary fables of various original races, as well as spontaneous animal vegetation, are therefore now equally discredited. Nations have branched off from preceding nations, sometimes by intentional emigration, and sometimes by accidental separation. War, commerce, want, caprice, turbulence, and pride, have in various regions, contributed to disperse the human race into new settlements; and among those tribes which have frequented the sea, the casualties of the weather have often compelled undesigned colonizations.

That there has been some catastrophe, like an universal deluge,

to which all authentic history must be posterior, is now becoming the belief of the most scientific geologists. The petrifications of animal and vegetable substances, which are to be found in every part of the globe, and on its hills and mountains, far distant from the ocean, and of which many species are extinct, concur with the earliest traditions of almost all countries, and especially of those which had any ancient literature preserving their history, to prove this momentous event.

But the only ancient record, which connects a rational chronology with this revolution of physical nature—the Genesis of Moses—has authorized our best chronologers to place it about 2348 years before the Christian era. This period is, therefore, the limit of all credible antiquity; and precedes, by a long interval, every document that has survived to us. But if the human race were at this time renewed, it is to a much later date that we must look for the beginnings of the British population.

The safe rule of Sir Isaac Newton, to admit no more causes of natural things, than are sufficient to account for their phenomena, may be efficaciously applied to the question, whether the human race has originated from one or many primeval stocks?

The most judicious physiologists now agree that there are no more varieties of form or manners among the numerous tribes of mankind, than such as the descendants of one pair may have exhibited under the varying influences of different climates and countries; and of dissimilar food, customs, diseases, and occupations. We may therefore believe the account of the most ancient and venerated history which we possess, that all nations have sprung from one original race; and to its primitive parents in the first source, and in the second, to one or more of their three descendants, who survived the awful catastrophe in which the first diffusion of human population disappeared, we must refer the various colonies of Britain whom we are about to enumerate.

The peopling of a globe that is nearly twenty-four thousand miles in circumference, could not have been immediately effected; and the naturally slow progress of population over so large a surface, must have been more gradual, by the mountains, deserts, lakes, woods, and rivers, which divide its various regions.

The impenetrable forests, ever increasing from the vegetative agencies of nature, till checked by human labour; and the continual and deleterious marshes, which rain and rivers are, every year, producing and enlarging in all uninhabited countries, must have long kept mankind from spreading rapidly, or numerously, beyond their first settlements. These appear not to have been in Europe.

All ancient history agrees with the Mosaic, and with the researches of modern science and antiquarian curiosity, to place the commencement of population, art, and knowledge, in the

eastern portions of the world. Here men first appeared and multiplied; and from hence first spread into those wilder and ruder districts, where nature was living in all her unmolested, but dreary, and barbarous majesty.

In the plains of warm and prolific climates, which the human race first cultivated, ease, abundance, leisure, and enjoyment, produced an early civilization, with all its advantages and evils. As the experience of the latter has, in subsequent times, and in our own, driven many from their native soil and patriotic comforts, to pursue the shadows of their hopes in new and uncultivated regions; so it appears to have actuated several to similar emigrations, in the earliest periods of society. In all ages, mankind have grown up in two great classes, which have diverged into a marked distinction from each other. It has been usual to call one of these, in its connected ramifications, the civilized states of antiquity; and to consider the other, with much complacent contumely, as savage and barbarous tribes.

But as both these descriptions of society have had a common origin, we may more philosophically contemplate them as the same people: of whom the Nomadic, or Wandering, radiated, like the modern settlers on the Ohio, the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Oronooko, from civilized communities, into new circumstances of life and residence; into desolate solitudes, often grand and picturesque; but for a long time comfortless and appalling: where nature reigned in a state of magnificence, as to her vegetable and animal subjects, but diffused for some time terror, penury, and disease, to all that was intellectual and human. It was impossible for any portion of the civilized population of the world, to wander from their domestic localities, and to penetrate far into these unpeopled regions, without changing the character and habits of their minds; or without being followed by a progeny still more dissimilar to every thing which they had quitted. In some, the alteration was a deteriorating process, declining successively into absolute barbarism; but in more, it became rather peculiarity than perversion.

Original forms of character, and many new and admirable habits and institutions, often grew up in these abodes of want, exertion, independence, and vicissitudes. The loss of some of the improvements of happier society, was compensated by energies and principles, which that must necessarily sacrifice, or cannot obtain: and it will be nearer the actual truth, to consider the barbarous and civilized states of antiquity, as possessed of advantages distinct from each other; and perhaps not capable of continuous union, although often becoming intermingled, for a time, with mutual improvement.

In our late age of the world, the term barbarian is often correctly applicable to many countries which we have visited; but

it will be unjust to the ancestors of all modern Europe, not to consider, that the appellation had not anciently a meaning so directly appropriate. The Greeks denominated all nations as *barbaroi* but their own; although Egypt, Phenicia, Babylon, and Carthage had preceded them in civilization.

The two ancient grand divisions of mankind, were not as strongly unlike, as the New Hollander, or Caffre, is to a modern European. They were at first to each other, what the Dorians were to the Athenians in Greece; the one a settled population, the other migratory. And though we may retain the expression of civilization, as the character of the settled races, it will less mislead our imaginations, if we call the other portion of mankind the Nomadic race. These had improvements and civilization of their own, though of a sterner and more hardy nature. They differed in attainments from their more polished relatives; but were not in all things their inferiors. It is unjust to degrade those with the appellation of barbarians, in the present meaning of the term, from whose minds, institutions, and manners, all that we now possess in civilization, superior to the most cultivated states of antiquity, has been principally derived. Our ancestors sprung from the great barbaric or Nomadic stock; and it may divest us of some of our unreasonable prejudices and false theories about them, if we make a rapid survey of the circumstances by which the two great classes of mankind have been principally distinguished.

Of these, **THE CIVILIZED** were those nations who from their first appearance in history, have been found numerously and durably associated together; building fixed habitations; cultivating continuously the same soil; and fond of connecting their dwellings with each other into cities and towns, which, as external dangers pressed, they surrounded with walls. They multiplied inventions in the mechanic and manufacturing arts; allowed an individual property in ground and produce, to be acquired and transmitted; and guarded and perpetuated the appropriation, with all the terrors of law and civil power.

They became studious of quiet life, political order, social courtesy, pleasurable amusements, and domestic employments. They exercised mind in frequent and refined thought; pursued intellectual arts and studies; perpetuated their conceptions and reasonings by sculptured imagery, written language, and an improving literature; and valued those who excelled in mental studies. They promoted and preserved the welfare of their societies, by well arranged governments, which every citizen was desirous to uphold; by a vigilant policy, which they contentedly obeyed; and by laws, wise in their origin and general tenor, but often pursuing human actions with inquisitorial severity; with vindictive jealousy; with sanguinary punishments and with a minuteness

and subtlety, which destroyed individual freedom, and bounded public improvement. They have usually loved religion; though they have made it a slavery, whose established superstitions it was treasonable to resist. They erected temples, oracles, and altars; they divided the energies and attributes of the Supreme Being, into distinct personalities, which they adored as divinities; made images and mythologies of each; devised and established a ceremonial worship, and permanent priesthood, which has usually been intimately connected with their political government; and made the sanctioned teachers of the belief, morals, and main opinions of their people.

But these civilized nations, notwithstanding all their improvements, and from the operation of some, have degenerated into sensuality; into the debasing vices, and to effeminate frivolities. The love of money, and a rapaciousness for its acquisition; and the necessities and false emulation which continual luxuries create, have dissolved their social morality, and substituted a refined, but persevering and ever-calculating selfishness, for that mutual benevolence which reason desires; which Christianity now enjoins; and which our best sympathies suggest. Superstition, irreligion, and despotism increase, as the moral attachments to probity and order lessen; and yet by their increase assist to undermine both loyalty and patriotism, as well as public happiness.

Factional violences on the one hand; legal oppressions and persecutions on the other; and an augmenting soldiery, every day becoming dangerous to the authorities that need them, from a practical sense of their own importance and power; and every day enfeebled by inefficient chiefs, because the promotion of talent is dangerous to its employers, and is impeded by the claims of the interested and powerful;—have often increased the evils of a voluptuary civilization, till states have subsided from secret and selfish disaffection, into feeble and disunited masses; which enemies have shaken, and powerful invaders at last subdued. Their mental progress, from all these causes, has been usually checked into that limited and stationary knowledge, soon becoming comparative ignorance, into which even the cultivation and social comforts of civilization have hitherto invariably sunk; and from which the irruptions, spirit, and agencies of the Nomadic tribes, or the newer kingdoms which they have founded, have repeatedly rescued the human race.

The other important part of the ancient population—that from which we have sprung—which the civilized world always contemplated with disdain, and frequently with horror, comprised those, who under various names, of which the Kimmerians, Kelts, Scythians, Goths, and Germans, are the most interesting

to us, long preferred a wilder, roaming, and more independent life.

By these, the forests and the hills; the unbounded range of nature; the solitude of her retreats; the hardy penury of her heaths; the protection of her morasses; and the unrestricted freedom of personal exertion and individual humour; (though with all the privations, dangers, wars, and necessities that attend self-dependence, and even human vicinity, unassociated by effective government and vigilant laws,) have yet been preferred to crowded cities and confused habitations; to petty occupations and contented submission; to unrelaxing self-government and general tranquillity.

This Nomadic class of mankind was composed of distinct families, that multiplied into separate tribes, living insulated from each other; and rarely coalescing into nations; though sometimes confederating for the purposes of war and depredation. Their primeval state was, in some, that of the shepherd, and in others, of the hunter. Or if any migratory clans paused awhile for agriculture, they quitted the soil after they had reaped the harvest; and sought out new plains to consume and to abandon; new woods to range, and new game to chase. Too fond of individual liberty—probably the first stimulus to their separation from civilized society—and too movable and too jealous of restricting laws, to have a regular government,—they became fierce, proud, and irascible; easily excited, rugged in manners, boisterous in temper, and implacable in resentments. Looking on the kingdoms and cities of refined life with contempt for its effeminate habits, and with the eye of rapacity for its tempting abundance, all their intercourse with it was war, depredation, and captivity. Sometimes multiplying too rapidly for the produce of their locality, they moved in large bodies to regions unoccupied, or incapable of resisting them; and, with their wives, families, and humble property, transported themselves forcibly from one country to another, to be often again, by some more numerous and warlike tribe, dispossessed of their new soil, or to be destroyed, in wars which were usually exterminations. Revolting as these habits are to our better and happier feelings, yet they served at that period to penetrate the wild earth; to subdue the exuberance of excessive vegetation, and to begin the first processes of preparing the unpeopled world for the cultivation and settlements of an improved posterity. They levelled some forests, and made roads through others: they found out the fords of rivers, the passes of the mountains, and the permeable parts of the insalubrious marshes. Their wars and depredations; their ravages and restless dispositions, were perpetually clearing new ground for human cultivation; and making new channels for human intercourse through unknown countries. Their vicissi-

fudes, though perpetuating their ferocity, yet kept them under particular excitement; and nourished hardy and active bodies.

Building their rude huts in the woods for easier defence, every invader that dislodged them, and proclaimed his triumph by his conflagrations, only drove them to explore and people more inaccessible solitudes; and rendered the district they quitted, unfit for barbaric occupation; but more adapted to become the residence of peaceful colonists. By their desultory movements, the domesticated animals, most useful to mankind, were everywhere scattered; the savage beasts destroyed, and new germs of future tribes were everywhere deposited; till some branches or other of these Nomadic tribes had moved from the Asiatic Bosphorus to the farthest shores of the European continent. Of these, the Kimmerians were the most advanced in the northwest; and the Kelts towards the west and south.

In this state, a new description of society became perpetuated and diffused, in which the greatest degree of individual liberty was exerted and allowed, that could be made compatible with any social combination.

Liberty was the spring and principle of their political associations; and pervaded the few civil institutions which their habits required, and their humours permitted. Neither chief nor priest was suffered to have much power. Influence, not authority, was the characteristic of the shadowy government which they respected; and it was the sacred custom of almost all their tribes, that a national council should be an inseparable portion of the sovereignty of each; in which all legislation should originate; by which the executive power of the chosen ruler should be continually controlled; in which all general measures of the state should be considered and determined, and all taxes imposed; and to which, every freeman that was aggrieved, might appeal for redress. We have direct historical evidence of this fact among all the German and Gothic tribes; and sufficient intimation that it had once prevailed among the Kimmerians and Kelts. Hence, while a political submission became the mark and practice of the civilized, individual independence and political liberty became the characteristic of the Nomadic. A fierce and jealous spirit of control never left them. As each man chose to be principally his own avenger, instead of leaving, like the civilized, the punishment of wrong to the magistrate and the laws, their feuds were unceasing and inveterate. A martial temper and habit became necessary to their existence; and the penury which attended their aversion to peaceful drudgery, their mutual desolations, and their wandering life, compelled them to seek both their food and comforts from war and rapine.

Yet amid these habits, a fearless and enterprising spirit, and a personal dignity and high-minded temper were nourished; and

the hardy and manly virtues became pleasing habits. In this life of constant activity, want, privation, courage, vigilance, endurance, and exertion, the female virtues were called perpetually into action; and their uses were felt to be so important, that the fair sex obtained among all the tribes of ancient Germany a rank, an estimation, and an attachment, which were unknown in all the civilized world of antiquity; and which the spirit of Christianity has since matured and completed.

Most of our improvements are, for a time, incompatible with each other; and must be separately pursued and successively attained. Hence, the division of mankind into the Nomadic and the Civilized conditions of society has been instrumental to a greater progress, and productive of more blessings, than an uniform civilization of all would have occasioned.

The subjected temper and patient habit of civilized life acquire merits, which the fierce and enterprising temper of the wilder state cannot attain; but this possesses an originality, an activity, a strength, and a vigorous virtue, which gives civilization new energies; dissipates its corruptions, and breaks its enslaving bonds. All nations have been most improved by due mixtures of these two great classes. The earlier civilized have been repeatedly disciplined, and, in the end, benefited by the invasions and conquests of the Nomadic. Many debasing vices have been checked: many injurious governments and institutions dissolved; and many pertinacious errors destroyed. And of those ruder nations, from which the British population has been formed, it will be obvious to every inquirer, that some of their peculiar habits and institutions, which were well adapted to their freer life, and which originated from their peculiar necessities and circumstances, have become the source of our greatest improvements in legislature, society, knowledge, and general comfort. The Nomadic mind is a mind of great energy and sagacity, in the pursuits and necessities peculiar to that state; and has devised many principles of laws, government, customs, and institutions, which have been superior to others that the earlier civilized have established.

The Saxons, Franks, Burgundians, Goths, and Northmen have been distinguished by these characteristics.

That these nations were ignorant of Grecian and Roman literature, and of the sciences of Egypt, was the consequence of their early separation from the civilized communities, before these intellectual blessings had been attained, or much diffused; and of their subsequent loss of intercourse with those nations, when more generally enlightened.

A state of ignorance must, in all countries, and in every individual, precede that of knowledge: because knowledge cannot be intuitive, though the power to receive and to apprehend it be

innate. In whatever world the mind exists, it must acquire the knowledge of what that world contains, after its birth; after its senses have begun to act, and to be acted on by the objects and events which it may contain. Hence, every nation must pass gradually from its times of ignorance, to its period of intellectual eminence, and general information.

But although our Nomadic ancestors were long without the cultivation of knowledge and literature, they were not therefore mentally inert.

There is an education of mind, distinct from the literary, which is gradually imparted by the contingencies of active life. In this, which is always the education of the largest portion of mankind, our ancestors were never deficient.

The operation of this practical, but powerful intellect, may be traced in the wisdom and energy of their great political mechanisms and municipal institutions. It pervades their ancient laws; and is displayed in full dimensions, as to our Saxon and Norman ancestors, in that collection of our native jurisprudence, which Bracton has transmitted to us. The system of our common law, there exhibited, was admirably adapted to their wants and benefit; and has mainly contributed to form the national bulwarks, and that individual character, by which England has been so long enriched and so vigorously upheld.

It is well known, that, of the two states which we have been considering, literary and scientific knowledge has been the earliest acquired by the civilized; and has always continued to be, with some partial fluctuations, their peculiar property; continually, though often tardily increasing, till they have reached that line of limitation, which their manners and institutions at last create.

But the natural capacity and the intellectual activity, though with a different application, have been equal in both classes. Influenced by dissimilar circumstances, and directed to distinct subjects, the mental power of each may have appeared to be disproportionate, when it was only diversified; but its exertion among those called barbarians, in their forest-habitations, in their predatory expeditions, in their rude councils and national wars, was unceasing; and so finally effective, that the genius of civilized Rome, repeatedly endangered by their hostilities, was at last subdued by their superior energies.

These two states seem to have been in all ages so contemporaneous, and to have pervaded the world so equally together, and in such constant vicinity, that history has recorded no era, since the separation of mankind at Babel, in which either has been extinct. On the contrary, the settler and the wanderer; the restless and the tranquil; the Scythian and the Egyptian, have always co-existed. As far as history ascends, the world has

been agitated and benefited by both. This fact confirms the idea, that the Nomadic were originally but branches of the civilized, as the migratory settlers on the Ohio and Missouri in our days are the effusions of other states, more advanced and improved: and, but that these men cannot now go where civilization from its commanding extent, and with its transforming effects, will not soon pursue them, their posterity would become the Scythians and Goths of modern times; and exhibit an example of the formation of new barbaric tribes.

The nations that appeared the earliest in the civilized state, were the Egyptians, Phenicians, Assyrians, Chinese, and Babylonians; and these have never been known in the Nomadic or barbaric state. In a later age, partly offsets from these, or from a kindred seed, the Carthaginians, Greeks, Persians, Hindus, and Romans emerged; of whom the Greeks and Romans began, at first, to act in their uncivilized condition.

Some of these nations—both of the earlier and the later improved—the Phenicians, Carthaginians, and Greeks, either visited Britain, or were acquainted with it; and the Romans ultimately conquered and occupied it. But the great masses of the populations, which have successively planted themselves in the British islands, have sprung from the Nomadic classes. The earliest of these that reached the northern and western confines of Europe, the Kinmerians and Kelts, may be regarded as our first ancestors; and from the German or Gothic nations who formed, with the Scythians, the second great flood of population into Europe, our Anglo-Saxon and Norman ancestors proceeded. The Sarmatic, or third Nomadic race, have never effected any settlements among us; nor reached those states of the continent from which they could have troubled us. England has seen them only as visitors and friends.

The migrations by land precede those by sea. The facilities of movement are greater, and the ocean is a scene of danger that repels adventure as long as other avenues of hope, or safety, are as accessible. But the chronology of these transplantations cannot now be ascertained. It is most probable, that population advanced contemporaneously, though not with an equal ratio, from both land and sea. The sea coasts, nearest to the first civilized states, were gradually visited and peopled, as Greece from Egypt and Tyre;—and the islands of the Archipelago and the Mediterranean, as well as Africa and Spain, were colonized by the Phenicians. But the great waves of population have rolled inland from the east. Tribe after tribe moved over the Bosphorus into Europe, until at length the human race penetrated its forests and morasses to the frozen regions in the north, and to the farthest shores of the ocean on the west. Our islands derived their population chiefly from branches of the inland hordes of

Europe, though the habitual visits of the maritime nations of antiquity, the Phenicians and Carthaginians, and their Spanish settlements, were not likely to have occurred without leaving some colonial results.*

* It is highly interesting to an Englishman, who has sprung from the uncivilized races of antiquity, to contemplate the deities and sculptures of Egypt in the courtyard and entrance hall of the British Museum. He there sees the venerated productions of the earliest civilized nation reposing in the metropolis of the descendants of one of the earth's most distant nomadic tribes. When Egypt was in her splendour, England was barbaric and unknown, and scarcely suspected to be existing at the supposed end of the habitable world. England has now reached one of the highest summits of human civilization; and Egypt has sunk into our ancestors' darkest state, without their free and hardy virtues. Osiris and Isis transported from the worshipping Nile to the Thames, to be but the gaze and criticism of public curiosity! The awing head of Memnon in London!! There is a melancholy sublimity in this revolution of human greatness, yet soon changing into a feeling of triumph in the recollection, that were Egypt now in her proudest state, she would not be, in any thing, our superior.

CHAPTER II.

The Kimmerian and Keltic Nations were the earliest Inhabitants of the West of Europe.—A brief Outline of their Migrations and Expeditions.—Settlement of their Colonies in Britain.—Welsh Traditions on this subject.

FROM the languages already remarked to have prevailed in Europe, we have clear indications of the three distinct and successive streams of population, to which we have alluded, because we find two separate families of languages to have pervaded the northern and western regions; with a third, on its eastern frontier; each family being peculiar to certain states. These three languages may be classed under the general names of the Keltic, the Gothic, and the Slavonic; and from the localities in which we find them, and from the names of the ancient nations who are first recorded to have inhabited those localities, they may be also called the Kimmerian, the Scythian, and the Sarmatian. Of these, the Welsh, the Gaelic, the Irish, the Cornish, the Armoric, the Manks, and the ancient Gaulish tongue, are the related languages which have proceeded from the KIMMERIAN or KELTIC source. The Anglo-Saxon, the Francotheotisc, the Mæso-gothic, and the Islandic of former times; and the present German, Suabian, Swiss, Dutch, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Orkneyan, English, and Lowland Scotch, are ramifications of the great GOTHIC or SCYTHIAN stock. The third genus of European languages, the ancient Sarmatian, or modern Slavonic, appears in the present Polish and Russian, and in their adjacent dialects.

The languages, classed under each of the above heads, are so visibly related together, as to make one and the same family, and to announce the same parent stock: but are so dissimilar to the others, as to mark a different source and chronology of origin. The local positions in Europe, of the different nations using these tongues, are also evidence of their successive chronology. The Keltic or Kimmerian is in the farthest part of the west, in the British islands, and on the western shores of France. The Scythian or Gothic languages occupy the great body of the European continent, from the ocean to the Vistula, and have spread into England. In the eastern parts of Europe, most contiguous to Asia, and also extending into Asia, the Sarmatian or Slavonic

tongues are diffused. So that we perceive at once, that the Kimmerian or Keltic nations, to have reached the westerly position, must have first inhabited Europe: that the Scythian or Gothic tribes must have followed next; and have principally peopled it; and that the Sarmatian, or Slavonic people, were the latest colonists. Other nations have entered it, at more recent periods, as the Huns and the Romans; and some others have established partial settlements, as the Lydians in Tuscany; the Greeks at Marseilles, and in Italy; the Phenicians and Carthaginians in Spain. But the three stocks, already noticed, are clearly the main sources of the ancient population of the European continent, in its northern and western portions.

The most authentic accounts of ancient history confirm the preceding statement.

That the Kimmerians were in Europe before the Scythian tribes, we learn from the information of Herodotus, the father of Grecian history. He states, apparently from the information of the Scythians themselves, that the Kimmerians anciently possessed those regions in Europe which the Scythians were occupying in his time.^a And these Scythians were then spread from the Danube, towards the Baltic and the north.

It cannot now be ascertained, when the Kimmerians first passed out of Asia over the Bosphorus, which they named; but that they were in Europe, in the days of Homer, is obvious, because he mentions them in his *Odyssey*;^b and he appears to have lived, at least eight hundred years before the Christian era. That he was acquainted with the position of the Kimmerians, in the north-eastern part of Europe, is three times asserted by Strabo.^c

That the Kimmerians were inhabiting these places, above seven hundred years before our Saviour's advent, we have direct historical evidence; because it was about this period, if not before, that they were attacked by the Scythians in these settlements.^d Overpowered by this invasion, the Kimmerians of these districts moved from Europe into Asia Minor; and afflicted its maritime regions with calamities, from their warfare, which Ionia remem-

^a Herod. *Melpom.* s. 11. I have adopted the Greek orthography of the *K*, *Κιμμεριαι*, because it expresses the proper pronunciation of the word.

^b *Κιμμεριων ανδρων*, *Od.* *Δ.* v. 14. He places them on the Pontus, at the extremities of the ocean; and describes them as covered with those mists and clouds, which popular belief has attached to the northern regions of the Euxine. The Turkish name *Karah Deksi*, the Greek *Μαυρο Θαλασσα*, and our Black Sea, imply the same opinion. Bayer says, that he has had it from eye-witnesses, that all the Pontus and its shores are infested by dense and dark fog. *Comm. Acad. Petrop.* t. ii. p. 421.

^c Strabo, *Geog.* p. 12. 38. 222.

^d Herodotus states this invasion to have occurred in the reign of Ardyes, the son of Gyges, *lib.* i. s. 15. Ardyes reigned from 680 to 631 years before Christ. Strabo places the same event in Homer's time or before, on the authority of some other historians, p. 38. 222. We can scarcely reduce any of the facts of ancient classical history, before the Persian war, to exact chronology.

bered with such horror, as to believe that they sprang from the infernal regions; to the neighbourhood of which even Homer consigns them.^e

The part of the Kimmerian population, which the Scythians thus disturbed, was then occupying the peninsula, which from them obtained the name of the Kimmerian Chersonesus; and its vicinity. Their name was also retained, after their departure, in the adjoining Bosphorus, in a mountain, and in a city on the peninsula, where the isthmus was protected by a ditch and a rampart. In these parts of Europe they had possessed great power, before the Scythians attacked them; and Herodotus says, that in his time, several Kimmerian walls and ports were to be seen there.^f The Turks are now the masters of this country, but their dominion begins to decline.

The retreat of the Kimmerians, who fled before the Scythians, has given rise to the assertion that they conquered Asia, because what the Romans called Asia Minor, was by the more ancient Greeks usually denominated Asia; but it is clear that their irruption was along the sea coast, and did not extend beyond the maritime districts.^h One of their chiefs who conducted it was called Lygdamis; he penetrated into Lydia and Ionia, took Sardis, and died in Cilicia. This destructive incursion, which succeeded probably because it was unexpected, has been mentioned by some Greek poets,ⁱ as well as by Herodotus,^k Callisthenes,^l and Strabo.^m They were at length expelled from Asia Minor by the father of Cræsus.ⁿ

When the Scythians first attacked them on the European side of their Bosphorus, their endangered tribes held a council; the chiefs and their friends wished to resist the invaders, but the others preferred a voluntary emigration. Their difference of opinion produced a battle, and the survivors abandoned their country to the Scythians.^o But while one portion went under Lygdamis to Asia, the more warlike and larger part of the Kimmerian nations, according to the geographers cursorily mentioned by Plutarch,^p receded westward from the Scythians, and proceeded to inhabit

^e "As Homer knew that the Kimmerians were in the north and west regions on the Bosphorus, he made them to be near Hades; and perhaps according to the common opinions of the Ionians concerning that race." Strabo, Geog. p. 222.

^f Strabo, lib. xi. p. 756, 475. Ed. Amst. 1707.

^g Herod. Melpom. lib. iv. s. 12.

^h Herod. Clío, s. 15.

ⁱ By Callinus in his poems, who calls them the "impetuous Kimmerians." Strab. lib. xiv. p. 958, and by Callimachus, Hym. in Dian. 252.

^k Herod. Clío, s. 6. Ibid. Melpom.

^l Ap. Strab. p. 930.

^m Strab. Geog. lib. i. p. 106, et. al.

ⁿ Herod. Clío, s. 16.

^o Herod. Melpom. s. 11.

^p Plutarch in Mario.

the remoter regions of Europe, extending to the German Ocean. "Here," he adds, "it is said, that they live in a dark, woody country, where the sun is seldom seen, from their many lofty and spreading trees, which reach into the interior as far as the Hercynian forest." But whether their progress to these parts was the consequence of the Scythian attack, or had preceded it, is of little importance to us to ascertain. The fact is unquestionable, that the Kimmerians anciently diffused themselves towards the German Ocean.

The history of the Kimmerians, from their leaving the eastern Bosphorus, to their reaching the Cimbric Chersonesus on the Baltic, has not been perpetuated. The traditions of Italy, and even an ancient historian intimate, that Kimmerians were in those regions near Naples, where the ancient mythologists place the country of the dead.⁴ Their early occupation of Europe and extensive dispersion divest this circumstance of any improbability. They who wandered across Europe from the Thracian Bosphorus into Jutland, may also have migrated southward into Italy, like the Goths and Lombards of a future age. But as nations, in the nomadic state, have little other literature than funeral inscriptions, the brief and vague songs of their bards, wild incantations, or rude expressions of martial trophies, divested of all circumstance or chronology, it is not till they assail the welfare of the civilized, and become a part of their national history, that we have any notice of their transactions; and often not till this period, any indications of their existence. But two intimations have been preserved to us of the Kimmerians, which probably express the general outline of their history. They are stated to have often made plundering incursions,⁵ and they were considered by Posidonius, to whose geographical works Strabo was often indebted, as a predatory and wandering nation.⁶

In the century before Cæsar they became known to the Romans by the harsher pronunciation of Kimbri,⁷ in that formidable

⁴ Strabo says, "And they deem this place Plutonian, and say that the Kimmerians are there; and they who sail thither, first sacrifice to propitiate the subterraneous demons, which the priests exhort them to do, on account of the profit which they derive from the offering. There is a fountain of river water, but all abstain from this, as they think it the water of the Styx. Geog. p. 171.—Ephorus applying this place to the Kimmerians," &c. *Ib.* p. 375.

⁵ Strabo, p. 106. This habit no doubt occasioned the word Kimbri to signify robbers among the Germans, as Plutarch remarks in his life of Marius.

⁶ Posid. ap. Strab. p. 450.

⁷ That the *Κιμμεριοι* of the Greeks were the Kimbri of the Greeks, and Kimbri (Kimbri) of the Latin writers, was not only the opinion of Posidonius, whom Strabo quotes, lib. vii. p. 293, but of the Greeks generally: "quum *Græci* Cimbro Cimberiorum nomine afficiant," *ib.* Diodorus Siculus expressly says, that to those who were called *Κιμμεριοι*, the appellation of *Κιμβροι* was applied in process of time, and by the corruption of language, lib. v. p. 309. Plutarch, in his life of

irruption from which Marius rescued the Roman state. At this period a great body of them quitted their settlements on the Baltic, and, in conjunction with other tribes, entered the great Hercynian forest, which covered the largest part of ancient Germany. Repulsed by the Boioi, they descended on the Danube. Penetrating into Noricum and Illyricum, they defeated the Roman consul Narbo; and a few years afterwards, having by their ambassadors to Rome solicited in vain the senate to assign them lands for their habitation, for which they offered to assist the Romans in their wars, they defeated four other consuls in as many successive battles, and entered Gaul. Having ravaged all the country between the Rhone and the Pyrenees, they spread into Spain, with the same spirit of desolation. Repulsed there by the Celtiberi, they returned to France; and joining with the Teutones, who had also wandered from the Baltic, they burst into Italy with a force that had accumulated in every region which they had traversed. Rome was thrown into consternation by their progress, and it required all the talents and experience of Marius, Sylla, and the best Roman officers to overthrow them.^u

The great mass of the Kimbric population perished in these conflicts. The Romans are stated to have destroyed from two to three hundred thousand, in two battles. It is impossible to read of human slaughter without lamenting it, or without feeling some abhorrence of those, however famed as heroes, by whom it has been effected. But in this war, the Kimbri provoked the destruction, by their desolating aggressions: and considering the spirit and customs of barbaric ferocity, which they maintained, and their national restlessness, their disappearance was advantageous to the progress of civilization, and to the interests of humanity. Marius did not, like Cæsar, go into Gaul in search of a sanguinary warfare. He obeyed the call of his country to rescue it from a calamitous invasion. His successes filled Rome with peculiar joy, and were sung by the poet Archias, whom Cicero's eloquence has made illustrious.^v

The rest of the Kimmerian nation on the continent remained in a feeble and scattered state. They are noticed by Strabo, as existing in his time on the Baltic;^w and are more briefly alluded

Marius, also identifies the Kimbri with the Kimmerioi. He says, "from these regions, when they came into Italy, they began their march, being anciently called Kimmerioi, and in process of time Kimbroi."

^u Liv. *Epit.* 63-67. Florus, lib. iii. c. 3. Oros. lib. v. c. 16. Strabo, lib. v. *Plut. Vit. Mar.* We have the names of three of their kings from Livy, Plutarch, and Florus; these are Bolus, Bojorise, and Teutobochus.

^v Even the illiterate Marius was pleased with this Parnassian effusion. "Ipsi illi C. Mario, qui durior ad hæc studia videbatur, jucundus fuit." Cicero, *Or. pro Arch.* c. 9.

^w He remarks that, in his time, Kimbri continued to inhabit their former settlements on the Baltic, and had sent a present of one of their sacred caldrons to Augustus, lib. vii. p. 449.

to by Pliny.* Both these writers represent them on the north-western shores of Europe, or on those coasts of the German Ocean, from which the Saxons and Danes made afterwards expeditions into Britain.

In the days of Tacitus, this ancient nation had almost ceased to exist on the continent of Europe; but his expressions imply their former power and celebrity. When he mentions the Kimbri who, in his time, remained in the peninsula of Jutland, he says, "A small state now, but great in glory; the marks of their ancient fame yet remain, far and wide, about the Elbe; by whose extent you may measure the power and greatness of this people, and accredit the reported numbers of their army." They were existing, or their fame continued in those parts, in the days of Claudian.†

Thus far we have proceeded upon the authentic authorities, which remain to us in the classical writers, of the primeval population of Europe. From these it is manifest, that the earliest inhabitants of the north of Europe, were the Kimmerians or Kimbri; and that they spread over it from the Kimmerian Bosphorus, to the Kimbriac Chersonesus; that is from Thrace and its vicinity, to Jutland and the German Ocean; to that ocean from which the passage is direct to Britain;—the regular voyage in our times from Hamburgh to England or Scotland.

The habit of movable nations in the uncivilized or nomadic state, would lead us to infer, as these Kimmerii or Kimbri are characterized as a wandering nation, and are shown by all that remains of their history to have been so, that at some early period, after they reached the shores of the German Ocean, they crossed it in their rude vessels to Great Britain. This reasonable supposition, analogous to all that we know of the customs of such nations, and of the colonization of other parts of the world, has a remarkable support in the name and traditions of the Welsh, and their ancient British literature. It is agreed by the British antiquaries, that the most ancient inhabitants of our island were called Cymry (pronounced Kumri): they are so named in all that remains of the ancient British literature. The Welsh, who are their descendants, have always called themselves Cymry; and have given the same appellation to the earliest colonists of our island; and as the authorities already referred to, prove, that the *Κιμμυριοι* or Kimbri were the ancient possessors of the northern coasts of the Germanic Ocean, and at-

* Nat. Hist. lib. iv. c. 27 and 28. The latter passage intimates Inland Cimbræ near the Rhine, as well as the Cimbræ in the Peninsula. In lib. vi. c. 14, he mentions Cimberii in Asia, near the Caspian.

† Tacitus de morib. Germ. Claudian calls the Northern Ocean by their name, "Cimbrica Thetis." Cons. Hon. lib. iv.

tempted foreign enterprises, it seems to be a safe and reasonable inference, that the Cymry of Britain originated from the continental Kimmerians.^a That a district, in the northern part of England, was inhabited by a part of the ancient British nation, and called Cumbria, whence the present Cumberland, is a fact favourable to this presumption.

The Danish traditions of expeditions and conquests in Britain, from Jutland and its vicinity, long before our Saviour's birth, which Saxo Grammaticus has incorporated into his history, may here be noticed. He is an authority too vague to be trusted alone; but he is evidence of the traditions of his countrymen, and these may claim that attention, when they coincide with the ancient British, which they would not otherwise deserve. They add something to the probability of early migrations, or expeditions from these regions into our islands, although they must not be confounded with historical facts.

The historical triads of the Welsh connect themselves with these suppositions in a very striking manner.^b They state that the Cymry were the first inhabitants of Britain, before whose arrival it was occupied by bears, wolves, beavers, and oxen with large protuberances.^c They add, that Hu Cadran, or Hu the Strong, or Mighty, led the nation of the Kymry through the Hazy, or German Ocean, into Britain, and to Llydaw, or Armorica, in France; and that the Kymry came from the eastern parts of Europe, or the regions where Constantinople now stands.^d Though we would not convert Welsh traditions into

^a Tacitus mentions a circumstance favourable to this deduction. He says of the *Cæstii* on the Baltic, that their language resembled the British, "*lingua Britannicæ proprior.*" *De mor. Germ.* If the opinion maintained in the text be true, the *Cæstii* must have been a Kimmerian tribe.

^b The Welsh have several collections of historical triads; which are three events coupled together, that were thought by the collector to have some mutual analogy. It is the strange form into which their bards, or ancient writers, chose to arrange the early circumstances of their history. One of the most complete series of their triads has been printed in the *Archæology of Wales*, vol. ii. p. 57-75. It was printed from a MS. dated 1601, and the writer of it states that he had taken them out of the books of Caradoc of Llancarvan, and of John Breckfa. Caradoc lived in the twelfth century. Breckfa was much later.

^c It may not be uninteresting to translate the whole triad. "Three names have been given to the isle of Britain since the beginning. Before it was inhabited, it was called *Clas Merddin* (literally the country with sea cliffs), and afterwards *Fel Ynis* (the island of honey). When government had been imposed upon it by *Prydain*, the son of *Acdd the Great*, it was called *Ynys Prydain* (the island of *Prydain*); and there was no tribute to any but to the race of the Kymry, because they first obtained it; and before them, there were no more men alive in it, nor any thing else but bears, wolves, beavers, and the oxen with the high prominence." *Triad 1. Arch. v. ii. p. 57.*

^d "The three pillars of the nation of the isle of Britain. First, *Hu Gadarn*, who led the nation of the Cymry first to the isle of Britain; and from the country of *Summer*, which is called *Deffrobani*, they came; this is where *Constantinople* is :

history, where they stand alone, it cannot be unreasonable to remember them, when they coincide with classical authorities. In the present case the agreement is striking. The Kimmerians, according to the authorities already stated, proceeded from the vicinity of the Kimmerian Bosphorus to the German Ocean; and the Welsh deduce their ancestors, the Cymry, from the regions south of the Bosphorus. The Welsh indeed add the name of their chieftain, and that a division of the same people settled in Armorica. But if the memory of Lygdamis, who led the Kimmerian emigration to Asia, and of Brennus, who marched with the Kelts against Greece, were preserved in the countries which they overran; so might the name of Hu Cadarn, who conducted some part of the western emigrations, be remembered in the island which he colonized.^e That Armorica, or Bretagne, was peopled by a race of men similar to those who inhabited Britain, is verified by the close resemblance of the languages of the two countries.

As we have traced the probable identity of the Kynry with the Kimmerii, and the actual identity of these with the Kimbri; it will be right to add the few circumstances, of the manners of these ancient people, which the classical writers have transmitted. They appear to have been such as might be expected from the earliest emigrants of the civilized stock, who diverged the farthest from their primitive seats of civilization. But as no Tacitus took the trouble to study their internal customs, we know nothing of their polity or national institutions. The repulsive features that most struck the attention of their enemies are nearly all that is recorded about them. They were too much dreaded or hated, to be carefully inspected or favourably delineated.

Ephorus said of the Kimmerians, that they dwelt in subterraneous habitations, which they called *argillas*, communicating by trenches.^f It is certainly a curious analogy of language, that *argel*, in the language of the Cymry, or British, means a covert, a place covered over.^g This mode of habitation seems to have

and through the hazy ocean they came to the island of Britain, and to Llydaw where they have remained." Triad 4. p. 57.

^e Pausanias has preserved the names of many of the kings of the Kelts who invaded Greece. So, Livy has transmitted to us those of the Keltic leaders, who attacked Italy in the time of the first Tarquin.

^f Ap. Strabo, Geo. lib. v. p. 375.

^g The word occurs in the ancient Welsh poetry, as in the *Afallenau of Merddhin*,
a dyf yn argel yn argoeddydd,
will come in the covert in the lofty woods.

1 W. Archaiol. p. 152.

It is also used in the *Englynion Beddau of Taliessin*:
Bet Llia Gwitel in argel arduwgy
dan y guellt ac gnevel.

The grave of Llia the Gwyddelian in the covert of Arduwgy,
under the grass and withered leaves.

1 Archaiol. p. 80.

been the primitive state of barbaric life. The Troglodytes of Asia are said to have lived in caves; and Tacitus describes some of the ruder German tribes as dwelling under ground. The practice of several animals which burrow in the earth may have suggested the custom; and it suits that savage state into which even the emigrants from civilized society may lapse, among woods and marshes, want and warfare, if they lose the knowledge of the mechanic arts, or the tools which these require. Ephorus added, that they had an oracle deeper under ground. The Kimbri swore by a brazen bull, which they carried with them. In battle they appeared with helmets representing fierce beasts gaping, or some strange figures; and added a high floating crest to make them look taller. They used white shining shields, and iron mail, and either the battle-axe, or long and heavy swords. They thought it base to die of a disease, and exulted in a military death, as a glorious and happy end.^h

Callimachus applies to these people the epithet horse-milkers.ⁱ This incident corresponds with the preceding accounts. The attachment to mare's milk has been common to most nations in their uncivilized state. Most rude and poor nations drink the milk of the animals they ride: as the Arabs of the desert use that of their camels. This habit suits their movability, scanty property, small fodder, and a sterile or uncultivated country.

The religious rites of the Kimmerians included occasionally human sacrifices; one of the most ancient and universal superstitions, which affected and disgraced mankind in the first stages of their idolatrous and polytheistic worship. Strabo, after remarking of the Kimbri, that their wives accompanied them in war, says that many hoary priestesses of their oracle followed, clothed in white linen garments bound with a brazen girdle, and with naked feet. These women, with swords in their hands, sought the captives through the army, and threw them into a brass vessel of the size of twenty amphora. Then one of the prophetesses, ascending an elevation, stabbed them singly, as suspended above the caldron; and made her divinations from the manner in which the blood flowed into it. The other assistants of the horrible superstition opened the bodies, and predicted victory from the inspection of the bowels. In their conflicts, they used a species of immense drum; for they struck upon skins stretched over their war chariots, which emitted a very powerful sound.^j Plutarch describes the women to have been placed on their wagons in the conflict with Marius; and when the men gave way in the battle, to have killed those who fled, whether parents or brothers. They strangled their infants at the same

^h Plut. in Mario. Val. Max. l. ii. c. 6.

^j Strabo, lib. vii. p. 451.

ⁱ Callim. Hym. in Dian, v. 252.

time, and threw them under the wheels, while fighting the Romans, and at last destroyed themselves rather than survive the calamity. These descriptions lead us to recollect some analogous passages of Tacitus concerning the Britons at the period of the Roman invasion. He describes women, with firebrands in their hands, running like furies among the army of the Britons in Anglesey; and adds, that they stained their altars with the blood of their captives; and consulted their gods by the fibres of men. He mentions also, that before their destruction of the colony at Camelodunum, "Women, agitated with the prophetic fury, sang its approaching ruin."^k

But upon investigating the remains of antiquity, we find another ancient people, placed in some of the western regions of Europe, at the time when Greek history begins. They were called Κελτοι, and afterwards Γαλαται; and Cæsar says of them, that they called themselves Celæ, or Keltæ, though the Romans gave them the appellation of Galli.^l

The Keltai, to follow the Greek orthography of the word, appear to have been one of the branches of the Kimmerian stock. The term Kimmerian, like German, or Gaul, was a generic appellation. The people to whom it extended had also specific denominations. Thus, part of the Kimmerians who invaded Asia, under Lygdamis were likewise called Trerones, or Treres.^m That the Keltæ were Kimmerians is expressly affirmed by Arrian in two passages;ⁿ and with equal clearness and decision by Diodorus;^o and is implied by Plutarch.^p

As the Kimmerians traversed the north of Europe, from east to west, the Kelts seem to have proceeded more to the south and southwest. Some geographers, before Plutarch, extended the country of the Kelts as far as the sea of Azoph.^q Ephorus was probably one of these; for he is not only mentioned to have

^k Tacitus Annal. lib. xiv. Stabat pro litore diversa acies, densa armis virisque, intercursantibus feminis. In modum furiarum, veste feruli, crinibus dejectis, faces preferebant—Nam cruore captivo adolere aras; et hominum fibris consulere deos sua habebant—Et feminæ in furore turbatæ, adense exitium canebant.

^l Cæsar. Comment. de bell. Gall. lib. i. s. 1. Pausanius says of these people, "They have but lately called themselves γαλαται. They anciently called themselves κελτοι, and so did others," p. 6. And that γαλαται was but another appellation of the κελτοι, see Diod. Sic. lib. v. p. 308, ed. Hanov. 1604. So Origen calls the Druids of Gaul, τρι Γαλατου δρυιδαι, adv. Cels. Galatai seems to be a more euphonous pronunciation of Keltai; and Galli is probably but the abbreviation of Galatai. Strabo also says, all this nation whom they now call Gallikon or Galatikon, p. 298.

^m Strabo, lib. i. p. 106. In another place he says, Magnetus was utterly destroyed by the Treres, a Kimmerian nation, lib. xiv. p. 958.

ⁿ Appian in Illyr. p. 1196, and de bell. civ. lib. i. p. 625.

^o Diod. Sic. lib. v. p. 309.

^p Plut. in Mario.

^q Plut. in Mario.

made Keltica of vast magnitude, and including much of Spain;^r but he likewise divided the world into four parts, and made the Kelts to inhabit one of the four towards the west.^s This statement leads us to infer, that the Kelts had been considered to be an extensive people;^t which indeed the various notices about them, scattered in the writings of the ancients, sufficiently testify. All the classical authors, who mention the Kelts, exhibit them as seated in the western regions of Europe. While the Kimmerians pervaded Europe from its eastern extremity to its farthest peninsula in the northwest, their Keltic branch spread down to the southwestern coasts. When their most ancient transactions are mentioned by the Greek and Roman writers, we find them placed in France, and Spain, and emerging into Italy.

In the time of Herodotus, the Kelts were on the western coasts of Europe. He says, that they inhabited the remotest parts of Europe to the west;^u and in another part he states them to live beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and about Pyrene; and he places among them the origin of the Danube.^v

Aristotle frequently mentions the Kelts. In one place, he notices them as neither dreading earthquakes, nor inundations;^w in another, as rushing armed into the waves;^x and in another, as plunging their new-born infants in cold water, or clothing them in scanty garments.^y In other works attributed to him, he speaks of the British island as lying above the Kelts;^z he mentions Pyrene as a mountain towards the west in Keltica, from which the Danube and the Tartessus flow; the latter north of the columns of Hercules; the former passing through Europe into the Euxine.^a He elsewhere speaks of Keltica, and the Iberians.^b

^r Strabo, lib. iv. p. 304.

^s Strabo, lib. i. p. 59. Ephorus, in his fourth book, which was entitled Europe, Strabo, p. 463, divided the world into four parts, *ibid.* p. 59; in the East he placed the Indians; in the South, the Ethiopians; in the West, the Keltæ; and in the North, the Scythians.

^t Ephorus was a disciple of Isocrates, who desired him to write a history, (Photius, 1455,) which he composed from the return of the Heraclidæ into the Peloponnesus to the twentieth year of Philip of Macedon. It obtained him a distinguished reputation. His geography is often mentioned, and sometimes criticised by Strabo. But he is extolled for his knowledge by Polybius, Diodorus, and Dionysius Halicarnassus.

^u Herod. *Melpom.* c. 49.

^v Herod. *Euterpe.* c. 33. So Arrian. Herodotus places a people, whom he calls Cunesioi, beyond the Kelts.

^w Arist. *ἠθικῶν Νικομ.* lib. iii. c. 10.

^x Arist. *ἠθικ.* *Ευδημ.* lib. iii. c. 1.

^y Arist. *Πολιτ.* lib. vii. c. 17.

^z De Mundo, c. iii. p. 552.

^a Meteor. lib. i. c. 12. This passage makes it probable, that by Pyrene the ancients meant the Pyrenees, though Herodotus calls it a city, and places it inaccurately as to the sources of the Danube.

^b De Mirab. Auscult. 1157, de Gen. An. lib. ii. c. 8. Strabo also calls their country Keltica, and Livy, Kelticum. Timagetes placed the springs of the Danube in the Keltic mountains. Schol. Apoll.

He places the Kelts above Iberia; and remarks that their country was too cold for the ass, which our present experience contradicts; or, perhaps, we should rather say, that the temperature of France has been softened by the demolition of its forests, the disappearance of its marshes, and the cultivation of its soil. Hipparchus also mentioned Keltica, but seems to have extended it into the arctic circle; for he placed Keltæ at the distance of six thousand stadia from Marseilles; and said that the sun shone all night in Keltica during the summer, and was not raised above the horizon, more than nine cubits in winter.^c

The opinions may be fanciful, but they show this great astronomer's notion of the extent of the Keltic population. The Boii who named Bohemia, and the Helvetians, are both admitted to be Keltic.^d

The tendency of the notices of the Kelts, by Herodotus, Aristotle, and Ephorus, is to show, that in their times, this people lived in the western parts of Europe, about Gaul and Spain. They are spoken of as being in the same places by later writers.^e But the evidence of Cæsar is particularly interesting on this subject. In his time the German or Scythic hordes had spread themselves over Europe, and had incorporated, or driven before them, the more ancient races, whom we have been describing. But he found the Kelts possessing, at the period of his entrance into Gaul, the most considerable, and the best maritime part of it. He mentions that the Seine and the Marne separated them from the Belgæ, and the Garonne from the Aquitani.^f But if the Kelts occupied the sea-coast of France, from the Seine to the Garonne, and had been driven to the Seine by the invasions of northern assailants, they were in a position extremely favourable for passing over into Britain; and had been under the same circumstances to impel them to it, which afterwards drove the Britons to seek refuge on a part of their coast, when the Saxons pressed upon them.

The Kelts had certainly been much spread upon the Continent, in the times anterior to Cæsar, and had shaken both Greece and Rome by perilous invasions. From the earliest of their predatory migrations which has been recorded by the classical writers, we find, that they were in the occupation of France about 600

^c Strabo cites Hipparchus, p. 128, but adds his own belief, that the Britons were more north than Keltica, by fifteen hundred stadia. In the time of Strabo the Keltæ were not more north than France. Hipparchus lived one hundred and fifty years before Strabo, and Keltica had become much limited, when the Roman wrote, by the successful progress to the Rhine of the German nations. The Belgæ had then passed this river, and even entered Gaul.

^d See Tac. Mor. Germ.—Strabo, lib. vii.—Cæsar, de bell. Gall.

^e As Pausanias, p. 62; Diod. Sic. p. 308; and Strabo in many places; also by Livy.

^f Cæsar, Comment. de bell. Gall. lib. i. c. 1.

years before the Christian era. At that period, their population in this country was so abundant, that their chiefs recommended two of their princes to lead a numerous body over the Alps into Italy. One large multitude passed them near Turin, defeated the Tuscans, and founded Milan; another party settled about Brixia and Verona, while succeeding adventurers spread themselves over other districts. The reign of Tarquinius Priscus at Rome marks the chronology of these expeditions.⁵

The next great movement of the Kelts, in the Italian States, that has been transmitted to us, occurred about 180 years after the preceding migration, when Brennus led them to that attack upon Rome itself, in which they became masters of the city, killed its senate, and had nearly taken its capitol, when Camillus rescued the perishing republic from its barbaric conquerors.^h

One hundred and ten years afterwards, Greece suffered from the irruptions of this prolific people, under another Brennusⁱ The Kelts burst from Illyria, into Macedonia and Thrace, poured thence into Thessaly, passed the Strait of Thermopylæ, as Xerxes had done, and proceeded to attack Delphos, when they were affected and destroyed by that panic which the reputation of the place, and the contrivances of its priesthood produced, and which preserved Greece from their further desolations.^k These events occurred about 280 years before our Saviour's birth. The Kelts are noticed afterwards as attempting Asia Minor, and as serving in the armies of Ptolemy and also of Antigonus,^l and they had frequent battles with the Romans, but usually experienced ruinous defeats;^m especially in that tremendous conflict with Quintus Fabius Maximus, of which Cæsar reminded the Gauls of his day,ⁿ when they were about to war with him, and in which Strabo states, that two hundred thousand Keltæ were cut off.^o

⁵ We derive our information of this important chronology and event from Livy. He states, that when Tarquinius Priscus reigned, the chief sovereignty of the Keltæ was with the Bituriges, (the inhabitants of that part of France where Bourges is now situated,) and that these gave a king to Kelticum. His name at that time was Ambigatus. The princes whom he sent out at the head of these expeditions were Bellovesus and Sigovesus, his sister's sons. The party under Sigovesus took the direction of the Hercynian forest. But Bellovesus commanded the invasion of Italy. Livy, Hist. lib. v. c. 34. The elder Tarquin died 578 years before the Christian era.

^h Dionysius Halic. dates this Keltic irruption, ἐπέδρε Κελτῶν, in the first year of the ninety-eighth Olympiad, or 120 years after Junius Brutus and Collatinus. Lib. i. p. 60.

ⁱ That the leader of the Keltæ in the attack of Rome, and their chief a century after in their invasion of Greece, should both be named Brennus, induces one to believe that this word is rather a descriptive than a personal appellation, and therefore to recollect that Brennin means a king in the Welsh and ancient British language.

^k The fullest account of this expedition of the Kelts into Greece, occurs in Pausanias, Attic. lib. i. p. 6—8, and Phoc. lib. x. p. 643—655.

^l Pausan. lib. i. p. 23.

^m Liv. Hist.

ⁿ Cæsar de Bell. Gall.

^o Strabo places the scene of this battle where the Isar and the Rhone flow, near

Strabo remarks of the Keltæ, that it was common to them and the Iberians to lie on the ground;^p that they used waxen vessels;^q that they were addicted to human sacrifices, from which the Romans reclaimed them;^r and that they were accustomed to bring home the heads of their enemies and fix them on the gates of their towns.^s That the Keltæ, or Gauls, were easier conquered than the Spaniards, he ascribes to their fighting more in masses.^t In the time of Alexander, there were Kelts on the Adriatic who offered him their friendship with language which he thought arrogant.^u The expeditions and positions above noticed of the Kelts, prove that they were in the habit of spreading themselves from France into other countries; and considering the spirit of enterprise, the abundant population, and power of the Keltæ in France, and the vicinity and fertility of Britain, we cannot avoid believing, that they crossed the sea to colonize it. Caesar expressly mentions, that one of the Keltic kings in Gaul, Divitiacus, who governed there the Suessiones, and was the most powerful prince in that country, had subjected also, part of Britain to his power.^v From him also we learn, that the Kelts of Armorica called upon some of the British tribes to aid them against his hostilities;^w and one of his reasons for attacking Britain was, that it had assisted the Keltic Gauls to resist him.^x He speaks also of its being visited by the Keltic merchants; and before his invasion of Britain, he sent one of the Keltic princes of Gaul, whom he had made a king, into our island to persuade the Britons to be friendly to the Roman state, because the authority of this chieftain was great in Britain. Thus Caesar affords sufficient evidence of the military and commercial intercourse between the two nations in his time, a fact favourable to the opinion of the affinity between some parts of their respective populations.

That colonies of Keltic race entered the British islands from Gaul, has always appeared to our antiquaries so probable, that there is scarcely any circumstance on which they have so cor-

the Kemminon mountains. The conqueror erected a trophy of white stone, and built two temples, one to Mars, and one to Hercules, p. 283.

^p Strabo, p. 249.

^q *Ib.* p. 233.

^r *Ib.* p. 303.

^s He says, that Posidonius declares he saw several of their heads, p. 303; a custom which Strabo thought barbarian; but which reminds us of our own legal practice with executed traitors.

^t *Ib.* p. 299.

^u Strabo, lib. vii. p. 462. Arrian, lib. i. p. 8. The account, related on the authority of Ptolemy Lagus, his General, and King of Egypt, is, that the king received the ambassadors with great civility, and asked them at his banquet what they most dreaded, expecting a complimentary answer as to himself. But they said they feared nothing, unless that the sky should fall and overwhelm them, though they highly valued his friendship. Alexander admitted them to his alliance, but called them arrogant.

^v *Lib.* ii. c. 4.

^w *Lib.* iii. c. 9.

^x C. 18.

dially agreed. The Welsh tradition may be therefore read without incredulity, which deduces two colonies from Gaul, not Kymry, or Kimmerians, but of Kimmerian origin; the one from Armorica, and the other from Gascony.^γ The distinction taken as to their origin suits the situation of the Kelts, who to use the expression of the triad, were of the first race of the Kymry. The Armorican emigration was of the tribe called Brython,^δ a name which recalls to our recollection, that Pliny found a people called Britanni remaining in Gaul in his time.^ε The colony from Gascony was the Lloegrwys, whose name became attached to that part of the island which they occupied; for the largest part of England has been always named Lloegr by the Welsh poets^β and chroniclers.^ε Tacitus expresses his belief, that the Gauls peopled Britain,^δ and Bede derives its inhabitants from Armorica.^ε The position of the Kelts on the maritime regions of the west of Europe, bringing them more within the reach of intercourse with the civilized nations of antiquity, who frequented the ocean, they had begun to feel the influence of the superior progress of the improved part of the world. The Grecian settlement of the Phocians, at Marseilles, which had occurred about 540 years before the Christian era, had flourished into great wealth and

^γ The fifth triad is this: "The three peaceful people of the isle of Britain. The first were the nation of the Kymry, who came with Hu Cadarn to the island of Britain. He obtained not the country, nor the lands, by slaughter or contest, but with justice and peace. The other was the race of the Lloegrwys, who came from the land of Gwasgwyn; and they were of the first race of the Kymry. The third were the Brython, and from the land of Llydaw they came; and they were of the first race of the Kymry. And these were called the three peaceful nations, because they came one to the other with peace and tranquillity; and these three nations were of the first race of the Kymry, and they were of the same language." *Trioedd ynys Prydain.* 2 *Archaïol.* p. 58.

^δ The Brython are frequently mentioned by the old Welsh poets; by Aneurin, in his *Gododin*, 1 *Archaïol.* p. 10, and by Taliesin, p. 31, 50, 66, 67, 73. He once mentions the *Morini Brython*, in his *Prif Gyfarch*, or *Primary Gratulation*, p. 33.

^ε Pliny *Hist. Nat. lib. iv. c. 31*; and *Dionysius*.

^β Aneurin speaks of *Lloegr*, p. 7, and calls its inhabitants *Lloegrwys*, p. 4, 9, and 11. *Taliesin* has *Lloegr*, p. 64 and 59, and *Lloegrwys*, p. 51, 55. *Llywarch Hen* and *Myrddhin* also use both words, as 108, 117, 153, &c.

^ε Besides the fabulous *Brut Tysilio*, and the *Brut ab Arthur*, 2 *Archaïol.* p. 116, 117, their historical chronicles *Brut y Saeson*, and the *Brut y Tywysogion*, p. 469, 471, &c. speak of England under this name.

^δ *Tacitus Vit. Agric.* In *Camden's Britannia* numerous analogies of manners and language between the Britons and Gauls are collected, to prove their identity of origin. Some of these are worth our consideration.

^ε *Bede Hist. Eccl. lib. i. c. 1.* We have two collateral proofs from the analogy of language of the affinity between the inhabitants of Britain and the ancient Kelts. *Pausanias*, mentioning that every Keltic horseman was followed to battle by two attendants, says that the Kelts called this custom, in their native language, *Tri-markisian*, because the name of a horse among the Kelts is *Markan*, *Phoc. lib. x. p. 545.* *Mark* is also a horse, *tri* is three, and *trimarkwys* is literally three horsemen, in the ancient British, and present Welsh. *Cæsar* states, that the Keltic people, who bordered upon the ocean, were in his time called *Armorics*, *lib. v. c. 44.* In the ancient British, and in the Welsh *ar-mor-uch* literally mean upon the sea-heights.

consequence. They subdued some of the Keltic regions around them, founded cities in it, built a splendid temple to the Ephesian Diana, raised large fleets, pursued extensive navigations, of which the voyage of Pytheas towards Iceland is an instance; and became distinguished for the elegance of their manners, their love of literature, and spirit of philosophy. They made their city so attractive for its intellectual resources, that some of the noblest of the Romans lived at Marsilles, in preference to Athens; and they diffused such a taste for Grecian customs around them, that the Gauls used Greek letters, and wrote their contracts in Greek.^f The Keltic invaders of Greece must have also introduced many beneficial improvements into their native country; for Strabo mentions, that treasures taken from Delphi, in the expedition under Brennus, were found by the Romans at Tholouse.^g It was remarked by Ephorus, that the Keltæ were fond of the Greeks;^h and their diffusion into Spain, which he also mentions,ⁱ brought them into immediate contact with the Phenicians and Carthaginians; and their Druids are certainly evidence that a part of the population had made some intellectual advance. The preceding facts, connected with the analogy of the language, as at first remarked, satisfactorily prove that our earliest population came from the Kimmerian and Keltic stock.

CHAPTER III.

Phenicians and Carthaginians in Britain.

BUT though the Kimmerii, and their kindred the Kelts, may have peopled Britain, a more celebrated people are also stated to have visited it. The Phenicians, in their extensive commercial navigations, colonized many of the islands, and some of the coasts of the Ægean and Mediterranean Seas. Inscriptions in their language have been found in Malta. They occupied Spain, and founded Cadiz; and it was probably in pursuit of them that Nebuchadnezzar, the celebrated King of Babylon, became the conqueror of Spain. They had also an established intercourse with islands, which the Greeks called "the Islands of Tin," or Cassi-

^f Strabo, p. 272, 273. Justin. L. 43. c. 3.

^g Strabo, p. 286.

^h Ib. p. 304.

ⁱ Ephorus stated, that they occupied the largest part of Spain, up to Cadiz. Strabo, p. 304. And Strabo mentions, that before the Carthaginians possessed Spain, the Keltæ and the Tyrians held it, p. 238.

terides. This, being a descriptive name, was probably the translation of the Phœnician appellation.^a As Herodotus intimates that the Cassiterides were, with respect to Greece, in the farthest parts of Europe;^b as Aristotle talks of *Keltic tin*;^c and Strabo describes both these islands and Britain to be opposite to the Artabri, or Gallicia in Spain, but northward, and places them within the British climate;^d as in another passage he states them to be as to Rome, without, or on our side of the columns of Hercules;^e as he mentions them to be productive of tin, obviously connecting them at the same time with the British islands;^f and in another part, as being in the open sea, north from the port of the Artabri,^g or Gallicia: the most learned, both at home and abroad, have believed the Cassiterides to have been some of the British islands. This opinion is warranted by there being no other islands famous for tin near the parts designated by Strabo; and by the fact that British tin was so celebrated in antiquity, that Polybius intended to write on the British islands and the preparation of tin.^h

It has been suggested, that the Scilly islands and Cornwall were more peculiarly meant by the Cassiterides. When Cornwall was first discovered from the south of Europe, it may have been thought an island, before greater familiarity with the coast taught the navigators that it was only a projecting part of a larger country; and even then, when the whole country connected with it was found to be an island, there was no reason to change its insular appellation. In our navigations to the Pacific, new-discovered places have been at first marked as islands, which were afterwards traced to be parts of a continent; and others have been deemed continental, which have been discovered to be insular.ⁱ

^a *Κασσιτερον* is the word used by the Greeks for tin. Bochart has founded an ingenious etymology of the "Britannic islands" on the Hebrew *בְּרִית־אֵן*, *Baratanac*, which, he says, means the Land of Tin. He says Strabo calls Britain, *Βριττανικη*. *Boch. Canaan*, lib. i. c. 39, p. 720. He also intimates, what is more probable, that the word *Κασσιτερον* may have been of Phœnician origin. The Chaldean Targums, of Jonathan and Jerusalem, certainly call tin *kastira* and *kistara*, as the Arabs name it *kasdar*. See Numbers, xxxi. 22.

^b Herod. *Thalia*. c. 115.

^c Aristot. lib. *Mirabilium*; and Mela places the Cassiterides in Celticis, or among the Keltæ, lib. iii. c. 6, p. 262.

^d Strabo, *Geog.* lib. ii. p. 181.

^e *Ib.* lib. ii. p. 191. He joins them with the British islands, *καὶ Καττιπεριδος, καὶ Βριττανικας*.

^f *Ib.* lib. iii. p. 219. Here he says, that tin is produced among the barbarians above Lusitania, and in the islands Cassiterides, and from Britain is brought to Marseilles.

^g *Ib.* lib. iii. p. 265. In this passage Strabo says likewise, they are ten in number, adjoining each other.

^h Polyb. *Hist.* lib. iii. c. 5. Festus Avienus describes islands under the name of *Æstryrnides*, which are thought to be the same with Strabo's Cassiterides. He says they were frequented by the merchants of Tartessus and Carthage, and were rich in tin and lead. *De oris Marit.*

ⁱ The reasons for supposing the Cassiterides to be the Scilly islands are thus stated

Much of the false description with which the position of the Cassiterides has been confused, may have been designedly circulated by the Phenicians themselves. We know from Strabo that they were anxious to deprive the rest of the world of any acquaintance with these islands. He has told us a very striking incident of this monopolizing solicitude, which must have been the parent of many misrepresentations about Britain, till the Romans subdued and examined it. He says, "anciently the Phenicians alone, from Cadiz, engrossed this market; hiding the navigation from all others. When the Romans followed the course of a vessel, that they might discover the situation, the jealous pilot wilfully stranded his ship; misleading those who were tracing him to the same destruction. Escaping from the shipwreck, he was indemnified for his losses out of the public treasury."^j When Cæsar invaded Britain, we know from his Commentaries that he was unacquainted with its magnitude, its harbours, or its people. It was even doubted whether it was a continent or an island.^k Of course the Romans at that time could have known nothing of the connection and continuance of coast between Cornwall and Dover. This ignorance of other nations, and the designed misinformation given by the Phenicians, may have occasioned the distinction to have been taken between the Cassiterides and Britain, and a supposition, favoured by Strabo, that some sea intervened.^l The Cassiterides had become imperfectly known to the Romans, in the time of Strabo, by the attempt of Publius Crassus^m to discover them. He seems to have landed at one of them; but the short account given of his voyage does not incline us to believe that he completely explored them.ⁿ

If we once presume that the Phenicians reached the Scilly islands, and extracted tin from them, we shall do great injustice

in Camden's *Britannia*. They are opposite to the Artabri in Spain; they bend directly to the north from them; they lie in the same clime with Britain; they look towards Celtiberia; the sea is much broader between them and Spain, than between them and Britain; they lie just upon the Iberian sea; there are only ten of them of any note, and they have veins of tin which no other isle has in this tract. *Camd. Brit.* p. 1112. Ed. 1695. All these circumstances have been mentioned of the Cassiterides.

^j Strabo, lib. iii. p. 265.

^k Dio. Cass. lib. xxxix. p. 127. Cæsar, *Comm. de Bell. Gall.* lib. iv. s. 18.

^l Solinus says that a turbid sea divided the Scilly isle (Siluram) from Britain, *Polyhist.* c. 22, p. 31. The distance is near forty miles. *Whit. Manch.* ii. p. 172, 8°.

^m Strabo, lib. iii. p. 265. Huët thinks this was not the Crassus who perished against the Parthians, though he had fought in Portugal and triumphed in Spain; but his son, who was Cæsar's lieutenant in his Gallic wars, and who subdued the people of Vannes and its vicinity. He may have undertaken the voyage from curiosity, as Volusenus, by Cæsar's orders, examined part of the sea-coasts of our island for military purposes. *Hist. de Com. des Anciens*, c. 38, p. 183, ed. Par. 1727.

ⁿ Whittaker's description of the present state of the Scilly islands is worth reading. *Hist. Manch.* ii. p. 169. Though the same chapter in other parts discovers a fancy painting far beyond the facts in its authorities.

to their memory to suppose that they who could sail from Tyre to the Scilly islands, would not have adventured across the small sea between them and the Land's End. Indeed, the voyage of Himilco shows that the Carthaginians, the offspring of Tyre, pursued voyages even more northward than Britain.^o We may therefore admit, without much chance of error, that the Cassiterides visited by the Phenicians were the British islands, though the Romans understood by the name the islands of Scilly, with perhaps part of the coast of Cornwall.^p

Having thus stated the most authentic circumstances that can be now collected, of the peopling of Britain by the Kimmerians, the Keltoid, and the Phenicians, it may not be improper to state, in one view, all that the Welsh traditions deliver of the ancient inhabitants of the island. As traditions of an ancient people committed to writing, they deserve to be preserved from absolute oblivion.

According to the Welsh triads, while it was uninhabited by human colonies, and was full of bears, wolves, heavers, and a peculiar kind of wild cattle, it had the name of *Clas Merddhin*.^q In this state, *Hy Cadarn* led the first colony of the *Cymry* to it, of whom some went to *Bretagne*.^r It then acquired the name of the *Honey Island*.^s In the course of time, *Prydain*, the son of *Aedd the Great*, reigned in it, and from him it was called *Ynys Prydain*, the *Isle of Prydain*;^t which is its present denomination in Welsh, and which the Greeks and Romans seem to have extended into *Britannia*. It was afterwards visited by two foreign tribes of *Kimmerian* origin, the *Lloegrwys*, from *Gwasgwyn*, or *Gascony*; and the *Brython*, from *Llydaw*, or *Bretagne*.^u Both of these were peaceable colonists. The *Lloegrwys* impressed their name upon a large portion of the island. At subsequent periods, other people came with more or less violence. The Romans;^v the *Gwyddyl Fficti* (the *Picts*) to *Alban* or *Scotland*, on the part which lies nearest to the *Baltic*;^w the *Celyddon* (*Caledonians*) to the north parts of the island; the *Gwyddyl* to other parts of *Scotland*;^x the *Corranaiid* from *Pwyll* (perhaps *Poland*) to the *Humber*;^y the men of *Galedin*, or *Flanders*, to *Wyth*; the *Saxons*;^z and the *Llychlynians*, or *Northmen*.^a

As the prosperity of the Phenicians declined under the hostilities of the ancient conquerors, who emerged from *Assyria*, *Babylon*, and *Persia*, their descendants, the *Carthaginians*, succeeded to

^o Pliny, lib. ii. c. 67.

^p Pliny has preserved the name of the Phenician navigator who first procured lead from the *Cassiterides*. He says, *Plumbum ex Cassiteride insula primus apporavit Midacritus*. *Hist. Nat. lib. vii. c. 57.*

^q Trioedd. 1.

^r Ib. 4 and 5.

^s Ib. 1.

^t Ib. 1. *Isidorus* says that *Britain* derived its name from a word of its inhabitants.

^u Ib. 5.

^v Ib. 8.

^w Ib. 7.

^x Ib. 6.

^y Ib. 7.

^z Ib. 6.

^a Ib. 8.

the possession of their European settlements; and in some places, as in Spain and Scilly, greatly extended their territorial power. The Carthaginian occupation of Spain is fully attested to us by the Roman historians, and was distinguished by the wars in that country of the celebrated Carthaginian generals Asdrubal and Hannibal. It was natural that when possessed of Spain, they should also acquire the more distant colonies of the Phenicians, and continue their commercial intercourse with the British islands and the neighbouring shores. Hence, there is no reason to disbelieve the opinion, that the Carthaginians had the same intercourse with the British islands which the Phenicians established. The voyage of Himilco warrants the supposition. This Carthaginian officer sailed from Spain on a voyage of discovery of the northern coasts of Europe, at the same time that Hanno was directed to circumnavigate Africa.^z

CHAPTER IV.

On the Knowledge which the Greeks had of the British Islands.—And on the Tradition of the Trojan Colony.

THE Grecian knowledge of Europe was gradually obtained. The calamities experienced at sea, by the conquerors of Troy on their return, dispersed them into many parts of the maritime regions of Europe.^a The subsequent settlements of several Grecian colonies in Italy, as well as that already noticed at Marseilles, from which they pursued distant navigations; and the visits of Grecian travellers and philosophers to the Phenician cities in Spain,^b led them to some knowledge of its western and northern seas, shores, and islands. The attack of Darius, the Persian king, on the Scythians in Europe, revealed more knowledge of these people than former ages had acquired;^c and the expeditions of Alexander, before his eastern adventure, disclosed to the Greeks all the north of Europe, up to the Danube. In the same manner, the restless enterprises of Mithridates made known to both Greeks and Romans the various tribes that inhabited the sea of Azoph and its vicinity.^d Hence the Grecians had much

^z Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. ii. c. 67.

^a Strabo, p. 223, 236. Plutarch in Nic. p. 238.

^b Of which we have an instance in Posidonius. See Strabo, 264.

^c Herodotus.

^d Strabo, p. 26. Several of the Greeks wrote on the ancient geography of Europe, whose works we have lost, as Dicæarchus, Messenius, Eratosthenes, and Posidonius,

information of the ancient chorography of Europe, though they were unacquainted, as Polybius intimates, with many of its inland regions.^e

But that Britain and Ireland were known to the Greeks, at least by name, is an unquestionable fact. The ancient Argonautica, ascribed to Orpheus, but of much later origin,^f describes the voyage of the Argonauts, on their return to Greece. In this curious work, they are made to sail round the north of Europe, from the Kimmerian Bosphorus. In coming southward, the author says "they passed by the island Iernida."^g Whether the next island they noticed, which is described as full of pine trees, was any part of Britain, cannot be ascertained. As this work, if not written in the time of Pisistratus, which many assert it to have been, is at least of great antiquity,^h it is an evidence that Ireland was known to the ancient Greeks.

In the book de Mundo, which is ascribed to Aristotle, the British islands are mentioned, with their specific names, Albion and Ierne.

The voyage of Pytheas, which was in existence in the fifth century,ⁱ must have transmitted much information to the Greeks concerning our islands. He seems to have lived about the time of Aristotle.^j He sailed from Marseilles, where he made an observation to determine its latitude, which enabled Eratosthenes and Hipparchus to calculate it with a precision which modern astronomers have found exact.^k He coasted Spain, Portugal, and France, into the British Channel. He passed along the

whom Strabo mentions, p. 163; and whom he seems too fond of censuring, which is one of the faults of Strabo. It was a favourite point with him to attack all former geographers. He comes within the remark of "bearing no brother near the throne."

^e Polybius, lib. iii. remarks this of the tract between Narbonne and the Tanais.

^f Suidas says, the Argonautica was written by an Orpheus of Crotona, whom Asclepiades, in the sixth book of his Grammaticæ, declared to be the friend of Pisistratus, vol. ii. p. 339. Some other works, published under the name of Orpheus, he attributes to Onomacritus, ib. 338.

^g *Ἀργοναυτικά*, v. 1179, p. 156, ed. Lips. 1764. Strabo, lib. iv. p. 307, calls Ireland *Ἰέρνιδά*, and Diodorus Siculus gives it a name that approaches very near its native appellation. Its name in the Gaelic is Erin; in Diodorus it is *Ἰέρν*, lib. v. p. 309.

^h The antiquity of the *Ἀργοναυτικά* has been ably vindicated by D. Ruhnkenius. He shows that it was quoted by two ancient grammarians, Orus and Draco Stratonicensis. He gives his own critical judgment of their antiquity in strong terms: "Is, qui Argonautica et Hymnos Orpheo subjecti, sive Onomacritus fuerit, ut plures traducit, sive alius, scriptor certe meo judicio *Vetustissimus* est; in quo quamvis animum diligenter attenderim no levissimum quidem recentioris ætatis vestigium reperi; contra, proba omnia et antiquitatem redolentia." Epist. Crit. 2, p. 128, ed. 1782.

ⁱ He is quoted by Stephanus, Voc. *οὐσιανός*, who lived at this period.

^j See M. Bougainville's very able Memoir on his Life and Voyages. Mem. Acad. des Inscript. v. xxx. p. 285.

^k Bougainville, p. 289. Pytheas referred the cause of the tides to the agency of the moon. Plut. de placit. Phil. His description of the stars in the north was cited with approbation by Hipparchus, in his Commentary on Aratus.

eastern shore of Britain, to the north, till he reached the island which he has called Thule. He is the first navigator that penetrated so far into the Northern Ocean. After this he made a voyage to the German Ocean; passed the Sound into the Baltic Sea, and sailed on to a river, which he thought the Tanais, the boundary of Europe.¹ In all his course, he made many observations on the climate, the people, and the productions of the countries he visited, of which only a very few fragments have descended to us; and it is evident, from what has been transmitted to us of his opinions, that Britain was a principal object of his examination.^m

In the third book of his history, Polybius has intimated that the British islands, and the manner of making tin, would be one of his subjects for a future composition.ⁿ His friend, the great Scipio, made inquiries concerning Britain^o of the merchants of Narbonne and Marseilles; but though he could obtain, from their ignorance or their jealousy, nothing worthy of memory, yet, as Polybius mentions that many authors before him had treated fully, though variously, on this and the other subjects which he postpones; and as he himself had travelled through Spain and Gaul, and had sailed over the ocean which bounds them;^p the remarks of an author so inquisitive and judicious, would have been an invaluable present to our curiosity. If they were ever written,^q time has deprived us of them. We have equally lost the works of Timæus, Isodorus, Artemidorus, Messenius, Eratosthenes, Hipparchus, and Posidonius, who are all mentioned to have noticed the British islands.^r

Indeed it is evident that the Grecian geographers directed their attention to the northern and western parts of Europe. Cæsar mentions that the great Hercynian forest of Germany was known to Eratosthenes, and some other Grecians, who called it Orcynia.^s But that Grecian colonies were in Britain cannot be believed on the vague intimation of St. Jerome.^t That Hiero, King of Sicily,

¹ Bougainville has collected the passages from Pytheas' voyage, in Strabo and Pliny, which express these circumstances; and has vindicated him from the angry invectives of Strabo, who, though occasionally erring himself, is very unsparring in his censure of Pytheas.

^m See Pliny, lib. ii. c. 77, & c. 99; lib. iv. c. 27, & c. 30; and Strabo, p. 163, and 175. Pytheas has had a singular fortune: he has been attacked by Strabo and Polybius; and followed by Eratosthenes and Hipparchus.

ⁿ Hist. lib. iii. c. 5. ^o Strabo, lib. iv. p. 289. ^p Polybius, lib. iii. c. 5.

^q In speaking of the British islands, Polybius rather expresses a treatise which he had it in his contemplation to compose, than one which he had made. From this passage, it is not certain, whether he fulfilled his intentions; and yet some allusions of Strabo seem to have been taken from such a work.

^r Pliny, lib. iv. c. 30, Strabo, lib. ii. p. 163; lib. iv. p. 304; lib. i. p. 111. We find from Tacitus, Vit. Agr., that Livy and Fabius Rusticus, "eloquentissimi auctores," had also treated of Britain before him.

^s Cæsar, lib. vi. c. 22.

^t St. Jerome in his questions on Genesis referring to Varro Sisinius Capito and

had the mainmast of his ship from England, rests on a passage in Athenæus," which has been thought corrupted; because a sentence of Polybius, if it had not been corrected, would have made Hannibal to have fought in Britain.^v Later Greek stories are mere random fictions.^w But that Britain was at least in the recollection of the Romans before Cæsar, is obvious from the passage of Lucretius which alludes to it.^x The remarks of Dion Cassius and of Diodorus, express the real state of the question as to the actual intercourse of the Grecians and Romans with Britain.^y

It is well known, that Jeffrey of Monmouth, who diffused in the twelfth century that history of Britain which in former times so much occupied the public mind, deduces the first colonization of Britain from a Trojan source; from Brutus, the son of Æneas, who after wandering through the sea, and landing in Gaul, finally settled in this island. The same story is in the Welsh Chronicles, which are ascribed to Tyssilio, and supposed, though too gratuitously, to have been Jeffrey's originals.

Not a line of history can be written from a work so obviously fabulous as the composition, or, as he describes it, the translation from Breton manuscripts, of Jeffrey. But the curious student may fairly ask, did this Trojan story originate with Jeffrey, or had it an earlier origin? A few observations will be sufficient on the subject.

Phlegon, but without giving their precise words, says, that the Greeks possessed all the sea coasts from the mountains Amanus and Taurus to the British Ocean. But these writers most probably meant no more than the Grecian colony at Marseilles.

^u Athenæus describes at length the celebrated ship which Archimedes made for Hiero, because he had just read very carefully the book which Moschion had written upon it. After giving a full detail of its various parts, he comes to its masts. He says, the second and third were easily found, but the first was obtained with difficulty. It was found by a herdsman, *ἐν τοῖς οὐραῖσι τῆς Βεσττανίας*, and Philous the Tauromenian, the mechanist, brought it down to the sea. Deip. lib. v. p. 208. Camden suggests that this may be a corruption for *Βεσττανίας*, or the Brutii in Italy.

^v The corrupt passage of Polybius occurs in the eclogue of the 11th book. The corruption here is manifest, as Camden has remarked. The passage applies wholly to Italy.

^w There have been some absurd fancies about the earlier intercourse of the Greeks and Romans with Britain. That Alexander the Great came from Cadiz to Britain, or that British kings made presents to Cato the Elder, in approbation of his virtue, as Cedrenus and J. Tzetzes mentions, are circumstances which show that the introduction of romance into history did not originate merely from our minstrels.

^x "Nam quid Britannium cælum differre putamus

Et quod in Ægypto est, qua mundi claudicat axis." Luc.

^y Dion says, "Its existence was not known to the earliest Greeks and Romans, and to the more recent it was a doubt whether it was a continent or an island. But though several maintained each opinion, they had no actual knowledge about it, as they neither saw the island themselves nor conversed with its natives," lib. xxxix. p. 127. Diodorus remarks, "Anciently it remained untouched by foreign powers; for we have not heard that either Bacchus or Hercules, or any of the other heroes, reigned in it," lib. iv. p. 300. Mela's opinion is, that Cæsar subdued in it tribes, not only unconquered before, but even unknown, lib. iii. p. 263.

It appears from Nennius, who wrote in the ninth century, that the opinion of this descent was in Britain in his time; for he mentions an outline of that story,^a which Jeffrey has so much amplified and dramatized.

Taliesin, in his poems, frequently mentions Troy, and seems to allude to the tradition of such a descent.^a All this is too vague for history. But it is remarkable, that there should have been in Europe several traditions connected both with the conquerors and the conquered, in that celebrated warfare which Homer has immortalized.^b

It was the ambition of Cæsar, who delighted to accomplish what no man before him had achieved, that led him, after the conquest of the Keltic nation in Gaul, and its German invaders, to attempt the discovery and subjugation of Britain. He knew not whether it was a vast continent or a confined island. But the doubt and obscurity were but additional temptations to his aspiring genius. To great minds, the unknown is as attractive as the wonderful; and untried danger is but a mysterious incentive to explore it. He prepared a small fleet to examine its coasts; and resolved, with the force which he could then venture to take from Gaul, to attempt to penetrate a country, which none of the conquerors of the civilized world appeared to have even seen.

CHAPTER V.

The Manners of the Ancient Britons.—The Druids.

WHEN Britain was invaded by the Romans, it exhibited the state of a country which had been peopled from several shoots of the barbaric or nomadic stocks, at different periods, with some

^a Nennius professes to derive his account from the annals of the Romans. It is briefly this: Brutus was the grandson of Ascanius, the son of Eneas. Driven from Italy and the Tyrrhenian Sea, he went to Gaul, and founded Tours, and thence came to this island, gave it his name, and peopled it about the time that Eli was the judge in Israel, c. 33.

^b See Welsh Archaeology, vol. i.

Thus Tacitus mentions the opinion of the Germans, that Ulysses was driven into the Northern Ocean, and built there Asciburgum; and that an altar dedicated to Ulysses, with the name of Laertes his father, had been found there, *De Mor. Germ.* s. 3. Solinus notices a tradition of Ulysses having reached a bay in Caledonia; "which," he adds, "an altar with a Greek inscription shows," c. 22. A Trojan colony is stated to have founded Trapano in Italy, *Dion. Hal.* p. 41, 42. But the tradition more immediately connecting itself with the intimations of Nennius, is that noticed by Ammianus Marcellinus, that some Trojans, flying from the Greeks and dispersed all around, occupied regions in Gaul then uninhabited, *lib. xv. c. 9.*

grafts or improvements from more civilized nations. Its inhabitants were divided into many tribes, of which about forty-five have been enumerated with distinct appellations.^a Of these, the Belgæ, whom Cæsar particularizes to have passed over from Belgic Gaul, and to have been established in the island by their victories, occupied part of the coast of the British Channel. He distinguishes the Cantii, or people of Kent, as more advanced than the rest in the habits of civilized life, and as not differing much from the people of Gaul. The Belgæ pursued agriculture. But most of the interior tribes lived on milk and flesh, or in that state which has been called the pastoral, and clothed themselves with skins.^b

All the Britons stained themselves of a blue colour with woad, which gave them a more horrible appearance in battle.^c They

^a I. From Kent to Cornwall were the

Cantii	Belgæ
Regni	Durotriges
Bibroces	Hædui
Atrebatæ	Carnabii
Segontiaci	Damnonii.

These were afterwards comprised in the Roman district called *Britannia Prima*.

II. In the Peninsula of Wales were the Silures, Ordovices, and Dimetæ, whose country formed the *Britannia Secunda* of the Romans.

III. Between the Thames, the Severn, the Mersey, the Humber, and the ocean the district afterwards named *Flavia Cesariensis*, comprised the

Trinobantes	Dobuni
Iceni	Huicci
Coritani	Ancalites
Cassii	Carnabii.

IV. In the *Maxima Cesariensis* of the Romans, or in our present Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Yorkshire, Durham, and part of Northumberland, were the

Setantii	or	Sistuntii
Volantii	or	Voluntii
Brigantes.		

V. The five nations, who occupied the districts of the Roman province of *Valentia*, which, comprising chief part of Northumberland, extended from the Wall of Hadrian, into Scotland, as far as the Wall of Antoninus, were the

Ottadini	Novantes
Gadeni	Damnii
Selgovæ.	

VI. Beyond these, in North Britain, were the tribes included in the Roman province of *Vespasiani*.

Horestii	Vacomagi
Vecturones	Albani
Taixali	Attacotti.

VII. In the rest of Scotland, were the

Caledoni	Mortæ
Cautæ	Carnonancæ
Légi	Cerones
Carnabii	Creones
Catini.	Epidii.

^b Cæsar. Comment. lib. v. c. 10. Herodian speaks of those in the northern districts, with whom Severus fought, as usually naked, with an iron ring round their neck or stomach, lib. iii. p. 83.

^c Cæsar. ib. *Mela*, lib. iii. c. 6. This seems to have been done from infancy, as

wore long hair on their heads, but shaved it from the other parts of the body excepting the upper lip. Their population appeared numerous to the Romans.^d

The aspect of the country, as it first struck their view, presented a succession of forests, lakes, and great rivers; and Mela remarks of it, what must have been true of most parts of Europe, where agriculture was little practised, that it was more adapted to the kindly nourishment of cattle than of men. He also represents the people in general as not only uncivilized, but as much behind the nations on the continent in their social culture. Their cattle and fields were their general wealth, and they seem to have been acquainted with no other.^e

Like all barbaric tribes, who have reached their stations at successive periods, or have grown up in separate and independent states, and whose active spirits are not occupied by the pursuits of civilized life, they were perpetually at war with each other;^f and it is probable that the present state and people of New Zealand exhibit more nearly than any other, the condition of Britain when the Romans entered it.

The Britons were taller than the Gauls, but not so strong. The young Britons whom Strabo saw at Rome, were higher by half a foot than the tallest man there, but their lower limbs were not straight; nor did the general outline of their make display the symmetry of beauty. Their hair was less yellow than that of the Gauls.^g The Silures are mentioned with ruddy cheeks and curled hair; and the inhabitants of Caledonia with red hair.^h As the Belgæ in Gaul wore loose breeches and a waistcoat with sleeves, instead of a tunic; and a sagum or upper garment,ⁱ we may suppose that their settlers in Britain used the same dress. Bonduca's royal costume, when she addressed the Britons, was long yellow hair, with a large golden torques; and a *χιτων* or tunic swelling round her bosom in various colours, with a thick

Pliny says the British wives and nurses did it, lib. xxii. c. 2. Hence Marshal's epithet, "*Cæruleis Britannis*," lib. xi. c. 32. Herodian remarks, of the Britons who resisted Severus, that they painted the figures of all kinds of animals on their bodies, lib. iii. p. 83; and as Claudian mentions "the fading figures on the dying Pict," it seems to have pervaded the island, and to have been continued by the less civilized to his time. Claud. de bell. Get.

^d Cæsar.

^e Mela, lib. iii. c. 6. Cicero gives us the impression of his day on this subject. In a letter to Atticus he says, "It is known that there is not a scruple of money in the island; nor any hope of booty, but in slaves," lib. iv. ep. 17. It is curious to read this remark now, when Britain is the wealthiest country of Europe.

^f Mela, ib. Herodian speaks of the Britons as "a most warlike nation, eager for slaughter," lib. iii. p. 83. "As already hinted, I consider the British History of Jeffrey of Monmouth a tissue of fiction, though it may have preserved some real names, traditions, and circumstances; but it is impossible to separate in it the true from the invented.

^g Strabo, lib. iv. p. 305.

^h Tacitus, Agric. Vit. Rutiliæ Comæ, Livy notices of the Gauls, lib. xxxviii. c. 17.

ⁱ Strabo, 300.

cloak thrown over it.^j The Britons had gold rings on their middle finger.^k

Their houses, chiefly formed of reeds or wood, were very numerous, like those of the Gauls, and were usually seated in the midst of woods, perhaps for better defence, as those of the New Zealanders are, for the same reason, placed on fortified hills. The wars of fierce and rude men, unacquainted with military discipline, or disdaining to submit to it, usually consist of attempts to surprise and ravage; and therefore precautions against sudden aggressions are the most essential parts of their defensive skill. The Britons seem to have cleared a space in the wood, on which they built their huts and folded their cattle; and they fenced the avenues by ditches and barriers of trees. Such a collection of houses formed one of their towns.^l

They had great quantities of cattle.^m Some of the British tribes are said not to have had the art of making cheese, though they had abundance of milk; others knew nothing of either agriculture or gardening.ⁿ They housed their corn in the ear, in subterraneous places, and threshed out no more than served them for the day.^o The little money which they had, was of the Spartan kind; it was either copper or iron rings, of a definite weight.^p They thought it a crime to eat hares, geese, or hens, though they bred them for pleasure. One of their most extraordinary and pernicious customs was, that community of women among ten or twelve men, who chose to form such an association, which reminds us of the Arrecoys of Otaheite. The British Arrecoys, however, seem not to have destroyed their children; as these were agreed to be considered as the offspring of the man who had married the mother.^q

In battle their chief strength was in their infantry.^r But they fought also on horses, and more especially in chariots, with scythes at the axles.^s In these they rode, throwing darts on every side; and, by the dread of the horses and the noise of the wheels, they

^j Xiph. epit. Dio. p. 169.

^k Pliny, lib. xxxiii. c. 6. This author remarks that the person who first put rings on the fingers, introduced one of the worst crimes of life, *ibid.* c. 4. The proximum scelus was coining money from gold, *ibid.* c. 13. The use of rings as a personal distinction for men has so greatly declined, that even Pliny would not have thought them to have a very wicked tendency. They are worn now but as a petty ornament, not as in his time for fastidious pomp.

^l Strabo, lib. iv. p. 306. Cæsar, lib. v. c. 17. Diod. Sic. lib. v. p. 301.

^m Cæsar, lib. v. c. 10.

ⁿ Strabo, lib. iv. p. 305.

^o Diod. lib. v. p. 301. Pliny notices that they used a species of lime as a manure, which he calls white chalk, lib. xvii. c. 4.

^p Cæsar, lib. v. c. 10. It is supposed that Cunobellin, the successor of Cassivellaun, first coined money in Britain. "About fifty of his coins, with his own name, have come down to the present age. Some of them exhibit a plane surface, but most a small convexity." Whit. Manch. book i. c. 9. One of them represents a bard with his harp, *ibid.* c. 7, sect. 5.

^q Cæsar, lib. v. c. 10.

^r Tacitus.

^s Mela, lib. iii. c. 6.

often disordered their opponents. When they had broken in among the horse they leaped from the cars, and fought on foot. The drivers retired a little out of the battle, but so stationed themselves as to be ready to receive the combatants if pressed by the enemy. Thus, to the activity of cavalry, they united the steadiness of infantry. By daily use and practice, they were so expert, that they could stop their horses at full speed down a declivity, could guide and turn them, run along the beam, stand on the yoke, and from thence, with rapidity, dart into their chariots.^c Diodorus, in mentioning the British war-chariots, recalls to our mind, that the heroes of the Trojan war used them likewise; there was, however, this difference, that among the Britons the driver was the superior person.^d

The honourable testimony of Diodorus to their superiority to the Romans in some of those moral virtues, in which the nomadic nations excelled the civilized, must not be omitted. "There is a simplicity in their manners, which is very different from that craft and wickedness which mankind now exhibit. They are satisfied with a frugal sustenance, and avoid the luxuries of wealth."^e

The religion of the Britons was of a fierce and sanguinary nature. It resembled that of the Gauls, which is thus described. They who were afflicted with severe disease, or involved in dangers or battles, sacrificed men for victims, or vowed that they would do so. The Druids administered at these gloomy rites. They thought that the life of a man was to be redeemed by a man's life; and that there was no other mode of conciliating their gods. Some made images of wicker-work of an immense size, and filled them with living men, whom they burned alive. Thieves and robbers, or other criminals, were usually made the victims; but if there were a deficiency of these, the guiltless were sacrificed.^f At some of their sacred rites the British women went naked, but stained dark, like Ethiopians, by a vegetable juice.^g That they consulted their gods on futurity, by inspecting the quivering flesh of their human victims, and that they had prophetic women, has been already mentioned.^h

Their superstitious fancies deemed the mistletoe sacred, if it vegetated from the oak. They selected groves of oaks, and thought every thing sent from heaven which grew on this tree. On the sixth day of the moon, which was the beginning of their months and years, and of their period of thirty years, they came to the oak on which they observed any of the parasitical plant

^c Cæsar, lib. iv. c. 29.

^d Diod. lib. v. p. 301. *Honestior auriga; clientes propugnant*, Tacit. Vit. Agr.

^e Diod. p. 301.

^f Cæsar, lib. vi. c. 15.

^g Pliny, lib. xxii. c. 2.

^h See before, p. 51. That the Kelts sacrificed human victims to a deity, whom the Greeks called Kronos, and the Latins Saturn, we learn from Dionysius Halic. lib. i. p. 30.

(which they called all-healing,) prepared a sacrifice and a feast under this venerated tree, and brought thither two white bulls, whose horns were then first tied. The officiating Druid, in a white garment, climbed the tree, and, with a golden knife, pruned off the mistletoe, which was received in a white woollen cloth below. They then sacrificed the victims, and addressed their gods to make the mistletoe prosperous to those to whom it was given; for they believed that it caused fecundity, and was an amulet against poison. They performed no ceremonies without the leaves of the oak.*

The ancient world, including the most enlightened nations, even Greece and Rome, were universally impressed with a belief of the powers of magic. But the expressions of Pliny induce us to imagine, that this mischievous imposture was peculiarly cultivated by the British Druids. He says, "Britain now celebrates it so astonishingly, and with so many ceremonies, that she might even be thought to have given it to the Persians."^a The Druids were indeed so superior in knowledge and intellect to the rest of the nation, that their magical frauds must have been easily invented and securely practised.

The Druidical system began in Britain, and from thence was introduced into Gaul. In Cæsar's time, they who wished to know it more diligently, for the most part visited Britain, for the sake of learning it. The Druids were present at all religious rites; they administered at public and private sacrifices; and they interpreted divinations. They were so honoured, that they decided almost all public and private controversies, and all causes, whether of homicide, inheritance, or boundaries. They appointed the remunerations, and the punishments. Whoever disobeyed their decree was interdicted from their sacrifices, which with them was the severest punishment. An interdicted person was deemed both impious and wicked; all fled from him, and avoided his presence and conversation, lest they should be contaminated by the intercourse. He was allowed no legal rights. He participated in no honours.

The Druids obeyed one chief, who had supreme authority over them. At his death, he was succeeded by the next in dignity. If others had equal pretences, the suffrages of the Druids decided it; and sometimes arms determined the competition.^b

* Pliny, lib. xvi. c. 95. As *derw* is British for an oak, and *derwydd* is the term for a Druid in the same language, it is probable that this class of persons was named from the tree they venerated. Maximus Tyrius calls the oak the Keltic image of the Deity. Dissert.

^a Pliny, lib. xxx. c. 4. The Welsh term for right-hand, seems to have some reference to the ancient superstitions of the Britons. It is *dechulaw*, or the south-hand; an expression which can only be true, when we look at the east. The circles at Stonehenge appear to have a reference to the rising of the sun at the solstice.

^b Cæsar.

The Druids had great privileges. They neither paid taxes, nor engaged in war. They were allowed exemption from warfare and all other offices. Excited by such advantages, many voluntarily submitted to the discipline, and others were sent by their friends and relations. They were said to learn a great number of verses there; so that some remained twenty years under the education. They conceived it not lawful to commit their knowledge to writing, though in all other things they used Greek characters. Cæsar adds, that a great number of youth resorted to them for education.

They taught that souls never perished; but passed at death into other bodies; and as this opinion removed the fear of death, they thought that it excited strongly to what they called virtue, of which valour was the most conspicuous quality. They discussed and taught also many things concerning the stars, and their motion; the size of the world, and its countries; the nature of things; and the force and power of the immortal gods.^c Such subjects of contemplation and tuition as these, show a knowledge and an exerted intellect, that could not have been the natural growth of a people so rude as the Britons and Gauls. They must have derived both the information and the habit from more civilized regions. The Druidical order consisted of three sorts of men; Druids, Bards, and Ouates. The Bards were the poets and musicians, of whom some were satirists, and some encomiasts. The Ouates sacrificed, divined, and contemplated the nature of things. The Druids cultivated physiology and moral philosophy; or, as Diodorus says, were their philosophers and theologians.^d

Of the Druidical superstitions, we have no monuments remaining, unless the circles of stones, which are to be seen in some parts of the island, are deemed their temples. Of all the suppositions concerning Stonehenge and Avebury, it seems the most rational to ascribe them to the Druidical order; and of this system we may remark, that if it was the creature of a more civilized people, none of the colonizers of Briton are so likely to have been its parents, as the Phœnicians and Carthaginians.^e The fact so explicitly asserted by Cæsar, that the Druidical system began in Britain, and was thence introduced into Gaul, increases our tendency to refer it to these nations. The state of Britain was inferior in civilization to that part of Gaul, and therefore it seems

^c Cæsar, lib. iv. c. 13; Mela, lib. iii. c. 20; and see Lucan's celebrated verses on their theory of transmigration.

^d Diod. Sicul. lib. v. p. 308. Strabo, lib. iv. p. 302.

^e Syria, Phœnicia, and Palestine abound with many solid rocks and stony mountains cut into shapes, and excavated into chambers, and with erections of stones for the purposes of superstition. Mr. Watts's Views in Syria and Palestine, from the drawings in Sir Robert Ainslie's collection, exhibit some curious remains of this sort.

more reasonable to refer the intellectual parts of Druidism to the foreign visitors, who are known to have cultivated such subjects, than to suppose them to have originated from the rude unassisted natives.

CHAPTER VI.

Invasion of Britain by Julius Cæsar.—Its final conquest by the Romans.

SUCH were the Britons whom Cæsar invaded. After his conquest in Gaul, and an expedition into Germany, he resolved to visit Britain. We need not ascribe this invasion to the British pearls, alluded to by Suetonius. The ambition of Cæsar, like that of all men of great minds, who have accomplished vast attempts, expanded with his successes. Accustomed to grand conceptions, and feeling from their experience of their own talents, and the abundance of their means, a facility of prosecuting the most capacious plans; it has been usual with conquerors, who have united sovereignty with their military triumphs, instead of enjoying their fame in peaceful repose, to dare new enterprises of danger and difficulty, and of mighty issue. Cæsar appears to have amused himself in forming great projects. He not only purposed to build a temple to Mars, whose magnitude was to surpass whatever the world had seen of religious architecture; to drain the Pomptine marshes; to make a highway through the Apennines, from the Adriatic to the Tiber: and to cut through the isthmus of Corinth:^a but he had also a dream of subduing the Parthians on the Euphrates; of marching along the Caspian, and Mount Caucasus to the Euxine; of invading Scythia; from thence of penetrating and conquering Germany; and from that country, of returning through Gaul, into Italy and Rome.^b That a mind, delighting to contemplate schemes so vast and extravagant, should not have reached the shores of Gaul, and surveyed the British island, then possessing the fame of being a new world, little known even to its Keltic neighbours as to its interior, without feeling the desire to explore it, was a natural event. Cæsar, under this impulse, collected the merchants of Gaul, who had been accustomed to visit the island; and inquired of them its size, what and how many nations inhabited it, their mode of warfare, their customs, and their harbours. Obtaining from those whom he questioned but scanty information, he sent one of his officers,

^a Suet. Vit. Cæs. s. 44.

^b Plut. Vit. Cæs.

in a vessel, to explore the coast, and collected all the ships, within his command, to make the exploring enterprise.

Some of the British states, hearing of his intentions from the Celtic merchants, sent envoys of peace.

His first expedition into Britain was to reconnoitre; not to subdue. He was compelled to fight upon his landing, in the vicinity of Dover, because the Kentish Britons immediately opposed him—conflicting even amidst the waves, with signal courage; and although Cæsar, observing his troops to be dispirited by the British attacks, ordered up the vessels with his artillery, and poured from their side stones, arrows, and other missiles, yet the natives stood the unusual discharges with intrepidity, and he made no impression. It was the rushing forward, alone, of the bearer of the eagle of the tenth legion, exclaiming, "Follow me, unless you mean to betray your standard to your enemies," that roused the Roman legions to that desperate and closer battle, which at length forced back the Britons, and secured a landing. The Britons retired; and Cæsar did not pursue. The natives of the locality sent a message of peace; but four days afterwards, a tempest dispersing his fleet, they assaulted the Romans with new attacks. Cæsar repulsed them; but after this success he thought it expedient, without advancing, to quit the island suddenly at midnight. He ascribes his departure to the approach of the autumnal equinox; but he knew of this event before his landing. The truth seems to be that he found his present force, though sufficient to repel the Britons, yet incompetent to subdue them.^c His next invasion, in the ensuing summer, was more formidable. It was made with five well-appointed legions, and two thousand cavalry—a force of thirty thousand of the best disciplined troops then known, under the ablest commander. As the Britons did not contest the landing, it was easily effected. On this visit he quitted the coasts, and marched twelve miles into the island. There he repulsed an attack. A storm again shattering his fleet, he stopped his advance, and returned to the coast, to provide for the safety of his ships. Ten days afterwards he resumed his former position, and was immediately assaulted by some of the British tribes, who had confederated under the temporary command of Cassivellaun. They were repelled. They attempted hostilities again on the succeeding day; but were again defeated. On these failures, the auxiliary bodies left Cassivellaun; and Cæsar being informed of their desertion, ventured to advance to the Thames, and to the borders of the state of the British prince. The ford had been fortified by sharp

^c Cæsar, lib. iv. c. 18–33. On this expedition Dio's observation seems a fair one—"He obtained from it nothing, either for himself or for his country, but the glory of having fought in it; and as he stated this very strongly, the people of Rome wondered, and extolled him." Lib. xxxix. p. 128.

stakes, under the water, and on the banks. The Romans passed it, up to their necks in water, in the presence of the natives, collected in arms on the other side, who, dismayed at the courage of the enemy, hastily retired.

Cassivellaun, keeping only four thousand war-chariots with him, confined his efforts to harassing the invaders.

The civil dissensions of the island then began to give Cæsar the advantages of his enterprises. The Trinobantes, of whose territories London was the metropolis, desired his aid, for their chief Mandubratius or Androgorus, against Cassivellaun; and five other tribes also sent in their submission. Cæsar was afterwards attacked by four kings of Kent, Cingetorix, Carnilius, Taximagulus, and Segonax, but without success; and Cassivellaun now sending an embassy for peace,^d Cæsar immediately granted it, demanded hostages, appointed a tribute, retired with his army to the sea-coast, and relanded it in Gaul.^e The Romans appeared no more in Britain, nor attempted to molest it, for several years.

Augustus afterwards talked of an expedition to Britain, and entered France, as if beginning it. But the Britons met him there with peaceful embassies; and custom-duties were imposed on the commodities, that were objects of trade between Gaul and Britain: as ivory, bridles, amber, and glass vessels. Strabo well remarks, that to have raised a tribute from the island, he must have established a military force there, but the expense of these troops would have consumed the contribution; and when violent courses are pursued, he adds, danger begins.^f

Tiberius was content to leave Britain unmolested. Caligula was flattered in Gaul, by one of the British princes seeking an asylum in his court; and drawing up his army on the sea-shore,

^d Cæsar, lib. v. c. 7-19. Dio remarks, that it would have been dangerous to him to have wintered in the island, lib. xi. p. 137. Polyænus has preserved a story that Cæsar's success in battle against the Britons was obtained by placing an armed elephant with a tower of soldiers in his front, whose appearance threw the natives into a panic. But Cæsar's force, skill, and discipline, were sufficient to have obtained his victories without this stratagem.

^e From Cæsar's own account, as thus abstracted, we perceive the propriety of Horace applying the epithet of *intactus* to Britain, as also of the *invictus* of Propertius. Tacitus has justly given the amount of his successes, when he states, that he did not subdue the island, but only showed it to the Romans. This correct intimation keeps clear of Lucan's extreme, that he showed his affrighted back to the Britons: and of that of Paterculus, that he twice passed through the island. His successes however astonished and delighted his countrymen. He offered to Venus, whom he once stated to be the ancestor of one of his aunts, (Suet. c. 6.) a breastplate of British pearls. Pliny. The victories over the Britons were painted on purple hangings: and some of the natives were given to the theatre. See Virgil, Georg. 3, and Servius, on the passage, p. 126.

^f Horace. Strabo. In the following year Augustus resumed his project of an invasion, because the natives broke their treaty; but the insurrection of the Cantabri in Spain prevented it. The "adjectis Britannis imperio," of Horace, is therefore rather a poetical figure, than an achieved fact.

he sounded a charge and commanded them to gather cockle-shells, as indications of a conquest. With this bloodless triumph, and the erection of a watch-tower to commemorate it, his ambition was satisfied. He left Britain to the continuation of those internal wars, which all uncivilized nations pursue; and which at last occasioned some to sacrifice their patriotism to their revenge, and to incite Claudius, his successor, to order Aulus Plautus to lead an army into the island.⁵ This general landed with a powerful force, comprising German auxiliaries and some elephants; and with Vespasian for one of his officers. He had the usual successes of the Roman discipline and skill. The Emperor Claudius came himself to partake the triumph. He took Camalodunum or Malden, the capital of Cunobelin's dominion; and, after a residence of sixteen days in the island, returned to Rome, leaving Plautus to govern Britain.^h Games, triumphal arches, dramatic representations, horse-races, bear-combats, pyrrhic dances, gladiators, rewards to his officers, and a splendid triumph to himself, with the surname of Britannicus, attested his own and the national exultations, at his successes in Britain.

Vespasian distinguished himself in Britain at this period. He fought thirty battles with the natives, took twenty towns, and subdued the Isle of Wight:ⁱ exertions which imply corresponding efforts and intrepidity on the part of the Britons. The great Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem, fought here also, as military tribune under his father, with much reputation both for his modesty and courage.^j It is interesting to read of this celebrated man, that when Vespasian was surrounded by the Britons, and in extreme danger, Titus rushed upon the assailing enemies, and at last extricated his revered parent.^k We may consider this great instrument of Providence as training himself, unconsciously, in Britain, for the awful task he was to accomplish.

The island, although thus penetrated to a certain extent, and the southern parts occupied by the Romans, was as yet neither conquered nor tranquil. Seven years afterwards, we find Ostorius withstanding the British assaults, and establishing a line of posts between the Nen and the Severn. The Britons on the east

⁵ Dio mentions Bericus as one of this description, lib. lx. p. 779. His remark on the political state of the Britons is, "that they were not *αυτονομοι*, but were subject to several kings," *ibid.* Of these Plautus first defeated Kataratakos, and afterwards Togodounnos, the two sons of Kunobelin, *ibid.*

^h Dio. lib. lx. p. 781, 782. Tacitus's account of this invasion has perished in his *ast* books. That elephants were used by the Romans in England, appears from the bones of an elephant having been found, on digging for gravel, in a field near Battle Bridge. 1 Lcl. Collect. p. lxiv.

ⁱ Sucton. Vesp. c. 4.

^j Suct. Tit. c. 4.

^k Dio. Cass. lib. lx. p. 788. Josephus mentions the extraordinary strength and activity of Titus, and gives instances of his rescuing his soldiers from the Jews by his personal exertions. Few pieces of history are more interesting than Josephus's account of the final siege and destruction of Jerusalem.

and north, and afterwards those of Wales, renewed the conflicts. The defeat and capture of Caradawg or Caractacus, whose appearance at Rome, as a prisoner, excited peculiar exultation; and for whom an impressive speech has been composed by Tacitus, of which the rude Briton could only recognise the manly feeling it displays,¹ secured the Roman conquests.

About ten years afterwards, the Britons rushed to a new effort to regain their independence, under Boadicea, which they began, like Mithridates in Asia, by an inhuman massacre of all the Romans within their reach. This new struggle has been described by Tacitus with all his energy. The Roman governor Suetonius happened to be a man of talent, equal to the emergency, and finally triumphed over all the fury and forces of the Britons. Boadicea poisoned herself; and the island was again subdued into terror and peace,^m though much remained unconquered.

Vespasian had the recollection of his personal exploits, to excite his military attention to Britain, after he had obtained the empire. He sent powerful armies to extend the Roman conquests. The conflicts continued with varying success: but the Britons were resolute and undaunted by failure.ⁿ

Seventeen years after the revolt of Boadicea, Agricola was appointed to command the Roman forces in Britain; and by him the conquest of the island was completed. The pen and affection of Tacitus have amply, and interestingly, detailed his political and military conduct; and has made Galgacus or Gallowg, on the Grampian Hills, as interesting as Caractacus.^o It is needless to detail battles that so much resemble each other; and always pain humanity both to read and to narrate. It is more pleasing to contemplate the wisdom of his liberal mind, which directed its powers to civilize and improve the fierce natives. He assisted them to build temples, forums, and more convenient habitations. He inspired them with a love of education; he applauded their talents; flattered them as possessing a genius superior to the Gauls; and he persuaded the sons of the chiefs to study letters. The Roman dress, language, and literature gradually spread

¹ See it in Tacitus, *Ann. lib. xii. c. 37.* Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes, whom Caractacus had married, was afterwards subdued, *ibid. c. 40.* The allusions to these victories in Britain, in the Roman poets of the day, show the joy of the public feeling on the occasion. See them collected in Camden's Introduction to the Britannia. It is amusing to read that our island was deemed a new world, an impervious region of frost and snow, where stars never set, and placed beyond the limits of the earth, &c. &c.

^m Tacit. *Ann. lib. xiv. c. 29-30,* and more concisely in his life of Agricola, c. 14-16.

ⁿ These events are briefly noticed by Tacitus in his Agricola, c. 16, 17. One of the able governors here was Frontinus, the author of the book on the stratagems of war.

^o His animated, and no doubt much amplified and polished speech is in Vit. Agric. s. 30.

among the natives. All this was improvement; but human advantages are mingled with imperfections. The civilization of Rome also introduced its luxury: and baths, porticoes, and sensual banquets became as palatable to the new subjects as to their corrupted masters.^p Four legions were kept in the island. Their labours pervaded it with four great military roads, that became the chief Saxon highways; and in the military stations, upon and near them, laid the foundations of our principal towns and cities. The Roman law and magistracies were everywhere established, and the British lawyers, as well as the British ladies,^q have obtained the panegyrics of the Roman classics. It is beautifully said by Rutilius, that Rome filled the world with her legislative triumphs, and caused all to live under one common pact; that she blended discordant nations into one country; and by imparting to those she conquered a companionship in her rights and laws, made the earth one great united city.^r

Britain, nearly half a century after Agricola, was visited by the Emperor Hadrian, who ordered the construction of a military work, from the mouth of the Tyne to the Solway Firth, as the boundary of the Roman provinces in Britain. A. C. 121. In the next reign, of Antoninus Pius, the Romans penetrated again to the isthmus between the firths of Forth and Clyde; and built another military rampart, for the farthest boundary of their empire in Britain.^s In 170 the Romans are said to have deserted all the country which lay to the north of the wall of Antoninus.^t

After this period, the Roman legions in Britain began to support their commanders in their competitions for the empire. During these disputes, two unsubdued nations in the northern parts of Britain, the Caledonians and Meata, broke through the rampart between the firths, and harassed the province. The Emperor Severus came to Britain to repress them. His wars in Scotland cost him much toil, and many men; A. C. 207. but he subdued his wild opponents, and, instead of the weak bar-

^p Tac. Ag. s. 21.

^q The stern Juvenal has

Gallia caesidicos docuit sacunda Britannos. Sat.

And Martiul has an epigram on the decus formæ of a British lady, whom he calls Claudia Rufina. The epithet of blue-eyed, which he applies to the Britons, was also given to them by Seneca. All the northern nations of Europe exhibit in their physiognomy, this contrast with the black eyes and darker skins of Italy.

^r *Legiferis mundum complexa triumphis
Fœdere communi vivere cuncta facit—
Fecisti patriam diversis gentibus unam—
Dum que offers victis proprii consortia juris
Urbem fecisti quod prius orbis erat.*

Rutil. Itin.

^s "Betwixt them Agricola had formerly erected a line of forts. These had not been destroyed, and Lollius joined them together by a long rampart." Whit. Manch. vol. ii. p. 86, 8vo.

^t *Ibid.* ^u Herodian, lib. iii. p. 83. Xiphelin in Sever. p. 339.

rier of Hadrian, he erected an immense wall of stone, twelve feet high, and eight feet thick, strengthened with towers, castles, and stations at proper distances, and defended by a ditch and military way. This great work (the vestiges of which are still visible in several places) was built nearly parallel to that of Hadrian, at the distance of a few paces further to the north, and from the east coast near Tinnmouth, to the Solway firth at Boulness, on the west coast.^v Severus died at York. As it was soon after A. C. 211. this period that the Saxons began to molest Britain, we shall proceed to narrate the history of the invasion and occupation of Britain by the Saxons and Angles, after first stating all that can be collected of their authentic history before they left the continent.

^v Eutropius, lib. viii. ; and see Henry's History of England, vol. ii. App. No. 9, and Horsley Britannia Romana. We derive some curious information on the Roman stations and residence in Britain, from the compilation of Richard of Cirencester, first printed in 1757 from a MS. of the fourteenth century. It presents us with eighteen Itinera, which, he says, he collected from the remains of records which a Roman general had caused to be made. Mr. Whitaker's remarks upon it, a little tinged with his sanguine feelings, are in his Hist. Manch. vol. ii. p. 63-91.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

The Origin of the Saxons.

THE Anglo-Saxons were the people who transported themselves from the Cimbric peninsula, and its vicinity, in the fifth and sixth centuries, into England. They were branches of the great Saxon confederation, which, from the Elbe, extended itself at last to the Rhine. The hostilities of this formidable people had long distressed the western regions of Europe; and when the Gothic nations overran the most valuable provinces of Rome, the Anglo-Saxons invaded Britain soon after the Romans quitted it. The ancient inhabitants, and the progeny of the Roman settlers, disappeared as the new conquerors advanced, or accepted their yoke; and Saxon laws, Saxon language, Saxon manners, government, and institutions, overspread the land.

This revolution, than which history presents to us none more complete, has made the fortunes of the Saxons, during every period, interesting to us. Though other invaders have appeared in the island, yet the effects of the Anglo-Saxon settlements have prevailed beyond every other. Our language, our government, and our laws, display our Gothic ancestors in every part: they live, not merely in our annals and traditions, but in our civil institutions and perpetual discourse. The parent tree is indeed greatly amplified, by branches engrafted on it from other regions, and by the new shoots, which the accidents of time, and the improvements of society, have produced; but it discovers yet its Saxon origin, and retains its Saxon properties, though more than thirteen centuries have rolled over, with all their tempests and vicissitudes.

Although the Saxon name became, on the continent, the appellation of a confederacy of nations, yet, at first, it denoted a single state. The Romans began to remark it, during the second century of the Christian era; until that period, it had escaped the notice of the conquerors of the world, and the happy obscurity was rewarded by the absence of that desolation which their ambition poured profusely on mankind.

Ptolemy, the Alexandrian, was the first writer whom we know to have mentioned the Saxons. By the passage in his Geography, and by the concurrence in all their future history, it is ascertained, that, before the year 141 after Christ,* there was a people called Saxons, who inhabited a territory at the north side of the Elbe, on the neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus, and three small islands, at the mouth of this river. From the same author it is also clear, that the Saxones were of no great importance at this period; for in this peninsula, which is now divided into Jutland, Sleswick, and Holstein, no fewer than six other nations were stationed, besides the Saxones and the remnant of the Cimbri.^b

But it is not probable, that the Saxons should have started suddenly into existence, in the days of Ptolemy. The question of their previous history has been therefore agitated; and an equal quantity of learning and of absurdity has been brought forward upon the subject.

It has been observed, that to explain the origin of the Saxons, the most wild and inconsistent fictions have been framed.^c But it is not this nation only, which has been thus distinguished by the perverseness of the human mind, labouring to explore inscrutable antiquity; every people may recount similar puerilities.

To claim an extravagant duration, has been the folly of every state which has risen to any eminence. We have heard, in our childhood, of the dreams of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Indians, and Chinese; and we know, that even Athenians could wear a golden grasshopper,^d as an emblem, that they sprung fortuitously from the earth they cultivated, in ages far beyond the reach of human history: we may therefore pardon and forget the fables of the Saxon patriots.

It has caused much surprise, that Tacitus, who wrote a particular description of Germany, many years before Ptolemy, should have omitted to name the Saxons.^e Every author has

* Ptolemy lived in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, according to Suidas, vol. ii. p. 646; but he testifies himself, in the 7th book Mag. Synt. p. 167, that he made astronomical observations at Alexandria in the 2d year of Ant. Pius, or ann. Christ, 139, 3 Fab. Bibl. Græc. p. 412. He speaks also of an eclipse of the moon in the 9th of Adrian, or ann. Chr. 125. De la Lande's Astron. i. p. 312. He mentions no observation beyond 141. Ib. 117.

^b Cl. Ptolemæus Geog. lib. ii. c. 11. Marcianus of Heraclea, somewhat later than Ptolemy, gives the Saxons the same position on the neck of the Chersonesus, Pont. ib. 651. The geographical Lexicographer of Byzantium, usually named Stephanus, briefly says, "dwelling in the Cimbric Chersonesus." Steph. Byz. voc Saxones.

^c Krantz remarked this: "Ita puerilibus fabulis et anilibus deliramentis omnia scætant, ut nihil in his sibi constet, nihil quadret." Saxonia, p. 1. Yet the absurdity of others did not preserve him from an imitation.

^d Potter's Antiq. of Greece, vol. i. p. 2. So the Arcadians boasted they were ἀροσέλκνοι, or before the moon. Ib. p. 1.

^e Conringius thinks, that by some unexplained accident, time has effaced from the text of Tacitus a passage about the Saxons. Schilter's Thes. Ant. Teut. iii. p. 704.

been unwilling to suppose, that they came to the Elbe in the short interval between these authors, and therefore it has been very generally imagined, that the nation, to whom Tacitus gave the denomination of Fosi,^f were the warriors, who acquired afterwards so much celebrity, under the name of Saxons.

Before such violent suppositions are admitted, it seems necessary to ask, if Ptolemy mentions any other people, in his geography of Germany, whom Tacitus has not noticed? if he does, the omission of Tacitus is not, in the present instance, singular; if he does not, the conjecture that the Fosi were the Saxons, comes to us with authority.

Upon comparing the Cimbric Chersonesus of Tacitus, with the delineation of the same place by Ptolemy, the question above stated is decided. Ptolemy does not mention the Saxones only, as being there; on the contrary, he names, separately, six other nations, before he comes to the Cimbræ. Tacitus, after mentioning the Frisii, Chauci, and Cherusci, speaks of the Fosi, and closes his account of this part of Germany with the Cimbræ. Tacitus has not merely neglected to name the Saxons, but also the Sigulones, the Sabalingii, the Cobandi, the Chali, the Phundusii, and the Charudes.^g If either of these tribes had risen to eminence, the one, so successful, would have been thought the Fosi. The Saxons became renowned, and their celebrity, rather than their situation, has made some persons desirous to find them in Tacitus. The name of Fosi cannot be strictly applied to the Saxons, with more justice than to the others.^h

But it cannot be inferred from the silence of Tacitus, that the Saxons were not above the Elbe in his days. In this part of his map of Germany, he does not seem to have intended to give that minute detail of information, which Ptolemy, fortunately for our subject, has delivered. Tacitus directed his philosophical eye on the German states, who differed in manners, as well as in name. He seldom presents a mere nomenclature; he seems to enumerate those the most carefully, whose wars, customs, fame, vicissitudes, and power, had distinguished them from the rest. As the

^f Cellarius Geog. Ant. i. p. 303, and Cluverius, iii. Germ. Ant. 87, and many others assert this. Spener with diffidence defends it. Notit. Germ. Ant. 363. With a manly but rare impartiality he states forcibly the objections to the opinion he adopts, 371. Leibnitz places the Fosi on the Fusa, a river which falls into the Aller, near Zell. Ibid. 372.

^g Cluverius thus stations these tribes. The Sigulones northward from the Saxons, as far as Tunderen and Appenrade; Sabalingii, above these, to the Nipsa and Tobesket, on which are Ripen and Kolding; Cobandi, thence to Holm and Horsens; Chali, beyond these to Hensburg and Hald; the Phundusii and Charudes on the west and east, northward, to the Lymfort; and the Cimbræ in Wensussel. Ant. Ger. iii. p. 94. See also on this Chorography Pontanus, p. 649.

^h Strabo, Tacitus, and Ptolemy, exhibit a very natural progression of information on the German geography. Tacitus gives a more accurate detail than Strabo, and Ptolemy, writing later, is still more minute.

Saxons, and their neighbours, were not remarkable in either of these circumstances, he knew them not, or he passed them over; but Ptolemy pursues the plan of a plain and accurate chorographer; he is solicitous to mark positions, latitudes, distances, and names, leaving narrations of history and manners almost out of his consideration. It was therefore a part of his plan to notice the Saxons, as it was consistent in Tacitus to have omitted them.

The only inferences which can be safely drawn from the silence of Tacitus and the preceding geographers, are, that the Saxons were then an obscure and inconsiderable people, and had neither molested the nations of greater notoriety, nor incurred the enmity of the Roman government.

It will be unnecessary to employ our time in enumerating the many fallacious theories which have been framed, on the origin of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. It will be more useful to select those few facts which may be gleaned from the writers of antiquity on this subject, and to state to the reader, rather what he may believe, than what he must reject.

The early occupation of Europe, by the Kimmerian and Keltic races, has been already displayed. The next stream of barbaric tribes, whose progress formed the second great influx of population into Europe, were the Scythian, German, and Gothic tribes. They also entered it out of Asia. It is of importance to recollect the fact of their primeval locality, because it corresponds with this circumstance, that Herodotus, besides the main Scythia, which he places in Europe, mentions also an Eastern or Asiatic Scythia, beyond the Caspian and Iaxartes.ⁱ As these new comers pressed on the Kimmerians and Kelts, their predecessors, those nations retired towards the western and southern extremities of Europe, pursued still by the Scythian invaders. This new wave of population gradually spread over the mountains, and into the vast forests and marches of Europe, until, under the name of Germans, an appellation which Tacitus calls a recent name,^j they had not only reached the Rhine, but had also crossed it into France. Here Cæsar found one great body firmly settled, descended from them, whom he calls Belgæ; though its component states had their peculiar denominations,^k besides a very large force of recent German invaders, under the command of Ariovistus.

ⁱ This Asiatic Scythia suits Mr. Abel Remusat's inference, in his Memoir lately read before the Academie des Inscriptions, that the Goths originally issued from Tartary, because near Mount Altai inscriptions have been found in Runic characters like those of Scandinavia. On this point we must always recollect, that the northern traditions about Odin, the common ancestor of the Scandinavians, Saxons, and Goths, bring him at the head of the Ase, from the Asiatic regions.

^j De Mor. Germ.

^k De Bell. Gall. The fact that nations of the same origin had yet different local or provincial names; as the Germans who passed the Rhine becoming Tungri, and part of the Belgæ, Bellovaci, &c., must be remembered, when we consider the de-

This second stock of the European population is peculiarly interesting to us, because from its branches not only our own immediate ancestors, but also those of the most celebrated nations of modern Europe, have unquestionably descended. The Anglo-Saxons, Lowland Scotch, Normans, Danes, Norwegians, Swedes, Germans, Dutch, Belgians, Lombards, and Franks, have all sprung from that great fountain of the human race, which we have distinguished by the terms Scythian, German, or Gothic.¹

The ancient languages of these nations prove their ancient affinity, the contiguous chronology of their first origin, and their common derivation; and afford evidences of these truths, from which every one may satisfy his doubts or his curiosity. We have works still existing in the ancient Gothic^m and Saxon,ⁿ as well as in the Frankish^o and Icelandic,^p in which the philologist will easily perceive their mutual relationship. The comparison of these with

rivation of nations; as the omission of this recollection has occasioned many antiquaries to consider those people as distinct in origin, who were really related. Tacitus remarks, that the Trevisi and Nervii were ambitious of a German origin, though residing in and near Gaul. Indeed, his whole book on the Germans proves that each tribe went by very distinct appellations, though all were Germans. This may lessen the scruples of those who doubt whether the Getæ and Goths were Scythian nations.

¹ Mr. Archdeacon Coxe, in his "Vindication of the Celts," has rebuked many of Mr. Pinkerton's erroneous opinions, unfounded declamation, wrong quotations, and misconstruction and misapplication of several ancient authorities. But amid these faults I have no doubt of the correctness of Mr. Pinkerton's general notion, that the German, Scythian, and Gothic nations were of the same generic family. This is all that I can praise in his Dissertation on the Goths; for the chronology which he attempts to build up, and many of his details, are not only unwarranted, but inconsistent with true history. Mr. Pinkerton and Mr. Whitaker, alike in their angry temperament of mind, and mode of reading, and stating ancient authorities, are in two extremes as to their inferences. The latter strives to make every thing Keltic, the former Scythian. Both are too apt to make their authorities speak rather what they wish, than what they find: they are equally intolerant of any contrary opinion; and though the one abhors and the other accredits Ossian, almost the only point in which they agree is to abuse Mr. Macpherson. Both, however, were men of vigorous minds and extensive reading; and deserve much praise for having devoted so much attention to these uninviting studies. The fire of genius at times burnt with great energy in Mr. Whitaker, and makes us lament that he did not direct it to more congenial themes.

^m The fragment of the Gospels, in the celebrated Silver MSS. of the Meso-Gothic, printed by Marshall with the Saxon Gospels in 1665, and recently with more splendour and accuracy, preserve a most interesting specimen of the ancient Gothic tongue.

ⁿ The present work will contain many specimens of this language. Wotton's *Conspectus* contains a copious catalogue of the Anglo-Saxon MSS. that exist.

^o The Franco-Theotic versified harmony of the four evangelists, by Otfred, and several other specimens of this language of the ancient Franks, are published with a glossary valuable to a certain extent, but which is capable of much improvement, in Schiller's *Thesaurus*.

^p Many of the Icelandic sagas have been published by the northern literati, with Latin translations. I have accustomed myself to rely on the accuracy of these versions, but some passages of Mr. Thorkelin's late translation of *Beowulf*, lead me to recommend to the student an acquaintance with the original language. Peringskiöld's catalogue of the sagas is printed in the *pars altera* of Hicke's *Thesaurus*.

the modern German, Danish, Dutch, Swedish, and Flemish, will equally demonstrate the kinship between the ancient parents and their existing descendants.[¶]

The first appearance of the Scythian tribes in Europe may be placed, according to Strabo and Homer, about the eighth, or, according to Herodotus, in the seventh century before the Christian era.[¶] Herodotus likewise states, that the Scythians declared their nation to be more recent than any other, and that they reckoned only one thousand years between Targitaos, their first king, and the aggression of Darius. The first scenes of their civil existence, and of their progressive power, were in Asia, to the east of the Araxes. Here they multiplied and extended their territorial limits, for some centuries, unknown to Europe. Their general appellation among themselves was Scoloti, but the Greeks called them Scythians,[¶] Scuthoi, or Nomades.

To this judicious and probable account of Herodotus, we add the information collected by Diodorus. He says, that the Scythians, formerly inconsiderable and few, possessed a narrow region on the Araxes; but by degrees they became more powerful in numbers and in courage. They extended their boundaries on all sides; till at last they raised their nation to great empire and glory.[¶]

One of their kings becoming valiant and skilful in the art of war, they added to their territory the mountainous regions about Caucasus, and also the plains towards the ocean, and the Palus Mæotis, with the other regions near the Tanais. In the course of time they subdued many nations, between the Caspian and the Mæotis, and beyond the Tanais. Thus, according to Diodorus, the nation increased, and had kings worthy of remembrance. The Sakai, the Massagetai, and the Arimaspoi, drew their origin from them.[¶]

The Massagetai seem to have been the most eastern branch of the Scythian nation. Wars arising between them and the other Scythian tribes, an emigration from the latter took place, according to the account which Herodotus selects, as in his opinion the most authentic,[¶] which occasioned their entrance into Europe.

¶ The continental writers have not so clearly distinguished the Keltic and Gothic nations as our own authors have done, but most frequently confuse the two races.

¶ See before, p. 39.

¶ Herod. *Melp.* s. 5, 7, 6, 11. The wars of the Scythians before this period must have been with their Asiatic neighbours; but I think there is no credit to be given to the system of an ancient great or universal Scythic empire. The passage in Justin, which seems to warrant it, and for which I have no great respect, does not appear to me to be a sufficient foundation for it. His period of 1500 years I believe to be fabulous; and am much inclined to the supposition that xv has been confounded in the MS. of Justin for xv^c; and that, in consequence, fifteen hundred has been read instead of fifteen. The supposition of one great and early Scythian empire seems to me to have no foundation. See *Vindic. of the Celts*, p. 14.

¶ *Diod. Siculus*, p. 127.

¶ *Ib.* p. 127.

¶ *Herod. Melpom.* s. 11.

Such feuds and wars have contributed, more than any other cause, to disperse through the world its uncivilized inhabitants.

The emigrating Scythians crossed the Araxes, passed out of Asia, and, invading the Kimmerians, suddenly appeared in Europe, in the seventh century before the Christian era. Part of the Kimmerians flying into Asia Minor, some of the Scythian hordes pursued them; but, turning in a direction different from that which the Kimmerians traversed, they missed their intended prey, and fell unintentionally upon the Medes. They defeated the Medes, pressed on towards Egypt, and governed those parts of Asia for twenty-eight years, till Cyaxares, the King of Media, at last expelled them.*

The Scythian tribes however continued to flock into Europe; and in the reign of Darius, their European colonies were sufficiently numerous and celebrated to excite the ambition of the Persian monarch, after his capture of Babylon; but all his efforts against them failed.^x In the time of Herodotus, they had gained an important footing in Europe. They seem to have spread into it, from the Tanais to the Danube,^y and to have then taken a westerly direction; but their kindred colonies, in Thrace, had extended also to the south. Their most northward ramification in Europe was the tribe of the Roxolani, who dwelt above the Borysthens, the modern Dnieper.^z

It would be impertinent to the great subject of this history, to engage in a minuter discussion of the Scythian tribes. They have become better known to us, in recent periods, under the name of Getæ and Goths,^a the most celebrated of their branches.

As they spread over Europe, the Kimmerian and Keltic population retired towards the west and south. In the days of Cæsar, the most advanced tribes of the Scythian, or Gothic race, were known to the Romans under the name of Germans. They occupied all the continent but the Cimbric peninsula, and had reached

* Herod. Clio, s. 15, 103-106. It was at this period that Idanthyrgus the Scythian king overran Asia as far as Egypt, Strabo, 1007. At this time also occurred the expedition of Maduos their king, Strabo, 106.

^x Herod. Melpom.

^y Ibid. Melp. s. 47-57.

^z Strabo says, "Above the Borysthens dwell the last of the known Scythio, the Roxolanoi. The parts beyond them are uninhabitable from the cold," 175. He repeats this again. "If any live above the Roxolanoi we know not. They are the most northern, and inhabit the places between the Tanais, (the Don,) and the Borysthens, p. 470.

^a That the Getæ were Goths cannot be doubted. The Getæ were the same as the Daci, or as they were more anciently called, Davi. Hence the Greek terms for slaves in their comedies, which Terence has borrowed, Geta and Davus, Strabo, lib. vii. 467. The Getæ used the same language with the Thracians, and the Greeks called them a Thracian nation: so does Menander. Strabo, p. 453-455. Ovid, who was banished to Tomæ, a town of Mysia, on the Euxine, frequently talks of his Getic and Scythic locality in his epistles and Tristia. As he was so near the borders of the Sarmatians, it is a natural circumstance that their name is also mentioned in his verses; but this is no identification of nations whose origin was so distinct.

and even passed the Rhine. One of their divisions, the Belgæ, had for some time established themselves in Flanders and part of France; and another body, under Ariovistus, were attempting a similar settlement near the centre of Gaul, which Cæsar prevented.^b It is most probable that the Belgæ in Britain were descendants of colonists or invaders from the Belgæ in Flanders and Gaul.

The names Scythians and Scoloti, were, like Galli and Kimmerians, not so much local as generic appellations. The different tribes of the Scythians, like those of the Kimmerians and Gauls, had their peculiar distinctive denominations.

The Saxons were a German or Teutonic, that is, a Gothic or Scythian tribe; and of the various Scythian nations which have been recorded, the Sakai, or Sacæ, are the people from whom the descent of the Saxons may be inferred, with the least violation of probability. Sakai-suna, or the sons of the Sakai, abbreviated into Saksun, which is the same sound as Saxon, seems a reasonable etymology of the word Saxon. The Sakai, who in Latin are called Sacæ, were an important branch of the Scythian nation. They were so celebrated, that the Persians called all the Scythians by the name of Sacæ; and Pliny, who mentions this, remarks them among the most distinguished people of Scythia.^c Strabo places them eastward of the Caspian, and states them to have made many incursions on the Kimmerians and Treres, both far and near. They seized Bactriana, and the most fertile part of Armenia, which, from them, derived the name Sakasina; they defeated Cyrus; and they reached the Cappadoces on the Euxine.^d This important fact of a part of Armenia having been named Sakasina, is mentioned by Strabo in another place;^e and seems to give a geographical locality to our primeval ancestors, and to account for the Persian words that occur in the Saxon language, as they must have come into Armenia from the northern regions of Persia.

That some of the divisions of this people were really called Saka-suna, is obvious from Pliny; for he says, that the Sakai, who settled in Armenia, were named Sacassani,^f which is but Saka-suna, spelt by a person unacquainted with the meaning of the combined words. And the name Sacasena,^g which they gave to the part of Armenia they occupied, is nearly the same sound as Saxonia. It is also important to remark, that Ptolemy mentions a Scythian people, sprung from the Sakai, by the name of Saxones. If the Sakai, who reached Armenia, were called Sa-

^b These two facts are fully asserted by Cæsar. He expressly distinguishes the Kelts from the Belgians in Gaul, as differing in language, laws, and customs, and ascribes to the Belgians a German origin.

^c Pliny, lib. vi. c. 19.

^d Strabo, lib. xi. p. 776, 778.

^e Ibid. p. 124.

^f Pliny, lib. vi. c. 11.

^g Strabo, lib. xi. p. 776, 778.

cassani, they may have traversed Europe with the same appellation; which being pronounced by the Romans from them, and then reduced to writing from their pronunciation, may have been spelt with the x instead of the ks, and thus Saxones would not be a greater variation from Sacassani or Saksuna, than we find between French, François, Franci, and their Greek name, φραγγι; or between Spain, Espagne, and Hispania.

It is not at all improbable, but that some of these marauding Sakai, or Sacassani, were gradually propelled to the western coasts of Europe, on which they were found by Ptolemy, and from which they molested the Roman empire, in the third century of our era. There was a people called Saxoi, on the Euxine, according to Stephanus.^h We may consider these also, as a nation of the same parentage; who, in the wanderings of the Sakai, from Asia to the German Ocean, were left on the Euxine, as others had chosen to occupy Armenia. We may here recollect the traditional descent of Odin preserved by Snorre in the Edda and his history. This great ancestor of the Saxon and Scandinavian chieftains, is represented to have migrated from a city, on the east of the Tanais, called Asgard, and a country called Asaland, which imply the city and land of the Asæ or Asians. The cause of this movement was the progress of the Romans.ⁱ Odin is stated to have moved first into Russia, and thence into Saxony. This is not improbable. The wars between the Romans and Mithridates involved, and shook most of the barbaric nations in these parts, and may have excited the desire, and imposed the necessity of a westerly or European emigration.

Of the ancient Scythian language, the probable parent of all the Gothic tongues, we have a few words preserved to us :

Exampaios	sacred ways.
Arima	one.
Spou	an eye.
Oior	a man.
Pata	to kill.
Groucasum	white with snow. ^j

Of their gods, we learn that they had seven; whose character and attributes were thought, by Herodotus, to be like some of the most distinguished in the Grecian mythology: as

Tabiti, their principal deity,
resembled the Greek, Vesta.

^h Stephanus de Urb. et Pop. p. 657. ⁱ Snorre Ynglinga Saga. c. 2, and
^j Herod. Melpom. s. 52, 28, 110. Pliny, lib. vi. c. 19.

Papaios	Jupiter.
Oitosuros	Apollo.
Artimpasa, or Arippasa	Venus.
Thamimasadas	Neptune.
Apia, wife of Papaios	Earth.

They had also a warlike deity, like Mars, whose name has not been given to us; and to whom only they raised altars, images, and temples,^k and to whom they sacrificed annually horses and sheep, and a portion of their prisoners. Their bows were proverbial.^l In battle they drank the blood of the first enemy whom they mastered. They scalped their opponents, and offered their heads to their king; and they made drinking vessels of the skulls of their greatest enemies or conquered friends. They had many diviners, who used rods of willow for their predictions.^m In these customs our Gothic ancestors resembled them. They had the moral virtues of Nomadic nations. Eschylus mentions them with an epithet that implies their habits of social justice. Homer declares that no nation was more just than theirs; and Strabo asks where is the wonder of this, as they cared little for money or commerce, which he considers to be the fountains of civilized dishonesty.ⁿ

The nations who entered Europe, after the Scythic or Gothic or Teutonic tribes, have been called Sclavonian or Sarmatian, forming a third great race who have appeared on the vast Germanic continent. The Sarmatian or Sclavonic branches have occupied Russia, Poland, Eastern Prussia, Moravia, Bohemia and their vicinity. As our ancient history is not connected with this race, it will be sufficient to remark, that they had reached the neighbourhood of the Tanais on the borders of Europe, in the

^k Herod. Melp. s. 59. Lucian tells us that they adored a sword, *Jup. Trag.*, which Herodotus mentions as their emblem of Mars. Lucian also says that despising the Grecian worship as unworthy of the deity, they sacrificed men to their Diana, who delighted in human blood.

^l "Like a Scythic bow," Strabo, 187.

^m Her. s. 64, 65, 67. Strabo remarks, that they used skulls for their cups, lib. vii. p. 458. In the days of Herodotus their customs were sufficiently ferocious. But by the time that their branches the Germans and Saxons had pervaded Europe and attracted the attention of Tacitus, they had attained the improvements whose benefits we feel. How superior both they and the Kelts of Gaul were to the more savage and uncivilized tribes of America we may perceive, by contrasting Tacitus's account of the Germans, with Brainerd the Indian missionary's description of the North American Indians. Of these he says, "they are in general wholly unacquainted with civil laws and proceedings; nor have any kind of notion of civil judicatures: of persons being arraigned, tried, judged, condemned or acquitted. They have little or no ambition or resolution. Not one in a thousand of them has the spirit of a man. They are unspeakably indolent and slothful. They discover little gratitude or even manhood, amidst all the kindnesses they receive. They seem to have no sentiments of generosity, benevolence, or goodness." See Brainerd's *Life by President Edwards*. He died 1747.

ⁿ Strabo, 460, 461, 454.

time of Herodotus, who calls them *Sauromatæ*.^p This fact gives one solid basis for their just chronology. Herodotus lived 450 years before our era; and thus he gives evidence of the existence and approach to Europe of the Sarmatian race at that period.

The Slavonic is a genus of languages which every examiner would separate from the Keltic and Gothic. The present Russian is thought to be the most faithful specimen of the original Slavonic. The Poles, the Bohemians, the Dalmatians, the Croatians, the Bulgarians, Carinthians, Moravians, and some other tribes adjacent, formerly used its various dialects.^q It prevailed in those parts of Europe where the ancients placed the *Sarmatæ*.^r The numerous tribes who spoke the Slavonic preserved their ancient name of *Venedi*, long after their invasion of Germany, in the fifth or sixth century, though they were also called *Slavi*. Their successes enabled them to reach the Saxons and the Franks, but their conquests were terminated by the opposition of Charlemagne, and their incessant civil feuds.

The incontrovertible fact, of the existence in ancient Europe of at least three genera of languages, strongly distinguished from each other, conducts us safely to the conclusion, that the collections of nations who spoke them, must have also differed in the chronology of their origin. As the Keltic tribes were found in the most western extremities of Europe, it is reasonable to infer that they visited it earlier than the others: so the Slavonic peoples, being found to reside about its eastern boundaries, may be fairly considered as the latest settlers. The Gothic or Teutonic states, from their position, claim justly an intermediate date. As they advanced westwards, the *Keltoi* retired before them. As the ramifications of the Scythians, Saxons, and Goths, spread toward the Germanic Ocean, the Slavonic hordes flowed after them from Asia. The Saxon was one of the Gothic or Teutonic states, and it was as far west as the Elbe, in the days of Ptolemy. The Saxons were therefore, in all likelihood, as ancient visitors of Europe as any other Gothic tribe. Their situation seems to indicate that they moved among the foremost columns of the second

^p He says the regions beyond the Tanais are no part of Scythia. The first portion belongs to the *Sauromatæ*, lib. iv. c. 21.

^q The extent of the nations *Slavorum*, and of their language, is stated by *Helmoldus*, *Chron. Slav.* p. 3; by *Krantz* in his *Wandalia*, p. 2; by *Chrytæus*, *Wandalia*, p. 3; by *Munster*, 1 *Schard. Hist. Germ.* 486; and by *Faber*, *Rer. Musc.* 132. On the *Slavi*, see *Spencer's Notitii*, ii. p. 384. *Sunt a Germanis plane diversi generis. Pontanus, Chor. Dan.* 710.

^r *Dubravii Hist. Bohem.* 44. *Helmoldus*, p. 3, says, that the Hungarians *nec habitu nec lingua discrepant*. But *Krantz* disputes his authority, and affirms, that all acknowledge the Hungarian and Slavonic to be dissimilar languages. *Wandalia*, 36.

great emigration into Europe; but the particular date of their arrival on the Elbe, or a more particular derivation, it is impossible to prove, and therefore unprofitable to discuss.*

CHAPTER II.

Description of the country inhabited by the Saxons near the Elbe, before they occupied Britain.

THE infant state of the Saxon people, when the Romans first observed them, exhibited nothing from which human sagacity would have predicted greatness. A territory, on the neck of the Cimbric Chersonesus, and three small islands, contained those whose descendants occupy the circle of Westphalia, the electorate of Saxony, the British islands, the United States of North America, and the British colonies in the two Indies. Such is the course of Providence, that empires the most extended, and the most formidable, are found to vanish as the morning mist; while tribes scarce visible, or contemptuously overlooked, like the springs of a mighty river, often glide on gradually to greatness and veneration.

The three islands, which the Saxons in the days of Ptolemy inhabited, were those which we now denominate North Strandt, Busen, and Heiligland.†

North Strandt, formerly torn from South Jutland by the violence of the waves, is situated opposite to Hesum, and above Eiderstede, from both which it is separated by intervals of sea. The Hever, a bay which flows below it, and washes the northern shore of the Eiderstede, is favourable to commercial navigations. This island was formerly about twenty miles long, and in most

* The most ancient nations of Italy and Greece, and those on the coast of the Mediterranean, the Ægean Sea, and the Adriatic, appear to me to have sprung partly from Phenician and Egyptian colonizations, and partly from the migrations of the Kimmerian and Keltic races. From this ancient population, secondary colonizations took place, like those which peopled Magna Græcia, and the north coast of the Euxine, and which settled at Marseilles. In their later population, the Gothic or Seythian tribes, as well as the Carthaginians, must have had some share. The most remarkable fact of the Latin language is, that although visibly of the same family with the Greek, yet it contains many striking resemblances, especially in its terminations, to the ancient Sanscrit. Meric Casaubon has taken some pains to show that the Saxon language has great affinity with the Greek. *De Ling. Sax.* 234-376.

† Cluver. *Ant. Ger.* iii. p. 97. Pontanus *Chorog.* 737. Du Bos *Histoire Critique*, i. p. 148. The geographer of Ravenna places Eustrachia among the Saxon isles, lib. v. c. 30. This may mean the neighbouring peninsula, Eyderstadt, which was almost an island.

parts seven miles broad. It once contained twenty-two parishes, and was noted for its agricultural produce, as well as its fish.^b The raging of the sea has materially damaged it since the time of the Saxons. Four calamitous inundations are recorded to have happened, in 1300, 1483, 1532, and 1615; but the most destructive of all began in the night of the 11th October, 1634; the island was entirely overflowed; 6408 persons, 1332 houses, and 50,000 head of cattle were washed away into the sea.^c Such devastations have almost annihilated the place. There is now remaining of Nord-strand only the small parish of Pelworm, which derives its safety from the height of its situation.

Busen lies north of the mouth of the Elbe, to the westward of Ditmarsia, and looks towards Meldorp; in breadth it is above two miles, in length near three. It is situated close upon the main land, of which it is suspected to have once formed a part. Being one even plain, the stormy ocean around makes the island a perilous habitation; it has therefore been surrounded by a strong dyke. It contains three or four parishes, with about as many villages; and though boasting no pre-eminence of soil, it commonly yields its produce with moderate fertility.^d

But the most celebrated, and the most frequented of the Saxon islands was Heiligisland. The words literally mean the sacred island.^e In the eighth century, and in the eleventh, it had two other names; Fossetis-land,^f and Farria, which have been written with various orthography.

This ancient seat of our forefathers has now become united to the British dominions.^g As it was the principal station of their naval excursions, it is peculiarly interesting to us, and an important object of our national history. But its condition has greatly varied: we will therefore subjoin its earliest, as well as its subsequent and latest descriptions, to give the reader the fullest information of its successive states that can now be obtained.

^b Chrytæus, 65. Pontanus, p. 741. Ubbo Emmius, p. 30, 158.

^c The destruction extended to other parts of Jutland. In the Eyderstede, 664 houses, 2107 persons, and 12,000 cattle and sheep were swept off. Busching's Geography.

^d Ubbo Emmius, *Rer. Fris.* p. 31. Pontanus, *Chorog.* 737, 738, and 741. He derives its name from Buysen, or Busch, a wood. His vernacular names of the fishes, with their Latin names of that day, are in p. 741.

^e Some derive the name from Hilgo, a bishop of the place; others, and in the opinion of Pontanus, verior, from some holy virgins who inhabited it. Their sacred steps the respectful grass never covered, as all the credulous natives will attest and show!! Pontanus *Chorog.* 733. But as an idol much revered, called Foseti, was in it, the epithet perhaps arose from the Pagan superstition.

^f *Alt. vita St. Lieudg.* ap. Bouquet, t. V. p. 449. This ancient name of the island and its idol seems to connect them with the Fosi of Tacitus.

^g On 26th August, 1814, the King of Denmark signed an official act, announcing his cession of this island to the crown of Great Britain. It had been annexed to Denmark in 1714. It was formerly possessed by the dukes of Holstein, Gottorf. Busching.

In the eighth century it is noticed by a writer as the place where the idol Fosete was adored.^b In the eleventh century, it is thus described by Adam of Bremen, under the name of Farria. "It lies in a long recess at the mouth of the Elbe. It is the first island that occurs in the ocean. It has a monastery and is inhabited. It is very fruitful: rich in corn, and a nurse of cattle and birds. It has one hill and no trees: it is surrounded with the steepest rocks, with only a single entrance, where there is fresh water. It is a place venerated by all sailors, and especially by pirates. Hence it is called Heiligeland."ⁱ

Its state about 1630, we take from Pontanus. "It had formerly seven parishes, and from its inhabitants and incidents, we learn that it was once much larger than it is at present. For in our times the sea receding, the soil has been worn down and carried off on all sides by the violence of the waves. It is eight German miles from Eyderstadt, and about nine from the Elbe. On the west, opposite England, it is 46 ells high, and towards the Elbe, 30. They who have examined its shores, report that solid bodies formed of stone, and like shells, oysters, and human hands, have been found there, and even books and candles. Its banner is a ship in full sail."^j He adds another description from its governor, which is translated in the note.^k

The occupations of its inhabitants have generally been those of the fisherman and the pilot. Perpetually at sea, like their Saxon

^b See note f. ⁱ Ad. Bren. Hist. c. 210, p. 64, ed. Linden. ^j Pontan. Chorog.

^k "The island consists of two rocks, one red, the other white. The first, containing the fortress and garrison of the place, can be ascended by only one path. Like a red mulberry it emerges straight up from the sea like Segeburg in Holsatia, 406 ells high, with a rich and fertile soil upon it, from two ells and a half to one ell deep. It bears pease, beans, and English barley, of such peculiar goodness, that two bushels of it excel three of Eyderstadt. It has lettuces, radishes, and spinage, and is free from serpents, toads, and every venomous animal. It has fine cattle and horses, but their motions must be restricted or they fall into the sea. The air is pure and salubrious. It has a church, 50 families, and about 300 inhabitants, an industrious and healthy race, skilled in navigation, and rich, and advancing themselves in other regions to wealth and dignities. The rock abounds with birds, of whom incredible numbers fly hither in crowds every autumn, especially cranes, swans, geese, ducks, thrushes, larks, and others, which supply the inhabitants with many banquets. They detain and use rain-water. It has a safe and capacious port, very deep and open to the south. This sometimes holds above 100 ships of burthen, and defends them from the north and west winds. Larger ships may find a shelter in it. The other white rock is sandy, and has springs of fresh water. It has rabbits; it affords no pasture, but it grows hemp. It has towards the north and east a metal like gold, which they call *mummergeoldt*, from which gold may be extracted, and sulphur enough to pay the expense of the smelting. Petrified almonds and wax-candles are found in its veins in abundance, and snails and shells converted into the metallic gold. There are small metallic branches, as of trees, so fine that no artificer could make such of gold. The island was formerly famous for the capture of herrings, and now abounds with fish, especially oysters." Pont. Chorog. p. 739, 740. As gold is seldom found united with sulphur, auriferous pyrites are very rare, though some have been found in Peru, Siberia, Sweden, and Hungary.

ancestors, they disregard the terrors of the ocean. Their food consists of their oats, and the produce of their nets. But though sacred in human estimation, the elements have not respected this island. In the year 800, a furious tempest from the northwest occasioned the greater portion to be swallowed up by the waves. In 1300 and 1500 it suffered materially from the same cause; but the inundation of 1649 was so destructive, that but a small part of the island survived it.¹ If another attack should wash away the sandy downs, scarce one-sixth of the present population could subsist.

Situated near nations highly civilized, this island exists for the benefit of all who navigate the Elbe, which, from its dangerous coast, could not be entered without it. A sea-mark by day, a light-house by night, Heiligland points out the path of safety to the anxious mariner, and abounds with skilful pilots, who possess the local knowledge which he needs. They conduct vessels to the Elbe, the Weser, the Eyder, or the Hever. But though now so useful to the navigator, it was anciently an object of terror. Its safe harbour, so contiguous to many marts of wealth and industry, long invited to it the adventurous pirate. From the age of the Saxons almost to our own, it has been thronged with maritime depredators.^m It is a subject of geographical contest, whether it be the Actania of Pliny, and the island of the Castum Nemus of Tacitus.ⁿ

The latest account of this curious island which has appeared, is that of an intelligent traveller who visited it in 1805, from which it appears that its population has increased.^o Connected now with the trade and interest of Great Britain, its prosperity will augment with our commerce, and from its local utility as a safe point of intercourse between England and the continent, its

¹ Busching's Geog. vol. i.

^m It has been often the seat of a royal residence. Radbodus, king of Frisia, had his last sovereignty upon it. See Ubbo Emmius, p. 52. The sea-kings also frequented it. But this island has been often confounded with Helgoland, a populous district of Norway, which is mentioned in Olther's voyage, Alired's Orosius, 24; and in Sir Hugh Willoughby's voyage, Hackluyt, p. 268; and of which the kings of Helgoland, mentioned in the Norwegian Chronicle, were kings. Pont.

ⁿ See Pontanus, 663, 737. Cluverius gives Heiligland as Actania; and Rugen, from its wood and lake, as the island designated by Tacitus, Ant. Germ. 107, 97. Heiligland has no woods. Pontanus, while he hints the pretensions of Zealand, seems to prefer Heiligland, because it is near the Elbe, and is almost a translation of castum nemus.

^o Dr. Adam Neale, in his travels, states, "The present inhabitants amount to about two thousand souls. The men gain their subsistence by fishing and pilotage, while the women tend the flocks of sheep and cows, and cultivate the soil, which produces little more than barley and oats. The communication between the cliff and the downs is carried on by means of a broad wooden staircase fixed in the rock, which is red breccia. There are three wells of fresh water, but scarcely a shrub or tree of any kind in the island; and turf, wood, fruit, and garden vegetables, are brought from Cuxhaven and Hamburg, in exchange for the fish with which the hardy Heligolanders supply these towns."

importance can no longer be undervalued. The island of Nieuwerk, at the very mouth of the Elbe, is a mere sand, with a beacon to guide the course of the approaching mariner.

The territory which the original Saxons occupied on the continent, was situated on the western side of the Cimbric peninsula, between the Elbe and the Eyder. This latter river is the boundary of Denmark, and has always been understood to mark the termination of the German states.^p It rises from a district which was anciently a forest; and from Borsholm, passing Keil and Rensberg, it continues its course into the British Ocean below Eyderstadt.

The region between the Eyder and the Elbe was denominated Nordalbingia, and its inhabitants Nordalbingi, in the earliest records we possess of these parts.^q North of the Eyder extended Sleswick, in South Jutland; and beyond that, the district of North Jutland was continued into Wendila, and ended in Skawen, from which in a clear atmosphere the rocks of Scandinavia are visible.

Three districts in ancient times divided this country of Nordalbingia or Eald Saexen.^r These unequal portions, which have preserved their names to recent times, are Ditmarsia, Stormaria, and Holsatia. The progress of the Slavi occasioned a fourth division in the province of Wagria. As the early state of all distinguished nations is a curious subject of contemplation, it may not be uninteresting to add a short account of the provinces which our ancestors first occupied on the continent.

Ditmarsia^a is separated on the north from Sleswick by the Eyder, and from Stormaria on the south by the Stoer. It fronts the isles of Heiligland and Busen, and extends in length thirty-seven miles, and in breadth twenty-three. Its general aspect is a soil low and marshy, and strong mounds are necessary to keep the ocean to its natural limits. The land on the coast is favourable to corn and cattle; but in the interior appear sterile sands, or uncultivated marshes. Its inhabitants, like those of all unfruitful regions, have been tenacious of the right of enjoying their poverty in independence, and the nature of the country has favoured their military exertions. Their habits of warfare and

^p Saxo Gram. Preface, p. 2. Svaningius, in Steph. Comm. in Sax. p. 16.

^q Ad. Brem. p. 63. The Privilegia, Eccl. Hamøb. 146, 147. Helmoldus Chron. Slav. 40. Some name the people Transalbinii.

^r So Alfred, in his Orosius, p. 20, 21, and his kinsman Ethelwerd, 833, entitle this region. The three divisions exist in Ad. Brem. 22, and Helmoldus Slav. 40. Subsequent geographers acknowledge it.

^a It is called Thiat-mares-guho in S. Ansharius, who lived in 840, and in whose work the name is first met with. 1 Langb. Script. 347. Thiatmaresca, in a diploma of 1059, ib.; and Thiatmarsgoi, in Ad. Brem. 23. Teutomarsia, Chryteus Proem. Also Dythmersi, Dytmerschi. Suhm has investigated the etymology in his Nordfolk. Oprin. 263.

scanty livelihood produced a harshness of disposition which often amounted to ferocity.[†]

Below Ditmarsia, and reaching to the Elbe, was Stormaria.[‡] The Stoer, which named the province, confined it on the north. The Suala, Trave, and Billa, determined the rest of its extent. It was almost one slimy marsh. The wet and low situation of Stormaria and Ditmarsia exactly corresponds with the Roman account of the Saxons living in inaccessible marshes.[‡] The Stoer is friendly to navigation and fishing. Stormaria is somewhat quadrangular, and its sides may be estimated at thirty-three miles.[‡]

Divided from Sleswick by the Levesou on the north, bounded by Wagria on the east, and by the Trave on the south,[‡] Holsatia stretches its numerous woods to Ditmarsia. The local appellation of the region thus confined has been, by a sort of geographical catachresis, applied to denominate all that country which is contained within the Eyder, the Elbe, and the Trave. In the age approaching the period of the continental residence of our ancestors, the Holtzati were nominally as well as territorially distinguished from the other states which we have considered.[‡] Their country received from the bounty of nature one peculiar characteristic. As the western and southern coasts of Eald Saexen were repetitions of quagmires, the loftier Holsatia presented a continued succession of forests, and of plains which admitted cultivation.

Strength and courage were qualities which grew up with the Holsatian, in common with his neighbours: he has been proverbial for his fidelity; his generosity has been also extolled; but an ancient writer diminishes the value of this rare virtue, by the companions which he associates to it. "They are emulous in hospitality, because to plunder and to lavish is the glory of an

[†] Pontanus, ch. 667. Cilicius Belli Ditmars. 427, annexed to Krantz. Their banner was an armed soldier on a white horse.

[‡] Ad. Brem. p. 22, derives the name from Storm, a metaphor expressive of the seditions of the inhabitants; but Stoer, the river, and Marsi, the residents in marshes, seem to compose a juster etymology. Chryteus Sax. 66. Pont. 664.

[‡] Saxones, gentem in oceani littoribus et paludibus inuis sitam. Orosius, 7. 32.

[‡] Pontanus, 666. Ad. Brem. 22, distinguishes the Sturmarii with the epithet nobiliores. Their banner was a white swan with a golden collar. Hammaburg (Hamburg) was their metropolis, which, before the eleventh century, had been *viris et armis potens*; but in Adam's time, was in *solitudinem redacta*. Ib.

[‡] Holsatia was 42 miles from Wilster to Kiel, and about 33 from Hanrahaw to New Munster. Pontan. 665.

[‡] Their etymology has been variously stated; 1. From the woods they inhabited; Holt, a wood; saten, to be seated. Ad. Brem. and Pontan. 2. From their country having been called Old Saexen, Old Saxony. Shering, *De Gent. Angl.* 28. It certainly was so named by Ravenna, *Geog. lib. v. s. 31*. So in Bede, *lib. i. c. 15*, and *lib. v. c. 11*. *Chron. Sax. p. 13*. By Gregory, *Ep. Bib. Mag. v. 16, p. 101*, and Boniface, *ib. p. 55*, who lived in the seventh century. Nennius, *3 Gale Script. Angl. 115.—3*. See another derivation in Verstegan, 91. Eginhard, in the ninth century, names it Holdunstetch. The derivation of Adam of Bremen has prevailed.

Holsatian; not to be versed in the science of depredation is, in his opinion, to be stupid and base."^z

Such were the countries in which our Saxon ancestors were residing when the Roman geographer first noticed them; and from these, when the attention of their population became directed to maritime depredations, they made those incursions on the Roman empire, which its authors mention with so much dismay. But the Saxons were one of the obscure tribes whom Providence was training up to establish more just governments, more improving institutions, and more virtuous, though fierce manners, in the corrupted and incorrigible population of imperial Rome. And they advanced from their remote and almost unknown corner of ancient Germany, with a steady and unreceding progress, to the distinguished destiny to which they were conducted.

CHAPTER III.

Circumstances favourable to the increase of the Saxon power on the Continent.

ABOVE a century elapsed after Ptolemy, before the Saxons were mentioned again by any author who has survived to us. Eutropius is the second writer we have, who noticed them. In accounting for the rebellion of Carausius, and his assumption of the purple, he states the Saxons to have united with the Franks, and to have become formidable to the Romans for their piratical enterprises. In the century which elapsed between Ptolemy and Carausius, the Saxons had greatly advanced in power and reputation, and they were beginning their system of foreign depredations when that emperor encouraged them to pursue it. Their prosperity during this interval seems to have arisen from the repulse of the Romans from the Elbe to the Rhine; from the rise of the Franks; and from their own application to maritime expeditions.

The descendants of the first Scythian population of Europe had acquired the name of Germans in the time of Cæsar. That it was a recent appellation, we learn from Tacitus.^a They were first invited into Gaul, to assist one of its contending factions,

^z Helmodus, Chron. Slav. 40. He adds, that the three people of Nordalbingia differed little either in dress or language. They had the *jura Saxonum*.

^a Tacitus, *Mor. Germ.* c. 2.

and the fertility of the country was so tempting, that their 15,000 auxiliaries gradually swelled into 120,000 conquerors,^b who established themselves in the northern provinces. Cæsar defeated them with great destruction; but he admits that France, from the Rhine to the Seine and Marne, was peopled by German tribes, differing from the Kelts in language, laws, and customs, little civilized, averse to trade, but excelling in bravery.^c

The same insuppressible love of distinction and adventure which led Cæsar into Britain, actuated him to an invasion of Germany. He resolved to pass the Rhine, that he might show them that the Romans could both dare and accomplish the attempt.^d He was offered ships; but he chose to construct a bridge, as better suited to the dignity of the Roman nation.^e He crossed the Rhine, burnt the towns and villages of one tribe, alarmed others; and after staying eighteen days in the country, returned to France,^f and made his first incursion into Britain. In a subsequent year, he entered Germany again by a temporary bridge; but the natives retiring to their woods, he thought it dangerous to pursue them, and left a garrison on the Rhine.^g He used some German auxiliaries against the Gauls; and was materially benefited by a charge of German horse, in his great battle at Pharsalia.^h His vast project of entering and subduing Germany from the Euxine has been already noticed.

Yet Cæsar had but shown Germany to the Romans, as he had led them to the knowledge of Britain. It was the succeeding reign of Augustus, which was the actual era of the establishment of the Roman power in Germany, as that of Claudius afterwards introduced it into our island. The reign of Augustus was, therefore, as important in its consequences to the Barbaric as it was to the Roman mind. It spread an intellectual cultivation through the outer circle of his civilized empire, superior to that which its varying provinces had before enjoyed; and it began the improvement of the German intellect and society, by adding to the principles, customs, and spirit of the Barbaric continent, whatever its uncivilized tribes could successively imbibe of the literature and arts of the Roman world. The Germans had much which the wild savages of the New World have been found without, and in which even the Romans were deficient; for they had some of the noblest principles of social polity and morals; but they had scarcely any literature, few arts, few luxuries, and no refinement. When these became united to their own nobility of spirit and political principles, kingdoms arose in

^b So one of the Keltic princes told Cæsar, lib. i. c. 23. In combating these Germans, the Eduari of Gaul, a Keltic race, had lost almost all their nobility, senate, and cavalry.

^c Cæsar, lib. ii. c. 1, lib. i. c. 1.

^f Ib. c. 16, c. 17.

^d Ib. lib. iv. c. 13.

^e Ib. lib. vi. c. 27.

^g Ib. c. 15.

^h Florus.

many parts of Europe, whose people have far transcended those of the Grecian states, and of the Roman empire.

Under Augustus, Gaul or France was completely reduced to Roman provinces; and most of its natives adopted the Roman appearance, language, and modes of life, and polity. Many colonies of the Romans were planted both in France and Spain, each a little image of Rome; and the natives assisted him to subdue the Germans.

The country between Gaul and the Rhine was also subdued into Roman provinces, and roads were constructed in every part. Eight of these were made in Belgium, diverging from a single town. All these parts were formed into two grand divisions, called *Germania Prima*, and *Germania Secunda*.

Castles and forts were built all along the Rhine, nearly fifty, and chiefly on its left bank, over which several bridges were thrown. A whole nation, the *Ubii*, was transplanted from beyond the Rhine to live along its left side: a Roman colony was placed among them, which increased afterwards into the city of Cologne. Other towns, as Mentz, Bonn, Worms, and Spire, arose from Roman stations. Eight legions were divided and placed in the most commanding spots to watch and overawe the Germans; and Augustus expressed and cultivated so strong an attachment to them, that he had a body of Germans for his guard.

Thus the reign of Augustus completely reduced all the regions up to the Rhine into the condition of Roman provinces: all within that boundary were debilitated in a state of subjection, and of beginning civilization.

The natives immediately beyond the Rhine stretching to the ancient country of our ancestors, were the *Batavi*, in the present Holland; the *Frisii*, in Friesland; the *Bructeri*, towards the Ems; the *Catti*, and the *Cherusci*, who extended to the *Weser*; and the *Chauci*, who inhabited the shores from the *Weser* to the *Elbe*; while the *Suevi* spread from the *Maine* to the *Danube*. The German nations nearest to the Rhine frequently passed it in the reign of Augustus, to attack the stations of the Romans; and these as willingly crossed the same river to defeat, plunder, and ravage, as far as they could penetrate.

Augustus frequently visited these parts of Germany; but operated more decisively on its southern regions. From the progress of his legions, the southern part, from the Alps to the *Danube*, became a Roman province, under the name of *Noricum*; and two other contiguous provinces, called *Rhetia* and *Vindelicia*, were also established from the Alps to the Rhine, the *Inn*, and the *Adige*.¹ The capital of *Vindelicia* was the present

¹ Tacitus.

Augsburg, which Tacitus then called a most splendid colony. The Roman dominion being thus established in the southern district of Germany, the Emperor's son-in-law, Drusus, felt the same spirit of enterprise which had incited Cæsar; projected the conquest of the whole continent, and actually began it. A passage in Tacitus displays the insatiable thirst of distinction, with which the active-minded youths of Rome, were urged upon expeditions incompatible with the comforts of the rest of mankind. Drusus crossed the Rhine from Holland, and ravaged around to the Maine, while a fleet navigated along the coast into the Zuyderzee, and the Ems. In the ensuing spring he penetrated to the Weser, and in another year to the Elbe, laying the country waste, and building forts on the Maese, the Rhine, the Weser, and the Elbe; but before he passed that river, he suddenly received, from natural causes, the fate which he was unsparingly dealing to others. Tiberius succeeded to the station, though not to the abilities of Drusus. He moved several times into Germany. In one year he passed the Weser; and in another, attacking the Chauci and Langobardi, he waved the imperial standards over the Elbe. His fleet triumphantly sailed up the river: he contemplated the collected warriors who lined its northern bank; but hazarded no attack. Two of the princes of the Cherusci served in the Roman army; of whom one was the celebrated Arminius, and another became a Roman priest.

Tiberius was called by other wars to the Danube; and while he was there conflicting with the Marcomanni and their allies, the avarice of Quintilius Varus, combined with his precipitate attempt to civilize them, provoked the Germans of the Rhine to rebel. Arminius stood forward as the champion of Germany; and by his skill and exertions, the Roman general and his army were destroyed. This misfortune struck Rome with consternation, and the horrors of an invasion like that of the Cimbri and Teutones, were anticipated; but Arminius was contented to have merited the title of the deliverer of his country.^k He had either not the means or the desire to pursue schemes of offensive conquest or of vengeful devastation beyond the precincts of Germany. He drove back the Roman empire from the Weser to

^j Dion. Cassius, p. 622-628, and the authors in Maecou's learned history of the Germans, i. p. 78-85. He has selected and arranged the most important passages of the classical authors concerning the transactions and movements of the German nations before the dissolution of the Roman empire. The authorities for most of the events alluded to in this chapter will be found in his work.

^k Tacitus gives him this title, Ann. lib. ii. c. 88. Kenler calls him the leader of the Saxons, 1 Schard. H. G. 501; but he was of the Cherusci. Spen. Not. 297. His character in Paterculus is interesting; "*Juvenis genere nobilis, manu fortis, sensu celer, ultra promptus ingenio, ardorem animi vultu oculisque preferens.*" He had served in the Roman armies, and obtained the equestrian dignity. The pen of Tacitus has completed his fame. For the disaster of Varus, see Dion. Cass. 667; Patere. ii. c. 117; and Tac. Ann. lib. i.

the Rhine. He restored to his countrymen the possession of their native soil up to the latter river; destroyed all the Roman forts on the Ems, the Weser, and the Saal; and when Tiberius hastened to relieve the capitol from its dismay, the imperial general could gain no decisive laurels from the cautious patriot.¹ Thus Arminius raised Germany into a new military and political position. Having learned himself all the Roman discipline, he diffused among his countrymen as much of it as they could be persuaded to adopt, and prepared them to receive more; and from this period the wars of these fierce people became every year more formidable to the Roman empire, and more instructive to themselves. Nearly twenty years had elapsed between the time that Tiberius had marched to the Weser and the period in which Arminius effected his revolt. During all this space, the Germans had all the Roman habits and peculiar civilization in their immediate contemplation: and all that intercourse occurred, which,—so large a portion of the country, from the Rhine to the Weser, being made Roman provinces; which, the serving of their chiefs and people in the Roman armies, and acting with them as allies; and which, their perpetual communications with the numerous Roman forts and stations,—could produce. Germany was thus constantly advancing to improvement from the time that Augustus established the Roman armies on its continent; and the successes of Arminius kept it from being too Romanized. By driving back the Romans to the Rhine, he preserved to his countrymen and their neighbours the power of continuing, not merely in independence, but of preserving their native manners and customs, with only so much addition of the Roman civilization as would naturally and beneficially harmonize with these. Many new ideas, feelings, reasonings, and habits, must have resulted from this mixture; and the peculiar minds and views of the Germans must have been both excited and enlarged. The result of this union of Roman and German improvement, was the gradual formation of that new species of the human character and society which has descended with increasing melioration to all the modern states of Europe.

Germany was not at this time very populous. The Hercynian forest, sixty days' journey in length, overspread a large portion

¹ There is a history of Arminius by Kenler, 1 Schard. p. 501–518. In the dialogue on his military merit by Hutt, *ib.* 426, the German prince says to Hannibal, with some truth, "Nam eorum qui res preclaras gesserunt, nemo majoribus difficultatibus enisus, aut gravioribus circa impedimentis eluctatus est.—In summa rerum aut hominum inopia, misera egestate, desertus ab omnibus, impeditus undique, tamen ad recuperandam libertatem, viam mihi communivi; citraque omnem extra opem, omne adjumentum, hoc solo præditus et suffultus animo, a me ipso rerum initia petivi et bellum extremè periculosum, non antea cæptum sed ab omnibus desperatum prosequutus sum." He details his exertions, and contrasts them, with more patriotism than critical judgment, with the exploits of Scipio and Alexander.

of its surface. Each state made a little desert around it for its defence; and the Suevi who were in Suabia and Franconia, used this desolating protection so abundantly, that they kept the country for 500 miles around them in a devastated condition. The population of Germany was, therefore, but scanty, and dwelt chiefly near the rivers, at their mouths, and on the sea-coasts. The Roman invasions repeatedly thinned the numbers of their tribes, by the slaughter of their battles and subsequent cruelties; and when new populations multiplied, as these existed under new circumstances, and amid many alterations of native manners around them, every succeeding generation differed from its predecessors: and this difference, from the continual intercourse with the only civilized empire which then existed, was that of progressive improvement producing progressive power, until Rome became their conquest, and its provinces their spoil, and the sites of their new kingdoms.

Germanicus renewed the victories of his father Drusus, and endangered for a while the independence of the barbaric continent. His warfare, though his name lives in the panegyric of Tacitus, can be only compared with that which we have witnessed in our days in St. Domingo. His first expedition was undertaken for the express purpose of human slaughter. One part of his legions, having destroyed their mutinous comrades, desired to attack the enemy to appease, by the blood of the Germans, the manes of their rebellious fellow-soldiers. They accordingly rushed to the massacre of the Marsi. "Germanicus, to spread the slaughter as wide as possible, divided his men into four battalions. The country fifty miles round was laid waste with fire and sword: neither sex nor age excited pity; nor any places, holy or profane; their sacred temple, the Tanfanæ, was destroyed. This slaughter was perpetrated without their receiving a wound, because the enemies they attacked were sunk in sleep, or unarmed and dispersed."^m

The surprise of the Catti, against whom Germanicus sent Cæcina, was one of their next exploits. "His arrival was so little expected by the Catti, that their women and children were either immediately taken prisoners or put to the sword: Mattium, the capital, was destroyed by fire, and the open plains were laidⁿ waste." In subsequent battles we usually find the addition, that "no quarter was given to the barbarians;" and in the progress of the Romans, the country was always desolated. In one battle we have this ferocious plan of warfare, even commanded by the applauded hero of the historian: "Germanicus rushing among the ranks, besought his men to give no quarter; he told them they

^m Tacit. Ann. lib. i.

ⁿ Ibid.

had no need of prisoners, and that the extirpation of the barbarians would alone end the war !” °

Trained amid their soldiery to such sanguinary habits, it is not surprising, that the Roman emperors should have carried to the throne the cruelties of the camp, and have exhibited there the merciless character, which in such campaigns as these they must have acquired. But to destroy the uncultivated nations of Europe, however unoffending, was no crime in the popular estimation at Rome. A surmune from a country subdued was a charm which made its chieftains deaf to all the groans of humanity and the clamours of violated right. They pursued this trade of sanguinary ambition, though Greece had taught the Romans to philosophize on morality ; and their orators, to destroy an obnoxious governor, could sometimes declaim as if they had felt themselves the advocates of mankind !

After these massacres of the Marsi and the Catti, Germanicus sailed up the Ems, and marched his army to the Weser. At this juncture Arminius^p was not wanting to his countrymen ; but the superior knowledge of his competitor, and the discipline of the invading troops, were rapidly annihilating the rude liberty of Germany. Its bravest tribes fell fruitlessly in its defence ; the survivors trembled for the awful issue ; when the jealous policy of Tiberius, who had succeeded to the empire, rescued them from absolute conquest. He called back Germanicus from his victorious progress ; although he asked to continue in his command but one year more, and would have extended the Roman empire to the Elbe.^q

The conquests of Germanicus were in truth so many depopulations. The Germans always fought till they had not men enough for further battles ; and every war was the destruction of the largest portion of the generation that waged it. But new races sprang up rapidly in the vacancy thus made, and under circumstances that were continually becoming more promotive of their improvement, especially in war, and in all the mental qualities which were connected with it, and which could be excited by a struggle with an enemy so renowned and so successful. War became their necessity, as well as the theatre of their glory ; and from the reign of Tiberius to the fall of the Roman empire under their swords, the German nations beyond the Rhine on the west,

° Tacit. Ann. lib. ii.

^p Many have thought that the famous *Irmensul* was a monument of Arminius, whose heroic actions the Germans long celebrated in their songs ; but there is no reason to believe that Arminius was ever venerated as a deity.

^q Tacit. Ann. lib. ii. s. 26. It is painful to read that Arminius fell a victim to the treachery and ingratitude of some of his countrymen ; or to his love of power and and their love of liberty.

and beyond the Danube on the east, were, under various denominations, of Marcomanni, Alemanni, Franks, Saxons, Burgundians, Lombards, and Goths, every year training and educating themselves in those military habits, laws, and exercises, and corresponding policy and institutions, which new events and experience discovered to be most effective for their own welfare and the annoyance of their enemy. They were in every generation becoming more and more the Spartans of modern Europe. Their martial systems increased progressively in wisdom and vigour. The whole frame of their society was made subservient to their warlike objects; and it became impossible for Rome, in the degeneracy of its confined civilization, to withstand the unremitted onsets of a people daily attaining superiority in force of mind, loftiness of spirit, ardent feeling, and moral fortitude and probity, as well as in technical discipline and manual activity.

The recall of Germanicus ended the progress of the Romans in the north of Germany. They had many conflicts and some successes; but they never reached the Elbe again. A. C. 17. They retreated gradually to the south, though not with perpetual retrogression. Sometimes the interior tribes of the country were afflicted by their victorious invasions, and as often were consoled by their expulsion. At one period Hadrian made a rampart for sixty leagues, from Neustadt on the Danube to Wimpfen on the Neckar, which lasted till Aurclian: the natives then pulled it down. Probus replaced it with stone; but it soon became an ineffective barrier. At length, after various conflicts, the Rhine, near the modern Leyden, separated the Romans and their allies from the free nations of the north.^r It was not indeed an impassable boundary, but the Romans generally kept within it: and thus the nations beyond, and more especially the Saxons, who were among the most remote, had full leisure to increase their population, and to improve the propitious circumstances which attended their peculiar situation.

The jealousy of Tiberius having stopped Germanicus from annihilating Arminius, and from destroying the nations beyond the Weser sufficiently for the extension of the Roman empire to the Elbe, all the German tribes from the Rhine to the Baltic were left to act, fight, and improve, with the new arts and knowledge which they had learnt from the Romans, and which they afterwards imbibed from their intercourse with the empire.

Their continuation in an independent state, was favoured by

^r Bebelius too eagerly denies that any part of Germany beyond the Rhine was conquered, though the emperors arrogated the surname Germanicus. *Orat. vet. Ger.* 1 Schard. 257. Mascou fairly states the fact, i. p. 131.—The *Tabula Peut.* (on which some excellent remarks of M. Freret are in *Mem.* vii. p. 292.) confirms this boundary.

the fall of Arminius. His talents and ambition might have subdued the northwestern coast of Germany into one dominion; but he being killed, and his Cherusci weakened, no similar hero, and no great kingdom, which such a character usually founds, arose in those parts. Hence every state from the Rhine to the Elbe, and amongst these the Saxons, grew up in the free exercise of its energies and means of power. Warlike activity was necessarily their predominating principle, not only to repel the Romans, but to protect themselves from each other. It was indeed an essential individual quality. The life of each depended on his martial efficiency; for their wars were always those of desolation and death.

The Romans continued to be the military educators of the population in these parts, without intending an effect so dangerous to their dominion. But their new principle or necessity, of forming part of their armies of German troops, led to this momentous result. They frequently felt its evil without changing their system. So early as the year 28, the Frisii, the neighbours of the Saxons, and some of whose nobles had served in the Roman armies, revolted, and for a long time remained independent.* Fifteen years afterwards, Batavi were serving in the Roman armies in Britain.†

From the Batavian marshes, in A. D. 47, Gennascus became the leader of the Chauci, and began that plan of operations which the Saxons in an after age so eagerly pursued. He plundered on Gaul with light ships. He became strong enough to invade Lower Germany.‡ In A. D. 69, the Emperor Vitellius became so fond of his German auxiliaries, as to take them to Rome, in their dresses of skins and long spears, and to consult their superstitions.¶ After him Civilis proved what military efficiency the tribes of these regions had acquired from Roman tuition. He had served among the Batavian cavalry that was employed in Britain, and he visited Rome. He found the sailors in the Roman fleet on the Rhine to be chiefly Batavi. With talents, which Tacitus compares with those of Hannibal and Sertorius, he roused his countrymen to arms against the Romans. The whole Batavian nation, Bructeri, Tencteri, and their neighbours, allied with them. He defeated the imperial armies, and was joined by the auxiliary forces, whom the Romans had trained. The Gauls submitted to him. One division of his navy sunk or took the Roman fleet; and he equipped another to intercept their supplies from Gaul. Defeated at one time, he maintained a doubtful battle at another, and at

* Tacit. Ann. lib. iv.

† Tacit. Ann. lib. xi. c. 18.

‡ Dio, Cass. lib. lx.

¶ Tacit. Hist. lib. ii. Suet. in Vit.

last obtained a creditable peace; and the Romans again took Batavians into their service in Britain.* These events deserve our contemplation, because they show that great improvements flowed from the Romans, towards the regions where our Saxon ancestors were stationed.

From Civilis to Caracalla, in the beginning of the third century, the emperors left the nations beyond the Rhine, to the natural course of their own means of continuing the progress, which the preceding events had excited. In Caracalla's reign, the tribes that dwelt on the Elbe near the North Sea, a position that includes the Saxons, felt so highly their own importance, as to send an embassy to Rome offering peace, but requiring money for observing it. The emperor gave the demanded payment; and so greatly favoured them, as to form a German body-guard, and to wear himself a German dress.†

But the savage Maximin soon changed this flattering scene. After the assassination of Alexander Severus, the ferocious Thracian assumed the contaminated purple, and announced his accession to the north of Germany in a series of victorious slaughter and unrelenting devastation. So irresistible was the tempest, that unless (says the historian) the Germans had escaped by their rivers, marshes, and woods, he would have reduced all Germany into subjection. His furious valour once betrayed him into a situation of so much danger in a marsh, that he was saved with difficulty, while his horse was drowning. His haughty letters to the senate display the exultation and the ferocity of his mind. "We cannot relate to you how much we have done. For the space of four hundred miles we have burnt the German towns; we have brought away their flocks, enslaved their inhabitants, and slain the armed. We should have assailed their woods, if the depths of their marshes had permitted us to pass."‡

This destructive invasion, like many other evils, generated, by the greatness of the necessity, a proportionate benefit. By a conjecture more probable in itself, and more consistent with contemporaneous facts than any other which has been mentioned, a modern writer has very happily ascribed to it the formation of that important confederation, which, under the name of Franks,

* Tacit. Hist. lib. iii. iv. Civilis had maintained a personal friendship with Vespasian. "Cum privatus esset amici vocabamur," lib. v. c. 26. Mascou, to his summary of the actions of Civilis, adds that his memory continued dear to the Hollanders: that in the Great Hall of the States General there were twelve pictures of his exploits, by Otto Veenius; and that the Dutch were fond of comparing him with their William, Prince of Orange, "the fountain of the liberties of Holland." Vol. i. p. 159.

† Herodian, lib. iv. c. 7.

‡ Jul. Capitol. Maxim. c. 12. Herodian, lib. vii. p. 146, ed. Steph. The history of Maximin is related by Mr. Gibbon with elegance and accuracy, i. p. 173—190, 4to.

withstood the Roman arms, and preserved the liberties of Germany.*

It is the prevailing opinion of the learned, that about the year 240 a new confederation was formed, under the name of Franks, by the old inhabitants of the Lower Rhine and Weser.^a As the incursion of Maximin took place about the year 235, the additional supposition of Spenser is very happy, that this confederation arose from a general desire of security and revenge.

The horizon of Rome was at this juncture darkening: civil wars were consuming the strength of the empire; and its Germanic enemies, who had many losses of liberty, life, and property to avenge, were learning the dangerous secret of the benefit of union. The Alemanni^b had alarmed Marcus Aurelius with its first exhibition. The advantage of this confederation generated others, until the Roman empire was overwhelmed by the accumulating torrent; and her western provinces were parcelled out among those warlike spoilers, whose improved posterity now govern Europe.

This sagacious union of strength in a common cause was consecrated on the Rhine by the general name of Franks, in which the peculiar denominations of the tribes were absorbed.^c Their valour achieved its end; and their existence and general conduct were peculiarly useful to the Saxon nation.^d The safety and success of our ancestors may have flowed from this timely confederation. The Saxon exploits on the ocean inflicted such wounds on the Roman colonies and commerce, that a peculiar fleet was appointed to counteract them; the southern coast of Britain was put under an officer called Comes Littoris Saxonici; and every historian mentions them with dread and hatred. It does not seem visionary to state, that it would have been one of the first employments of the Roman indignation to have exterminated them by an expedition like those of Drusus, Germanicus, and Maximin, if the confederation of the Franks had not interposed a formidable barrier that was never destroyed, and which

* Spenser in his *Notit. Germ. lib. iv. p. 338.* "Non valde vereor adfirmare, Maximini crudelem in Germaniam incursionem fœdus inferioris Rheni accolis Germanis suasisse."

^a Gibbon, 1, p. 259. Fœdœmagne, *Mem. Ac. xv. p. 268*, and Freret, *Hist. Ac. Insc. ix. p. 88*, and *Mem. xxxiii. p. 134*, unite in the opinion.—Mascou, who dislikes it, p. 196, has evidently not weighed all the circumstances.

^b For the nations who assumed this name, see Spenser, 175–179.

^c The states who united in the league are particularized by Spenser, p. 341; and by Chrytaus, *Sax. Proem.*

^d The ancient writers give us some curious traits of the Franks of this period: "Francis familiare est ridendo fidem frangere." Vopiscus *Proc. c. xlii. p. 237*, Ed. Bip. "Gens Francorum infidelis est. Si perjeret Francus quid novi faciet, qui perjurium ipsum sermonis genus putat esse non criminis." *Silvian de Gub. Dei, lib. iv. p. 82.* *Mag. Bib. Pat. 5.*—Aguin, *lib. vii. p. 116.* "Franci mendaces, sed hospites."—This union of laughter and crime, of deceit and politeness, has not been entirely unknown to France in many periods since the fifth century.

kept the imperial armies employed at the south banks of the Rhine.^a We may add, that the furious desolations of Maximin were favourable to the growth of the Saxon power; for they depopulated the contiguous states, and left the Saxons without any strong neighbours to coerce or endanger them.

Another cause, peculiarly promotive of the prosperity of the Saxons, was their application to maritime expeditions; and it is interesting to the philosophical student of history to remark, by what incidents they were led to this peculiar direction of their courage and activity.

CHAPTER IV.

The application of the Saxons to maritime expeditions.

THE situation of the Saxons on the sea-coast of that part of Europe, which was in the neighbourhood of some fertile provinces of the Roman empire, and yet remote enough to elude their vengeful pursuit; and the possession of an island, with an harbour so ample, and yet so guarded against hostile assaults, as Heligland afforded, were circumstances propitious to a system of piracy.

The tribes on the sea-coasts, from the mouths of the Rhine to the Baltic, had from the days of Cæsar been gradually forming themselves to maritime exertions. The Romans themselves, inattentive to the consequences, contributed to their progress in this new path of war. Drusus equipped a fleet on the Rhine to waft his army to the Ems: he cut a channel for its passage into the Zuyder Zee; and we find in his time, that the Bructeri, who lived on the left of the Ems, were able to fight a battle with him on the seas.^a In the reign of Tiberius, Germanicus built a thousand vessels on the Rhine, Maes, and Scheld,^b teaching the attentive natives the use of ships, and the manner of their constructing them, and employing them in their navigation.

Within thirty years afterwards, Gennascus, at the head of the Chauci, evinced their improvement; for with light ships, armed for plunder, he made the descent already noticed on the contiguous shores, and particularly on the Roman provinces in France, knowing that they were rich, and perceiving that they were

^a Pontanus Origin. Franc.—Spener, 333–360, and his 2 vol. 421–429, and Schiller's Glossary, 316–322, furnish much information on the Frankish tribes.

^a Mascou, Hist. vol. i. p. 80.

^b Tacitus Ann. lib. ii. c. 6.

weak against such attacks.^c His enterprises were in fact the precursors of those, with which the Franks and Saxons afterwards annoyed the Roman empire. The naval exertions of Civilis have been stated before.

As the population between the Rhine and Ems were thus accustomed to maritime exertions, the Saxons began to multiply near them, and to spread into the islands we have described. But an active system of naval enterprise is not naturally chosen by any nation; and, still less, distant voyages, which are fatal to land warriors from their ignorance, and still more formidable from their superstitions. Hence the Saxons might have lived amid their rocks and marshes, conficting with their neighbours, or sailing about them in petty vessels for petty warfare, till they had mouldered away in the vicissitudes in which so many tribes perished; if one remarkable incident, not originating from themselves, but from a Roman emperor, had not excited their peculiar attention to maritime expeditions on a larger scale, with grander prospects, and to countries far remote.

This event, which tinged with new and lasting colours the destiny of Europe, by determining the Saxons to piratical enterprises, was the daring achievements of the Franks; whom Probus, during his brief sovereignty, had transported to the Pontus. To break the strength of the barbaric myriads, who were every year assaulting the Roman state with increasing force, this emperor had recourse to the policy, not unfrequent under the imperial government, of settling colonies of their warriors in places very distant from the region of their nativity.

Among others, a numerous body of Franks, or rather of the contiguous tribes united under that name, was transplanted to the Euxine. The attachment of mankind to the scenes of their childhood; and their ardent longing, when in foreign lands, for the country which their relatives inhabit; where their most pleasing associations have been formed; where their individual characters have been acquired, and customs like their own exist; are feelings so natural to every bosom, and so common to every age, that it is not surprising that the Frankish exiles, when removed to the Euxine, regretted their native wilds.^d We read therefore, with general sympathy, that they soon after seized the earliest opportunity of abandoning their foreign settlement. They possessed themselves of many ships, probably the vessels in which they had been carried from the German Ocean to the Euxine, and formed the daring plan of sailing back to the Rhine. Its novelty and improbability procured its success; and the necessities which attended it, led them to great exploits. Compelled to

^c Tacit. Ann. lib. xi. c. 18.

^d So strong was this feeling in Germany, that some of the German chiefs whom Augustus forced from their country killed themselves. 1 Mascou, 85.

land wherever they could for supplies, safety, and information, they ravaged the coasts of Asia and Greece. Reaching at length Sicily, they attacked and ravaged Syracuse with great slaughter. Beaten about by the winds, often ignorant where they were, needing subsistence, and excited to new plunder, by the successful depredations they had already made, they carried their triumphant hostility to several districts of Africa. They were driven off by a force sent from Carthage; but, sailing at last to Europe, they concluded their remarkable voyage by reaching in safety their native shores.*

In this singular enterprise, a system to endure for ages received its birth. It discovered to themselves and their neighbours, to all who heard and could imitate, that, from the Roman colonies, a rich harvest of spoil might be gleaned by those who would seek for it at sea. It likewise removed the veil of terror that hung over distant oceans and foreign expeditions. These Franks had desolated every province almost with impunity; they had plunder to display, which must have fired the avarice of every needy spectator; they had acquired skill, which those who joined them might soon inherit; and perhaps the same adventurers, embarking again with new followers, evinced by fresh booty the practicability of similar attempts. On land, the Roman tactics and discipline were generally invincible; but, at sea, they who most frequent it are usually the most expert and successful. The Saxons perceived this consequence: their situation on the ocean tempted them to make the trial; they soon afterwards began their depredations, and by this new habit evinced the inciting and instructive effects of the Frankish adventure.

The piracies of the Franks and Saxons are not mentioned in the imperial writers anterior to this navigation; but they seem to have become frequent after it: for within a few years subsequent, the Franks and Saxons so infested the coasts of Belgium, Gaul, and Britain, that the Roman government was compelled to station a powerful fleet at Bologne, on purpose to confront them. The command was intrusted to Carausius, a Menapian, of the meanest origin; but a skilful pilot and a valiant soldier. It was observed, that this commander attacked the pirates, only after they had accomplished their ravages, and never restored the capture to the suffering provincials. This excited a suspicion, that by wilful remissness he permitted the enemy to make the incursions, that he might obtain the booty on their return. Such conduct was fatal to the design of suppressing the piracies of the Franks and Saxons. It permitted the habit of such enterprises to become established; and the success of those who

* The original authorities are Zosimus, end of book i.; Eumen. Paneg. iv. c. 18 and Vopiscus in Probo, c. 18.

eluded his avarice, on their return, kept alive the eagerness for maritime depredations.^f

Another incident occurred to establish their propensity and power. The emperor, informed of the treasons of Carausius, ordered his punishment. Apprised of his impending fate, he took refuge in augmented guilt and desperate temerity; he boldly assumed the purple, and was acknowledged emperor by the legions in Britain. The perplexities in which the Roman state was at that time involved favoured his usurpation; and, to maintain it, he had recourse to one of those important expedients which, originally intended for a temporary exigency, lead ultimately to great revolutions.

As it was only by active warfare that his sovereignty could be maintained, he made alliances with the Germans, and A. D. 297. particularly with the Saxons and Franks, whose dress and manners he imitated in order to increase their friendship. To make them of all the use he projected, he encouraged their application to maritime affairs; he gave them ships and experienced officers, who taught them navigation and the art of naval combat.^g No circumstance could have tended more to promote their future successes and celebrity. They had sufficient inclination to this new path of action. They only wanted the tuition and encouragement. Fostered by this imperial alliance, and supplied with those essential requisites without which they could not have become permanently formidable, they renewed their predatory attacks with licensed severity. Every coast which had not received Carausius as its lord, was open to their incursions. They perfected themselves in their dangerous art, and by the plunder which they were always gaining, they increased their means as well as their avidity for its prosecution, and nurtured their population in the perilous but attractive warfare. The usurpation of Carausius, and this education of the Saxons to the empire of the ocean, lasted seven years.

Sixty years afterwards, a similar occurrence advanced the Saxon prosperity. Magnentius, another usurper of the bloody and restless sceptre of Rome, having murdered Constans, endeavoured to preserve the perilous dignity by an alliance of fraternization with the Franks and Saxons, whom in return, he protected and encouraged.^h This was another of those auspicious incidents, which enhanced the consequence and power of those tribes who had been invisible to Tacitus, and who had been merely known by name to Ptolemy. But as Providence had destined them to be the stock of a nation whose colonies, commerce, arts, knowledge and fame, were to become far superior to those of Rome, and to pervade every part of the world, it cherished them

^f 1 Gibbon, 362. 1 Mascou, 243.

^g 1 Mascou, 244. 1 Gibbon, 364.

^h Julian Orat. cited 1 Mascou, 280.

by a succession of those propitious circumstances which gradually formed and led them to that great enterprise for which they were principally destined, the conquest of Romanized Britain.

CHAPTER V.

The League of the Saxons with other States, and their Continental Aggrandizement.

BUT in the beginning of the fourth century, the Saxons were not alone on the ocean; other states, both to the south and north of their own locality, were moving in concert with them, whose nominal distinctions were lost in the Saxon name. This addition of strength multiplied the Saxon fleets, gave new terror to their hostility, and recruited their losses with perpetual population. The league extended. Their depredations increased their population, affluence, and celebrity; and these results extended their power. What emulation, policy, or rapacity may have first prompted, success and fear made more universal. They who would not have been tempted to unite, dreaded the wrath of those whose proffered alliance they refused: and at length, most of the nations north of the Rhine assumed the name, strengthened the association, and fought to augment the predominance of the Saxons. Towards the south, between the Elbe and the Rhine, the Chauci seem to have led the way. The Frisii, urged by kindred passion and a convenient position, willingly followed. The precise date of the accession of others is not so clear; but in some period of their power the Chamavi, and at last the Batavi, the Toxandri, and Morini, were in their alliance. North of their territorial position the Cimbri, the Jutes, the Angles, and others not so discernible, added their numbers to the formidable league; which lasted until their expedition to Britain,^a and then began to dissolve.

Without detaining the reader by a detail of the modern chorography answering to the position of these tribes,^b it may be sufficient to state concisely, that the progress and leagues of the Saxon states enlarged gradually from the Elbe to the Weser;

^a Spenser's *Notitia*, 363-370. That the Saxons of the fifth century were an association of people, was remarked by Stillingfleet, *Orig. Brit.* 305; and Langhorn, *Elench. Ant. Alb.* 342. See also Freret, *Mem. Ac. Inscr.* xxxiii. p. 134; and 2 Gibbon, 523.

^b This may be seen as to the Chauci, Spenser, 302-313. Cluverius, *lib. iii.* p. 72. Cellarius, *Ant. Geog.* i. p. 298.—As to the Frisii, Spenser, 314-332. Cluv. p. 55. Cell. 295. As to the Chamavi, Sp. 260, &c. The same authors treat of the others.

from the Weser they reached to the Ems; and still augmenting, they diffused themselves to the Rhine with varying latitude, as the Franks, many of whose allies they seduced, quitting that region, and abandoning their exploits on the ocean, marched upon Gaul. The extension of this new confederation was favoured by the change of policy and position adopted by the Franks. As this people stood foremost to the Roman vengeance, they experienced its effects. They had many distressing wars to maintain, which in time compelled them to abandon maritime expeditions, and to consolidate their strength for their continental conflicts. Their ultimate successes made this warfare the most popular among them. Hence, the nearer we approach the period of the invasion of England, we find the Franks less and less united with the Saxons on the ocean, and even wars begin to be frequent between the rival friends. As the former moved onward, to the conquests of Belgium and Gaul, the Saxons appear to have been the only nation, under whose name the vessels of piracy were navigated. Saxons were the enemies everywhere execrated, though under this title several nations fought. Some of the tribes on the maritime coast, who had composed the league of the Franks, abandoned it, to share the easier warfare and ampler booty of the Saxons. At last this successful people diffused themselves into the interior of Germany so victoriously, that the vast tracts of country embraced by the Elbe, the Sala, and the Rhine, became subjected to their power,^c in addition to their ancient territory from the Elbe to the Eyder.^d An old Belgic chronicle in rhyme, makes Nether Sassen, Lower Saxony, to have been confined by the Scheld and the Meuse;^e but this is a larger extent than others admit.

^c That continental Saxony at last extended to the Rhine is affirmed by Adam of Bremen, p. 3; and see the later writers. Chrytmus, 72; et Proem. Krantz Saxon, p. 5. Spener Notit. 2 vol. 400-413. Eginhart, the secretary of Charlemagne, says, p. 7, that in his time, Saxony Germaniæ pars non modica est.

^d The Saxon poet commemorates the Saxons to have retained this region in the time of Charlemagne:

Saxonum populus quidam quos claudit ab austro
Albia sejunctum positos Aquilonis ad axem,
Hos Northalbingos patrio sermone vocamus.

Ap. Du Chesne, Hist. Fran. Script. 2. p. 160.

• Oude boeken hoor ick gewagen,
Dat all t'land beneden Nyemagen,
Wilen Neder Sassen hiet,
Alsoo als die stroom verschiet
Van der Maze ende van den Rhyn,
Die Schelt was dat westende syn.

Schildt. Thes. 706.

I have heard that old books say,
That all the land beneath Nyemagen
Whilom was called Nether Saxony,
Also that the stream
Of the Maes and the Rhine confined it:
The Scheld was its western end.

But those allies of the Saxons with whom the history of Britain is most connected, were the Jutes and Angles. The Jutes inhabited Jutland, or rather that part of it, which was formerly called South Jutland,^f but which is now known as the duchy of Sleswick. The little band first introduced into England by Hengist and Horsa, were Jutes. Their name has been written with all the caprices of orthography.^g

The Angles have been derived from different parts of the north of Germany. Engern, in Westphalia, was a favourite position, because it seemed to suit the geography of Tacitus. Angloen, in Pomerania, had good pretensions, from the similarity of its name; and part of the duchies of Mecklenburg and Lunenburg was chosen out of respect to Ptolemy; but the assertion of Bede and Alfred, which Camden has adopted, has, from its truth, prevailed over all. In the days of Tacitus and Ptolemy, the Angli may have been in Westphalia or Mecklenburg, or elsewhere; but at the era of the Saxon invasion, they were resident in the district of Anglen, in the duchy of Sleswick.^h

The duchy of Sleswick extends from the river Levesou, north of Kiel, to the Tobesket, on which stands Colding; but that particular position, which an ancient Saxon author calls Old England, extends from the city of Sleswick to Flensburg. Sleswick was the capital of Anglen, and was distinguished, in the eleventh century, for its population and wealth.ⁱ

^f Chrytæus, Saxon, 65. Pont. Chor. Dann. 655.

^g As Geatum, Giotæ, Jutæ, Gutæ, Geatani, Jotuni, Jetæ, Juitæ, Vitæ, &c. The Saxon Chronicon Holsatiæ, p. 54, says the Danes and Jutes are Jews of the tribe of Dan! and Munster as wisely calls the Helvetii, Hill-vitæ, or Jutes of the hills!

^h Bede's words are: "De illa patria, quæ angulus dicitur et ab eo tempore usque hodie, manere desertus inter provincias Jutarum et Saxonum perhibetur," lib. i. c. 15. His royal translator's expressions are similar: "Is tha land betwyh Geatum and Seaxun. Is sæd of thære tide the hi thanon gewiton oth to dæge tha hit west wunige," p. 483. Alfred in his Orosius, alluding to the Danish countries on the Baltic, says, "on thæm landum cardodon Engle wær hi hider on land coman." Camden, in his introduction, attributes to the Angles the German cities Engelheim, where Charlemagne was born, Ingolstad, Engleburg, Engelrute; and Angleria, in Italy.

ⁱ Pontanus, Geographia, 655, 656. It is our Ethelwerd who gives us the ancient site of the Angles most exactly. Anglia vetus sita est inter Saxones et Giotos, habens oppidum capitale quod sermone Saxonico Sleswic nuncupatur, secundum vero Danos, Haithabay, p. 833. Some, who admit this situation, will not allow that the Angli were German emigrants. Schiller's Glos. p. 49. Wormius derives them from the Jutes. Literat. Runica, p. 29. This is a mere supposition. As Tacitus notices Anglia in Germany, but does not specifically mention Jutes, a speculative reasoner might, with greater probability, make the Angli the parents of the Jutes. That they were kindred nations is clear from the identity of their language. Our Kentish Jutes have always talked as good English as our Mercian, and Norfolk, and Yorkshire Angles. Jutes, Angles, and Saxons, seem to have been coeval twigs of the same Teutonic branch of the great Scythian or Gothic tree. Some dialectic differences of pronunciation may be traced, but no real diversity of language.

CHAPTER VI.

Sequel of their History to the Period of the Anglo-Saxon Invasion.

WHILE the Saxons were in this state of progressive greatness, in the fourth century, the prosperity and contiguity of Britain invited their frequent visits; and their attacks were favoured by the incursions of other enemies, who are called by the historians Picti, Scoti, and Attacotti.

In a similar combination of hostilities, Nectaridus, the commander of the Saxon shore, was slain, and the general of the island, Fullo-faudes, perished in an ambush. Several

A. C. 368. officers were sent by the Roman emperors to succeed them; but their exertions being inadequate to the necessity, Theodosius, an experienced and successful leader, was appointed by Valentinian in their room. The Picts and the co-operating tribes attacked from the north, while the Saxons and their allies assaulted the maritime coasts. Theodosius, from Richborough, marched towards London, and dividing his army into battalions, correspondent to the positions of the enemies, he attacked the robbers encumbered with their plunder. The bands that were carrying away the manacled inhabitants and their cattle, he destroyed, and regained the spoil; of this he distributed a small share among his wearied soldiers; the residue he restored to its owners, and entered the city, wondering at its sudden deliverance, with the glories of an ovation.

Lessoned by experience, and instructed by the confessions of the captives and deserters, he combated this mixture of enemies, with well-combined artifice and unexpected attacks. To recall those who in the confusion, from fear or from cowardice, had abandoned their ranks or their allegiance, he proclaimed an amnesty;^a and to complete the benefit he had begun, he prosecuted the war with vigour in the north of Britain. He prevented by judicious movements the meditated attack; and hence the Orkneys became the scene of his triumphs. The Saxons, strong in their numbers and intrepidity, sustained several naval encounters before they yielded to his genius.^b They ceased at last to molest

^a Am. Marcel. lib. xxvii. c. 8. p. 263.

^b Claud. 4 Cons. Hon. 31, "maduerunt Saxonæ fuso Orcades." Saxo consumptus bellis navalibus, Pacatus Paneg. Theod. p. 97.

the tranquillity of Britain, and the addition of a deserved surname, Saxonicus, proclaimed the services of Theodosius.^c He added the province of Valentia to Roman Britain, restored the deserted garrisons, and coerced the unruly borderers by judicious stations and a vigilant defence.^d

The Saxon confederation might be defeated, but was not subdued. Such was its power, that they were now bold enough to defy the Roman armies by land, and invaded the regions on the Rhine with a formidable force. The imperial general was unable to repulse them; a reinforcement encouraged him. The Saxons declined a battle, and sued for an amicable accommodation. It was granted. A number of the youth fit for war, was given to the Romans, to augment their armies; the rest were to retire unmolested. The Romans were not ashamed to confess their dread of the invaders, by a perfidious violation of the treaty. They attacked the retreating Saxons from an ambush; and, after a brave resistance, the unguarded barbarians were slain or made prisoners.^e It is to the disgrace of literature, that the national historian of the day has presumed, while he records, to apologize for the ignominious fraud.

Such an action might dishonourably gain a temporary advantage, but it could only exasperate the Saxon nation. The loss was soon repaired in the natural progress of population, and before many years elapsed, they renewed their depredations, and defeated Maximus.^f At the close of the fourth century they exercised the activity and resources of Stilicho. The unequal struggle is commemorated by the encomiastical poet, whose genius gilds, with a departing ray, the darkening hemisphere of Rome.^g After his death the Saxons commenced new eruptions.^h They supported the Armorici in their rebellion,ⁱ aided the Gothic Euric, began to war with the Franks,^j and, extending the theatre of their spoil, made Belgium, Gaul, Italy, and Germany tremble at their presence. At length, Charlemagne, having prosecuted against them one of the most obstinate and destructive wars which history has recorded, their predominance was abased, and

^c Pacat. 98. "Quum ipse Saxonicus."—The British government have wisely done equal justice to the defenders of their country: we have Earl St. Vincent, Lord Viscount Duncan Baron of Camperdown, and Baron Nelson of the Nile, and Earl of Trafalgar.

^d Am. Marc. p. 406. Claudian. de 3 Consul. Hon. states his successes against the Picts and Scots, p. 44.

^e Am. Mar. 416.—Orosius, vii. c. 12, and Cassiodorus, 2 vol. 636, also mention the incident.

^f S. Ambrose, quoted 1 Mascou, 371.

^g Claudian. de Laud. Stil. lib. ii. p. 140, Elz. edit. ^h Jerom. in Mascou, 410.

ⁱ Sid. Apoll. Paneg. Avit. v. 369.

^j 2 Mascou, 39. Gregory of Tours, lib. ii. c. 19, mentions the capture of the Saxon islands by the Franks; and lib. iv. c. 10, what he calls their rebellion and Chlotarius' successes against them. Ib. ct c. 14; and their ravages in France, c. 37, p. 35.

their spirit of aggression destroyed.^k The celebrity and power of the Saxons on the continent then ceased. They dwindled to a secondary rank, and have ever since acted a secondary part in the events of German history. But they have never been obscure. In the tenth and eleventh and twelfth centuries, colonies of their population settled themselves in Hungary^l and Transylvania;^m and allied themselves by marriages with the ruder chieftains of those regions. Saxon dukes became emperors of Germany soon after the separation of this dignity from the crown of France. Branches from their stem have formed the most illustrious princes in the north of Germany, and Saxony has the honour of having given birth to the great Reformer of Christianity in the fifteenth century, and her chieftains of successfully supporting this intellectual emancipation and improvement, till it became impossible for power or craft to suppress it. A king of Saxony still exists, though with dismembered dominions, and the country yet presents a people of the most cultivated mind of all the German continent. The rise of the Saxon nation has been, therefore, singularly propitious to human improvement. It created a new formation of mind and manners, and polity in the world, whose beneficial results the state and history of England expressively display. No events tended more to civilize Germany from the third century to the eleventh, than the activity, leagues, colonies, conquests, and transactions of this people. All the improvements of Germany, beyond what Rome imparted, have arisen from the Saxon and the Frankish mind. They kept from it the more barbarous population of the Slavonians and the Huns, and the rude heroes of Scandinavia and the Baltic. The imperial reigns of the house of Saxony, notwithstanding the faults of some of its princes, principally contributed to establish the German independence, civilization, and prosperity during the middle ages. But the beneficial agencies of this race on the continent having diminished, other nations, whom they assisted to form and educate, are now attaining a political, and will probably gain a mental preponderance; unless Saxony, in her adversity, shall regain a moral one—the great foundation of all intellectual superiority.

^k See this war in Eginhart's *Vita. Carol. Magn.* and in the *Poeta Saxon.* *Antiq. Annal. de gestis Caroli M.* ap. Duchesne, ii. p. 136.

^l See the *Chronicles of Hungary*, of Thwrocz, pars ii. c. 11, c. 22.

^m See the authorities collected by Eder on this point, in his *De initiis, juribus que primævis Saxonum Transilvanorum.* *Comment.* p. 17, and 63-78. *Flemings, Hollanders, and others also went there, ibid.* Ed. Vienn. 1792.

CHAPTER VII.

The History of Britain elucidated from the Death of Maximus in 388, to the final Departure of the Romans.

SOON after the termination of the fourth century, the Saxon invasion of England occurred. It will be therefore useful to consider the state of the island at that time. A just perception of the events which occurred in Britain previous to their arrival, will usefully illustrate the causes of their success, and remove some of the difficulties, with which this portion of our history has been peculiarly embarrassed.

The transactions of the natives of Britain, from the fall of Maximus to the Saxon invasion, are almost lost to us, from the want of accurate historiographers of this period. The crude declamation of Gildas, Bede's extracts from him, the abrupt intimations of Nennius, and Jeffry's historical romance, or rather amplification of Nennius, with many additions from unknown sources, or from his own invention, are all the original documents which either Britons or Saxons have left us on this curious and important interval.

The querulous and vague invectives of Gildas have been reduced to some chronology by Bede; and the broken narrations of Nennius have been dramatized by Jeffry; but the labours of Bede have not lessened the original obscurity of Gildas; and all that the imagination of Jeffry has effected, has been to people the gloom with fantastic shapes, which, in our search for authentic history, only make us welcome the darkness that they vainly attempt to remove.^a

^a In the Archæology of Wales are two copies of Jeffry's History in Welsh; but they are not entitled to more historical respect than his Latin work. The Welsh triads have some curious notices concerning the ancient history of the Britons; but these are very unlike the fables of Jeffry; and this dissimilarity, while it makes the most ancient triads more respectable, increases our disrespect for his work, whether in Welsh or Latin. Some of the triads, indeed, which have a more modern aspect, seem to be taken from Jeffry's history. But I cannot believe that this history, whether first written by Tyssilio, Caradoc of Lancarvan, or Jeffry, was in existence, in its present details, before the 11th century. Some of its incidents may have been earlier traditional stories; but their present arrangement, chronology, and details, and the amplifications and additions with which they are accompanied, appear to me to be fictitious, and unauthorized; fully as much so as those of Saxo Grammaticus. The true cannot now be separated from the invented. We are therefore compelled to discredit the whole.

The chronology into which Bede has distorted the rhetoric of Gildas, was erroneously chosen by our venerable and valuable historian.^b His authority, which his learning would in any age make respectable, has been peculiarly impressive, because, without his ecclesiastical history, we should have lost almost all knowledge of the Anglo-Saxons for three centuries after their establishment in this island. With unsuspecting deference, our historians have rather studied Gildas, as he has been transcribed by Bede, than in his own composition; and thus they have governed the chronology of this interesting interval by the authority of Bede, without examining if Bede has not been himself mistaken.

It will much assist our inquiry to take a general survey of the history of the Roman empire at this period.

While Gratian governed the western empire, and Theodosius the eastern, the legions of Britain, who had so often been conspicuous for their turbulence, seceded from their allegiance to Gratian; and, in concert with the Britons, appointed Maximus, a Spaniard by birth, but then in the Roman service in Britain, to be their emperor in his stead.^c He was a man of great merit. He accepted the dangerous honour, and prepared to support it. Perhaps, if he had been contented to have reigned in Britain, his throne might have been perpetuated, and then a new destiny would have changed the fortune of England and the western world. The Saxons would in that case not have obtained Britain; and a Roman British kingdom might have stemmed the barbaric torrent that afterwards overwhelmed the empire. But either from the desire of extending his dominion into his native country, or because the dignity and life of the new sovereign were insecure until victory had confirmed the usurpation, he collected a great body of British youth, and with these he passed into Gaul. Many wonders have been fabled of his levies, and of the fatal effects of their absence from the island. Many legends of the most ridiculous nature have been appended, which grave historians have believed.^d That he raised all the force from Britain which he could

^b Bede postpones the invasions of the Picts and Scots, and the coming of the legions, until after Constantine. I have considered attentively the reasonings of his ingenious editor in his behalf, but I cannot coincide in his opinion. See Smith's Bede, App. p. 672.

^c Zos. lib. iv. p. 247. Socrates, lib. iv. c. 11. Sulpicius gives him a high character. Vir omni vitæ merito etiam predicandus,—if he had refused the offered diadem. Dial. ii. c. 7.

^d See Usher, 617–636, Ib. 200. This affair, as stated by Jeffry, lib. v. c. 14, is, that Maximus ordered 100,000 common people and 30,000 soldiers out of Britain, to colonize Armorica; c. 15, he desired wives for them; and c. 16, the king of Cornwall sent Ursula, his beautiful daughter, with 11,000 noble ladies, and 60,000 meaner women, who embarked at London. Great storms drowned part, and Guanius king of the Huns, and Melga king of the Picts, murdered the others, who resolved to be

collect, is probable, because he had a great stake to contend for, and the power of an ancient empire to withstand. But we need not extend this to the depopulation of our island, or to the total destruction of its military strength. His officer assassinated Gratian, after he had reigned fifteen years, and Valentinian admitted Maximus into a participation of the empire. He retained it until he failed to conciliate Theodosius, or ventured to contend with him for the dominion of the whole.

The superior forces or ability of the emperor of the East avenged the death of his unfortunate patron. Maximus perished at Aquileia.^e The British soldiers did not long survive the leader they had befriended; but that they wandered into Armorica, and new-named it, seems to be unfounded.^f

In 391, the generous Theodosius delivered the sceptre of the western empire to Valentinian, who marched into Gaul against the Franks. He renewed the ancient leagues with them, but perished by the weapon of a murderer in 392. A new adventurer for empire, Eugenius, assumed his dignity, made fresh treaties with the Franks and Alemanni, collected troops from all parts to maintain the exalted station he had ventured to seize, and advanced to defy the genius of Theodosius. In 394, he sustained a destructive combat near Aquileia, which terminated his ambition and his life.

The next year was marked by the death of Theodosius himself; and when he expired the Roman glory began to set. His two sons lived only to disgrace him. The western hemisphere was possessed by Honorius, the youngest son of Theodosius, who in January, 395, at the age of eleven, became master of an empire almost besieged by enemies; Italy, Africa, Gaul, Spain, and Britain, looked up to him for protection,^g and in turns demanded it: while Arcadius, his brother, filled the throne of the East. A minister

virtuous. Johan Major will have Ursula to be the daughter of the Scottish king, that Scotland may have the credit of her story. A lady settles the point by averring that Verena, one of the virgins, assured her in an express revelation that the blessed Ursula was a Scotswoman; her convenient visions also authenticated their relics!! Vision Elizabeth, lib. iv. c. 2. Usher Primord. 618-624. Baronius, who with others countenances the emigration, mentions, that the Martyrologies devoted the 11th October to the memory of Ursula and the 71,000; a day still religiously observed at Cologne for this superstitious incident. Some affirm that no person can be buried at Cologne in the place where they were said to have lain, because the ground throws up other corpses, which some deny!! Usher, 202, and 993.

^e Socrates, p. 270-273.

^f This point has been much controverted, but I cannot avoid agreeing with Du Bos, that Quant au tems où la péuplade des Bretons insulaires s'est établie dans les Gaules, it was not before the year 513. Hist. Crit. ii. 470. The chronicle of the abbey of Mont S. Michel, in Bretagne, gives this year as the epoch of their arrival. Anno 513, venerunt transmarini Britanni in Armoricam, id est minorem Britanniam. Ib. 472. The ancient Saxon poet, ap. Duchesne Hist. Fran. Script. ii. p. 148, also peoples Bretagne after the Saxon conquest.

^g 3 Gibb. 104. Aurelius Victor has drawn a very exalted and interesting character of Theodosius.

able to have upheld a falling state directed the young mind of Honorius. Stilicho, his appointed guardian, passed the Alps soon after the new accession, reviewed the garrisons on the Rhine, and negotiated with the Germans. During the progress of the same year he marched the legions of the empire along the coast of the Adriatic, to punish the guilty favourite who was diffusing misery through the East. In November, the fate of Rufinus delivered Stilicho from a competitor, and the world from a subordinate tyrant, who converted a trust of power into an instrument of base oppression.^h

But the enemy that was destined to shake the Roman empire to its foundation, and to give the signal of successful onset to the barbarians who were crowding to encompass it, began now to appear. Superior genius frequently produces great revolutions on the theatre of the world, when it is placed in the sphere of command. Empires rise to grandeur by the potent springs which that only can set in action; but when these have spent their force, and a new potentate appears, gifted with the same creative powers; the scenes of greatness change, the descendants of the illustrious are destroyed, and new edifices of sovereignty are erected, to tower, to menace, and to fall, like those on whose ruins they exist. Such was Alaric, who, at the close of the fourth century, united under his sovereignty the strength of the Gothic nation.

The Gothic nation had slowly but steadily advanced to consequence and power. Augustus had extended the Roman empire in the eastern part of Germany, up to the Danube. Before he died, Maraboduus, a German who had been educated by serving in the Roman armies, and by fighting against them, led the nation of the Marcomanni, with others of the Suevian race, into Bohemia; and founded there a new barbaric kingdom, which became peculiarly formidable to the Romans. His movements excited most of the nations between his new position and Italy to take up arms; and Tiberius was three years employed with fifteen legions, and an equal proportion of auxiliary troops, before he could subdue what was called Illyricum, or the countries that lay between the Danube and the Adriatic. The civil dissensions of

^h Gibbon, 117-120. Claudian has punished the vices of Rufinus by a fine effusion of heroic satire. His description of the council of the calamities of mankind is a living picture:

“ Nutrix Discordia belli,
Imperiosa Fames, Leto vicina Senectus,
Impatiens que sui Morbus, Livorque secundis
Anxius, et scisso mœrens velamine Luctus,
Et Timor et cæco preceps Audacia vultu,
Et Luxus populator opum, quem semper adhœrens
Infelix humili gressu comitatur Egestas,
Fœda que Avaritiæ complexæ pectora matris
Insomnis longo veniunt examine Curæ.”

In. Ruf. lib. i. p. 21, Elz. ed.

the Marcomanni enabled the Romans to establish themselves beyond the Danube. Of the subsequent Roman emperors, Nerva, Trajan, and Antoninus had successful wars with these people, and their neighbours, the Dacians, Quadi, and others; but about the year 167, from a confederation of all these nations, Marcus Aurelius had to sustain a war, the most dangerous and destructive that the Romans had experienced. Almost all the nations from Illyricum to Gaul appeared in arms. Aurelius made proportionate exertions. To his regular armies he added slaves and gladiators, robbers whom he pardoned, and Germans whom he could trust. He sold by auction, at Rome, all his personal property to augment his pecuniary funds, and after the military efforts of many years, at last subdued them; but the succeeding emperors were unable to retain any province beyond the Danube; and as they retreated, the nations to the north became more prosperous and daring.

Of these the Goths were the most adventurous and successful. They begin to appear in the imperial history about the time that the Franks are mentioned. They invaded Dacia. One Roman emperor, Alexander, used the ruinous policy of paying them an annual subsidy, and their history afterwards is that of continual progression. Many barbaric nations joined them; and, assuming their name, enlarged both their power and celebrity, as other tribes had thus contributed to the importance of the Franks and Saxons. Under Decius, about the year 250, the Gothic king passed the Danube at the head of 70,000 men, and ravaged Thrace and Macedonia: others afterwards invaded Asia, and with fleets assailed the Pontus. In 267, the Goths, Heruli, and Scythæ plundered the Archipelago, and devastated Greece. All the talents of Aurelian were insufficient to preserve the provinces beyond the Danube. He therefore abandoned Dacia to the warlike nations who were threatening it, and transplanted the friendly population to the right bank of the Danube. Probus pursuing this policy, caused 100,000 Bastarnæ to cross the Danube, and to settle in the southern provinces, which had been depopulated in these contests. To the same districts he also transplanted the Franks and Saxons. But all these measures were ineffective to resist the perpetual advance of the enterprising Goths, becoming in every campaign better disciplined by their unceasing contests with the Roman armies, and by the education of their chieftains in the Roman service, during the intervals of peace. The ambition and spirit of the Gothic nation increased with their improvements and power; and when Alaric appeared to lead them, they discovered themselves to be as superior to the Romans in their military qualities, as they were in their political institutions, and in some of the moral virtues.

In this year, the western world had been alarmed by the
 376. irruption of the Huns.¹ After swelling their army by the
 nations they conquered, they had rushed on the Gothic
 tribes. Unable to repulse the ferocious invaders, the Goths had
 precipitated themselves over the Danube. Stationed by the
 Emperor Valens in Lower Mœsia, the Goths revolted, penetrated
 into Thrace, defeated and killed their imperial benefactor, in 378,
 at Adrianople; and from this disastrous day never abandoned
 the Roman territory.² At length Theodosius made an accom-
 modation with them; a large portion of their warriors were
 taken into the imperial service, and a successful attempt was
 made to convert them to the Christian faith.

Among the Goths, who were allied to the Roman armies,
 Alaric passed his youth. Born in the island of Peuce,^k on the
 Euxine, of one of the principal families of the Goths,^l he had
 early abandoned the confined limits of his native soil, for the
 civilized regions of Europe, where he cultivated his mind with
 their improvements. He solicited an appointment in the Roman
 armies, and he was only entrusted with the command of bar-
 barbarian battalions. Though by birth a barbarian himself, he felt
 the superiority of his assuming mind, and was disgusted by the
 degradation. In Thrace, in Macedon, and in Thessaly, he
 396. showed the terrors of his discontent; he obtained the pas-
 sage of the immortalized Thermopylæ, overran Bœotia,
 Attica, and the Peloponnesus; and though his superstition pro-
 tected Athens from his fury, the other famed cities in Greece,
 Corinth, Argos, and Sparta, now enfeebled and degenerated,
 were conquered by his valour, his fortune, or his name.^m When
 Stilicho advanced with the imperial troops, to chastise the
 daring invader, Alaric, by a great exertion of skill, escaped to
 Epirus, and extorted, from the timid ministers of the Byzantine
 court, the title and authority of governor of the Eastern Illyri-
 cum. He was soon after recognised king of the Visigoths.ⁿ

¹ The history of these Huns is ably abridged by Mr. Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 561; he traces their unsuccessful contests with the Chinese, their divisions and emigrations, their conquests, the union of the Alani, and their wars upon the Goths. One of their ancient historians, Jornandes, c. 24, gives their execranda origine, that is, *veneficarum cum immundis spiritibus congressu*. M. de Guignes leads the way on their history.

² Gibbon, ii. p. 591-617. Ib. 640.

^k Claud. de 6 Consul. Hon. p. 174. Peuce is an island at the mouth of the Danube, formed by two of its discharging torrents. Strabo, p. 211. Dionys. Periegetes, v. 310.

^l Jornandes says of Alaric, "*Secunda nobilitas Baltharum que ex genere origo mirifica*," &c.

^m Zosimus, lib. v. p. 292-295. Yet let not the historian's apology for Sparta be forgotten. "*Nec armis amplius nec idoneis ad pugnam viris munita, propter Romanorum avaritiam*."

ⁿ The history of Alaric is narrated by Gibbon, v. iii. p. 134.

With these recollections of the Roman history, we may proceed to contrast the loose phrases of Gildas with the circumstances we can glean from the Greek and Latin writers, which seem applicable to the British history.

Immediately after mentioning the death of Maximus, Gildas states,^o that Britain, despoiled of her soldiery and military apparatus, and her youth, who followed the usurper to return no more; and being utterly ignorant of war, groaned for many years under the incursions of the Scots from the northwest,^p and of the Picts from the north.

This account, though obviously the language of exaggeration, is somewhat countenanced by the writers of the imperial history. It is stated by Sozomen, that Maximus collected a numerous army from Britain, Gaul, and Germany, and went to Italy.^q We learn from others, that the Franes took advantage of his absence to invade Gaul, and that the Saxons also moved in successful hostility against him.^r During the reign of his prosperity, in the second year of his empire, the Picts and Scots had vigorously defied him.^s It becomes, therefore, highly probable, that these Irish and Caledonian wanderers would be alert to profit by the opportunity of his absence, as well as the Franes and Saxons. On this occasion we shall accredit Gildas, and as Maximus was killed at Aquileia, in 388,^t we may consider that as the year in which the incursions began.

The next account of Gildas is, that the British nation, unable to endure these ravages, sent an embassy to Rome, desiring a military force, and promising a faithful obedience to the imperial sceptre.^u That a province suffering under a hostile invasion

^o Gildas, s. xi. p. 4. Gale's xv. *Scriptores*. Richard, entitled of Cirencester by some, by others Monk of Westminster, places this invasion in the year after the death of Maximus, lib. iii. c. 1. See his *de Situ Britannia* in the *Antiquitates Celtae-normannicae*, p. 120. Ado. Viennensis, an author of the ninth century, gives a similar chronology. *Chron. Aetas Sexta*, p. 353. *Bib. Mag. Patrum*, v. 7.—Bede, without any authority, and contrary to the literal meaning of Gildas, postpones it for about twenty years, lib. i. c. 12, and thus lays a foundation for his subsequent mistakes.

^p The *Circius*, which is the expression of Gildas, is mentioned by Pliny, ii. 46, as a wind famous in the province of Narbonne, and inferior in vehemence to none. Harduin interprets it, nord-west-nord.

^q "Collecto ex Britannia et vicinis Gallia, et ex Germanis ac finitimis gentibus numero exercitu, in Italiam profectus est." Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* lib. vii. c. 13, p. 721, Ed. Vales.

^r The valuable fragment of Sulpitius Alexander, preserved by Gregory of Tours, lib. c. 9, p. 34, mentions the Francic incursion: and St. Ambrose, ep. 17, intimates, though with no particulars, the Saxon success. "Ille statim a Francis, a Saxonum gente in Sicilia Sicæ et Petavione ubique denique terrarum victus est." 1 *Mascou*, 371.

^s Prosper in his *Chronicon* says, "incurantes Pictos et Scotos, Maximus strenue superavit."

^t 3 *Gibbon*, 40. The British history miscalls him Maximian, and kills him at Rome, lib. v. c. 16.

^u Gildas, s. 12.

should solicit succour from the fountain of power, and that, to obtain it, they should lavish assurances of fidelity, to expiate the imputation of treason, which the elevation of Maximus would produce, are circumstances which bear the marks of truth in their natural probability.

He adds, that a legion came by sea, well appointed with every requisite for service; that, engaging with the enemy, they destroyed a great multitude, drove them from the borders, and liberated the subjected natives from their rapacity and tyranny.^v

If we inquire of the imperial writers by whom this service was performed, we shall find that for three years after the fate of Maximus, both divisions of the Roman empire were governed by Theodosius,^w who, by his edict, made void all the usurper's exertions of the prerogative, that every thing might resume its pristine situation.^x It was a necessary consequence of these orders, that the civil powers of the revolted provinces should be immediately replaced: we accordingly find that a Vicarius, named Chrysanthus, was sent to Britain by Theodosius, whose good conduct was admired.^y No other period seems to have been more suitable to his administration.^z

But from the time of Constantine the policy of the emperors had completely separated the civil and military powers.^a This regulation could not allow Chrysanthus to have been the deliverer of Britain. The military arm was wielded by an arrangement of officers, jealously distinguished from the civil authority.^b Chrysanthus may have governed Britain as Vicarius, to diffuse internal quiet over a revolted province, as far as the civil magistracy was able to operate, but could have no forces to coerce the menacing barbarians.

During the latter period of the reign of Theodosius, and for many years in that of his successor, the military force of the

^v Gildas, s. 12.

^w Gibbon, iii. p. 55.

^x Cod. Theod. lib. xv. tit. 14.

^y Socrates, Hist. Eccles. lib. vii. c. 12. This temperate expression of Socrates *ἰθαρυμωδῶς*, was construed by Carte to imply the attainment of such a height of glory, that he must have stopped the Scottish depredations, p. 169. Our Henry also amplifies it so far as to say, that Chrysanthus was sent on purpose to check them, that he executed his commission with great ability and success, expelled the enemies, and restored the tranquillity of the province. He refers to Socrates as his authority, who only mentions what the text expresses.

^z The remark of Carte is just, that in no other juncture could Theodosius have intermeddled in the affairs of the western empire, p. 169.

^a Gibbon, ii. 43. Du Bos, Hist. Crit. i. 69. Le préfet du pretoire, et les officiers qui lui étoient subordonnés, nec ommandèrent plus les troupes.—The vicarius of Britain was under the *præfectus prætorio* of the Gauls, Notitia, s. 36., and was a civil officer.

^b Even Julian, when sent to command the army in Gaul, though he, en qualité de César, ou d'héritier présomtif de l'empire, put pretendre à une autorité plus étendue que celle qu'un généralissime ordinaire auroit exercée en vertu de sa commission, cependant Julien n'osoit rien décider concernant la levée des subsides et la subsistence des troupes. Du Bos, 61.

western empire was under the command of Stilicho, the master-general of the cavalry and infantry of the west.^c It must have been under him that every military aid was despatched into Britain.

The indistinct intimations of the Monk of Bangor are confirmed by Claudian; his mellifluous muse devoted herself to pursue the triumphs, and to proclaim the glory of Stilicho; and in Claudian's historic picture of his fame, the victorious battles of this superior man with the Picts and Scots, form one of those groupes, which, for this part of his life, have ensured to Stilicho an honourable celebrity.^d

But the desired euphony and imagery of poetry are unfriendly to geographical and chronological detail. We must not, therefore, expect from Claudian, the exact year of the Christian era in which Stilicho or his officers approached Ireland and Caledonia. We must endeavour to trace the chronology from other sources.

Britain, according to Gildas, mourned these devastations many years. A probable interval seems to arise from the situation of the empire. Though Maximus was conquered in 388, yet the Franks and Saxons continued in hostility. When Valentinian, who was sent against them into Gaul, was murdered, the usurpation of Eugenius harassed the empire for two years. Soon after he had perished, Theodosius expired.

The death of Rufinus left Stilicho at leisure, in the year 396. The African war was not prosecuted till 398, in which Gildo fell;^e therefore we may consider either the preceding year, or the subsequent, 399, as the era in which Britain was rescued from the spoilers.^f This last will allow eleven years for the *multos annos* which Gildas notes to have intervened between the invasion after Maximus and its suppression.

The querulous narration adds, that the Romans ordered the natives to build a wall between the two seas, in the north of Britain, to deter the invaders, and to protect the natives; that the irrational vulgar, having no director, constructed it of turf instead of stone.^g

This narration has the appearance of being an ignorant account

^c Gibbon, iii. 116.

^d Claudian de Laud. Stil. lib. ii. p. 140. Elz. edit.

^e Gibbon, iii. p. 128.

^f Richard places it eleven years before the capture of Rome by Alaric, or 399, lib. ii. c. i. p. 121. *Antiq. Celto-Nor.* The criticism of Mascou, p. 394, on Pagius, who dates a similar passage in 402, confirms our Richard's chronology, as it makes 399 the year in which Honorius was preparing the expeditions alluded to in the lines:

Domito quod Saxone Tethys
Mitior, aut fracto secura Britannia Picto
Ante pedes humili Franco, &c.

In Eutrop, p. 196.

^g Gildas, s. 12.

of the construction of one of those famous walls, which have so deservedly attracted the curiosity of antiquaries.

Gildas states, that this legion having returned home, the plunderers came again.^h A passage in Claudian verifies the fact, that the legion quitted the wall soon after the successes of Stilicho, and diffuses a ray of light, which determines the chronology of the incident.

We have mentioned the pacification which Alaric extorted from the eastern government; it might seem to them a release from anxiety; it was made by Alaric an interval of earnest preparation for more fortunate warfare. He surveyed the state of the world with the eyes of prophetic penetration, and discerned the vulnerable part, in which the genius of Rome might be fatally assailed. About the year 400, he suddenly marched from his eastern settlements to the Julian Alps, and poured his forces into Italy. The emperor of the West fled at his approach, when Stilicho again interposed the shield of superior talents. To meet the destructive Goths with a competent force, he summoned the Roman troops out of Germany and Gaul into Italy; even the legion which had been stationed to guard the wall of Britain against the Caledonians was hastily recalled, and attended the imperial general at Milan.ⁱ In the battle of Pollentia, Alaric discovered the inferiority of his troops, and made a bold but ruinous retreat.^j

The battle of Pollentia was fought in March, 403. We must allow time for the troops to have travelled from the north of Britain to Milan, and may date this departure of the Roman legion in the year 402. No one can disbelieve that in their absence the habitual depredators would return.

Gildas proceeds to inform us, that ambassadors went to Rome with rent garments, and with ashes on their heads, to implore further aid.^k However we may be inclined to ascribe the costume of the embassy to the imagination of the author, we cannot dispute the probable fact, that the province solicited and obtained the protection of its sovereign.

We have no direct evidence from the imperial writers that Stilicho sent back the legion, after the battle of Pollentia, into Britain, but it must have been there before 406, because we read of soldiers then choosing and deposing emperors in the island.

^h Gildas, s. 13. The peculiarity of style in which he indulges himself is remarkable: "Rabid robber wolves, with profound hunger and dry jaws, leaping into the sheep-fold," are the invaders who are brought over by "the wings of oars, and the arms of rowers, and sails swelling in the wind."

ⁱ Claudian, in his poem de Bello Getico, p. 169 :

Venit et extremis legio præsentata Britannia,
 Quæ Scoto dat fræna truci, ferro que notatas
 Perlegit exanguæ Picto moriente figuras.

^j Gibbon, iii. 147-155.

^k Gildas, s. 14.

Their presence must have been attended with its usual effect on the Picts and Scots.¹

Before we state the next sentence of Gildas, it will be proper to narrate the incidents, which, as he does not notice, though of principal importance, we may presume he never knew; they occurred between the last defeat of the Picts and Scots, and the final departure of the Romans.

The unwearied genius of Claudian has resounded the praise of Stilicho in poetry, which, though sometimes defective in taste, yet has too much energy and felicity to perish. The acts which the general achieved, justify his bard, and raise the minister above his degenerate countrymen. But it may be said of human virtue, as Solon pronounced to Cræsus of human happiness, that we should wait until the life is closed, before we pronounce decisively upon it. Stilicho for a while was the saviour of the Roman empire; he ended his career its most destructive scourge. He excited invasions, which he wished to have the merit of repressing; he introduced the barbarian hordes into the provinces, who quitted them no more; he occasioned rebellions which completed the debility of the imperial government; and paved the way for the extinction of the western empire.

When Alaric menaced Italy, Stilicho drove off the tempest; but he wanted to have his son invested with the imperial dignity, and he hoped to extort the concession from the trembling Honorius, by the terror of impending evils. To effect this, he excited the German nations to invade Gaul.^m Fatal contrivance of un-

¹ For the origin and history of these two nations, the reader may usefully consult Mr. Pinkerton's Inquiry into the early history of Scotland.

^m Orosius, lib. vii. c. 38, and c. 40; and from him Isidorus. Wandal. Grotius. p. 732, expressly affirms the treason. Jerom Ep. ad. Ager. exclaims against the semi-barbarian traitor, who armed against his adopted country its worst enemies. Prosper says, that salutis imperatoris tendebat insidias, p. 50. Marcellinus more explicitly says of him, "Spreto Honorio, regnumque ejus inhians, Alanorum, Suevorum, Wandalorum que gentis donis pecuniisque illectas contra regnum Honorii excitavit, Eucherium filium suum paganum, et adversum Christianos insidias molientem, cupiens Cæsarem ordinare." Chron. p. 37, added to Scaliger's Euseb. If these authors are not sufficient to make the imputation credible, the point seems to be decided by the evidence of a contemporary, who, being a pagan, gives more weight to an opinion, in which he and the Christians coincide; I mean Rutilius, whom Gibbon does not mention; he says,

Quo magis est facinus diri Stilichonis acerbum,
Proditor arcani quod fuit imperii.
Romano generi dum nititur esse superstes,
Cruclis summis miscuit ima furor:
Dumque timet, quidquid se fecerat ipse timeri,
Immisit Latine barbara tela neci.
Visceribus nudis armatum condidit hostem,
Illatæ cladis liberiore dolo.
Ipsa satellitibus pellitis Roma patebat,
Et captiva prius, quam caperetur, erat.

Itinerarium, lib. ii. v. 41-50.

principled ambition!ⁿ A most formidable irruption of the tribes between the Rhine and Danube, Alani, Suevi, Vandali, and many others, burst over the mountains, and deluged the western world. A portion of these, under Radagaisus, perished before Stilicho in Italy,^o and furnished him with the laurels he coveted. The remainder crossed the Rhine, which, if the charge of treason be true, was purposely divested of its protecting troops, and overwhelmed Gaul and its vicinity. "The consuming flames of war spread from the banks of the Rhine over the greatest part of the seventeen provinces of Gaul; that rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean, the Alps, and the Pyrenees, was delivered to the barbarians, who drove before them, in a promiscuous crowd, the bishop, the senator, and the virgin, laden with the spoils of their houses and altars."^p

This disaster spread consternation through Britain. Inflamed with their success, the invaders menaced this island. It is expressly asserted by Zosimus, that their devastations alarmed the army in Britain. Apprehensive of their further progress, and to exert an energy adequate to the crisis, the troops created an emperor for themselves. One Marcus was their first choice; finding his councils or his conduct insufficient for the exigency, they destroyed him, and elected Gratian, who is mentioned with the title of *Municeps*, in his room. Within four months afterwards he was murdered, and, induced by the flattering name, the British soldiery selected one Constantine from the ranks and decorated him with the imperial garments.^q

Constantine seems not to have been unworthy of his station;^r he passed out of Britain into Gaul, stayed a short time at Boulogne, conciliated to his interest the soldiers scattered upon the continent, and defeated the terrible barbarians.^s

The authority of Constantine was acknowledged in Gaul, and he reduced Spain. His son Constans laid aside the cowl of a monk, which, previous to his father's elevation, he had assumed,^t and was created *Cæsar*. Honorius, to whom Constantine had respectfully stated, that his dignity had been forced upon him, appeared to acquiesce in his retaining it, and sent him the imperial robes.^u The barbarians obtained rein-

ⁿ Gibbon attempts to defend Stilicho, but the weight of evidence must prevail. Du Bos, p. 190, accredits his guilt. How fatal the scheme was to Rome, we may judge, when we recollect, that "le dernier Decembre, 406, fut la journée funeste où les barbares entrèrent dans les Gaules, pour n'en plus sortir." Du Bos, 194.

^o For the expedition of Radagaisus, see Gibbon, iii. 163–173, and Mascon, 404–411.

^q Gibbon, iii. 171. ^r Zosimus, lib. vi. p. 373 and 371; Orosius, vii. 40.

^s Zosimus, *ibid.* ^t Marcellin. Com. p. 38; Orosius, vii. 40; Jornandes, c. 32.

^u Yet Frigeridus, cited by Gregory of Tours, characterises him as *gulæ et ventri deditus*, lib. i. c. 9, p. 35.

^v Zosim. lib. v. p. 359.

forcements, but Constantine adopted the precautionary measure of placing troops to guard the passages into Gaul.^v

During this division of the imperial power, Alaric again assembled a willing army, and appeared on the Roman frontier. The guilt of Stilicho had been detected and punished, and his death removed the last bulwark of the empire. The court of Honorius could furnish no other mind competent to confront the Gothic conqueror. In 408, he overwhelmed resistance, and besieged Rome. A ransom obtained a short security, but determined his superiority. In the next year he assailed it again, and condescended to accept from an emperor of his own nomination, the title of master-general. Every doubt was now removed; he saw his irresistible power, and the succeeding summer was marked by the dismal catastrophe of a third siege and successful assault,^w whose ferocious cruelties we might notice with abhorrence, but that the generals of civilized ages choose yet to perpetrate them in violation of all moral principle or social benevolence, and in wilful contempt of the inevitable opinion of posterity!

Aug. 24,
410.

Among the officers attached to the interest of Constantine was Gerontius, who had proceeded from Britain. The valour and services of this person on former occasions are stated by the historians; but, offended that Constans returned to Spain, on his second visit, with another as his general, the slighted Gerontius abandoned the interests of the emperor he had supported, and elevated a friend to dethrone him.^x He pursued his new purpose with a fatal alacrity, besieged and slew Constans at Vienne,^y and menaced the father with deposition. The troops of the legal emperor, Honorius, profited by the quarrel, and destroyed the competition. Constantine was taken at Arles, and Gerontius was pursued to the confines of Spain; his house was besieged, and the assailants set it on fire. His friend and wife received from his hands the death they implored, and he joined them in the tomb.^z

411.

^v Zosim. p. 374.

^w Gibbon, iii. 24–1244.

^x Zosim. 371, 372–375.

^y Orosius, lib. vii. Olympiodorus ap. Photium, 183. Marcellin, Chron. 38. Eusebius Chronicon. 412.

^z See the detail in Gibbon, iii. p. 259. I am tempted to imagine, that in drawing his Vortigern, Jeffry has copied and distorted the Gerontius of the imperialists. Some particulars are alike in both. He makes Constans a monk, and Vortigern a British consul,—who rebelled against, and caused Constans to be destroyed. Vortigern being afterwards besieged in the place to which he fled, and his pursuers finding they could not get an entrance, it was set on fire, lib. vi. and lib. viii.—The facts from the Roman historians are, that Gerontius proceeded from Britain, and was a comes or count; that he revolted from Constans, who had been in a monastery and caused his death; that he fled for refuge afterwards, and prevented his pursuers from entering his house, who therefore applied flames. These coincidences would induce me to strike Vortigern entirely out of true history, but that I find a Gurthri-gernus mentioned in Gildas, and a Gwrtheyrn in the Welsh remains. Their authority inclines me to believe, that Jeffry has confounded Gerontius, who died in

Amid this complexity of rebellion and sub-rebellion, the western provinces of the Roman state were sacrificed to the revenge of the military competitors. The crime which degraded all the merit of Stilicho was, from the same motives of selfishness, repeated by Gerontius. He also, to diminish the danger of his revolt, by his incitements and advice influenced into hostile invasion the barbarians who hovered near the Celtic regions.^a This desperate act of ambition was unfortunate for Rome. Constantine could not repel the torrent, because the flower of his army was in Spain.^b Britain and Gaul experienced all its fury. The cities even of England were invaded. To whatever quarter they applied for help, the application was vain. Honorius was trembling before Alaric, and Constantine could not even save Gaul.

In this extremity the Britons displayed a magnanimous character; they remembered the ancient independence of the island, and their brave ancestors, who still lived ennobled in the verses of their bards; they armed themselves, threw off the foreign yoke, deposed the imperial magistrates, proclaimed their insular independence, and, with the successful valour of youthful liberty and endangered existence, they drove the fierce invaders from their cities.^c The sacred flame of national independence passed swiftly over the Channel, and electrified Armorica. This maritime state, and its immediate neighbours, in the same crisis and from the same necessity, disclaimed the authority of a foreign emperor, and by their own exertions achieved their own deliverance.

Thus the authentic history from 407, is, that the barbarians, excited by Gerontius, assailed both Gaul and Britain; that Constantine could give no help, because his troops were in Spain; that Honorius could send none, because Alaric was overpowering Italy; that the Britons thus abandoned, armed themselves, declared their country independent, and drove the barbaric invaders from their cities; that Honorius sent letters to the British states, exhorting them to protect themselves;^d and that the Romans never again recovered the possession of the island.^e

Spain, with Gwrtheyrn, in England, and in his Vortigern has given us a fictitious medley of the history of both.

^a Zosimus, lib. vi. p. 375. There was a severe imperial law in existence, made A. D. 323, which was applicable to these crimes of Gerontius and Stilicho: "Si quis barbaris scelerata factione facultatem depredationis in Romanos dederit, vel si quo alio modo factam deviserit, vivus amburatur." Cod. Theod. lib. vii. tit. i. But ambition is always blind to its punishment, and as heedless of laws as of morality.

^b Zosimus, lib. vi. p. 375.

^c Zosimus, p. 376; and see Nennius, s. 25-27.

^d Zosimus, lib. vi. p. 381, *φιλανθρωπία*. The silver ingot discovered in 1777, in digging among the old foundations of the Ordnance office of the Tower, marked "ex officio Honorii," implies that the authority of Honorius was at first respected in the island.

^e The Abbé Du Bos, Hist. Crit. 211: and Mr. Gibbon, iii. 275, agree in placing

To these facts which we know to be authentic, it is with much distrust that we endeavour to adapt the vague lamentations of Gildas, which Bede has abridged. The account which he has left us of men sitting on the wall to be pulled down; of the British nation cut up by the Picts and Scots, like sheep by butchers; of the country becoming but the residence of wild animals; of the antithetical letter to Ætius in Gaul, "the barbarians drive us to the sea, and the sea drives us back to the barbarians; so that between the two we must either be slaughtered or drowned;" of part of the natives enslaving themselves to the barbarians, to get victuals; and of the remaining turning robbers on mountains, caves, and woods, can only awake our suspicion that querulous declamation has usurped the place of history, in his verbose yet obscure composition, or has converted local incidents into a national catastrophe. He who has stated these things, has also declared that the Britons, whom the Romans for near four centuries had civilized, could not build a wall, nor make arms without patterns;^f has mentioned nothing of the emperors, or transactions after Maximus; and has ascribed the walls of Hadrian and Severus to the fifth century, and the castles of the Saxon shore, so long before constructed, to a legion quitting Britain for ever. As far as Gildas can be supported and made intelligible by others, he is an acceptable companion. But he contains so much ignorant and exaggerated narration, and uses so many rhetorical generalities, that he cannot be trusted alone.^g If any application was made to Ætius from Britain, it must be referred to the period when the civil contests that pervaded it, invited the attacks of the northern invaders, and facilitated their progress, as we shall afterwards notice; and it may have been sent on behalf of particular districts only.

the defection and independence of Britain in 409. The words of Procopius are express, that the Romans never recovered Britain, lib. i. p. 9, *Grot. Prosper*, in his *Chronicon*, intimates as much. In the year before the fall of Constantine, he says, *Hac tempestate, præ valetudine Romanorum, vires funditur attenuatæ Britannia*, p. 50. *Scal. Euseb.* Bede, though he afterwards copies Gildas with mistaken chronology, yet, lib. i. c. 11, after mentioning the capture of Rome by Alaric, adds, *ex quo tempore Romani in Britannia regnare cessarunt*, after having reigned in it 470 years since Cæsar. Now in c. 2, he says, Cæsar came 60 ant. Chr.; therefore according to Bede, in this passage, the Romans lost the government of Britain by the year 410.

^f Gildas, s. 12 and s. 14.

^g Gildas. Bede, lib. i. c. 12 and 13. The errors of Gildas are not to be charged upon Bede; he has only adopted them because he had no other Latin document to use. The Roman account of British transactions ceased when the imperial troops finally quitted England. Native literature only could supply materials afterwards for future history; but the Saxons of Bede's age did not understand the British tongue. Hence Bede had no authority but Gildas for this part of his history. Nennius had certainly other materials before him; for, with some fables, he has added many original circumstances which are entitled to attention.

CHAPTER VIII.

The history of Britain, between the departure of the Romans and the invasion of the Saxons.

WHEN Zosimus mentions Britain, for the last time, in his history, he leaves the natives in a state of independence on Rome, so generally armed as to have achieved the exploits of Roman soldiers, and to have driven the invaders from their cities. This appears to be authentic history. We may assume the governing powers of the island, at that period, to have been the civitates or the territorial districts, because the emperor would of course have written to the predominant authority. This was the state of the island in or after the year 410, and to this we may add from others, that the Romans never regained the possession of it.^a There is evidence that they assailed the liberties of Armorica,^b but none that they contested with the Britons the enjoyment of their independence.

The Britons, who had been strong enough to repulse from their island, the barbarians who had overran Gaul, or who had taken

^a Mr. Camden makes Britain return to the subjection of Honorius, and to be happy for a while under Victorinus, who governed the province, and put a stop to the inroads of the Picts and Scots. *Introd.* 85. Henry, lib. i. c. i. p. 119, 8vo. enlarges still more; he states, that after the death of Constantine, Britain returned to the obedience of Honorius, who sent Victorinus with some troops for its recovery and defence; and that this general struck terror into all his enemies in this island; but the increasing distresses of the empire obliged Honorius to recall Victorinus, and all his troops, from the island.—There is no authority for this circumstantial detail. Rutilius, in his journey in Italy about 416, merely takes occasion to compliment Victorinus on his former honours. In this friendly digression he says, that the ferocious Britannus knew his virtues, whom he had governed so as to excite their attachment. *Itiner.* 499, p. 14. ed. Amst. Whether he governed it under Theodosius or Honorius is not said. That he could have no command of troops is certain, because the vicarius or governor was a civil officer. The act of his government, according to Rutilius, was not then a recent thing, but at some distance, because he adds another event, which, he says, lately happened, "illustrius nuper sacræ comes additus aulæ:" marking this honour as a recent event in 416, implies that the others were not recent; hence there is no reason to place him in Britain after 409.

^b Du Bos, *Hist. Crit.* p. 213, thinks, that the revolt of Armorica contributed more than any other event to establish la monarchie Française in Gaul. Armorica comprehended five of the seventeen provinces of Gaul. On its struggles for liberty, see Du Bos, and 1 *Mansou*, 453, 476; also 3 *Gibbon*, 275.—It had afterwards many unfavourable conflicts with the Franks. *Greg. Tours.* lib. iv. and v. *Freculphus*, lib. ii. c. 22.

advantage of that calamity to molest them, could not have been subdued without a serious invasion. Even the exposed and inferior Armorica maintained a vigorous resistance. But the dismal aspect of the Roman state, during the fifth century, coincides with the absolute silence of authors to prove that the Romans forbore to invade the British independence.

The majesty of the Capitol had departed; the world no longer crouched in submission before it; and even its own subjects are said to have rejoiced over its ruin. The Goths conquered Spain; a rebel arose from the tomb of Honorius; another general repeated the treason of Stilicho; and the terrible Genseric embarked with his Vandals against Africa: even Ætius was a subject of dubious fidelity. At the head of 60,000 barbarians he extorted the honours he enjoyed, maintained his connection with the Huns and Alaric, and had to withstand the Franks and Suevi. The son of Alaric besieged Narbonne, the Belgic provinces were invaded by the Burgundians, and the desolating Attila at last burst upon Gaul.^e

But whatever was the cause which induced Honorius to permit, or withheld his successors from molesting, the independence of Britain, it was an event which might have been made beneficial to every class of its inhabitants. The Romans had, in the beginning of their conquests in Britain, from motives of self-preservation, endeavoured to civilize it. When by their incentives, the national mind had been diverted from habits of warfare, to the enjoyments of luxury and the pursuits of commerce, the natives shared in the prosperity, the vices, and the institutions of the governing empire. At the end of the fourth century, the evils of corrupted civilization, and of its invariable attendant, a weak, tyrannical and oppressive government, were dissolving in every part the decaying fabric of the Roman dominion. Its state at this period has been described to us by a contemporary, who though he writes with the antithesis without the genius of Seneca, yet was a man of sense and piety, and saw clearly and felt strongly the mischiefs which he laments, and the ruin to which they tended.^d He, after detailing the social vices of the Roman world at that time—its general selfishness, rivalry, envy, profligacy, avarice, sensuality, and malignant competitions, expatiates on one important fact, which deserves our peculiar notice, from its destructive hostility to the stability of the empire, as well as to the welfare of every individual. This was not merely the weight and repetition of the taxations imposed by the government, but still more the permitted and overwhelming oppressions of the authorized tax-gatherers, exceeding their authority, and

^c See Gibbon, iii. p. 262-271, and 327-432.

^d This was Sulvian, an ecclesiastic of Marseilles. It occurs in his treatise *De gubernatione Dei*, which is published in the *Magna Bibliotheca Patrum*, vol. v.

converting their office into the means of the most arbitrary and ruinous oppressions.

He says, "In all the cities, municipia, and villages, there are as many tyrants as there are officers of the government; they devour the bowels of the citizens, and their widows and orphans; public burthens are made the means of private plunder; the collection of the national revenue is made the instrument of individual peculation; none are safe from the devastations of these depopulating robbers. The public taxation is a continual destruction: the burthens, though severe, would be more tolerable, if borne by all equally and in common; but they are partially imposed and arbitrarily levied: hence many desert their farms and dwellings to escape the violence of the exactors; they seek exile to avoid punishment. Such an overwhelming and unceasing proscription hangs over them, that they desert their habitations, that they may not be tormented in them."^e

Such were the evils under which the people of the Roman empire were groaning, from the conduct of the officers of the public revenue, who seem to have resembled Turkish pashas. The disastrous consequences to the empire itself are as forcibly delineated.

"From these oppressions many, and those not of obscure birth but of liberal education, fly to our national enemies; (that is, the barbaric nations pressing on the Roman empire) that they may not perish under the afflictions of legal prosecutions. And although the people to whom they retire differ in religion, language, and ruder manners, yet they prefer to suffer the inconveniences of dissimilar customs among barbarians, than ruinous injustice among Romans. They emigrate to the Goths, to the Bagaudæ, and other ruling barbarians, and do not repent the change."^f

This preference given by the Roman people to the protection of the barbaric government, to that under which they had been brought up, explains impressively the facility with which the German nations at this period overwhelmed the Roman empire. He mentions it repeatedly and emphatically.

"Thus the name of Roman citizen, once so valued and bought so dearly, is now spontaneously repudiated and shunned: it is esteemed not only useless but abominable. What can be a greater evidence of the iniquity of the Roman administration, than that so many both noble and honourable families, and to whom the Roman state ought to be the means of the highest honour and splendour, are driven to this extremity, that they will be no longer Romans."^g

His next assertion is, that, if they did not emigrate to the

^e *Salvian*, p. 89, 91.

^f *Ib.* 90.

^g *Ib.*

barbaric nations, they became part of those affiliated robbers who were called *Bagaudæ*.^h

“They who do not fly to the barbarians, become themselves barbarians. In this state is a large portion of Spain, and no small part of Gaul. Roman oppression makes all men no longer Romans. The *Bagaudæ* are those who, plundered and maltreated by base and bloody judges, after they had been deprived of the right of Roman liberty, choose to lose the honours of the Roman name. We call them rebels and traitors, but we have compelled them to become criminal. By what other causes are they made *Bagaudæ* but by our iniquities; by the dishonesty of our judges; by the proscriptions and rapine of those who convert the public exactions into emoluments for themselves; who make the appointed taxations the means of their own plunder;—they fly to the public foe to avoid the tax-gatherer.”ⁱ

He declares these feelings to have been universal.

“Hence there is but one wish among all the Romans, that they did not live subject to the Roman laws. There is one consenting prayer among the Roman population, that they might dwell under the barbarian government. Thus our brethren not only refuse to leave these nations for their own, but they fly from us to them. Can we then wonder that the Goths are not conquered by us, when the people would rather become Goths with them than Romans with us.”^j

^h To Scaliger's note on the *Bagaudæ*, *Animad. Euseb.* 243, we may add that *Bagat*, in the *Armoric*, is a troop or crew. *Lhuyd Archæiol.* 196. *Bagach*, in Irish, is warlike. *Bagach*, in *Erse*, is fighting. *Bagud*, in Welsh, is multitude. *Du Cange* mentions *Βαγυδοι*, *vagare*, and *Boguedim*, Hebrew for *rebellis*. *Glos. Med. Lat.* i. p. 432. See their history in *Du Cange*, *ib.* and *Du Bos*, p. 204.

ⁱ *Salv.* p. 90, 91.

^j *Ib.* 92. I cannot dismiss this author without noticing the intimation he gives us of the moral benefit which the irruptions of the German barbaric tribes produced at that period. The Vandals furnish an instance, who, it is well known, invaded Spain, and from thence passed victoriously into Africa, where they established a kingdom: they were one of the weakest of the barbaric nations, yet they were led onwards to successes that surprised the dismayed Romans. Though fierce and rude, they were remarkable for the chastity of their manners, at the very time when voluptuous profligacy was prevailing in the Roman empire, and especially in its provinces in Africa. *Salvian* mentions the African depravity from his own observations in the strongest terms of reprehension. The abominations were general and incurable. He describes, as a specimen, Carthage, the Rome of Africa, which had its schools, philosophers, gymnasia, churches, nobles, magistrates, and every establishment and advantage that distinguished a Roman great city. But he says he saw it full of the most dissolute luxury, and the foulest vices and debauchery in all its inhabitants, as well as of the most selfish tyranny and rapacity in the great and rich. It was even the fashion for the men to dress themselves as women, and to pass for such. In this state of evil, the Vandals, like a torrent, overran the north of Africa, and settled themselves in Carthage, and the other towns; their speedy corruption was anticipated in a country so abandoned; but, to the astonishment of the empire, instead of degenerating into the universal depravity, they became its moral reformers. The luxuries and vices that surrounded them, excited their disgust and abhorrence. Their own native customs were so modest, that instead of imitating they despised and punished, with all their fierce severity, the impurities they witnessed. They compelled all the prostitutes to marry. They made adultery a capital crime, and so sternly punished personal

These political evils, thus oppressively affecting the general population of the Roman empire, may satisfy us that the Britons, once become independent, armed, and victorious over their barbaric invaders, would not court the return of the Roman yoke. Therefore every narration which states, that after their independence they offered unconditional submission to the Roman empire, cannot but excite our suspicion and disbelief.

When we proceed to inquire into the events which followed the emancipation of Britain, the first question which naturally occurs to us is, what was the government which the natives substituted to the imperial institutions.

Britain, under the Romans, contained two municipia, nine coloniæ, ten civitates possessing the *Latio jure*, twelve stipendariæ, besides many other towns.* It was usual with the Romans to partition their conquests into districts, called civitates. In Gaul, during the fifth century, there were one hundred and fifteen civitates; each of these had its capital city, in which resided a senate, whose jurisdiction extended over all the pagi which composed the territory of the civitas.¹ Now if the seventeen provinces of Gaul had one hundred and fifteen civitates, the five provinces of Britain, which were as flourishing, might reasonably have had thirty-three, which is the number of the great towns enumerated by Richard.

We are, therefore, to consider Britain, in the latter periods of the Roman residence, divided into thirty-three civitates, of which thirty were in England and Wales. The chief towns were :^m

Municipia :

Verolanium,
Eboracum.

Coloniæ :

Londineium,
Camalodunum,
Rhutupis,
Thermæ,
Isca Secunda,
Deva Getica,
Glevum,
Lindum,
Camboricum.

Latio jure donatæ :

Durnomagus,
Catarracton,
Cambodunum,
Coccium,
Luguballia,
Ptoroton,
Victoria,
Theodosia,
Corinum,
Sorbiodunum.

} in Scotland.

Stipendariæ :

Venta Silurum,

debauchery, that a great moral change took place in all the provinces they conquered. He details these circumstances in his seventh book. He gives our Saxon ancestors the same character, "feri sed casti," fierce but chaste, and it seems to be manifest, that the superior character, virtue, mind, and general loveliness of the ladies of modern Europe, have arisen from the barbaric tribes of ancient Germany, and from the revolution of manners, as well as of government, which they produced by their conquest of the Roman empire.

* Richard, p. 111. *Antiq. Celto-Scand.*

¹ Du Bos, i. p. 2.

^m Richard, *ubi sup.* For the modern names see Mr. Whitaker's *Manchester*, vol. ii. 330-379.

Stipendaria :

Venta Belgarum,
 Venta Icenorum,
 Segontium,
 Muridunum,
 Ragaë,
 Cantio polis,

Stipendaria :

Durinum,
 Isca,
 Bremenium,
 Vindonum,
 Durobrovæ.

In each of these principal towns, the offices of power and dignity belonging to each civitas, were made residentiary; the duumviri, senates, decurions, curiæ, and ediles. These civitates were arranged under five provinces, two of which were governed by consulares, and three by presides. Above these provincial magistrates a vicarius extended his overruling authority, subordinate only to a prætorian præfect, with whom the emperor preserved an immediate communication.^a

The vicarius and the provincial magistrates, or the consulares and presides, were foreigners. With such a jealous hand did Rome maintain her empire, that no native was suffered to enjoy, in any case, the provincial administration; nor could the provincial officers, or their children, marry with a native, or purchase territorial property, slaves, or houses.^o On the other hand, the municipal officers of the civitates seem to have been natives.

It was a point carefully guarded by law, that the officers of one civitas should not interfere with any other; hence the edict, that no duumviri should with impunity extend the power of their fasces, beyond the bounds of their own civitas.^p The decurions served for the civitas of their nativity; and it was ordered, if to avoid the office any withdrew to another civitas, that he should be made to serve in both.^q

We may, therefore, conceive England and Wales, in the fifth century, divided into thirty independent civitates, governed by native officers originating from each civitas. The imperial magistrates, whom Zosimus mentions that they deposed, were most likely the vicarius, the consulares, and the presides; and on their deposition, the island, as far as it was possessed by the Britons, would naturally divide into thirty independent republics; or, into as many separate republics as there were civitates. That this event did happen we have a sort of evidence in the circumstance, that Honorius addressed his letters to the civitates of Britain.

But in addition to these civil powers, the influence of the ecclesiastical, must be taken into consideration. In Gaul, therefore most probably in Britain, every civitas had a bishop,^r and every

^a 2 Gibbon, 32-38. Notitia, s. 49.

^o Cod. Theod. lib. xii. tit. i. s. 174.

^p Du Bos, i. p. 14.

^o 2 Gibbon, p. 39.

^q Cod. Theod. lib. xii. tit. i. s. 12.

province had a superior bishop, answerable to our metropolitans, though not distinguished with the title of archbishop. The bishops had some power, and from this enjoyed much consideration and credit in every district. The people in general were in two divisions, the free and the servile.

Thus far the few facts left to us fairly extend. Independent Britain, after the year 410, contained many independent republics or civitates; each of these was governed by chief magistrates or duumviri, a senate, subordinate officers called decurions, an inferior senate called curiæ, with other necessary officers. The ecclesiastical concerns were regulated by a bishop in each, whose power sometimes extended into lay concerns.

But it is probable, that these thirty independent civitates did not long continue in peace with each other. The degenerated civilization, bad financial system and oppressive government of the Romans, must have left evil habits and tendencies in the British population. Nor can we suppose that the natives of each civitas would always be contented with the legal power of the offices to which they were called; quietly lay down the fasces at the end of the year, if duumviri; or if senators, seek no more authority than belonged to their official acts; or if inferiors, aspire not unduly to an elevation of condition. The accidents of human life would not fail to involve disputes of jurisdiction between one civitas and others: and mankind are generally eager to determine their differences by force. We cannot doubt that no long interval would ensue, before civil discord pervaded the island, or that this would terminate in the predominance of military tyrants; because, in that most dreadful of all evils, civil fury, it is the sword which eventually prevails.

The lamentations of Gildas concur with the obscure intimations of Nennius to prove, that a considerable part of the interval between the emancipation of the island and the arrival of the Saxons, was occupied in the contests of ambitious partisans.

“The country,” says Gildas, “though weak against its foreign enemies, was brave and unconquerable in civil warfare. Kings were appointed, but not by God; they who were more cruel than the rest, attained to the high dignity.”

With as little right or expediency, as they derived their power, they lost it. “They were killed, not from any examination of justice, and men more ferocious still were elected in their place. If any happened to be more virtuous or mild than the rest, every degree of hatred and enmity was heaped upon them.”^a The clergy partook of the contentions of the day.

He renews this picture in his address to the British kings who

^a Gildas, s. 19.

had survived the Saxon invasion, and though his expressions are not elucidated by an historical detail, yet they are supported by the expression of St. Jerome, "Britain, a province fertile in tyrants," and by the assertion of Procopius, that it remained a long time under its tyrants.[†]

Here that agreement between Gildas and other writers occurs, which entitles him to belief; and if his other loose declamations about the devastation of the barbarians in Britain, and the application of the natives to Ætius for succour have any foundation, they must be referred to the period of those civil wars which succeeded the Roman departure. We can conceive, that when the strength of the country was not directed to its protection, but was wasted in mutual conflicts, the hostilities of the Picts and Scots may have met with much success. Not opposed by the force of the whole island, but by the local power of the particular civitas or district invaded, the enemies may in many parts, especially of the northern districts, have defeated the opposition, and desolated the land of the northern borders and the adjacent coasts. With equal success, from the same cause, the western shores may have been plundered by the Scots, and the southern by the Saxons. Some of the maritime states, abandoned by their more powerful countrymen, may have sought the aid of Ætius, as they afterwards accepted that of the Saxons; but either the account of Gildas is rhetorical exaggeration, or is applicable only to particular districts, and not to the whole island.

These contests seem at last to have produced a great cluster of regal chiefs within the island. We hear of kings of Devonshire, Cornwall, Kent, and Glastonbury; several Many kings
in Britain. kings of Cumbria, the kings of Deira and Bernicia, several contemporary kings of Wales, and others in the north and west of England, about the time of the Saxons.[‡] We find Malgocunc styled by Gildas, the dethroner of many tyrants; and Nennius mentions the Saxons to have fought, and Arthur to have marched, with the kings of the Britons.[§] But this succession of tyrants is only known to us by casual intimation, and by the denunciations of Gildas. They appear in their rest of obscurity like the distant wood at the last refractions of the departed sun: we behold only a dark mass of gloom, in which we can trace no shapes, and distinguish no individuals.

In this period of the independence and civil warfare of Britain, one tyrant is said to have predominated over the rest, or at least in the southern part of the island, whom Gildas calls Gurthrygnus, and whom the Welsh triads and poets name Gwrtheyrn.[¶]

[†] Procop. Hist. Vandal, lib. i. sed mansit ab eo tempore sub *tyrannis*.—2 Jerom ad Ctes. Britannia provincia fertilis tyrannorum. 3 Gib. 277. 1 Masc. 516.

[‡] See Gildas, Ep. p. 10. Nennius, p. 105–107, 117. Taliesin, *passim*. Caradoc Llanc. ap. Usher, 469. Llyward hen; Aneurin.

[§] Gildas, 12. Nennius, 114.

[¶] It has been already remarked, that the Vortigern of Jeffry seems to be a

But Britain was not now in the state in which the Romans had found it. Its towns were no longer barricadoed forests,^a nor its houses wood cabins covered with straw,^y nor its inhabitants naked savages with painted bodies,^z or clothed with skins.^a It had been for above three centuries the seat of Roman civilization and luxury. Roman emperors had been born,^b and others had reigned in it.^c The natives had been ambitious to obtain, and hence had not only built houses, temples, courts, and market places, in their towns, but had adorned them with porticoes, galleries, baths, and saloons,^d and with mosaic pavements, and emulated every Roman improvement. They had distinguished themselves as legal advocates and orators,^e and for their study of the Roman poets.^f Their cities had been made images of Rome itself, and the natives had become Romans.^g The description of Caerleon in Wales is applicable to many others in Britain.^h The ruins of Verulam, near St. Albans, exhibited analogous signs of splendour and luxury;ⁱ and the numerous remains of habitations

mixture of Gerontius and Gwrtheyrn. Nennius has added some idle fables to his name; yet gives him a genealogy. Mac Guortheneu, M^cGuitaul, M^cGuitolin, M^cap Glou, p. 112. The Saxon Ethelwerd, p. 833, calls him Wrtheyrn, which corresponds with the name in the Welsh remains.

^x Cæsar, lib. v. c. 14. Tac. Vit. Agr. Strabo, lib. iv. y Diod. Sic. lib. v. c. 8.

^z Cæsar, lib. v. Mela, lib. iii. c. 6. Pliny, Hist. lib. xxii. c. 1.

^a Cæsar, lib. v. c. 14.

^b As Constantine the Great; for such I consider to be the fair meaning of the orator's words addressed to him, speaking of Britannia, or the British Isles, "Tu etiam nobiles, ILLIC ORIENDO fecisti." Mr. Gibbon thinks this may refer to his accession: but the other opinion is the most natural construction; and so the foreign editor thought when he added the marginal note, "Nam in Britannia Constantinus natus fuit."

^c Carausius, Constantinus Chlorus, the father of Constantine, and others.

^d Tacit. Vit. Ag. c. 21.

^e Hence Juvenal's "Gallia cauidicos docuit sæcunda Britannos," Sat. 15. Gaul being their place of study.

^f So Martial intimates, "Dicitur et nostros cantare Britannia versus." Ep.

^g Hence Gildas says, "Ita, ut non Britannia, sed Romania insula censeretur," c. v. p. 3. He adds, that all their coins were stamped with the image of the emperor, *ibid.*

^h Giraldus has left this account of its remains in the twelfth century. "It was elegantly built by the Romans with brick walls. Many vestiges of its ancient splendour still remain, and stately palaces, which formerly, with the gilt tiles, displayed the Roman grandeur. It was first built by the Roman nobility, and adorned with sumptuous edifices, with a lofty tower, curious hot baths, temples now in ruins, and theatres encompassed with stately walls, in part yet standing. The walls are three miles in circumference, and within these, as well as without, subterraneous buildings are frequently met with; as aqueducts, vaults, hypocausts, stoves," &c. Giral. Camb. Itin. Camb. p. 836.

ⁱ One abbot of St. Albans, before the conquest, found great subterraneous passages of the ancient city, Verulam, solidly arched and passing under the river, and tiles and stones, which he set apart for the building of a church. Mat. Par. Vit. Ab. p. 40. The next abbot exploring farther, met with the foundation of a great palace, and remains of many buildings, with some manuscripts. He discovered several stone floors, with tiles and columns fit for the intended church; and pitchers and vessels made of earth, and neatly shaped as with a wheel; and also vessels of glass, containing the ashes of the dead. He also met with several dilapidated temples, subverted altars, idols, and various coins. Mat. Par. *ibid.* p. 41.

or towns built in the Roman fashion, which casual excavations are even yet every year, and sometimes every month, disclosing to our view, show that Britain, at the time of the Saxon invasion, had become a wealthy, civilized, and luxurious country.^j These epithets, however, whenever used, are but comparative phrases, and their precise meaning varies in every age, from the dawn of Egyptian civility to our own bright day. Britain did not in the fifth century possess our present affluence and civilization, but those of a Roman province at that epoch. It had not our mind, or knowledge, or improvements, but it shared in all that Rome then possessed or valued. Gildas has been emphatically querulous in painting the desolations which it had endured before his time—the sixth century—from the Picts, the Irish, and the Saxons, and from its own civil fury; and yet, after all these evils had occurred, he describes it as containing twenty-eight cities, and some well-fortified castles, and speaks of the country with metaphors, that seem intended to express both cultivation and abundance.^k Bede, who lived two centuries after Gildas, does not subtract from his description; but on the contrary adds “nobilissimis” to his cities, and “innumera” to his castles,^l which Nennius above a century later repeats.^m

If our knowledge of the moral state of Britain at this period be taken from the vehement censures of Gildas, no country could be more worthless in its legal chieftains and religious directors, or in its general population. He says it had become a proverb, that the Britons were neither brave in war, nor faithful in peace; that adverse to peace and truth, they were bold in crimes and falsehood; that evil was preferred to good, and impiety to religion. That those who were most cruel were, though not rightfully, anointed kings; and were soon unjustly destroyed by others, fiercer than themselves. If any one discovered gentler manners or superior virtues, he became the more unpopular. Actions, pleasing or displeasing to the Deity, were held in equal estimation. It was not the laity only who were of this character; the clergy, he adds, who ought to have been an example to all, were addicted to intoxication, animosities, and quarrels.ⁿ He aggravates the features of this revolting picture,

^j It is mentioned by the orator Eumenius, that when the father of Constantine the Great rebuilt Autun, he was chiefly furnished with workmen from Britain, “which abounded with the best builders.” Eum. Pan. 8.

^k Gildas, c. 1. The fecundity of the harvests of Britain, and the innumerable multitudes of its cattle and sheep, had been extolled by the Roman encomiast of Constantine. Paneg. Const. And we read in Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xviii. c. 2, and Zosimus, lib. iii. of corn being carried to Germany from Britain, by the Roman armies, as if from their granary. Permission had been granted by Probus to plant vines and make wine in Britain. Scrip. Aug. p. 942; and see Henry’s History, vol. ii. p. 106–112.

^l Hist. Eccl. c. 1, p. 41.

^m Nenn. 3 Gall. p. 98.

ⁿ See his first tract de excidio Brit.

in his subsequent addresses to the British kings, whom he names, and for whom no epithet seems, in his opinion, to have been too severe: and to the clergy, on whom his vituperative powers of rhetoric and scripture-memory are exerted with unceremonious profusion; accusing them, besides their folly and impudence, of deceit, robbery, avarice, profligacy, gluttony, and almost every other vice:—"even," he adds, "that I may speak the truth, of infidelity."^o He is angry enough with the Saxons, whom he calls Ambrones, Furciferi, and Lupi, "robbers, villains, and wolves;" but these are forbearing metaphors, compared with the flow of Latin abuse which he pours first on all the British kings generally, and then especially on Constantine, "the tyrannical cub of the lioness of Devonshire;" on the other "lion's whelp," Aurelius Conan, "like the pard in colour and morals, though with a hoary head;" on Vortiper, "the stupid tyrant of South Wales, the bear-driver," and what his words seem to imply, "the bear-baiter;" on Cuncglas, whose name he is pleased with recollecting, implies the "yellow bull-dog;" and on Maglocune, "the dragon of the island," the most powerful and "the worst" of all.^p But the very excess and coarseness of the invectives of Gildas, display such a cynicism of mind and atrabilious feeling in himself, as not only to show that he partook of the dispositions he reprehends, but also that he has so much exaggerated the actual truth, that we cannot disencumber it from his spleen, his malice, or his hyperboles. Bede has condescended to adopt a few sentences from his inculpations; but Nennius has not copied them; nor has Marc the hermit, one of the last-known revisers of Nennius, inserted them.^q Yet so many features of moral depravity

^o See his last declamation against the ecclesiastical order of Britain, of which he yet says, before he dies, he sometimes wishes to be a member, "Ante mortem esse aliquandiu participem opto."

^p It is his epistola in which these expressions occur, with copious commentaries of the same tendency. I am rather inclined to think, that one of the passages against Maglocune, alludes to his having aided Mordred against the celebrated Arthur. "Nonne in primis adolescentiæ tuæ annis, AVUNCULUM REGEM cum fortissimus prope modum militibus, quorum vultus, non catulorum leonis in acie magno-pere disparis, viscebantur, accerriunc, ense, hasta, igni oppressisti." The chronology suits Arthur, and the king with his brave militibus, whose countenances in battle were not much unlike lion's whelps, will sound like remarkable expressions, to those who cherish the romances on Arthur and his knights.

^q Of the small history of the Britons, usually ascribed to Nennius, the Rev. W. Gunn has recently (1819) published an edition from a MS. in the Vatican, that seems to be of the age of the tenth century, where it bears the name of Mark the Anchorite. "Incipit Historia Brittonum edita ab anachoreta Marco ejusdem gentis seto Epo. p. 46." "The original is on parchment, fairly written in double columns, and fills ten pages of a miscellaneous volume of the folio size." Gunn's Pref. It once belonged to Christina, the celebrated queen of Sweden. The two MSS. of this work in the British Museum, Vitel. A. 13 and Vespas. D. 21, have the name of Nennius as the author. So has the MS. of the Hengwrt library. The Bodleian MS. No. 2016, now No. 163, makes Gildas its author. "A Gilda sapiente composita." Of the new MS. Mr. Gunn justly says, "It varies not as to general import from the copies already known. It differs from those edited by Gale and Bertram in certain

in the Roman empire at this period are described by Fabian, who witnessed and detailed them, that however unwilling we are to adopt the violent abuse and repulsive rhetoric of Gildas, there is too much reason to fear, that many of the deformities which his coarse daubing has distorted almost into incredibility, degraded the character and accelerated the downfall of our ancient British predecessors.*

transpositions of the subject; in the omission of two introductory prefaces; in not acknowledging the assistance of Samuel Bewly, the reputed master of Nennius; and in detaching the life of St. Patrick from the body of the work, and placing it at the end." Pref. xxiv. It is in fact the former work dislocated and curtailed. I think these alterations quite sufficient to account for Mark having put his own name to the transcript he so varied. The MS. makes one of its latest computation of dates in 946, and the fifth year of Edmund the Anglo-Saxon king, p. 45. But this year is afterwards protracted to 994, pp. 62 and 80. The dates of all the copies are inconsistent. Mark by his date has varied that of Nennius, which in the MSS. used by Gale was 800, and in the Hengwrt MS. 796, and in c. xi. is made 876. This would imply that the chronicle had both earlier authors and revisals than Mark. Jeffrey quotes Gildas frequently as a writer of some history which we have not; and as this history of Nennius has had the name of Gildas prefixed to it, and bears so many marks of dislocated passages and changes of its date, I am tempted to think that it is an old chronicle revised and altered by several hands. Gildas may have made the first sketch of part of it. His work, Nennius in the ninth century may have abridged and carried on, and Mark in the next age have added his revisal. It is clear that the history of Nennius is not the whole work of Gildas to which Jeffrey alludes, because it does not contain the incident to which he refers. It is therefore either an extract or a different work.

* See Salv. de Gub. 44, 5, 6, 7.

APPENDIX TO BOOK II.

THE MANNERS OF THE SAXONS IN THEIR PAGAN STATE.

CHAPTER I.

The Character and Persons of the most ancient Saxons.

WE may now pause to consider the most prominent features of the Saxons before they established themselves in Britain.

The Anglo-Saxons came to England from the Germanic continent; and above a century had elapsed from their first settlements before they received those improvements and changes which followed the introduction of the Christian system. These circumstances make it necessary to exhibit them as they were in their continental and pagan state, before they are delineated with the features, and in the dress of Christianity.

It would be extremely desirable to give a complete portrait of our ancestors in their uncivilized state; but this is an epocha in the history of the human mind which in former times seldom interested any one, and has not been faithfully detailed. Hence on this subject curiosity must submit to be disappointed. The converted Anglo-Saxon remembered the practices of his idolatrous ancestors with too much abhorrence, to record them for the notice of future ages; and as we have no Runic spells to call the pagan warrior from his grave, we can only see him in those imperfect sketches, which patient industry may collect from the passages scattered in the works, which time has spared.

The character of the ancient Saxons displayed the qualities of fearless, active, and successful pirates. It is not merely the Spanish churchman Orosius,^a who remarks them as dreadful for their courage and agility, but the Emperor Julian, who had lived

^a Orosius, lib. vii. c. 32.

among barbarians, and who had fought with some Saxon tribes, denotes them as distinguished amongst their neighbours for vehemence and valour.^b Zosimus, their contemporary, expresses the general feeling of his age when he ranks them as superior to others in energy, strength, and warlike fortitude.^c

Their ferocious^d qualities were nourished by the habit of indiscriminate depredation. It was from the cruelty and destructiveness, as well as from the suddenness of their incursions, that they were dreaded more than any other people. Like the Danes and Norwegians, their successors and assailants, they desolated where they plundered with the sword and flame.^e

It was consistency in such men to be inattentive to danger. They launched their predatory vessels, and suffered the wind to blow them to any foreign coast, indifferent whether the result was a depredation unresisted, or the deathful conflict. Such was their cupidity, or their brutal hardihood, that they often preferred embarking in the tempest which might shipwreck them, because at such a season their victims would be more unguarded. Their warfare did not originate from the more generous, or the more pardonable of man's evil passions. It was the offspring of the basest. Their swords were not unsheathed by ambition or resentment. The love of plunder and of cruelty was their favourite habit; and hence they attacked, indifferently, every coast which they could reach.^f

Inland provinces were not protected from their invasion. From ignorance, necessity, or policy, they traversed the ocean in boats, framed of osiers, and covered with skins sewed together; and such was their skill or their prodigality of life, that in these they sported in the tempests of the German Ocean.^g

It is possible that men who had seen the vessels in which the Francs had escaped from the Pontus, and who had been twice instructed by Imperial usurpers in the naval art, might have constructed more important war ships, if their judgment had approved. Although their isles, and their maritime provinces of Ditmarsia and Stormaria, were barren of wood, yet Holsatia abounded with it; and if their defective land-carriage prevented

^b Julian Imp. Orat. de laud. Const. p. 116.

^c Zosimus, lib. iii. p. 147, ed. Ox.

^d Salvian says, *gens Saxonum fera est. de Gub. Dei, lib. iv.* V. Fortunatus calls them "*aspera gens, vivens quasi more ferino,*" 8 Mag. Bib. 787; and Sidonius has the strong expression of "*omni hosti truculentior,*" lib. viii. c. 7. Even in the eighth century the Saxons on the continent are described by Eginhard as "*natura feroces,*" p. 4.

^e Amm. Marcell. lib. xxviii. c. 3.

^f Amm. Marcell. lib. xxviii. c. 3, xxvii. c. 8. Sid. Apoll.

^g That this ocean was anciently dangerous from its tempests, Boniface, the self-devoted missionary of Germany, often states: *periculosum est navigantibus,* p. 52. *Germanici tempestatibus maris undique quassantibus fatigati senis miscrere,* p. 59. vol. xvi. Bib. Mag. Patrum.

the frequency of this supply, the Elbe was at hand to float down inexhaustible stores from the immense forests of Germany.

They may have preferred their light skiffs,^h from an experience of their superior utility. When their fatal incursions had incited the Romans to fortify and to garrison the frontier of Britain and Gaul, the Saxons directed their enmity against the inland regions. For their peculiar vessels no coast was too shallow, no river too small; they dared to ascend the streams for eighty or an hundred miles; and if other plunder invited, or danger pressed, they carried their vessels from one river to another, and thus escaped with facility from the most superior foe.ⁱ

Of the Saxons, an author of the fifth century says to a friend who was opposed to them, "You see as many piratical leaders as you behold rowers, for they all command, obey, teach, and learn the art of pillage. Hence, after your greatest caution, still greater care is requisite. This enemy is fiercer than any other; if you be unguarded, they attack; if prepared they elude you. They despise the opposing, and destroy the unwary; if they pursue, they overtake; if they fly, they escape. Shipwrecks discipline them, not deter; they do not merely know, they are familiar with all the dangers of the sea; a tempest gives them security and success, for it divests the meditated land of the apprehension of a descent. In the midst of waves and threatening rocks they rejoice at their peril, because they hope to surprise."^j

As their naval expeditions, though often wildly daring, were much governed by the policy of surprise, so their land incursions were sometimes conducted with all the craft of robbers. "Dispersed into many bodies," says Zosimus, of one of their confederates, "they plundered by night, and when day appeared, they concealed themselves in the woods, feasting on the booty they had gained."^k They are, however, seldom mentioned by the historians of the fourth and fifth centuries without some epithets which express a superiority over other men in their achievements or their courage.

The forocity of the Saxon character would seem to suit better the dark and melancholy physiognomies of Asia and Africa, than the fair, pleasing, and blue-eyed countenances by which our ancestors are described.^l But though nature had supplied them with the germs of those amiable qualities which have become the

^h On the vessels of the Saxons, see Du Bos, *Hist. Crit. de la Mon. de France*, i. p. 159.—*Mioparo quasi minimus paro; idem et carubus. Est parva scapha ex vimine facta quæ contexta crudo corio genus navigii præbet. Isidorus Orig. lib. xix. c. 1.*

ⁱ See Du Bos, 149. 2 Gibbon, 524.

^j Sid. Apoll. Epist. vi. lib. 8.

^k Zosimus, lib. iii. p. 149. This tribe whom he calls Quadi, Marcellinus, lib. xvii, c. 8, more correctly names Chamavi. These robbers were destroyed by one Charietto, a Franc, who organized some corps on the same plan.

^l Sidon. Apoll. lib. viii. ep. 9. Bede, lib. ii. c. 1. The expressions applied by Tacitus to all the German nations are, "truces, et cerulei oculi."

national character of their descendants, their direful customs, their acquired passions, and barbarous educations, perverted every good propensity. So ductile is the human capacity, that there is no colour, climate, or constitution, which governs the moral character so permanently as the good or evil habits and discipline to which it is subjected. An incident mentioned by Symmachus shows that they had a pride of mind which could not endure disgrace. He says that twenty-nine Saxons strangled themselves to avoid being brought into a theatre for a gladiatorial show.^m

Their persons were of the largest size. On the continent they were so proud of their forms and their descent, and so anxious to perpetuate them, that they were averse to marriages with other nations.ⁿ Hence the colour of the hair of their males is mentioned as uniform. In the fourth century they cut their hair so close to the skin, that the appearance of the head was diminished and the face enlarged.^o In the following ages, their hair behind is mentioned as diffused upon their shoulders;^p and an ancient Saxon law punished the man who seized another by the hair.^q

In their dress, their loose linen vests were adorned with trimming, woven in different colours.^r Their external garment was the sagum, or cloak,^s and they had shoes. Their females had gowns, and several ornaments for the arms, hands, and neck.^t

The Saxons who invaded Thuringia in the sixth century, are described by Wittichind as leaning on small shields, with long lances, and with great knives, or crooked swords, by their sides.^u

^m Ep. xlvi. lib. 2. p. 90.

ⁿ Meginh. ib. ap. Lang. Script. Dan. tom. ii. p. 39. Wittichind. p. 5. Tacitus had expressed the same of all the German tribes.

^o Cujus vertices extimas per oras
Non contenta suos tenere morsus
Aretat lamina marginem comarum
Et sic crinibus ad cutem recis-ia
Decrescit caput, additurque vultus.

Sid. Ap.

^p Wittichind, p. 5.

^q 1 Linden. Codex Legum, p. 474.

^r Paul. Warnefrid de Gest. Langob. lib. iv. c. 23, p. 838. Grot. ed. The vest is mentioned in the old Saxon law, p. 474, and their idol, Crodus, had one.—Fabric. Hist. Sax. tom. i. p. 61.

^s Wittichind, p. 5; and see Lindenbrog Glossary, Voc. Sagum, and Weiss. The curious may see a description of the dress of a Franc in the Monk of St. Gall's life of Charlemagne, and of a Longobard in P. Warnefridus, lib. iv. c. 23.

^t One is called in the old Anglian law the Rhedo, to the stealing of which the same penalty was attached as to stealing six sows with pig. The mother, in the same law, might at her death leave to her son, land, slaves, and money; to her daughter, the ornaments of the neck; id est, murænas (*necklaces*), nuscas, monilia (*collars*), inares (*ear-rings*), vestes, armillas (*bracelets*) vel quicquid ornamenti proprii videbatur habuisse. 1 Lindenb. p. 484.

^u Wittichind, p. 5. As Tacitus remarks that the Germans seldom had swords, and more generally javelins, there is some plausibility in the derivation of the Saxon

Fabricus, an author of the sixteenth century, saw in an ancient picture of a Saxon, a sword bent into a semilunar shape.^v He adds, that their shields were suspended by chains, that their horsemen used long iron sledge hammers,^w and that their armour was heavy. I have not met with the documents from which he took these circumstances.

CHAPTER II.

The Government and Laws of the more ancient Saxons.

It is said by Aristotle, that whoever lives voluntarily out of civil society must have a vicious disposition, or be an existence superior to man.^x But nature has endeavoured to preserve her noblest offspring from this dismal and flagitious independence. She has given us faculties which can only be used, and wants which can only be provided for in society. She has made the social union inseparable from our safety, our virtue, our pride, and our felicity.

Government and laws must have been coeval with society, for they are essentially necessary to its continuance. A spacious edifice might as well be expected to last without cement or foundation, as a society to subsist without some regulations of individual will, and some acknowledged authority to enforce their observance.

The Athenian philosopher has correctly traced the progress of our species towards political institutions. The connubial union is one of the most imperious and most acceptable laws of our frame. From this, arose families and relationships. Families enlarged into villages and towns, and an aggregation of these gave being to a state.^b

A family is naturally governed by its parents, and its ramifications by the aged. The father, says Homer, is the legislator to his wife and children.^c Among most barbarous tribes, the aged ancestors have prescribed to the community the rules of mutual

name from their *sachs*, or peculiar swords. The Cimbri on the contrary had great and long swords, according to Plutarch, in his *Life of Marius*.

^v Fabric. i. p. 66.

^w The favourite weapon of Thor, according to the Northern Eddas, was a mallet.

^x Aristotle's *Politic.* lib. i. c. 2, p. 380, cd. 1606.

^b Aristot. lib. i. c. 3, p. 381. This is one of Aristotle's most valuable works, and will repay with great profit a careful attention.

^c Cited by Aristot, *ibid.* p. 379.

behaviour, and have adjudged disputes. As population has multiplied, civilization advanced, and the sphere of human activity has been enlarged, more precise regulations, more decided subordination, and more complicated governments became necessary, and have been established.

That the Saxon societies, in their early stages, were governed by the aged, is very strikingly shown in the fact, that the words of their language which denote authority, also express age. When it states that Joseph was appointed ruler over Egypt, the words are, "ƿette into ealdre over Eȝýpta land."^d For Cæsar, the emperor, we have "Cæſar tha beoþ cýninga ýlþeƿc."^e Here eldest is used as synonymous to greatest. A British general is called an "ealdorþan."^f The Latin term satrapa, by which Bede expressed the ruling Saxon chief of a district on the continent, is rendered by his royal translator "ealdorþan."^g The phrase of "a certain ruler," in St. Luke, is, in the Saxon gospel, "ƿum ealdor."^h The contest between the disciples of Christ which should be the greatest, is expressed in the Saxon, which should be the ýlþeƿc.ⁱ The aged were the primitive chiefs and governors among the Saxons, and therefore the terms expressing age were used to denote dignity so habitually that they were retained in common phrase, even after the custom of connecting power with seniority had become obsolete.

The most ancient account of the Saxon government on the continent exists in this short but expressive passage of Bede: "The ancient Saxons have no king, but many chiefs set over their people, who, when war presses, draw lots equally; and whomsoever the chance points out, they all follow as leader, and obey during the war. The war concluded, all the chiefs become again of equal power."^j

That the continental Saxons in the eighth and preceding centuries were under an aristocracy of chieftains, and had no kings but in war; and that the war-kings who were then chosen laid aside their power when peace was re-established, is attested by

^d Genesis, xlv. v. 8, in Thwaite's Saxon Heptateuch.

^e So the pontifex is called ýlþeƿca hýrceop, Orosius, lib. v. c. 4.

^f Sax. Chron.

^g Smith's edition of Bede, p. 624.

^h Luke xviii. v. 18. So the highest seats in the synagogue are called tha ýlþeƿcan ƿecl, Luke xx. 46. The Saxons had ýlþeƿc ƿýphta for the chief workman, ýlþeƿc ƿicing for the chief of pirates, on ƿcýpe ýlþoƿc for a pilot, ýlþeƿc on tham ýfelan flocce for prince of that evil flock. So Bede's "he who by the priority of seat seemed to be their chief," lib. v. c. 13, is rendered by Alfred ƿe ƿeƿ ƿecler ýlþeƿc et me tuhte tha he heora ealdor þeon ƿceolbe, p. 633.

ⁱ Luke xxii. v. 24.

^j Bede Hist. Eccles. lib. v. c. 10, p. 192.

other ancient authorities.^k More recent historians have repeated the assertion.^l Cæsar gives an account nearly similar, of the German magistracy in his time.^m We may, therefore, safely infer, that when the Anglo-Saxons visited England, they came under war-kings. The reigns of Hengist, and the founders of the dynasties of the Octarchy, were so many periods of continued warfare, and their immediate posterity were assailed with hostility from the natives almost perpetual. The Anglo-Saxons were under a necessity of continuing their war-kings, until at length a permanent, though a limited monarchy, was established. Their chiefs, or *witena*, continued in their influence and power. They elected the king, though they chose him from the family of the deceased sovereign; and their consent in their *genot* continued to be necessary to the more important acts of his authority.

There were four orders of men among the ancient Saxons: the *Etheling* or noble, the free man, the freed man, and the servile. The nobles were jealous of their race and rank. Nobles married nobles only, and the severest penalties prohibited intrusions of one rank into the others.ⁿ

Of their laws, in their pagan state, very little can be detailed from authority sufficiently ancient. From the uniformity of their principles of legislation in continental Saxony and in England, and in a subsequent age, we may infer, that pecuniary compensation was their general mode of redressing personal injuries, and of punishing criminal offences. This feature certainly announces that the spirit of legislation began to be understood, and that the

^k The ancient Saxon poet says,

Quæ nec rege fuit saltem sociata sub uno
 Ut se militiæ pariter defenderet usu:
 Sed variis divisa modis plæbs omnis habetæt,
 Quot pagos, tot pene duces. Du Chesne.

Si autem universale bellum ingrueret, sorte eligitur cui omnes obedire oportet ad administrandum imminens bellum. Quo peracto æquo jure ac lege propria contentus potestate unusquisque vivebat.—Wittichind, lib. i. p. 7. So the *Vetus Theotisce Chronicon* on the year 810. *Twelff Edclunge der Sassen de reden over dat lant tho Sassen.* Und Wannere dat se krich in dat lant tho Sassen hadden so koren se von den twelffen einen, de was ore Koning de wile de krich warde. Und wan de krich bericht wart, so weren de twelffe gelick, so was des einen koniges state uth, und was den anderen gelick—Lindenb. Gloss. 1317. This is "Twelve *Ethelings* governed over the land of the Saxons; and whenever war arose in that land, the Saxons chose one of the twelve to be king while the war lasted: when the war was finished the twelve became alike."

^l Krantz *Metropol.* lib. i. c. 1, and Belli *Dithmar.* p. 431. Fabricius *Hist. Sax.* i. p. 69. Sagittarius *Hist. Bard.* 60.

^m Quum bellum civitas aut illatum defendit aut infert, magistratus qui eo bello præsent ut vite necisque habeant potestatem delingunt. In pace nullus est communis magistratus, sed principes regionum atque pagorum inter suos jus dicunt controversiasque remouunt.—De Bell. Gall. lib. vi. c. 21.

ⁿ *Meginhard*, 2 Lang. p. 40. *Nithardus*, lib. iv. *Huebald Vita B. Lebuini, Act. Sanct.* vol. vi. p. 282, and *Wittichind.*

sword of punishment had been wrested by the government out of the hand of the vindictive individual. It also displays a state of society in which property was accumulating. It is, however, a form of punishment which is adapted to the first epochs of civilization only; because as wealth is more generally possessed, pecuniary mulcts become legal impunity.

Their severity against adultery was personal and sanguinary. If a woman became unchaste, she was compelled to hang herself, her body was burnt, and over her ashes the adulterer was executed. Or else a company of females whipped her from district to district, and, dividing her garments to the girdle, they pierced her body with their knives. They drove her, thus bleeding, from their habitations; and wheresoever she went, new collections of women renewed the cruel punishment, till she expired.* This dreadful custom shows that the savage character of the nation was not confined to the males. Female chastity is indeed a virtue as indispensable as it is attractive; but its proper guardians are the maternal example and tuition, the constitutional delicacy of the female mind, its native love of honour, and the uncorrupted voice and feeling of society. If it can be only maintained by the horrors of a Saxon punishment, the nation is too barbarous, or too contaminated to be benefited, by the penalty.

In their marriages they allowed a son to wed his father's widow, and a brother his sister-in-law.[†]

From one of the laws of their confederates, the Frisians, who were among the tribes that settled in England, we learn that their religious establishment was protected by penalties as terrible as those which guarded their chastity. "Whoever breaks into a temple, and takes away any of the sacred things, let him be led to the sea, and in the sand which the tide usually covers, let his ears be cut off, let him be castrated, and immolated to the gods whose temples he has violated."[‡]

CHAPTER III.

The Religion of the Saxons in their Pagan State.

At this happy period of the world, we cannot reflect on the idolatry of ancient times without some astonishment at the infatuation which has so inveterately, in various regions, clouded

* Boniface describes this custom in his letter to Ethelbald, the king of Mercia, in *Mag. Bibl. Patrum*, tom. xvi. p. 55.

† *Sax. Chron.* Bede i. c. 27. p. 64.

‡ *Lex. Fris.* ap. 1. Lindenb. p. 508.

the human mind. We feel, indeed, that it is impossible to contemplate the grand canopy of the universe; to descry the planets, moving in governed order; to find comets darting from system to system in an orbit of which a space almost incalculable is the diameter; to discover constellations beyond constellations in endless multiplicity, and to have indications of the light of others whose full beam of splendour has not yet reached us; we feel it impossible to meditate on these innumerable theatres of existence, without feeling with awe, that this amazing magnificence of nature announces an Author tremendously great. But it is very difficult to conceive how the lessons of the skies should have taught that localizing idolatry, which their transcendent grandeur, and almost infinite extent, seem expressly calculated to destroy.

The most ancient religions of the world appear to have been pure theism, with neither idols nor temples. These essential agents in the political mechanism of idolatry were unknown to the ancient Pelasgians, from whom the Grecians chiefly sprung, and to the early Egyptians and Romans. The Jewish patriarchs had them not, and even our German ancestors, according to Tacitus, were without them.

In every nation but the Jewish, a more gross system of superstition was gradually established. The Deity was dethroned by the symbols which human folly selected as his representatives; the most ancient of these were the heavenly bodies, the most pardonable objects of erring adoration. But when it was found possible to make superstition a profitable craft, then departed heroes and kings were exalted into gods. Delirious fancy soon added others so profusely, that the air, the sea, the rivers, the woods, and the earth became so stocked with divinities, that it was easier, as an ancient sage remarked, to find a deity than a man.

But if we meditate more profoundly on the subject, we may infer that polytheism and idolatry were but the effects of the natural progress of the human mind towards knowledge, and in reasoning. They were erroneous deductions, but they were efforts at improvement. As the intellect became more exercised, and the sensibilities awakened; and as vice began to spread, the idea arose that the adored Supreme was so great, and man so unworthy, that human beings, or concerns, could not be objects of his divine attention. The theory of our world being consigned to inferior divinities more like our imperfect selves, was a suggestion of infant philosophy attempting to reconcile their perception of the exalted majesty of the Deity with their feeling of the daily misconduct and follies of the human race. They would neither deny his existence, nor disbelieve his providence, nor could they live in comfort without believing them; and poly-

'theism was patronized by the refining religious intellect as a supposition calculated to unite both these truths, and to satisfy the doubts of the scrupulous and inquisitive. At first they were but venerated as his ministers and delegates. But as new refinements or caprices arose, and especially after the custom of allegorizing natural phenomena prevailed, the fancied deities were multiplied, and connected with all the departments and agencies of nature. Hero-worship emerged from their belief of the soul's immortality, and was in time added to that excess of posthumous gratitude and veneration, to which mankind are always prone.

The use of idols was an attempt to solace the mind, to excite the memory, interest the feelings, and fix the attention by a visible image of the invisible Omnipresence. In all religious countries they have been found to be efficacious for these purposes, especially with the less intellectual. But in all, both polytheism and idolatry tend at last to fix the mind almost exclusively on their own false imaginations, to deprave the reasoning faculty, to supersede the adoration of the universal Parent, and to occasion the most deplorable superstitions and tyrannical persecutions. The continuing advance of the human mind then led to the abolition of both these fictitious systems as steadily as it originally suggested them. When our Saxon ancestors had settled themselves in England they used both. They had many gods, and they venerated their images; but that the progress of their manly intellect was fast operating to shake the attachment to the national superstitions, we may infer from the candour with which they listened to the first Christian missionaries, and from the rapidity with which they adopted the Christian faith.

There is a beauty in the name appropriated by the Saxon and German nations to the Deity which is not equalled by any other, except his most venerated Hebrew appellation. The Saxons called him God, which is literally, **THE GOOD**; the same word signifying both the Deity and his most endearing quality.

The peculiar system of the Anglo-Saxons is too imperfectly known to us, for its stages to be discriminated, or its progress detailed. It appears to have been of a very mixed nature, and to have been so long in existence as to have attained a regular establishment and much ceremonial pomp.

That when they settled in Britain they had idols, altars, temples, and priests; that their temples were surrounded with enclosures; that they were profaned if lances were thrown into them; and that it was not lawful for a priest to bear arms, or to ride but on a mare; we learn from the unquestionable authority of our venerable Bede.*

* Bede, lib. ii. c. 13. et 9; lib. iii. c. 8; lib. ii. c. 6. Pope Gregory

Some of the subjects of their adoration we find in their names for the days of the week.

Sunday,	or sunnan ɔæg,	is the Sun's day.
Monday,	or Monan ɔæg,	is Moon's day.
Tuesday,	or Tīwe ɔæg,	is Tiw's day.
Wednesday,	or Wodnes ɔæg,	is Woden's day.
Thursday,	or Thunnes ɔæg,	is Thunre's day.
Friday,	or Frige ɔæg,	is Friga's day.
Saturday,	or Seternes ɔæg,	is Seterne's day. ^b

Of the sun and moon we can only state, that their sun was a female deity, and their moon was of the male sex;^c of their Tiw, we know nothing but his name. Woden was the great ancestor from whom they deduced their genealogies. It has been already remarked, that the calculations from the Saxon pedigrees place Woden in the third century.^d Of the Saxon Woden, his wife Friga, and of Thunr, or Thor, we know very little, and it would not be very profitable to detail all the reveries which have been

mentions, that if their pagan temples were well-built, they might be used for Christian churches, lib. i. c. 30. Their name for idol was ƿīg, and for altar ƿīgðeð, the table or bed of the idol. The word ƿīg also signifies war, and this may imply either that the idol was a warrior, or the god of war.

^b I take the Saxon names of the days of the week from the Cotton MS. Tiberius A. 3. They may be also found in the Saxon Gospels, p. 24 S. 72 M. 55 T. 48 W. 49 Th. 28 F. 52 S. As Thor means also a mountain, his name may have some connection with the ancient Eastern custom of worshipping on mountains and hills. He was called the god of thunder; hence is named Thunre. The word Thor seems to imply the mountain deity.

^c The same peculiarity of genders obtained in the ancient Northern language. Edda Semundi, p. 14. It is curious, that in the passage of an Arabian poet, cited by Pocock, in not. ad Carmen Tograi, p. 13, we meet with a female sun and masculine moon. The distich is,

Nec nomen femininum soli dedecus,
Nec masculinum lunæ gloria.

Thus the Caribbees think the moon a man, and therefore make it masculine, and call it Noneim. Breton's Gram. Carabb. p. 20. So the Hindu Chandra, or moon, is a male deity. 2 A. R. 127. The priests of Ceres called the moon Apis, and also Taurus. Porph. de Ant. Reg. 119. Cæsar mentions, that the Germans worshipped the sun and moon, lib. vi. c. 19. In the Saxon treatise on the vernal equinox we have their peculiar genders of these bodies displayed. "When the sun goeth at evening under this earth, then is the earth's breadth between us and the sun; so that we have not her light till she rises up at the other end." Of the moon it says, "always he turns his ridge to the sun."—"The moon hath no light but of the sun, and he is of all stars the lowest."—Cotton MS. Tib. A. iii. p. 63.

^d 1 Anglo-Saxons, p. 202. Perhaps hleothon, the Saxon for oracle, may have some reference to Thor. Þleo means a shady place, or an asylum. Þleothon is literally the retirement of Thor. Þleothon cƿýðe means the saying of an oracle. Þleothonræde the place of an oracle.

published about them. The Odin, Frigg, or Frega, and Thor, of the Northmen, were obviously the same characters; though we may hesitate to ascribe to the Saxon deities the apparatus and mythology which the Northern scalds of subsequent ages have transmitted to us from Denmark, Iceland, and Norway. Woden was the predominant idol of the Saxon adoration, but we can state no more of him but so far as we describe the Odin of the Danes and Norwegians.*

The names of two of the Anglo-Saxon goddesses have been transmitted to us by Bede. He mentions RHEDA, to whom they sacrificed in March, which, from her rites, received the appellation of Rhed-monath; and EOSTRE, whose festivities were celebrated in April, which thence obtained the name of Eorþre-monath.† Her name is still retained to express the season of our great pascal solemnity: and thus the memory of one of the idols of our ancestors will be perpetuated as long as our language and country continue. Their name for a goddess was *gyðena*; and as the word is applied as a proper name instead of Vesta,‡ it is not unlikely that they had a peculiar divinity so called.

The idol adored in Heligland, one of the islands originally occupied by the Saxons, was FOSETE, who was so celebrated that the place became known by his name; it was called Fofeteþland. Temples were there built to him, and the country was deemed so sacred, that none dared to touch any

* Without imitating those who have lately fancied that there never was an Odin, and that he is merely a mythological personage, the name of a deity, we may remark, that the date of Odin's appearance in the North cannot be accurately ascertained. This difficulty has arisen partly from the confusion in which, from their want of chronology, all the incidents of the North, anterior to the eighth century, are involved, and partly from the wild and discordant fictions of the scalds, who have clouded the history of Odin by their fantastic mythology. The same obscurity attends the heroes of all countries who have been deified after death, and upon whose memory the poets have taken the trouble to scatter the weeds as well as the flowers of their fancy. The human existence of Odin appears to me to be satisfactorily proved by two facts: 1st, The founders of the Anglo-Saxon Octarchy deduced their descent from Odin by genealogies in which the ancestors are distinctly mentioned up to him. These genealogies have the appearance of greater authenticity by not being the servile copies of each other; they exhibit to us different individuals in the successive stages of the ancestry of each, and they claim different children of Odin as the founders of the lines. These genealogies are also purely Anglo-Saxon. 2d, The other circumstance is, that the Northern chroniclers and scalds derive their heroes also from Odin by his different children. Snorre, in his *Ynglinga Saga*, gives a detailed history of Sweden regularly from him; and though the Northerners cannot be suspected of having borrowed their genealogies from the Anglo-Saxons, yet they agree in some of the children ascribed to Odin. This coincides between the genealogies preserved in their new country of men who left the North in the fifth and sixth centuries, and the genealogies of the most celebrated heroes who acted in the North during the subsequent ages, could not have arisen if there never had been an Odin who left such children. I have already expressed my opinion, that the Anglo-Saxon genealogies lead us to the most probable date of Odin's arrival in the North.

† Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, in his works, vol. ii. p. 81.

‡ See *Saxon Dictionary*, voc. *Lýðena*.

animal which fed on it, nor to draw water from a fountain which flowed there, unless in awful silence. In the eighth century, Willebrord, a converted Anglo-Saxon, born in Northumbria, who, under the auspices of his uncle Boniface, went missionary to Friesland, endeavoured to destroy the superstition, though Radbod, the fierce king of the island, devoted to a cruel death all who violated it. Willebrord, fearless of the consequences, baptized three men in the fountain, invoking the Trinity, and caused some cattle who were feeding there to be killed for the food of his companions. The surrounding pagans expected them to have been struck dead or insane.^b

That the Angles had a goddess whom they called Hertha, or mother Earth, we learn from Tacitus. He says, that in an island in the ocean there was a grove, within which was a vehicle covered with a garment, which it was permitted to the priest alone to touch. The goddess was presumed to be within it, and was carried, by cows, with great veneration. Joy, festivity, and hospitality were then universal. Wars and weapons were forgotten, and peace and quiet reigned, then only known, then only loved, until the priest returned the goddess to her temple, satiated with mortal converse. The vehicle, the garment, and the goddess herself, were washed in a secret lake. Slaves ministered, who were afterwards drowned.ⁱ

The Saxons dreaded an evil being, whom they named Faul, † some kind of female power they called an elf, who is very frequently used as a complimentary simile to their ladies. Thus Judith is said to be elf reinu, shining as an elf.^k They also venerated stones, groves, and fountains.^l The continental Saxons respected the lady Hera, a fancied being, who was believed to fly about in the air in the week after their Jule, or between our Christmas and Epiphany. Abundance was thought to follow her visit.^m We may add that Hilde, one of their terms for battle, seems to allude to a war-goddess of that name.

^b Alevini vita S. Willebrord in his works, p. 1438, or in Sanct. Hist. Col. vol. vi. p. 130, Charles Martel conquered Radbod, and added the island to his dominions, *ibid.* Saint Liudger, who died in 809, destroyed the temples of Fosete. See his life by Altfriidus, who was alive in 846, in Act. Sanct. Bolland. March. tom. iii. p. 646.

ⁱ Tacit. *de mor. German.*

[†] That Faul might not hurt, was part of one of their exorcisms. See Sax. Dict. voce Faul.

^k So Judith, p. 21.

^l See Meginhard. Conrad Usperg. Wilkina, 83. Linden. Gloss. 1473.

^m Gubelin ap. Meiborn. Irminsula. p. 12. We may add that Bede, in his commentary on Luke, mentions demons appearing to men as females, and to women, as men, whom, he says, the Gauls call Dusii, the presumed origin of our word deuce. Hincmar, in 16 Bib. Mag. 561. But he does not say that these demons were part of the Saxon paganism. There were two personages feared in the North, whom we may mention here, as words from their names have become familiar to ourselves; one was Oebus Bochus, a magician and demon, the other was Neccus, a malign

That the Saxons had many idols, appears from several authors. Gregory, in the eighth century, addressing the old Saxons, exhorts them to abandon their idols, whether of gold, silver, brass, stone, or any other kind.^a Hama, Flinnus, Siba, and Zernebogus, or the black, malevolent, ill-omened deity, are said to have occupied part of their superstitions, but we cannot be answerable for more than their names.^b A Saxon Venus has been also mentioned; she is exhibited as standing naked in a car, with myrtle round her head, a lighted torch in her breast, and the figure of the world in her right hand. But this description implies too much refinement in its allusions, and the authority is not decisive.^c

The account of Crodus has stronger marks of authenticity; it seems to have been preserved in the Brunswick Chronicle, from which more recent historians have taken their descriptions. The figure of Crodus was that of an old man clothed in a white tunic, with a linen girdle, with floating ends. His head was uncovered: his right hand held a vessel, full of roses and other flowers, swimming in water; his left hand supported the wheel of a car; his naked feet stood on a rough scaly fish like a perch.^d It was raised on a pedestal. It was found on the Mount Hercinius, in the fortress of Harsbourg, which was anciently called Saturbourg,^e or the fortified hill of Satur. Hence this was probably the idol of Satur, from whom our Saturday is named.^f

That the Saxons had the dismal custom of human sacrifices on some occasions cannot be doubted. Tacitus mentions it as a feature of all the Germans, that on certain days they offered human victims to their chief deity. Sidonius attests, that on their return from a depredation the Saxons immolated one-tenth of their captives, selected by lot.^g We have already mentioned,

deity who frequented the waters. If any perished in whirlpools, or by cramp, or bad swimming, he was thought to be seized by Neocus. Steel was supposed to expel him, and therefore all who bathed threw some little pieces of steel in the water for that purpose. Verel. Suio-Goth. p. 13. It is probable that we here see the origin of hocus-pocus, and Old Nick.

^a 16 Bib. Mag. 101.

^b Fabricius Hist. Sax. p. 62. Verstigan describes the idol Flynt as the image of death in a sheet, holding a torch, and placed on a great flint-stone. He was also represented as a man in a great cloak, with a lion on his head and shoulders, and carrying a torch. His figure was sometimes more deformed with monstrous feet. It had a crown on its head. Montf. Ant. Exp. c. 10.

^c Gyraldus says he read of this idol in the Saxon histories. Worm. Mon. p. 19.

^d Albinus Nov. Sax. Hist. p. 70, and Fabricius, p. 61.

^e Montfaucon Ant. Exp. c. 10. He says, that at the entrance of this fortress the place was, in his time, shown where this image stood.

^f The description of Prono, of the three-headed Trigla of Forevith with five heads, and Svanto with four; of Radevast with a bull's head in his breast, and an eagle on his head, mentioned by Montfaucon from Grosser's History of Lusatia, seem to be more Oriental than Teutonic, and may have come into Germany from the latter Sarmatian tribes.

^g Tac. De Moribus Germ. Sid. Apoll. ep. vi. lib. 8. Herodotus says of the Scythians, the presumed ancestors of the Saxons, that they sacrificed to Mars every hundredth man of their prisoners. Melp.

that for sacrilege the offender was sacrificed to the god whose temple he had violated; and Ennodius states of the Saxons, Heruli, and Franks, that they were believed to appease their deities with human blood." But whether human sacrifices were an established part of their superstitious ritual, or whether they were but an occasional immolation of captives or criminals, cannot be decided. Nor is the distinction material.*

Of the rights of the Anglo-Saxons we cannot learn many particulars. In the month of February they offered cakes to their deities, which occasioned the month to be called *sol monath*. September, from its religious ceremonies, was denominated *Halig monath*, the holy month. November, was marked, as the month of sacrifices, *Blot monath*, because at this period they devoted to their gods the cattle that they slew.† As it was their custom to use during the winter salted or dried meat, perhaps November, or *Blot monath*, was the period when the winter provision was prepared and consecrated.

Their celebrated festival of *Leol*, *Jule*, or *Yule*, which occurred at the period of our Christmas, was a combination of religion and conviviality. December was called *ęppa Leola*, or before the *Leol*. January was *ępępa Leola*, or after it. As one of the Saxon names for Christmas day was *Leola*, or *Leohol beg*, it is likely that this was the time when the festival commenced. This day was the first of their year; and as Bede derives it from the turning of the sun, and the days beginning then to lengthen,‡ as it was also called mother night, and their sun was worshiped as a female, I suspect that this was a festival dedicated to the sun.

But the Saxon idol, whose celebrity on the continent was the most eminent, was *IRMINSULA*.§

* Ennodius in *Mag. Bib. Pol.* 15, p. 306.

† Of the human sacrifices of the Northmen we have more express testimony. *Dithmar* apud *Steph.* 92, says, that in *Sceland*, in January, they slew ninety-nine men, and as many horses, dogs, and cocks, to appease their deities. *Snorre* mentions a king of *Sweden* who immolated nine of his sons to *Odin*, to obtain an extension of life, i. p. 34. He also states the *Swedes* sacrificed one of their sovereigns to *Odin*, to obtain plenty, ib. p. 56. When the famine began, oxen were offered up; in the following autumn they proceeded to human victims, and at last destroyed their king. *Dudo Quint.* says, they slew cattle and men in honour of *Thor*. For other instances of human sacrifices in the North, see *Herv. Saga*, 97; *Ara Frode*, 63, 145; *Kristni Saga*, 93.

‡ Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, p. 81. See a good description of a Danish sacrifice in *Snorre. Saga Hak. God.* c. 16.

§ Bede, *de Temporum Ratione*. I see that *ęyl runne* once occurs in a hymn, "Let the sun shine." See *Dict. Voc. Gyl*. They who desire to see the opinions which have been given of the derivation of the *Leol* will be assisted by *Hickes, Dissert. Ep.* p. 212, &c.

¶ The most complete account of this idol is in the *Irmisula Saxonica*, by *Henry Meibomius*. It is in the third volume of his *Rorum German. Hist.* published by the two *Meibomii*.

The name of this venerated idol has been spelt with varying orthography. The Saxon Chronicle, published at Mentz in 1492, calls it *Armensula*, which accords with the pronunciation of modern Saxony. The appellation adhered to by Meibomius, the most elaborate investigator of this curious object of Saxon idolatry, is *Irminsula*.^a

It stood at Eresberg, on the Dimele.^a This place the Saxon Chronicle above mentioned calls Marsburg. The Rhyming Chronicle of the thirteenth century writes it Mersberg, which is the modern name.^b

Its temple was spacious, elaborate, and magnificent. The image was raised upon a marble column.^c

The predominant figure was an armed warrior. Its right hand held a banner, in which a red rose was conspicuous; its left presented a balance. The crest of its helmet was a cock; on its breast was engraven a bear, and the shield depending from its shoulders exhibited a lion in a field full of flowers.^d The expressions of Adam of Bremen seem to intimate that it was of wood, and that the place where it stood had no roof. It was the largest idol of all Saxony, and according to Rolwinck, a writer of the fifteenth century, whose authorities are not known to us, though the warlike image was the principal figure, three others were about it.^e From the Chronicle called the Vernacular Chronicle, we learn that the other Saxon temples had pictures of the *Irminsula*.^f

Priests of both sexes attended the temple. The women applied themselves to divination and fortune-telling; the men sacrificed, and often intermeddled with political affairs, as their sanction was thought to insure success.

The priests of the *Irminsula* at Eresberg appointed the gow graven, the governors of the districts of continental Saxony. They also named the judges, who annually decided the provincial disputes. There were sixteen of these judges, the eldest, and therefore the chief, was called *Gravius*; the youngest, *Fruno*, or attendant: the rest were *Freyerichter*, or free judges. They had jurisdiction over seventy-two families. Twice a year, in April and October, the *Gravius* and the *Fruno* went to Eresberg, and there made a placatory offering of two wax lights and nine pieces of money. If any of the judges died in the year, the event was notified to the priests, who out of the seventy-two families chose a substitute. In the open air, before the door of

^a Meibom. p. 6. It has been called *Irminulus*, *Irminsul*, *Irmindsul*, *Erminsul*, *Herimansul*, *Hormensul*, *Herinsuel*, *Hermensul*, and *Adurmensul*, *ibid*.

^b *Ibid*. c. ii. p. 6.

^c *Ibid*. p. 7.

^d *Ibid*. c. iii. p. 8.

^e *Ibid*. p. 9. The particular descriptions of this idol are all taken from the Saxon Chronicle printed at Mentz.

^f Meibom, c. iii. p. 9.

^g *Ibid*.

the person appointed, his election was seven times announced to the people in a loud voice, and this was his inauguration.

In the hour of battle, the priests took their favourite image from its column, and carried it to the field. After the conflict, captives, and the cowardly of their own army, were immolated to the idol.^a Meibomius states two stanzas of an ancient song, in which the son of a Saxon king, who had lost a battle, complains that he was delivered to the priest to be sacrificed.^b He adds, that, according to some writers, the ancient Saxons, and chiefly their military, on certain solemn days, clothed in armour, and brandishing iron cestus, rode round the idol, and, sometimes dismounting to kneel before it, bowed down and murmured out their prayers for help and victory.^c

To whom this great image was erected, is a question full of uncertainty. Because *Ερμης* approached the sound of Irminsul, and *Αρης* that of Eresberg, it has been referred to Mars and Mercury.^d Some considered it a memorial of the celebrated Arminius;^e and one has laboured to prove that it was an hieroglyphical effigy, intended for no deity in particular.^f

In 772, this venerated object of Saxon superstition was thrown down and broken, and its fame destroyed by Charlemagne. For three days the work of demolition was carried on by one part of the army, while the other remained under arms. Its immense wealth and precious vessels were distributed to the conquerors, or devoted to pious uses.^g

^a Meib. c. iii. p. 10. Tacitus mentions generally of the Germans, that they detached their idols and banners from their sacred groves, and carried them to the field of battle. Germ. s. 7.

^b The verses are :

Sol ich nun in Gottes fronen hende
In meinen aller besten tagen
Geben werden, und sterben so elende
Das musz ich wol hochlich klagen.

Wen mir das glucke fuget hette
Des streites einen guten ende,
Dorffte ich nicht leisten diese wette
Nutzen mit blut die hirc wende.

Meibom. p. 10.

^c Meibom. p. 11.

^d Ibid. c. v. p. 11.

^e The names to this supposition are very respectable.

^f Joannes Goropius Beccaius is the person whose reveries are given at length in Meibomius, 13-17. We may suggest as a new opinion, that Hermansul literally expresses either, "The Pillar of the Lord the Moon, or the Lord Man," whom the Germans, according to Tacitus, revered. As the moon was a male deity, Mannus and the moon may have been the same person. From the inscription mentioned below, it was clearly their war god. The similarity between Irmin and *Ερμης* may have led Tacitus to mention that the Germans chiefly worshipped Mercury, s. 9.

^g Meibom. p. 18. The image is said to have been long preserved in the monastery at Corbey. It then bore this inscription: "Formerly I was the leader and god of the Saxons. The people of war adored me. The nation who worshipped me governed the field of battle." Ibid.

The fate of the column of the image after its eversion may be noticed.^a It was thrown into a wagon, and buried on the Weser, in a place where Corbey afterwards stood. It was found again in the reign after Charlemagne, and was transported beyond the Weser. The Saxons attempting to rescue it, a battle ensued on the spot, which was afterwards called Armensula, from the incident. The Saxons were repulsed, and, to prevent further chances, the column was hastily thrown into the Inner. A church being afterwards built in the vicinity, at Hillesheim, it was conveyed into it after much religious lustration, and placed in the choir, where it long served to hold their lights at their festivals.^o For many ages it remained neglected and forgotten, till at length Meibomius saw it, and a canon of the church, friendly to his studies, had its rust and discoloration taken off.^p

Idoltrous nations are eminently superstitious. The proneness of mankind to search into futurity attempts its gratification, in the eras of ignorance, by the fallacious use of auguries, lots, and omens.

All the German nation were addicted to these absurdities, and the account which Tacitus relates of them generally is applied by Meginhart to the ancient Saxons. They were infatuated to believe that the voices and flights of birds were interpreters of the Divine will. Horses were supposed to neigh from celestial inspiration, and they decided their public deliberations by the wisdom of lots. They cut a small branch of a fruit-tree into twigs, marked them, and scattered them at random on a white vest. The priest, if it were a public council, or the father, at a private consultation, prayed, gazed at heaven, drew each three times, and interpreted according to the mark previously impressed. If the omen were adverse, the council was deferred.^q

To explore the fate of an impending battle, they selected a captive of the nation opposing, and appointed a chosen Saxon to

^a It was about eleven feet long, and the circumference of the base was about twelve cubits. The base was of rude stone, or of gravel-stone. The column was marble, of a light red colour. Its belts were of orichalchus; the upper and lower gilt, and also the one between these and the crown, which is also gilt, as is the upper circle incumbent on it, which has three heroic verses. The whole work was surrounded with iron rails, dentated to preserve it from injury. Meibom. p. 31. He has given a plate of it.

^o Meibom. p. 19. and p. 31.

^p Ibid. p. 19. Our ancient Irmin-street has been lately conjectured to have been derived from the name of this idol. If so, the inference would be reasonable that it was worshipped also in England.

^q Tacit. de morib. Germ. and Meginhart, p. 39; and see Bede, p. 144, 147. In the law of the Frisians there is a curious order of determining by lot, with twigs, who was guilty of a homicide, when it occurred in a popular tumult. See it in Lindenb. i. p. 496. Alfred, in his version of Bede, says, they hluton mid canum, they cast lots with twigs, p. 624.

fight with him. They judged of their future victory or defeat by the issue of this duel.^r

The notion which from Chaldea pervaded both East and West, that the celestial luminaries influenced the fortunes of mankind, operated powerfully on the Saxon mind. Affairs were thought to be undertaken with better chance on peculiar days, and the full or new moon was the indication of the auspicious season.^s

Magic, the favourite delusion of ignorant man, the invention of his malignity, or the resort of his imbecility, prevailed among the Anglo-Saxons. Even one of their kings chose to meet the Christian missionaries in the open air, because he fancied that magical arts had peculiar power within a house.^t

Of the speculative principles of the Anglo-Saxon Paganism we have no written evidence. But of the religion of the Northmen, which prevailed in or near the parts which the Angles and Saxons inhabited about the Elbe, and was the religion of the Northmen colonies of England, we have sufficient documents remaining. In these we probably contemplate the substance of the faith of our forefathers. In some respects the polytheism of the north was one of the most rational forms of its erroneous theory; and, though inferior in taste and imagination, displays on the whole a vigour and an improvement of mind beyond the classical mythology. The Edda, though wilder, has better theology than much of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

It is remarkable, that the Northmen venerated three principal supreme deities connected with each other by relationship. Odin, whom they called All-father, or the Universal Parent; Freya, his wife; and their son Thor. Idols of these three were placed in their celebrated temple at Upsal.^u Of these the Danes, like the Anglo-Saxons, paid the highest honour to Odin; the Norwegians and Icelanders to Thor; and the Swedes to Freya.^v

In the system of the Northmen's religion, we see the great principles of the ancient theism, mingled with the additions of allegory, polytheism, and idolatry. Odin's first name is the All-father, though many others were subjoined to this in the process of time. He is described in the Edda as the First of the Gods: "He lives for ever: he governs all his kingdom, both the small parts and the great: he made heaven, and the earth, and the air: he made man, and gave him a spirit which shall live even after the body shall have vanished. Then the just and the well-deserving shall dwell with him in a place called Gimle; but bad men shall go to Hela."^w In other parts it adds: "When the All-father sits on

^r Meginhard, p. 39.

^s Ibid.

^t Bede, i. c. 25, p. 61.

^u Ad. Brem.

^v Mallet. *Nort. Antiq.* vol. i. p. 97. So in the Edda, Gangler is represented as be-
holding three thrones, each above the other. The lowest was called the lofty one;
the second his equal: the highest was named "the third." *Suppl. Nor. Ant.* vol. ii.
p. 262.

^w Edda, *Hist. Prim.* p. 283. See the twelve names given to Odin, p. 265, and 46,
in p. 305.

his supreme throne, he surveys with his eyes all the world and the manners of all men.”^a “Odin is the first and the most ancient: he governs all things; and though the rest of the gods are powerful, yet they serve him as children their father. He is called All-father, because he is the father of all the gods.”^b Thor is represented as the son of Odin and Freya, and the earth is called Odin’s daughter.^c

They had some remarkable traditions preserved in their ancient *Voluspa*. One, that the earth and heavens were preceded by a state of non-entirety.^a Another, that at a destined period the earth and all the universe would be destroyed by fire. This catastrophe was connected with a being, that was to direct it, whom they called Surtur, or the black one.^b Till this day Loke,

^a Edda, Hist. Sext. p. 292.

^b Edda, Hist. Duod. p. 305.

^c Edda, p. 292.

^a The words of the *Voluspa* are: “At the beginning of time there was nothing: neither land, nor sea, nor foundations below. The earth was nowhere to be found: nor the heaven above. There was an infinite abyss, and grass nowhere.” Edda, Hist. Prim. p. 284.

^b The Edda thus describes him: “First of all was *Muspells-heim*. It is lucid, glowing, and impervious to strangers. There Surtur rules, and sits in the extremity of the earth. He holds a flaming sword, and will come at the end of the world and conquer all the gods and burn the unwise.” Edda, p. 286. The most ancient and oracular *Voluspa* thus speaks of this period:—

The giant *Hrymr* rides from the east.
The sea swells.
The serpent that surrounds the world
Turns himself with gigantic might.
The snake moves the seas.
The eagle clamours;
It tears the dead with its beak.
The ship of nails is loosened.

It floats from the East.
The sons of *Muspell* come
Along the deep:
Loke governs them.
The raging people press on.

What occurs among the gods?
What among the *Elfi*!
The world of the giants resounds.
The gods are in the council.
The dwarfs groan
Before their stone doors.
They knew the paths of the rocks.
Do you know what is happening?

Surtur is coming from the south
With Fire, his companion.
Like the sun shines his sword:
The sword of the gods of slaughter.
The rocks threaten destruction.
The giantesses are wandering.

their principle of evil, was to remain in the cave and chains of iron to which he was consigned.^c A new world is to emerge at this period; the good will be happy.^d The gods will sit in judgment, and the wicked will be condemned to a dreary habitation.^e The Edda ends with another description of this final period, which presents it to us in a more detailed shape.

Men tread the path of Heia.
The heavens are cleft asunder.

Then to Hlina
Will come a second grief,
When Odin goes forth
To battle with the wolf
And the slayer of Bela:
The fair one with Surtur,
Then will fall,
The husband of Freya.

The Voluspa then mentions that Vidar, a son of Odin, will revenge his father's death on the wolf; and that Thor will kill the great serpent. It adds:

All mankind
Will disappear from the world—
The sun darkens;
The sea overwhelms the earth;
The peaceful stars
Vanish from the sky.
Fire rages
To the end of the age.
The ascending flame
Plays on the heavens.

See the original, ap. Bartholin, 590-595.

^c Edda, p. 347.

^d The Voluspa thus describes it:—

Then will be seen again
A green world come up
Out of the sea.
The waters will glide;
The eagle flies,
And takes the fish in the mountains.

The gods will meet
In the fields of Ida,
And there discourse
On the desolated abode;
And there will discuss
Great conferences
And the ancient words of Odin.

Voluspa, ib. p. 596, 597.

The hall will then be seen to stand
Fairer than the sun,
Covered with gold
In Gimli.

"Snow will rush from all quarters of the world. Three winters without a summer will be followed by three others, and then wars will pervade the whole world. Brother, father, son, will perish by each other's hands. The wolf will devour the sun; another, the moon. The stars will fall from heaven. The earth trembles. Mountains and trees are torn up. The sea rushes over the earth. Midgard the great serpent hastens over it. The ship made of the nails of dead men floats. The giant Hrymer is its pilot. The wolf Fenris opens his enormous mouth; the lower jaw touching the earth; the upper, the heavens. The serpent breathes poison over heaven, and the sons of Muspell ride forward: Surtur leads them. Before him, behind him, a glowing fire spreads. His sword radiates like the sun. From their course the bridge of heaven is broken. They move towards a plain, and Fenris and Midgard follow. There Loke and Hrymer meet them with all the infernal genii. The

There the just people will dwell,
And for endless days
Enjoy pleasure.

The powerful one will then come
For the divine judgment.
The strong one from the realms above,
Who governs all things.
He brings the sentence,
And determines the causes.
He appoints the sacred destinies
Which will be fulfilled.

Then will come the dim
And flying dragon;
The fierce serpent from below
The mountains of Nida,
He floats on his wings;
He hovers over the plain;
Nidhoggr, over the dead.
Now the earth shall be swallowed up.

A hall will be seen to stand,
Far from the sun,
In Nastrondo.
Its doors behold the north.
Poison-drops distil
Within from its windows.
The abode is woven round
With serpent thorns.

There, over rapid rivers,
Will be seen to go
The perjured
And the assassins;
And they who pull the ear
Of another's wife.
Nidhoggr will there gnaw
The bodies of the dead.
The wolf will tear them.
Knowest thou what is coming?

Voluspa, sp. Barth. p. 599-601.

The same events are mentioned in the *Vafthrudnismal*, Edd. Sem. p. 98-99.

hosts of the sons of Muspell glitter round. Heimdal sounds vehemently his tremendous trumpet to awaken the gods. Odin consults. The ash Ygdraill trembles. Every thing in heaven and earth is in fear. The gods and heroes arm. Odin, with his golden helmet, moves against Fenris. Thor assails Midgard. Frey falls beaten down by Surtur. The dog Garmur attacks Tyr, and both perish. Thor kills the serpent, but dies also. And the wolf devours Odin. Vidar seizes the monster's jaws, and at last rends them asunder. Loke and Heimdal slay each other. Surtur then darts his flames over all the earth, and the whole world is consumed."^f

These traditions correspond with the idea mentioned in the beginning of this work, that the barbaric nations of Europe have sprung from the branches of more civilized states.

Allegory, disturbed imagination, mysticism, and perverted reasoning, have added to these traditions many wild and absurd tales, whose meaning we cannot penetrate. The formation of Nifl-heim, or hell, from whose rivers came frozen vapours; and Muspeil-heim, or the world of fire, from which lightning and flames issued. The gelid vapours melting from the heat into drops: one of these becoming the giant Ymer,^g and another, the cow *Ædumla*, to nourish him; who by licking off the rocks their salt and hoar frost, became a beautiful being, from whose son Bore, their Odin, and the gods proceeded;^h while from the feet of the wicked Ymer sprang the Giants of the Frost. The sons of Bore slaying Ymer, and so much blood issuing from his wounds as to drown all the families of the Giants of the Frost, excepting one, who was preserved in his bark.ⁱ The re-creation of the earth from the flesh of Ymer; his perspiration becoming the seas; his bones the mountains; his hair the vegetable races; his brains the clouds; and his head the heavens.^j All these display that mixture of reasoning to account for the origin of things; of violent allegory to express its deductions; of confused tradition, and distorting fancy, which the mythologies of all nations have retained.

We have already remarked, that the general term used by the Anglo-Saxons to express the deity in the abstract was God, which also implied the Good. This identity of phrase carries the imagination to those primeval times, when the Divine Being was best known to his creatures by his gracious attributes, was the object of their love, and was adored for his beneficence. But when they departed from the pure belief of the first æras, and bent their religion to suit their habits, new reasonings, and their wishes, then systems arose, attempting to account for the production of things, without his preceding eternity or even agency, and to describe his own origination and destruction. Hence the Northmen cos-

^f Edda, last chapter, p. 347—350. It then proceeds to describe the new world.

^g Edda, Hist. Tert. p. 288. ^h Edda, Hist. Quart. 269.

ⁱ Edda, Hist. Quin. p. 290. He was called Bergelmer.

^j The ancient verse, quoted in Edda, p. 291.

mogonists taught the rising of the world of frost from the north, and of the world of fire from the south; the forming by their united agency a race of evil beings through Ymer, and of deities through the cow *Ædumla*; a warfare between the divine and the wicked race; the death of Ymer; the fabrication of the earth and heaven out of his body; and the final coming of the powers of the world of fire to destroy all things, and even the deities themselves. The mixture of materialism, atheism, and superstition visible in these notions, shows the divergency of the human mind from its first great truths, and its struggles to substitute its own phantoms and perverted reasonings instead. All polytheism and mythology seem to be an attempted compromise between scepticism and superstition: the natural process of the mind beginning to know, resolved to question, unattending to its ignorance, and solving its doubts by its fancies, or concealing them by its allegories.

The most formidable feature of the ancient religion of the Anglo-Saxons, as of all the Teutonic nations, was its separation from the pure and benevolent virtues of life, and its indissoluble union with war and violence. It condemned the faithless and the perjured; but it represented their Supreme Deity as the father of combats and slaughter, because those were his favourite children who fell in the field of battle. To them he assigned the heavenly Valhall and Vingolfa, and promised to salute them after their death as his heroes.^k This tenet sanctified all the horrors of war, and connected all the hopes, energies, and passions of humanity with its continual prosecution.

As the nation advanced in its active intellect, it began to be dissatisfied with its mythology. Many indications exist of this spreading alienation,^l which prepared the Northern mind for the reception of the nobler truths of Christianity, though at first averse from them.

^k Edda, Hist. Duod. p. 304.

^l Bartholin has collected some instances which are worth the attention of those who study the history of human nature. One warrior says, that he trusted more to his strength and his arms than to Thor and Odin. Another exclaims: "I believe not in images and demons. I have travelled over many places, and have met giants and monsters, but they never conquered me. Therefore I have hitherto trusted to my own strength and courage." To a Christian who interrogated him, one of these fighters boasted, that he knew no religion, but relied on his own powers. For the same reason a father and his son refused to sacrifice to the idols. When the king of Norway asked Gaukathor of what religion he was, he answered, "I am neither Christian nor heathen; neither I nor my companions have any other religion than to trust to ourselves and our good fortune, which seems to be quite sufficient for us." Many others are recorded to have given similar answers; despising their idols, yet not favouring Christianity. Another is mentioned as taking rather a middle path. "I do not wish to revile the gods; but Freya seems to me to be of no importance. Neither she nor Odin are any thing to us." See Bartholin de Caus. p. 79-81.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Menology and Literature of the Pagan Saxons.

In their computation of time, our ancestors reckoned by nights instead of days, and by winters instead of years. Their months were governed by the revolution of the moon. They began their year from the day which we celebrate as Christmas-day,* and that night they called Moedrenech, or mother night, from the worship or ceremonies, as Bede imagines, in which, unsleeping, they spent it. In the common years, they appropriated three lunar months to each of the four seasons. When their year of thirteen months occurred, they added the superfluous month to their summer season, and by that circumstance had then three months of the name of *Līða*, which occasioned these years of thirteen months to be called *Trī-Līði*. The names of their months were these:

<i>Līuli</i> , or <i>æftera</i> <i>Leola</i> , answering to our	January.
<i>sol</i> monath	February.
<i>Rehð</i> monath	March.
<i>Ēortur</i> monath	April.
<i>Trī-milchi</i>	May.
<i>Līða</i>	June.
<i>Līða</i>	July.
<i>Weird</i> , or <i>Wenden</i> monath	August.
<i>þalig</i> monath	September.
<i>Wýntýr þýlleth</i>	October.
<i>Bloth</i> monath	November.
<i>Līuli</i> , or <i>æþra</i> <i>Leola</i> (before <i>Leol</i>)	December.

They divided the year into two principal parts, summer and winter. The six months of the longer days were applied to the summer portion, the remainder to winter. Their winter season began at their month *þýntýr þýlleth*, or October. The full moon in this month was the era or the commencement of this

* The Franks began the year in the autumnal season; for Alcuin writes to Charlemagne: "I wonder why your youths begin the legitimate year from the month of September." Oper. p. 1496.

season, and the words *ƿyntyr ƿylleth* were meant to express the winter full moon.

The reason of the names of their months of *sol monath*, *Rehd monath*, *Ɔortun monath*, *ƿalig monath*, and *Bloth monath*, we have already explained. Bede thus accounts for the others:

Tri-milch expressed that their cattle were then milked three times a day. *Lida* signifies mild or navigable, because in these months the serenity of the air is peculiarly favourable to navigation. *Wenden monath* implies that the month was usually tempestuous. The months of *Leola* were so called because of the turning of the sun on this day, and the diminution of the length of the night.^b One of the months preceded this change, the other followed it.

It has been much doubted whether the Anglo-Saxons had the use of letters when they possessed themselves of England. It is certain that no specimen of any Saxon writing, anterior to their conversion to Christianity, can be produced. It cannot therefore be proved that they had letters by any direct evidence, and yet some reasons may be stated which make it not altogether safe to assert too positively, that our ancestors were ignorant of the art of writing in their pagan state.

1st. Alphabetical characters were used by the Northern nations on the Baltic before they received Christianity,^c and the origin of these is ascribed to Odin, who heads the genealogies of the ancient Saxon chieftains as well as those of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark; and who is stated to have settled in Saxony before he advanced to the North.^d Either the pagan Saxons were acquainted with the Runic characters, or they were introduced in the North after the fifth century, when the Saxons came to Britain, and before the middle of the sixth, when they are mentioned by Fortunatus, which is contrary to the history and traditions of the Scandinavian nations, and to probability. We may remark, that *Run* is used in Anglo-Saxon,^e as *Runar* in the

^b This valuable account of the Saxon year is in Bede, *De Temporum Ratione*, in the second volume of his works, in the edition of Cologne, p. 81. Other Saxon menologies may be seen in Wanley, 185, and 109; and a comparative one of the Anglo-Saxons, Franks, Icelanders, Danes, and Swedes, is in Hicke's *Gram. Anglo-Sax.* p. 214.

^c I would not attribute to the Runic letters an extravagant antiquity, but the inscriptions on rocks, etc. copied by Wormius in his *Literaturæ Runicæ*, and by Stephanus, in his notes on Saxo, proved that the Northerners used them before they received Christianity.

^d Snorre, *Ynglinga Saga*.

^e So Cedmon uses the word, *run drih gerecenod*, p. 73; *hæt reo run dube*, p. 86; that he to him the letter should read and explain, *hæt reo run dube*, p. 90; he had before said, in his account of Daniel and Belshazzar, that the angel of the Lord *ƿrac tha in ƿage ƿorða genýnu ðarƿe doctafar*, p. 90.

Icelandic, to express letters or characters.^f It is true that Odin used the runæ for the purpose of magic, and that in Saxon *run-cræftig*, or skilled in runæ, signifies a magician;^g but the magical application of characters is no argument against their alphabetical nature, because many of the foolish charms which our ancestors and other nations have respected, have consisted, not merely of alphabetical characters, but even of words.^h

2d. The passage of Venantius Fortunatus, written in the middle of the sixth century, attests that the Runic was used for the purpose of writing in his time. He says,

The barbarous Runæ is painted on ashen tablets,
And what the papyrus says a smooth rod effects.ⁱ

Now, as the Anglo-Saxons were not inferior in civilization to any of the barbarous nations of the North, it cannot be easily supposed that they were ignorant of Runic characters,^j if their neighbours used them.

3d. Though it cannot be doubted that the letters of our Saxon MSS. written after their conversion are of Roman origin, except only two, the th and the w, þ, ƿ, the thorn and the wen, yet these two characters are allowed by the best critics to be of Runic parentage;^k and if this be true, it would show that the Anglo-Saxons were acquainted with Runic as well as with Roman characters, when they commenced the hand-writing that prevails in their MSS.

^f Schilter's *Thesaurus*, vol. iii. p. 693.

^g Thus Cedmon says, the *run-cræftige* men could not read the hand-writing till Daniel came, p. 90.

^h One passage in a Saxon MS. confirms this idea: "Then asked the *ealþorþman* the *heftling*, whether through *þrycneft*, or through *ryngtafer*, he had broken his bonds; and he answered that he knew nothing of this craft." *Vesp. D. 14*, p. 132. Now *ryngtafer* means literally *ryn* letters. We may remark, that the Welsh word for alphabet is *coel bren*, which literally means the tree or wood of Omen; and see the Saxon description of the northern Runæ, in *Hickes's Gram. Ang. Sax.* p. 135.

ⁱ *Ven. Fortun. lib. vi. p. 1814. Ed. Mag. Dib. tom. viii.*

^j There are various alphabets of the Runæ, but their differences are not very great. I consider those characters to be most interesting which have been taken from the ancient inscriptions remaining in the North. *Wormius* gives these, *Lit. Run.* p. 58. *Hickes*, in his *Gram. Anglo-Isl. c. 1*, gives several Runic alphabets.

^k The Saxons used three characters for th, Ð, ƿ, and þ. Of these the two first seem to be Roman capitals, with a small hyphen. *Astle*, in his *History of Writing*, p. 7 and 8, gives these d's. The other, þ, is the Runic d. See *Wormius*, p. 58. The Runic d, in some dialects, was pronounced th; so *dus*, a giant, or spectre of the woods, as given by *Wormius*, p. 94, is by other writers written thus. I consider the ƿ to be taken from the þ.

4th. If the Saxons had derived the use of letters from the Roman ecclesiastics, it is probable that they would have taken from the Latin language the words they used to express them. Other nations so indebted, have done this. To instance from the Erse language :

For book, they have	leabhar, from	liber.
letter,	liter, ¹	litera.
to write,	scriobham,	scribere.
	grafam,	γραφω.
writing,	sgriobhadh,	scriptura.
	leagham, }	legere.
to read,	leabham, }	

But nations who had known letters before they became acquainted with Roman literature would have indigenous terms to express them.

The Saxons have such terms. The most common word by which the Anglo-Saxons denoted alphabetical letters, was *ƿæf*; plural, *ƿæfa*. Elfric, in his Saxon Grammar, so uses it.^m The copy of the Saxon coronation oath begins with, "This writing is written, *ƿæf be ƿæfe* (letter by letter,) from that writing which Dunstan, archbishop, gave to our lord at Kingston."ⁿ In the same sense the word is used in Alfred's translation of Bede,^o and in the Saxon gospels.^p It is curious to find the same word so applied in the Runic mythology. In the *Vafthrudis-mal*, one of the odes of the ancient Edda of Semund, it occurs in the speech of Odin, who says, "fornum stavfoni" in the ancient letters.^q

The numerous compound words derived from *ƿæf*, a letter, show it to have been a radical term in the language, and of general application.

<i>8ƿæf-cneft,</i>	the art of letters.
<i>8ƿæfen-ƿop,</i>	the alphabet.
<i>8ƿæf-gefez,</i>	a syllable.
<i>8ƿæflic,</i>	learned.
<i>8ƿæfnian,</i>	to teach letters.
<i>8ƿæfpleza,</i>	a game at letters.
<i>8ƿæf-ƿife,</i>	wise in letters.
<i>8ƿæfeƿ-heafod,</i>	the head of the letters.
<i>8ƿæfa-nama,</i>	the names of the letters.

¹ In the Erse Testament, Greek letters are expressed by *litrichibh Greigis*. Luke, xxiii. 38.

^m Cotton. Lib. Julius, A. 2.

ⁿ Cotton. Lib. Cleop. B. 13.

^o Bede, 615, 633.

^p John, vii. 15. Luke, xxiii. 38.

^q Edda Semund, p. 3. In the Icelandic Gospels, for Latin and Hebrew letters we have *Latiniskum* and *Ebreskum bokstefum*. Luke, xxiii. 38. The Franco-theotic, for letters, has a similar compound word, *bok-staven*.

The same word was also used like the Latin *litera*, to signify an epistle.⁷

The art of using letters, or writing, is also expressed in Saxon by a verb not of Roman origin. The Saxon term for the verb to write, is not, like the Erse expression, from the Latin *scribere*, but is "ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ," or "ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ." This verb is formed from a similar noun of the same meaning as *ᚱᚱᚱᚱ*. The noun is preserved in the Mæso-Gothic, where *writ* signifies "a letter."

In like manner the Saxons did not derive their word for book from the Latin *liber*; they expressed it by their own term, "*boc*," as the Northerns called it "*bog*."

I do not mean to assert indiscriminately, that whenever a word indigenous in a language is used to express writing, it is therefore to be inferred, that the people using that language have also letters; because it may so happen that the word may not have been an indigenous term for letters, but for something else; and may have been applied to express letters only analogically or metaphorically. To give an instance: the Indians of New England expressed letters, or writing, by the terms *wussukwhonk*, or *wussukwhæg*.⁸ But the Indians had no letters nor writing among them; whence then had they these words? The answer is, that they were in the habit of painting their faces and their garments, and when we made them acquainted with writing, they applied to it their word for painting.⁹ But though they could figuratively apply their term for painting to express writing, they had nothing to signify a book, and therefore it was necessary to ingraft our English word "*book*" into their language for that purpose.¹⁰

On the whole, I am induced to believe that the Anglo-Saxons were not unacquainted with alphabetical characters when they

⁷ When a letter or authoritative document is mentioned in Saxon, the expressions applied to it are not borrowed from the Latin, as *scriptum*, *mandatum*, *epistola*, and such like; but it is said, "*Honorius sent the Scot a ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ*," Sax. Ch. 39; desired the Pope with his *ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ* to confirm it, *ib.* 38. So Alfred, translating Bede, says, "the Pope sent to Augustin *pallium* and *ᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱᚱ*," *i. c.* 29, here borrowing from the Latin the *pallium*, a thing known to them from the Romans, but using a native Saxon term to express the word *epistle*.

⁸ Thus in the Indian Bible, "and this writing was written," Dan. v. 24, is rendered, *kah yeh wussukwhæg unussukkuh whoou*: "and this is the writing that was written," *kah yeh wussukwhonk ne sdt tannus-sukuh whoonik*, *ib.* v. 25. "Darius signed the writing," *Darius sealham wussuk whoouonk*, vi. 9. "And the writing was" *wussuk whonk no*. John, xix. 19.

⁹ Thus *wussukhoen* was a painted coat. Williams' *Key to the Language of America*, p. 184, ed. 1643, and see his remark, p. 61. The Malays, who have borrowed their letters from other nations, have used the same analogy. Their word "to write" is *toolis*, which also signifies to paint. See Howison's *Malay Dictionary*.

¹⁰ Hence the translator was obliged to express, "this is the book of the generation" by *uppomtuongane book*. Matt. i. 1. So, "I have found the book of the law," *nun-namtoch naumatue book*. 2 Kings, xxii. 8. "Hilkiah gave the book, Hilkiah *enun-namtau book*." *Ibid.* v. 9.

came into England. However this may be, it is certain that if they had ancient letters, they ceased to use them after their conversion, with the exception of their þ and ƿ. It was the invariable policy of the Roman ecclesiastics to discourage the use of the Runic characters, because they were of pagan origin, and had been much connected with idolatrous superstitions.^v Hence, as soon as the Christian clergy acquired influence in the Saxon monarchy, all that appeared in their literature was in the character which they had formed from the Romans.

We know nothing of the compositions of the Anglo-Saxons in their pagan state. Tacitus mentions generally of the Germans, that they had ancient songs,^w and therefore we may believe that the Anglo-Saxons were not without them. Indeed, Dunstan is said to have learned the vain songs of his countrymen in their pagan state; and we may suppose, that if such compositions had not been in existence at that period, Edgar would not have forbidden men, on festivals, to sing Heathen songs.^x But none of these have survived to us. If they were ever committed to writing, it was on wood, or stones; indeed, their word for book (*boc*) expresses a beech-tree, and seems to allude to the matter of which their earliest books were made.^y The poets of barbarous ages usually confide the little effusions of their genius to the care of tradition. They are seldom preserved in writing till literature becomes a serious study: and therefore we may easily believe, that if the Anglo-Saxons had alphabetical characters, they were much more used for divinations, charms, and funeral inscriptions, than for literary compositions.

^v The Swedes were persuaded by the Pope, in 1001, to lay aside the Runic letters and to adopt the Roman in their stead. They were gradually abolished in Denmark, and afterwards in Iceland.

^w De Moribus German.

^x Wilk. Leg. Anglo-Sax. p. 83.

^y Wormius infers, that pieces of wood cut from the beech-tree were the ancient northern books, Lit. Run. p. 6. Saxo Grammaticus mentions, that Fengo's ambassadors took with them literas ligno insculptas, "because," adds Saxo, "that was formerly a celebrated kind of material to write upon," lib. iii. p. 52. Besides the passage formerly cited from Fortunatus, we may notice another, in which he speaks of the bark as used to contain characters. See Worm. p. 9, who says, that no wood more abounds in Denmark than the beech, nor is any more adapted to receive impressions, ib. p. 7. In Welsh, *gwydd*, a tree, or wood, is used to denote a book. Thus Gwilym Tew talks of reading the *gwydd*. Owen's Dict. voc. *Gwydd*.

THE VOLUSPA.

THIS Poem is frequently quoted in the Edda of Snorre, as a competent authority, and is therefore much more ancient. It is thought to have been compiled from preceding traditions by Sæmund, who lived about a hundred years before Snorre. As it has never appeared in English, and is very little known in Europe, and is the most ancient record of the traditions of the Northmen that has yet been found, a translation of the whole of it will be here added, as it illustrates some of the Pagan superstitions of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors. It is obscure and difficult, and the meaning not always certain. The preceding extracts are given with Bartholin's ideas. I will attempt the version of the whole as literally as possible, and attending to its other late versions. In some parts, all the interpretations differ, but the reader will perceive, from my translation, the general tendency of this rude poem. Its best commentary will be found in Snorre's Edda. The name Voluspa implies the oracle or prophecy of Vola. This Sibyl of the North expresses in it, though with rapid conciseness, the great outlines of the most ancient Northern Mythology. The Voluspa and the Edda are two great repositories of the most venerated traditions of Pagan Scandinavia. The Voluspa opens abruptly, and, most probably, represents many of the ancient Saxon traditions or imaginations.

Be silent, I pray, all holy creatures !
 Greater or small ! sons of Heimdallar !
 I will tell of the devices of Valfodur :
 The ancient discourses of men ; the earliest I know.

I know the giants ; the early born :
 They who formerly instructed me.
 I know there are nine worlds, and nine supports,
 And the great centre under the earth.

In the era of the ages where Ymer was dwelling,
 There was no sand nor sea,
 Nor winds on a vast ocean.
 Earth yet was not ; nor the heaven above.
 Only the abyss of chaos ; and no grass.

Before Bur had raised up the meadows,
 And had enlarged Midgard,
 The sun shone round the south,
 And the ground produced its green fruits.

The sun from his noon, threw out the moon
 With his right hand, over the steeds of heaven.
 The sun knew not where should be his palaces :
 The moon knew not where should be her home :
 The stars knew not where would be their station.

Then all the Deities moved to their royal stools :
 The stupendously-holy Gods considered these things :
 They gave names to the night, and to the twilight,
 They called the morning and mid-day so ;
 And bade the rise and the course of the year to begin.

The Asæ met in the fields of Ida,
 And framed their images and temples.
 They placed the furnaces. They created money.
 They made tongs and iron tools.

They played at dice. They were merry.
 No vicious desire of gold arose among them.
 Till three of the Thursa virgins come,
 Two very powerful from Jotun-heim.

The Gods then went to their divine stools,
 Inquiring of the Holy Deities, this,—
 Who ought to be the Lord of the Duerga, (the dwarfs,)
 Or to create them
 From Bruner's blood, and the legs of Blavis ?

There Motsogner obtained the pre-eminence
 Of all the Duerga. Durin, the next.
 They made many images of men,
 Dwarfs on the earth, as Durin said.

Nor and Nidi ; the northern ; the southern ;
 The east ; the west ; the hidden Althiofi,
 Bivor and Bavor ; Bumbur ; Nori,
 An, and Anar ; Ae ; the mead of knowledge.

Veiger and Gandalfur ; Vindalfur ; Thrain ;
 Theckur ; Thorinn ; Thror ; Litur and Vitur ;
 Nar and Nyradur. Now I have the dwarfs,
 The violent and the placid, rightly enumerated.

Fili ; Kili ; Fundinn ; Nali ;
 Heiti ; Vili ; Hanar ; Svior ;
 Frar ; Hornbore ; Flogur ; Lonec ;
 Aurvangur and Eikinskialldi.

It is time that the dwarfs
 From the family of Dualin
 Should be reckoned by the kindreds of the people,
 For an auspicious year ;

They go out from the rocks above ground,
To the seats of the husbandmen ;
The sea of the ploughs.

There was Draupner and Dolgkrasir :
Har ; Haugspere ; Hlevangur ; Gloe ;
Skryver ; Virvir ; Skafidur ; Ai ;
Alfur ; Ingve of Eikinskialldr ;
Falur ; Frosti ; Fidur ; Sinnar ;
Dore ; Ore ; Dufur ; Andvere ;
Heph ; Fili ; Haar ; Sviar ;
This will be manifest while people live ;
The number of their descendants will value it.

Until three came from this troop,
The powerful and rich Asæ, to their home,
They found, in the land, weak unwarlike ones.
Ask and Embla, without a destiny.

These had then no soul ; they had then no reason :
No blood ; no senses ; no good colour.
Odin gave them a soul. Hænir gave reason ;
Lodur gave them blood and a good complexion.

I know that an ash existed called Ygdrasil :
Its lofty size covered with white clay.
Then comes the rain that falls in the valleys ;
It stands always green over Ordar-brunne.^a

Then came the much-knowing Virgins ;
Three, from that sea
Which extends over the oak :
One is called Urd (necessity) ;
Another Verdande (the possible) ;
The third Skulld.^b
They engrave on the shield ;
They appoint laws, they chuse laws
For the sons of the ages ;
The fates of mankind.

This one knew the first slaughter
Of the people in the world ;
When they supported Gullvelg with weapons ;
And burnt her in the hall of Hlar.

Three times they burnt her ;
Three times re-born :
Often—again—yet she lived.

^a These words mean "The Fountain of Necessity."

^b The Edda calls these "The Past, the Present, and the Future."

They called her Heid,
Whatever house they came to.

Vola of good omen
Dishonoured the divine mysteries.
She knew magic arts.
She could use enchantments,
Always troubling like an evil woman.

Then the Deities
Went each to their judicial stools.
Considering whether mischief from bad counsel
Would occur from the Asæ ;
Or whether all the Gods
Should reserve their banquets to themselves.

Odin hastened,
And sent his darts into the crowd.
This was the first slaughter of men in the world.
The wall of the city of the Asæ was broken.
Vaner made the fields to be trampled by war.

Then all the gods
Went to their judicial stools :
The Holy Deities: to consider
Who would mingle the ether and the sea ;
Or give the Virgin Odi
To the race of the Jotna (the giants).

Thor was one there ; turgid with bile :
He rarely sat,
When he perceived such things.
Oath and compacts were cut thro',
And all the controversies which intervened.

She knew ;
Heimdallur had the secret song ;
Under the same sacred zone
She beheld the river
Flowing with its dark torrent.
From the compact of Valfodur.
Know you more ? It is this.

She sat alone in the air,
When the old man came,
Yggiongur of the Asæ,
And looked her in the face.
" What do you seek from me ?"
" Why do you tempt me ?"
I know all. Odin !
Where have you hidden the eye ?

In the greater fountain of Mimur.
Mimur every morning drinks mead
From the pledge of Valfodur.
Know you more? What is it?

Herfodur delivered to him
The rings and the bracelets.
The spell of riches; wisdom;
And the staves of prophecy.
He saw these well and widely
Over all the earth.
Know you more? What is it?

He saw the Valkyriar
Immediately coming;
Adorned on steeds, they went to Gothiod.
Skulld held the shield:
Scogul was the other.
Ginnur; Helldur;
Gondul and Gierskialld.
Now the maidens of Odin are told:
The Valkyriar: instructed to ride over the ground.

I saw
The secret destinies on Balder.
The bleeding warrior; the son of Odin.
The slender and polished weapon
That killed him
Stood in the field growing upwards.

It was made from that tree
Which appeared to me
A mournful calamity
When Hodur darted it:
The killer of Balder, born before day,
Before one night the new born
Struck the son of Odin.

Then he would not raise his hands
Nor comb his head
Before he should carry
The fœ of Balder to the pile.
Frigga grieved in her Fensola,
The keeper of Vahalla.
Know you more? Is it this?

She saw the bound one
Lying under the grove of the Huns.
The perfidious funeral.
One like Lok,
There sat as Sigynia.

Never dear to her husband.
 Know you more? What is it?

A river flows from the east
 Over poisoned vales,
 Carrying mud and turf.
 It is called Slidur.

There stands towards the north,
 In Nidafjollum,
 A golden palace named Sindra ;
 But another exists in Okolni.
 The ale-cellars of the Jotun
 Which is called Brimir.

She saw a palace stand far from the sun
 In Nastrondum.
 It looks at the doors of the north.
 The building is twisted from the spines of serpents :
 Poisoned torrents
 Flow through its windows.

There she saw amid the dreadful streams
 The perjured and the murderers :
 And those who pull the ears
 Of another's wife.
 Their Nidhoggur
 Tore the flesh from their corpses.
 The fierce Wolf devoured the men.
 Know you more? It is this?

There sat an old man
 Towards the east in a wood of iron.
 Where he nourished the sons of Fenris.
 Every one of these grew up prodigious ;
 A giant form ;
 The persecutor of the moon.

He was saturated
 With the lives of dying men.
 He sprinkled the host of the Deities with blood.
 He darkened the light of the sun in the summer.
 All the winds were malignant.
 Know you more? It is this?

He sat on a mound, and struck the harp.
 Gygas the herdsman.
 The glad Egder (the eagle)
 Sang before him on the boughs of the tree,
 The purple cock surnamed Fialer.

The golden-haired bird
 Sang with the Asæ.
 He roused the heroes with Herfador.
 But another crowed below the earth,
 The yellow cock in the palace of Hela.

Garmur barked horribly
 Before the cave of Gnipa.
 The chains will be broken :
 Freco will rush out.
 Wise, she knows many things.
 But I see beyond,
 From the twilight of the Deities,
 The fierce Sigtiva.

Brethren will fight and slay each other ;
 Kindred will spurn their consanguinity :
 Hard will be the world :
 Many the adulteries.
 A bearded age : an age of swords :
 Shields will be cloven.
 An age of winds : an age of wolves.
 Till the world shall perish
 There will not be one that will spare another.

The sons of Mimur will sport ;
 But the bosom of the earth will burn.
 Hear the sound of the Mystic horn,
 Heimdallur will blow on high
 The elevated horn.
 Odin will speak by the head of Mimur.

The ancient tree will sound ominously.
 The Jotun will be dissolved.
 The ash Yggdrasil erected
 Will become terrible.
 Garmur will bark
 Before Gniper's cave.
 The chains will be shattered :
 And Freco will run forth.

Hrymer will drive his car from the east.
 Jorngandus will revolve round
 With the rage of the Jotun (giants).
 The serpent will move the seas ;
 But the eagle flies
 Through the seas of the people :
 And Lok will hold his club.

All the sons of Fifo lead Freco.
 The brother of Bilvifs accompanies them.

What is there among the Asæ?
 What among the Elfi?
 All the house of the Jotun trembles:
 The Dvergi (the dwarfs) groan
 Before the doors of the rocks:
 Their stony asylum.
 Know you more? What is it?

Surtur comes from the south
 With Swiga—lesi
 The sword of Valtivi radiate like the sun:
 The stony rocks glide away:
 The Deities are enraged:
 Men tread the way of Hela:
 But the heaven is cleft in twain.

Then Hlinar, the other grief goes forth.
 When Odin goes to battle with the Wolf.
 The striker of Beli shining
 Opposes Surtur.
 Then the husband of Frigga falls.

Then will come Sigfodr
 The greater son of Odin:
 Vidar; to fight with the fatal animal.
 Who, with her broad hand,
 In the middle of her jaws,
 Pierces his heart with a sword.
 Thus avenging the death of her father.

Then comes
 The beautiful son of Hlodynia.
 The son of Odin combated the Wolf.
 He slew in wrath the serpent Midgard.
 Men state the prop of the world.

The offspring of Fiorgunar
 Stepped nine steps.
 Weakened by the black and hungry snake,
 The sun darkens;
 The earth is immersed in the sea;
 The serene stars are withdrawn from heaven:
 Fire rages in the ancient world:
 The lofty colour reaches to heaven itself.

Garmur barks before the cave of Gnipa;
 The chains are broken:
 Freco rushes out.

She sees at last emerge from the ocean,
 An earth in every part flourishing.
 The cataracts flow down:

The eagle flies aloft ;
And hunt the fishes in the mountains.

The Asæ met in Ida Valle,
And talked of the world's great calamities :
And of the ancient runæ of Fimbultyr.

These things done, the wonderful dice
Are found gilt in the grass,
Which those of the former days possessed.

There were fields without sowing ;
All adverse things became prosperous.
Baldur will come again.
Haudur and Baldur :
Hropr and Sigropr ;
The Asæ will dwell without evils.
Do you yet understand ?

The Heinir shares the power of choosing Vidar,
And the sons of the two brothers
Inhabit the vast mansion of the winds.
Do you know more ?

An hall stands brighter than the sun ;
Covered with gold in Gimle.
Their virtuous people will dwell :
And for ages will enjoy every good.

There will come the obscene dragon flying,
The serpent from Nidar-fiolli.
He carries the corpses in his wings :
He flies over the ground :
The infernal serpent, Nidhoggur :
Now the earth gapes for him.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

The Arrival of Hengist.—His Transactions and Wars with the Britons, and final Settlement in Kent.

HITHERTO England had been inhabited by branches of the Kimmerian and Keltic races, apparently visited by the Phenicians and Carthaginians, and afterwards occupied by the Roman military and colonists. From this successive population, it had obtained all the benefits which each could impart. But in the fifth century, the period had arrived when both England and the south of Europe were to be possessed and commanded by a new description of people, who had been gradually formed amid the wars and vicissitudes of the Germanic continent; and to be led to manners, laws, and institutions peculiarly their own, and adapted, as the great result has shown, to produce national and social improvements, superior to those which either Greece or Rome had attained. The Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain must therefore not be contemplated as a barbarization of the country. Our Saxon ancestors brought with them a superior domestic and moral character, and the rudiments of new political, juridical, and intellectual blessings. An interval of slaughter and desolation unavoidably occurred before they established themselves and their new systems in the island. But when they had completed their conquest, they laid the foundations of that national constitution, of that internal polity, of those peculiar customs, of that female modesty, and of that vigour and direction of mind, to which Great Britain owes the social progress which it has so eminently acquired. Some parts of the civilization which they found in the island assisted to produce this great result. Their desolations removed much of the moral degeneracy we have before alluded to.

Although in the fictions of romance kingdoms fall almost at the will of the assailant, yet in real life no great revolutions of states occur, without the preparatory and concurring operation of many political causes. The Saxons had for nearly two centuries

been attacking Britain, with no greater successes than the half-naked Scoti from Ireland had obtained. They plundered where they arrived unexpectedly. They were defeated when they encountered a military or naval resistance. Hengist and Ella would not have been more fortunate than their depredatory countrymen who had preceded them, if the events of the day had not by their agencies conducted them and their successors from exile and piracy to the proprietorship and kingdoms of the English octarchy.

Amid the sovereignties into which the island was divided, and the civil distractions which this division of power produced, it appears that one ruler was made the supreme monarch, with the addition of a council of the other chiefs. The council is mentioned by all the ancient writers who treat of this period,^a and Gwrtheyrn is named by each as the predominating sovereign.^b

Gwrtheyrn is mentioned as a proud and cruel tyrant; but with these features Gildas describes the general body of the Britons, both clergy and laity.^c Their supreme king seems to have acted only with the selfish spirit of his contemporaries, and he was surrounded with many political difficulties that would have embarrassed a wiser and a better man. His authority was disputed^d by a chieftain of Roman parentage, whose parents had perished in the possession of the imperial purple, and to whom Gildas gives the name of Ambrosius Aurelianus.^e The Scoti and Picts were harassing the island wherever they could penetrate,^f and a mortal distemper was raging among the people,^g which appears to have spread over a large part of the world.^h But the greatest affliction of Britain was the numerous petty sovereignties into

^a As by Gildas, s. 22, 23. Nennius, c. 38, &c. Bede, p. 52. Flor. Wig. 194.

^b Thus W. Malmsh. p. 9. "Omnes reguli insulæ Vortigerni subternebantur monarchiæ." The traditions of the Welsh that have been committed to writing notice the same plan of government. The seventh historical triad exhibits Arthur as the penteyrn, literally the head-king; and Maelgwn, the king of Gwynedd, as the penhynain, or chief elder. Welsh Archæol. vol. ii. p. 3. According to this British appellation, Gwrtheyrn was the pen-teyrn, whose supreme power was called unbæueth, literally, the one head-ship or monarchy.

^c See Gildas's epistola annexed to his history, p. 10-39.

^d Nennius, c. 26.

^e Gildas, s. 25. Nennius, c. 44. The Welsh triads call him Emrys Wledig, or king Emrys, which is the name disfigured, in the MSS. or printed copy of Nennius, into Embreis gleutic, c. 44. He is frequently mentioned in the triads. His descendants were alive in the time of Gildas, but much degenerated.

^f Gildas, c. 20. Bede, lib. i. c. 16. The Vita S. Carentoci names the leaders of the Scoti, "In istis temporibus Scoti superaverunt Britanniam; nomina ducum quorum Briscus, Thuibainus, Machkius, Anpacus." MSS. Vesp. A. xiv. p. 90.

^g Gildas, c. 21.

^h Gildas, c. 21. Marcellinus mentions a great pestilence following a famine at Constantinople, when Ætius III. and Symmachus were consuls, an. 446, p. 41. Soal. Euseb. Evagrus, lib. ii. c. 6, extends it over Asia and the world, τὰς γῆς, p. 298, ed. Vales. Corporibus tumescentibus oculos amittebant: simulque tussis vexati tertio die moriebantur. No remedy could be found for it.

which, after the departure of the Romans, it had become divided.¹ Gwrtheyrn had to encounter each of these evils, and all nearly at the same time. The country became dissatisfied at its sufferings, and its discontent increased the civil factions of the period. Royalty has no safety when the sovereign is unpopular. When the fuel of rebellion abounds in every part, the restlessness of the disturbed society seldom fails to produce events or characters which begin the fatal conflagration.

In this state of the country, three Saxon cyules, or vessels, arrived from Germany on or near the British coast; whose leaders were named Hengist and Horsa, two brothers, and descendants from Woden. As their numbers were too few for conquest, their visit must have been either a matter of accident, or for the purpose of a transient depredation. Nennius says they were exiles.²

Arrival of
Hengist.
A. C. 449.

If we estimate the number of these Saxons, from the size of the Danish vessels in a subsequent age, they could not have exceeded three hundred men;³ and there is no reason to believe that the Saxon ships, as they are mentioned by Sidonius, were larger. They may have been some of the Saxons, who were at this time supporting the Armorici, and hovering on the coast of France.

They arrived at Ebbsfleet,¹ in the Isle of Thanet, near Richborough. The king and British chiefs were at that time holding a public council, on the best means to repel their Irish and Scottish enemies, and it was agreed to employ these Saxon adven-

¹ The custom of gavel kind, which prevailed among the Britons, increased this evil. In the Lives of the Welsh Saints in the Cottonian library, Vesp. A. 14, and Titus, D. 22, MSS. seemingly of the twelfth century, two striking instances of this custom are given. The Vita Cadoci, after mentioning a king who left ten sons, says of them, "paternum regnum inter se secundum eorum numerum unicuique suam provinciam diviserunt." So the Vita S. Carentoci, speaking of the son of Cunedda, states that "divisit possessiones patris sui inter fratres suos."

² Nennius, c. 28. Many authorities mention that the Saxons were invited, and many that they came accidentally. It is most likely that the first arrival off the island was casual, but that their landing and subsequent increase were the result of invitation.

³ Gildas, Bede, Flor. Wigorn. Malmesbury, H. Huntingd. and others, mention the ships, but not the number of men. Verstegan and his authority, p. 126, and Speed, Hist. 291, outrage probability so far as to crowd 9000 into these three ships.—The Danish ships of a subsequent age had 100 men each. Herv. Sag. p. 25.—Laxmon gives the probable number, "Threo scipen gode comen mid flode, threo hundred enihiten," MSS. Cott. Calig. A. 9. p. 79.

¹ Or Ypwinea fleet, Sax. Chronicle, 12. It was near the estuary of the Wanstun, which divides Thanet from the main land of Kent.—The Wanstun was once navigable for ships of large burthen. See Betteley Ant. Rutup. 13. In Bede's time it was three stadia broad, and fordable only in two places, lib. i. c. 25. It is now, at Recuiver, one of its entrances, a brook which may be stopped over, and in its centre, towards the Barr road, is not six feet broad. Ebbsfleet is now an inland spot at some distance from the sea.—Barr was a naval station formerly, and some old drawings still exist, which represent a man with a ferry-boat at this place.

turers as subsidiary soldiers.^m They were accordingly retained to serve against the northern invaders, the Pihtas, Scoti, and other foes; they were promised food and clothing, and were stationed in Thanet.ⁿ Their first exertions are stated to have been directed against the Irish and Picts, in just performance of their engagement, and with immediate success.^o But it was not enough to repress one incursion of these active enemies. It was their habit to attack, plunder, retire, and return; and if one quarter was too well guarded, to attempt another. All pirates in every age use this policy, and exhibit this perseverance. Hence it was not enough to have repelled the first assailants; and to do more larger forces were requisite. But as the numbers which had come with Hengist were few, it was natural that he should recommend the invitation of more of his countrymen, if they were to be used for the purpose of continued military defence.^p The king assented; and they sent to their native land for further supplies.^q

But we must not resort to Wittichind for the speech of the ambassadors. Though a Saxon himself, he appears to have been completely ignorant of the Saxon antiquities.^r We can conceive the application to have been an address to the courage and spirit of adventure of the youth of Jutland, from which Hengist had sailed.^s Hengist may have added, as a lure, the probability of greater aggrandizement; but the lofty projects of ambition are not the first conceptions of humbler fortunes: auspicious events gradually teach hope to be more aspiring. One unexpected success occasions a further elevation to be attempted, until a greatness, at one time the most improbable, is attained with a facility which surprises the adventurer. But in the beginning of his employment, it is not probable that Hengist, with his scanty means,

^m Gildas, s. 22. Nen. c. 28. The British poem of Golyddan indignantly alludes to this council. Welsh Arch. v. i. p. 156.

ⁿ Gildas, s. 13. Nennius, s. 28. 35. The ancient British name of Thanet was Ruithina. Nen. c. 26.

^o Bede, lib. i. c. 15, p. 52. Sax. Ch. p. 12. Ethelwerd, lib. i. p. 633.

^p Nennius, s. 37.

^q I would place at this period, as well as at their first arrival, that invitation which Bede, lib. i. c. 15; Ethelwerd, 633; Sax. Chron. 12; and others, affirm.

^r He was the biographer of his contemporary, Otho, who died 972. Sigebert, 1196. Gorm. Quart. Celeb. Chron.—He addresses his Saxon history to Matilda, Otho's maiden daughter. He knows nothing of the Saxons prior to their entering Thuringia. He was so ignorant of them as to say, that the Saxons in England were called Angli-Saxonia, because the island was in a sort of angle of the sea. P. 3. he says, when he was a boy, he heard of the Macedonian extraction of the Saxons. If the Saxons sprang from the Sacasene, who lived near Persia, which is the most probable account of their origin, traditions connected with the battles of Alexander might have remained with them, as with the nations in the east; but this is a subject too illusory to deserve any attention. If it be worth recollecting at all, it is merely as another tradition pointing to their eastern origin.

^s Bede, p. 52.

could have projected the conquest of a country so well peopled as Britain. It was the civil feuds, divided sovereignties, and warring interests of the unhappy island, and events not before anticipated, which also arise in disturbed periods of society, that led him to perceive that permanent settlements were attainable, and to desire their acquisition. Hence we need not fancy that his primary invitations held out magnificent hopes, or that his first friendly allies came in search of thrones. The sword of the Saxon was ready for every enterprise; war and booty were his high-prized pleasures; and it is probable, that at the first call of Hengist many thronged, who knew only that they were to fight and to be rewarded.

The Saxons at that time had, as we have already described, spread from the Elbe to the Rhine; and the old Saxon Chronicler describes them to have then been active in depredation on all the sea-coast from Holland to Denmark.⁴

The subsequent actions of Hengist are not satisfactorily detailed in our oldest writers: their great result, the occupation of Britain by the Anglo-Saxon nations, and the consequent defeats and sufferings of the Britons, are strongly but generally expressed. Few of the accompanying circumstances are noticed, and these it is not easy to arrange under any definite chronology. All that criticism can do is to select the incidents that seem indisputable, and to add the remarks which they naturally suggest.

It was not until the seventh year after his arrival in England that Hengist is stated to have begun his kingdom in Kent.⁵ Thus a period of six years intervened between his entrance and his establishment; and this was occupied by three classes of events, which are all mentioned, though not circumstantially narrated. These were his own conflicts with the Picts and Irish,—his alliance and friendship with Gwrtheyrn and the Britons,—and his subsequent hostilities against them, and final conquest of Kent into a kingdom, which he transmitted to his posterity. These events followed in the order thus stated; but the time which each occupied cannot now be discriminated.

The consequences of admitting and employing Hengist and his followers became so calamitous to the Britons, that the original policy of the measure has been generally reprobated. But this was not the single act of Gwrtheyrn. It was the unanimous

⁴ *Ethelwerd*, p. 833. His Chronicle ends with *Edgar*, about whose time he lived. He derives himself from *Ethelred*, the brother of *Alfred*, p. 831. It is a rude but valuable Chronicle.

⁵ The *Saxon Chronicle* expressly states, that after the battle in 455, in which *Horsa* fell, Hengist acquired his little kingdom; after whom Hengest song to rice, p. 13. The more ancient *Ethelwerd* has the same date, with *et Hengest cepit regnum*, p. 834. *Henry of Huntingdon* dates his acquisition one year later, p. 311; and *Florence of Worcester* one year earlier, p. 204. *Nennius*, without specifying the exact year, indicates a similar interval.

resolution of the national council of kings and chiefs who decided for its adoption. It appeared to them to be an expedient means of protecting the coasts of the island from the maritime desolations of the Irish and Picts, that one set of barbarians should be hired to combat the others; for in the eyes of the Romanized Britons all these piratical invaders were deemed barbarians, and are so mentioned. The purposed utility of the measure was immediately attained. Hengist defeated the depredators, with a slaughter which at last ended their incursions.* To have foreseen at the outset, that the employment of a few hundred Saxons for this purpose would have induced the whole nation of the Angli, with a large portion of the continental Saxons and Jutes, to expatriate themselves from their domestic hearths into Britain, required a power of prophetic vision, which it was no disgrace to the Britons to have wanted. No such event had at that time occurred to the island. The Saxons were not, like the Romans, a mighty and civilized empire, whose ambition had been rapaciously progressive. They had been but petty and partial depredators; active, bold, and persevering, but whom moderate exertions of military vigilance had always repelled. Hence Gwrtheyrn and the British council had no reason to anticipate the new spirit of permanent dominion and territorial conquest, with which so large a portion of the Saxon confederation became afterwards inspired: and still less, their power of effecting such ambitious resolutions.

The censure to which the Britons are more justly liable is, that when these intentions began to appear, no vigorous system of union and patriotic resistance was adopted to frustrate their completion. On this point the evils of their political system, and the bad passions of Gwrtheyrn, operated to destroy the independence of the country. The chiefs pursued their conflicts with each other, which the people supported; and Gwrtheyrn projected to use the aid of Hengist against those who were jealous of his power, or had become his competitors.

When Hengist obtained permission to increase his forces, as the island was accessible on so many points of attack, by enemies who came by sea, and chose their own places of operation; this augmentation was necessary to the country while it continued the policy of using foreign auxiliaries. Seventeen more chiules came with his daughter Rowena;† and afterwards forty more, with his son and kinsman, plundering the Orkneys and Scotland

* W. Malm. lib. i. p. 9.

† Nonn. c. 36. Malmesbury, p. 9, mentions her with an "ut accepimus;" and H. Huntingdon with a "dicitur a quibusdam," p. 310. The Welsh Triads, c. 38, call her Ronwen, and some of the later Welsh poems allude to her; but there seems no historical authority for her existence, except the brief passages of Nennius, which Jeffrey of Monmouth, and from him Wece and Lazamon have so copiously expanded, and to which Malmesbury and Huntingdon seem to allude.

in their way, who were stationed off the Scottish coast, near the wall.^a

For these services an interval of cordiality occurred between Hengist and the Britons.⁷ That Hengist invited Gwrtheyrn to a feast, at which the fair and blue-eyed Rowena officiated as the cup-bearer, till the British king became intoxicated both with wine and love, and at last obtained her for his wife, we must believe, if at all, on the credit of Nennius.^a But the burthen of their remuneration diminished the gratitude of the Britons; and the martial vigour which had produced the successes of the Saxons alarmed those whom they had benefited. The object for which they had been engaged having been attained, the natives wished their departure; but military adventurers have no proper homes; having abandoned peaceful life and its comforts for the fame and advantages of daring warfare in other countries, their new habits and gratifications are inconsistent with the quiet and content of agricultural obscurity. The Saxon-Jutes refused to leave their station in Thanet: they demanded larger supplies; and stated that they must plunder for their subsistence if these were refused.^b The Britons had the spirit to resent their requisition, but not the wisdom to combine to expel them; 455. and the third class of incidents to which we have alluded began.

The Saxons made peace with the Picts, collected their forces, and, imitating those whom they had been employed to repress, ravaged the nearest cities and countries, from the east sea to the west.^b The desolations that followed are strongly painted. Public and private edifices destroyed, priests slain at the altars, and chieftains with their people: some part of the population flying to monasteries, others to forests and mountains, and many to foreign parts, imply the successful ravages, which the first assaults of Hengist and his Jutes effected, against the unprepared and astonished natives.^c

But these victorious depredations could not long continue. These evils aroused the Britons to wiser policy and to a courageous resistance. Self-love produced the conduct which no patriotism had suggested. A vigorous system of defence was resolved upon, and Guortemir, a son of Gwrtheyrn, was appointed to conduct it. A series of battles occurred between him and Hengist and Horsa, in which victory was alternate. It is expressly stated by Nennius, that Guortemir three times defeated and besieged Hengist and his Jutes, and at last expelled them from Thanet and from England. He adds, that for five years they were kept out of the island, till Guortemir's death.^d As Gildas asserts that the invaders at one time returned home;

^a Nen. c. 37.

^b Bede, lib. i. c. 15. p. 53.

^c Gildas, c. 25.

⁷ Ethelw. 833.

^b Ibid.

^c Ibid.

^d Nen. c. 36.

^e Nenn. c. 45.

and Bede, though a Saxon, admits the fact by inserting it in his history;^f as Hengist did not begin his reign in Kent till six years after his arrival in the island;^g and as there are some foreign traditions of his having founded Leyden during his absence from England,^h his temporary expulsion, and the successful exertions of the Britons at this period, seem entitled to our belief.

The Britons who combined against Hengist were headed by two sons of Gwrtheyrn, who are named Guortemir and Categirn. On the Derwent the first struggle occurred;ⁱ the next at a place called the Ford of the Eagles, now Ailesford in Kent, was distinguished by the death of Horsa on the part of the Saxons, and of Categirn among the Britons;^j a third battle was fought at Stonar, on the sea-shore fronting France, from which the Saxons fled to their chiules.^k Guortemir was the British chieftain who commanded in all these conflicts. But fable has obscured his title to celebrity. We may concede to him all the praise that Cambrian affection can demand, without believing that he pulled up a tree by the roots, and with the vegetating club killed Horsa, and defeated the Saxons.^l Courage has been always the characteristic of the Cymry, and they may disclaim, without injury to their glory, every impossible achievement.

Guortemir dying, Hengist is stated to have returned with an augmentation of his forces, which proved ultimately irresistible;^m but he is described as having first regained a footing in the island, by the treacherous massacre of the British chieftains at a banquet. The account of Nennius represents him not only as soliciting a treaty of peace, which was closed by the invitation of the Britons to a friendly feast; but also as commanding his Saxons to come with their short swords under their garments, and on his exclaiming, "Nimod eure saxes," "Unsheathe your swords," to slay all but Gwrtheyrn. The meeting was held, and the cruel perfidy was accomplished.ⁿ It cannot now be determined how much, or if any part of this is true; or whether the fatal issue, if it occurred,

^f Bede, lib. i. c. 16, p. 53.

^g See before note *.

^h Usher, in his *Primordis Eccl. Anglic.* p. 420, extracts a passage to this effect from the *Chronicon of Gerbrandus*, who died 1504. I do not know his authorities. *Kempius*, in his *Res. Frisic.* lib. ii. c. 1, affirms the same. Usher adds, that "Dousa, Meursius, Hegenius, &c. *Vulgata Hollandis chronica sequuti*," also report it, p. 420.

ⁱ Nennius, c. 46.

^j *Sax. Chron.* 13. *Ethelw.* 834. Nennius gives the British name of the place as *Sathonegabail*, p. 110; but his British names of places and persons have been badly transcribed. On Horsa's monument, see *Gough's Camden*, vol. i. p. 231.

^k *Nenn.* c. 46, 47. *Batteley* thinks that the site of this battle was *Stone-end*, in the south corner of Kent. *Ant. Rutup.* p. 19. There still remains a great quantity of human bones under the church at *Hythe*, which imply that some great battle has been fought in this vicinity. Nennius calls the stone, from which the field was named, "The Stone of the Title." Unless this means the boundary of the kingdom or county of Kent, the subject of the allusion is lost.

^l *Nenn.* c. 45.

^m *Nenn.* c. 46, 47.

ⁿ *Nenn.* c. 48.

to be attributed to premeditated villany. One Welsh bard, two centuries afterwards, alludes to a catastrophe like this, but with no distinctness of historical detail.*

As Nennius adds to the history of Gwrtheyrn incidents undeniably fictitious,[†] and inserts fables as decided about St. 455. Germain, in circumstances which the true chronology of the bishop disproves,[‡] he may have equally invented, or at least have exaggerated this event. A feast, inebriation, an unpremeditated quarrel, and a conflict may have taken place; and the battle may have ended in the destruction of the Britons. But this is all that is creditable of this celebrated catastrophe; and even this statement is rather a concession to an ancient tradition, than the admission of an historical fact.

The great battle, which, according to the Saxon chroniclers, completed the establishment of Hengist in Kent, was fought at Crayford, in 457. The Britons, defeated in this with great slaughter, abandoned Kent, and fled in terror to London.[§] Eight years afterwards, the Britons attacked Hengist again, but it was with ruin to themselves. And in 473, they attempted another battle with him, but with such a calamitous issue, that they are declared to have fled from the Saxons as from fire.[¶]

The name of Hengist has been surrounded with terror, and all his steps with victory. From Kent, he is affirmed to have carried devastation into the remotest corners of the island; to have spared neither age, sex, nor condition; to have slaughtered the priests on the altars; to have butchered in heaps the people who

* The passage in Golyddan is:

When they bargained for Thanet, with such scanty discretion,
With Hors and Hengys in their violent career,
Their aggrandisement was to us disgraceful,
After the consuming secret with the slaves at the confluent stream.
Conceive the intoxication at the great banquet of Mead;
Conceive the deaths in the great hour of necessity:
Conceive the fierce wounds: the tears of the women:
The grief that was excited by the weak chief:
Conceive the sadness that will be revolving to us,
When the brawlers of Thanet shall be our princes.

Got. Arym. 2. W. Arch. 156.

The only words here that imply any premeditated treachery are "rhin dilain," the consuming or destroying secret, which in the Cambrian Register for 1796 are translated too freely, "The plot of death."

[†] See his Stories, from c. 38. to c. 34.

[‡] Nennius, c. 29, 30, &c. St. Germain was bishop of Auxerre, from 418 to 448. Fabricius, Bibl. Med. lib. vii. p. 139. He lived thirty years and five days after St. Amator, according to his ancient biographer Constantius. Amator died in 418, Stillingfleet, Orig. Brit. p. 209. Bede also errs in placing the visit of St. Germain into Britain, to oppose their Pelagian opinions, after the arrival of the Saxons.

[§] Sax. Chron. "And the Bryttas the foreletun Centlond," p. 12. It is from this victory that Huntingdon dates the kingdom of Hengist, p. 31.

[¶] Sax. Chron. p. 14. Fla. Wig. 200, 201.

fled to the mountains and deserts;† and to have finally established his dominion in Kent, Essex, Middlesex, and Sussex. But when from these hyperboles of conquest, we turn to the simple and authentic facts, that all the battles of Hengist, particularized by the Saxons, were fought in Kent; that one of the last contests was even in Thanet, in the extremity of his little kingdom,‡ and that no good evidence is extant, of his having penetrated, except in his first depredations, beyond the region which he transmitted‣ to his posterity; and, above all, that at this very period the Britons were so warlike that twelve thousand went to Gaul, on the solicitations of the emperor, to assist the natives against the Visigoths,‡ we must perceive that exaggeration has been as busy with Hengist as with Arthur; and that modern historians have suffered their criticism to slumber, while they were perusing the confused declamations of Gildas and his copyist, Bede. What Gildas related as the general consequences of all the Saxon invasions has been too hastily applied to the single instance of Hengist. From this error the misconception of his real history has arisen. The truth seems to be, that the fame of Hengist depends more on the circumstance of his having first conceived and executed the project of an hostile settlement in Britain, than on the magnitude of his conquests, or the extent of his devastations.

For twelve years after the battle at Wippeds Floot, he remained alone exposed to the vengeance of all the Britons in the island, except those in Kent, whom he had subdued. The ease with which he seems to have maintained his extorted dominion announces the continuance of the discord between the contending native chieftains, which was wasting the British strength,‡ and which Gildas seems to protract to the times of Arthur. At length
465. another adventurer appeared on the island. The success of Hengist made a new species of enterprise familiar to the Saxon states. To combine to obtain riches, cultivated lands,

† This statement is seriously given by Hume, p. 20., and by our venerable Milton. 1 Kennett's Collection of Histor. 37. Langhorn, p. 33, follows Jeffry, and adds York, Lincoln, London, and Winchester to his conquests.

‡ Wippedfloot.

‣ Mr. Carte has observed, that he never extended his territories beyond Kent. Hist. England, p. 198. Mr. Whitaker is of a similar opinion. Manchester. ii. 4to. p. 28.

‡ The expedition of Riethamus, mentioned in Sidon. Apollon. lib. iii. ep. 9, and Jornandes, c. 45. This incident was early noticed by Freculphus, Chron. t. ii. c. 17. — Sigebert Gembl. in mentioning it gives a gentle lash upon Jeffry; Quis autem fuerit late, historia Britonum minime dicit, quæ regum suorum nomina et gesta per ordinem et pandit. 1 Pist. 504. Either this Riethamus was Arthur, or it was from his expedition that Jeffry, or the Breton bards, took the idea of Arthur's battles in Gaul.

‡ Gildas in his last section, and in his epistle; and Bede, c. 22. An abrupt but valuable passage of Nennius, p. 118, also intimates that Ambrosius was connected with the civil fury at this period: "A regno Goorthrigerni usque ad discordiam Guitolini et Ambrosii anni sunt duodecim." Huntingdon declares, "Non cessabant civilia bella," p. 311. And see the Lives of the Welsh Saints, MSS. Vesp. A. 14.

and slaves to tend them, was more inviting than to risk the tempest for uncertain plunder. Hence it is not wonderful, that while some were diffusing themselves over Germany, the success of Hengist attracted the maritime part of the Saxon confederation; and assisted to convert it from naval piracy to views of regular conquest in Britain.

Hengist was succeeded in Kent by his son Æsc, who reigned twenty-four years. No subsequent event of importance is recorded of this little kingdom, till the reign of Ethelbyrhte, who acceded in 560,¹ and enjoyed the sceptre for above half a century.²

CHAPTER II.

Ella arrives in Sussex, and founds a kingdom there.—Cerdic invades the south part of the island, and establishes the kingdom of Wessex.—Battles of his successors with the Britons.

ELLA was the next Saxon chieftain, or king, who, twenty-eight years after the first arrival of Hengist, invaded Britain. He landed with three sons in Sussex;^a and drove the Britons into the great wood, which stretched from the south of Kent into Sussex and Hampshire.^b Although they came with but three ships, they succeeded in gaining a settlement. Hence we may infer, that they were resisted only by the petty British sovereign of the district. By slow degrees they enlarged their conquests on the coast. In the eighth year of their arrival they attempted to penetrate into the interior; a dubious but wasteful battle on the river Mercread checked their progress. Recruited by new arrivals from the continent, they ventured to besiege Andredes Ceaster, a city strongly fortified according to the usages of the age. The Britons defended this with some skill. Taking advantage of the adjoining

A. C. 477.
Arrival of
Ella.

400.

¹ Sax. Ch. p. 20.

² Flor. Wig. dates his accession 561, and gives fifty-six years as the duration of his reign, p. 221. The names by which Alfred translates the title of dæces, which Bede gives to Hengist and Horsa, are Latioowas and Heretagan, p. 463. The British king, whom Jeffry calls Vortigernus, and the Welsh writings Gwrthmeyrn, Alfred names Wyrthgeorn, p. 462.

^a Saxon Chron. 14. Flor. Wigorn. 203. Ethelwerd, 834.

^b The wood of Kent was anciently 120 miles long towards the west, and 30 broad from north to south. On the edge of the wood, in Sussex, stood Andredes Ceaster. Lombard's Perambulation of Kent, 167, 168. This vast wood was a wilderness, not inhabited by men, but by deer and hogs.

forest, while the Saxons attempted to scale the walls, a division of the Britons attacked them from the woods behind: to repel them the Saxons were compelled to desist from their assault on the city. The Britons retired from the pressure of their attack into the woods, sallying out again when the Saxons again advanced to the city. This plan was successfully repeated with great loss to the assailants, till Ella conceived the idea of dividing his Saxons into two bodies; one to storm, the other to cover the attack.^c This measure succeeded, and the Saxons burst into the city; but, irritated by their loss, disgraced their conquest by one of those barbarous actions which history ought never to mention without horror, and which no events or reasons can justify: the inhabitants were put to the sword.^d This was a conquest not far distant from the shore; so that this Saxon kingdom was rather permitted by the Britons to exist than extorted from their national opposition. Ella's settlement was probably considered as a colonization, that would have no important consequences to the British people. It became the kingdom of Sussex.

As this state was never formidable to the others, nor is much mentioned afterwards, there is no reason to imagine that Ella made any great progress; but Ella is commemorated as the preponderant Saxon chief^e at that time in England; his conquests were therefore superior to those of Hengist and his son, who were his contemporaries. This is another circumstance, which shows the mistake of attributing such extensive desolation and triumphs to Hengist. Both he and Ella appear to have been satisfied with the possession of the provinces they invaded. It was the next warrior who spread consternation through Britain, resisted the genius of Ambrosius and Arthur, and by his successes ensured safety to the intruders in Kent and Sussex.

Eighteen years after Ella, another powerful colony of Saxons arrived in the island, under the auspices of Cerdic, who also derived his genealogy from Woden.^f The first essay was made with five ships; but the battles and conquests of its leaders display either abilities of the most superior kind, or an accumulation of force far beyond that which had assailed the other parts of the island. The place of his primary descent is by no means clear. The modern name,

495.
Invasion of
Cerdic.

^c Hen. Hunt. p. 312. He adds, that the city was never rebuilt, but remained apparently in his times in a state of ruin, which showed to the passenger how noble a place it had been.

^d Sax. Chron. 15. "No wearth thær forthon an Bryt to lafe." Our ancient chroniclers make often small differences in their chronologies. Thus the Sax. Chron. dates this event in 490, Flor. Wig. 491, and Ethelwerd, 492.

^e Sax. Chron. 71. Bede, lib. ii. c. 5.

^f Sax. Chron. 15. Flor. Wig. 205. Cerdic was the ninth descendant from Woden by his son Baldæg, and his great grandson Freothogar. Allowing thirty years for a generation, this would place the existence of Odin about 225, which is near the time when the Franks accomplished their voyage from the Eaxine.

which could correspond with the ancient appellation of *Cerdices Ora*, has not been preserved.^a Both Yarmouth and Southampton^b have had their advocates; but a remarkable passage in the Saxon Chronicle, which indicates that he attacked West Sæxna-land six years after his arrival,^c induces a belief that his first attempt was on some other part of the island.

In the same year that Cerdic assaulted the district after-wards denominated Wessex, a band of his allies, under 501. Porta, effected a landing with the companies of two ships at Portsmouth, and defeated the Britons.^d Others came, thirteen years afterwards, under Stuf and Wihtgar.

It was in the battles with Cerdic that the strength of the Britons and Saxons seem to have been first opposed to each other with a national magnitude, and for many years with varying success. It was not till twenty-four years after his arrival that Cerdic and his son are noticed to have established the kingdom of Wessex.^e Of the conflicts which he had with the Britons during these twenty-four years, the Saxons have left scarcely any notice. As Cerdic did not arrive in any part of England till forty-six years after Hengist, he found a new generation of Britons, with different kings and chiefs from those who had employed and fought with the conqueror of Kent. Gwrtheyrn, Guortemir, and Ambrosius, had long been dead. The Britons were in possession of all the island but Kent and Sussex; and when Cerdic attacked them, they were at liberty to have employed all their forces against him, as Ida had not yet arrived, nor had the Angles expatriated themselves.

The only British king whom the Saxons mention in the battles that preceded the establishment of this West Saxon kingdom was Natanleod, and he appears but in one great battle, in which he fell in 508.^f This was something like a national conflict be- 508. tween the two contesting races. Cerdic increased his own

^a Yet Higden, in his *Polychronicon*, makes *Cerdicesora* that *quæ nunc dicitur Gernemouth*, p. 224, which (if we could rely upon it) would decide that Yarmouth was the spot. Camden mentions a striking fact in favour of the claims of Yarmouth. "The place is called by the inhabitants at this day, *Cerdicksand*." *Britain*, 390, Gih.

^b This position is thought to be warranted by comparing the Saxon Chron. p. 18, which mentions the arrival of the nepotes of Cerdic at *Cerdicesora*, in 514, and *Matt. West.* who states their arrival in *occidentali parte Britannie*, p. 184; but this is not conclusive evidence. Mr. Whitaker thinks, that all Cerdic's operations were confined to Hampshire, vol. ii. p. 61.

^c *Sax. Chron.* p. 15. So *Ethelwerd*, 834. *Sexto etiam anno adventus eorum occidentalem circumierunt Britannie partem quæ Westsæx nuncupatur.*

^d *Sax. Chron.* p. 17. *Flor. Wig.* 205. *Ethelw.* 834.

^e Thus the *Sax. Chron.* 519, "Her Cerdic and Cynric West-Sæxna rics onfengun," p. 18. *Flor. Wig.* "regnare cœperunt," p. 208, *Ethelwerd*, "in ipso anno facietanus cœperunt regnare," p. 834. So *Huntingdon* to the same date, "Regnum West Sæx incipit," p. 313.

^f *Sax. Chron.* p. 16. *Flor. Wig.* 206. *Ethelwerd*, 834.

strength by auxiliary forces from the Saxons in Kent and Sussex, and Natanleod assembled the greatest army of Britons that had yet met the Saxons together. He directed his main attack on their right wing, where Cerdic commanded, and drove it from the field; but, too eager in pursuit, he allowed this chieftain's son to move on him in the rear, and the victory was wrenched from his grasp.^m He fell with 5000 Britons; and such was the extent of his disaster, that all the region near the scene of conflict became afterwards called by his name.ⁿ This victory gave Cerdic a firm position in the island, though it did not enable him yet to found a kingdom.

The subsequent battles of Cerdic and his friends with the Britons, which the Saxon writers have recorded, are but few. In 514 his kinsmen, Stuf and Wihtgar, made their incursion on Cerdicesore. In 519, Cerdic and his son Cynric obtained a victory at Cerdices-ford, which appears to have first laid the actual foundation of the West-Saxon kingdom, as from this time the Saxon chronicle dates the reign of the West-Saxon kings.^o The struggle lasted the whole day with varying success, but in the evening the Saxons conquered.^p In 528, another conflict is mentioned at Cerdices-leah, but its issue is not stated: and, in 530, Cerdic and his son took the Isle of Wight with great slaughter. In 534, Cerdic died.^q He does not appear to have done more than to have maintained himself in the district where he landed; but his posterity enlarged his settlement into a kingdom, so powerful, as to absorb every other in the island.

His son Cynric defeated the Britons at Searohyrig; and four years afterwards at Beranbirig.^r In this last battle the Britons made peculiar exertions to overcome their invaders. They collected a large army; and, taught by former defeat the evil of disorderly combats, their leaders attempted an imitation of better discipline. They were formed into nine divisions; three in front, three in the centre, and three in the rear, apparently to act as a reserve; their archers and horse were arranged like the Romans. The Saxons observing the array, condensed themselves into one compact body, and made an attack in this mass which proved irresistible.^s

^m H. Hunt. 312.

ⁿ Chron. Sax. "Her Cerdic and Cynric West Seaxna rice onfengun:" after mentioning the battle, it adds, "siththan riceadon West Seaxa cynceborn of tham dæge," p. 18.

^o See Note ⁿ above.

^p Hen. Hunt. 313. Camden places the battle at a ford of the Avon, at the place now called Charford in Hampshire.

^q Sax. Chr. 20. Flor. Wig. 219. I think Somner goes too far from the line of Cerdic's operations, when he guesses this to be Chardsley in Buckinghamshire.

^r Sax. Ch. 20. Flor. Wig. 230. This is placed at Banbury in Oxfordshire; the other at Salisbury.

^s H. Hunt. p. 314. This ancient author, from sources now lost, has preserved the particular circumstances of several of these Saxon battles. He seems to have had a

It was Cealwin, the third king of Wessex, who acceded in 580, that obtained the greatest successes against the natives, and took from them more of their country than his predecessors had been able to subdue. His brother defeated the Britons at Bedford, and dispossessed them of four towns; and six years afterwards Cealwin himself obtained a great victory at Deorham, against three British kings, who fell in the battle; Conmail, Condidan, and Farinmail. The number of these kings shows that the same ruinous division of the British strength continued in the island, though its rulers had at times sufficient policy to combine their efforts. This appears to have been a conflict of some magnitude, as well from the union of the three kings, as from the important results of the victory; for three of the great cities of the Britons, Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, submitted after it to the conqueror.^a Seven years afterwards, in 584, the Britons again tried the fortune of war with him at Fethanleagh: a son of Cealwin fell in the struggle, and the Saxons retreated in disorder; but their king succeeded in rallying them, and at last obtained a hard-earned and long-contested triumph. He obtained much booty and many towns; but as the Saxon chronicler remarks that he afterwards retired into his own district,^b the Britons were still powerful enough to prevent or discourage his advance.

Such is the Saxon statement of the battles which attended the establishment and progress of the formidable kingdom of Wessex; by which we find that eighty-two years elapsed after the arrival of Cerdic, before it was extended to include Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath. Its first acquisition was Hampshire by Cerdic. It was enlarged into Wiltshire, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire, by his son; and by his grandson into Gloucestershire and part of Somersetshire. But after these successes, it was still flanked on the west by British kingdoms in Cornwall, Devonshire, and part of Somersetshire; and on the northwest by the British princes in Wales; and by British states or kingdoms on the north, from Gloucestershire to Scotland. On the south at the sea-coast it was supported by the Saxon kingdoms of Sussex and Kent. But if the nation of the Angles had not successively arrived after Cerdic's death, to overrun the east, the centre, and the country beyond the Humber, the Saxon occupation of Britain would have been a precarious tenure, or have remained, like Normandy in France, but a Saxon colonization of our southern shores. It was

military tact which led him to notice them. He had certainly other chronicles before him than those which have survived to us.

^a Lygeanbarh; Ægelesbarh, Bonnington, and Egonesham. Chr. Sax. p. 22. These are supposed by Gibbon to be Leighton in Bedfordshire; Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire; Bonnington and Enoham in Oxfordshire.

^b Chr. Sax. p. 22. F. Wig. 223. Ethelw. 535. Durham in Gloucestershire is believed to have been the site of this battle.

^c Gehtwarf thonan to his agenum, Ch. Sax. p. 22.

the emigration of the Angles from Sleswick that ultimately wrested the island from the ancient Britons, and converted it into England. But before we narrate this great incident, which has so peculiarly affected our national fortunes and character, we will pause to consider the ancient British accounts of their conflicts with the West-Saxon invaders.

CHAPTER III.

Ancient British Accounts of the Battles with the West Saxons, and the authentic History of Arthur.

SOME of the battles mentioned by the ancient Welsh poets are those between Cerdic and the Britons; one of these is the battle at Llongborth. In this conflict Arthur was the commander-in-chief;^a and Geraint ab Erbin was a Prince of Devonshire, united with him against the Saxons. Llywarch Hen, in his elegy on his friend, describes the progress of the battle. The shout of onset, and the fearful obscurity which followed the shock are succeeded by the terrible incidents which alarm humanity into abhorrence of war. The edges of the blades in contact, the gushing of blood, the weapons of the heroes with gore fast dropping, men surrounded with terror, the crimson gash upon the chieftain's brow, biers with the dead and reddened men, a tumultuous running together, the combatants striving in blood to the knees, and ravens feasting on human prey,^b compose the dismal picture which this ancient bard has transmitted to us of a battle in which he was personally engaged.

The valiant Geraint was slain; "slaughtering his foes he fell."^c The issue of the conflict is not precisely stated, but some ambiguous expressions concur, with the absence of all triumphant language, to indicate that the Britons did not prevail. As Llongborth literally implies the haven of ships, and was some harbour on the southern coast, we may consider this poem as describing the conflict at Portsmouth when Porta landed. The Saxon Chronicle says, that a very noble British youth fell on that occasion,^d but does not mention his name.

^a Llywarch Hen's Elegies, p. 9.

^b *Ib.* p. 3-7.

^c Llywarch Hen's Elegies, p. 7. The 20th triad names him as one of the Llywarchenawg, the naval commanders of Britain. The Welsh genealogies make him the son of Constantine of Cornwall, from Gwen the daughter of Gyngar. They give him a son named Seliff. *Bodedd y Saint*, Welsh Arch. vol. ii. p. 33.

^d Sax. Chron. 17. Fl. Wig. 206.

Llywarch mentions another battle on the Llawn, in which Arthur was engaged. Gwen, the poet's favourite son, exerted himself in the struggle. The battle was at the ford of Morlas. The bard describes his son as watching the preceding night, with his shield on his shoulder. He compares his impetuosity to the assault of the eagle; and laments him as the bravest of his children. "As he was my son, he did not retreat." Of the event of the battle, he only says, that Arthur did not recede.*

Of the other contests which ensued before Wessex was colonized by Saxons, we have no further information from the British writers, except of the battle at Bath.

Gildas intimates, that until the battle of Bath the Saxons and the Britons alternately conquered; and that this was almost the last, but not the least slaughter of the invaders. Nennius makes it the twelfth of Arthur's battles.^f The position of this battle has been disputed, but it seems to have occurred near Bath.^g Its chronology is not clear.^h The Welsh MSS. in the red book of Hergest says, that 128 years intervened from the age of Gwrtheyrn to the battle of Badon, in which Arthur and the elders conquered the Saxons.ⁱ

Arthur was the British chieftain who so long resisted the progress of Cerdic. The unparalleled celebrity which this Briton has attained, in his own country and elsewhere, both in history and romance, might be allowed to exalt our estimation of the Saxon chief, who maintained his invasion, though an Arthur opposed him, if the British hero had not himself been unduly magnified into an incredible and inconsistent conqueror.

The authentic actions of Arthur have been so disfigured by the additions of the Minstrels, and of Jeffry, that many writers have denied that he ever lived; but this is an extreme, as objectionable as the romances which occasioned it. The tales that all human perfection was

The probable history of Arthur.

* Llywarch Hen's Elegy on Old Age, p. 131-135.

^f Gildas, s. 26. Nennius, s. 23.

^g Mr. Carte describes the Mount of Badon, in Berkshire, p. 205. Usher places the battle at Bath, p. 477. Camden also thinks that Badon Hill is the Bannosdowne, or that which overhangs the little village Bathstone, and exhibits still its bulwarks and a rampire. Gilson, ed. p. 470.

^h Gildas in a passage of difficult construction says, as we interpret, that it took place forty-four years before he wrote,—*annum obsessiois Badonici montis, qui que quadragesimus quartus ut novi oritur annus, mense jam primo emenso qui jam et mens natiuitatis est, s. 26.*—Bede construed it to mean the forty-fourth year after the Saxon invasion, lib. i. c. 16, but the words of Gildas do not support him. Matt. West. p. 186, places it in 520. Langhorn, p. 62, prefers 511.

ⁱ See this published in the Cambrian Register, p. 313. Fryse, in his *Defensio*, p. 120, quotes a passage of Taliesin on this battle, which I have not observed among his printed poems.

^j His existence was doubted very early. Genebrard said, it might be inferred from Bede, *Arcturum magnus nusquam existime*. Chron. lib. iii. ap. Usher, 522. Sigebert, who wrote in the twelfth century, complained that, except in the then

collected in Arthur;^k that giants and kings who never existed, and nations which he never saw, were subdued by him; that he went to Jerusalem for the sacred cross;^l or that he not only excelled the experienced past, but also the possible future,^m we may, if we please, recollect only to despise; but when all such fictions are removed, and those incidents only are retained which the sober criticism of history sanctions with its approbation; a fame ample enough to interest the judicious, and to perpetuate his honourable memory, will still continue to claim our belief and applause.

The most authentic circumstances concerning Arthur, appear to be these:

He was a chieftain in some part of Britain near its southern coasts. As a Mouric, king of Glamorganshire, had a son named Arthur at this period,ⁿ and many of Arthur's actions are placed about that district, it has been thought probable that the celebrated Arthur was the son of Mouric; but this seems to have been too petty a personage, and too obscure for his greater namesake, who is represented by all the traditions and history that exist concerning him to have been the son of Uther.

He is represented in the Lives of the Welsh Saints, with incidents that suit the real manners of the age. Meeting a prince in Glamorganshire, who was flying from his enemies, Arthur was, at first, desirous of taking by force the wife of the fugitive. His military friends, Cei and Bedguir, persuaded him to refrain from the injustice; and to assist the prince to regain his lands.^o

A British chief having killed some of his warriors, Arthur pursues him with all the avidity of revenge. At the request of

newly-published British history, nullam de eo mentionem invenimus. 1 Pistori Rer. German. 504.—Our Milton is also sceptical about him. Many others are as unfriendly to his fame.

^k And, in short, God has not made, since Adam was, the man more perfect than Arthur. Brut G. ab Arthur. 2 W. Archæol. p. 299.

^l Nennius, or his interpolator, Samuel, pledges himself that the fragments of the cross brought by Arthur were kept in Wedale, six miles from Mailros. 3 Gale, p. 114.—Langhorn, whose neat Latin Chronicle of the Saxon kingdoms I wish to praise for its general precision, adduces Jerom and others to prove that Britons used to visit Jerusalem, p. 47.

^m Joseph of Exeter, in his elegant Antiocheis, after contrasting the inferior achievements of Alexander, Cæsar, and Hercules, with those of his *fios regum Arthurus*, adds,

Sed nec pinetum coryli, nec sidera solem
 Æquant; annales Laticæ, Graios que revolve:
 Præca parum nocit, æqualem postera nullum
 Exhibitura dies. Reges supereminet omnes
 Solus; præteritis melior, *mæjorque futuris.*

Ap. Usher, p. 519.

• Reg. Llandav.

• Vita S. Cadoci, Cott. MSS. Vesp. A. 14.

St. Cadoc, Arthur submits his complaint to the chiefs and clergy of Britain, who award Arthur a compensation.^p

At another time, Arthur is stated to have plundered St. Pater-nus, and to have destroyed a monastery in Wales.^q These incidents suit the short character which Nennius gives of him, that he was cruel from his childhood.^r

It is stated, by Caradoc of Llancarvan, that Melva, the king of Somersetshire, carried off Arthur's wife, by force to Glaston-bury. Arthur, with his friends, whom he collected from Corn-wall and Devonshire, assaulted the ravisher. The ecclesiastics interposed, and persuaded Melva to return her peaceably. Arthur received her, and both the kings rewarded the monks for their useful interference.^s

Arthur also maintained a war against the Britons in the north of the island; and killed Huel their king. He was greatly re-joiced at this success; because, says Caradoc, he had killed his most powerful enemy.^t Thus Arthur, by his wars with his own countrymen, as much assisted the progress of the Saxons, as he afterwards endeavoured to check it, by his struggles with Cerdic.

He may have fought the twelve battles mentioned by Nennius;^u but it is obvious, from the preceding paragraphs, that they were not all directed against the Anglo-Saxons. He is represented by Nennius, as fighting them in conjunction with the kings of the Britons. It is clear from many authorities, that there were several kings at this time in different parts of Britain.^v But there ap-pears, as the preceding pages have intimated, to have been a paramount sovereign; a Pen-dragon, or Penteyrn; who, in no-minal dignity at least, was superior to every other. Arthur is exhibited in this character;^w and his father Uthur had the same appellation.^x

^p Ibid.

^q Ibid. Vita S. Paterni MS. Cai is mentioned as his companion in a poem of Taliesin's.

^r Nenn. c. 62.

^s Carad. Vit. Guild. MSS. King's Lib. Malmesbury mentions, in his History of Glastonbury, p. 307, one circumstance of Arthur sending Ider, the son of King Nuth, on an adventure, after having knighted him; but it is too romantically nar-rated to be classed among the authentic facts. Giants have no right to admission into ordinary history.

^t Carad.

^u Nenn. c. 62, 63. He thus enumerates them: 1st, at the mouth of the river called Glen; 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th, on another river called Douglas, in the reign of Linius; 6th, on the river called Bassas; the 7th, in the wood of Caledon; the 8th, in Castle Gunnion, where he adds that Arthur had the image of the cross and of Mary on his shoulders; the 9th, at Caerleon; the 10th, on the banks of the Rebroit; the 11th, on the mount called Agned Cathregonion; the 12th, on the Badon Hills.

^v The Cott. MSS. Vesp. A. 14, in the Lives of the Welsh Saints, mention several in Wales.

^w Trioedd 7, p. 3.

^x There is an elegy on Uthyr's death among the ancient British bards. See Welsh Arch. vol. i.

Four of the battles, ascribed to him by Nennius, have been ably illustrated by Mr. Whitaker.⁷ Mr. Camden and others had remarked, that the Douglas, on which Nennius had placed them, was a river in Lancashire. The historian of Manchester, whom I am happy to praise for his genius and energy, has commented on the positions of these conflicts with great local knowledge. His fancy, though often too prolific, and even on this portion of our history peculiarly active, yet describes these with so much probability, that we may adopt his sketches as history.

The battle of Badon Hills, or near Bath, has been celebrated as Arthur's greatest and most useful achievement; a long interval of repose to the Britons has been announced as its consequence;⁸ yet it is curious to remark, that this victory only checked the progress of Cerdic; and does not appear to have produced any further success. We hear not of the vindictive pursuit of Arthur, of the invasion of Hampshire, or the danger of Cerdic. The Saxon was penetrating onwards even towards Wales or Mercia; he was defeated, and did not advance.⁹ No other conflicts ensued. Arthur was content to repulse. This must have been because he wanted power to pursue. Arthur was, therefore, not the warrior of irresistible strength; he permitted Cerdic to retain his settlements in Wessex; and such an acquiescence accords with the Chronicle, which asserts, that after many fierce conflicts, he conceded to the Saxon the counties of Southampton and Somerset.^b The latter was however still contested.

This state of moderate greatness suits the character in which the Welsh bards exhibit Arthur. They commemorate him; but it is not with that excelling glory, with which he has been surrounded by subsequent traditions. On the contrary, Urien of Reged seems to have employed the harp more than Arthur. Ilywarch the aged, who lived through the whole period of slaughter, and had been one of the guests and counsellors of Arthur,^c never displays him in transcendent majesty. In the battle of Llongborth, which Arthur directed, it was the valour of Geraint that arrested the bard's notice; and his elegy, though long, scarcely mentions the commander, whose merit, in the

⁷ Hist. Manch. vol. ii. p. 43-45. 4to. ed.

⁸ This seems to be the battle mentioned by Gildas and Bede, which occurred when Gildas was forty-four years old.

⁹ Bede's expressions taken from Gildas express the general truths of these conflicts. "Now the natives; now their enemies conquered, until the siege of the Hills of Bath, when they (the Britons) did not give the least slaughter to their enemies," c. 16. p. 53.

^b Red. quoted by Polychronica, says, in quibusdam chronicis legitur, quod tandem Arthurus extenuatus, post 96 annum adventus Cerdici fidelitate sibi jurata dedit ei Hamptershiram et Somersetham, p. 234.—The Chronicle of Ricardi Divisionensis, in MSS. at Cambridge, affirms the same. It is quoted by Langhorn, Chron. Rer. Anglorum, p. 70.

^c Triocedd, 116, p. 74.

frenzy of later fables, clouds every other. As an effusion of real feeling, this poem may be supposed to possess less of flattery and more of truth in its panegyric. It speaks of Arthur with respect, but not with wonder. Arthur is simply mentioned as the commander and the conductor of the toil of war; but Geraint is profusely celebrated with dignified periphrasis.⁴

In the same manner Arthur appears in the *Afallenau* of Myrddin; and in *Taliesin* he is mentioned as a character well known and revered;⁵ but not idolized; yet he was then dead, and all the actions of his patriotism and valour had been performed. Not a single epithet is added, from which we can discern him to have been that whirlwind of war, which swept away in its course all the skill and armies of Europe. That he was a courageous warrior is unquestionable; but that he was the miraculous Mars of the British history, from whom kings and nations sunk in panic, is completely disproved by the temperate encomiums of his contemporary bards.

One fact is sufficient to refute all the hyperboles of Jeffry, whose work has made him so extravagantly great. Though Arthur lived and fought, yet the Anglo-Saxons were not driven from the island, but gradually advanced their conquest, with progressive dominion, whether he was alive or whether he was dead. Reflecting on this unquestionable fact, we may hesitate to believe that Arthur was victorious in all his battles,⁶ because, if he wielded the whole force of Britain, and only fought to conquer, what rescued Cerdic, Ella, the son of Hengist, and the invaders of Essex and East-Anglia from absolute destruction?

The Welsh triads notice many of Arthur's friends and warriors; and mention one stanza as his composition. But this must be mere tradition.

Sef ynt fy nhri chadfarchawg,
Mael hir, a Llyr Lluyddawg;
A cholofn Cymru Caradawg.⁷

To me there are three heroes in battle;
Mael the tall, and Llyr with his army,
And Caradawg the pillar of the Cymry.

Arthur perished at last ingloriously, in a civil feud with

⁴ As "the glory of Britain—the terror of the foe—the molester of the enemy—the great son of Erbin—the strenuous warrior of Dyvnaint." *Llywarch*, p. 3-7.

⁵ Myrddin styles him *moder tyrfa*, king of a multitude. *Afall*. l. W. A. 153.

⁶ *Nennius*, c. 62, says this, "in omnibus bellis victor extitit." But the author quoted by Higden, p. 224, says more probably of Cerdic, who often fought with Arthur, "si semel vinceretur, alia vice serior surrexit ad pugnam."—*Gildas*, a. 26, implies an alternation of victory previous to the battle of Bath.—*The MS. Chron. Divin.* cited by Langhorn, 70, affirms it.

⁷ *Triceadd* 22, p. 62.

Medrawd his nephew, who is said to have engrossed the affections of Gwenhyfar, his wife. But as the blow of His death. Arthur on Medrawd is mentioned as one of the most mischievous blows in Britain;^a this may have been the immediate cause of Medrawd's hostility.

The character of Medrawd has been branded with much reproach by the Welsh, because their favourite Arthur perished in the war which he excited. But there is a triad, which records his gentleness, good nature, and engaging conversation; and declares that it was difficult to deny him any request.ⁱ He must have been powerfully supported, to have raised an army capable of confronting Arthur in the field. Maelgwn, who reigned in Gwynedd, seems to have been one of Medrawd's allies; for Gildas inculcates him for having destroyed the king his uncle, with his bravest soldiers.[‡]

The conflict took place at Camlan, where both Arthur and Medrawd fell:^k Arthur, mortally wounded, was carried out of the field. From the coast of Cornwall he was conveyed into Somersetshire. Sailing along the shore they reached the Uzella, which they ascended, and the king was committed to the care of his friends in Glastonbury,^l but their skill could not avert the fatal hour.

The death of Arthur was long concealed, and a wild tale was diffused among the populace, that he had withdrawn from the world into some magical region; from which at a future crisis he was to reappear, and to lead the Cymry in triumph through the island. Why this fiction was invented, we may now in vain inquire. It could not repress the ambition of the Saxons, because the temporary absence of Arthur was sufficient to favour their wishes; and if his living authority could not prevent British insurrection, was it probable that his residence in another region would avail? Yet Taliesin industriously sang that Morgana promised, if he remained a long time with her, to heal his wounds; and it is notorious that the return of Arthur was a fond hope of the people for many ages. Perhaps it was an illusion devised to avert the popular vengeance from those who, by aiding Medrawd, had contributed to produce the lamented event;^m or perhaps some, affecting to reign in trust for Arthur, conciliated the public prejudice in favour of their government, by thus representing that they governed only for him.

^a *Triodd* 51, p. 13.

ⁱ *Triodd* 83, p. 18.

[‡] Gildas, p. 12.

^k This battle is placed in 542, by the Annals in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii. p. 648; by many authors cited by Usher, *Ant.* p. 521; and by Jeffrey and the Welsh *Brut* ab Arthur.

^l See Jeffrey's curious poem, his best work, MSS. Cott. Lib. Vesp. E. 4. See also Giraldus *Spec. Eccles. dist. ii. c. 9*, cited apud Usher, p. 523.

^m Math. Westm. p. 192, declares that the king voluntarily concealed himself while dying, that his enemies might not triumph, nor his friends be molested.

Of the family of Arthur we know little. We hear of Noe in Caermarthenshire, reputed to be his son; another son, Llechau, is celebrated as an accomplished warrior.* His sister Anna married Llew, brother of the famous Urien, and son of Cynvarch; Medrawd was her son.† The marriage of Anna united the kings of the northern Britons in consanguinity with Arthur.

But though the friends of Arthur concealed the place of his interment, a future age discovered it. In the year 1189, when romance had begun to magnify his fame, his body was diligently sought for in the abbey of Glastonbury. The circumstances attending this search give us the first clear and historical certainty about this celebrated man, and are therefore worth detailing. They have been transmitted to us by Giraldus Cambrensis, who saw both the bones and the inscription, as well as by a monk of the abbey; and the same facts are alluded to by William of Malmsbury, a contemporary, and by others. His remains discovered in 1189.

The substance of the account of Giraldus is this.‡ Henry the Second, who twice visited Wales, had heard from an ancient British bard, that Arthur was interred at Glastonbury, and that some pyramids marked the place. The king communicated this to the abbot and monks of the monastery, with the additional information, that the body had been buried very deep to keep it from the Saxons; and that it would be found not in a stone tomb, but in a hollowed oak. There were two pyramids or pillars at that time standing in the cemetery of the abbey. They dug between these till they came to a leaden cross lying under a stone, which had this inscription, and which Giraldus says he saw and handled—"Hic jacet sepultus inclytus Rex Arthurus in insula Avallonia."§ Below this, at the depth of sixteen feet from the surface, a coffin of hollow oak was found containing bones of an unusual size. The leg-bone was three fingers (probably in their breadth) longer than that of the tallest man then present. This man was pointed out to Giraldus. The skull was large, and showed the marks of ten wounds. Nine of these had concreted into the bony mass, but one had a cleft in it, and the opening still remained; apparently the mortal blow.¶

* MSS. Vesp. A. 14. p. 57. Trioedd 10. p. 3.

† See the genealogy in Mr. Owen's *Life of Ilywarch*.

‡ This account of Giraldus corresponds with that of the monk of Glastonbury, which Leland had extracted in his *Assert. Art.* p. 50.; and Usher in his *Antiq.* p. 117. Malmsbury more briefly alludes to it, *De Ant. Glast.*

§ A fac-simile of this inscription is given in Gibson's *Camden*, p. 66; and in Whitaker's *Manchester*, part ii. Dr. Whitaker was told that the cross had then lately been in the possession of Mr. Chancellor Hughes, at Wells. The form of the letters suits the age of Arthur.

¶ Matthew Paris notices the discovery of the bones, but says that it was occasioned by their digging the grave of a monk, who had an earnest desire to be buried in

Giraldus says, in another place, that the bones of one of Arthur's wives were found there with his, but distinct, at the lower end. Her yellow hair lay apparently perfect in substance and colour, but on a monk's eagerly grasping and raising it up, it fell to dust.⁹

The bones were removed into the great church at Glastonbury, and deposited in a magnificent shrine, which was afterwards placed, in obedience to the order of Edward I., before the high altar. He visited Glastonbury with his queen, 1276, and had the shrine of Arthur opened to contemplate his remains. They were both so interested by the sight, that the king folded the bones of Arthur in a rich shroud, and the queen those of his wife; and replaced them reverentially in their tomb.⁴

The circumstances of Arthur's funeral could be known only from Welsh traditions. Giraldus has left us one of these: "Morgan, a noble lady, proprietor of this district and patroness of the Abbey, and related to Arthur, had the king carried, after the battle of Camlan, to the island called Glastonbury to heal his wounds."¹⁰ The same facts are alluded to by Jeffry, in his elegant poem, which entitles him to more literary respect than his history, and which contains more of real British traditions.⁷

The pyramids or obelisks that are stated to have marked the place of Arthur's interment, long remained at Glastonbury. They had images and inscriptions, which have not yet been understood, but which do not seem to relate to Arthur.⁸ A sword, fancied to have been his caliburno, was presented by Richard the First, as a valuable gift, to the king of Sicily.²

that spot. It is not improbable that this may have been a further inducement with the convent to have the spot dug.

⁹ Girald. *Institutio Principis*. ap. *Lel.* 47. This work still remains in MSS. in the British Museum. ¹ *Mon. Glast.* *Lel.* 55.

⁷ *Gir.* in *Speculo Ecclesiastico*, MSS. *Brit. Mus.*; and *Ap. Lel.* 44.

⁸ It is still in MSS. in the British Museum. Since it was noticed in this work, Mr. Ellis has given an account of it, with extracts, in his *History of the Early English Romances*.

² On one of the sides of the pyramid that was twenty-six feet high, with five sides, was a figure in a pontifical dress: on the second side was a royal personage, with the letters *Her, Sezi, Bliayer*: on the third, *Wemerest, Dantomp, Winewegn*: the other sides had also inscriptions. The smaller pyramid was eighteen feet high, and had four sides with inscriptions. *W. Malmaide Antiq. Glast.* *Gale*, iii. p. 306, as collated in my copy by Hearne.

² *Usher*, p. 121. These are the only circumstances which we can present to the reader as Arthur's authentic history. The romances about him contain several names of real persons, and seem occasionally to allude to a few real facts. But their great substance and main story are so completely fabulous, that whatever part of them was once true, is overwhelmed and lost in their fictions and manifest falsifications both of manners and history.

CHAPTER IV.

Establishment of the Anglo-Saxons in East Anglia, Mercia, and Essex.—Arrival of Idas in Northumberland.—Battles with the Britons.—Kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira.

WHILE Cerdic and his son were conflicting with Arthur, and the other British kings and chiefs who opposed them in Hampshire and the adjoining regions, several adventurers from the nation of the Angles in Sleswick, arrived on the eastern coast of the island. The chronology of their invasions cannot be more definitely stated than by the date which an old chronicler has affixed to them, and which accords so well with the other facts on this subject, that it may be considered as entitled to our attention. Another more ancient has mentioned that many petty chiefs arrived in East Anglia and Mercia in the reign of Cerdic, and fought many battles with the natives; but as they formed no kingdom and were numerous, their names had not been preserved.* The year in which the invasions began to occur is placed by the other annalist in 527.^b

First arrivals in East Anglia, 527.

Contemporary with these assailants, a body of Saxons planted themselves in Essex, and protected on the south by the kingdom of the Jutes in Kent, and on the north by the adventurers in East Anglia, they succeeded in founding a little kingdom, about 530,^c which has little else to attract our notice, than that it gradually stretched itself into Middlesex, and obtained the command of London, then but a flourishing town of trade, though destined in a subsequent age to become the metropolis of all the Jute, Saxon, and Angli kingdoms of the island.

Kingdom of Essex founded, 530.

In this state of the contest between the British nation and their Saxon invaders, while the Britons, yet masters of all the island, from the Avon to the Cornish promontory on the west, and to the Firth of Forth on the north, were resisting and arresting the progress of the son of Cerdic on the one hand, and the unrecorded adventurers in Norfolk and Suffolk on the other, the most formidable invasion occurred on the coast above the Hum-

* H. Huntingd. p. 313.

^b Matt. Westm. p. 168.

^c The first king was Erkenwin, who died 587. Matt. Westm. p. 200.

ber, which the natives had yet been called upon to oppose. In 547, Ida led to the region between the Twede and the Firth of Forth, or accompanied, a fleet of forty vessels of warriors, all, of the nation of the Angles.⁴ Twelve sons were with him.* The chieftains associated with him, or who afterwards joined in his enterprise, appointed him their king.[†] Ida, like Hengist, Cerdic, and Ella, traced his pedigree to Woden, the great ancestor of the Anglo-Saxon chieftains, as well as those of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

That part of Britain, between the Humber and the Clyde, was occupied by Britons; but they were divided into many states. The part nearest the Humber, was called Deifyr by the ancient natives, which, after the Saxon conquest, was named Deira; and north of Deifyr was Bryneich, which became latinized into Bernicia. Deifyr and Bryneich had three sovereigns, whose names have descended to us: Gall, Dyvedel, and Ysgwnell.

In some part of the district between the Humber and the Clyde, was a state called Reged, which Urien, the patron of Taliesin, governed. In the parts nearest the Clyde, there were three other sovereigns, Rhydderc the Generous, Gwallog the son of Llencog, and Morgant. Llywarch Hen also enjoyed a little principality in Argocd. Aneurin, the bard, was the chief of a district, called Gododin. And Mynnyddawr ruled in a part near the friths at Eiddyn, which has been conjectured to be the origin of Edinburgh, or the burgh of Edin. Cunedda was also a wledig, or sovereign, in some of these northern regions, who emigrated into North Wales: and Cau was another. All these, and some others, are mentioned in the Welsh remains; which proves that the north of Britain, like the south, was divided amongst many sovereignties: some of them of very inconsiderable size. This state of the country, at the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasion, must be always recollected, when the facility and permanency of the Saxon conquests are adverted to.[‡] From the Kymry, or Britons, having retained possession of much of this country, for some time after the Saxon invasions, a large portion of it was called Cumbria; which is the Latin name by which their states or kingdoms in these parts have been usually expressed. As the Saxon con-

⁴ Flor. Wig. "In provincia Berniciorum," p. 218. So Nennius calls him the first king of Bernicia, p. 114.

* We may record their names as specimens of their family appellations: Adda, Balric, Theodric, Ethelric, Theodberc, Osmar from his queens, and Occa, Ailric, Eoca, Oerwold, Segor, and Segother. Most of these are significant words, or combinations of words in the Saxon language.

† So Huntingdon states, p. 314.

‡ See for these facts Nennius—Caradoc's Life of Gildas—The Welsh Triads—Aneurin's Gododin—Taliesin's Poems—Cotton. MSS. Vesp. A. 14.—Llywarch Hen's Poems—Bododd y Saint. 2 W. Arch.

quests spread, the extent of British Cumbria was diminished, and the most noted of the British race, who had any Cumbrian kingdom in these parts, were the Ystradclwyd, who maintained what has been called the Strat Clyde kingdom. The word Y-strad-clwyd, literally imports the valley of the Clyde; and the region they occupied, was therefore about the Clyde. After enduring wars, with various fortune, with the Britons, the Dalriads, and the Picts, their little kingdom was destroyed in the close of the tenth century. Alelyde, which means the height of the Clyde, was the principal town of the Y-strad-clwyde; and was in all likelihood the present Dunbarton. This circumstance increases the probability, that the Eiddyn, another town in these parts, which Mynyddawr governed at this period, was the town on the Forth, almost parallel with Al-clwyde, and which has long become illustrious, under the name of Edinburgh. Another British state between the Y-strad-clwyde, and the Saxons, seems to have existed so late as the tenth century; as Eugenius, or Owen, king of the Cumbri, is then mentioned.^b

The defence of the Britons, according to the poems which remain in the manuscripts of their ancient poets, appears to have been peculiarly vigorous in these districts; and their warriors have received a liberal meed of praise, from the bards whom they patronized.

Of these, Urien, the chief of Reged, has been most extolled. He was the son of Cynvarc, the Aged.^c Taliesin has addressed to him several poems, with warm panegyric; and alludes to him in others. In these he calls him the head of the people; the shield of warriors; the most generous of men; bounteous as the sea; the thunderbolt of the Cymry. He compares his onset to the rushing of the waves: and to the fiery meteors moving across the heavens.^d But though he notices him as engaged in many battles,^e he has only distinctly described the battle of Argoed Llwyfain, and the battle of Gwenystrad.

As Ida was the war-king, who led the Angles against the Britons in these parts, it was with his forces, that Urien and his sons and friends so fiercely combated. Ida is not named in the Welsh poetry; because they have chosen to stigmatize the invader by a reproachful epithet. They call him Flaiddwyn,^f the flame-

^b Mr. Pinkerton distinguishes the kingdom of Stradclwyde from the kingdom of Cumbria, *Inq. Hist. Scot.* i. p. 60-99. But we must add to this opinion, the recollection that there were many British states at the time of Ida's invasion.

^c Several triads mention him and his family, as also Llywarch Hen, and Taliesin.

^d See the Yspeil Taliesin, p. 57. *Canu Urien Reged*, p. 55; and his other poems addressed to Urien.

^e As in his *Canu i Urien*, p. 57.

^f Flaiddwyn is also mentioned in the triads; but it is for a misfortune which some ladies will not permit either the brave or the good to escape. His wife, Ban is classed among the British women who were notorious for unchastity. *Trioedd* p. 56. It would seem from this tradition that he had married a British lady.

bearer, or destroyer; a term which implies the devastations that accompanied his progress. As the elegy of Llywarch Hen, on Urien, expresses that he conquered in the land of Bryneich, or Bernicia;^m we must infer, that he was frequently successful against Ida; and two of his most fortunate battles appear to be those which Taliesin has selected for his praise.

The bard states, that on a Saturday, the invaders, under "the destroyer," hastened with four divisions, to surround
 Battle of Goddeu and Reged, the seat of Urien's government.
 Argoed They spread from Argoed to Arfynnydd, and demanded submission and hostages.
 Llyvain.

Owen, the son of Urien, and his friend Cenau, indignantly rejected the proposal. Urien then indulged their ardour. He exclaimed,

Being assembled for our country,
 Let us elevate our banners above the mountains :
 And push forward our forces over the borders ;
 And lift our spears above the warriors' heads ;
 And rush upon the Destroyer in his army ;
 And slay both him and his followers ?

Impressed with his patron's valour, Taliesin declares, that when he was declining with age, he should be unable to meet death with smiles, unless he was praising Urien.ⁿ

Another conflict with Ida, was at the mound of Gwenystrad, literally, "the pleasant valley." The Britons of
 Battle of Cattraeth assembled round Urien, "the king of vic-
 Gwenystrad. torious battle." Taliesin, who was present in the
 547. struggle, thus describes it :

Neither the fields, nor the woods, gave safety to the foe,
 When the shout of the Britons came
 Like a wave raging against the shore—
 I saw the brave warriors in array ;
 And after the morning, how mangled !
 I saw the tumult of the perishing hosts ;
 The blood springing forward and moistening the ground.
 Gwenystrad was defended by a rampart :
 Wearied, on the earth, no longer verdant,
 I saw, at the pass of the ford,
 The blood-stained men dropping their arms ;
 Pale with terror :—
 I admired the brave chief of Reged ;
 I saw his reddened brow,
 When he rushed on his enemies at Llec gwen Calystan :
 Like the bird of rage was his sword on their bucklers :
 It was wielded with deadly fate.

^m Llywarch Hen, Welsh Arch. p. 104. Mr. Owen, now Dr. Owen Pughe, published a translation of this ancient bard, which, though wanting some revival, entitles him to the thanks of all the friends of British literature.

ⁿ Taliesin, p. 53.

Taliesin renews his wish not to die pleasantly, unless he was praising Urien.^o

Besides the patriotic valour of Urien, which he lavishly praises with all the artifice, and sometimes with the exaggerations of poetry;^p Taliesin extols highly his liberality. This is the theme of several poems.^q

Urien was also commemorated by his bardic friend, Llywarch Hen, who has left an elegy upon him. After bravely resisting the Saxons, it was the misfortune of Urien Urien killed.
547. to be involved in one of those civil contests which were at this period the disgrace and ruin of the Britons. As he was besieging one of the descendants and successors of Ida, in Holy Island, he was slain by Llovan Lawdeffro, or Llovan with the detested hand, an emissary of Morgant, one of the chiefs of the Northern Britons.^r Llywarch's elegy celebrates the British king with much earnest sympathy, but in rude and warlike strains.^s

^o Taliesin, p. 52.

^p One specimen may be added :

What noise is that ? Does the earth shake ?
Or is it the swelling sea that roars !
If there be a sigh in the dingle ;
Is it not Urien who thrusts !
If there be a sigh on the mountains ;
Is it not Urien who conquers !
If there be a sigh on the slope of the hills ;
Is it not Urien who wounds ?
If there be a sigh of dismay ;
Is it not from the assault of Urien !
There is no refuge from him ;
Nor will there be from famine,
To those who seek plunder near him !
His wrath is death !

Can. Urien, p. 56.

^q See the Dadolwch Urien, which is translated in the Vindication of the ancient British Poems, now annexed to this work. See also the Songs to Urien in 1 Welsh Arch. p. 55.

^r Nenn. Gen. p. 117. Trioedd. 39. p. 9.

^s Marwnad Lly. Hen. W. A. p. 103-107. As Llywarch Hen is one of the British bards of the sixth century, the genuineness of whose poems is strongly marked, I will translate some extracts from his elegy on Urien of Reged. He begins with an abrupt address to his spear.

Let me rush forward, thou ashen piercer !
Fierce thine aspect in the conflict !
'Tis better to kill than to parley.

Let me rush forward, thou ashen piercer !
Bitter and sullen as the laugh of the sea
Was the bursting tumult of the battle,
Of Urien of Reged the vehement and stubborn.

Owen, one of the sons of Urien, was also distinguished for his brave resistance to the Angles under Ida. Taliesin praises his

An eagle to his foe in his thrust, brave as generous.
In the angry warfare certain of the victory
Was Urien, ardent in his grasp.

I bear by my side a head ;
The head of Urien !
The courteous leader of his army ;
But on his white bosom the raven is feeding.
He was a shield to his country ;
His course was a wheel in battle.
Better to me would be his life than his mead :
He was a city to old age ;
The head, the noblest pillar of Britain.

I bear a head that supported me !
Is there any known but he welcomed ?
Wo to my hand !
Where is he that feasted me ?

I bear a head from the mountain :
The lips foaming with blood.
Wo to Reged from this day.

My arm has not shrunk
But my breast is greatly troubled.
My heart ! is it not broken ?
The head I bear supported me.

The slender white body will be interred to-day,
Under earth and stones.
Wo to my hand !
The father of Owen is slain.—

Eurddyl will be joyless to-night,
Since the leader of armies is no more,
In Aber Llew Urien fell.—

Discovered is my lord :
Yet from his manly youth
The warriors loved not his resentment.
Many chiefs has he consumed.

The fiery breath of Urien has ceased
I am wretched.
There is commotion in every district,
In search of Llovan with the detested hand.

Silent is the gale
But long wilt thou be heard.
Scarcely any deserve praise,
Since Urien is no more.

Many a dog for the hunt and ethereal hawk
Have been trained on this floor,
Before Erlleon was shaken into ruins.

liberality and valour; and says he chased his enemy, as a herd of wolves pursuing sheep.¹ In his Song to the Winds, the bard records Owen's successful defence of the flocks and cattle of his province; and also mentions his battles at the ford of Alclud, and other places. The poet's imagery is wild and dismal, like his subject. He describes the swords whirled round the faces of the combatants, and the blood staining their temples. "There was joy," he exclaims, "that day to the ravens, when men clamoured with the frowning countenance of battle. But the shield of Owen never receded."² The elegy states, that by the sword of this warrior, Flamddwyn perished.³ Taliesin occasionally commemorates other British heroes; but as it would be useless to revive a catalogue of names, long since forgotten, they need not be enumerated here.

That conflict between the Saxons and Britons, which occupies the largest space in the ancient British poetry, is the battle

This hearth! no shout of heroes now adheres to it:
More usual on its floor
Was the mead; and the inebriated warriors.

This hearth! will not nettles now cover it!
While its defender lived,
More frequent was the tread of the petitioner.

The green sod will cover it now;
But when Owen and Elphin lived
Its caldron seethed the prey.

This hearth! the mouldy fungus will hide it now.
More usual about its meals
Was the striking of the sword of the fierce warrior.

Thorns will now cover it.
More usual once was the mixture
Of Owen's friends in social harmony.

Ants will soon overrun it.
More frequent were the bright torches
And honest festivities.

Swine will henceforward dig the ground,
Where once the gladness of heroes
And the horn of the banquet went round:
It was the solace of the army and the path of melody.

¹ Marwnad Owain ap Urien Reged, Tal. 1 W. A. p. 59.

² Can y Gwynt, p. 38, 39.

³ Marwnad Owain, p. 59. Both the Saxon Chronicles, Flor. Wig. p. 218, and Nonnius, p. 116, mention Ida to have reigned only twelve years. Yet Huntingdon calls him at his accession "juvenem nobilissimum," p. 314. The comparison of these authorities places Ida's death in the flower of his manhood; and this gives a countenance to the Welsh bard's assertion, that he perished in his conflicts with Owen of Reged.

or destruction of Catteraeth. It forms the subject of the *Gododin of Aneurin*,^v a poem much alluded to and venerated by the poets of Wales, and which has procured for him, among them, the title of the king of the bards. He was a chieftain in the northern part of the island, in the sixth century; and perished at last from the blow of an axe, inflicted by one Eiddyn, who has been therefore classed as one of the three foul assassins of Britain.^x

As it contains no regular narration of incident, and no introductory announcement of its subject, but consists chiefly of stanzas but little connected, on the feats and praises of the chieftains whom it commemorates; and as it records places and British heroes, whose names, however notorious in their day, are not preserved elsewhere, it is difficult to say to what precise event or locality it actually applies. That the warriors mentioned were the contemporaries of Aneurin is clear, from its contents,^y but this is all that we can with certainty infer.

It has been usually supposed to record a battle, between the collected Britons of the north, under Mynyddawr of Eiddyn, which has been assumed to be Edinburgh, and the Saxons of Ida, or his successor. The issue was calamitous to the Britons; for out of above 360, who wore the golden torques, the mark of their nobility, only three escaped, of whom the bard was one.^z This unfortunate result is undeniably stated; and it is as manifestly imputed to the Britons having previously indulged in an excess of mead.

^v It is the first poem printed in the *Archæology of Wales*. I printed a translation of the first seventy-three lines, in the "*Vindication of the Ancient British Poems*."

^x "*Tair anaf gyflafan ynys Prydain. Eiddyn mab Einygan a laddwys Aneurin Gwawdrydd mydeyrn beird.*" *Triad 47*, 2 *Welsh Arch.* p. 65, and see p. 9.

^y Thus he says he saw what he describes:

"I saw the scene from the highland of Adoen.
I saw the men in complete order at dawn at Adoen.
And the head of Dyfnwal ravens were consuming."

Gweleis y dull o ben tir Adoen.
Gweleis y wyr tyll vawr gan u aur Adoen.
Aphon Dyfynaul vrych brien ae cnoyn.

God. W. A. p. 13.

^z A stanza of the *Gododin* thus states the result:

"The warriors went to Catteraeth. They were famous.
Wine and mead, from gold, had been their liquors—
Three heroes, and three score, and three hundred,
With the golden torques.
Of those who hastened after the jovial excess,
There escaped only three from the power of the sword,
The two war-dogs, Aeron and Cynon Dayarawd,
And I from the flowing blood,
The reward of my blessed muse."

Godod. p. 4.

A recent writer on Cambrian mythology, whose imagination has been as active as such an illusive subject could excite it to be, has strenuously urged, that the Gododin records the famous massacre of the British nobles by Hengist.^a That it neither mentions Hengist nor Gwrtheyrn, has not appeared to him to be an objection.^b He supports his opinion by an unusually free translation, and by a sanguine commentary.

This translation contains so much fancy, and is in parts so forcibly adapted to the conjecture, and the whole is removed so much from the plain literal sense, that it seems most reasonable to dismiss the new hypothesis, as the illusion of a warm imagination. If the poem has any relation to the incident, which has become the subject of the tradition alluded to, that incident cannot be attached to Hengist, and did not occur in the manner hinted by Nennius, and detailed by Jeffry.^c

The prevailing subject of the poem, continually repeated in every second or third stanza, is the intoxication of the Britons, from some great feast of mead, previous to the battle.^d So far

^a See *Mythology and Rites of the British Druids*, p. 318-384. Of its author, the Rev. Edward Davies, I wish to speak with more than mere respect, because his remarks on the ancient Welsh literature, in this work and in his *Celtic researches*, though displaying the same creative imagination, which pervades and injures Mr. Whitaker's historical investigations, have yet in many parts thrown great light on the venerable remains of the British bards, and contributed to gain for them more attention than they have been accustomed to receive.

^b Mr. Davies thinks that he traces various allusions to them and to Ambrosius; but the same latitude of construction in this respect would almost make any poem mean any thing.

^c The difference of opinion between Mr. Davies and all former readers of the Gododin, cannot be better stated than in his own words: "I also perceived, that the great catastrophe which the bard deploras, was not, as it has been generally represented, the fall of 360 nobles in the field of battle, to which they had rushed forth in a state of intoxication; but, the massacre of 360 unarmed British nobles, in time of peace, and at a feast, where they had been arranged promiscuously with armed Saxons," p. 321. On this I will only remark, that the former opinion is the manifest literal import of the poet's words. The new conjecture requires the ingenious author's commentary, as well as an adapted translation to make it at all probable.

^d They went to Cattræth:
Loquacious were their hosts.
Pale mead had been their feast, and was their poison.
God. p. 2.

So many other passages:

Gwyr a aeth Gattræth vedvæth vedwn.	Ibid.
Med yvynt melyn melys maglawr.	Ibid.
Cyt yven vedd gloew wrth liw babir, Cyt vei da ei vlas y gas bu hir.	Ibid.

So the bard says he partook of the wine and mead there;

Yveis y win a med y Mordai.	God. p. 4.
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the poem and the tradition correspond; and all the British nobles perished but three, another coincidence. But as Aneurin, according to the unvarying statement of the Welsh literature, lived in the early part of the sixth century,^a and was contemporary with Taliesin, who mentions him;^f and as the bard was himself one of the survivors of the conflict, and a captive from it,^g it cannot have occurred till some time after Hengist had died.^h To this decisive evidence, from its chronology, may be added a remark, that although to the praise of his several heroes, or of their exploits, he annexes, almost invariably, a lamentation of their festive indulgence; yet this is not accompanied with any specific charge of treachery on the part of the Saxons.ⁱ If it related to the reported massacre, the natural process of the poet's mind would

^a So Mr. Davies acknowledges, p. 317; and adds, "Edward Llwyd refers the era of the Gododin to the year 510, and this probably upon the authority of the ancient MS. which he quotes in the same passage," p. 321.

^f In his *Anrec Urien*, p. 51. In like manner Aneurin speaks of Taliesin:

I Aneurin will do
What is known to Taliesin,
The partaker of my mind. God. p. 7.

^g Aneurin thus mentions his captivity:

In the earthy abode,
With the iron chain
About the top of my two knees;
From the mead,
From the festive horns,
From the host at Cattraeth. God. p. 7.

^h Mr. Davies escapes the difficulties of chronology by three large suppositions. First, he supposes, that though Hengist came in 449, yet that the reputed massacre did not occur till 472. But though Hengist was then alive, the Saxon Chronicle states, that he obtained his kingdom after a battle in 455; and that in 457, after another battle, the Britons abandoned Kent. Another battle, in which twelve British leaders fell, occurred in 465. After such transactions as these, such a confiding banquet was not likely to have occurred on the part of the Britons, nor was such a massacre wanted to give Hengist that kingdom, which he had both acquired and maintained. His second and third will best speak for themselves: "There is no improbability in Aneurin's having attended the feast, as a young bard, in 472, and his having bewailed the friends of his youth, *thirty-eight years afterwards*, when he had fallen into the hands of the foe, and was confined in a dreary dungeon," p. 322. Yet according to Aneurin's own expressions in the preceding note, the captivity seems to me to be clearly referred to the destruction at Cattraeth. His words are:

Yn y ty deyerin
Cатуyn heyernin
Am benn vy deulin
O ved o vuelin
O Gattræth winin.

Then follows the passage, in note ^f, on himself and Taliesin.

ⁱ Mr. Davies believes he discerns such charges. But the supposed allusions are not direct, and do not seem to me to be the natural construction of the passages so applied.

have been to have inveighed against the Saxons for their perfidy; instead of so continuously censuring the Britons for their inebriety. If Hengist had invited them to a banquet of peace and friendship, it was not merely natural, but it was even laudable, according to the customs of that age, that the festivity should advance to intoxication. As it is not likely that the bards ever witnessed a banquet without this termination, it could not justly form, nor would have been made a subject of inculpation.

That the Gododin should commemorate so many British chiefs, Ceawg, Cynon, Madawg, Tulwlich, Mynnydawg, Cywlich, Caradawg, Owen, Eidiol, Pereddur, and Aeddan; and yet not actually name either Gwrthyrn, Guortemir, or Ambrosius, cannot but strengthen the inference, that it has no concern with the latter; for why should some be mentioned directly and plainly, and others, the most important in rank and power, be never named, but implied, as he thinks, by some periphrasis?

The locality of the incident, alluded to in the poem, seems also, as far as it can be ascertained, to be inconsistent with the massacre imputed to Hengist. It fixes the scene at Cattræth, and it implies that the people of Deira and Bernicia were in the conflict.^b Cattræth has been always placed in the northern districts. So has Eiddyn, from which Mynnydawg came, whose courteousness is repeatedly praised in the poem, and whom in its natural construction it mentions as the commander of the British force. His host is also mentioned in the conflict, not as if he was feasting with a small retinue, but as his warlike tribe;¹ and it is correspondent with this view that the Triads mention his host at the

¹ This hero, whose name begins four of the stanzas of the poem, and whose praise seems to be their import, has been converted by Mr. Davies, contrary to all former translations, into an epithet. But by the same mode of interpretation, when we meet with the names Hengist, Cicero, and Naso, we may, if we please, turn our Saxon ancestor into a war-horse; the Roman orator into a bean; and the poet of the metamorphoses into a nose.

^b Of the men of Dewyr and Bryneich:
The dreadful ones!
Twenty hundred perished in an hour.

O wyr Dewyr a Bryneich dychraw
Ugeincant eu divant yn un awr. God. p. 2.

¹ The Gorgordd Mynnydawc mwyn vawr: "the host of Mynnydawg the Courteous," is mentioned in several passages: as

Rac Gorgordd Mynnydawc mwyn vawr.—Twice in p. 2.

He is also noticed in p. 10 and 11. The last is
Of the host of Mynnydawg there escaped
But one weapon.

Mr. Davies transforms this proper name into an epithet, implying mountain chief; and then supposes it to mean Vortigern, because North Wales is a mountainous region, and Vortigern was the lord of it, p. 322.

battle of Cattraeth, as one of the three gallant hosts of Britain, because they followed their chiefs at their own charge.^m

The natural import of the poem is, that the Britons had fought hastily on one of their festive days. And this leads us to infer, that they might have been surprised by an unexpected advance of the Saxon forces. That 360 nobles, intoxicated at a previous banquet, should have perished in this battle, and that 360 should be the number said to have been massacred by Hengist at his feast, are coincidences that lead the mind to believe there may be some connection between the two incidents. But every other circumstance is so unlike, that we may more reasonably suppose, that the actual event occurred in a battle, as Aneurin has exhibited it; and upon a surprise, as we have suggested, and that tradition has erroneously attached it to the first Saxon invader, and feigned the banquet and its calamitous consequences to be the result of a premeditated treachery on a festive invitation; or that they are what they have been always thought to be, really distinct transactions.

The same conflict is alluded to in other poems; but its disastrous issue and the inebriety, not the Saxon perfidy, is the usual topic.ⁿ Even Golyddan, who mentions the massacre of Hengist, has no allusion to Cattraeth or Mannydawg, nor gives any intimation that it relates to the subject of the Gododin.^o

^m See Triad 79; 2 Welsh Arch. p. 69; and Triad 36, p. 8.

ⁿ It is so mentioned in a poem printed in the Welsh Archaeology, as a part of Taliesin's Dyhuddiant Elphin, though it obviously begins as that ends. Mr. Davies found it to be in one MS. appended to Aneurin's Gododin, Celt. Res. 574. The passage may be thus translated:

A year of sorrow
For the men of Cattraeth!
They nourished me.
Their steel blades;
Their mead;
Their violence;
And their fetters.

1 W. Arch. p. 21.

In the Gorchan Cynvelyn, the incantation of Cynbelyn, it is thus mentioned, as if by Aneurin himself:

Three warriors, and three score, and three hundred,
Went to the tumult at Cattraeth.
Of those that hastened
To the bearers of the mead,
Except three, none returned.

Cynon and Cattraeth
With songs they preserve,
And me—for my blood they bewail me—
The son of the omen fire,
They made a ransom,
Of pure gold, and steel, and silver.

Ibid. p. 61.

^o The golden torques mentioned by Aneurin was then worn in Britain. "In

The progress of the Angles in the north was slow and difficult. The Britons appear to have fought more obstinately in these parts than in any other. Three of their kings, besides Urien and his son, are named, Ryderthen, Guallawc, and Morcant,^p as maintaining the struggle against the sons of Ida, and with alternate success. Sometimes the Britons, sometimes the Angles conquered. After one battle, the latter were driven into an adjoining island, and were for three days besieged there,^q till Urien, their pursuer, was assassinated, by an agent of Morcant, one of the British kings that had joined him in the attack on the invaders. The motive to this atrocious action was the military fame which Urien was acquiring.^r The short reigns of Ida's six immediate successors, induce us to suppose them to have been shortened by the violent deaths of destructive warfare.^s

The death of Ida, in 550, produced a division of his associates. His son Adda succeeded; but one of his allied chieftains, also a descendant of Woden, quitted Bernicia, and sought with those who followed him a new fortune, by attacking the British kingdom of Deifyr, between the Tweed and the Humber. This chieftain was named Ella, and he succeeded in conquering this district, in which he raised the Angle kingdom of Deira, and reigned in it for thirty years.^t Yet though able to force an establishment in this country, many years elapsed before it was completely subdued; for Elmet, which is a part of Yorkshire, was not conquered till the reign of his son, who expelled from it Certic, its British king.^u

One Jute, three Saxon, and three Angle kingdoms were thus established in Britain by the year 560: in Kent, Sussex, Wessex, Essex, East Anglia, Bernicia, and Deira. Another Angle kingdom was about twenty-six years afterwards added in Mercia, which became in time more powerful and celebrated than any other, except that of the West Saxons, who at last conquered it. This kingdom of

Ida's
death.
550.

Establishment
of the oc-
tarchy. 560.

1692, an ancient golden torques was dug up near the castle of Harlech, in Merionethshire. It is a wreathed bar of gold, or perhaps three or four rods jointly twisted, about four feet long, flexible, but naturally bending only one way in form of a hat band; it is hooked at both ends; it is of a round form, about an inch in circumference, and weighs eight ounces. Gibson's Additions to Camden, p. 658, ed. 1695.—Bonduca wore one, Xiphelin. Epit. Dionis. p. 169. ed. H. S. 1591; and the Gauls used them, Livy, lib. xxxvi. c. 40. Gibson quotes a passage of Virgil, *Æneid*, lib. v. v. 559; which implies that the Trojan youth wore them.—Llywarch, p. 135, says, that his twenty-four sons wore eudorchawg, or wearers of the golden torques, which, from the above description, we perceive was not a chain.

^p Nennius *Geneal.* p. 117.

^q Nennius, p. 117.

^r Nenn. p. 117. The Welsh Triads mention this murder in noticing the three foul assassins of Britain. "Llofan Llawddma, who killed Urien, the son of Cynfarch," *Triodd* 38. 2 W. A. p. 9.

^s Thus his son Adda, his eldest son, reigned but seven years; Clappa, five; Theodulf, one; Froothulf, seven; Theodric, seven; and Ethelric, two. *Flor. Wig.* 221.

^t *Flor. Wig.* 221. *Sax. Ch.* 20.

^u Nenn. *Geneal.* p. 117.

Mercia made the eighth which these bold adventurers succeeded in founding. It was formed the latest of all. The first enterprises of the Angles against the district in which it was raised, were those of inferior chieftains, whose names have not survived their day; and it seems to have been at first considered as a part of Deira, or an appendage to it. Its foundation is dated in 586.* But although Crida is named as its first sovereign, yet it was his grandson, Penda, who is represented as having first separated it from the dominion of the northern Angles.†

When we contemplate the slow progress of the Saxon conquests, and the insulated settlements of the first adventurers, we can hardly repress our surprise, that any invader should have effected a permanent residence. Hengist was engaged in hostility for almost all his life; the safety of Ella, in Sussex, was little less precarious. The forces of either were so incommensurable with the numbers and bravery of the people they attacked, that nothing seems to have saved them from expulsion or annihilation, but the civil dissensions of the natives. Fallen into a number of petty states,‡ in actual warfare with each other, or separated by jealousy, Britain met the successive invaders with a local, not with a national force, and rarely with any combination. The selfish policy of its chiefs, often viewing with satisfaction the misfortunes of each other, facilitated the successes of the Saxon aggressions.

Although the people who invaded Britain, were principally Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, yet as the Saxon confederation extended from the Baltic to the Rhine, if not to the Scheldt, we can easily accredit the intimations, which we occasionally meet with, that Frisians,§ and their neighbours were mixed with the Saxons. The Britons maintained a long, though a disorderly and ill-conducted struggle, and many fleets of victims must have been sacrificed by their patriotic vengeance, before the several kingdoms were established. In such a succession of conflicts, the invading chiefs would gladly enlist every band of rovers who offered; and, as in a future day, every coast of Scandinavia and the Baltic poured their warriors on England, so it is likely that, in the present period, adventurers crowded from every neighbouring district.¶

* Crida was the first Mercian sovereign, and grandfather to Penda; he began to reign, 586. 3 Gale Scriptores, 229. H. Hunt, 315. 2 Leland's Collectanea, 56, 1 lb. 258.—Leland, ib. i. 211, from an old chronicle, observes, that the Trent divided Mercia into two kingdoms, the north and south.

† Nenn. Geneal. 117.

‡ *Tota insula, diversis regibus divisa, subjacuit.* Joannes Tinmuth ap Usher, 662.

§ Bede, lib. v. c. 10. Procop. lib. iv. p. 467. Colinus, ap Canneg. de Britten, p. 68; and Ubb. Emm. p. 41; and Spener, 361.

¶ So Mascou also thinks, p. 527. Some of the Icelandic writings mention northern kings, who had dominions in Britain, in the sixth and seventh centuries. If they be not entirely fabulous, they may relate to some of these expeditions. On this period we may also recollect the life of the first Offa. See Matt. Paris, Vit. Offa.

In this part of our subject we are walking over the country of the departed, whose memory has not been perpetuated by the commemorating heralds of their day. A barbarous age is unfriendly to human fame. When the clods of his hillock are scattered, or his funeral stones are thrown down, the glory of a savage perishes for ever. In after-ages, fancy labours to supply the loss, but her incongruities are visible; and gain no lasting belief.

Opposite to the island of Northstrand, on the western shore of Sleswick, a small tract of land, dangerous from its vicinity to a turbulent sea, was in ancient times occupied by a colony of Frisians. They extended north from Husum for several miles along the sea-coast. In the middle of the district was the town Brested, surrounded by a rich soil, though sands extended beyond. It terminated about Langhorn. The people who dwelt on it were called Strandfrisii, and the tract was denominated Frisia Minor. The marshy soil was colonized by the natives of Friesland, in an age which has not been ascertained. Saxo speaks of Canute the Fifth's journey to it, and then describes it as rich in corn and cattle, and protected from the ocean by artificial mounds. It was a complete flat; the waters sometimes were terrible to it; fields were often burst, and carried off to another spot, leaving to their owner a watery lake. Fertility followed the inundation. The people were fierce, active, disdain- ing heavy armour, and expert with their missile weapons.*

It was an opinion of Usher,^b that these Frisians accompanied Hengist into England. To convert Hengist's Jutes into the Strandfrisii Jutes is an exertion of mere conjecture. These Frisii, as well as others from Friesland, may have joined in some of the expeditions, and this probability is all that can be admitted.

The various parts of Britain, into which the Saxons and their confederates spread themselves, may be stated from the Irish primate's commentary on Bede's brief distinction, which forms the basis of all our reasonings on the subject.^c

The Jutes possessed Kent, the Isle of Wight, and that part of the coast of Hampshire which fronts it.

The Saxons were distinguished, from their situation, into South Saxons, who peopled Sussex.

* Pontanus, *Chorograph.* 657. Saxo *Grammaticus*, lib. xiv. p. 260. Ed. Steph. and his Prefatio, p. 3. Frisia Major was not unlike it, as a low marshy soil, much exposed to the fury of the ocean. Saxo, lib. viii. p. 167; and Steph. notes, 16.

^b Usher, *Primord.* 397.

^c Bede has thus placed them. The Jutes in Kent and the Isle of Wight. The Saxons in Essex, Sussex and Wessex. The Angles, whose native country remained in his time a desert, in East Anglia, Midland Anglia, Mercia, and all Northumbria, p. 52. Alfred, in his translation of the passage, makes no addition to this information. The people of Wessex were called Ge-wisai, in Bede's time and before, lib. iii. c. 7.

East Saxons, who were in Essex, Middlesex, and the south part of Hertfordshire:

West Saxons, in Surrey, Hampshire, (the site of the Jutes excepted,) Berks, Wilts, Dorset, Somerset, Devon, and that part of Cornwall which the Britons were unable to retain.

The Angles were divided into

East Angles, in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, the Isle of Ely, and (it should seem) part of Bedfordshire.

Middle Angles, in Leicestershire, which appertained to Mercia.

The Mercians, divided by the Trent into

South Mercians, in the counties of Lincoln, Northampton, Rutland, Huntingdon, the north parts of Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, Bucks, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire;—and into

North Mercians, in the counties of Chester, Derby, and Nottingham.

The Northumbrians, who were,

The Deiri, in Lancaster, York, Westmoreland, Cumberland, Durham.

The Bernicians, in Northumberland, and the south of Scotland, between the Tweed and the Firth of Forth.⁴

CHAPTER V.

The History of the Anglo-Saxon Octarchy, and its further Successes against the Britons, to the beginning of the Seventh Century.

THE exertions of the British against their invaders having thus
560. failed, eight Anglo-Saxon governments were established in the island. This state of Britain has been improperly denominated the Saxon heptarchy.* When all the kingdoms were

⁴ Usher, Primord. c. 12. p. 394. With this, Camden's idea may be compared and for the sentiments of an ingenious modern on the Anglo-Saxon geography, see Dr. Whitaker's Hist. Manchester, lib. ii. c. 4. p. 68.

* Although most of our ancient annalists and modern historians have retained the word heptarchy, yet one old chronicler, I perceive, has more critically said, "Provincia Britonum, quæ modo Anglia nominatur, Saxonum temporibus in octo regna divisa fuit." Th. Rudborne's Hist. Major. Winton. i Anglia Sacra, 187.—Meth. Westm. 198, as correctly 'states the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms to have been eight. He names the eight kings who reigned in 586, p. 200.

The word heptarchy came to be used from the habit of mentioning the two king-

settled, they formed an octarchy. Ella, supporting his invasion in Sussex, like Hengist in Kent, made a Saxon duarchy before the year 500. When Cerdic erected the state of Wessex in 519, a triarchy appeared; East Anglia made it a tetrarchy; Essex a pentarchy. The success of Ida, after 547, having established a sovereignty of Angles in Bernicia, the island beheld a hexarchy. When the northern Ella penetrated, in 560, southward of the Tees, his kingdom of Deira produced an heptarchy. In 586, the Angles branching from Deira into the regions south of the Humber, the state of Mercia completed an Anglo-Saxon octarchy. As the Anglo-Saxons warred with each other, sometimes one state was for a time absorbed by another; sometimes, after an interval, it emerged again. If that term ought to be used which expresses the complete establishment of the Anglo-Saxons, it should be octarchy; if not, then the denomination must vary as the tide of conquest fluctuated. If the collective governments are to be denominated from the nations who peopled them, as these were three, the general term would be triarchy; but it is obvious, that octarchy is the appellation that best suits the historical truth.

It was in the slow progression which has been stated that the Anglo-Saxons possessed themselves of the different districts of the island. The Britons, with all the faults of their mode of defence, yielded no part till it had been dearly purchased; and almost a century and a half passed away from the first arrival of Hengist to the full establishment of the octarchy. We cannot state in what year each British principality was destroyed, or each county subdued; but we have seen that, from the sea-coasts where they landed, the invaders had always to fight their way with pertinacity, and difficulty, to the inland provinces.

But the Anglo-Saxons, as they advanced, did not, as some have fancied, exterminate the Britons; though many devastations must have accompanied their progress. The fierce warriors of Germany wanted husbandmen, artisans, and menials for domestic purposes. There can be no doubt that the majority of the British population was preserved to be useful to their conquerors. But the latter imposed their own names on every district, place, and boundary; and spread exclusively their own language in the parts which they occupied. It is however true, that some Britons disdained the Saxon yoke, and emigrated to other countries. Armorica, or Bretagne, was the refuge to many. From others, Cornwall and Wales received a large accession of population; and some are even said to have visited Holland.^b

doms of Deira and Bernicia, under the appellation of Northumbria. But though they were united under one sovereign, yet, as they became consolidated, Essex, Kent, or Sussex ceased to be separate and independent kingdoms; so that the term was still improper.

^b H. Canegieter, in his *Dissertation de Brittenbergo*, Hag. Co. 1734, has parti-

The most indignant of the Cymry retired into Wales. There, the bards, fugitives like the rest, consoled the expatriated Britons with the hope that the day would afterwards arrive when they should have their full revenge, by driving out the Saxon hordes. Not only Taliesin sung this animating prediction;^c Myrddin also promised the Britons that they should again be led by their majestic chief, and be again victorious. He boldly announced, that in this happy day should be restored to every one his own; that then the horns of gladness should proclaim the song of peace, the serene days of Cambrian happiness.^d The anticipation of this blissful era gave rapture to the Cymry, even to their stony paradise of Wales.^e The proud invaders marked the vaunting prophecy, and, to render it nugatory, unpeopled some of their native coasts on the Baltic,^f and filled Britain with an active and hardy

cularly examined this point. His decision is that Brittenburg was named from the Britons, but was built by the Romans. He prefers, to the assertion of Gerbrandus, that the Britons fled from the Saxons into Holland, and built Catwyth on the Rhine, the opinion of Colinus, the ancient monastical poet, who admits that they visited and ravaged it, but affirms that they did not settle.

^c A serpent with chains,
 Towering and plundering,
 With armed wings
 From Germania;
 This will overrun
 All Loegria and Brydon,
 From the land of the Lochlin sea
 To the Severn.

After mentioning that the Britons will be exiles and prisoners to Saxony, he adds,

Their Lord they shall praise,
 Their language preserve,
 Their country lose
 Except wild Wales,
 Till the destined period of their triumph revolves,
 Then the Britons will obtain
 The crown of their land,
 And the strange people
 Will vanish away.

He concludes with declaring that Michael has predicted the future happiness of Britain. Taliesin, p. 94.

Gildas, p. 8., states that the Saxons had a prophecy that they should ravage Britain 150 years, and enjoy it 150. The limitation has rather a Cambrian aspect.

^d Myrddin's *Afallenau*, p. 153. Golyddan, in his *Arymes Prydein vawr*, endeavours to inspire his countrymen by a similar prediction. The first part is a review of the transactions between Hengist and the Britons. It is in the *Welsh Archaeology*, vol. i. p. 156-159.

^e These epithets are Welsh. Stony Wales is a phrase of Taliesin, and Llywarch denominates Powys "the paradise of the Cymry," p. 119.

^f Bede affirms the complete emigration of the Angles; he says, their country "ab eo tempore usque hodie manere desertus," lib. i. c. 15. To the like purpose Nonnius, "ita ut insulas de quibus venerant absque habitatore relinquerunt." c. 37.

race, whose augmenting population and persevering valour at length carried the hated Saxon sceptre even to the remotest corners of venerated Anglesey. But up to the reign of Alfred, and even afterwards, the Britons still maintained their own kingdom in Cornwall and part of Devonshire, and in that portion of the north which composed the Straclyde district. It was not till Athelstan that they finally lost Exeter.

The Britons long after Arthur's death maintained their patriotic struggle against the kingdom of Wessex. They fought, 571. though unsuccessfully, at Bedford, against the brother of Ceawlin, as we have noticed before. The Anglo-Saxons, in marching back to Wessex, through the districts yet in the hands of the natives, took Lygeanburh, Aylesbury, Bensington, and Ensham.^a Six years afterwards, the Britons again resisted the progressive ambition of the Saxons. An important battle occurred between them at Derham, in Gloucestershire, in which some of the kings of Wales appear to have confederated against the invaders: for three British sovereigns, Conmail, C'ondidan, and Farinmail fell in the conflict:^b two of these seem to be the princes lamented by Llywarch Hen in one of his elegies:^c the

^a Sax. Ch. 22. Fl. Wig. 222. Ethelw. 834.

^b Sax. Ch. 22. Fl. Wig. 223. Ethelw. 835.

^c His Marwnad Cynddylan, the son of Cyndrwyn. It begins energetically:

Stand out, ye virgins,
And behold the habitation of Cynddylan.
The palace of Pengwern:
Is it not in flames?
Wo to the young who wish for social bonds.
One tree with the woodbine round it
Perhaps may escape.
What God wills; be it done.
Cynddylan!
Thy heart is like the wintry ice.
Twrch pierced thee through the head.
Thou gavest the ale of Tren.

W. Arch. p. 107.

The venerable bard proceeds with his panegyric apostrophes to his deceased friend, calling him the bright pillar of his country; the sagacious in thought; with the heart of a hawk, of a greyhound, of a wild boar; and daring as a wolf tracing the fallen carcass. See it translated by Dr. Owen Pugh, p. 71-105.

He also commemorates Caranmael, apparently the Saxon Conmail.

I heard from the meadow the clattering of shields.
The city confines not the mighty.
The best of men was Caranmael.

W. A. p. 112.

He also laments the fall of Freuer.

Is it not the death of Freuer,
That separates me this night?
Fatal end of social comfort!
It breaks my sleep. I weep at the dawn.

W. A. p. 110.

last was king of Monmouthshire.^l The capture of three cities, then of considerable note among the Britons, as they are now to us, Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, were the fruits of the Saxon victory.^k

Seven years afterwards, we read of Ceawlin pursuing hostilities against the Britons on the Severn. A bloody contest occurred at Frithern. The Britons fought with earnest resolution, and for some time with unusual success. The brother of the West Saxon King was slain, and his forces gave way. But Ceawlin rallied his countrymen, and after great slaughter, obtained the victory. The issue was as decisive as it had been long doubtful; and many towns were added to Wessex, and a vast booty divided among the conquerors.^l The Britons, with undismayed perseverance, fought again seven years afterwards, at Wanborough, and appear to have obtained a complete victory.^m There were probably many efforts of minor importance made by the Britons which the Saxon chroniclers have not noticed.ⁿ

But as soon as the Anglo-Saxon kings had so far subdued the Britons, as to be in no general danger from their hostility; and began to feel their own strength in the growing population of their provinces, and in the habitual submission of the natives, their propensity to war, and their avarice of power, excited them to turn their arms upon each other.

It was the impatience of a young mind to distinguish itself, which thus began a new series of wars that lasted till Egbert. The attacks and successes of the West Saxons and the South Saxons had turned off from Kent the direction of British hostility. Left at leisure for the indulgence of youthful turbulence, Ethelbert, the fourth successor of Hengist, at the age of

^l I do not know that the Freuer of Llyward means the same person as Farinmail; but it is likely that this was the Fernvail who was then reigning in Gwent or Monmouthshire. See Regis. Landew, quoted by Langhorn in his useful chronicle, p. 115.

^k See before, p. 193. Ethelward calls these cities, *urbes eorum clariores*, p. 635. Huntingdon's epithet is *excellentissimus*, p. 315.

^l Flor. 224. Hunt. 315. M. Westm. omits the ultimate successes of Ceawlin, and states it as a British victory, p. 198. Soon after this contest, Langhorn quotes Io. Salisb. Poyle. v. c. 17, to say, that "*paulo post Anglorum introitum impositum fuisse Angliæ nomen.*" Langhorn has here departed from his usual accuracy. The passage of our elegant monk is lib. vi. c. 17, p. 197, and merely mentions that "*ab inventu Saxonum in insulam appellatur Anglia.*" These words determine no chronology like *paulo post*. They express only one of the consequences of the Saxon invasion, without marking the precise time of the change of name.

^m The brief intimation of the Saxon Chronicle, p. 22, is more fully expressed in Hunt. 315; and Ethelward ascribes to this battle the expulsion of Ceawlin from his throne, p. 635.

ⁿ Thus Meigant, the British bard of the seventh century, mentions an expedition of the British chief Morial:

Pacing to combat, a great booty
Before Caer Lwydgoed, has not Morial taken
Fifteen hundred cattle and the head of Gwrial?

1 W. Ar. p. 160.

sixteen, presumed to invade Ceawlin, the king of Wessex. This action seems to have been intemperate. Ceawlin had displayed both talent and resources for war, and Kent never attained the territorial extent or power of Wessex. But it is probable, that the Anglo-Saxons knew nothing as yet of the geography or comparative strength of their respective kingdoms. The issue of this contest taught Kent to understand better its true position in the political scale of the octarchy. Ceawlin collected his troops, defeated Ethelbert at Wimbledon, and threatened the Kentish Jutes with the subjection which they had armed to impose.* This is remarked to have been the first battle that occurred between the Anglo-Saxon sovereigns.†

Ceawlin soon imitated, but with more success from his superior means, the ambition of Ethelbert. On the death of its sovereign, Cissa, he obtained the kingdom of Sussex. By annexing it to West Saxony, he changed the Saxon octarchy into a temporary heptarchy.

Dreaded for his power and ambition, Ceawlin now preponderated over the other Saxon monarchs :‡ but his prosperity changed before his death. His nephew, Ceolric, allied with the Cynry and the Scoti against him; and all the valour and conduct of Ceawlin, could not rescue him from a defeat, in the thirty-third year of his reign, at Wodnesburg, in Wilts, the mound of Woden already alluded to.§ His death soon followed, and the unnatural kinsman succeeded to the crown he had usurped. He enjoyed it during a short reign of five years, and Ceolwulf acceded.

The disaster of Ceawlin gave safety to Kent. Ethelbert preserved his authority in that kingdom, and at length succeeded to that insulary predominance among the Anglo-Saxon kings, which

* Sax. Chron. p. 21. Flor. Wigorn. 222. Malmesbury attributes the aggression to Ethelbert's desire of engrossing *præ antiquitate familiæ primas partes sibi*, p. 12.

† Hunt. 315. About this time, in 573, the Saxons obtained a settlement in France. They were plac'd in the Armorican region after their irruption, in *sinibus Bajocassium et Namnetensium*. Boquet's *recueil des historiens des Gaules*, vol. ii. p. 250.—Hence Gregory of Tours calls them *Saxones Bajocassos*, lib. v. c. 10. It is curious that they were sent against the British settlers in Gaul, who defeated them. Gregory, lib. v. c. 27. Their district, Charles the Bald, in his *Laws apud Silvacum*, calls *Langum Saxoniam*. Boquet, p. 250.

‡ Bede, lib. ii. c. 5. He was the second Saxon prince so distinguished.—Matt. West. says generally, "*magnificatum est nomen ejus vehementer*," p. 197.—Langhorn fancied that he was the Gormund, whom the Britons mention with horror. Chron. Reg. Angliæ, 123. This Gormund, by some styled king of the Africans, by others a pirate of Norway or Ireland, is fabled to have invaded the Britons with 166,000 Africans. Rad. dic. 359, 3 Gale, and Jeffry, 12. 2. Alanus de Insulis, lib. i. p. 25, gives him 360,000.

§ Sax Chron. 22. Coola, as Flor. Wig., 225. names him, was son of Cuthulf. Ethelwerd, 835.—This village stands upon the remarkable ditch called *Wansdike*, which Camden thought a Roman work to divide Mercia from Wessex, and which others have supposed to have been a defence against the incursions of the Britons.

they called the Bretwalda, or the ruler of Britain.* Whether this was a mere title assumed by Hengist, and afterwards by Ella, and continued by the most successful Anglo-Saxon prince of his day, or conceded in any national council of all the Anglo-Saxons; or ambitiously assumed by the Saxon king that most felt and pressed his temporary power; whether it was an imitation of the British unbennaeth, or a continuation of the Saxon custom of electing a warcyning, cannot be ascertained.

While Ceolwulf was governing Wessex, Ethelfrith, the grandson of Ida, reigned in Bernicia, and attacked the Britons with 603 vehemence and perseverance. None peopled more districts of the ancient Cymry with Angles, or more enslaved them with tributary services.† It is probable that he extended his conquests to the Trent. Alarmed by his progress, Aidan advanced with a great army of Britons either from Scotland, or those who in the Cumbrain or Strat-clyde kingdoms, and their vicinity, still preserved their independence, to repress him. The Angles met him at Degsastan; a furious battle ensued, which the determination of the combatants made very deadly. The Britons fought both with conduct and courage, and the brother of Ethelfrith perished, with all his followers. At length the Scottish Britons gave way, and were destroyed with such slaughter, that the king, with but few attendants, escaped.‡ They had not, up to the time of Bede, ventured to molest the Angles again.

The colonists of Sussex, endeavouring to throw off the yoke of Ceolwulf, the West Saxon king, who is mentioned as always engaged in quarrels with the Angles, Britons, Picts, or Scots, ventured on a conflict with him, which, disastrous to both armies, was most fatal to the assertors of their independence.¶

The Bernician conqueror, Ethelfrith, renewed his war with the 607 or 612 Cymry. He reached Chester, through a course of victory. Apart from the forces of the Welsh, assembled under Brocmail, king of Powys, he perceived the monks of Bangor, twelve hundred in number, offering prayers for the success

* Bede, lib. ii. c. 5, names him as the third qui imperavit all the provinces south of the Humber. Malmesbury amplifies this into "omnes nationes Anglorum præter Northanhimbros continuis victoriis domitas sub jugum traxit," p. 10.—The Saxon Chron. calls him one of the seven bretwaldas who preceded Egbert. The proper force of this word bretwalda cannot imply conquest, because Ella the First is not said to have conquered Hengist or Cerdic; nor did the other bretwaldas conquer the other Saxon kingdoms. The Anglo-Saxon sovereigns, to whom Bede gives this title in succession, are Ella of Sussex; Ceawlin, of Wessex; Ethelbert, of Kent; Redwald, of East Anglia; Edwin, Oswald, and Oswy, of Northumbria; and see Hunt. 314.

† Hunt. 315.

¶ Bede, lib. i. c. 34. Sax. Chron. 24.—The position of this, as of most of the Saxon battles, is disputed. Dalston, near Carlisle, and Dawston, near Jedburgh, has each its advocate.

• H. Hunt. 316. Sax. Chron. p. 25.

of their countrymen: "If they are praying against us," he exclaimed, "they are fighting against us;" and he ordered them to be first attacked: they were destroyed;" and, appalled by their fate, the courage of Brocmail wavered, and he fled from the field in dismay.⁵ Thus abandoned by their leader, his army gave way, and Ethelfrith obtained a decisive conquest. Ancient Bangor itself soon fell into his hands, and was demolished;⁷ the noble monastery was levelled to the earth; its library, which is mentioned as a large one, the collection of ages, the repository of the most precious monuments of the ancient Britons, was consumed;⁸ half ruined walls, gates, and rubbish, were all that remained of the magnificent edifice.* We may presume that the addition of Cheshire to Bernicia was the consequence of the victory.

But amidst their misfortunes, the Cymry sometimes triumphed. Ceolwulph from Wessex advanced upon them, not merely to the Severn, but crossed it into the province of Glamorgan. 610. Affrighted at his force, the inhabitants hastened to Tewdric their former king, who had quitted his dignity in behalf of his son Mowrick, to lead a solitary life among the beautiful rocks and woodlands of Tintern. They solicited him to reassume the military command, in which he had never known disgrace, if he sympathized in the welfare of his countrymen or his son. The royal hermit beheld the dreaded Saxons on the Wye, but the remembrance of his own achievements inspired him with hope. He put on his forsaken armour, conducted the tumult of battle with his former

* The chronology of this battle is disputed. The Saxon Chronicle dates it in 607, p. 25. Flor. Wig. 603. The Annals of Ulster in 612. Matt. West. in 603, p. 204. The ancient Welsh chronologer, in the *Cambrian Reg.* for 1796, places it in 602, and fourteen years before the battle of Meigen, p. 313. Bede says, that Austin had been jam multo ante tempore ad caelestia regna sublato, lib. ii. c. 2.; but Austin died in 605.

⁵ Brocmail was one of the patrons of Taliesin, who commemorates this struggle.

I saw the oppression of the tumult; the wrath and tribulation;
The blades gleaming on the bright helmets;
The battle against the Lord of Fame in the dales of Hafren;
Against Brocmail of Powys, who loved my muse.

Taliesin, p. 66.

⁷ Ancient Bangor was about eight miles distant from Chester. Caius de Antiq. Cantab. lib. i. sp. Usher, 133.—Leland says, "the cumpace of the abbey was as of a waulld toune, and yet remaineth the name of a gate caullid Porth Hogan by north, and the name of another, port Clays by south.—Doe syns chaunging the bottom rennith now thourou the mydle betwyxt thes two gates, one being a mile dim from the other." Itiner. vol. v. p. 26.

⁸ Humph. Lhuyd asserts this. *Comm. Frag. Brit. Descript.* 58., and Giraldus Cambrensis declares that Chester also was destroyed. *De illaud. Wallim.* c. 7. And it is not likely that a rude Anglo-Saxon warrior would take any care to preserve British MSS. This destruction was an irreparable loss to the ancient British antiquities.

⁹ Malmesbury, 19.—In the Triade Bangor is paralked with the isle of Avallon, and Caer Caradog, for possessing 2400 religious. The Bangor of modern note is a city built by Maclo on the Meneath, near Anglces, Job. Rossius, sp. Usher, 133.

skill, and drove the invaders over the Severn. A mortal wound in the head arrested him in the full enjoyment of his success, and he breathed his last wishes for his people's safety at the confluence of the Severn and the Wye. The local appellation Mathern, the abbreviation of Merthyr Teudric,^b pointed out his remains to the sympathy of posterity: in the sixteenth century his body was found unconsumed, and the fatal blow on his head was visible.^c

The condition of the Britons at this juncture was becoming more distressful and degrading. Driven out of their ancient country, they had retired to those parts of the island, which, by mountains, woods, marshes, and rivers, were most secluded from the rest; yet in this retreat they lived with their hands against every man,^d and every man's hand against them; they were the common butt of enterprise to the Angles of Bernicia, and Deira, and Mercia; to the Saxons of Wessex, and to the Gwiddelians of Ireland; and they were always as eager to assail as to defend. The wild prophecies of enthusiasts, who mistook hope for inspiration, having promised to them, in no long period, the enjoyment of the soil from which they had been exiled, produced a perpetual appetite for war. Their independent sovereignties fed, by their hostile ambition, the flames of domestic quarrels, and accelerated the ruin of their independence. But yet, under all these disadvantages, they maintained the unequal conflict against the Anglo-Saxons with wonderful bravery, and did not lose the sovereignty of their country until the improvements of their conquerors made the conquest a blessing.

Cynegils with the West Saxons again assailed some branches of the Britons. If Bampton in Devonshire be the place which the Saxon annalist denominates Beamdune, the princes of Cornwall were the objects of attack. When the armies met, Cynegils surprised the Britons by drawing up his forces into an ar-
 014. rangement which was not common to that age. This display and the sight of the battle-axes, which the Saxons were brandishing, affected them with a sudden panic, and they quitted the field early, with the loss of above two thousand men.*

^b The martyr Teudric. Usher quotes the Register of Landaff for this conflict, p. 562.—Langhorn. Chron. p. 148.

^c Godwin præsul. ap. Usher, 563. In the chancel of Mathern church an epitaph mentions that he lies there entombed. Williams's Monmouthshire, App. No. 17.

^d Matt. West. paints this forcibly, p. 198 and 199.

* Hunt. 316. Sax. Chron. 25. Camden supposes the place to have been Bindon in Dorsetshire, 1 Gough's ed. 44. The editor mentions favourably the opinion of Gibson, which is in the text, ib. p. 50.

CHAPTER VI.

**The Introduction of Christianity among the Anglo-Saxons, in Kent and Essex.
Ethelbert's Reign in Kent.**

THE history of the Anglo-Saxons has, thus far, been the history of fierce, barbaric tribes; full of high courage, excited spirit, persevering resolution, great activity, and some military skill; but with minds which, although abounding with talent and love of enterprise, and inventive of political institutions, well adapted to their civil position and necessities, were void of all lettered cultivation; unused to the social sympathies, and averse from the intellectual refinements, of which they were naturally capable. These great blessings of human life were introduced into the island, with that peculiar form of Christianity, which the benevolent feelings and religious enthusiasm of Pope Gregory deservedly, with all his imperfections, surnamed the Great, conveyed into England by his missionary Augustin. This great mental and moral, we may add from some of its results, political revolution, was suggested and accomplished by a train of coincidences, which deserve to be recollected.

The Roman papacy had felt the advantage, to itself, of the conversion of the Gothic nations; and Gregory, in succeeding to that dignity, would have imbibed a disposition to promote the same religious policy, if his own earnest belief in Christianity had not led him to befriend it. But the Anglo-Saxons were not the only nation of Europe that were then pagans. All Germany, and all the nations from the Rhine to the Frozen Ocean, and all the Slavonian tribes, were of this description. England, which Rome had long before amused itself with describing, as cut off from the whole world, and as approaching the frozen and half-fabled Thule, was so remote, and, by its Saxon conquerors, had been so separated from any connection with the civilized regions, that it seemed to be the country least adapted to interest him. But an accidental circumstance, which does credit to his heart, had turned the current of Gregory's feelings towards our island, before he had reached the pontifical honours.

It was then the practice of Europe to make use of slaves, and to buy and sell them; and this traffic was carried on, even in the western capital of the Christian church. Passing through the market at Rome, the white skins, the flowing locks, and beautiful

countenances of some youths who were standing there for sale, interested Gregory's sensibility.^a

To his inquiries from what country they had been brought, the answer was, from Britain, whose inhabitants were all of that fair complexion. Were they Pagans or Christians? was his next question: a proof not only of his ignorance of the state of England, but also, that, up to that time, it had occupied no part of his attention. But thus brought as it were to a personal knowledge of it, by these few representatives of its inhabitants, he exclaimed, on hearing that they were still idolators, with a deep sigh: "What a pity, that such a beauteous frontispiece should possess a mind so void of internal graces!" The name of their nation being mentioned to him to be Angles, his ear caught the verbal coincidence. The benevolent wish for their improvement darted into his mind, and he expressed his own feelings, and excited those of his auditors by remarking: "It suits them well: they have angel faces, and ought to be the co-heirs of the angels in heaven." A purer philanthropy perhaps never breathed from the human heart, than in these sudden effusions of Gregory's. That their provincial country Deiri, should resemble the words *De ira*, seemed to his simple mind to imply, that they ought to be plucked from the wrath of God; and when he heard that their king's name was called Ella, the consonancy of its sound, with the idea then floating in his mind, completed the impression of the whole scene. His whole enthusiasm burst out. "Hallelujah! the praise of the creating Deity must be sung in these regions."^b This succession of coincidences, though but verbal, affected his mind with a permanent impression of the most benevolent nature. He went immediately to the then pope, and prayed him to send some missionaries to convert the English nation, and offered himself for the service. His petition was refused, but the project never left his mind, till he was enabled by his own efforts to ac-

^a The chronicler of St. Augustin's monastery at Canterbury, W. Thorn, mentions that these were three boys: "Videt in foro Romano tres pueros Anglios," *Decem Script.* p. 1757. In the Anglo-Saxon homily on Gregory's birth-day, published by Mrs. Elstob, it is stated that English merchants had carried them to Rome, and that the practice was continuing. "Tha zelamp het æt rumum pæle gpa gpa gyt for oft ðeð, thæt Englifce cýthmen þrohton heora pape to Romana byrig. 7 Gregorius eode be thære feræt to tham Englifcum mannum heora thing fceapigende. Tha zere he ðerfux tham þarum cypecnichtar gefette. Tha þaron hýter lichaman 7 fægner 7 þitan man 7 æthelice zefeaxode, p. 11.

^b Bede, *Hist. lib. li. c. i. p. 78.* This incident was probably in Gregory's mind, when he wrote this passage in his moral exposition of Job. "Ecce lingua Britannie, quæ nil aliud noverat, quam barbarum friandere, jamdudum in divinis laudibus Hebræum cepit, Halleluia, resonare," lib. xxvi. c. 6. p. 688. ed. Paris. 1640.

complete it. As Ella died in 589, this incident must have occurred before this year.

In 592, Gregory became pope, and four years afterwards he attempted to execute his philanthropic purpose. He selected a monk named Augustin, as the fittest for the chief of the mission, and added some other monks of congenial feelings to assist it. They set out on their journey, but the dread of encountering a nation so ferocious, as the Saxons had from their successes the character of being, and ignorance of their language, overcame both their resolution and their zeal. They stopped, began their return to Rome, and sent Augustin back to solicit Gregory not to insist on their pursuing an enterprise so dangerous and so little likely to be availing.*

Gregory prevailed on Augustin to resume the mission, and answered the entreaties of the rest by a short but impressive letter. He remarked to them that it was more disgraceful to abandon an undertaking once begun, than to have at first declined it. That as the work was good, and would receive the Divine aid, they ought to pursue it. He reminded them of the glory that would recompense their sufferings in another world, and he appointed Augustin their abbot, and commanded their obedience to his directions, that the little community might have an effective governor.⁴ He wrote also to the bishop of Arles, recommending this band of religious adventurers to his friendship and assistance. He addressed letters to other prelates in 596. France to the same purport. He requested the patronage of the Frankish kings to their undertaking; and also endeavoured to interest Brunehilda, one of their queens, to befriend it. The missionaries were forty in number.⁵

But to which kingdom of the octarchy should they first apply? A natural circumstance led them to Kent.

Ethelbert, who had begun his reign with the inauspicious attack on Wessex, had been afterwards so harassed by others of the Saxon kings, that it was with difficulty he preserved his own dominions from subjection.⁶ Adversity and danger had made him wiser. His future measures were more prosperous, and he became the Brætwalda of the Saxon octarchy, and predominated over it as far north as the Humber.

The circumstance auspicious to Augustin's mission, was Ethelbert's marriage with Bertha, a Frankish princess. She had been educated to be a Christian, and she had stipulated for the right of

* Bede, lib. i. c. 23, p. 59.

⁴ Bede, lib. i. c. 23, p. 59.

⁵ Those letters of Gregory are printed amid his very multifarious correspondence, which are classed in twelve books, and occupy the fourth volume of his works. Dr. Smith has selected those which concern this mission, in the appendix to his Bede, No. 6; and Mrs. Elstob has translated them in her appendix, p. 7, &c.

⁶ Malmsh. p. 10.

pursuing her own religion after her marriage.⁵ To Kent and to this queen Augustin proceeded with his companions, with interpreters whom the king of the Franks had provided.

Augustin sent one of these to Ethelbert, to announce that he came from Rome, and had brought with him a messenger, who promised to those that obeyed him everlasting joys in heaven, and a kingdom that should never end. The king, whom the conduct of his queen had dispossessed of all virulence against Christianity, ordered them to remain in Thanet, where they had landed, supplied with every necessary, till he had determined what he should do with them.

Interested by their arrival, the queen was not likely to be inactive. But the freedom of all the Anglo-Saxon tribes, and 597. the power of their witenagemots, as well as the opposing influence of the Saxon priests, occasioned Ethelbert to pause. After a few days' deliberation, he went into the island and appointed a conference. He sat in the open air, fearful lest, if he received them in a house, he should be exposed to the power of their magic if they used any. They came with a simple but impressive ceremony. They advanced in an orderly procession, preceded by a silver cross, as their standard, and carrying also a painted portrait of our Saviour, and chanting their litany as they approached. The king commanded them to sit down, and to him and his earls, who accompanied them, they disclosed their mission.⁶ Ethelbert answered with a steady and not unfriendly judgment. "Your words and promises are fair, but they are new and uncertain. I cannot therefore abandon the rites, which, in common with all the nations of the Angles, I have hitherto observed. But as you have come so far to communicate to us what you believe to be true, and the most excellent, we will not molest you. We will receive you hospitably, and supply you with what you need. Nor do we forbid any one to join your society whom you can persuade to prefer it." He gave them a mansion in Canterbury, his metropolis, for their residence, and allowed them to preach as they pleased.⁷

⁵ Bede, lib. i. c. 25, Hunting. 321.

⁶ Bede, lib. i. c. 25, p. 61. The homily briefly states the address of Augustin in these words: "Hu ƿe mildheortra hæleand mid hƿi agenre thƿorunge thiſne ſcýlðriġan midbancarþe alýſþe 7 geleafullum mannum heofena ƿiceſ inƿær geƿonode," p. 34. The substance of the sermon is given at length by Joscelin, Angl. Sac. vol. ii. p. 59; and a translation of it in Elstob, p. 33.

⁷ The text is from Bede, p. 61. But Alfred's Saxon of this speech perhaps exhibits most exactly the actual words of Ethelbert: "Fægeƿe ƿorþ thiſ ſýnd and gehat the geþrohton 7 uſ fæcgath. Ac ſorþthon hi niƿe ſýndon and uncuthe, ne maġon ƿe nu gýt tha gethaſiġean tha ƿe ſorlætan tha ƿiſan the ƿe lan-

They entered the city singing the litanies, which they had found to be interesting to the populace. They distinguished themselves by prayers, vigils, and fastings, which excited the admiration of those who visited them; and their discourses pleased many. On the east side of the city, a church had been built, during the residence of the Romans, dedicated to St. Martin, which the queen had used as her oratory. Here they sang, prayed, performed their mass, and preached till they made several converts, whom they baptized. The impression spread, till at length the king was affected, and became himself a Christian.¹ In no part of the world has Christianity been introduced in a manner more suitable to its benevolent character.

The peculiar form of this religion, which Gregory and Augustin thus introduced, was of course that system which Rome then professed. It was the best system which had been recognized at Rome; and it could not be better than that age, or the preceding times were capable of receiving or framing. It was a compound of doctrines, ritual, discipline, and polity, derived partly from the Scriptures, partly from tradition, partly from the decisions and orders of former councils and popes, and partly from popular customs and superstitions, which had been permitted to intermix themselves. But such as it was, it was the most useful form that either its teachers or the then intellect of the world could furnish. Nor is it clear that its new converts would have relished or understood any purer system. The papal clergy were then the most enlightened portion of the western world; and the system which they preferred must have been superior to any that the barbaric judgment could have provided.

The pope continued his attentions to his infant church. He sent Augustin the pall, the little addition to his dress which marked the dignity of an archbishop, with a letter of instructions on the formation of the English hierarchy, with several MSS. of books,² ecclesiastical vessels, vestments, and ornaments, and

gere tibe mid ealle Ængel theode heoldan. Ac forþon the ge feorran hiber æltheodige coman and thær the me gethuht and gefapen is tha thing tha the soth and bette zelýfðon, tha ge eac sýlce sýlladon us tha gemærsuman, ne sýllath se forðhon eor hefige ðeon: Ac se sýllath eor fremsumlice on særlithnesse onson and eor andlýfne sýllan and eorne thearfe forgrifan. Ne se eor heferiath tha ge ealle tha the ge magon thurh eorne lane to eorper geleafan æfternýsse getheode and gecýrre," p. 487.

¹ Bede, c. 26.

² Bede, c. 29, p. 70. Wanley has given a catalogue of the books sent by Gregory. These were, 1st. A Bible, adorned with some leaves of a purple and rose colour, in two volumes, which was extant in the time of James the First. 2d. The Psalter of St. Augustin, with the Creed, Pater Noster, and several Latin hymns. 3d. Two copies of the Gospels, with the ten Canons of Eusebius prefixed; one of which El-

several religious persons to assist him,¹ who were afterwards active in the conversion of the rest of the island. Augustin restored from its ruins another British church at Canterbury, which had been built in the Roman times, and began the erection of a monastery.² The king sanctioned and assisted him in all that he did; and afterwards became distinguished as the author of the first written Saxon laws, which have descended to us, or which are known to have been established;—an important national benefit, for which he may have been indebted to his Christian teachers, as there is no evidence that the Saxons wrote any compositions before. Gregory sent into the island “many manuscripts,” and thus began its intellectual as well as religious education.³

Seven years after Augustin’s successful exertions in Kent, he appointed two of the persons that arrived last from Rome, Melitus and Justus, to the episcopal dignity, and directed them
604. to the kingdom of Essex. Sabert, the son of Ethelbert’s sister, was then reigning. The new religion was favourably received; and Ethelbert, to whose superior power the little state was subject, began the erection of St. Paul’s church at London, its metropolis.⁴

Augustin did not long live to contemplate the advantages which he had introduced into England. He died the year of his mission into Essex. Ethelbert survived him eleven years. His son Eadbald restored the Saxon paganism in Kent, and drove out the Christian ecclesiastics. The three sons of Sabert imitated him in Essex. But this persecution was of a short duration. A simple contrivance of Laurence, the successor of Augustin, affected the mind of Eadbald with alarm. He appeared before the king, bleeding from severe stripes; and boldly declared that he had received them in the night from St. Peter, because he was meditating his departure from the island. The idea was exactly level with the king’s intellect and superstition. A strong sensation of fear that the same discipline might be inflicted, by the same invisible hand, on himself, changed his feelings, and he became a zealous friend to the new faith. The exiled bishops

stob believed to be in the Bodleian library, and the other at Cambridge, p. 42. 4th. Another Psalter with hymns. 5th. A volume containing legends on the sufferings of the apostles, with a picture of our Saviour in silver, in a posture of blessing. 6th. Another volume on the martyrs, which had on the outside a glory, silver gilt, set round with crystals and beryls. 7th. An exposition of the Epistles and Gospels, which had on the cover a large beryl surrounded with crystals. Augustin also brought Gregory’s Pastoral Care, which Alfred translated. See Eistob, p. 39–43, and Wanley, 172, whose description is taken from Thomas de Elmham, a monk of Augustine’s abbey, in the time of Henry the Fifth. See also Cave, Hist. Lit. p. 431.

¹ A list of the vestments, vessels, &c., sent by Gregory is added to Eistob, from Wanley’s communication, App. 34–40.

² Bede, lib. i. c. 33.

³ Bede, lib. i. c. 29.

⁴ Bede, lib. ii. c. 3.

were recalled, and the old Saxon rites were abolished for ever in Kent and Essex.^p

Laurence enjoyed his triumph but two years; and, on his death, Mellitus, who had converted Essex, received his dignity: a man of noble family, and of such an active spirit, that the gout, with which he was severely afflicted, was no impediment to his unabated exertions for the mental and moral improvement of the Saxon nation. All those early prelates enjoyed their rank but for a brief period. In five years he died, and Justus, his friend and companion from Rome, was made his successor.^q As Gregory had chosen the men who were best adapted to accomplish his purpose, it is probable that those he selected were advanced in life.

CHAPTER VII.

Expedition of the East Anglians to the Rhine.—Edwin's Asylum in East Anglia.—Redwald's Defeat of Ethelfrith.—Edwin's Reign in Northumbria, and the Introduction of Christianity into that Province.

THE kingdom of East Anglia becomes remarkable by an incident which Procopius has preserved, and which occurred in the sixth century. It exhibits the adventuring spirit of our early Saxon princes. 534-547.

Between the Rhine and the Northern Ocean, the Varni inhabited.^r Their king solicited a princess of East Anglia for his son, and the hand of the lady was promised. On his death-bed it occurred to him, that an alliance with the Franks, his neighbours, would be more profitable to his people than the friendship of the Angles, who were separated from the Varni by the sea. In obedience to the political expediency, Radiger, the prince, married his father's widow, his step-mother, because she was sister of Theodebert the Franc. The rejected East Anglian would not brook the indignity; she demanded revenge for the slight, because in the estimation of her countrymen the purity of female chastity was sullied if the maiden once wooed was not wedded. Her brother and the East Anglian warriors thought her quarrel just; a large fleet sailed from England under her

^p Bede, lib. ii. c. 5, 6.

^q Bede, lib. ii. c. 7, 8.

^r The editor of the great collection des Historiens des Gaules, Paris, 1741, remarks (referring to Valensius), that Procopius erred when he placed the Varni on the right bank of the Rhine, and that he is more credible when he places them nearer the Danes, vol. ii. p. 42.

auspices, and landed on the Rhine. A part of the army encamped round her; the rest, with one of her brothers, defeated the Varni, and penetrated the country. Radiger fled. The Angles returned to the lady, glorying in their victory. She received them with disdain. They had done nothing, as they had not brought Radiger to her feet. Again her selected champions sallied forth, and Radiger at last was taken in a wood. The captive entered her tent, to receive his doom. But the heart of the East Anglian was still his own. He pleaded his father's commands, and the solicitations of his chiefs. The conquering beauty smiled forgiveness. To accept her hand, and to dismiss her rival, was the only punishment she awarded. Joyfully the prince obeyed, and the sister of Theodebert was repudiated.^b

This event is the only one in the history of East Anglia which can interest our notice until the reign of Redwald. Before this prince it had arrogated no dominating precedence in England. The intemperate ambition of Ethelfrith propelled it into consequence. This king of the Northumbrian Angles, dissatisfied with his inherited Bernicia, and his trophies in Scotland and Wales, invaded Deira, to which Edwin the son of Ella, at the age of three years, had succeeded; and by expelling the little infant, converted the Saxon states in England into an hexarchy. Edwin was carried to North Wales, and was generously educated by Cadvan.^c

As Edwin grew up he was compelled to leave Wales; and for many years wandered about in secret, through various provinces, to escape the unceasing pursuit of Ethelfrith. Reaching East Anglia, he went to the court of Redwald, and avowing himself, besought his hospitable protection. Redwald received him kindly, and promised what he asked. Impatient that Edwin should be alive, Ethelfrith sent repeated messengers, with presents to the East Anglian sovereign, requiring him to surrender the youth, and adding menaces if he refused. Redwald remembered the unvarying successes of Ethelfrith, and fearful of encountering his hostility, promised either the death or the surrender of Edwin. A friend to the young exile discovered his intentions, and counselled him to fly. But Edwin, weary of living like a fugitive, replied, "I cannot do this. I have made a compact with Redwald, and I will not be the first to break it, while he has done me no evil, nor has yet discovered any enmity. If I am to perish, he that betrays or destroys me will be disgraced, not myself. And whither should I fly, who have been wandering already so long,

^b Procopius Goth. Hist. lib. iv. p. 468-471. Gibbon places this incident between 534 and 547, which were the extreme terms of the reign of Theodebert, vol. iii. c. 38, p. 637.

^c Alfred Beverl. lib. vi. p. 90. Redwald was son of Titel, and grandson of Uffa, Fl. Wig. 233.

through so many provinces of Britain, without a shelter? How can I escape elsewhere the toils of my persecutor?" His friend left him. Edwin remained sitting before the palace, reflecting on his misfortunes and darkening projects. In this anxious state night approached, and he believed he saw an unknown person advance to him, who promised him present deliverance and great future prosperity, if he should listen to what would be afterwards taught him. The vision laid his hand on his head, and, adjuring him to remember this interview, disappeared;⁴ or else Edwin waked. But he had a more substantial friend than the apparition of a dream.

The queen of Redwald secretly pleaded for the youthful exile, and with noble sentiments: "A king should not sell a distressed friend, nor violate his faith for gold: no ornament is so ennobling as good faith." Interested by her intercession, and inspired with her fortitude, Redwald resolved to keep sacred the duties of hospitality; and Edwin was informed by his watchful, though unknown friend, of the generous determination.

The preparations of Ethelfrith, disappointed of his prey, compelled him to arm; Redwald acted with judicious vigour; and he attacked Ethelfrith, before he had collected all his troops, on the east bank of the Idel in Nottinghamshire.* The Northumbrian king, by his experienced valour and veteran soldiers, supplied the disparity of his troops, and balanced the contest. The East Anglians advanced in three divisions; one of these, Rainer, the son of Redwald, led. The ancient fortune of Ethelfrith befriended him; he attacked this wing, and the prince and his warriors were destroyed. This disaster only stimulated Redwald to more determined exertions; he still outnumbered his opponent, and his other divisions were firm. Ethelfrith, unused to such resistance, and impatient for the event, rushed on the East Anglians with a dangerous impetuosity. His friends did not follow his injudicious courage; he was separated from them, and perished among the swords of the surrounding East Anglians.^f Edwin also signalized himself. Redwald not only reinstated him in Deira, but enabled him to subject Bernicia to his power. Thus the hexarchy continued. The sons of the slain usurper fled into Scotland,^g where they imbibed Christianity. Redwald ascended to the national pre-eminence which Ella, Ceawlin, and Ethelbert had possessed under the title of the Bretwalda; and, on his death, it was assumed by Edwin.^h

The three brothers who governed Essex perished in a conflict with the West Saxons.ⁱ Redwald was succeeded 623.

^d Bede, lib. ii. c. 12.

^e Ibid.

^f Hunting. lib. ii. p. 316. Sax. Chron. 27.

^g Sax. Chron. 27. Bede, lib. iii. c. 1. Polychron. 3 Gale, 229.

^h Bede, lib. ii. c. 5.

ⁱ Ibid. Flor. Wig. 231.

in East Anglia by Eorpwald. Redwald, during a visit to Ethelbert in Kent, had adopted Christianity for his religion; but returning to his own country, his wife and the East Anglian priests opposing his impressions, he attempted to unite it with the Saxon idolatry. He built an altar to Christ in the same temple where the sacrifices to Odin were performed.^j But even this strange combination of worship had the effect of drawing the attention of his East Anglians to the Christian faith.

The vicissitudes of Edwin's life had indued his mind with a contemplative temper, which made him more intellectual than any of the Anglo-Saxon kings that had preceded him, and which fitted him for the reception of Christianity. His progress towards this revolution of mind was gradual, and the steps have been clearly narrated by his countryman Bede.

He solicited in marriage Tata Edilberga, the daughter of Ethelbert in Kent. Her brother, who had abandoned his idolatry, objected to her alliance with a worshipper of Odin. Edwin promised that he would not interfere with her religion, but would allow the free exercise of it both to herself and her friends. He also intimated that if, on the examination of it by his wise men, it was found to be more holy and worthier of God than his native faith, he might himself adopt it. The Saxon princess became his wife, and Paulinus, one of those whom Gregory had last selected to assist Augustin, went with her as her priest and bishop.^k

The first care of Paulinus was to prevent the queen and the noble persons in her train from relapsing into their idolatry. His next, to convert some of the natives; but they were impenetrable to his exortions. Odin still continued to be their favourite.

At this period the life of Edwin was attacked by an assassin. Cwichhelm, the pagan king of Wessex, commissioned one of his subjects to visit Edwin's court, and watch his opportunity to stab him with a poisoned dagger. The wretch reached the royal residence on the Derwent, and introduced himself as a messenger from his king. Edwin was then about to be made a father by his queen. The name of Cwichhelm procured an introduction, and his intended assassin entered. He had abilities and firmness sufficient to begin the delivery of a fictitious message, when suddenly starting up, he clenched his weapon and rushed upon the king. The attack was so sudden that Edwin was off his guard and defenceless; but a thegn to whom he was greatly attached, Lilla, was near him: he saw the rising dagger and Edwin's danger; he had no shield; but with the impulse of a generous heart he threw himself before his king, and received in his own body

^j Ibid. lib. ii. c. 15. This altar, Bede says, lasted to the time of Aldulf, the king of East Anglia, his contemporary, who mentioned that he had seen it when a boy.

^k Bede, lib. ii. c. 9.

the blow, which it was impossible to avert. So vehement was the stroke that it went through Lilla and slightly wounded the king. The swords of the attendants were instantly drawn upon the murderer; but he stood on his defence, and was not hewn down till he had stabbed another knight with the weapon which he had withdrawn from his first victim's body.¹

On this same night his queen was delivered of her daughter Eanfleda. The king thanked his idols for her birth; and when Paulinus directed his attention to the Christian Saviour, Edwin, like Clovis, who had established in France the kingdom of the Franks, promised that he would adopt the faith he recommended, if heaven should give victory to his arms against the king, who had sent the assassin to destroy him. As a pledge of his own determination to fulfil this engagement, he consented to the baptism of the new-born babe. Eleven others of the household at the same time received the Christian rite.²

Edwin assembled his forces and advanced against Cwichhelm. His expedition was successful. But on his return from his victory into Northumbria,³ he delayed to embrace the new religion. He had become dissatisfied with his idols, but he was of that class of mind which requires the conviction of its reason before it decides on its belief. He conferred long and anxiously with Paulinus on the subject, and with his wisest nobles. He was seen frequently sitting alone, discussing with himself what he ought to do, and to which religion he should adhere.⁴ In these deliberations a letter reached him from Pope Boniface, exhorting him to abandon useless and insensible idols, who of themselves could not even change their locality; but if not moved by others, must, like a stone, remain for ever where they were. The Pontiff told him he had a living spirit within him, of which they were destitute, which would survive the dissolution of his body; and added, "Come then to the knowledge of Him who has created you; who has breathed into you this spirit of life; and who has sent his Son to redeem you from sin and every evil power; and to reward you with all the blessings of his heavenly world."⁵

Boniface at the same time sent an epistle to his queen, reminding her of the duty of interesting her husband in Christianity; and urging her to soften his prepossessions against it, and to impress upon his senses the excellence of the faith she had adopted, and the admirable nature of its future rewards.⁶

These letters were received and considered; but Paulinus found that the loftiness of the king's mind, and the natural pride of the Anglo-Saxon nation, could not be easily brought to stoop to the humility and gentleness of the Christian precepts.⁷ In this

¹ Bede, lib. ii. c. 9. Fl. Wig. 232.

² Ibid. Sax. Chron. 27.

³ Bede, lib. ii. c. 10.

⁴ Sax. Chron. 28.

⁵ Ibid. c. 11.

⁶ Bede, lib. ii. c. 9.

⁷ Bede, lib. ii. c. 12.

junction he appears to have come to the knowledge of the king's dream at the court of Redwald, and he made an ingenious use of it.

The vision at its departure was said to have laid its right hand on the king's head, and to have exclaimed: "When this sign is repeated, remember this conference, and perform your promise of obeying what will then be disclosed to you."

Paulinus, without appearing to have had any previous knowledge of this dream, one day entered the king's apartment as he was pursuing his meditations on the opposing religions; and advancing with a solemn air, imitated the action of the imaginary figure, and placed his right hand on his sovereign's head, at the same time asking him if he remembered that sign.

The king's sensibility was instantly affected. His dream and promise rushed upon his mind. He did not pause to consider that Paulinus might, from his queen or his intimate friends, have become acquainted with his own account of his believed vision. All seemed supernatural, and Paulinus to be the actual vision that had addressed him. He threw himself at the bishop's feet, who, pursuing the impression which he had excited, raised him, and exhorted him to lose no time to fulfil his thrice-repeated engagement; and reminded him that this, alone, would deliver him from the eternal evils of disobedience.*

The king, now seriously affected by the important question, summoned his witena-gemot, that, if they participated in his feelings, all might be baptized together. When they met, he proposed the new worship for the subject of their deliberations, and required each to express his feelings without reserve.

Coifi, the high priest of their idols, as the first in rank, addressed; and unless the coarseness of his mind was that of the country, must have surprised the king. His speech, from the singularity of the criterion by which he governed the faint moral feeling he possessed, deserves a literal translation. "You see, O king! what is now preached to us. I declare to you most truly what I have most certainly experienced, that the religion which we have hitherto professed contains no virtue at all, and as little utility. No one of all your court has been more attentive than I have been to the worship of our gods; and yet many have received far richer benefits, far greater honours, and have prospered more in all that men transact or pursue, than I have. But if these gods had been of any real worth, would they not in preference have assisted me who have never neglected them? If then, on due inquiry, you shall perceive that these new things which are preached to us will be better and more efficacious, let us hasten to adopt them without any delay."

* Bede, lib. ii. c. 12.

This effusion of self-interest would lead one to suspect that the effects of the Anglo-Saxon conquest of Romanized and Christianized Britain, and of the civilization, luxuries, and mental cultivation which it had, to a certain extent, exhibited to the Saxon eye, had already shaken their attachment to the rude superstitions of their ancestors; or the high priest of their national deities would not have, so feelingly, expatiated on his comparative neglect. This circumstance will contribute to account for the ease with which Christianity was established in the island.

The next speaker discovered a mind unusually enlarged for a people hitherto so unaccustomed to intellectual investigations.

"The present life of man, O king! seems to me, if compared with that after-period which is so uncertain to us, to resemble a scene at one of your wintry feasts. As you are sitting with your caldormen and thegns about you, the fire blazing in the centre, and the whole hall cheered by its warmth; and while storms of rain and snow are raging without, a little sparrow flies in at one door, roams around our festive meeting, and passes out at some other entrance. While it is among us it feels not the wintry tempest. It enjoys the short comfort and serenity of its transient stay; but then, plunging into the winter from which it had flown, it disappears from our eyes. Such is here the life of man. It acts and thinks before us; but, as of what preceded its appearance among us we are ignorant, so are we of all that is destined to come afterwards. If, then, on this momentous future, this new doctrine reveals any thing more certain or more reasonable, it is in my opinion entitled to our acquiescence."

The other witena and the royal counsellors exhibited similar dispositions. Coifi desired to hear from Paulinus an exposition of the Deity. The bishop obeyed, and the Angle priest exclaimed, "Formerly I understood nothing that I worshipped. The more I contemplated our idolatry, the less truth I found in it.

1 Bede, lib. ii. c. 13. Alfred's translation of this interesting speech presents it to us as near to its original form as we can now obtain it. "Thýrlíc me íf geseþen, Cýning, thýf andþarþe líf manna on eorþan, to ríchmetenýrre thære tíde the of uncuth íf, fpa gelíc, fpa thu æt fpaændum fítte míd thinum ealdorþmannum 7 thegnum on fínter tíde 7 fý fýn onæled, 7 ðín heall geseþmed. 7 híc ríne 7 fnofe 7 fteýríne ute. Cume ðonne an spearfa 7 hræðlice þ huf ðurh fleo 7 cume ðurh ofþre ðuru in; ðurh ofþre ut gesece. þæt he on ða tíd ðe he inne ðíþ, ne ðíþ hríned míd þý ftoþme ðæs fínterf. ac þ ðíþ an eagan hrýhtm 7 þ læfte fæt. ac he fona of fíntfa in fínter eft cýmer. sfa ðonne ðíf monna líf to medmýclum fæce ætýpeth. hæt ðær foregange. ofþe hæt ðær æfterfýlge fe ne cunnon. Forþon gif þe of nife lær ofíht cuþlice 7 geseifenlice þrínge. heo ðær fýrthe íf þ fe ðære fýlgean." p. 516.

But this new system I adopt without hesitation; for truth shines around it, and presents to us the gifts of eternal life and blessedness. Let us then, O king! immediately anathematize and burn the temples and altars which we have so uselessly venerated." On this bold exhortation he was asked who would be the first to profane the idols and their altars, and the enclosures with which they were surrounded. The zealous convert answered, "I will: as I have led the way in adoring them through my folly, I will give the example of destroying them in obedience to that wisdom which I have now received from the true God." He requested of the king weapons and a war-horse. It was a maxim of their ancient religion, that no priest should carry arms, or ride on any horse but a mare;—an interesting rule, to separate the ministers of their religion from the ferocity of war. The priest girded on a sword, and, brandishing a spear, mounted the king's horse, and rode to the idol temple. The people, without, thought him mad. He hurled his spear against the temple to profane it, and then commanded his companions to destroy all the building and its surrounding enclosures. The scene of this event was a little to the east of York, beyond the river Derwent, at a place, in Bede's time, called Godmundingaham."

Edwin and his nobility were soon afterwards baptized, in the eleventh year of his reign. In 632, he persuaded Eorpwald of East Anglia, the son of Redwald, to imitate his example. Sigebert the brother and successor of Eorpwald, not only increased the diffusion of Christianity in East Anglia, but applied so closely to the study of it as to be called by the Chronicler, "Most Learned."

Edwin reached the summit of human prosperity: a considerable part of Wales submitted to his power, and the Menavian islands; and he was the first of the Angles that subdued or defeated all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms but Kent." The internal police which prevailed through his dominions was so vigilant, that it became an aphorism to say, that a woman with her newborn infant, might walk from sea to sea without fear of insult. As in those days travelling was difficult and tedious, and no places existed for the entertainment of guests, it was an important and kind convenience to his people, that he caused stakes to be fixed in the highways where he had seen a clear spring,

* Bede, c. 13. It is still called Godmundham, or the home of the mund, or protection of the gods.

† Doctissimus. Flor. Wig. 233, 234.

‡ Flor. Wig. 233. Sax. Chron. 27. Bede, ii. c. 9, and 16. The Menavian islands were Eubonia and Mona, or Man and Anglesey.—Bede, c. 9, states, that Anglesey contained 960 hydes or families, and Man 300. The fertility of Anglesey occasioned the proverb, *Moa mam Cymry*; Mona the mother of Wales. Pryse's Pref. to Wynne's Caradoc.—The king of Gwynedd had his royal seat in it at Aberffraw, which is now a small village. Camp. Reg. 1796, p. 402.

with brazen dishes chained to them, to refresh the weary sojourner, whose fatigues Edwin had himself experienced. In another reign these would have been placed only to have been taken away; but such was the dread of his inquiring justice, or such the general affection for his virtues, that no man misused them. It is remarked by Bede, as an instance of his dignity and power, that his banner was borne before him whenever he rode out, either in peace or war. When he walked abroad, the *tufa* preceded him.*

For seventeen years he reigned victorious over his enemies, and making his subjects happy. But Edwin, with all his merit, was an imperfect character. He had admitted Christianity to his belief, but he was forty-three years old before he had adopted it. His mind and temper had therefore been formed into other habits before he allowed the new faith to affect him. He was still the Saxon warrior, and partook of the fate which so many experienced from their martial character. Five years had not elapsed after his conversion before his reign was ended violently; and the disaster resulted from his ambition. The tender years of his life had been cherished by the father of Cadwallon, the sovereign of North Wales; but when Edwin had obtained the sceptre of Ethelfrith, he waged furious war with the son of his host. We know neither what had caused him, when young, to leave his asylum in Wales, nor what occasioned now the hostility between him and Cadwallon. But as the Welsh king invaded Edwin, we may presume him to have been the aggressor. Edwin defeated Cadwallon, who had penetrated to Widdrington, about eight miles north of Morpeth.† It is with regret we read that he was not satisfied with defensive war, and did not forbear to use the rights of victory against his early friend and protector. He obeyed his resentment or his ambition in preference to his gratitude. He pursued Cadwallon into Wales, and chased him into Ireland.‡ So severely did he exercise his advantages, that

* We know, from a passage of Vegetius, corrected by Lipsius, that the *tufa* was one of the Roman ensigns; and we are informed by Isidorus, that Augustus introduced a globe upon a spear among his signs, to denote a subjected world. Lipsius is of opinion that this was the *tufa* alluded to by Bede.—*De Militia Romana*, lib. iv. c. 5. p. 162. ed. Antwerp, 1598.

† Jeffry's account of the quarrel is, that Edwin wished to wear his crown independently of the Welsh prince, who was advised to insist on his subjection, and threatened to cut off his head if he dared to crown it. Lib. xii. c. 2, 3.

‡ The 34th Triad states, that Cadwallon and his family lived seven years in Ireland, p. 7.—Jeffry annexes a pretty nurse tale to Cadwallon's exile. Sailing to Armorica, he was driven by a tempest on the island of Garnereia: the loss of his companions affected him to sickness; for three days he refused food, on the fourth he asked for venison; a day's search discovered none. To save his king, Brian cut an ample piece out of his own thigh, roasted it on a spit, and presented it to the king as genuine venison. It was greedily devoured. The wind changed, they got safe to Armorica, and Brian afterwards killed the second-sighted magician of Edwin. Lib. xii. c. 4, and 7.

the British Triads characterize him as one of the three plagues which befell the Isle of Anglesey.^a

For a few years his authority continued over Gwynedd. But this apparent triumph only flattered him into ruin. Cadwallon besought the aid of Penda, the Mercian king, who armed in his cause with all the activity of youth. The confederated kings met Edwin in Hatfield Chace in Yorkshire, on the 12th of October. As Mercia until that time had been obscure and tranquil, and an appendage to his kingdom of Deira, Edwin had no reason to apprehend any danger from this union. But the end of all battles is uncertain: the death of a commander; the mistake of a movement; a sudden unforeseen attack on some part; a skilful, even at times an accidental, evolution, has frequently made both talent and numbers unavailing. The detail of this conflict has not been transmitted, but its issue was calamitous to Edwin. He fell in his forty-eighth year, with one of his children; and most of his army perished.^b

The victors ravaged Northumbria; the hoary Penda exercised peculiar cruelty on the Christian inhabitants. Consternation overspread the country. The royal widow fled in terror, under the protection of Paulinus, and a valiant soldier, with some of her children, to her kinsman in Kent.^c

On Edwin's death, the ancient divisions of Northumbria again prevailed, and an heptarchy reappeared. His cousin Osric, the grandson of Ella, succeeded to Deira; and Eanfrid, the long exiled son of Ethelfrith, to Bernicia: both restored paganism, though Osric had been baptized. The Welsh king Cadwallon, full of projects of revenge against the nation of the Angles, continued his war. Osric rashly ventured to besiege him in a strong town,^d but an unexpected sally of Cadwallon destroyed the king

^a Matt. West. 224, in his *Combustus Urbibus et Colonis destructis*, explains the direful scourge.

^b Osfrid fell before his father. Bede, lib. ii. c. 20. Sax. Chron. 29. Gibson and Carte place the battle in Hatfield Chace. Langhorn prefers Hethfield in Derbyshire, near Cheashire, 176: others, more absurdly, have glanced on Hatfield in Herts. Near the Yorkshire town many intrenchments are to be seen. I will not aver that rats shun the town, or that the sparrows are displeas'd with Lindham in the moors below it. Gibson's Add. to Camden, 725.—The men of Powys so distinguished themselves in this battle, that they obtained from Cadwallon a boon of fourteen privileges. The Welsh call the scene of conflict Meigen. Cynddelw, cited in Owen's *Llywarch*, p. 117.

^c Eadbald received them honourably, and made Paulinus bishop of Rochester. Bede, lib. ii. c. 20. Sax. Chron. 29. He gave her the *villam maximam* Lininge (*Liming*) cum omnibus adjacentibus, in which she built a monastery. Hugo. Candid. *Cænob. Burg. Hist.* p. 37, ed. Sparke. She exhibited a novelty to the English, which produced serious consequences. She took the veil. Smith's Notes on Bede, 101. The hospitality of Eadbald seems not to have been unchequered; her apprehension of him and Oswald induced her to send her children to France, to Dagobert, their relation. Bede, c. 20.

^d Bede, lib. iii. c. 1. The town was a municipium, and was therefore in all probability York. Smith's Notes on Bede, 103.

of Deira. For a year the victor desolated Northumbria : his success struck Eanfrid with terror, and his panic hurried him to his fate. He went with twelve soldiers to sue for peace of the Welchman. Notwithstanding the sacred purpose of his visit, he was put to death.

The swords of Cadwallon and his army seemed the agents destined to fulfil their cherished prophecy. The fate of the Anglo-Saxons was now about to arrive : three of their kings had been already offered up to the shades of the injured Cymry ; an Arthur had revived in Cadwallon.—But the lying prophecies of hope, and human augury, have been the experience and the complaint of ages, and are never more fallacious than in ambition and war.

Triumphant with the fame of fourteen great battles and sixty skirmishes,* Cadwallon despised Oswald, the brother and successor of Eanfrid, who rallied the Bernician forces, and attempted to become the deliverer of his country. With humble confidence the royal youth committed his cause to the arbitration of Providence,^f and calmly awaited the decision on the banks of the Denise.^g There, Cadwallon and the flower of his army were destroyed.^h The return of the Cymry to their ancient country never became probable again.ⁱ

* Llywarch Hen, p. 111.

^f The piety of Oswald previous to the battle is expressed by Bede. To his arrayed army he loudly exclaimed : " Let us kneel to the Omnipotent Lord, the existing and the true, and unite to implore his protection against a fierce and arrogant enemy. He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our people." The army obeyed the royal mandate. Lib. iii. c. 2.

^g Camden places this battle at Dilston, formerly Devilston, on a small brook which empties into the Tine, 854, Gib. ed.—Smith, with greater probability, marks Erringburn as the rivulet on which Cadwallon perished, and the fields either of Cockley, Hallington, or Bingfield, as the scene of conflict. App. to Bode, 721. The Angles called it Hefenfield, which name, according to tradition, Bingfield bore.

^h Although Jeffry admits Oswald to have conquered at Havenfield, yet he has sent Penda to be the person defeated there ; and instead of suffering his Cadwallon to perish, inflames him with rage at the disaster, and despatches him like lightning in chase of Oswald, whom he permits Penda to kill ; Cadwallon then became possessed of all Britain. Lib. xii. c. 10, 11. Such is his history !

ⁱ The ancient bard Llywarch Hen composed in his old age an elegy on Cadwallon, whose death he lived to witness ; and thus speaks of his friend :

Fourteen great battles he fought
For Britain, the most beautiful ;
And sixty skirmishes.

Of Lloegy (England)
The scourge and the oppressor,
His hand was open :
Honour flowed from it.

Cadwallon encamped on the Yddon,
The fierce affliction of his foes.
The lion, prosperous against the Saxons.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Reign, Actions, and Death of Penda.—History of the Anglo-Saxon Octarchy to the Accession of Alfred of Northumbria.

ABOUT this time the kingdom of Mercia was not only distinctly formed, but, by the extraordinary ability of one man, 627-634. was at the same time raised to a greater eminence in the Saxon octarchy than any of its preceding kings, even those who had become Bretwaldas, had actually obtained. This man was Penda, who, though not classed among the Bretwaldas, would, if victory over the other Anglo-Saxon states had given the dignity, have possessed it more rightfully than any other. It has been mentioned that several petty adventurers of the Angles had successively penetrated into the inland districts, which were comprised in the kingdom of Mercia, and established settlements among the Britons in these regions. In 586, one of them, named Crida, also a descendant of Woden, began to attain a regal pre-eminence; but as we may infer from an intimation of Nennius, that Penda first separated Mercia from the kingdom of the northern Angles, it must have been in subordination to the king-

Cadwallon in his fame encamped
On the top of Mount Digoll :
Seven months, and seven skirmishes daily.

He led the hand of slaughter in the breach ;
Eagerly he pursued the conflict ;
Stubborn in an hundred battles,
A hundred castles he threw down.

He made the eagles full ;
Violent his wrath in the gash ;
As the water flows from the fountain,
So will our sorrow through the lingering day,
For Cadwallon !

Welsh Arch. i. p. 121 ; and Owen's Llywarch,
p. 111-117.

* Crida is the first Mercian chief that is mentioned in the documents which remain to us, with the title of king. He began to reign in 586. 3 Gale Script. p. 229. Hunt. 315. Lel. Collect. ii. p. 56. Ibid. i. 258. Leland from an old chronicle observes, vol. i. p. 211, that the Trent divided Mercia into two kingdoms, the north and the south.

dom of Deira, which formed its northern frontier.^b In 627, Penda, the grandson of Crida, succeeded to the crown at that age, when men are usually more disposed to ease than activity. He was fifty years old before he became the king of Mercia, and he reigned thirty years;^c but it was to the terror and destruction of several of the other Anglo-Saxon kings. Mercia had neither displayed power nor ability before his accession; but Penda's military talents and uncommon vigour speedily raised it to a decided and overwhelming preponderance. In the year after he attained the crown, we find him in a battle with Cynegils, and his son Cwichelm, in Wessex, at Cirencester. The conflict was undecided during the whole day, and in the ensuing morning the war was ended by a treaty.^d Five years afterwards, at the age of sixty, he joined Cadwallon, and defeated Edwin of Northumbria, in that battle in which this prince was slain.^e

The piety of Oswald was sincere, and influenced his conduct; he obtained a bishop from Icolm-kill to instruct his rude subjects; and he earnestly laboured to advance their moral tuition. His own example strengthened his recommendations on that essential duty, without which all human talents, and all human aggrandizement, are unavailing decorations. In the festival of Easter a silver dish was laid before him, full of dainties. While the blessing was about to be pronounced, the servant appointed to relieve the poor, informed the king that the street was crowded with the needy, soliciting alms. Struck by the contrast, that while he was feasting with luxury, many of his subjects, beings of feelings, desires, and necessities like his own, were struggling with poverty; remembering the benevolent precepts of Christianity, and obeying the impulse of a kind temper, he ordered the food, untouched, to be given to the supplicants, and the silver dish to be divided among them.^f The beggar for one instant participated in the enjoyments of a king, and rank was, in that fierce and proud day, admonished to look with compassion on the misery which surrounds it.

Oswald had the satisfaction of perceiving the blessings of Christianity diffused into Wessex. A spirit so lowly and charitable as his own, must have powerfully felt the beauties of its

^b Nennius, p. 117. "Penda primus separavit regnum Merclorum a regno Nordorum." Ceorl acceded between Crida and Penda. Rad. Polych. p. 229. It was Ceorl's daughter Quenburga that Edwin married in his exile. Bede, lib. ii. c. 14.

^c Flor. Wig. dates his accession in 627, p. 232. Penda was the eleventh descendant from Woden, by his son Wihlmg, *ibid.* and Hunt. 316.

^d Hunt. 316. Sax. Chron. 29. The pacification is mentioned by Flor. Wig. 233; and Matt. West. 217.

^e See before, p. 242.

^f Bede, lib. iii. c. 6. Oswald was *Nepos Edwini regis ex sorore Ache. ibid.*—As he united Deira and Bernicia, the Saxon states formed, during his reign, an hexarchy.

benign morality. He stood sponsor for Cynegils, who received baptism. The nation followed the example of the king.^a

642. While Oswald was benefiting his age by a display of those gentle virtues which above all others are fitted to meliorate the human character, the Mercian king was preparing to attack him. His invasion of Northumbria was fatal to the less warlike Oswald, who fell at Oswestry in Shropshire, in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and the ninth of his reign. Oswald breathed his last sigh in prayer for his friends.^b

As ferocious as he was daring and restless, Penda caused the head and limbs of Oswald to be severed from his body, and exposed on stakes.^c He proceeded through Northumbria with devastations, and finding himself unable to carry the royal city of Bebbanburh by storm, he resolved to destroy it by fire. He demolished all the villages in its vicinity, and encompassing the place with a great quantity of the wood and thatch of the ruins, he surrounded the city with flames. But the wind, which was raising the fiery shower above the city walls, suddenly shifted. The element of destruction, most fatal to man, was driven back from its expected prey on those who had let it loose, and the sanguinary besiegers, in panic or in prudence, abandoned the place. The Northumbrians afterwards made Oswy, the brother of Oswald, their king.

Penda's next warfare was against Wessex. Cenwalh, the son of Cynegils, had offended him by repudiating his sister. 643. He invaded and expelled him; and Cenwalh was an exile in Wessex for three years, before he could regain his crown.^d

In the year after Oswald's death, the victorious Penda turned his arms against East Anglia, then in a state of unambitious and inoffensive tranquillity. But this disposition only tempted the ambition of the Mercian. In this country, Sigebert had succeeded the son of Redwald, whom at one time fearing, he had fled into France for safety, and there became a Christian, and attached himself to study. Attaining the crown of East Anglia, he established that school in his dominions, which has not only the distinction of being the first, after that at Canterbury, which the Anglo-Saxons established to teach reading and the literature to which it leads, but also of being supposed to have formed the original germ of the University of Cambridge.^e Sigebert built

^a Bede, lib. iii. c. 7.

^b Bede, lib. iii. c. 9.

^c Bede, lib. ii. c. 12. Oswy, his successor, removed and interred them, *ibid.* But the Saxon Chronicler mentions that his hands were at Bobbanburh in his time, p. 31. They were kept as relics.

^d Bede, lib. iii. c. 16.

^e Bede, lib. iii. c. 7. Flor. Wig. 237. Sax. Chron. 32.

^f Bede's account is, that desiring to imitate what he had seen well arranged in Gaul, he instituted, with the help of Felix from Kent, a school in which youth

also a monastery; and preferring devotion, letters, and tranquillity, to state, he resigned his crown to his kinsman Ecgric, who was reigning in a part of East Anglia, assumed the tonsure, and retired into the monastery, which he had founded. On Penda's invasion, the East Anglians, fearful lest their reigning monarch should be unequal to repel his superior numbers, drew Sigebert by force from his monastery, and compelled him to head their army, from a belief that it would prosper under the guidance of so good a man. He led them to the shock, but disclaiming all weapons of destruction, he used only a wand of command. His skill was excelled by the veteran ability of Penda. Both the East Anglian princes fell, and their army was dispersed.^m

The ambition and the success of Penda were not yet terminated. In 654, he marched into East Anglia, against Anna, the successor of Sigebert, and Ecgric, and destroyed him.ⁿ His crime was unpardonable in the eyes of Penda. He had hospitably received Cenwalch.^o

In that warlike age, when every man was a soldier, no conquest was permanent, no victor secure. Penda lived to exhibit an instance of this truth. When Oswy assumed the government of Bernicia on the death of Oswald, he placed Oswin, son of Osric, the kinsman of the applauded Edwin, over Deira. Oswin, of a tall and graceful stature, distinguished himself for his humanity and generosity, but could not allay the jealousy of Oswy, who soon became eager to destroy the image he had set up. Oswin shrunk from a martial conflict, and concealed himself, with one faithful soldier, Tondhere, his foster-brother, in the house of Earl Hunwald, his assured friend. This man betrayed him to Oswy, and suffered him to be murdered.^p Oswin had given to his betrayer the possessions he enjoyed. The soldiers of Oswy, whom he guided, entered the house in the night. Tondhere offered himself to their fury, to save his lord and friend; but had only the consolation to perish with him.^q

should be instructed in letters. Felix gave him teachers and masters from Kent, lib. iii. c. 18. Dr. Smith has given a copious essay on the question, whether this was the foundation of the University at Cambridge, and preceded that of Oxford in antiquity. He considers himself to have shown "feliciter," that the school of Sigebert was planted at Cambridge; but admits that the posterior account, which Peter Blesensis has left of Joffrid's teaching near Cambridge, after the Norman conquest, is an "objectio validissima," which can hardly be answered. On the whole, he thinks, that if he has not identified the Cambridge University with the school of Sigebert, he has at least shown, that the fables about Alfred's founding Oxford are to be entirely rejected. App. No. 14, p. 721-740.

^m Bede, lib. iii. c. 18.

ⁿ Flor. Wig. 240. Sax. Chron. 23. Anna was the son of Eni, of royal descent. His brother Adelhere acceded on Anna's fall; but in his second year was slain by the army of Oswy. The third brother, Edewold, a pious prince, succeeded. On his death, Adulph, the son of Anna, was crowned. Hist. Elicn. MSS. Cott. Lib. Nero. A. 15; and 1 Dugdale, 86.

^o Bede, lib. iii. cap. 18, and c. 7.

^p Bede, lib. iii. c. 14.

^q Dugd. Mon. i. 333.

Oswy was, however, destined to free the Anglo-Saxon octarchy from Penda. When this aged tyrant was preparing to
 655. invade his dominions, he sued long and earnestly for peace in vain. At the age of eighty, the pagan chief, encouraged by his preceding successes, still courted the chances and the tumult of battle. Rejecting the negotiations repeatedly offered, he hastened with the veterans whom he had long trained, to add Oswy to the five monarchs whose funeral honours recorded him as their destroyer. With trembling anxiety Oswy met him, with his son Alfred, and a much inferior force; but the battle is not always given to the strong, nor the race to the swift. Penda had filled up the measure of his iniquities, and Providence released the country from a ruler, whose appetite for destruction age could not diminish. He rushed into the battle with Oswy confident of victory, but the issue was unexpectedly disastrous to him. Penda, with thirty commanders perished before the enemy, whose greatest strength they had subdued, and whose present feebleness they despised. The plains of Yorkshire witnessed the emancipation of England.^r Oidilwald, the son of Oswald, was with the forces of Penda, but not desirous to assist him. When the battle began, he withdrew from the conflict, and waited calmly for the event in a distant position. This secession may have produced a panic among the troops of Penda, or by occupying the jealous attention of part of them, diminished the number which acted against Oswy. The principal leaders of the Mercians fell in defending Penda, and the country happening to be overflowed, more perished by the waters than by the sword.

By the death of Oswin the hexarchy returned; by the death of Penda, a pentarchy appeared; for the kingdom of Mercia was so weakened by the result of this battle, that it fell immediately into the power of Oswy, who conquered also part of Scotland.

Penda, during his life, had appointed one of his sons, Peada to be king of that part of his dominions and conquests which were called Middle Angles; a youth of royal demeanour and great merit. Peada had visited Oswy in Northumbria, and solicited his daughter, Alchfleda, in marriage. To renounce his idols and embrace Christianity, was made the condition of her hand. As his father was such a determined supporter of the ancient Saxon superstition, and was of a character so stern, the princess must have inspired her suitor with an ardent affection to have made him balance on the subject. Peada submitted to hear the Christian preachers; and their three great topics, the resurrection, the hope of future immortality, and the promise of a heavenly kingdom,

^r Sax. Chron. 33. Bede, lib. iii. c. 24. Winwidfeld, near Leeds, was the theatre of the conflict. Camden, Gib. 711.—Bede does not explicitly assert that Penda had three times the number of forces, but that it was so reported.

inclined him to adopt the religion which revealed them. The persuasions of Alfred, the eldest and intelligent brother of the princess, who had married his sister Cyneburga, completed the impression. He decided to embrace Christianity, even though Alchfeda should be refused to him. He was baptized with all his earls and knights, who had attended him, and with their families, and took four priests home with him to instruct his people.* The Saxon mind appears to have then reached that state of activity and judgment, which had become dissatisfied with its irrational idolatry, and was thus become fitted to receive the belief of Christianity, as soon as they were influenced to attend steadily to its interesting and enlightening truths. The exertions of the ecclesiastics were successful. Every day, many Mercians, both nobles and laity, became converted.

The mind of Penda himself had seemed at last to lessen its aversion to the new faith before his fall. He allowed it to be preached in his own dominions to those who chose to hear it; and he took a fair distinction on the subject. He permitted them to believe, if they practised what they were taught. He is stated to have hated and despised those who adopted Christianity, but did not perform its injunctions; exclaiming that those miserable creatures were worthy only of contempt, who would not obey the God in whom they believed. This important revolution of opinions occurred to Mercia about two years before Penda's death.† His character was violent and ambitious, but his mind was strong, decided, and of a superior energy. If literature and Christianity had improved it, his talents would have placed him high among the most applauded of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

Penda's death led to the complete conversion of Mercia. Oswy, after his victory, reigned three years over it, and gave to his son-in-law Peada the sovereignty of the Southern Mercians, whom the Trent divided from the Northern. To read that Mercia beyond the Trent contained but seven thousand families, and in its other part only five thousand,‡ leads us to the opinion, that its successes under Penda had not arisen from the numbers of its population, but rather from his great military abilities and powerful capacity. From his reign it advanced with a steady and rapid progress. Christianity spread through it with great celerity after Penda's death. Its two first bishops were Irishmen; and the third, though born an Angle, was educated in Ireland.

In the spring after his father's death, Peada was assassinated at his Easter festival; and, with the report preserved by the chroniclers, that it was from the treachery of his queen.‡ An-

* Bede, lib. iii. c. 21. The names of the four priests were Cidd, Adda, Betti, and Diuma. The three first were Angles, the last an Irishman, *ibid.*

† Bede, lib. iii. c. 21.

‡ Bede, lib. iii. c. 24.

§ See Bede, c. 24; Sax. Chron. 33; and Malmsh. p. 27. It is not uninteresting to

other tradition, but of slender authority, ascribes it to the arts of her mother, who was still a pagan.^v It may have arisen from the resentments of those who lamented the fall of the ancient idolatry, which Peada had first subverted in Mercia. He had laid the foundation of the celebrated monastery at Peterborough before he fell, which his brother completed.^s

The chieftains of Mercia had submitted to the Northumbrian king with an impatient reluctance. They concealed Wulfhere, another of Penda's children, among themselves, till a fit occasion arose of using his name and rights: and after Peada's death, three of them placed Wulfhere at their head, assembled in arms, disclaimed the authority of Oswy, expelled his officers, and made their young leader their king. They succeeded in establishing the independence of their country.⁷

Wessex now began to emerge into activity and power. Her
650. king, Cenwalch, defeated the Britons, who had imagined, that, after his defeat by Penda, he would prove an easy conquest.^a Pen in Somersetshire was the place of their conflict: the Britons attacked with an impetuosity that was at first successful, but at length were defeated, and chased, with a slaughter from which they never recovered, to Pedridan on the Parrett.^a This locality would seem to intimate, that it was the Britons of Cornwall and Devonshire who had principally invaded. Animated by this success, Cenwalch sought to revenge on Mercia and Wulfhere the disgrace which he had suffered from his father. A struggle ensued, in which, after some reverses, the Mercians prevailed, and part of Wessex was subjected to the authority of the Mercian king.^b

read how characteristically an ancient monk expresses the incident. "The enemy of the human race instigated against him *that nature*, by which he deprived us of the joys of Paradise; to wit, his wife Alflæda, who betrayed and slew him." Hug. Cand. p. 4. The Norman Rhimed Chronicle also ascribes the crime to the queen:

Alflæd la roine engine taunt doluersment,
Ke ele sun barun tuat par graunt traisement.

Ed. Sparke, 243.

^v Speed quotes Rob. Swapham to this effect, but I have not met with the passage. The Register of Peterborough, Ap. Dugd. i. p. 63, uses the phrase, *indigna et immatura morte*, without designating the person, whom Ingulf also omits. Huntingdon has merely, *ipso occiso*, p. 317.

^a Chron. Petrib. p. 1. It was called Medenhamstede, because there was a well there named *Medes-wel*. Sax. Chron. 33.

⁷ Bede, lib. iii. c. 24.

^b Huntingdon, lib. ii. p. 317, et facta est super progeniem Bruti plaga insanabilis in die illa. *Ib.*

^a "Et persecuti sunt eos usque ad locum qui Pederydan nuncupatur." Ethelwerd, p. 216.—So the Saxon Chronicle, by *geflymde oth Pedridan*, p. 39.—There is a place called the Parret, in Somersetshire, the entrance of which was called Pedridan muth, perhaps the Aber Peryddon of Golyddan.

^b *Ib.*, p. 216.—The issue of this battle has been differently stated. Ethelwerd, 837, makes Cenwalch take Wulfhere prisoner at *Æscodan*, or Aston, near

Essex about this period restored Christianity, through the instrumentality of Oswy. Sigeberht its king came frequently into Northumbria, and Oswy used to reason with him, that those things could not be gods which the hands of men had made; that wood and stone could not be the materials of which Deity subsisted: these were destroyed by the axe and by fire, or were often subjected to the vilest occasions. As Sigeberht admitted these obvious truths, Oswy described the real subject of human worship to be, that Eternal and Almighty Being, to us invisible, and in majesty incomprehensible; yet who had deigned to create the heavens, and the earth, and the human race; who governs what he framed, and will judge the world with parental equity. His everlasting seat was not in perishing metals, but in the heavens; in those regions where he had promised to give endless recompense to those who would study and do the will of their Lord and Maker. The frequent discussion of these topics at length conquered the resisting minds of Sigeberht and his friends. After consulting together, they abandoned their idolatry; and the king adopted the Christian faith as the religion of Essex.^c

Sussex embraced the opportunity of Cenwalch's exile to terminate its subordination to Wessex. In 645 Penda had expelled Cenwalch from Wessex; and in 648 we find Edilwalch commencing his reign as king of Sussex.^d He submitted to the predominance and courted the friendship of Wulfhere; and in 661 received the Isle of Wight, and the Meanwara district in Hampshire, part of the spoils of Wessex, from the bounty of his conqueror. Sussex at this period contained seven thousand families, but remained attached to its idol worship. But Wulfhere persuaded Edilwald to be baptized; and by the exertions of Wilfrid, the bishop most distinguished in his day, the little kingdom, about A. D. 688, exchanged its paganism for Christianity.^e Essex also submitted afterwards to Wulfhere,^f who became now the most

Wallingford, in Berks.—The Saxon Chronicle, 39, and Flor. Wigorn. 241, as far as they express themselves, imply the contrary.—Malmsh. says, the Mercian was at first gravitur afflictus by the loss, but afterwards avenged himself, p. 27.—The expressions of Bede, that Wulfhere gave the Isle of Wight and a province in West Saxony to the king of Sussex in one part of his life, lib. iv. c. 13, and that Cenwalch, during Wulfhere's life, was gravissimis regni sui damnis impiissime ab hostibus afflictus, lib. iii. c. 7, fully countenance the idea, that if Cenwalch at first prevailed, the ultimate triumphs were enjoyed by Wulfhere.

^c Bede, lib. iii. c. 22. This was in 653.

^d Matt. West. p. 224, mentions the expulsion of Cenwalch. So Floren. Wig. p. 237.—In 648 the exiled monarch returned. Flor. Wig. 238.—In 661, Matt. West. places the 13th year of Aethelwald's reign in Sussex, p. 232.

^e Bede, lib. iv. c. 13. Sax. Chron. p. 39. The annotator on Bede remarks, that the memorial of this province remains still in the names of the hundreds of Meansbrough, Eastmean, Westmean, and Mansbridge. Smith's Bede, p. 155.

^f Bede, lib. iii. c. 30.—Hugo Candidus names Sigher as the king of Sussex subdued by Wulfhere. Canob. Burg. Hist. p. 7 and 8.—This is a misnomer. Sigher reigned with Sebbi in Essex at this period. That Surrey was also in subjection to

important of the Anglo-Saxon sovereigns, though he is not mentioned with the title of Bretwalda, which seems to have been discontinued after this period. Perhaps the conjecture on this dignity which would come nearest the truth, would be, that it was the walda or ruler of the Saxon kingdoms against the Britons, while the latter maintained the struggle for the possession of the country; a species of Agamemnon against the general enemy, not a title of dignity or power against each other. If so, it would be but the war-king of the Saxons in Britain, against its native chiefs.

Oswy is ranked by Bede, the seventh, as Oswald had been the sixth, of the kings who preponderated in the Anglo-Saxon octarchy.^a He died in this year.^b His greatest action was the deliverance of the Anglo-Saxons from the oppressions of Penda; he also subdued the Picts and Scots; but the fate of the amiable Oswin, whom he destroyed, shades his memory with a cloud.^c Alfred, his eldest son, who had assisted to gain the laurels of his fame in the field of Winwid, was rejected from the succession, for his illegitimacy, and the younger Ecgfrid was placed over the united kingdoms of Northumbria.^d

On the death of Cenwalch, his widow, Saxburga, assumed the sceptre of Wessex. She wielded it with courage and intelligence; she augmented her army with new levies, and encouraged her veterans. The submissive were rewarded by her clemency; to the enemy a firm countenance was displayed;^e but the proud barbarians of Wessex disdained even a government of wisdom in the form of a woman;^f and for ten years the nobles shared the government. In the first part of this interval, Æscuin, son of Cenfusus, a prevailing noble, descended from Cerdic, is mentioned to have ruled.^g He

Wulfhere, appears from a charter in the register of Chertsey Abbey, in which Frithwald, the founder, styles himself "Provinciæ Surrianorum subregulus regis Wlfarii Mercianorum." This was in 666. MSS. Cotton. Lib. Vitel. A. 13. This Frithwald is called king.

^a Bede, lib. ii. c. 5. Sax. Chron. p. 7.

^b Sax. Chron. 40. Chron. Abb. Petri de Burgo, p. 2.

^c If Oswin's character has not been too favourably drawn, his death was a great loss to his contemporaries. His tall and handsome person was adorned by a disposition unfrequent in his age; affatu jucundus, moribus civilis, omnibus manu largus, regum humilimus, amabilis omnibus. Flor. Wig. 237. To the same purport Bede, lib. iii. c. 14, and Matt. West. 234.

^d Reprobato notho—factione optimatum quamquam senior. Malms. 20, 21.—Ecgfrid had resided as a hostage with the Mercian queen at the time of Penda's fall. Bede, lib. iii. c. 24.

^e Malms. 14. She reigned for one year. Sax. Chron. 41.

^f "Indignantibus regni magnatibus expulsa est a regno, nolentibus sub sexu feminæ militare." Matt. West. 236.

^g There is a seeming contradiction on this point between Bede and the Saxon Chronicle. Bede, lib. iii. c. 12, says, that after Cenwalch's death, acceperunt subreguli regnum gentis, et divisum inter se tenuerunt annis circiter decem.—Flor. Wig. 246, mentions this passage, but mentions also the opposite account of the

led a powerful force against Wulfhere, the king of Mercia; a battle, in which the mutual destruction was more conspicuous than the decision, ensued at Bedwin in Wilts. It is worth our while, says the moralizing historian, to observe how contemptible are the glorious wars and noble achievements of the great. Both these contending kings, whose vanity and pomp hurled thousands of their fellow-creatures to their graves, scarcely survived the battle a year.* Within a few months Wulfhere died of a natural disease; and in 670 Æscuin followed. Kentwin is denominated his successor;† and Ethelred, the surviving son of Penda, acceded to the crown of Mercia, and ravaged Kent.‡

Ecgfrid, who was governing in Northumbria, had repulsed, with great slaughter, an invasion of the Picts. Their general, Bernhaeth, fell, and the corpses of his followers stopped the current of the river which flowed near the scene of ruin.§ In 679 Ecgfrid invaded Mercia, though Ethelred had married his sister. The Mercians met him on the Trent, and, in the first battle, his brother Ælfrin fell. More calamitous warfare impended from the exasperation of the combatants, when the aged Theodore interposed. His function of archbishop derived new weight from his character, and he established a pacification between the related combatants. A pecuniary mulct compensated for the fate of Ælfrin, and the retaliation in human blood was prevented.¶

A destructive pestilence began to spread through Britain, from its southern provinces to the northern regions, and equally afflicted Ireland in 684.‡ The calamity extended to Wales, and many of the natives emigrated to Bretagne. Cadwaladyr, the son of Cadwallon, accompanied them. He was kindly received by one of the Breton kings, and partook of his hospitality, till devotion or an aversion to the military vicissitudes of the day, induced him to abandon his royal dignity in Wales, and to visit Rome. He was the last of the Cymry who pretended to the sovereignty of the island.¶

Anglica Chronica. The Saxon Chronicle, after Saxburga's year, places Æscuin in 674, and Kentwin in 676, both within the ten years of Bede, p. 41, 44. I cannot reject the evidence of Bede, who was born at this time. Perhaps Æscuin and Kentwin were the most powerful of the nobles, and being of the race of Cerdic, enjoyed the supremacy. Ina's charter authenticates Kentwin's reign. See it in *Malmsh. de Ant. Glas.* 3 Gale, 311. Alfred, in his *Chronological Fragment*, inserted in his *Bede*, mentions both Æscuin and Kentwin. *Walker's Alfred. Mag. App.* p. 199.

* *H. Hunting.* p. 318. *Sax. Chron.* 45.

† *Sax. Chron.* 44. *Ethelward*, 537.

‡ *Sax. Chron.* 44. The *Chronicon of Peterborough* dates the invasion of Kent in 677, p. 3.

§ *Malmsh. Gest. Pontif.* lib. iii. p. 261. Eddius fills two rivers with the bodies, over which the victors passed "sicis pedibus." *Vit. Wilf.* c. 19, p. 61, ed. Gale.

¶ *Bede*, lib. iv. c. 21. *Malmsh.* 20, 28. *Sax. Chron.* 44. Ecgfrid had conquered Lincolnshire from Wulfhere before Ethelred's accession, *Bede*, lib. ii. c. 12.

‡ *Bede*, lib. iii. c. 27.

¶ *Jeffry, Brit. Hist.* lib. xii. c. 17, 18. This work and the *Brit. Tynille* and *Brit. G. Ab. Arthur* end here. The death of Cadwaladyr is the termination of those

When Cadwaladyr died at Rome, Alan, the king of Bretagne, sent his son Ivor, and his nephew, Inyr, with a powerful fleet, to regain the crown which Cadwaladyr had abandoned or lost. Ivor was at first so successful, that he defeated the Saxons, and took Cornwall, Devonshire, and Somersetshire. But Kent-
 681. win met him with the West Saxon power, and, chasing him to the sea, again disappointed the hopes of Cymry.^a Rodri
 698. Maelwynawc assumed the pennaduriaeth, or sovereignty of the Cymry, on Ivor's departure for Rome.^v

The restless Ecgfrid soon turned his arms upon Ireland. This
 684. nation, although by some of its tribes occasionally at variance with the Welsh, had always continued in strict amity with the English;^w but this peaceful forbearance was no protection from the avarice of power. Their country was miserably ravaged by Boerht, the Northumbrian general; the lands of Bregb were plundered, and many churches and monasteries were destroyed. The islanders defended their domestic lairs with valour, and the Angles retreated.

It is at this period that Ireland appears to have been conspicuous for the literature of some of her monastic seminaries. Bede states, that many of the noble and middle classes of the English left their country, and went to Ireland, either to study the Scriptures or to pass a more virtuous life. Some connected themselves with the monasteries, and preferred passing from the abode of one master to that of another, applying themselves to reading. The Irish received them all most hospitably, supplied them

British Chronicles, which contain the fabled history of Arthur and his predecessors; and they close analogously to their general character; for the voice of an angel is made use of to deter Cadwaladyr from returning to Britain. The reason added for the celestial interference is, because the Deity did not choose that the Britons should reign in the island before the time predicted by Merlin. The same voice ordered him to Rome, and promised that his countrymen should, from the merit of their faith, again recover the island, when the time foretold was arrived!! Jeffry, lib. xii. c. 17. Brut. Tys. and Brut. Arth. p. 386.

^a Brut. y Saeson and the Brut. y Tywysogion, p. 468-470. Sax. Chron, 45. Wynne's History of Wales is not a translation of Caradoc. It is composed from his work, with many additions badly put together.

^v Brut. y Tywys, p. 471. Dr. Owen's biographical notice of Cadwaladyr may be read as a good summary of the chief incidents that concern this celebrated Welsh prince. Cadwaladyr, son of Cadwallon ab Cadwan, succeeded to the nominal sovereignty of Britain, in the year 660. Disheartened at the progress of the Saxons, he went to Rome in 686, and died in 703. With him the title of king of the Britons ceased, and such parts as were not conquered by the Saxons were governed by different chiefs, as Stratelyde, Cornwall, and Wales. In the Triads he is styled one of the three princes who wore the golden bands, being emblems of supreme authority, which were worn round the neck, arms, and knees. He was also called one of the three blessed kings, on account of the protection and support afforded by him to the fugitive Christians, who were dispossessed by the Saxons. There is a church dedicated to him in Mona, and another in Denbighshire. Camb. Biog. p. 34.

^w Bede characterizes the Irish as a people innoxiam et nationi Anglorum semper amicitiam, lib. iv. c. 26.—Malmesbury describes them as a "genus hominum innocens, genuina simplicitate, nil unquam mali moliens," p. 20.

with food without any recompense, and gave them books to read, and gratuitous tuition.¹

In the next year, Egfrid invaded the Picts with the same purpose of depredation; but a feigned flight of the natives seduced him into a defile. At Drumnechtan the fierce assault of patriotism was made, and Egfrid perished with most of his troops.² The body of Egfrid was taken to Icolmkill, or the celebrated isle of St. Columba, and buried there.³

This disastrous expedition humbled the power of Northumbria.⁴ The Irish and Scotch immediately disclaimed its predominance, and some of the Welsh princes obtained their independence. This kingdom, which in the hands of Ethelfrid, Edwin, and Oswy, had menaced the others with subjection, was formidable to its contemporaries no more. The kings of Wessex and Mercia obscured it by their superior power, and it precipitated its own fall by incessant usurpations and civil wars.⁵

¹ Bede, lib. iii. c. 27. He mentions two of these monasteries by name, Paegna-læch and Rathmelsigi. The studies pursued in Ireland about this time are implied rather than expressed, in the tumid and not easily comprehensible epistle of Aldhelm, to be the geometrical and grammatical arts, logic, rhetoric, and the Scriptures. I can hardly guess what he means by his "his ternaque omnisas physicam artis machinas." Ush. Syll. p. 39.

² Bede, lib. iv. c. 26. The annals of Ulster thus mention his death: "Battle of Drumnechtan, on the 20th May, where Egfrid M'Offa was killed with a vast number of his men. He burnt Tula-aman Dunella." Ant. Celt. Nor. p. 59.

³ San. Dun., p. 5, calls the place of battle Nechtanesmere, which corresponds with the Drumnechtan of the Irish Chronicle.

⁴ Thirteen years afterwards, Beorht, endeavouring to revenge the calamity by another invasion, also perished, Bede, lib. v. p. 24.—Ann. Ulst. 59. Sax. Chron. 49. Hunting. 337.

⁵ Bede remarks the fines angustiores of Northumbria after Egfrid, lib. iv. c. 26. It is about this time that the authentic chronicles of the Welsh begin. Four of them are printed in the Welsh Archaeology, vol. ii. The Brut y Tywysogion begins with the year 680, and ends about 1290, p. 390-467. This is printed from the Red Book of Hergest. The Brut y Saeson, which is in the Cotton Library, begins, after a short introduction, in 683, and in 1197. Another copy of the Brut y Tywysogion, printed from MSS. in Wales, begins 660, and ends 1196. Some extracts are also printed from another Chronicle, called from the name of a former transcriber, Brut Jean Brechfa, beginning 686. These last three Chronicles occupy from p. 468 to p. 582. These Chronicles refer to Caradoc of Llancarvan, who lived in the twelfth century, as their author. As they contain facts and dates not always the same in all, it is not probable that Caradoc wrote them all. Their variations seem to have arisen from the imitations or additions of the ancient transcribers, who have brought them down below the times of Caradoc. Their general character is that of plain simple chronicles, in an humble, artless style, but seldom correct in their chronology. They scarcely ever agree with the Saxon dates.

CHAPTER IX.

Reign of Alfred of Northumbria and his Successors.—History of Wessex to the Death of Ina.

THE important improvements, which always occur to a nation, 684—728. when its sovereign is attached to literature, give peculiar consequence to the reign of Alfred, who succeeded his brother Ecgfrid in Northumbria. He was the eldest, but not the legitimate, son of Oswy, and was therefore prevented by the nobles of his country from ascending the throne, to which they elected his younger brother. This exclusion kept him several years from the royal dignity, but was beneficial both to his understanding and his heart. His name alone would interest us, as the precursor of the greater sovereign, his namesake; but the similarity of his intellectual taste and temper, with the pursuits and sentiments of the celebrated Alfred of Wessex, makes his character still more interesting. We cannot avoid remembering the lives and pursuits of those eminent men whose names we may happen to hear; and as Alfred of Northumbria appears in Bede as the first literary king among the Anglo-Saxons, we may reasonably suppose, that his example and reputation had no small influence, in suggesting the love of study, and exerting the emulation of the distinguished son of Ethelwulf.

Alfred, of Northumbria, whom Eddius distinguishes by the epithet of the most wise, had been educated by the celebrated Wilfrid.^a He had governed Deira under his father Oswy, and had contributed to the defeat of Penda. He had cultivated a friendship with Peada, and had married his sister; and by inspiring Peada with a favourable impression of Christianity, had occasioned its establishment in Mercia.^b

Rejected by the great from the crown of his father, he did not attempt to raise the sword of military competition against his brother: he submitted to the decision of the Northumbrian Witenas, and retired contentedly to a private life. Learned ecclesiastics from Ireland had given to his father and country what intellectual information they had acquired. The larger tuition of Wilfrid,

^a Bede, lib. iii. c. 25. He remunerated his preceptor by a bishopric, in the second year of his reign. Ibid. lib. v. c. 19.—Eddius Vit. Wilf. c. 43.—The Saxon MS. in the Cotton Library, Vesp. D. 14. p. 132, spells the name Alfred. Bede calls him Alfridus.

^b Bede, lib. iii. c. 21. c. 24. He reigned under his father.—Eddius, c. 7. c. 10. So Bede implies, c. 25.

who had visited Rome, and studied in France,^c had inspired him with a fondness for knowledge which now became his happiness. He devoted himself to piety and literature, and voluntarily retired into Ireland, that he might pursue his unambitious studies.^d For fifteen years he enjoyed a life of philosophic tranquillity and progressive improvement. The books reserved by the Christians engrossed so much of his attention, that one of the epithets applied to him was, "most learned in the Scriptures."^e

He exhibited to the world this example of contented privacy till the death of Egfrid raised him to the throne without a crime. The catastrophe of his brother had taught most impressively the folly of military ambition, and the national as well as personal comforts of the peaceful and intellectual virtues. He governed the kingdom, to which he was now invited, with the same virtue with which he had resigned it; he derived his happiness from the quiet and enjoyments of his people;^f he encouraged literature, received with kindness the Asiatic travels of Arculfus, who had visited Greece, Syria, and Egypt, and which had been written by Adamnan, liberally rewarded the author, and by his bounty caused the composition to be imparted to others.^g

The love of Alfred for knowledge became known beyond the precincts of Northumbria, and attracted the attention of the celebrated Aldhelm. The subjects chosen by the West-Saxon scholar, for the entertainment of the king, show the extent of the royal attainments. "On the number seven; collections from the flowers of the Bible, and the tenets of philosophers; on the nature of insensible things; and on the prosody and metre of poetry."^h

^c Bede, lib. iii. c. 25.

^d "In insulis Scotorum ob studium literarum exulabat—in regionibus Scotorum lectioni operam dabat—ipse ob amorem sapientiæ spontaneum passus exilium." *Bede Vita S. Cudberti*, c. 24.—"In Hyberniam seu vi seu indignatione accesserat, ibi et ab odio germani tutus, et magno otio literis imbutus, omni philosophia composuerat animum." *Malmabury*, 21.—"Viro undecimumque doctissimo. Bede, *Hist. lib. v. c. 12*.—*Rex sapientissimus. Eddius Vit. Wilf. c. 43*.—The wise king of the Saxons. *Annals Ulster*, p. 60.

^e Bede, *Hist. Abbat. Wirenuth*, p. 300.—"Alcuin describes him thus: Qui æcrie fuerat studis imbutus ab annis ætatis primæ, valido sermone sophista acer et ingenio, idem rex simul atque magister. *De Pont.* 718.

^f "Per decem et novem annos summa pace et gaudio provinciam præfuit: nihil unquam præter in peraratione magni Wilfridi quod livor edax dignè carere posset admittens." *Malma*, 21. *Alcuin*, p. 722.

^g Bede, lib. v. c. 15. Bede calls the book *De locis sanctis multis utilissimum*. Arculfus surveyed Jerusalem, Palestine, Damascus, Constantinople, Alexandria, and the Archipelago. Returning home he was driven by a tempest on Britain; Adamnan received him, listened eagerly to his conversations, and immediately committed them to writing. Bede, *ibid.* This work of Adamnan is apud Mabillon, *Act. Ben. Sæc. iii. part. ii. p. 502*. There is a tract of Bede, *De locis sanctis*, taken from this of Adamnan, printed p. 315, of Smith's edition.

^h *Malsb. Pontif.* p. 342.

Yet, though attached to the studies of the clergy, he was not their indiscriminating instrument. He had made his early instructor, Wilfrid, a bishop; but when, in his opinion, that prelate was unduly pressing points, however conscientiously, which he disapproved of, he remained immovable in what he thought was right, and Wilfrid quitted his dominions.¹ We cannot now fairly judge of the subjects of their difference. They were on ecclesiastical privileges; but as Wilfrid, though an able man, was of an ambitious character, inclining to turbulence, and fond of domination, it is probable that Alfred was not unduly maintaining the fair liberty of his own judgment. The value of perseverance in any opinion depends upon its wisdom; but the principle, in men of his character, is always that of well-meaning rectitude.

The pope, John VII., afterwards interfered, by a letter to Alfred, rather dictatorial. And Wilfrid, from the Mercian court, to which he had retired, sent an abbot and another with the pope's letters and his further expostulations. Alfred at first received them austerely. His manner was afterwards softened, but his purpose continued firm. His final answer was courteous, but decisive.

“My venerable brothers:—Ask of me whatever things are necessary to your comfort, and I will grant them, as proofs of my great respect for you; but from this day make no solicitations in behalf of Wilfrid your lord. What my royal predecessors, and the archbishop sent formerly from Rome, with almost all the prelates of Britain, thought fit to order, I will never change, while I live; whatever writings you may bring me from the apostolic seat, as you choose to call it.”^k

Alfred adhered with temperate firmness to his determination. The urgencies of the pope and Wilfrid could not shake it. He reigned over the province, which his knowledge enlightened, and his virtues cherished, for nineteen years. Sickness then fell upon him. In his last hours he was disturbed by the apprehension that he might have acted wrong in resisting the applications of the pope and prelate; but his speech failed him for several days before his death. When he expired, one Eadwulf assumed the sceptre, to whom Wilfrid began a journey with hopes of a friendly reception; but Eadwulf sent him this message:—“I swear, by my salvation, that unless he depart in six days from my kingdom, both he and all that I find with him shall perish.” Wilfrid stopped his progress; but he had with him the effective means of retorting the menace. Osred, the son of

¹ See Eddius, Vit. Wilf. c. 44–46.

^k Eddius, c. 61. It was addressed also to Ethelred of Mercia.

c. 61.

Alfred, had joined him, and in two months was established in Northumbria, and Eadwulf expelled.¹

The effect of Alfred's reign and habits in this province became visible in Ceolwulf, who soon succeeded to his throne. This prince, who acceded in 731, was the patron to whom Bede addressed his ecclesiastical history of the English nation. In the dedication, the venerable father of the Anglo-Saxon learning says, that it was this king's delight not only to hear the Scriptures read, but to be well acquainted with the deeds and sayings of his illustrious predecessors. From this feeling he had desired Bede to compose his history. But the flame, which Alfred had kindled in his dominions, was soon afterwards quenched there by the sanguinary civil contests that succeeded. It burnt, however, with a cheering influence in the other provinces of the octarchy. Bede and Alcuin may be considered as two of the valuable minds which it had excited.

In the year of Egfrid's destruction, Ceadwalla began to contend for the throne of Wessex: he was descended from Cerdic, through Ceawlin and his son Cutha.² His youth was of great promise, and he suffered no opportunity of exerting his warlike talents to occur unimproved. Banished from his country by the factious chiefs who governed it, he was assiduous to assemble from it a military force, and he succeeded in drawing the youth of Wessex to his standard.³ In Selsey he obtained money and horses from Wilfrid, the bishop,⁴ and directed his first onset on the king of Sussex, whom he surprised and destroyed, and whose kingdom he desolated. The royal generals, who had been warring in Kent, returned, and expelled the invader,⁵ who profited by his expulsion to secure to himself the crown of Wessex. This accession of strength he wielded triumphantly against Sussex, which lost its defenders, and yielded to the fortune of his arms.⁶ Ceadwalla also captured the Isle of Wight; but stained his prosperity with cruelty.⁷

For two years, Ceadwalla and his brother Mollo plundered Kent, which had been harassed by Sussex, and weakened by incapable rulers.⁸ The natives viewed the spoilers for

¹ Eddius. c. 57.

² Sax. Chron. 45. Malmesbury, in his Life of Aldhelm, p. 11. Wharton's Ang. Sac. 2, or 3 Gale, 346, says that Kentwin, morbo et senio gravis, appointed Ceadwalla his successor; but as Kentwin only reigned nine years, the addition of senio gravis can hardly be correct.

³ Malmesbury, p. 14.

⁴ Malmesb. De Gest. Pontif. lib. iii. p. 265.

⁵ Bede, lib. iv. c. 15. Flor. Wig. p. 255.

⁶ Bede, ib. Flor. Wig. 255. Langhorn Chron. 241, 242. Sussex is said by Bede to have contained the land of 7000 families, lib. iv. c. 13.

⁷ During this conquest he formed the inhuman project of destroying its inhabitants, and of repopling it from his own province. Bede, lib. iv. c. 15.

⁸ Hunting. lib. iv. p. 335. Malmesbury mentions the civil wars, which also afflicted Kent, lib. i. p. 11. In the preceding year, pestilentia depopulata est Britannia. Chron. Petri de Borgo, p. 4.

some time with fruitless indignation. Town after town was ravaged. Rousing themselves at last, the men of Kent collected into a competent body, and attacked them with auspicious valour. Mollo, with twelve soldiers, was surprised in a cottage. The invaded people brutally surrounded them with flames, and they were reduced to ashes.¹

In obeying the impulse of a headlong wrath, the Kentish men forgot that cruelty makes even the injured odious, and justifies punishment; it much oftener stimulates revenge than deters it. The brother of Mollo was on the throne of Wessex, and in the following year spread a torrent of vindictive calamities through Kent, which it mourned in all its districts.²

The Roman missionaries and the ecclesiastics whom they educated, had not only succeeded in establishing Christianity in England, but they raised so strong a feeling of piety in some of its Anglo-Saxon sovereigns, as to lead them to renounce the world. It was not only the widowed queen of Edwin, who gave the first precedent of an Anglo-Saxon lady of that rank taking the veil;³ nor Oswy devoting his daughter Elfleda to a convent,⁴ who exhibited this religious zeal; but several of the sovereigns themselves, from its impulse, abandoned their thrones. Thus, in 688, Ceadwalla travelled to Rome as on a pilgrimage of piety, where he was baptized by the pope, and died, before he was thirty, in the following week.⁵ Thus also some years afterwards, in 709, two other Anglo-Saxon kings, Cenred of Mercia, and Offa of Essex, probably affected by the example Ceadwalla, quitted that dignity which so many myriads covet, went to Rome, and became monks there.⁶ And thus, also, at no long interval, a greater sovereign than either, Ina of Wessex, obeyed the same impression, took the same journey, and found his grave in the same venerated city. Offa is described as a most amiable youth, who was induced to abdicate his power from the purest motives of devotion. It is remarked by an old chronicler, that the examples of these two kings produced a thousand imitations.⁷

Ina succeeded Ceadwalla in Wessex. He was the son of Cenred, who was the nephew of Cynegils.⁸ His father was living at the period of his accession.

The Saxon octarchy, amidst all its vicissitudes, presented in one province or the other an uninterrupted succession of great

¹ Malmesbury, p. 11. Sax. Chron. p. 46. Huntingdon, p. 336. W. Thorn, in his Chronica, writes the catastrophe at Canterbury, p. 1770, x Script.

² Sax. Chron. 46. Hunting. 336.

³ Smith's Bede, p. 101, note.

⁴ Bede, lib. iii. c. 29.

⁵ Sax. Chron. 46. Bede, lib. v. c. 7. Sergius gave him the name of Peter. An epitaph in Latin verse was inscribed on his tomb, which Bede quotes.

⁷ Bede, lib. v. c. 19.

⁸ Hunt. 337.

⁶ Sax. Chron. 47. Bede, lib. v. c. 7.

men. From Hengist to Egbert, talents were never wanting on some of the Anglo-Saxon thrones. The direction of the royal capacity varied; in some kings valour, in others military conduct; in some piety, in some learning, in some legislative wisdom, predominated. The result was, that the Anglo-Saxons, though fluctuating in the prosperity of their several districts, yet, considered as a nation, went on rapidly improving in civilization and power.

Much of the fame of Ina has been gained by his legislation. He published a collection of laws which yet remains,^b and he deserves the gratitude of mankind in common with every other law-giver. Whoever applies himself to mark the useful limits of human action, to set boundaries to individual selfishness, to establish the provisions of justice in defence of the weak or injured, and to rescue the criminal from punishments of caprice or favour, is a character entitled to the veneration of mankind. A declamation against laws is a satire upon wisdom the most benevolent. Laws must partake of the ignorance and spirit of the age which gave them birth. An Ina must legislate as an Ina, and for the people of an Ina. If the subsequent improvements of mankind discover that prior regulations have been defective, succeeding legislators will correct those provisions, which the progress of society has made obsolete or improper. What they may devise, their posterity, who will have changed into new beings, may mould into a fitter correspondence with their own necessities; but to abolish all laws, because laws are not all perfect, would be to unchain the tiger passions of mankind, and to convert society into an African desert, or a Cytherean brothel.

The wrath of the West Saxons for the fate of Mollo had not relented. With inhumanity, as great as that which they 004. professed to chastise, they continued to desolate Kent. At length, their hostilities were appeased by the homicidal mulct of thirty thousand marks of gold.^c Wihtred, from the line of Ethelbert, had obtained the crown of Kent, and terminated the miseries which the people had suffered from the invasion and a turbulent interregnum.^d

The Mercian nobility displayed the ferocity of the age, in destroying Ostrida, the wife of Ethelred, their reigning king.^e The cause of her fate is not known. The reason adduced by Lang-

^b Wilkins's *Leges Saxoniarum*, p. 14-27. The first paragraph of these announces his father Cenred as one of the counsellors by whose advice he promulgated them.

^c *Sax. Chron.* 47, 48. *Malmesbury*, 14. Others make the payment smaller; as *Polychronicon*, p. 243, 3000 pounds; *Flor. Wig.* p. 260, 3750 pounds. Wihtred, unable to resist Ina, proposed the expiatory fine. *Huntingd.* 337.

^d *Sax. Chron.* 48. *Huntingd.* 337.

^e *Beed.* lib. v. c. ult. *Sax. Chron.* 49. *Flor. Wig.* 260. *Matt. West.* 250. She was sister to Ecgfrid, and daughter of Oswy. I observe her name signed to a charter of Peterborough monastery in 680. *1 Dugd. Monast.* 67. *Ego Ostrich regina Ethelredi.*

horn,^f that her sister had murdered Peada, is unlikely, because this event had occurred near forty years before. Ethelred exhibited another instance of the spirit of religion among the Anglo-Saxon kings. He voluntarily descended from the

704. throne, to become monk and abbot of Bardney;^g he was succeeded by his nephew, Cenred.^h

Osred, the son of Alfred, and but eight years old at his father's death, had been besieged by the usurper Eadulf already noticed, with his guardian Berthfrid, in Babbanburh, the metropolis of this northern kingdom.ⁱ After their deliverance and the dethronement of the usurping competitor, Berthfrid, the protecting præfect of Northumbria, defeated the Picts between Hæfe and Cære,

709. in the field of Manan. Finguin M^cDelaroiith perished in the battle.^j It is not stated who commanded the Picts, but Nectan, or Naiton, was king of this people at this period.^k

Ina continued to reign prosperously. He waged war with Geraint, the British king of Cornwall. Amid the first

710. charges, Higbald, a Saxon leader, fell; but at last the Britons fled.^l Ina also prosecuted a war with Ceolred, who had

715. succeeded his cousin Cenred in Mercia. At Wodensbury they met; the slaughter of the battle was great; the event was no advantage to either.^m

Ceolred, king of Mercia,ⁿ was succeeded by Ethelbald, who 716. possessed the crown for forty-one years. In this year Osred of Northumbria, the eldest son of Alfred, was de-

^f Chron. Reg. Angl. p. 256.

^g In this capacity he died in 716. Chron. Petri de Burgo, 6.

^h Malmesbury, 28.

ⁱ Malmesb. de Pontif. lib. iii. p. 268. Eddins Vit. Wilf. c. 57, p. 85. Hoveden describes Bebbanburh to have been a city munitissima non admodum magna, sed quasi duorum vel trium agrorum spatium, habens unum introitum cavatum, et gradibus miro modo exaltatum. On the top of the mountain was the church. Annal. pars prior, 403. The city was built by Ida.

^j Sax. Chron. 50. Flor. Wig. 264. Bede, lib. v. c. 24, dates it 711. Gibson, in his Appendix to the Chronicle, conjectures that Hæfe and Cære were Carehouse and Heefold, a little beyond the wall, p. 18. "710. Slaughter of the Picts in the field of Manan, among the Saxons, where Finguin M^cDelaroiith perished." Annals of Ulster, p. 60.

^k Nectan, in the Annals of Ulster, p. 60. In 716 he drove the family of Iona beyond Drum-albin, *ibid.* p. 60. In 725 he was put in chains by king Drust, *ibid.* p. 61. Bede, lib. v. c. 21, calls him Naiton, and mentions his changing the time of Easter to the Roman period, which the Annals of Ulster place in 715, p. 60.

^l Sax. Chron. 50. Hunting. 337. Flor. Wig. 264. This Geraint was the third of that name in Cornwall. Owen's Llywarch, p. 3. Aldhelm addressed to him a letter on the British celebration of Easter, which is among the epistles of Boniface. Biblioth. Magna Pat. v. 16, p. 65, sp. 44. In this he styles Geraint, domino gloriosissimo occidentalis regni sceptrā gubernanti, Geruntio regi.

^m Sax. Chron. 50. Hunt. 338.

ⁿ Unless we interpret the account, given by Boniface, of Ceolred's dying conversation with the devil, who came for him in the middle of a feast, (Malmesb. 28,) as a sudden incidence of insanity, the missionary of Germany is at variance with Huntingdon, who says of Ceolred, that patriæ et avitæ virtutis hæres clarissime rexit, p. 337.

stroyed at the lake of Windamere by his revolting kinsmen,* one of whom, Coenrid, the son of Cuthwin, succeeded;† but he fell from the agitated throne two years afterwards, and Osric, another son of the learned Alfred, took his place.‡

In 718, Inigils, the brother of Ina, died. Though no achievement of greatness is attached to his name in history, yet the events of the future time have given it importance. He was the ancestor from whom Egbert and Alfred, and the following Saxon monarchs of England, deduced their descent.†

Ina rebuilt the abbey of Glastonbury at the request of Aldhelm. It had been utterly destroyed, but he erected it with magnificence, and it lasted until the Danish ravages.‡ The insurrection of pretenders disturbed the close of Ina's reign: but he attacked and destroyed Cynewulf Ætheling; and in the next year his queen besieged another, Ealdbryht, in Taunton, a castle which 721. the king had built to defend that part of his dominions, and in which the rebel had taken his post of enmity. She levelled it to the ground, and Ealdbryht withdrew into Sussex. Ina directed his forces against this province, and three years afterwards slew his competitor.‡

After a fortunate reign of thirty-seven years, the king imitated the custom which had become so remarkable among the Anglo-Saxon kings, and laid down his dignity. His queen had long exhorted him, as his age advanced, to retire from the concerns of the world; but the charms of habitual power for some time defeated her eloquence. One day, as she travelled with the king to one of his rural mansions, where a splendid feast was prepared with all the pomp and bustle of royal luxury, she seized the occasion of converting it to a moral lecture on her favourite theme. They left the place after the repast, and a rustic by her orders, in their absence, scattered the festive hall with filth and rubbish, and placed a swinish litter on the couch where he had reposed. Before they had advanced two miles on the road, she desired to return, and Ina courteously complied with her request; but when he entered the hall of his festivity, and saw the disgusting change, he contemplated it with silent astonishment and displeasure, till informed that the queen had directed it: he de-

* Malmsh. 21. Huntingd. 336. Bede, lib. v. c. 24. Sax. Chron. 51. Oared has received the lash of Boniface. Malmsh. 28.—Malmshbury complains of him, p. 21.

† Bede, lib. v. c. 22. Flor. Wig. 266.

‡ Bede, lib. v. c. 23. Simeon Duncl. p. 7. The expressions of Malmshbury imply that Osric assisted to procure his brother Oared's death: he says of Kenred and Osric, *domini sui occisi sanguinem luentes fædo exitu auræ pollueræ*, p. 21.

§ Sax. Chron. 51. Asser. p. 3. Abb. Rieval, 350.

¶ Bromton, p. 758. He founded the great church of Glastonbury *pro anima propinqui ejus Mellonis*. See his charters to it. 1 Dugdale, Monast. 12, 13. Malmsh. de Ant. Glast. 3 Gale, 309, 311. His other gifts to it were magnificent.

‡ Sax. Chron. 52. Hunt. 336. Flor. Wig. 268.

manded from her an explanation of the strange mystery. She smiled and answered: "My lord and husband! this is not indeed the noisy hilarity of yesterday: here are no brilliant hangings, no flattery, and no parasites: here are no tables weighed down with silver vessels: no exquisite delicacies to delight the palate: all these are gone like the smoke and wind. Have they not already passed away into nothingness? And should we not feel alarmed who covet them so much? for we shall be as transient. Are not all such things? are not we ourselves like a river, hurrying, heedless and headlong, to the dark ocean of illimitable time? Unhappy must we be if we let them absorb our minds. Think, I entreat you, how disgusting those things become of which we have been so enamoured. See to what filthy objects we are attached. In these loathsome relics we may see what our pampered bodies will at last be. Ah! let us reflect, that the greater we have been, and the more powerful we are now, the more alarmed ought to be our solicitude; for the greater will be the punishment of our misconduct."^u

The singularity of the incident had its full impression on the mind of Ina: he resigned his crown to his kinsman, and, imitating what all ranks were then emulous to do, he travelled to Rome.^v He founded there a Saxon school, for the instruction of his countrymen who chose to be educated at Rome, and he added a church for their service, and the convenience of their burial. To support this, and to provide a subsistence for the English who should dwell there, he imposed the payment of a penny on every family, which was denominated Romescot. It was sent to the papal see.^w Ina studiously avoided all pomp in his voluntary humiliation. He cut off his hair, put on a plebeian dress, and lived with his queen a private and retired life, even seeking support by the labour of his hands, till he died there.^x This conduct was evidence that his religious feelings were genuine impulses of sincerity.

The mutations of the octarchy for the last century had been generally from an heptarchy to an hexarchy; at the period of Ina's death it was an hexarchy, because Wessex had absorbed Sussex, and Deira and Bernicia were amalgamated into North-
731. umbria. This restless province was then governed by Osric, who left the kingdom to Ceolwulf, the brother of Cenred, whom he had destroyed,^y and the friend and patron of Bede. In

^u Malmesbury, p. 15.

^v Bede, lib. v. c. 7. Sax. Chron. 52. Flor. Wig. 269. M. West. 265. Bede says of Ina's journey, that it was what in these times plures de gente Anglorum, nobiles, ignobiles, laici, clerici, viri ac femine, certatim facere conserant.

^w Matt. West. 265.

^x Dug. Monast. i. p. 14. 32. Malm. Pont. 313. Alcuin mentions him by the name of In:

"Quem clamant In, incerto cognomine, gentes."

Oper. p. 1676.

^y Flor. Wig. 269. Malmesb. 21. Ceolwulf submitted to the tonsure in 737, and

Mercia, Ethelbald, a descendant of Wybba, reigned.^a In Essex, which was becoming fast the satellite of Mercia, Suebricht had governed alone since his brother Offa went to Rome.^a In Kent, Eadbert had ascended the throne of Wihtred, whose laws remain to us.^b In East Anglia, Aldulphus was succeeded by Selred; on his death, Alphuald, for a short time, inherited the sceptre.^c

CHAPTER X.

The History of the Octarchy, from the Death of Ina to the Accession of Egbert, in the year 800.

ÆTHELHEARD, the kinsman of Ina, and a descendant of Cerdic, obtained the crown of West Saxony.^a Oswald, also sprung from the founder of Wesssex, at first opposed his pretensions, but discovering the inferiority of his forces, abandoned the con-

Eadbert succeeded. Smith's Bede, p. 224. Ceolwulf was descended from Oega, one of the sons of Ida. Sim. Dun. p. 7. Bede in one line expresses the vicissitudes of Ceolwulf, and the state of the country, *captus et adtonsus et remissus in regnum*, lib. v. c. ult.

^a Sax. Chron. 51. 59. Bede, lib. v. c. 24. He was the son of Alwion. Ing. 33.

^b By mistake, Langhorn, 281, and Rapin, place Selred on the throne of Essex. Malmsh. 35; Flor. Wig. 273; and Al. Beverl. 85, led them into the error. We learn from Huntingdon, that Selred was king of East Anglia, p. 339, whom the Chronicle of Mailros supports. Suebricht or Sueabred was king of Essex, and died 738. Mailros, p. 136. Sim. Dunelm. 100. A charter of his, dated 704, is in Smith's Appendix to Bede, p. 749. In another he signs with Sebbi and Sigbear, ib. p. 748. Swithred reigned in Essex 758, Sim. Dun. 275.

^c After a reign of thirty-four years and a half, Wihtred died in 725, and left Edilberct, and Alric his heirs. Bede, lib. v. c. 23. Eadbert reigned until 748. Sax. Chron. 56, or 749. Mailros, p. 137. Ethelbert until 760. Sax. Chron. 60, when the surviving brother, Alric, succeeded. Malmsh. p. 11. After this period we find three kings again in Kent signing charters contemporaneously; as in 702 Sigiraed and Eadbert appear, in one charter, as kings of Kent; and in another, Eardulf; and in 765 Egbert signs a charter with the same title. Thorpe, Reg. Roffens. p. 16. So many kings, in so small a province as Kent, strikingly illustrate the gavel-kind tenure of lands which still prevails there.

^c In the synod at Hatfield in 680, Aldulph was present. This was the seventeenth year of his reign. Bede, lib. iv. c. 17, and the Ely History, MSS. Cott. Nero. A. 15, state Aldulph to have been reigning in 679. The Chronicle of Mailros accurately places Selred after him, who died 747. 1 Gale Script. 137. Alphuald, the successor of Selred, died 749. *ibid.* Humbean and Albert divided the kingdom afterwards, *ibid.* Sim. Dun. 103. M. West names them Beorna and Ethelbert, p. 273. Bromton, p. 749. Flor. Wig. places Beorn in 758, p. 275. I hope these few last notes correctly state a very troublesome chronology.

^a Sax. Chron. 52. Flor. Wig. 269. Ran. Higd. Chron. Petri de Bargo, p. 6, gives this date, which Ethelwerd, p. 837, also sanctions. Matt. West. p. 266, has 727, yet the expressions of Bede, a contemporary, imply the year 725. Smith's ed. p. 188, note.—A passage of Malmsh. in his Antiq. Glouc. Eccles. p. 312, promises to

test.^b The king invaded Devonshire, and was extending the ravages into Cornwall, when the Britons, under Rodri Malwynawc, vanquished him at Heilyn, in Cornwall. At Garth Maelawch, in North Wales, and at Pencoet, in Glamorganshire, the Cymry also triumphed.^c On Æthelheard's death, Cuthred, his kinsman, succeeded him.^d

The king of Mercia at this period, Ethelbald, was a man of elegant stature, a powerful frame, a warlike and imperious spirit. Persecuted in his youth by the king he had succeeded, and to whom he had been dangerous, he owed his safety to the secrecy of his retreat. Here the pious Guthlac endeavoured to moralize his mind, and, in gratitude to the friend of his adversity, Ethelbald constructed the monastery of Croyland over his tomb.^e The military abilities of this Mercian king, procured him the same predominance over the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms which Egbert afterwards acquired. He subdued them all up to the Humber; and afterwards, in 737, invaded and conquered Northumbria.^f The Welsh next attracted his ambition; and, to annex the pleasant region between the Severn and the Wye to his Mercian territories, he entered Wales with a powerful army. At Carno, a mountain in Monmouthshire, the Britons checked his progress in a severe battle, and drove him over the Wye with great loss.^g

reconcile the contradictions. It states that Ina went twice to Rome. "Eodem anno quo idem rex Romam personaliter adiit, privilegium apostolico signaculo corroboratum in redendo Glastoniam apportavit. Et postea iterum cum Ethelburga regina sua, instinctu ejusdem, Romam abiit."—Bede may have dated his first peregrination; the others his last.

^b Huntingd. 338. In the charter of Ina, transcribed by Malmesbury, *Antiq. Glast.* p. 312. Ethelheard signs *frater reginæ*. Oswald was the son of Ethelbald, of the race of Cerdic, through Cealwin and Cuthwin. *Flor. Wig.* 269. *Sax. Chron.* 53. The plural expression of Bede, taken in its natural force, seems to express that Ina left his crown to Oswald, as well as Ethelheard, "ipse relicto regno ac junioribus commendato," *lib. v. c. 7.*

^c *Brut y Saeson*, and *Brut y Tywysogion*, 471, 472.

^d *Sax. Chron.* 55. The Chronicle of Mailros, a document valuable for its general accuracy, countenances Bede's date of Æthelheard's reign; it says, that in 740, after a reign of fourteen years, he died. 1 *Gale's Rer. Angl. Script.* p. 136.

^e *Ingulf.* p. 2-4. To sustain the stony mass an immense quantity of wooden piles was driven into the marsh; and hard earth was brought in boats nine miles, to assist in making the foundation. There is a MS. life of Guthlac, in the Cotton Library, *Vesp. D. 21*, in Saxon, by a monk named Alfric, and addressed to Alfwold, king of East Anglia. His beginning will show the respectful style used by the clergy to the sovereigns at that time. "Urum ƿealdende riht gelyfendum, a ƿorulð minum tham leoƿertan hlaforðe, ofer ealle oðre men eorðlice Kýningar, Alƿƿoib Earc Angla Kýning, mid rihte et mid ge-ƿiſenum riče healðend." *MSS. ibid.*

^f *Hunt. lib. iv. p. 339, 340. Sax. Chron.* 54.

^g *Brut y Tywysogion.* p. 472.

But he afterwards marched another army against the Britons, in conjunction with Cuthred, who had succeeded Æthelheard in Wessex. The great superiority of the Saxon forces obtained a decisive victory at Ddefawdan. After much plunder, the victors retired.^b 743.

The friendship between Ethelbald and Cuthred was not lasting. Cuthred wished to emancipate himself from the power of the Mercian, who, to keep Wessex in subjection, fomented its civil distractions. The son of Cuthred gave him this advantage. This impetuous youth attempted to depose his father, but perished in the guilty struggle.^c Two years after, Cuthred suppressed a dangerous rebellion of Edelhun, one of his chieftains, whose extraordinary valour would have conquered the superior numbers of the king, if in the hour of victory a wound had not disabled him.^d 748.

Cuthred now presuming his power to be equal to the effort, disclaimed the intolerable exactions of Ethelbald, and resolved to procure the independence of Wessex, or to perish in the contest. At Burford in Oxfordshire, the rival princes met. Cuthred was assisted by the brave Edelhun, who had now become a loyal subject; Ethelbald displayed the forces of Kent, East Anglia, and Essex, in joint array with his Mercians. Edelhun, advancing beyond his line, pierced the golden dragon,^e the splendid banner of Mercia, and, animated by his intrepidity, the West Saxons poured the shout of battle, and rushed to the charge. The chronicler describes with unusual warmth a conflict terrible to both armies. Ambition inflamed the friends of Mercia. The horrors of subjection made Wessex desperate. Slaughter followed the sword of Edelhun, and Ethelbald raged like a resistless fire. Their mutual fury brought the general and the king into personal collision; each collected his full vigour, and struck at the other with a power and determination that menaced destruction in every blow: but the king of Mercia at last discerned the superiority of his antagonist, and preferring safety to glory, he gave to his yet struggling army the first example of an hasty flight.^f 752.

^b Brut y Tywysogion, p. 472. Flor. Wig. 272. Sax. Chron. 55. Mailros, p. 136, and Matt. West, 271, date the event in 744.

^c Sax. Chron. 55. Mailros, 137. Huntingdon, 341. His expression, that Ethelbald affixit eum nunc seditionibus nunc bellis, implies that the insurrection was fostered by Mercia.

^d Hunt. 341. Sax. Chron. 56. Flor. Wig. 273.

^e The ancient Wittichind describes the Saxon standard on the continent, as a representation of a lion and a dragon with an eagle flying above; intended to be symbols of their bravery, prudence, and rapidity, Hist. Sax. p. 6.

^f Huntingdon has preserved the circumstances of the battle, p. 341. It is also mentioned in Sax. Chron. 56. Flor. Wig. p. 273. Mailros dates it, as it does the events of this period, a year later, p. 137. A stone coffin was found near Burford, in December, 1814.

The event of this conflict rescued Wessex from the yoke of Mercia, and established the foundation of that predominance which was afterwards improved into the conquest of the island. Cuthred again successfully invaded the country of the Welsh.^m

In 754, Cuthred died, leaving Wessex in a state of progress towards that superiority which, under the reign of Egbert, it finally attained. Sigebyrht succeeded;ⁿ his reign was short, arrogant, and tyrannical; he perverted the laws to his convenience, or presumptuously violated them. When Cumbra, the noblest of his earls, obeyed the solicitations of the people, and intimated their complaints to the king, he was arbitrarily put to death, and the grievances were multiplied. The nobles and the people assembled; after a careful deliberation, Sigebyrht was deposed from his authority by an unanimous decision, and Cynewulf, a youth of the royal blood, was elected in his place. Deserted by all, the deposed king fled into the wood of Anderida; a swineherd of the murdered Cumbra discovered him in his hiding-place, and immediately slew him.^o

The long reign of Ethelbald, at one period so successful, terminated in calamity. His defeat by Wessex was never
755. retrieved, and he perished at last by civil insurrection; by the same means of evil with which he had endeavoured to oppress Cuthred. At Seggeswold the fatal battle ensued, for which he was not prepared, and Ethelbald fell, either by assassination or in the general slaughter. Bernred, who headed the rebellion, attempted to invest himself with the robes of royalty; but the nomination of Ethelbald was supported by the nobles of Mercia, and the young prince, Offa, who has acquired such celebrity, and who was descended from Eoppa, the brother of Penda, was placed upon the throne.^p Bernred did not survive the year.^q

^m Sax. Chron. 56. Mailros, 137. The British Chronicles state a battle at Hendford about this time, in South Wales, where the Cymry triumphed. Brut y Tywys. 473.

ⁿ Flor. Wig. 273. Sax. Chron. 56. Cant-wara-burh, Canterbury was burnt this year.

^o Hunt. 341, 342. Malmsh. 15. Mailros, 137. Ethelwerd names the place of his death Pryfetesfloodan, p. 838.

^p Ingulf, p. 5. Mailros, 137. Matt. West, p. 274, apparently misconceiving a passage of Huntingdon, p. 341, erroneously makes Ethelbald to have fallen against Cuthred, whom he represents to have survived him. The monk of Croyland enables us to rectify the mistake, and is supported by Malmsh. 28, and by the Sax. Chron. p. 56, and Flor. Wig. p. 273, who place the decease of Cuthred a year before Ethelbald's. Bede implies, that Ethelbald perished by assassination, lib. v. c. ult.

^q That Bernred died this year has been disputed. Malmsh. p. 28; Alur. Beverl. 87; Ingulf, 5. The biographer of Offa, p. 11; Flor. Wig. 274; Ethelward, 839, affirm or imply it. On the other hand, Matt. West, p. 274; Sax. Chron. 59; Bromton, 776; and some others, state Bernred's expulsion only; and Matt. West. 277, makes him to perish by fire in the year 769, after having burnt the town of Catterick. But the Chronicle of Mailros, which, p. 137, mentions the attempt on the Mercian crown, by Bocrared, calls the person, who caused and perished in the

We may pause a moment to cast a rapid glance on Northumbria. Ceolwulf, the friend of Bede, had acceded to the united kingdoms; but so perilous was the regal dignity in this perturbed kingdom, that he voluntarily abandoned the disquieting crown, and sought the tranquillity of the cloister.^f

The revolutions of Northumbria.
731-737.

Eadbert succeeded. His kingdom, left unprotected by his march against the Picts, suffered from an invasion of the Mercian Ethelbald; but he afterwards enlarged his dominions,^g and had the ability to maintain himself in his crown for twenty-one years; but religious impressions then came upon him, and he assumed the religious life.^h He was the eighth Anglo-Saxon king who had exchanged the crown for the cowl. But on his abdication all the fruits of the wise example and useful reign of Alfred seemed to vanish in the turbulent activity of the excited mind of the country taking now a mischievous direction: the turbulence of civil murder again broke loose. In the first year of his accession, his son Osulf perished from domestic treachery, and Moll Edelwold ventured to accept the crown.ⁱ In his third year his life and honours were fiercely assaulted by one of his leaders, Oswin, whom he slew at Edwinescliffe. At no long interval afterwards the tomb received him, and Alred, of the race of Ida,^j was elevated to the crown. After a few years he was driven out, and Ethelred, the son of Moll, was chosen in his stead.^k In his third year, this king fraudulently procured the death of two of his generals by the instrumentality of two others. In the very next year, these men rebelled against himself, destroyed in two successive attacks others of his commanders, and expelled him from his kingdom.^l Alfwold

737.

765.

774.

fire of Catterick, Earnredus, p. 138. Hence it is not certain that they were the same persons, and, if not, the *aufugavit* of the one side is not sufficiently explicit to disprove the death stated on the other.

^f Huntingdon, p. 340, paints strongly the apprehensions of Ceolwulf: "*Ipse horribilibus corpis necis, et conditionis, et multimodis calamitatis, intus cruciobatur, et animo et corpore deoquabatur.*" Bede remarks that an excessive drought destroyed the fertility of this year, lib. v. c. ult.

^g Hunt. p. 340. Sax. Chron. p. 54. Bede, lib. v. c. ult. Sim. Dun. 11.

^h Hunt. 342. Sax. Chron. 59. Chron. Petrib. 8. Huntingdon ascribes Eadbert's retreat to the impression made upon his mind by the violent deaths of Ethelbald and Sigebert, contrasted with the peaceful exit of Ceolwulf.

ⁱ Bede says he was a *sua plebe electus*; and adds, that in his second year a great mortality took place, and lasted for two years. The dysentery was the principal malady, lib. v. c. ult.

^j By his son Edric, Sim. Dun. 11. Two letters of Alred to Lullus, a French bishop, are extant, Mag. Bibl. 16, 89, and apud Du Chesne, Hist. Franc. vol. ii. p. 854. In the one he desires the bishop's assistance in establishing an amity with Charlemagne; the other is a letter of civility from Alred and his queen, Ougeotha, to Lullus, congratulating him on his arrival from a long journey.

^k Chr. Mailros, 137, 138. Hunt. 342. Sax. Chron. 60, 61. Matt. West, 376, 378.

^l Mailros, 138.

obtained it; but such was the spirit of the country, that in the following year two chieftains raised an army, seized the king's ealdorman, Beorn, and his justiciary, and burnt them to ashes, because, in the estimation of the rebels, their administration of justice had been too severe.⁷ Alfwold, to whom
 788. a chronicle applies the epithet, "King of the innocent," was treacherously killed by his patrician, Sigan; and Osred, his kinsman, son of Alred, acceded. In the next year he was betrayed and driven out, and Ethelred, the son of Moll, was recalled.⁸ But as adversity, though it corrects many dispositions into virtue, yet sometimes only exasperates the stubborn, so it appears to have rather increased than diminished the obduracy of Ethelred. In the year of his restoration, he left Eardulf wel-
 792. tering in his blood at the gate of a monastery; and in the following year he dragged Elf and Elwin, the children of Alfwold, from York, and slew them. Osred, who had been deposed, attempted to recover the crown; his army deserted him, he fell into the hands of Ethelred, and perished. This prince now endeavoured, by a marriage with the daughter of Offa, to secure his authority, and for this purpose he repudiated his previous wife. But his policy and his murders were equally vain. Whoever, by an example of cruelty, lessens the public horror at deeds of blood, diminishes his own safety, and gives popularity to his own assassination. In the fourth year of Ethelred's restoration, his subjects, whom he had assisted to brutalize, destroyed him, and set up Osbald. After a reign of twenty-seven days, they deposed Osbald, and he obtained security in the cloister.⁹ Eardulf, who had been recovered from his assassination by the charity of the monks, who found him apparently lifeless near their cloister, had fled to Charlemagne, and visited Rome. The emperor of the West, in conjunction with the papal legate, assisted him in his efforts to regain his kingdom: and he was crowned in 794. Before four years elapsed, they who had murdered Ethelred, revolted from Eardulf; and under their leader, Wada, endeavoured to destroy him. The sword of the king prevailed, and the rebels fled.¹⁰ Here for a while we will

⁷ Mailros, 139. Hunt, 343. Sax. Chron. 62.

⁸ Mailros, 139. Hunt, 343. Chron. Pet. 10. Rich. Hag. 298. Sax. Chron. 64. Osred took refuge in the Isle of Man, Sim. Dun, 12. Alcuin addressed to Ethelred, or, as he spells the name, Edelred, a letter of strong moral exhortation, which is still in existence. He reminds him how many of his predecessors had perished, *propter injustitias et rapinas et immanditias vite*. He intreats his people to be at peace between themselves, and to be faithful to their lord, that, by their concord, the kingdom might be extended, *quod semper per discordiam minui solebat*. Alcuini opera, p. 1337, ed. Paris, 1617.

⁹ Mailros, 139.

¹⁰ Ann. Franc. ap. Du Chesne, vol. ii. p. 45. Mailros, 140. Huntingdon might well say, "*Gens Anglorum naturaliter dura est et superba, et ideo bellis intestinis incessanter attrita*." Alcuin displays the angry feelings of Charlemagne at this re-

quit this region of civil discord. Happy is the country in which the regal office is not elective, nor the right of succession permitted to be questionable! An hereditary monarchy, though, like all human institutions, it has its inconveniences, yet has not been the contrivance of childish thinkers or half-way politicians; it was the benevolent invention of human wisdom, profiting from the most disastrous experience. No contests have been more baneful to human life and happiness, than those which have sprung from the uncertain right of succession, and from the practicability of attaining power by violence. It was a noble effort of advancing civilization, which strove to annihilate the evil, by accustoming mankind to revere as sacred the laws of hereditary succession.

Offa, who had obtained with violence the throne of Mercia,^o displayed talents, and enjoyed a prosperity, which have made his name illustrious. His youth has been fabulously represented as distinguished by a wonderful transformation, from a miserable child, afflicted with imperfections in his speech, and the most important senses of the intellect, the sight and hearing, into an elegant frame, adorned with every human accomplishment.^d His monastic panegyrist has also bequeathed to his queen, Drida, or Cynedrida, a series of adventures scarcely probable, and which have the aspect of having been invented, in order to impute to her, more plausibly, the crime which has stained the memory of Offa for ever.^e When he had enjoyed his throne many years, he began to covet an augmentation of dominion. Some of his attacks were against the Northumbrians,^f and the Hestingi.^g He

petition of ferocity at Northumbria; he styled them a nation perfidam et perversam, pejorem paganis. Malmsh. 26.

^c Bede's expression, concerning the accession of Offa, is, that having driven out Bernred, he sought the kingdom with a blood-stained sword, lib. v. c. ult. An epithet so marking, as sanguinolento, from a contemporary, implies that Offa's reign commenced with human slaughter.

^d Vita Offa secundi, added to Watts's edition of Matthew Paris, p. 10.—The author of it was some monk of St. Alban's; he makes Offa's real name Pineredus. The name of Offa was derived from a king, whom he calls Offa primus, the son of Warmund, who had similar defects, and a cure as miraculous. His editor believes that this Offa primus never existed but in his page. I have however discovered him in Saxo-Grammaticus. Saxo says, Warmund, the 17th king of Denmark, had in his age a son named Uffo, who excelled his cotvals in his person, but who was thought weak in mind, and never spoke till the king of Saxony endangered his father, &c. 59-65.

^e The account is, that the lady was allied to the French king, but for some crime was adjudged to die. Respect for majesty saved her from the ordeals of iron and fire. She was committed to the chances of the sea in an open boat, with little food; the stormy ocean threw her on the coast of Wales, and she was conducted to Offa. A plaintive story interested his compassion, and he recommended her to the protection of his mother. Her charms or her wiles animated his pity into love, and she became his wife. Vita Offa, p. 12.

^f Brompton, x Script. p. 776, puts the Northumbri first; but Huntingdon, 243, places them after his other conquests. So Matt. West. 275, and Hoveden, 409.

^g Mailros, p. 138. Hoveden, 403. Sim. Dun. 107.—The situation of these people

774. invaded Kent, and a great slaughter ensued at Otford, in which Offa triumphed, and Kent submitted to the power of Mercia.^a Afterwards he measured his strength with the king of Wessex, at Bensington, and established his great power by defeating Cynewulf, and subjecting part of his dominions.^b

The conquests of Offa have not been transmitted to us in accurate detail; but the celebrity which he attained, and the blood which his contemporary, Alcuin, attests him to have shed, imply many warlike and not rightful exertions.^c The prerogatives which he exercised confirm the traditions of his power. He founded the abbey at St. Alban's, and the abbey of Bath; and made gifts of land to Canterbury, and other places, far beyond the limits of his inherited domains.^d

Offa is distinguished beyond the other Anglo-Saxon kings who had preceded him in the octarchy, by commencing an intercourse with the continent. He had a correspondence with Charlemagne, which does credit to the Frankish sovereign and to himself. In one letter, Charlemagne communicates to him with perceptible exultation his success in procuring the continental Saxons to adopt Christianity. In another the Frankish emperor promises security to all pilgrims, and his especial protection and legal interference to all commercial adventurers, on their paying the requisite duties. He greets Offa with expressions of friendship, and sends him a belt, an Hungarian sword, and two silken cloaks.^e

A discord of some moment interrupted this amity. All inter-

is contested. Mr. Watts thinks them of Hastings, one of the Cinque Ports. Langhorn, p. 29, believes the word to have meant east men, and to have alluded to the east part of Northumbria.—Alford, in his annals, settles the question. A charter in Dublet fixes them in Sussex. Offa by this confirms a grant of land, in the neighbourhood of Hastings, to the Abbey of St. Denis; and styles Bertwald the proprietor of Hastings and Pevensey, his *fidelis*.

^a Mailros, 138. Sax. Chron. 61. Vit. Offæ, p. 15.

^b Sax. Chron. 61. Matt. West. 279.

^c Alcuin, the preceptor of Charlemagne, speaking of the immature fate of Offa's son, mentions, that pater suus pro confirmatione regni ejus multum sanguinem effudit. Ap. Malmsh. de Gest. p. 33.

^d Matt. West, 284. Dugdale Monasticon, i. p. 19, 62, 177, 184. Matt. West, p. 268, enumerates twenty-three counties which Offa governed. Amongst these, the districts of East Anglia, Essex, and part of Wessex and Northumbria, are recited.

^e Du Chesne Scrip. Fr. vol. ii. p. 620. Malmsh. 32. In the second volume of Du Chesne's Hist. Franc. Scriptorum, p. 686, is another letter from Charlemagne to Offa. The king states the *guilty* conduct of a Presbyter et Scottus, who had eaten meat in Lent. The king mentions that the clergy in France, for want of full evidence, had declined to pass sentences upon him; and adds, that, as he could not remain where he was, from the infamy of the thing; and lest the sacerdotal honour should be thought by the ignorant vulgar to be tarnished, and lest others should be induced to violate the sacred fast, Charlemagne thought it fittest to send him to abide the judgment of his bishop.

Another monument of their intercourse exists in a letter from Charlemagne to the archbishop Athilhard, whom Alcuin styles, the primate of Canterbury. In this letter the humanity of Charlemagne is nobly distinguished. It is in behalf of some

course between the two countries was reciprocally interdicted ;^m but the quarrel is not stated to have lasted long. Offa had also a quarrel with the pope.

The wars of Offa with the Britons were at first to his disadvantage. Some branches of the Cymry penetrated in an incursion into Mercia. Their united attack drove the English from the Severn ; they frequently repeated their devastations. Offa collected in greater number the forces of the Anglo-Saxons, and marched into Wales. The Britons, unable to withstand him, quitted the open country between the Severn and the Wye, and withdrew to their mountains. Impregnable among these natural fortresses, they awaited the return of the invaders, and then sallied out in new aggressions. To terminate these wasteful incursions, Offa annexed the eastern regions of Wales, as far as the Wye, to Mercia, planted them with Anglo-Saxons, and separated them from the Britons by a large trench and rampart, extending from the æstuary of the Dee to the mouth of the Wye.ⁿ It was carried through marshes, and over mountains and rivers, for an hundred miles, and was long celebrated under the name of *Claudh Offa*, or *Offa's Dyke*.^o Its remains and direction are yet visible.^p It was used for ages afterwards, as the boundary which determined the confines of England and Wales : a boundary jealously guarded with the most rigorous penalties.^q

exiles, for whom he entreats the prelate to intercede with Offa, that they may have leave to return to their country in peace, and secured from the oppression of injustice. He says, their lord, *Vinhrinagstan*, was dead, who he thinks would have proved faithful to his lord, if he might have remained in his country. "To escape the peril of death, he fled to us, but was always ready to purge himself from all infidelity. We kept him with us not from enmity, but with the hope of producing a reconciliation. As to these his followers, if you can obtain their peace, let them remain in the country. But," adds this humane king, "if my brother answers harshly about them, send them to us uninjured. It is better to travel than to perish ; it is better to serve in another country than to die at home. But I trust to the goodness of my brother, if you strongly intercede for them that he may receive them kindly for love of us, or rather for the love of Christ."

The delicacy of this application is peculiar. He does not write to Offa, because he will not compromise his own dignity by subjecting it to a refusal, nor appear to dictate to another prince ; he employs an honoured minister of peace ; he applies to Offa the tender epithet of my brother ; and he makes a denial almost impossible, by the disinterested humanity which he intends to show them, if Offa should be inexorable. 2 *Du Chesne*, p. 678.

^m *Alcuin ap. Malmsh.* 32.

ⁿ *Brut y Tywys.* p. 473. *Brut y Saeson*, p. 474. *Asser, de Gestis Elfredi*, 10. *Sim Dunelm.* p. 118. After these events the princes of Powys moved their royal seat from Pengwern, or Shrewsbury, to *Mathraval* in Montgomeryshire. Where the royal castle of *Mathraval* stood, a small farm-house is the only building visible now.

^o *Lhwyd Comment. Brit. Descript.* 42.—Almost all the cities and towns on its eastern side, "in ton vel ham finientia habent." *Ibid.*

^p See *Gibson's Camden*, p. 587.

^q *Jo. Sariab. Polycrat.* in his *De nugis curialium*, lib. vi. p. 184.

Offa's desire of reading is mentioned by Alcuin.^r

The basest action of Offa was the murder of Ethelbert, king of East Anglia.

At the close of Offa's reign, Ethelbert possessed the crown of East Anglia, a peaceful and intelligent prince, in the bloom of youth and beauty, interesting in his manners, and virtuous in his disposition. Invited or welcomed by Offa,^s he went to Mercia, for the purpose of receiving the hand of Etheldritha, the daughter of the Mercian king. He travelled with a splendid retinue. Offa received him with that distinction which was due to the allotted husband of his daughter. But before the marriage was completed, Ethelbert was assassinated, and the father of his beloved commanded the murder. Though Offa had pledged his protection, had received the king of East Anglia as his guest, had introduced him to his daughter as her approved husband, and the nuptial feast had begun, Offa is represented as having procured his assassination.^t The favourable moment of annexing East Anglia to Mercia was a temptation which overpowered the feelings of the father and the man. The friends of Ethelbert fled in consternation. Offa invaded his dominions, and East Anglia was added to his conquests.

Did such a complication of crimes benefit the perpetrator? Before two years elapsed, he sunk from his empire to his grave. Remorse embittered all the interval. His widowed daughter abandoned his court, fled into the marshes of Croyland, and pined away her life in mourning solitude;^u his queen, the evil counsellor of his ambition, perished miserably;^v the husband of another of his daughters was cut off in the same year with himself:^w the other, who married Brihtric, died a martyr to vice and penury the most extreme, scorned and abhorred;^x his son Ecgfrid, who succeeded him, was permitted to exist only 141 days;^y and thus the race of Offa disappeared for ever.

^r Alcuin in a letter to him says, "It greatly pleases me that you have such an intention to read; that the light of wisdom may shine in your kingdom which is now extinguished in many places." He adds some good moral advice. *Alc. Op.* p. 1554.

^s The welcome is affirmed by all. The invitation by Malmesbury, 29, and the author of the *Life of Offa*, p. 23, and Hen. Silgrave, *MSS. Cott. Cleop. A. 12*.

^t That Offa commanded the murder is expressly asserted by Ethelwerd, 840; Hoveden, 410; Huntingdon, 344; *Sax. Chron.* 65; *Flor. Wig.* 281; *Malmesb. de Pont.* 287; *Bromton*, 749; *Higden*, 251; *Rad. Dicot.* 446; and *Aessori Annal.* 154. Their uniting evidence does away the attempt of *Matt. West.* p. 283, and the fabulous monk of *St. Alban's*, in *Vita Offa*, p. 23, who wants to fix it solely on the queen.—Both these apologists admit that Offa immediately seized East Anglia; and such an action, after such a catastrophe, is among the most forcible evidences of his guilt and its motive.

^u *Ingulf.* 7. *Bromton*, 752. *Vit. Offa*, p. 24.

^v *Vit. Offa*, p. 25.

^w Ethelred, the son of Moll.

^x See further, note ^r p. 276.

^y *Bromton*, 754. *Hunt.* 344. *Ingulf.* 6. Offa went to Rome before his death, and extended to his own dominions the liberality of Ina, called *Romescot*. It was with strict truth that the friend of the great Alfred mentions Offa with the epithet

During the reign of Offa, the sceptre of Wessex had been swayed, since 755, by Cynewulf. He warred with the Britons successfully,^a and met Offa in the disastrous conflict at Bensington. After a reign of many years he fell a victim to revenge and desperation. He endeavoured to expel Cyneheard, the brother of the deposed Sigebyrht; a suspicion that he was meditating retaliation, occasioned the attempt.^b Cyneheard determined to prevent the blow; he watched the unguarded moment when the king with a few attendants visited a lady at Merton in Surrey; he collected about eighty desperadoes, hastened to the place, and surrounded the chamber to which the king had retired, before his friends were aware of his danger. The king quitted the apartment, and vigorously defended himself; he beheld Cyneheard, and, rushing forward, severely wounded him; but no courage could prevail against such numbers. Cynewulf was slain. Roused by the clamour of the struggle, his thanes hurried to the conflict. Safety and wealth were offered to them by the assassins; but no bribes could repress their loyal indignation; and they fell nobly by their master's side; one British hostage only escaped, desperately wounded. In the morning the dismal tidings had circulated; and the great officers of the royal household, Osric, the friend, and Weverth, the faithful minister of Cynewulf, with their attendants, rode to the town. Cyneheard lavished both promises and presents, if they would assist him to obtain the crown. The disinterested thanes disdained the favours of a murderer, forced an entrance with their battle-axes, and a deadly contest ensued, in which the guilty perished.^b

This melancholy catastrophe produced the dignity of Brihtric. He was of the race of Cerdic,^c and married Eadburga, 787. the daughter of Offa. The year of his accession was distinguished as that in which the Danes are recorded by the Anglo-Saxon writers to have first landed on the English shore. The gerefæ of the place went out to see the strangers, who had arrived with three vessels, and was instantly killed.^d Their incursion was repeated on other parts of the island.

The wife of Brihtric, or Beorhtric, is expressed by Asser to have imitated the tyranny of her father, Offa; to have hated all to whom her father was attached, and to have done whatever

"universis circa se regibus et regionibus finitimis formidolosus rex." Asser de Reb. Gest. Eilfredi, p. 10.

^a Flor. Wig. 274. Sax. Chron. 57. Of Cornwall, I presume; for in his charter to the monastery at Wells, dated 766, he adduces among his motives to the donation pro aliqua vexatione inimicorum nostrorum Cornubiolorum gentis. See it ap. Dagd. i. 186.

^b Matt. West. 280. This author states, that Cyneheard had been banished.

^c Sax. Chron. 59, 63. Flor. Wig. 278. Hunt. 343.

^d Sax. Chron. 63.

^e Sax. Chron. 64.; Flor. Wig. 280.; and see Ethelwerd.

was odious to mankind. She became familiar with crimes which the gentleness of female nature never perpetrates till its moral sentiments have been erased. She accused to the king whomsoever her caprice disliked, and thus deprived them of life or power. When he refused the gratification to her malice, she used the secret poison.

To one youth the king was so attached, that her arts were fruitlessly exerted to procure his disgrace. She mingled for him a poisoned cup. It was the destiny of Brihtric, that, by accident, he should drink the contents. Thus punished for his unjust compliances with the malignancy of Eadburga, he expired as well as the youth,* and was succeeded by Egbert.

Driven out of Wessex, the wretched woman sailed with great treasures to France, and presented herself to Charlemagne. With splendid presents she stood before the throne: "Choose, Eadburga," said the king, "which you prefer, me or my son."—"Your son," was her answer, "because he is youngest." The monarch tauntingly assured her, that if she had selected him, he should have transferred her to his son; but that as her election had been otherwise, she should have neither. He gave her what he thought better suited her immorality, the habit and discipline of a cloister; but even in this retreat she indulged her depravity, and was turned out of the society. In poverty and miserable vice she dragged on a loathed existence, and at last, accompanied by a little girl, she begged her daily bread at Pavia; and closed an abandoned life by a deplorable death.†

CHAPTER XI.

The Reigns of Egbert and Ethelwulf.

EGBERT, the most distinguished and successful king of all the Anglo-Saxon race before Alfred, was the son of Alcmund, or Ethelmund, the great grandson of Inigils, the brother of Ina. Alcmund was left early in his mother's care, and his sisters were

* Asmer relates these incidents from the communications of his illustrious master: "Quod a domino meo Ælfredo Angul-saxonum rege veredico, etiam saepe mihi referente audivi," p. 10. The Saxon chronicle mentions Worr as the caldorman who died with Brihtric, p. 68. Brihtric was buried in Tewkesbury. Chron. de Tewkesb. MSS. Cott. Cleop. c. 3.

† Asmer says he had this fact from many who had seen her, p. 12.—In 798, London was burnt, with many of its inhabitants. Chron. Pet. 10.

sent into Saxony for their education, where they became religious.^a Egbert received the instruction of the times, and his talents gave splendour to his youth. When Brihtric became king of Wessex, the popularity of Egbert excited his mistrust, and he projected his destruction. To avert the danger, Egbert fled to Offa. The messengers of Brihtric followed him; and, to debar the young exile from the friendship of Mercia, they solicited for their master the daughter of Offa. Eadburga was betrothed to Brihtric, and Egbert sailed to the coast of France, where he greatly improved his mind.^b

It was after 787, that he left Offa for the court of Charlemagne. The indefatigable monarch, whom Europe every year beheld in a new part of its varied climate, pouring his disciplined warriors on the powerful savage tribes, which swarmed between the German Ocean and the mouth of the Danube, in the year 788 marched against the Slavonians on the Baltic. Scarce had they submitted, but the Huns were invading him, and he was also summoned towards Naples by the hostilities of the eastern empire. He subdued the Avarians and the Huns, the modern Austrians and Hungarians. When Saxony revolted, he determined to extirpate the most hostile of its confederation. The fate of 30,000 men evinced the dreadful execution of his determination.

On his return from this expedition, he passed his winter at Aix-la-Chapelle, a place with which he was much delighted. 795. In the subsequent years we find him at Paderborn, afterwards traversing the French coasts, visiting the diet at Mentz, and, in the year 800, marching into Italy through Suabia and Friuli. We may reasonably suppose that Egbert attended him in some of these expeditions, and that great activity, enlargement, and information of mind, was acquired by the Anglo-Saxon prince during his asylum with the Frankish sovereign. Thus Egbert's exile and adversity became beneficial both to himself and to the country which he was soon called to govern.

It was in the year 800 that Egbert was summoned out of the French empire to the throne of England. As he was the only descendant of Cerdic that was in existence,^c his accession was highly popular in Wessex. 800.

At the period of his accession, the island, though nominally under an hexarchy, was fast verging into a triarchy. The petty powers of Kent, Essex, and East Anglia, had already become

^a Wallingford, 3 Gale, 531. See Thorn. 2; x. *Scrip.* 2211; and 3 *Lel.* 55. The Saxon Chronicle makes the father of Egbert king of Kent, p. 63; and Higden entitles him *sub reguli*, p. 252. So Rudborne. The eldest sons of the kings of Wessex seem, at this period, to have been always appointed kings of Kent, until the reign of Alfred.

^b *Malma. lib. ii. c. 1, p. 36.* Hen. *Silgrave, Cott. MSS. p. 12.*

^c *Malsbury, lib. i. c. 2, p. 16.*

the satellites of Mercia; Northumbria, occupied in producing and destroying a succession of usurpers and turbulent nobles, had ceased to molest her neighbours; Wessex had enlarged herself by the incorporation of Sussex; its population and wealth multiplied under the peaceable administration of Brihtric, and a series of able sovereigns had reduced the nobles of the land to an useful subordination. The force of Wessex was therefore a well organized concentration of various powers, ready to operate with all their energies for any great purpose to which they should be summoned.

At this crisis Egbert acceded. The friendship of Charlemagne had educated him to the arts of empire; and the studies cultivated at the Frankish court had excited his mind, and polished his manners.^d From the example of the French emperor he learnt the difficult policy of governing, with vigour and prudence, the discordant members of a great body politic. The character of Charlemagne was a mixture of cultivated intellect and barbarism, which was likely to have interested and improved the mind of Egbert; and in the wars of the Franks he must have imbibed a military knowledge superior to that of every Anglo-Saxon competitor.

His mild government completed the attachment of his subjects, and the tranquillity of the first years of his reign fostered his growing strength.

For the first nineteen years of Egbert's reign, Kenwulf continued to sit on the throne of Mercia. He had subdued Kent, and ruled Mercia and its appendages, with an ability which suspended the ambition of the West Saxon king. Kenwulf is mentioned with applause for his peacefulness, piety, and justice.^e His ability was known to his contemporaries, and secured his repose.

It was on the inferior Britons of the West, that Egbert first tried the efficacy of his military strength. He penetrated successfully into Devonshire and Cornwall; resistance was in vain; and he ravaged, unchecked, from the East to the West.^f

The path to his greatness was laid open to Egbert by the death
819. of Kenwulf.^g The wisdom of this king had completed the efforts of Offa for the power of Mercia; and if his successors had been of equal energy, Wessex might not at this period have become its superior.

^d Malmesbury says of the Franks, "This nation, from the activity of its powers and the urbanity of its manners, was decidedly the prince of all the western states;" he mentions that Egbert *regnandi disciplinam a Francis acciperit, and that with them aciem mentis expodiret et mores longè a gentilitia barbarie alienos indueret.* Lib. ii. c. 1, p. 36.

^e Ingulf. Hist. p. 6. rex justissimus. Chron. Pet. 10.

^f Sax. Chron. 69. Flor. Wig. 265. Malmesb. 36. Ethelw. 840. In the year 816, the English school at Rome was burnt. Flor. Wig. 265.

^g Ingulf. 7.

But to such a degree of strength had these rival states respectively attained, that it was obvious a serious competition must soon arise from one to be sovereign of the whole. The humiliation of the other powers increased the rivalry of these. Two neighbouring co-equals in power cannot long exist in amity together, because man is too much a being of hope and envy, and too little appreciates tranquillity and content. By its political power, Mercia promised to win in the approaching race of supremacy; but Wessex was rising so fast into importance, that nothing less than a continuation of able government in Mercia could suppress its competition. Both had reached that point of power, at which the state that was first disquieted by the evils of a weak administration would inevitably fall under the pressure of the other.

Egbert and Kenwulf governed their several kingdoms with such steady capacity, that, during their co-existence, the balance was not determined. If Kenwulf had been the survivor, and minors or incapable men, harassed by factious chiefs, had succeeded to the throne of Egbert, then Mercia would have acquired the monarchy of England; but the coveted distinction was allotted to Wessex, and the causes powerful enough to reduce a nation, were suffered to operate in Mercia.

Kenwulf left his son, Kinelm, a child of seven years of age, the heir to his crown, under the tutelage of his marriageable daughters. The eldest of these, Windroda, hopeful of acquiring a permanent authority, resolved on her brother's death. He was carried by his foster-father, under pretence of hunting, into a wood, and there murdered. Her crime failed to profit her. Her uncle, Ceolwulf, took the crown; in his second year he was driven out by Beornwulf.^b

These distractions checked Mercia in her career of dignity. Beornwulf became by his usurpation rather the king of his party than sovereign of the united population of his territory. He had acquired his throne by violence; yet if his skill had been equal to the crisis, he might have consolidated his power; but he is characterized as a fool, rich and powerful, though of no regal ancestry.^c With giddy precipitancy he plunged into a personal competition with Egbert, and linked the fate of Mercia in his own^d

^b Ingulf, 7. Flor. Wig. 286.

^c Ingulf, 7. *A Bernulpho quodam fatuoso et divitiis ac potentia pollenti, in nullo que lineam regalem contingente expulsus est.*

^d In 823, a battle occurred at Gafelford, or Camelford, in Cornwall. *Sax. Chron.* Flor. Wig. 287. The men of Devonshire are particularized as the combatants who conflicted with the Cornish Britons. The pieces of armour, rings, and brass furniture for horses, dug up here, and the local tradition of a bloody battle, may be collateral evidences of this struggle; but they are also claimed by Leland as the attestations of the celebrated fight of Camlan, which he places on this spot. Whether Egbert or his generals commanded against the Britons, is not decisively ascertained.

It was in 823 that Beornwulf rushed to that collision, which the wary Egbert seems to have been reluctant to hazard. 823. The twenty-three years' forbearance of the West Saxon prince indicates no inordinate ambition; but the hostilities of Beornwulf roused him into activity. At Wilton the competition between the two states was decided.^k The superior strength of the forces of Mercia was balanced by the skill of Egbert. A furious battle ensued, which the rival armies maintained with great obstinacy; but at length Egbert conquered with great slaughter, and Beornwulf fled in irremediable confusion.

Egbert derived from his victory all the consequences of which it was so fruitful: he beheld the favourable moment for breaking the power of Mercia for ever, and he seized it with avidity. He despatched his son, Ethelwulf, and the warlike bishop and able statesman, Ealstan, with a competent army, into Kent, who drove the potty sovereign that had ruled there, the dependent of Mercia, over the Thames;^l and then Kent, and its neighbour, Essex, became for ever united to the crown of Wessex.

Egbert pursued his scheme of aggrandizement with careful policy. He forbore to invade Mercia; for though it had been defeated, it abounded yet with courageous soldiery; and Egbert seems to have been cautious of putting too much into hazard. Instead of attacking Beornwulf in Mercia, Egbert fomented the discontent with which the East Anglians endured the Mercian yoke; by promise of support he excited East Anglia to revolt, and thus engaged his rival in a new warfare.^m

Beornwulf went in anger to chastise the East Anglians. His incapacity again disgraced him with a defeat: he fell in 825. the contest;ⁿ and was succeeded by Ludecan, who again led the forces of Mercia against East Anglia; but he was as unfortunate as his predecessor, and found a grave where he had hoped for empire. Wiglaf, the governor or prince of Worcestershire, succeeded.^o

The views of Egbert were now accomplished. An important passage of Ingulfus pours light on the policy of Egbert. He says that the two usurpers, Beornwulf and Ludecan, by their imprudence destroyed all the military strength of Mercia, which had been most numerous and victorious.^p For this event Egbert seems to have waited; and as soon as he found that Mercia had

^k Sax. Chron. 70. Flor. Wig. 267. Hunt. 344.

^l Sax. Chron. 70. Wallingf. 534. Hunt. 345. Flor. Wig. 287. The year 824 is remarked by continental annalists to have had a winter so extremely severe, that not only animals, but many of the human race, perished in the excessive cold. See Annal. Fuldenses. 6 Bouquet's Recueil, p. 208. The annals add a description of a huge stone which fell from the air!

^m Ingulf. 7.

ⁿ Ibid. Chron. Petr. 12.

^o Ibid.

^p Regno vehementer oppressa, totam militiam ejus, quæ quondam plurima extiterat, et victoriosissima, sua imprudentia perdidit. Ing. 7.

exhausted herself against others, his caution was thrown aside, and his officers marched his army immediately into Mercia. Wiglaf, attacked before he could recruit his forces, fled from his new dominion, and concealed himself from the eager searches of Egbert in the monastery of Croyland. That interesting character, Ethelburga, widowed in the hour of the marriage-feast by her father Offa's crime, sheltered the fugitive prince in her respected cell.^a How painfully must she have moralized on the deed which had not only destroyed her happiness, but had contributed in its consequences to the ruin of Mercia!

The negotiations of the venerable abbot of Croyland preserved Wiglaf, but completed the inevitable degradation of Mercia. Egbert agreed to the king's continuing on the throne as the tributary vassal of Wessex. The expressions of Wiglaf, in the charter of Croyland, six years after this pacification, are, "I have procured it to be confirmed by my lord, Egbert, king of Wessex, and his son."—"In the presence of my lord, Egbert and Athelwulf."—The payment of the tribute is attested by Ingulf.^b The submission of East Anglia was consequential to the humiliation of Mercia. 827.

Northumbria had not yet felt his power. Eardulf, whom we left reigning at the beginning of this the ninth century, had assumed a hostile posture against Kenwulf of Mercia; but the clergy interposed, and procured a reconciliation.^c In 806, Eardulf was driven out, and the province continued without a king for a long time.^d Alfwold is mentioned afterwards, as a fleeting monarch of two years; and Eanred, the son of Eardulf, then succeeded for thirty-three years, and transmitted it to his son.^e It was against Eanred that Egbert marched, after the conquest of Mercia. The Northumbrian prince was too prudent to engage his turbulent and exhausted kingdom in a war with Egbert: he felt the imperious necessity, and obeyed it. At Dore, beyond the Humber, he met the West-Saxon prince, and amicably acknowledged his superiority.^f

The Anglo-Saxon octarchy thus subdued, he turned the tide of conquest towards Wales. With a numerous army he penetrated to Snowdon, the Parnassus of the Cambrian bards. The same successes attended his arms in North Wales. 828.

^a Ing. 7.

^b Per dominum meum Egbertum regem West Saxonie et Athelwulphum filium ejus illud obtinui confirmari. Ing. 9.—In presentia dominorum meorum Egberti regis West Saxonie et Athelwulphi filii ejus. Ing. 10.

^c Promissa tributis annualis Pensione. Ing. 8.

^d Sim. Dunelm. de Gestis Reg. Angl. 117.

^e Sim. Dunelm. de Dunel. Eccles. 13.

^f Sax. Chron. 71. Flor. Wig. 268.

^g Chron. Mailros. 141.

and he penetrated to Denbighshire, and from thence to Anglesey.* He appointed his son Ethelwulf king of Kent.⁷

The only enemy that baffled the genius of Egbert was the
 832. Danes, who continued their depredations; and probably under the command of that celebrated sea-king, Ragnar Lodbrog, whose actions will be more distinctly considered.* They ravaged the Isle of Sheppey, and in the next year defeated Egbert at Charmouth, in Dorsetshire.^a This disaster, perhaps, occasioned that council which Wiglaf, in his charter to Croyland, mentions to have met this year at London, for the purpose of deliberating on the Danish depredations.^b The efficacy of the measures adopted by the council appeared at Hengston Hill, in
 835. Cornwall. The Danes landed on this part of the island, and the Cornish Britons, from fear or voluntary policy, entered into offensive alliance with them against Egbert. The king of Wessex defeated their combined forces with great slaughter.^c

After a reign of prosperity seldom rivalled, Egbert died full of
 836. glory.^d He had made all the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms subordinate to his own; but the tale, that he assembled the Anglo-Saxon states, and abolishing the distinction of Saxons and Angles, and all provincial appellations, commanded the island to be called England, and procured himself to be crowned and entitled king of England, seems not to be entitled to our belief.^e

* Brut y Saeson. 475. Brut y Tywysog. 392. Sax. Chron. 72. Ethelwerd, 841.

⁷ So he says in a charter at Rochester, dated "Ethelwulph, quem regem constituemus in Cantia." Thorpe, Reg. Ref. p. 22.

^a See the next book, ch. 3.

^b Sax. Chron. 72.

^c Ingulf, 10. (Ubi omnes congregati fuimus pro concilio capiendo contra Danicos piratas littora Angliæ assidue infestantes.)

^d Sax. Chron. 72.

^e Sax. Chron. 73. Flor. Wig. 291. Higden, 253. Chron. Petri de Bergo, 13. The Chronicle of Mailros says in 838, p. 142. The Asserii Annales, 839, p. 155. Wallingford, 837, p. 531. On the 26th January, in the year 839, an unusual inundation of the sea devastated all Frisia, so that it was almost on a level with the copious masses of sands, called there Dunos (Downs). Animals, men, and houses, were destroyed by the waters. The number of the inhabitants known to have perished in the deluge, was 2437. Annal. Bertiniani. 6 Bouquet's Recueil.

* I was induced, as early as I began this work, to doubt this popular tale, by observing these circumstances:—1. That although if such an act had taken place, the legal title of Egbert and his successors would have been rex Anglorum; yet that neither he nor his successors till after Alfred, generally used it. In his charters Ethelwulf always signs king of the West Saxons; so do his three sons; so Alfred; and in his will he says, I, Alfred, of the West Saxons, king. Asser, the friend of this king, styles Ethelwulf and his three sons always kings of the West Saxons, p. 6-91. It is with Alfred that he begins to use a different title; he names him Angul Saxonum rex.—2. Egbert did not establish the monarchy of England: he asserted the predominance of Wessex over the others, whom he defeated or made tributary, but he did not incorporate East Anglia, Mercia, or Northumbria. It was the Danish sword which destroyed these kingdoms, and thereby made Alfred the monarch of the Saxons; accordingly, Alfred is called primus monarcha by some; but, in strict truth, the monarchy of England must not even be attributed to

As the new enemies from the Baltic, who had begun to appear in England, for the first time, at the end of the eighth and in the ninth centuries, were not duly noticed by our historians before the publication of this work, it will be necessary, for the more perfect understanding of the events which they caused, to take a review of the political state of Scandinavia, and of its customs at this period.

him, because Danish sovereigns divided the island with him, and occupied all the parts which the Angles had peopled, except Mercia. It was Athelstan, who destroyed the Danish sovereignty, that may, with the greatest propriety, be entitled *primus monarcha Anglorum*; and accordingly Alured of Beverly so intimates him, p. 93. *Totius Angliæ monarchiam primus Anglo-Saxonum obtinuit Edelstanus.*—3. The important incidents of the coronation, and change of name, are not mentioned by the best writers. The Saxon Chronicle, Florence of Worcester, Asser, Ethelward, Ingulf, Huntingdon, Hoveden, Bromton, Malmesbury, the Chronicle of Mailros, of Peterborough, and Matthew of Westminster, say nothing about it.—4. Why should Egbert, a Saxon, have given the Angles a preference in the royal title? The fact seems to be, that the people of the provinces colonized by the Angles had been long called Angli. Bede and Boniface, in the century before Egbert, so call them. There is, however, one charter that makes an exception. In one of those at Rochester, Egbert is called *rex Anglorum*. Thorpe, p. 22. Yet his son Ethelwulf does not continue the title, but uses that of *occidentalium Saxonum*, p. 23; which proves, that if the other charter with the *Anglorum* be a genuine one, yet that this word could not have arisen from any legal change of title, or his son would have continued it. So far as such a phrase was applied to Egbert from his victories, it was a just compliment; but it is no evidence of his assumption of it as his legal title.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

The Political State of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, in the Eighth Century.

ALTHOUGH popular language, seldom accurate, has given the denomination of Danes, to the invaders of England, they were composed of the nations who lived in the regions now known by the general appellations of Sweden and Norway, as well as of the inhabitants of Zealand and Jutland. Of these, the Swedes were the earliest civilized, and seem to have first abandoned the system of maritime piracy. The Norwegians continued their aggressions, though at long intervals, to the year wherein this history ends. The Danes, who headed the most terrible of the invasions, were also the most successful. Under Sweyn, Canute, and his children, they obtained the government of Britain.

The general aspect of the north, in the eighth century, was remarkable for two peculiarities, which were fitted to produce an age of piracy. These were the numerous petty kings who ruled in its various regions, and the sea-kings who swarmed upon the ocean.

Norway, whose broken coast stretches along a tumultuous ocean, from the rocks of the Baltic into the arctic circle, was the most sterile of all the regions of the north. Its rugged mountains, and intolerable cold, were unfriendly to agricultural cultivation; but they nurtured a hardy and vigorous race, who, possessing no luxuries, feared no invasion, but poured their fleets on other coasts, to seize the superfluities which happier climates produced.* The navigator whom Alfred consulted and employed, describes this region, which he calls Northmannaland, as very long and very small. "All that man may use for pasture or plough lieth against the sea; and even this in some places very

* Adam Bremen. *Historia Ecclesiastica*, lib. iv. c. 96. p. 71, ed Lindenbrog. Franc. 1630.

rocky. Wild moors lie against the east, and along the inhabited lands. In these moors the finnas dwell. The cultivated land is broadest towards the east, but becomes continually smaller as it stretches towards the north."b Ohthere added, that the "moors were in some places so broad, that a man would be two weeks in travelling over them; in others but six days."c

From these descriptions we may remark, that the natural state of the country favoured maritime depredations. The population was along the sea. The natives were hardy, and their subsistence scanty. Compelled by their penury, they roamed largely abroad, and returned, when plunder had enriched them.d

Norway, in the eighth century, was divided among numerous sovereignties, called fylki, which an Icelandic Saga defines to have been a province which could furnish twelve ships, containing each sixty or seventy well armed men.e Sometimes every fylki had an independent king. Sometimes more than one were under the same ruler.f The chorographical description of Norway enumerates twenty-two of these fylki, besides the fylki of Trondheim, which contained eight more.g The number of sovereignties probably varied according to the ambition and success of the several chiefs. The Hervarar Saga mentions, that at one period there were twelve kingdoms in Norway.h In the ninth century they were very numerous. Snorre, the very ancient and most valuable historiographer of Norway,i brings all the fylki kings to our view, in his history of Harald Harfrage, the descendant of a petty prince in the southern parts of Scandinavia, who acceded in 862.j Harald swore to subdue all these little sovereigns, as Gormo had already conquered those of Denmark,

b See Ohthere's narration, inserted by Alfred in his Saxon translation of Orosius, p. 24, ed. Lond. 1773. The land subjected to human culture, he describes as about 60 miles broad in the eastward, about 30 in the middle; and northward, where smallest, it might be three miles to the moors. Ibid.

c Ohthere, *ibid.*

d Adam Brem. p. 71.

e Olaf Tryggva-son's Saga, c. 41. Stephanus says, that the ancient Danes used the word fylki to signify a province now called the Læn; but so populous as to furnish an army. In each of these a sovereign governed. Note in Saxon. Gram. p. 118, ed. Hafn. 1644.

f Olaf's Saga, p. 97.

g Stephanus recapitulates them, p. 118.

h C. 18, p. 221. This Saga, whose author is unknown, is a kind of Icelandic Epopea. The original was published with a vernacular translation and Latin notes, by Verelius, in 1672. The last edition is valuable for its Latin version; but it has omitted, I think, with a diminution of its utility, and with injustice to Verelius, his learned notes. Some might have been retrenched, but the great body of them ought not to have been characterized as "non momentaneæ."

i Snorre Sturleson was born at Hvam, in West Iceland, 1178. In 1213 he was made supreme judge of Iceland. He was a poet as well as an historian. His moral character was not so distinguished as his genius. He was killed at Reickholt, in his sixty-third year. See his life, prefixed to Schöning's edition of his *Heimskringla*, or *Historia Regum Norvegiarum*. Havn. 1777.

j *Annales Islandici vetustissimi*, 2 Langbeck's Script. Dan. p. 186.

and Eric those of Sweden. He accomplished his vow. By his first effort he destroyed the kings who governed in the eight fylki of Trondheim, and reduced these fylki under his dominion.^k The rest of his life was chiefly occupied by his wars with the other. The struggle ended in his uniting them all under one monarchy.^l

Skirted by the Alps of Norway, Sweden was distinguished for its fertility, wealth, and commerce.^m Its population was numerous, warlike, and hospitable.ⁿ The name of Sweden, though now applied to the whole region governed by the Swedish monarch, was in ancient times restricted to the territory about Upsal.^o Before the eighth century, it contained many provincial sovereignties, called Herads Konungr, of whom the king of Upsal was the chief. As cultivation spread, and deserts were converted into fields, new kingdoms rose.^p Nineteen of these puny kingdoms are enumerated.^q The king of Upsal, subjecting these inferior rulers, received the denomination of Thiod Kongr.^r Ingialld, who perished in the invasion of Ivar Vidfadme, destroyed by treachery twelve of the petty kings.^s The king of Upsal received tribute from the rest, who were thence denominated Skatte Konngar, tributary kings.^t But these subordinate rulers sometimes amassed so much wealth by piracy, as to be more powerful than the superior lord.^u Sweden had not a very extensive population, till after the beginning of the eighth century: in the preceding age it was so full of woods and deserts, that it required many days' journey to pass over them. The father of Ingialld exerted

^k Snorre, Harald's Saga, c. 8, p. 81.

^l See Snorre, Harald's Saga, p. 83-112. The last chapters of the Ynglinga Saga are on the immediate ancestors of Harald, who sprang from the Ynglingi of Upsal.

^m Adam Brem. 68. Rembert, who obtained the archbishopric of Hamburg in 865, has left us some valuable expressions about Birca, which he calls the port of Sweden. He says, *Ibi multi essent negotiatores divites et abundantia totius boni atque pecunia thesaurorum multa.* Vita Ansgar. 1 Langb. 459.

ⁿ Adam Brem. p. 68. He says, the Swedes not only thought it a disgrace to refuse hospitality to the traveller, but they contended for the honour of entertaining him. Ibid. The Swedes had as many wives as they could maintain. Ibid.

^o Snorro calls this part Swithiod. He places here the Ynglingi, whose succession Ivar Vidfadme disturbed. Adam Brem. also distinguishes Suedia from the adjoining provinces of Gothland, p. 68.

^p Snorre, Ynglinga Saga, c. 40, p. 48.

^q In Messenii Scand. Illust. i. p. 7.

^r Verelius in Got. et Rol. p. 87. I observe in Snorre, that the ancient title of the kings of Sweden was Drottmar (lord). Dyggvi was first saluted Konungur (king), c. 20, p. 24. His mother was the daughter of Dan the Magnificent, a quo Danus ortum est nomen, ibid. Snorre says, the Swedes call him their drottinn, who takes the skattgialfr, the tribute from them, c. 11, p. 15.

^s Snorre, Yngl. c. 43, p. 53.

^t Peringskiöld Monum. Upl. 10. He calls the kings of Upsal Envalda, or Ofwer Konungar. The arms of Upland were a golden apple, or globe, surrounded with a belt, in allusion to the monarchy. Ibid.

^u Verelius Got. et Rol. 75.

himself to convert many forests and heaths into arable land.^v He made roads through parts which no human foot had explored, and by his wise industry, great extents of country were adorned for the first time by the cottages, corn, and people of a flourishing cultivation.^w This continent was, however, still so little peopled, that Olaf, the son of Ingialld, flying from Ivar, in the eighth century, found the country from the west of the kingdom of Upsal, to the Vener lake, an uninhabited forest. By the axe and by fire, he cleared the regions about the river, which runs into the lake; and the province and kingdom of Vermaland, under his auspices arose.^x It was not until the ninth century, that Jamtia and Helsingia, the two northern provinces of Sweden, received a permanent colony. Men, flying from the tyranny of the preponderant sovereign, levelled the woods, and spread themselves over the district.^y It seems to have been general throughout the north, that the interior parts of every country were wild solitudes. The sea-coasts were peopled; but as the natives undervalued agriculture, the adventurous spirits plunged into piracy, and the rest, addicted to hunting and pasturage, made few efforts to remove the frightful forests and extensive marshes which everywhere forbade their occupation.^z Sweden was for a long time a favourite prey to the pirates of Denmark and the Baltic.^a In the eighth century, the Upsal kingdom was conquered by Ivar Vidfadme, the little potentate of Scania, whose father was one of the chiefs destroyed by Ingialld.^b Upsal afterwards continued to increase in its power and preponderance.

The country of the Danes was composed of islands, which an unquiet ocean separated, and of the peninsula Jutland, which is almost insulated by its numerous bays. Of the Danish islands, Fionia was remarkable for its Odinsec,^c the place in Denmark to

^v Snorre, *Ynglinga Saga*, c. 37, p. 45.

^w Snorre, p. 45. Locconius, with truer chronology than others, places Aunund immediately before the father of Ragnar Lodbrog. *Hist. Succ.* p. 41.

^x Snorre, *Yng.* c. 46, p. 55.

^y Snorre gives the history of these colonizations in his *Saga Hakonar Goda*, c. 14, p. 137. Verelius cites the *Olaf Saga* on the same fact, in *Goth. et Rolf.* p. 15.

^z Verelius, *Goth. et Rolf.* 13. Hence the *Suerris-Saga* says, that travelling was very difficult, because on the melting of the ice and snows upon the rivers and lakes, the road must then be taken through pools, marshes, and trackless woods. *Verel. ib.* p. 14.

^a Snorre, p. 43, 44.

^b *Ibid.* p. 53.

^c *Ibid.* p. 9. Odins-ey means Odin's island. Odin afterwards moved into Sweden, built a temple, and founded a city at Sigton. *Ibid.* He is usually placed before the Christian era; but the Saxon Genealogies make him above 300 or 300 years more recent. These are entitled to much notice, because the Saxon annals are far more accurate and precise than the Northern. They were also committed much earlier to writing. These make Cerdic, in 495, the ninth descendant from Odin, (*Sax. Chron.* 15.) Ida, in 547, the tenth, (*Ibid.* 19.) Ella, in 560, the eleventh, (p. 20.) If we reckon each generation at twenty-five years, as a fair average, then, according to Cerdic's genealogy, Odin will be placed 270 after Christ; according to Ida's, 290, A. C.; according to Ella's, 285, A. C. This position of Odin, by the Saxon chronol-

which Odin went out of Saxony, after his reputed emigration from the Tanais. It became a great city. The island was very fertile, but its coasts were full of pirates.^d

Zealand was distinguished amidst the other isles for its magnitude, and its ancient metropolis, Lethra, whose sovereign was superior to the other kings who governed in the various provinces of the Danes.^e Jutland, which extended from the Angles to the Sound, constituted a principal part of the Danish strength. Its soil was sterile, but the country upon the rivers was cultivated; and the most frequented cities were on the arms of the sea, which ran into it. The rest was made up of vast solitudes and briny marshes, like all the north in this savage and calamitous period. It abounded with uninhabited forests, which concurred with the fens to keep the interior unpeopled. Hence the maritime coasts, though full of incessant danger, from the pirates, were the parts frequented.^f

The Danes also occupied Scania, on the Scandinavian continent. It was their richest province.^g This peninsula was almost an island: a tract of land, composed of deep forests and rugged mountains, divided it from Gothland.^h It produced Ivar, the king whose invasion destroyed the dynasty of the Ynglingi at Upsal, and who occupied part of England.ⁱ Saxo mentions Hallandia and Blekingia as Danish possessions.^j

Wulfstan, a navigator with whom Alfred conversed about the north-eastern countries of the Baltic, enumerated the isles of Langoland, Leland, Falster, and Sconey, as belonging at that period to Denemearca.^k The German chronicles at this time generally mean Jutland when they speak of Denmark, but the

clera, has sometimes suggested to me the probability, that Odin's famous emigration from the Euxine, was no other than the daring voyage of the Franks from the Euxine, which occurred between 270 and 280, A. C., and which is stated before, p. 160. It is a coincidence, that Snorre places his first conquests in Saxony; for the Franks landed about the Frisia, and immediately after that, the sea was covered with Frankish and Saxon pirates. Odin is also said by the Northern traditions to have fled from the Romans; but no other flight than the Frankish voyage is noticed by the Latin writers. The Saxon piracies show, that the Frankish voyage gave a new impulse to society in the north.

^d Adam Brem. 64.

^e On Lethra and its topography, see Stephanus in Sax. p. 74. It was in the middle of the island, not far from Roschild. Sveno, who lived in 1186, says, that this famous city had in his time so declined, that inter abjectissima forme vix colitur. Hist. Reg. Dan. 1 Langb 45. Roschild became afterwards the metropolis.

^f Adam Brem. 63. Jutland was anciently called Reidgotaland. Torfæus, Series Reg. Dan. 86, 87. The rest of Denmark was called Ey-gotland, the insular Gothland. Ibid. 83, 87.

^g Knytlings Saga. Worm. Mon. Dan. App. p. 35.

^h Adam, 64. In his time it had become very opulent.

ⁱ Snorre, p. 53, 54.

^j In his preface, he mentions the rock in Blekingia, so famous for its surprising inscriptions. He says, lib. vii. p. 138, Harald Hyldetand, as a monument to his father, caused his actions to be described on it. Wormius relates what remains of it. Monum. Dan. p. 221.

^k Alfred's Orosius, p. 25.

isles seem to have always formed an important part of the Danish population.¹

Denmark was anciently possessed by many contemporary kings. The *Knytlinga Saga*, after enumerating the districts which Denmark contained in the time of Canute, adds, that although then under one sovereign, they had formerly been divided into many kingdoms.² According to this document, Jutland contained five of these *Konga-ryki*, at Sleswick, Ripen, Arhusen, Wiburg, and Hording.³ The islands, and the continental provinces of Scania and Hallandia, had also their respective sovereigns, among whom the king of Lethra appears the most ancient and the most powerful.⁴ These petty kings were styled *Fylki Kongr*, people, or provincial kings.⁵ Ambition, before the eighth century, had diminished the number of the rival thrones. Two monopolized Jutland; Fionia, Seeland, and Scania, had each another.⁶ This number also lessened; and at the period of their first aggression on England, the Danish royalty was confined to a king in Jutland, and one over the isles. Soon afterwards one monarcha commanded the whole. Gormo Grandævus, who lived in the end of the ninth century, is stated to have destroyed the other reguli.⁷

In speaking of kings and kingdoms, we use words of swelling sound, and magnificent import. Splendour, extensive dominion, pomp, power, and venerated dignity, are the majestic images which arise in our minds when we hear of thrones. But we must dismiss from our thoughts the fascinating appendages to modern royalty, when we contemplate the petty sovereigns of the North. Some of their kingdoms may have equalled an English county in extent, but many would have been rivalled by our hundreds. Seated in their rural halls, with a small band of followers scattered about, these northern *fylki* kings were often victims to pirates who assailed them. They had neither castles, cities, nor

¹ They were anciently called *Witahedh*, or *Vitaslett*. *Verelius*, *Hist. Suio-Goth.* 16. *Peter Olau* says, that the name *Dania primo et principaliter*, comprehended the islands. *Chron.* 1 Langb. 83.

² *Knytlinga Saga*. *Wormius*, App. 36.

³ In Canute's time the proportionate importance of these provinces may be inferred from the war-ships they furnished to the king. Heida bay, containing 350 *kyrkna* or parishes, provided 130 ships. Ripen, 324 parishes, 110 or 120 ships. Arhusen, 210 parishes, 90 ships. Wiburg, 250 parishes, 100 ships. Hording, 160 parishes, 50 ships. Fionia, 300 parishes, 100 ships. Zealand, 309 churches, 120 ships. Scania, 353 churches, 150 ships. *Worm.* p. 34, 35.

⁴ *Snoorre* generally calls the Danish kings, kings of Hleidra, as p. 9, 17, 41, 43, &c. *Stephanus* says, *ab hac Lethra Danis reges in antiquissimis monumentis semper nominantur Kongar aff Ledra*, p. 74.

⁵ *Stephan.* p. 103. *Verelius* informs us, that *fylking* is an embodied army, *fylke* a province furnishing a *fylking*, and *fylke* king its sovereign. In *Got. et Sol.* p. 37.

⁶ *Anon. Roskild. Chron.* 1 Langb. 374. To the same purpose *Stephanus*, p. 103.

⁷ *Torfaus Hist. Norv.* i. p. 410. *Snoorre* intimates as much. *Harald's Saga*, c. 3. p. 78.

defensive fortifications.^a Even the Thiod-Kongr, the preponderant ruler, sometimes fell before one of his inferiors whom plunder had enriched.^b

The more settled kings of Denmark became known more distinctly to us in the time of Charlemagne. During his life, Godfrid reigned in Jutland, who had subdued the Frisians, and also the Obotriti and a part of the Slavi. He threatened Charlemagne with war. He was succeeded by Hemming, his cousin, who made peace with the Frankish monarch, and the Eyder was established as their common boundary. On Hemming's death, the Danish sovereignty was contested between Sigefrid and Ring, in whose warfare 11,000 men with both the competitors perished.

CHAPTER II.

The Sea-Kings and Vikingr of the North.

WHEN we review these kings and sub-kings of the North, we behold only a part of its political situation. There were also sovereigns who possessed neither country nor regular subjects, and yet filled the regions adjacent with blood and misery. The sea-kings of the North were a race of beings whom Europe beheld with horror. Without a yard of territorial property, without any towns or visible nation,^a with no wealth but their ships, no force but their crews, and no hope but from their swords, the sea-kings swarmed on the boisterous ocean, and plundered in every district they could approach. Never to sleep under a smoky roof, nor to indulge in the cheerful cup over a hearth,^b were the boasts of these watery sovereigns, who not only flourished in the plunder of the sea and its shores, but who sometimes amassed so much booty, and enlisted so many followers, as to be able to assault provinces for permanent conquest. Thus Haki and Hag-

^a We have a remarkable instance of this in Birca, the port and chief commercial emporium of Sweden. Rembert, who lived about 865, states this Birca to have been so defenceless, that on the approach of the Danes, the people fled from it to a neighbouring civitatem. This civitas was also non multum firma. They offered 120 pounds of silver to save Birca. Ansch. vita, p. 460. 1 Langb.

^b Verelius in *Harvarar Saga*, 142.

^c Multi enim reges hinc foere maritimi (Sæ-konungar) qui maximis quidem captis sed nulli præerant regioni. Snorra, *Yngl. Saga*, c. 34, p. 43. Multi insuper qui nec ditiores nec subditos habebant sed piratica tantum et atrocissimi opes querebant. *Wiik-kungar* et *Næh-kungar*, i. e. reges maritimi dicebantur. Verelius, *Hist. Sæis-Gott.* p. 6.

^d Snorre, p. 43.

bard were sea-kings; their reputation induced many bands of rovers to join their fortunes. They attacked the king of Upsal, whom Haki defeated and succeeded.^c Some years afterwards, the sons of Yngvi, who had become sea-kings, and lived wholly in their war-ships, roamed the ocean in search of adventures. They encountered the king of Hayley-ia, and hanged him. They also assaulted Haki, and overpowered him.^d Solvi was a sea-king, and infested the eastern regions of the Baltic with his depredations. He suddenly landed in Sweden in the night, surrounded the house where the king of Upsal was sleeping, and applying firebrands, reduced all who were in it to ashes.^e Such was the generous warfare of these royal pirates.

It is declared to have been a law or custom in the North, that one of the male children should be selected to remain at home, to inherit the government. The rest were exiled to the ocean, to wield their sceptres amid the turbulent waters.^f The consent of the northern societies entitled all men of royal descent, who assumed piracy as a profession, to enjoy the name of kings, though they possessed no territory.^g Hence the sea-kings were the kinsmen of the land-sovereigns. While the eldest son ascended the paternal throne, the rest of the family hastened, like petty Neptunes, to establish their kingdoms in the waves;^h and, if any of the fylki-kongr, or thiod-kongr, were expelled their inheritance by others, they also sought a continuance of their dignity upon the ocean.ⁱ When the younger branches of a reigning dynasty were about to become sea-kings, the ships and their requisite equipments were furnished as a patrimonial right, and perhaps as a political convenience.

When we recollect the numerous potentates of Scandinavia, and the general fecundity, we may expect that the ocean swarmed with sea-kings. Such was their number, that one Danish sovereign is mentioned by Saxo to have destroyed seventy of the honourable but direful race.^j Their rank and successes always secured to them abundant crews, and the mis-

^c Snorre, Yngling. c. 25, p. 30, 31.

^d Snorre, p. 31, 32. The practice of hanging the chief they overpowered, seems to have furnished their scalds with some gloomy wit. One of them calls the tree from which the king was suspended, *the horse of Sigar*. Ibid. 31.

^e Snorre, p. 43.

^f Mæssenius Scand. i. p. 4; and see Wallingford, 533.

^g Olaf Trygg. Saga sp. Bartholin. antiq. Dan. 446. Snorre has given a particular instance of this. Saga of Olaf, Hinnom. Helga, c. 4. Wormius recognises the same custom. Mon. Dan. 269.

^h See Verelius, Hist. Suo-G. p. 6. Pontanus, Hist. Dan. p. 87. Stephanus in Sax. p. 152. Thus a grandson of the famous Ragnar Lodbrog was a sea-king, while his brother succeeded to the crown of Sweden. Fili Biornis jarasidæ suæ Eirikus et Refillus, hic erat Herkongr oc Sækongr. Hervarar Saga, 225.

ⁱ Thus Gudrum: ab eo regno pulsus piratico more vixit, I Langb. 480. Thus also Biorn. 2, 1, 10, 89.

^j Saxo-Gramm. lib. vii. p. 142.

chief they perpetrated must have been immense.^k These sea-kings were also called Her-kongr.

The sea-kings had the name of honour, but they were only a portion of those pirates, or vikingr, who in the ninth century were covering the ocean. Not only the children of the kings, but every man of importance, equipped ships, and roamed the seas to acquire property by force.^l At the age of twelve, the sons of the great were in action under military tutors.^m Piracy was not only the most honourable occupation, and the best harvest of wealth, it was not only consecrated to public emulation by the industrious who pursued it,ⁿ but no one was esteemed noble, no one was respected, who did not return in the winter to his home with ships laden with booty.^o The spoil consisted of every necessary of life, clothes, domestic utensils, cattle, which they killed and prepared on the shores they ravaged, slaves, and other property.^p It is not surprising that while this spirit prevailed, every country abounded in deserts.

So reputable was the pursuit, that parents were even anxious to compel their children into the dangerous and malevolent occupation. It is asserted in an Icelandic Saga, that parents would not suffer the wealth they had gained by it to be inherited by their offspring. It is mentioned to have been their practice to command their gold, silver, and other property to be buried with them, that their offspring might be driven by necessity to engage in the conflicts, and to participate the glory of maritime piracy.^q Inherited property was despised. That affluence only was

^k Snorre has recorded the sufferings of Sweden in his *Ynglinga Saga*; and the famous inscription on the lapis *Tirstedensis*, given by Wormius, *Monum.* 267, and commented on by Bartholin, 438, records the memory of Frotho, a vikingr terrible to the Swedes, 443. The ancient *Sveno Aggonis* mentions the extensive depredations of Helghi, a rex maris, *Hist. Dan.* 1 Langb. 44. And the *Nornagesti Historia* in one instance exhibits a volume of such incidents. "Hi regulus permultos subjugaverant, pugnatōres fortissimos interfecerant, urbesque incendio deleverant ac in Hispania et Gallia immensam stragem ediderant." Ap. Torfæus, *Series Reg. Dan.* 384.

^l Snorre, *Saga, Olafi Helga*, c. 192, p. 315.

^m Snorre furnishes us with a fact of this kind: "quo tempore primum navem bellicam adscendit Olafus Haraldii filius XII annos natus erat." His mother appointed Ranius, who had been his foster-father, and had been often in warlike expeditions, the commander of the forces, atque Olafi curatorem. *Saga, af Olafi Helga*, c. 2, p. 3.

ⁿ The northern writers attest the glory which accompanied piracy. See Bartholin, 437. Verelius in *Hervarar Saga*, 47. Wormius, *Mon. Dan.* 269. Bartholin quotes the *Vatzdela*, which says, *Mos erat magnorum virorum regum vel comitum, æqualium nostrorum, ut piraticis incumbere, opes ac gloriam sibi acquirentes*, p. 438.

^o *Stephanius in Sax.* p. 69.

^p Thus Eysteinn, king of Upsal, pirated in Vaurnia, prædas ibi agit vestes, aliasque res pretiosas nec non colonorum utensilia rapiens, pecoræque in litore mactans, quo facto domum reversi sunt. Snorre, *Yngling. Saga*, c. 51, p. 58. So Adils plundered in Saxland, and got many captives. *Ibid.* c. 32, p. 40.

^q *Vatzdela* ap. Barth. 438.

esteemed which danger had endeared.* It was therefore well said of the Northmen by one of their contemporaries, that they sought their food by their sails, and *inhabited* the seas.[†]

Even the regular land-kings addicted themselves to piracy.[‡] It was the general amusement of their summer months; hence almost every king commemorated by Snorre is displayed as assaulting other provinces, or as suffering invasions in his own.[§] With strange infatuation, the population of the day welcomed the successful vikingr with the loudest acclamations; although, from the prevalence of the practice, domestic misery became the general lot. The victors of one day were the victims in the next; and he who was consigning without pity the women and children of other families to the grave or to famine, must have often found on his return but the ashes of his paternal habitation, and the corpses of those he loved.

The name by which the pirates were at first distinguished was *Vikingr*, which perhaps originally means kings of the bays.[¶] It was in bays that they ambushed, to dart upon the passing voyager. The recesses of the shores afforded them a station of safety as to the perils of the ocean, and of advantage as to their pursuit. Our bolder navigation, which selects in preference the middle of the ocean, was then unusual. The ancient merchants coasted wherever they could, and therefore naturally frequented bays in the progress of their voyage. In hopes of prey, the bays were also full of pirates, ever ready to dart upon their object.^{‡‡}

These fierce bands of robbers appear to have been kept in amity with each other by studied equality. It was a law, that the drinking vessel should pass round the whole crew, as they sat, with undistinguished regularity.^{§§} Their method of fighting was the offspring of their fearless courage; they lashed their ships together, and from the prows rushed to mutual battle.^{¶¶}

The ferocity and useless cruelty of this race of beings almost transcend belief. The piracy of the vikingr, who were also

† *Vatzdæla* ap. Barth. 433.

‡ *Nigelus*, who lived about 826, has left a poem on the baptism of Harald, in which he says,

“*Ipsæ quidem populus late pernotus habetur,
Lintre dapes quærit, incolitatque mare.*” 1 *Langb.* 400.

‡ *Vere*. in *Got. et Rol.* p. 75.

§ *Yngl.* c. 26. p. 31, 32, 40. Hence Snorre marks the autumn as the season of their return.

¶ *Wormius* says, *viig* means a bay. *Mon. Dan.* 269; and *Bartholin* favours the derivation, 446.

‡‡ *Wormius*, 269. And see the dissertation annexed to the *Gunnlaugi Saga*, 303.

§§ *Snorre*, *Yngl. Saga*, c. 41. p. 50. This custom is stated to have prevailed among the predatory Britons; “*circa medium cerevisiæ ordinatum in modum circuli, illud circumdando discubuerunt.*” *Vita Cadoci MSS. Cotton Library, Vesp. A 14.*

¶¶ *Snorre*, *Harald's Saga*, c. 11, p. 85.

called *hernadi*,^a was an exhibition of every species of barbarity. Besides the savage food of raw flesh and blood,^b which, however, the Greenlanders of our times are stated to have used, as also the Abyssinians,^c to tear the infant from the mother's breast, and to toss it on their lances from one to another,^c is stated in several books to have been the custom of many of these pirates, from which, though at a late period, their civilizing chiefs at last alienated them. It was a consistency of character in such men to despise tears and mourning so much, that they would never weep for their deceased relations.^d

One branch of the vikingr is said to have cultivated paroxysms of brutal insanity, and they who experienced them were revered. These were the *berserkir*,^e whom many authors describe. These men, when a conflict impended, or a great undertaking was to be commenced, abandoned all rationality upon system; they studied to resemble wolves or maddening dogs; they bit their shields; they howled like tremendous beasts;^f they threw off covering; they excited themselves to a strength which has been compared to that of bears, and then rushed to every crime and horror which the most frantic enthusiasm could perpetrate.^g This fury was an artifice of battle like the Indian war-whoop. Its object was to intimidate the enemy. It is attested that the unnatural

^a These words were at first promiscuously used. The *Brandkrossa thetti*, and the *Svarfdalensium historia*, cited by the editors of the *Gunnlaugi Saga*, p. 305, evince that they had some difference of meaning, but I do not think we understand the distinction. They who are curious may read the dissertation above quoted, p. 305.

^b See the *Saga Gothrici et Rolfi*, and also the *Helgaquida* of *Sæmund*, in *Barthol.* 456. One of the laws of *Hialmar* mentioned in the *Orvar Oddz Saga*, was, *ne crudam carnem comederent*. *Ibid.*

^c The Greenlanders eat raw flesh, and drink the reindeer's hot blood. 2 *Crantz*, 28. See *Bruce's* life, p. cvii. 2d edition.

^d This is stated by the English annalists, as *Osborn*, in his life of *Elphegus*. 2 *Langb.* p. 441. *Matt. Westm.* p. 388, and *Henry* of *Huntingdon*, lib. v. p. 347. After citing these, *Bartholin* records from the *Landnamá*, the name of the man who abolished the horrid custom. The *Landnamá* says, "Olverus *Barnakall* celebris incolæ *Norvegiæ*, validus fuit pirata, ille infantes ab unius hastæ mucrone in aliam projici, passus non est, quod piratis tunc familiare erat; ideoque *Barnakall* (infantum præsidium vel multos habens infantes) cognominatus est." *Bartholin*, p. 457.

^e *Adam Brem.* states this fact of the *Daneæ*, p. 64.

^f The *berserkir* were at first honoured. The *Hervarar Saga* applies the name to the sons of *Arngrim* as a matter of reputation. *Omnes magni berserkir fuere*, p. 15. *Snorre*, in mentioning one who fought with *Harald Harfagre*, calls him a *berserkir mikill*, a mighty *berserkir*. *Harald's Saga*, c. 19, p. 94. The scald *Hornklofi* says, *fremuere berserki bellum eis erat circa præcordia*, p. 95. In another place, *Snorre* says, *Harald* filled his ship with his attendants and *berserkir*; he says the station of the *berserkir* was near the prow, *ibid.* p. 82; he mentions them also, 69. It was in allusion to their ferocity, that the *Harbarz lioth* of *Sæmund* applies the name *berserkir* to signify giants. *Edda Sæmundar*, p. 107.

^g *Hervar. Saga.* p. 35. *Saxo* describes the *berserkir* fury minutely twice in his seventh book, p. 123, 124. *Torfaus* also, in *Hrolfi kraka*, p. 49, mentions them.

^h *Annotatio de Berserkir* added to *Kristni Saga*, p. 142. See the *Eyrbyggja Saga*, *ibid.* p. 143. So the *Egills Saga*, sp. *Bartholin*, p. 346.

excitation was, as might be expected, always followed by a complete debility.^b It was originally practised by Odin.¹ They who used it, often joined in companies.¹ The furor Berserkicus, as mind and morals improved, was at length felt to be horrible. It changed from a distinction to a reproach,² and was prohibited by penal laws.¹ The name at last became execrable.

When we consider the calamities, which the course of nature everywhere mixes with the happiness of man, we should from theory, expect a general union of sentiment and wisdom to mitigate the evils which none can avoid. Experience however shows our species to have been engaged at all times, in exasperating every natural affliction, by the addition of those which human agency can create. Mankind appear from history to have been always attacking each other, without the provocation of personal injury. If civilization, science, and Christianity have not allayed the spirit of political ambition, nor subdued the love of warlike glory, we cannot be surprised that the untaught Northmen delighted in the depredations to which they were educated, from which they derived honour and fame, and by which they subsisted. Pity and benevolence are the children of our disciplined reason and augmented felicity. They are little known to our species in those ages, when general misery licenses and produces the most tyrannical selfishness. Hence the berserkir, the vikingr, or the sea-king, felt no remorse at the sight of human wretchedness. Familiar with misery from their infancy, taught to value peaceful society but as a rich harvest easier to be pillaged, knowing no glory but from the destruction of their fellow-creatures, all their feelings, all their reasonings were ferocious; they sailed from country to country, to desolate its agriculture, and not merely to plunder, but to murder or enslave its inhabitants. Thus they landed in Gothia. The natives endeavoured to escape. The invaders pursued with the flame and sword.^m Thus in Sweden, part of the inhabitants they massacre, and part they make captive; but the fields were ravaged far and wide with fire.ⁿ The same miseries proclaimed their triumphs in Wendila. The flame and sword were unsparing assailants, and villages were converted into

^b *Hervarar Saga*, p. 37. So the *Egills Saga*. *Bartholin*, p. 346.

¹ *Snoorre, Ynglinga*, c. vi. p. 11. In the *Havamal* of *Sæmund*, Odin boasts of it as a magical trick. See the ode in *Barthol.* 347.

² So they appear in the *Hervarar Saga*.

^m Thus the *Vatzdæla*. *Thorus furore Berserkico nonnunquam corripiebatur, quod in tali viro probum ducebatur, neque enim illud ipai gloriosum erat.* *Barthol.* 345. This man is made to say of himself, that it disgraced him, and he asks advice how to overcome it. *Ibid.* 346.

ⁿ The code of Icelandic law says, "furore berserkico si quis grassetur, relegatione punietur." *Ann. Kristni Saga*, p. 142. So the *Grettis Saga* mentions of *Eric* the earl of Norway, omnes Berserkos Norvegia exulare jussit, *ibid.* 142.

^o *Snoorre, Ynglinga Saga*, c. xxi. p. 24.

^p *Snoorre*, c. xxxi. p. 39.

uninhabited deserts.^o Thus at Paris they impaled 111 of their captives, crucified many others on houses and trees, and slew numbers in the villages and fields.^p In war they seemed to have reckoned cruelty a circumstance of triumph; for the sea-king and the vikings even hung the chiefs of their own order on their defeat.^q And yet from the descendants of these men some of the noblest people in Europe have originated.

CHAPTER III.

Comparisons between the Histories of Saxo-Grammaticus and Snorre.—The first aggression of the Northmen on the Anglo-Saxons.—And the Rise, Actions, and Death of Ragnar Lodbroc.

SUCH was the dismal state of society in the North. For a long time the miseries of this system were limited to the Baltic. After the colonization of England had freed the Germanic and British ocean from Saxon piracy, Europe was blessed with almost three centuries of tranquillity. One Danish rover is stated to have wandered to the Maese^r in the beginning of the sixth century; but the enterprise was unfortunate. Other Danes are mentioned as acting with the Saxons against the Franks. But after this century,^b we hear no more of Danes for above two hundred years.

But some of the historians of the North pretend that the Danes visited England and Europe in a much earlier period. Are these entitled to our belief?

Saxo-Grammaticus, who died 1204,^o has left us a history which has delighted both taste and learning,^d by its elegance and

^o Snorre, c. xxxi. p. 39.

^p Du Chêne, *Hist. Francorum Script.* vol. ii. p. 655. The annals which he edited abound with such incidents.

^q There are many instances of this in Snorre, p. 31, 33, 44, &c. also in the *Herwarar Saga*, and others.

^r Gregory of Tours, who lived in 573, the oldest author extant who mentions the Danes, narrates this expedition, lib. iii. c. 3, p. 53. *Corpus Franc. Hist.* ed. Hanov. 1613.

^b Venantius Fortunatus, who lived 565, mentions them as defeated by the kings of the Franks, lib. viii. c. 1, p. 622, and his lines to the *Dux Lupus* (lib. vi.) imply that the Danes and Saxons had invaded the country near Bordeaux. This was probably some ebullition of the Anglo-Saxon expeditions against Britain.

^c Stephan. *Prolog.* p. 22.

^d Erasmus has honoured Saxo with a panegyric which every historian must covet; "*qui sue gentis historiam splendide magnificeque contexit. Probe vividum*

vigour; and which, considering his age and country, is surprising for its power of composition. He conducts the Danes into Britain long before the Christian era. According to his narration, Frotho the first, his ninth king of Denmark,^e Amleth, whose memory our Shakspeare has preserved,^f Fridlevus, the twenty-third king of Saxo,^g and Frotho, the next sovereign,^h fought, and with one exception obtained splendid victories in Britain, previous to the appearance of the Christian legislator. Twelve reigns afterwards, he states that Harald Hyldetand invaded England, and conquered the king of Northumbria.ⁱ

Some documents for his history Saxo may have derived from poems of the ancient scalds, from inscriptions on stones and rocks, from an inspection (yet how imperfect!) of the Icelandic authors, and from the narrations of his friend.^j We may even grant to him, that such men as he enumerates, such actions as he so eloquently describes, and such poems as he so diffusely translates,^k once appeared; but the chronology and succession into which he arranges them are unquestionably false. The boasted fountains of the history of the ancient Scandinavians,^l their memorial stones, and funereal runæ,^m the inscribed rings of their shields, the woven figures of their tapestry, their storied walls, their lettered seats and beds, their narrative wood, their recollected poetry, and their inherited traditions, may have given to history the names of many warriors, and have transmitted to posterity

et ardens ingenium, orationem nusquam remissam aut dormitantem; tam miram verborum copiam, sententias crebras, et figurarum admirabilem varietatem, ut satis admirari nequeam, unde illa ætate, homini dano, tanta vis eloquendi suppetiverit." Dial. Cicero. ap. Stephan. p. 33. And yet a more correct taste would suggest that his work is rather an oration than a history. Though some parts are happy, it is in general either tumid and exaggerated, or losing, or clouding, the specific fact in declamatory generalities. It wants that exact taste for truth, as well as for patient comparison of antiquarian documents, which the history of such a period peculiarly required.

^e Hist. Dan. lib. ii. p. 25.

^f Hist. Dan. lib. iii. p. 56, 57. The speech of Amleth to the people, after destroying Fengo, is an exertion of eloquence very creditable to the genius of Saxo, p. 54, 55.

^g Hist. Dan. 67.

^h Hist. Dan. 95. Saxo places the birth of Christ immediately after. Ibid.

ⁱ Hist. Dan. 137.

^j Saxo mentions these authorities in his preface, p. 2; and the curious will be pleased to read Stephanus's notes upon it.

^k We have a striking proof how much Saxo has amplified the barren songs of the scalds, and therefore how little to be relied on for precision in his poetical and elegant dialogue between Hialto and his friend Biarco, whom he roused to the defence of his endangered king. Forgetful of the emergency, Saxo prolongs it to six folio pages. Stephanus has cited part of the concise and energetic original, p. 82, which discovers the historian's exuberance.

^l Torfæus mentions these in the prolegomena to his History of Norway, and in his Series Regum Dan. 50-53. They are also remarked by Bartholin, lib. i. c. 9.

^m Wormius has given us the inscriptions found in Denmark in his Monumenta Danica; and Peringskiöld copies many out of Sweden in his Monumenta Ullerakarna, 321-349, and in his Monumentum Svec Goth, 177-306. See also Verelius's manufactio, and others.

the fame of many battles, but no dates accompanied the memorials; even the geography of the incidents was very rarely noted. Hence, however numerous may have been the preserved memoranda, their arrangement and appropriation were left to the mercy of literary fancy or of national conceit.

Saxo unfortunately emulated the fame of Livy, instead of becoming the Pausanias of Scandinavia; and instead of patiently compiling and recording his materials in the humble style or form in which he found them, which would have been an invaluable present to us, has shaped them into a most confused, unwarranted, and fabulous chronology. The whole of his first eight books, all his history antecedent to Ragnar Lodbrog, can as little claim the attention of the historian, as the British history of Jeffry, or the Swedish history of Johannes Magnus. It is indeed superfluous, if we recollect the Roman history, to argue against a work which pretends to give to Denmark a throned existence, a regular government, and a tissue of orderly and splendid history for twenty-four royal accessions before the birth of Christ. Saxo, on whose history many others were formerly built, refers to the Icelandic writers;ⁿ but this only increases our depreciation of his narratives, for they are at irreconcilable variance with all his history before the ninth century.^o

The Icelandic writers, Torfæus, their able champion, divides into four kinds: the allegorical, the fabulous, the mixed, and the authentic.^p

Of the authentic, the only one extant who attempts a history much earlier^q than the times of Harald Harfragre, is Snorre, the son of Sturla, who has given us as faithful a compilation of northern history as his means and age permitted. Beginning with Odin, the common ancestor of the Scandinavian, Danish and Saxon nations, as Hercules was of the Grecian royal dynasties, he first gives the history of the Ynglingi kings at Upsal, and the life of Hulfdan Svarte, the father of Harald. He then continues the history of Norway to his own time.

ⁿ Though he applauds them in his preface, and even says, "quorum thesauros historicarum rerum pignoribus refertos curiosius consulens, haud parvam præsentis operis partem ex eorum relationis imitatione contexui; nec arbitros habere contempsi, quos tanta vetustatis peritiam callere cognovi;" notwithstanding this, it may be fairly doubted if he knew much of them.

^o Torfæus says justly of Saxo, that he has placed some kings before Christ, who flourished long after him; that he has made other kings of Denmark, who belonged to other regions, and has raised some to the supreme throne of Denmark, who were but tributary reguli. *Series Regum Dan.* p. 219.

^p See his discriminated catalogue of the Icelandic writings in his *Series Regum Dan.* p. 3-12.

^q There are Icelandic writers extant more ancient than Snorre, as Ara Frode, born 1068; his contemporary, Somund, the author of the ancient Edda; Eirik, who about 1161 wrote on the sons of Harald Gillius; Charles, an abbot, in 1169, whose history of king Swerrer remains; and Oddus, author of the Saga of Olave Tryggvason; but these are on later subjects. Torfæus, *prolegomena Hist. Norv.*

Snorre incidentally mentions the Danish kings of Lethra,² and he clashes irreconcilably with Saxo, always in the chronology and successions, and sometimes in the incidents.³ As far as the internal characters of authenticity can decide the competition between him and Saxo, he has every superiority, and no rational antiquary will now dispute it. His narratives, though sprinkled with a few fables,⁴ are very short, consistent, and unadorned; they display the genuine costume of the time: the quotations from the scalds are given literally, no chronology is marked, and his arrangement does not carry up his actors to any extravagant antiquity.⁵ It is in his work, if in any of the northern ancient documents, we shall find some true information of the earliest attacks of the Northmen on Britain.

The first king whom Snorre mentions to have had dominion in England, is Ivar Vidfadme, a king of Scania, who conquered Upsal. His words are "Ivar Vidfadme subjected to him all Sweden, all Denmark, great part of Saxony, all Austurrikia, and the fifth part of England."⁶ But no English chronicler notices such a person or such an event. Our ancient annalists expressly mark the year 787 as the date of the first aggressions of the Northmen on England,⁷ which is subsequent to the reign of Ivar. If, therefore, he conquered or plundered anywhere in Britain, it must have been in Scotland, of whose early history we have no correct information,⁸ and whose coasts were most likely to be the first attacked.

¹ P. 24, 34, 37, 39, 41, 43, 54, 69, 70, 77.

² To give only one instance; Saxo places Helgi and his son Rolf Krake eleven reigns before Christ. Snorre says, Rolf fell in the reign of Eystein, p. 43, the third king before Ingiald, who lived in the seventh century of the Christian era.

³ As in p. 9, 10, 24 and 34.

⁴ He gives thirty-two reigns between Odin and Harald Harfragre. Almost all the kings perished violently; therefore the average of their reigns cannot exceed twenty years. This computation would place Odin about 220 years after Christ. Nothing can show more strongly what little support the songs of the scalds can give to the remote periods of northern antiquity, than the fact that the scald Thiodolfr, on whom Snorre bases his history before Harald Harfragre, and whom he therefore quotes twenty-six times, lived in the days of Harald, or about the year 900. We find him, p. 115, singing in the last days of Harald, who died 936. Excepting Brage Gamle, who is once quoted on Odin, p. 9, and Eywindr, who lived after Thiodolfr, and who is adduced twice, p. 13, 31, no other scald is referred to. The poems of the scalds may be good authority for incidents near their own times, but can be only deemed mere popular traditions as to the earlier history of a barbarous people. Snorre's other authorities are genealogies and individual narratives. See his preface. But the Icelandic genealogies are often contradictory. Their most voracious writers are rather the faithful recorders of traditions, usually true in substance, but as usually inaccurate, than the selecting or critical compilers of authentic history.

⁵ Snorre Yngl. Saga, c. xiv. p. 54. This part of England the Hervarar Saga marks to be Northumbria; and gives the same dominion to his grandson Harald Hyldetand, c. xix. p. 223.

⁶ Sax. Chron. 64: Fl. Wig. 280; Ethelw. 639; Malm. 16; Hent. 343; Mett. West. 262, and several others. The annals of Ulster do not mention their attacks on Ireland earlier; but from this period incessantly.

⁷ The northern literati place Ivar at the end of the sixth century. If this were

But from the state and habits of the natives of Scandinavia and the Baltic, which have been described, we might have expected that the result would have been, that mutual destruction and desolation, which would in time have consumed themselves and unpeopled the north. Europe had then no reason to apprehend any mischief from such men, because Charlemagne had just raised a formidable Frankish empire, Egbert had consolidated the Anglo-Saxon power, and it was the interest of the new monarchies that were absorbing their own little sovereignties to extinguish such a restless race. But such are the unexpected directions which the course of human agency frequently takes, that at this very period those dreadful hurricanes of war and desolation began to arise in the north, which afflicted all the maritime regions of Europe with a succession of calamities for above a century. As it exhibits a curious picture of human nature in its more savage energies, and is immediately connected with the romantic, and yet authentic, history of one man, whose transactions have not before been introduced into our annals, Ragnar Lodbrog, it is important to take an enlarged but calm review of the causes that produced this direction, and gave such an effect to his peculiar position and singular propensities.

In every country whose inhabitants have passed from their nomadic or wandering condition into a settled state, the cultivated lands become gradually the property of a portion only of the community. Their first occupiers or partitioners transmit them to their descendants; while the rest of society, as it multiplies, must, until commerce and the arts open new sources of employment and acquisitions, either serve the proprietary body as vassals and retainers, more or less dignified by office, title, or birth; or as labourers more or less servile; or they must float loosely in life without an adequate provision for their desires or necessities. This unprovided class soon arises as population increases, and augments with its increase. When the sub-divisions of trade and manufactures occur, large portions of the unprovided are absorbed by them; but still many remain, in every age and country, from the rudest to the most civilized, who form a body of men disposed to be restless, migratory, enterprising, and ready for every new adventure, or impression, which the flowing accidents of time, or the rise of bold and active original characters can present to them. This class pursues the progress of society in all its stages, feeds or occasions all its wars, seditions, colonies,

just chronology, he might have been one of the adventurers that came among the Angles into Northumbria or Mercia.

As the Angles and Jutes came from the Danish provinces of Sleswick and Jutland, their ancient memorials might have, not unfairly, pretended to conquests in Britain. But from a critical comparison of some of the most authentic of the ancient Icelandic authorities, I am satisfied that Ivar Vidfadne has been placed above a century too early.

and migrations, and has repeatedly shaken the happiness of the more civilized nations.

It seems not to be the want of actual food on the earth which creates this unprovided body ; for there is not sufficient evidence that nature has, in any period, produced less food than the existing population needed. The more population tends to press upon the quantity of subsistence in any country, the more it also tends to increase it. As the pressure begins, the activity and ingenuity of mankind are roused to provide for it. The powers of nature have hitherto answered to their call, and rewarded their exertions with the requisite supply. Hence increased productibility has always accompanied increased population, and still attends it : nor have we yet approached, nor probably shall we ever reach the period when the fertility of the earth and the ingenuity of man shall fail to be equal to the subsistence that is needed. New means have always hitherto unfolded to meet new exigencies. In the case of the Northmen, it is remarkable, that although every act of plunder was also an act of ravage, and more of the necessaries and conveniences of life were destroyed by their depredations than were either carried off or consumed ; yet the numbers of both the plunderers and plundered increased till they formed well-peopled and prosperous communities.

This unprovided class arises from the impossibility of having any system of property without it. These systems have increased population, civilization, general prosperity, and individual comfort ; but they are always multiplying the number of those, who either form no part of the proprietary body, or whose individual portions are inferior to the demands of their habits, their passions, or their necessities. To equalize all property, would not destroy the evil, unless wisdom and virtue could be made equally common. Society at this moment presents us, in every part of Europe, with a large unprovided population. A similar class existed, though under different habits, in the ninth century, all round the Baltic and North Sea ; and it was from this body of men that the sea-kings and vikings principally emerged.

This unprovided population consisted and consists not of the poor only, but also of many from the wealthier classes of every state. In every age, some portions of the families of all the rich and great have been as unable to continue the state and enjoyment of their relations, and of their own earlier days, as the meaner conditions of life to attain them. The one become the leaders of the other, and both alike desire adventures and employments, by which they can attain the property, the luxuries, or the distinctions which they covet.

In the fifth and sixth centuries, the Anglo-Saxons of this class

poured themselves on Britain, and the numerous petty sovereignties in Norway, Sweden, and the Danish isles, seem to have arisen from the same source. Adventurers, seeking their fortune, appear to have landed from time to time on various parts of the uninhabited regions and islands of Scandinavia, with little bands of inferior companies; and as their posterity multiplied, levelled the forests, drained the marshes, and cultivated the earth: then humble kingdoms, jarlls, and nobility appeared. But the same result, in time, pursued them here which had driven them hither. All the lands they could subject to human culture became appropriated; claims of individual property became fastened on the parts which were left untilled; and unprovided population increased in each, who had to look elsewhere for the rank and comforts which the rest inherited.

At the close of the eighth and the beginning of the ninth century, the unprovided population of the north was in full activity among their little kingdoms and jarlldoms in every part of the Baltic. The acquisition of property by violence was their object, the sea their road to it, the sword their instrument, and all the settled habitations which they could reach, master, or surprise, were the theatres of their enterprise. The invention of the term sea-king satisfied the ambition of their highest-born chieftains; and the spoil obtained by their depredations, and the energies necessary to be exerted to make the expeditions successful, gratified their associates.

But the vicinity of their domestic homes for a long time circumscribed the sphere of their exertions. There is not sufficient evidence that they had advanced beyond the Baltic, till that individual to whom we have already alluded, Ragnar Lodbrog, had been expelled by Harald from his insular kingdom; and becoming himself a sea-king, led his fleet of depredators successively to Friesland, Flanders, the British islands, and to France.

We do not know enough of the incidents of his youth to delineate the gradual formation of Ragnar's peculiar character; but we can trace some of the circumstances that favoured the new habit which he either began or the most powerfully promoted. His father, Sigurd, was a Norwegian, who had married the Danish princess, daughter of the king of the chief Danish island.^a His spirit of adventure had therefore an encouraging example in his father's elevation. But that father had been opposed by the king of Jutland in a battle in which nearly eleven thousand men and both the chieftains perished.^a On this fatal result the contending partisans compromised their quarrel by raising the sons of their several leaders to their fathers' thrones. Ragnar was made king of the isles, and Harald of the Danish

^a So Snorre states.

^a Ad. Brem. Alb. Stead. and Almonius.

territory in Jutland. But this arrangement was too pacific to last long in such a turbulent age; and the friends of Harald were found to be numerous enough to enable him to expel Ragnar from his sea-girt kingdom. This warrior, in all the pride and activity of his youth, was driven with all his followers to seek that provision and distinction on the ocean, and by their swords, which they were not allowed to retain on their domestic territory.

If Ragnar had been a common-minded man he would have been but a common plunderer, and have soon fallen into the usual violent deaths of battle or punishment which most pirates at last undergo. But Denmark was, from its contiguity to the Frankish kingdom and to the improving continental Saxons, the most civilized country of the barbaric north. Its monarchy was also beginning to arise. Its small kingdoms having been subdued or absorbed into two, and these, from their increasing power and dignity, being more cultivated than formerly, Ragnar Lodbrog, before he became a sea-king, had obtained the greatest advantages of education which the Baltic at that time afforded. Son of an enterprising Norwegian and of a Danish princess, he thus united in himself all the improvements which Norway and Denmark could then confer. His great natural talents thus assisted, he entered upon his new profession with a distinction which led to great exploits. The actual enjoyment of a previous kingdom fixed large objects of ambition in his mind; gave him at his outset an impressive and dignified character, and connected him with more numerous and powerful friends and followers than any ordinary vikingr could influence or command. The insular nature of the territory over which he had reigned favoured his enterprises, and he soon became formidable enough to compel his land-rival to implore the succours of the Frankish empire.

But this event became only another impulse to the new direction which Ragnar was insensibly giving to all the population about him. That the Franks should presume to interfere in behalf of his enemy, was an affront that fixed in his heart an indignant resolution to avenge himself on them. This vindictive feeling led him out of the Baltic to France itself; and though he could not dethrone his competitor at home, he had followers enough to penetrate to the walls of Paris, and to afflict France, in its then quarrelling state, with the most calamitous depredations. The personal fame which he gained by these distant expeditions was an impressive appeal to the vanity and emulation of all the northern youth; and his booty tempted the most selfish to join his fleets or to imitate his adventures.

About the same period a king of Norway, Harald Harfagre, unintentionally contributed to give the unprovided population and ambitious youth of that country the same external direction and

a new impulse to pursue it. He also began the system of subduing in Norway all its petty sovereignties, and of extirpating piracy within his dominions. Nothing then remained in Norway for those who had not lands or property, but to seek them elsewhere. Bands of adventurers now arose from hence, who were resolved to obtain subsistence, plunder, fame, or settlement in other countries by their swords. And one of these, under the command of Hrolfr or Rollo, after harassing France with desolation, extorted from its sovereign the province of Normandy.

From the operation of these circumstances as they successively occurred, distant expeditions, for temporary plunder, vindictive retaliations, or military colonization, became, from the end of the eighth century, the regular habits of the active population of the north. We have mentioned that in 787 the fierce visitors first appeared in England. By the year 800, they had begun to molest the Franks;^b and before the death of Charlemagne, which occurred in 814, they had even reached the Mediterranean.

He was at dinner in the city of Narbonne when their ships came in sight. By the construction of the vessels and the agility of their mariners, he knew they were not merchants. He rose from the table, and went to the eastern window of the mansion to contemplate them. His tears fell as he gazed: "I fear not," he exclaimed, "that they can injure me; but I weep that they should dare, in my lifetime, to approach my coasts. I foresee the misery they will bring on my descendants."^c

To protect his empire from assaults, he caused ships to be built against them on the rivers which, from Gaul and Germany, disembogue their waters into the Northern Ocean.^d In every harbour, and at the mouth of every stream which it was possible for them to ascend, he established stations and garrisons to preserve the endangered country. Kept off by his active genius, they seldom molested the peace of his dominions.

His son Louis attempted the policy of converting the north; he invited all such vikingr as approached his coasts to accept of the sacred baptism. As he was careful that the initiated should leave his court laden with presents, it is not surprising that they came in haste to be baptized. A surly exclamation of a converted chieftain revealed the sincerity of the new Christians and the utility of the project. At one paschal solemnity, the pretended penitents were so numerous, that white dresses could not be procured for all the pagans; some linen of the clergy was cut

^b So the ancient Saxon Latin versifier states. *Hist. Franc. Du Chesne*, ii. p. 164.

^c The monk of St. Gall has transmitted to us this incident in his work, *De Reb. Car. Magn.* ii. p. 130.

^d Eginhard, p. 8. Meyer, in his *Annals of Flanders*, mentions that the emperor stayed some time at Ghent, on account of the ships which he had ordered to be built there against the Northmen.

up and sewed together, and a garment thus made was given to a northern leader. The son of Odin frowned with disdain. "This is the *twentieth* time that I have come to be washed, and I have hitherto always received the best white dresses; this vile apparel is fit only for a herdsman; if I can have no better garment, I disclaim your Christianity."^e

The civil wars of the children of Louis favoured the subsequent aggressions of the vikings.^f The Frankish princess sent an embassy, in 847, to the king of the Northmen, to desire peace, and to announce their union.^g But such an embassy was as useless as it would have been to have petitioned any single wind not to blow. Every habitable district was a nursery of pirates; and to obtain the forbearance of one leader, was to ensure a rich harvest for the rest. This effect seems to have been experienced; for in this same year we read of their attacks on Brittany, Aquitain, and Bourdeaux, as well as on Dorestad and the Batavian island. In Aquitain they ravaged successfully; "because," says Ademar, "the chiefs were destroying each other in their warfare, and because the people had no fleet to protect their coasts." The list of districts which they afflicted is very copious.^h They also attacked Spain near Cadiz, fought three battles with the Moors, and, when Abderrahman provided a fleet to oppose them, they left the country, full of plunder.ⁱ

Of all the sea-kings and vikings who roamed the ocean in the ninth century, the man whose life and death had the most disastrous effects on England was Ragnar Lodbrog, whose quida, or death-song, has been long venerated for its antiquity, and celebrated for its genius.^j The learned of the North have usually quoted it as his own composition,^k although one would ascribe it to his wife, who was also a famous scald or poetess.^l It is one of the most ancient pieces of northern literature; expresses exactly the manners of those times; and, compared with the other histories and traditions that have been preserved concerning him, will be found to contain the most simple, probable, and consistent incidents. As his death, the approach of which it ends with intimating, was the cause of that disastrous invasion which shook Alfred from his throne, it merits the consideration of the English reader, in those parts which concern the British islands.

^e Sax. Gall. p. 134.

^f See Chron. Fontanell. and the Ann. Bertin. and Frag. Hist. Brit. in Boquet's Recueil, v. 7.

^g Mirœi ap. Deplom. vol. i. p. 23.

^h See 1 Langb. 534.

ⁱ Mariana.

^j The most complete edition for the use of the English reader of the Lodbrokar Quida is that edited by Johnstone in 1782. But as his English translation is not a literal one, a more exact version is attempted of the passages quoted in the text.

^k An Wormius, Bartholin, Stephanus, and others. It was not uncommon in the north for their kings to celebrate their own actions.

^l So Torfœus intimates.

Ragnar is not mentioned by name in the Saxon annalists; because, while they commemorate the invasions of the Northmen during his life, they seldom notice the commander. But the Frankish chronicles expressly mention him in that aggression in 845, in which he even penetrated as far up the Seine as Paris. He began by ravaging the isles of the sea; thence proceeded to Rouen, and finding no effective resistance, he left his ships, and his warriors spread over the country. Invited onwards by the general consternation, they advanced to Paris on Easter-Eve. The next day they entered the city, and found it deserted by its inhabitants. They destroyed the monastery of St. Germain, when a present from the king of seven thousand pounds induced them to desist from their ravages.^m The attacks of his son Biorn, in 843, are also recorded.ⁿ His name of Lothbroc occurs in our chroniclers at his death; but they were ignorant of his true history, which is stated in none of our old documents, except in the ancient Anglo-Norman poem of Denis Pyramis.^o His death, as justly stated in the Icelandic remains, happened in Northumbria. In opposition to his wife Aslauga's counsel he built two ships of a size which the North had never beheld before; he filled them with soldiers, and sailed along the Scottish coast to England, which he selected to be the theatre of his exertions.^p The tri-

^m Chron. Fontanel; 7 Bouq. p. 41; Chron. Vezel. p. 271; Mirac. Racher. p. 361; and Aimonius, p. 350. Pet. Olav. 1 Langb. 109. See also Ann. Bertin. and Amm. Mirac. S. Germ.

ⁿ Frag. Hist. Brit. 7 Bouq. p. 46. The chronicles which mention Biorn's expeditions are very numerous. See Pontop. Gest. Dan.

^o It is so extraordinary to find this in an Anglo-Norman rhymers work, that I quote the passage in the original, as it has never been observed or printed before. He is here called Lothbroc, and his three sons, Yngar, Hulbe, and Berin, for Ingar, Udba, and Beorn.

Cil Lothebroc e ses treis fiz
 Furent de tute gent halz;
 Kar uthlages furent en mer;
 Unques ne fuierent de rober.
 Tuz jurs vesquirent de rapine;
 Tere ne cuntree veisine
 N'est pres d'els ou il a larun,
 N'ensent fait invasion.
 De ceo furent si enrichiez,
 Amuntez et amanantez,
 Qu'il aveient grant annee
 De gent; e mult grant assemble;
 Qu'il aveient en lur compagne
 Kant erronent oth lur navye.
 Destrut en aveient meint pais;
 Meint poeple destrut et occis:
 Nule contree lez la mer
 Ne seput d'els ja garder.

Den. Pyr. MSS. Domit. xi. p. 12.

^p 2 Langb. 227. Torfaus, Hist. Norv.

umphs of these royal pirates had been obtained by the celerity of their retreats, as well as the vigour of their attacks. It was not their competency to overcome the force which any country could embody against them, that made them so successful; but their ability in their light ships of attacking before it could be collected, or of eluding it when too formidable. These spacious ships tended to deprive Ragnar of this advantage, and thereby produced his fate.

Too large for the ignorant navigation of that period, these vessels were soon wrecked on the English shore. Thrown on the coast of enemies, without means of return, Ragnar had no choice but to dare his fortune, which his pride also counselled. He moved forward as soon as he got to the shore, to plunder and ravage, either disdaining to recollect that his small band would soon be confronted by superior strength, or hoping to deter any hostility by the boldness of his measures.

Ella, at that time, was king of Deira, and with the force of his kingdom marched up to the fearless vikingr; a fierce, though unequal conflict ensued. Ragnar, clothed in the garments which he had received from his beloved Aslauga, at their parting, four times pierced the ranks of Ella, but his friends fell one by one around him, and he at last was taken prisoner alive.

Ella obeyed the impulse of barbarian resentment, and doomed his illustrious prisoner to perish with lingering pain in a dungeon, stung by venomous snakes.¹

The *Quida* celebrates the depredations of Ragnar on various countries, from the Baltic to England, and on Flanders. It presents to us a view of one of the dreadful states of society in which our species have lived. Every incident is triumphantly described with the imagery of death, and the revolting circumstances attending human slaughter are recollected with exultation. Such were the people for whom the author composed this death-song, that not content with equalling the pleasures of war to social festivity, and with remembering, without remorse, its destruction of youthful happiness; he even extols it as rivalling one of the

¹ 2 Langb. 277. Saxo has been thought to place Ella in Ireland, but whoever reads the pages 176, 177, carefully, will see that he speaks of England. The Icelandic authors unanimously station him in Northumbria. This fact ascertains the time of Ragnar's death: for Ella usurped the Northumbrian crown in 862, and perished 867; therefore between these years Ragnar must have expired. The English chroniclers acknowledge that Lodbrog was killed in England; but so imperfectly was the Northumbrian history known to them, that for the true history of Ragnar's fate, they substituted two contradictory tales. See *Matt. West.* 314-316, and *Bromton*, 802.

² "Delightful was the work at Sky, as when the damesels bring the wine." St. 18.
"Pleasant was it at Ila's Straits, as when the wine-bearing Niorans hand the warm streams."

"In the morning I saw strock down
The fair-hair'd wooer of the maiden,
And him whose converse was so sweet to the widow."

St. 19.

sweetest hours of life: "Was it not like that hour when my bright bride I seated by me on my couch?" What must have been the characters and the transactions of that nation, in which the conversation and sympathy of love, were felt to be *but* as charming as a battle!

We may concede to the historical traditions of the North, and to the chroniclers of other nations, that Ragnar Lodbrog depredated with success on various parts of Europe, on the British islands, on Sweden, Norway, and the coasts round the Baltic.* We may admit that he was one of those men whose lives become models to their contemporaries; and that his activity and genius were fitted to give celebrity to bloodshed, and dignity to plunder. "Fifty and one times," as his Quida asserts, "his messenger, the spear, may have announced the distant enterprise." But it would be an extravagant aggrandizement of his fame, to attribute to him all the horrors which Northern piracy poured upon Europe in the first part of the ninth century. It is indeed a coincidence with his life, that till he lived, few and rare were the aggressions of the sea-king and the vikingr, beyond the northern Hellespont.† But though he gave to the storm of depredation a new direction; yet when he had once burst beyond the precincts of the Baltic; when he had once crossed new oceans, and thrown the beam of glory round his course, we may believe that adventurers swarmed from every coast, eager to track his way. It is certain that after his life, new heroes appeared every year, and the seas were burthened with ever-succeeding fleets of such greedy and ruthless savages.

It was the lot of Ragnar to have a numerous posterity,‡ and all his passions were infused into his children, whom he educated to be sea-kings like himself. But as our history is concerned with his English exploits only, we will state them from his Quida, in its own language, and in the succession in which they are there placed.

The Quida begins with Ragnar's attempt on Gothland, by which he obtained his wife Thora. This expedition, and others in Eyra-sound, or the Baltic; at the mouth of the Dwina; at Hel-singia, in the bay of Finland; and against Herrauthr, his wife's father; at Scarpey, in Norway; at Uller Akri, near Upsal; at the Indoro Isles, in the bay of Drontheim; and on the island of

* Stanza 13, and see Stanza 24.

† We may refer to Saxo, l. ix. p. 169, 177, with Stephanus's notes; to the Icelandic fragment, in 2 Langb. 270, 280; to the Ragnar Saga; and to Torfseus, in his Series Dan. and his Hist. Norveg. for the northern account of the particular transactions of Ragnar. Johannes Magnus, and Loccenius, also mention his history.

‡ The Baltic is called by some the Hellespont; as by Hevelius, in the Dedic. to his Selenographia. The use of this word has, I think, sometimes misled Northern authors to carry some of their heroes towards the Euxine, the Hellespont of Homer.

§ According to Saxo, he had ten sons by his three wives, p. 169, 170, 172. The Ragnar Saga, sp. Torfseus, 346, 347, gives their mothers differently from Saxo.

Bornholm, occupy the first nine stanzas. After these exploits the sea-king comes nearer to the British shores, and begins his southern ravages with an attack on Flanders. This is followed by a bold invasion of England, in which he boasts of the death of the Anglo-Saxon Walthiofr.

We hewed with our swords—
 Hundreds, I declare lay
 Round the horses of the Island-rocks,
 At the English promontory.
 We sailed to the battle
 Six days before the hosts fell.
 We chanted the mass of the spears
 With the uprising sun.
 Destiny was with our swords:
 Walthiofr fell in the tumult.*

Conflicts at Perth, and on the Orkneys, are then exultingly sung: another occurs afterwards in England.

Hard came the storm on the shield
 Till they fell prone to the earth
 On Northumbria's land.
 On that morning was there
 Any need for men to stimulate
 'The sport of Hilda, where the sharp
 Lightnings bit the helmed skull!
 Was it not as when the young widow
 On my seat of pre-eminence I saluted.†

Exploits at the Hebrides; in Ireland; at another coast, where "the thorn of the sheath glided to the heart of Agnar," his son; at the Isle of Sky; and in the bay of Ila, on the Scottish coast, are triumphantly narrated. Another stanza follows, which seems to make Lindisfarne the locality of the battle:

We had the music of swords in the morning
 For our sport at Lindis-eyri
 With three kingly heroes.
 Many fell into the jaws of the wolf;
 The hawk plucked the flesh with the wild beasts;
 Few ought therefore to rejoice
 That they came safe from the battle.
 Ira's blood into the sea
 Profusely fell; into the clear wave.‡

He next records his expedition on the British isle of Anglesey:

The swords bit the shields;
 Red with gold resounded
 The steel on the clothes of Hilda.
 They shall see on Aungol's Eyri,
 In the ages hereafter,

* *Lud. Quid.* St. 11. *John.* p. 14. † *St.* 15. p. 18. ‡ *St.* 20. p. 24.

How we to the appointed play
Of heroes advanced.
Red were on the distant cape
The flying dragons of the river that gave wounds.^a

After two stanzas of eulogy on battles, he begins to commemorate his disastrous change of fortunes, and avows that it was unexpected to him :

It seems to me, from experience,
That we follow the decrees of the fates.
Few escape the statutes of the natal goddesses.
Never did I believe that from Ella
The end of my life would come,
When I strewed the bloody slaughter,
And urged my planks on the lakes.
Largely we feasted the beasts of prey
Along the bays of Scotland.^a

But he consoles himself with his belief in his pagan mythology :

It delights me continually
That the seats of Baldor's father
I know are strewed for guests.
We shall drink ale immediately
From the large hollowed skulls.
Youths grieve not at death
In the mansions of dread Fiolner.
I come not with the words of fear
Into the hall of Vithris.^b

He animates his spirit as the adders sting him, with the remembrance of his children, as if he anticipated their fiercer revenge for his sufferings :

Here would for me
All the sons of Aslauga,^c
The bright brands of Hilda awake
If they knew but the danger
Of our encounter.
What a number of snakes
Full of venom strike me !
I gained a true mother for my children,
That they might have brave hearts.^d

^a St. 21. p. 24.

^b St. 24. p. 28.

^c St. 25. p. 28.

^e We have a specimen of the traditions of the Norwegians concerning this lady, in Torfæus. He says that in Spangareid, an isthmus in Norway, the greatest part of her history remains uncorrupted. The people of this region relate from the accounts of their ancestors, that a golden harp came on shore in a small bay near them, in which was found a little girl. She was brought up; afterwards kept sheep; became famed for her beauty; married a Danish king, and was called Otsuga. They show a hill, called Otsuga's hill. The bay is named Gull-Siken, or golden bay; and the stream near this is called Kraaka-becker, or the rivulet of Kraaka. Torf. ser. Reg. p. 35. Kraaka was one of this lady's names.

^d St. 26. p. 30.

His strength decreases as he sings : he feels advancing death, yet seems to catch a gleam of pleasure from the hopes of the vengeance which his children will inflict :

It flows to my inheritance ;
 Grim dangers surround me from the adder ;
 Vipers dwell in the palace of my heart—
 We hope that soon the staff
 Of Vithris will stand in Eilla's breast.
 My sons must swell
 That their father has been thus conquered.
 Must not the valiant youths
 Forsake their repose for us.*

The recollection of his own exploits gives a momentary impulse of new vigour, and the number announces the ferocious activity of his sea-king life :

Fifty and one times have I
 Called the people to the appointed battles
 By the warning spear-messenger.
 Little do I believe that of men
 There will be any
 King, more famous than ourself.
 When young I grasped and reddened my spear.
 The Æsir must invite us ;
 I will die without a groan.†

As the fatal instant presses on, he rouses himself to expire with those marks of exultation which it was the boast of this fierce race to exhibit :

We desire this end.
 The Disir goddesses invite me home.
 As if from the hall of him rejoicing in spoils,
 From Odin, sent to me.
 Glad shall I with the Ase
 Drink ale in my lofty seat.
 The hours of my life glide away
 But laughing I will die.‡

The sovereign that arose with sufficient ability to meet and change the crisis which these new habits of the Scandinavian nations were bringing on Europe, was Alfred the Great, the son of Ethelwulph, and grandson of Egbert.

* St. 27, p. 30.

† St. 28, p. 32.

‡ St. 29, p. 32. Torfæus supposes two other Lodbrogs. I am not sure that he is not dividing the same person into three parts. But it is clear that the Ragnar Lodbrog, the subject of the Quida, is the person whom Eilla of Northumbria destroyed between 863 and 867, and whose children, in revenge, executed that invasion which destroyed the octarchy of England, and dethroned Alfred for a time.

CHAPTER IV.

The Reign of Ethelwulph.—Invasion of the Northmen.—Birth of Alfred the Great.—His Travels.—Ethelwulph's Deposition.

THE death of Egbert, in 836, checked for a while the ascendancy of the West Saxon power, because his sceptre descended to an inferior hand in his son Ethelwulph. This prince, 836-856. who from the failure of other issue became his successor, was then a monk. Educated in the earlier part of his life by Helmstan the bishop of Winchester, he had shared at first in his father's warlike toils. In 823, he had marched with Alstan into Kent after the defeat of Mercia, and was appointed by his father king of that country,^a but the passive timidity of his disposition alienated him from an ambitious life, and he returned to his preceptor, who recommended him to the care of Swithin, a prior of the monastery at Winchester. From Swithin the prince received not only instruction, but also the monastic habit, and by his first master was appointed a sub-deacon.^b

The quiet seclusion which Ethelwulph's slow capacity and meek temper coveted, was not refused to him by Egbert, because another son promised to perpetuate his lineage.^c But life is a mysterious gift, which vanishes at the will of other agencies, whose operations we cannot trace, whose power we cannot limit. The destined heir of Egbert's dignity was in the tomb before his father, and this catastrophe invested Ethelwulph with an importance which his natural character could never have obtained. He became what Egbert had been, the only existing descendant of Cerdic, the revered ancestor of the West Saxon princes. This casualty made the accession of Ethelwulph an object of popular desire; but though sovereigns had often at will descended from the throne to the cloister, it was less easy to quit the cloister for the throne. The papal dispensation was first wanted to release

^a There is a charter of Egbert, dated 823, in which he says of Ethelwulph, "quem regem constituimus in Cantia." Thorpe, Reg. Roff. p. 22.

^b Rudborne Hist. Mag. Winton. lib. iii. c. 1, p. 199, published in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, vol. i.—Malmesbury Pontif. p. 242. Wallingf. 532. No good document authorises us to say that he was made a bishop.

^c The expressions of the chroniclers are in general more negatives, implying that Egbert left no other heir; but the extract which Leland has translated, ex *Chronico quodam Wiledunensi Anglicis rithmis scripto*, explicitly says, *Atwulphus rex Egberti filius secundus*. Collectanea, vol. iii. p. 219.

Ethelwulph from his sacerdotal engagement; on its arrival he assumed the crown of Egbert.^d

His indolent, mild, and weak mind^e was not adequate to the exigencies of the time, but he enjoyed the great advantage which was capable of counteracting the ill effects of his inability, a wise and vigorous minister. Alstan, the bishop of Sherborne, had possessed the favour of Egbert, and on his death became the political and military tutor of Ethelwulph: he was powerful, warlike and intelligent. He had the good and rare fortune to enjoy his preferments for fifty years. He endeavoured to rouse the king to those exertions which his dignity made a duty. He provided supplies for his exchequer, and he laboured to organize a military force. His wise measures, though sometimes baffled by an incompetent execution, and by the suddenness of aggressions, which no vigilance could prevent, had the general success of punishing many insults, and of preserving the country from a permanent conquest.^f

Nothing is more curious nor more interesting in history than to remark, that when great political exigencies evolve, which threaten to shake the foundations of civil society, they are usually as much distinguished by the rise of sublime characters, with genius and ability sufficient to check the progress of the evil, and even to convert its disasters to benevolent issues. One of these extraordinary persons was Alfred the Great, and considered with regard to the time of his appearance, the great ends which he achieved, and the difficulties under which he formed himself, no historical character can more justly claim our attention and admiration than our venerated king.

Ethelwulph had married Osberga, the daughter of Oslac, a man mentioned with an epithet of celebrity, and the king's cup-bearer. Oslac had sprung from the chieftain, who, in the time of Cerdic, had obtained the Isle of Wight.^g After three elder sons, Osberga was delivered of Alfred, at Wantage, in 849. Berkshire.^h She is highly extolled for her piety and understanding; but the education of Alfred must have lost the

^d Wallingford, 532. The name of this king has been disfigured by that variety of orthography which prevailed at this time, and often confuses history. Ethelwulphus, Ethulfus, Athulfus, Adulfus, Aithulfus, Adhelwifus, Athelwifus, Atwulfus.

^e Malmesbury's expressions are, *natura lenis et qui sub quiete degere quam multis provinciis imperitare mallet—crassioris et hebetis ingenii.* p. 37—*mansuetoris ingenii—segnem,* p. 247.

^f Though Alstan had stripped his monastery of some of its advantages, our William, in his history, p. 37, and his Gest. pont. 247, commemorates him with an encomium which is liberal and strongly featured.

^g Asser de rebus gestis Ælfredi, p. 4, ed. Ox. 1722. Oslac was alive at his grandson's birth; for he signed a charter as the ambassador of Ethelwulph, which the king of Mercia gave to Croyland in 851. Ingulf, p. 15.

^h Asser, p. 3, adds, that the country was called Berroc scire a berroc silva ubi barus abundantissime nascitur.

benefit of her talents, because his father married another lady before the sixth year of his childhood had expired. She is said to have given him to Swithin, the preceptor of his father, to be taught.¹ The bishop may have nurtured or infused that habitual piety for which Alfred was remarkable; but was unquestionably unfit for the office of literary tutor, as Alfred passed his childhood without knowing how to read.

Their successes in France, having enlarged the horizon of the Northmen's ambition, every new aggression on England became more formidable than the preceding. In 851, they first ventured to winter in the Isle of Thanet.² This was a new era in their habits. Their ancient custom had been to pirate abroad in the summer, but to return with the autumn. But Ragnar's success in France had increased their daring, and enlarged their views. They had now formed the daring project of remaining in the countries which they insulted.

In the spring they attempted against the Anglo-Saxons the most serious invasion which England had yet experienced. 852. Their numbers, perhaps the result of a confederation, were superior to any preceding attack. They entered the Thames with 350 ships, plundered Canterbury and London, and marched into Mercia. The names of all their chieftains are not mentioned; but as Ragnar Lodbrog was now in full activity, he may have led or aided the invaders.

Mercia had been governed by Withtlaf till 838. His son and wife reached the tomb before him, and he buried them by the side of Etheldritha, the daughter of Offa. She had sheltered him from the pursuit of Egbert, and his grateful feelings were so ardent, that when he heard of her death, his grief confined him to his bed, and it was with difficulty afterwards that he was withdrawn from her grave. His brother Bertulph succeeded, and signalized his reign by favouring the assassination of his brother's grandson; his own son was the murderer; love of power was the cause. Bertulph was king of Mercia, when the Northern warriors entered his dominions;³ he endeavoured to repel them, but was defeated.⁴

The Northmen after this victory turned southward and entered Surrey. The West Saxons collected under Ethelwulph, and his

¹ Rudborne Hist. mag. p. 207. There is a beautiful MS. on St. Swithin, written by Lantfredus in the tenth century, in the British Museum. Bib. Reg. xv. c. 7. But it contains an account of his miracles only, to justify his canonization in the reign of Edgar. One part is a curious Latin alphabetical or acrostic hymn.

² Sax. Chron. 74. Asser, p. 5, places the winter residence in Shepey Isle; but the printed Chronicle dates their first wintering in Shepey in 854. The MSS. Sax. Chron. Tib. B. 4, has 855.

³ Ingulf, 11. Sax. Chron. 74. Mr. Hume erroneously says that Brictric governed Mercia at this period, p. 71.

⁴ Sax. Chron. 74. Flor. Wig. 295.

son Ethelbald, and at Aclea, a field of oaks, the two nations met, and a battle ensued, which the desperate courage of both armies made long and very deadly. It was not until the greatest part of the invaders had perished, that they lost the ground. The English at last triumphed: the battle was so destructive, that Asser, who lived in the period when the Northmen maintained the most furious contests, yet attests that so great a slaughter of the invaders had never been known before that day, or during his experience since.^m

The Earl of Devonshire had already defeated them at Wenbury in that county, and Æthelstan, the subordinate king of Kent, with the Earl Ealhere, had enjoyed a similar success at Sandwich, where nine of their ships were taken.ⁿ

The Mercian succession of sovereigns was now drawing to its close. Beortulf was succeeded in 852, by Burrhed the last king of Mercia, who in the next year requested the assistance of Ethelwulph against the Britons of Wales.^o Burrhed had already fought a battle, in which Merfyn Frych the British king, fell, and was succeeded by Roderick, who has obtained in Welsh history the epithet of Mawr, or the Great.^p But an epithet like this rather expresses the feelings of his countrymen, than the merit of

^m Asser, p. 6. Voltaire has strangely confounded this invasion with that against Ethelred, above a century later. He says, "On prétend qu'en 852, ils remontèrent la Tamise avec trois cens voiles. Les Anglais ne se défendèrent mieux que les Francs. Ils payèrent comme eux leurs vainqueurs. Un roi nommé Ethelbert suivit le malheureux exemple de Charles le chauve. Il donna de l'argent." *Essai sur les Mœurs*. Œuvres complètes, t. 16, p. 472, ed. 1785. In his previous paragraphs, he confounds the Britons with the English. "Les Anglais,—ils n'étaient échappés du joug des Romains que pour tomber sous celui de ces Saxons." *Ibid.*

ⁿ Asser, p. 6. Sax. Chron. 74. There is some confusion about Ethelstan; by three authors (Huntingd. 345, Mailros, 142, and Hoveden, 412,) he is styled the brother of Ethelwulph. But Flor. Wig. 291, Ethelwerd, 841, Malmsbury, 37, and the printed Saxon Chronicle, make him the son. The MSS. Saxon Chronicle, in the Cotton Library, Tib. B. 4, differs from the printed one, for it calls him the son of Egbert. It says, "ƿeng Echeþulf ƿiþ ƿunu to Weþt Seaxna ƿice; and Echeþtan ƿiþ oþer ƿunu, ƿeng to Cantƿana ƿice, and to Suthƿigean, and to Suthƿeaxna ƿice," p. 30. Matt. West. 301, and Rudborne, 201, make him Ethelwulph's illegitimate son. Asser's testimony, p. 6, would decide that he was the son of Ethelwulph; but that these descriptive words are wanting in the Cotton MSS. of his book. Bromton says, Ethelwulph had a son, Athelstan; but that he died in annis adolescentiæ suæ, 802. Malmsbury states, that Ethelwulph gave to him the provinces which Egbert had conquered, 37. Ethelstan is mentioned by Fordun to have perished in a battle against the Picts, lib. iv. c. 14, p. 666. In 850 he signed a charter as king of Kent. Thorpe, Reg. Roff. p. 23. Dr. Whitaker supposes him to have been St. Neot.

^o Asser, 6.

^p Wynne's Hist. p. 37.

his character. It may be just in provincial history as long as that exists in its local seclusion; but the force of the expression vanishes when the person it accompanies is brought forward into more general history in an enlightened age. He who was great in his little circle or ruder times, becomes then diminutive and obscure; and it is almost ludicrous to apply one of the most splendid symbols of recorded merit, to actions so inconsiderable, and to characters so ambiguous as a petty Welsh prince. The grand epithets of history should be reserved for those who can abide a comparison with the illustrious of every age, like the lofty mountains of nature, which, whether existing in Italy, in Tartary, or Chili, are admired for their sublimity by every spectator, and in every period.

Roderic endured the invasion of Ethelwulf and Burrhed, who penetrated with victorious ravages to Anglesey.⁴
 653. Ethelwulph gave his daughter Ethelswitha in marriage to the Mercian, and the nuptial solemnities were celebrated royally at Chippenham.⁵

The vikingr appeared again in Thanet. Ealhere with the armed men of Kent, and Huda with those of Surrey, overwhelmed the invaders with the first fury of their battle; but the conflict was obstinately renewed, the English chiefs fell, and after many of both armies had been slain or drowned, the pirates obtained the victory.⁶

In the fifth year of Alfred's age, his father, although he had three elder sons, seems to have formed an idea of making him his successor. This intention is inferred from the facts that Ethelwulf sent him at this time to Rome, with a great train of nobility and others; and that the pope anointed him king at the request of his father.⁷

It is expressly affirmed, that the king loved Alfred better than his other sons.⁸ When the king went to Rome himself, two years afterwards, he took Alfred with him, because he loved him with superior affection.⁹ The presumption that he intended to make Alfred his successor, therefore agrees with the fact of his paternal partiality. It is warranted by the declara-

⁴ Wynne, 27. Asser, 7. Sax. Chron. 75.

⁵ Asser, 7. Matt. West. 305. Burrhed therefore became Alfred's brother-in-law. Voltaire calls him inaccurately his uncle. Comme Burrhed son oncle, p. 473.

⁶ Asser, 7. Ragnar's Quida mentions one of his exploits at an English promontory, where the English noble Walthiofr fell. See before, note * p. 306.

⁷ So Florence, 296; Sim. Dun. 139; Rad. diocet. 450; Chron. Mailros, 142; Matt. West. 307; and Cron. Joan. Taxton, MSS. Cotton Lib. Julius, A. 1, affirm. As St. Neot the son or brother of Ethelwulph went, about this period, seven times to Rome, his journeys or his advice may have had some connection with this project.

⁸ Cum communi et ingenti patris sui et matris amore supra omnes fratres suos. Asser, 15, Matt. West. 307, Sim. Dun. 141, Flor. Wig. 297, express the same fact.

⁹ Filium suum Ælfrædum iterum in eandem viam secum ducens eo quod, illum plus ceteris filiis suis diligebat. Asser, p. 8.

tion of Matthew of Westminster, that one of the causes of the rebellion which followed against Ethelwulph was, that he had caused Alfred to be crowned, thereby, as it were, excluding his other children from the chance of succession.^v

In Alfred's journey through France, he was very hospitably treated by Bertinus and Grimbald.^z When Alfred arrived in the course of nature at the royal dignity, he remembered Grimbald's services and talents, requited them by a steady friendship, and obtained from them an important intellectual benefit.

In 855, Ethelwulph, with the sanction of his witena-gemot, made that donation to the church which is usually construed to be the grant of its tithes. But on reading carefully the obscure words of the three copies of this charter, which three succeeding chroniclers have left us, it will appear that it cannot have been the original grant of the tithes of all England. These words imply either that it was a liberation of the land which the clergy had before been in possession of, from all the services and payments to which the Anglo-Saxon lands were generally liable,^y or that it was an additional gift of land, not of tithes, either of the king's private patrimony, or of some other which is not explained. The reason for the gift which is added in the charter strengthens the first supposition;^z but the terms used to express the persons

^v *Causa autem bifaria erat, una quod filium juniorem Ælfredum quasi aliis a sorte regni exclusis, in regem Romæ fecerat coronari.* Matt. West. p. 308.

^z *Vita Grimbaldi.* Lel. Collect. i. p. 18.

^y Ingulf, Malmesbury, and Matt. West., profess to give copies of the charter. The king, (in Ingulf's copy,) after reciting the depredations of the Northmen, adds, with some confusion of grammar and style, "Wherfore I Ethelwulph, king of the West Saxons, with the advice of my bishops and princes, affirming a salutary counsel, and uniform remedy, we have consented that I should adjudge some hereditary portion of land to all degrees before possessing it, whether male or female servants of God, serving him, or poor laymen; always the tenth mansion: where that may be the least, then the tenth part of all goods should be given in perpetual freedom to the church, so that it may be safe and protected from all secular services and royal contributions greater or smaller, or taxations which we call wynterden; and that it may be free from all things; and without the military expedition, building of bridges, and constructions of fortresses." Ing. Hist. p. 17. Malmesbury's copy corresponds with this; but for "then the tenth part of all goods," it has "yet the tenth part," omitting the words, "of all goods," and changing "tum" into "tamen," p. 41. Matt. West. p. 308, gives it a different aspect: he makes it like an absolute hereditary gift, but converts the general term "land," used by the others, into "my land." Thus "I grant some portion of my land to be possessed in perpetual right, to wit, the tenth part of my land, that it may be free from all offices, and secular services, and royal tributes," &c. adding the same reason as above. The natural force of Matthew's words limits the lands given, to the king's own lands, which were only a small part of the kingdom, but gives a proprietary right more expressly than the others. I think there is no reason to believe that tithes were then first granted, but that this charter was meant to have the operation mentioned in the text.

^z "That they may more diligently pour forth their prayers to God for us without ceasing; as we have alleviated their servitude in some part, 'eorum servitutum in aliqua parte levigamus.'" Ing. p. 17. Malmesb. 41. An alleviation of services is not a grant of tithes.

to whom the benefit was granted seem to confine it to monastical persons.^a But whatever was its original meaning, the clergy in after-ages interpreted it to mean a distinct and formal grant of the tithes of the whole kingdom.^b

He went afterwards to Rome himself with great magnificence, accompanied by Alfred,^c who was entering his seventh year. As the expeditions of the great to Rome were, in those days, usually by land, Ethelwulf went first into France, where Charles, the French king, received him with honour and royal liberality, and caused him to be conducted through his dominions with every respectful attention.^d

The presents which the West Saxon king carried to the pope were peculiarly splendid. A crown of pure gold, weighing four pounds, two golden vessels called *Baucas*, a sword adorned with pure gold, two golden images, four Saxon dishes of silver gilt, besides valuable dresses, are enumerated by his contemporary Anastasius. The king also gave a donative of gold to all the Roman clergy and nobles, and silver to the people.^e

Ethelwulf continued a year at Rome, and rebuilt the Saxon school which Ina had founded.^f By the carelessness of its English inhabitants, it had been set on fire the preceding year, and was burnt to ashes.^g One act which he did at Rome evinces his patriotism and influence, and entitles him to honourable remembrance. He saw that the public penitents and exiles were

^a The words in *Ingulf* are, "famulis et famulabus Dei, Deo servientibus sive laicis miseris." In *Malmsbury* the same, omitting the epithet "miseris." *Famulabus* cannot apply to rectors or curates; *famulis et famulabus Dei*, mean usually monks and nuns. The copy of *Matthew of Westminster*, for these words, substitutes "Deo et beate Marie, et omnibus sanctis." But *Matthew* wrote in the latter end of the thirteenth century. *Ingulf's* copy is above two centuries more ancient than his.

^b So *Ingulf*, and *Malmsbury*, and others state it; but all classes of men who have obtained a grant by deed, try to extend its meaning as far for their own benefit as the construction of the words can be carried. The law itself looks only at the sense of the words used. *Asser's* opinion of its import would be very valuable if it was clearly given: because, as a contemporary, we should gain from him the meaning given to it at its first publication. If his first sentence stood alone, it would confirm our first construction; but his rhetorical after-phrase adds something, which, if it means any thing more, I do not understand it. The passage stands thus: "He liberated the tenth part of all his kingdom from every royal service and contribution, and in an everlasting instrument in the cross of Christ for the redemption of his soul, and of his predecessors, he immolated to the triune Deity." I do not see that these latter words increase the meaning of the first, which express only a liberation from burthens. They seem to add that he offered this liberation as a sacrifice to the Deity.

^c *Asser*, 9.

^d *Annales Bertiniani* in *Bouquet's Recueil*, tom. vii. p. 71.

^e *Anastasius Bibliothecarius de vitis Pontif.* vol. i. p. 403, ed. Rome, 1718.

^f *Rudhorne*, 202. *Anastasius* describes it as an habitation; *quæ in eorum lingua burgus dicitur*, p. 317. The place where it was situated, was called the Saxon street, *Saxonum vicium*. *Anast.* 363. This school was much attended to by the Anglo-Saxon nobles and sovereigns.

^g *Anastasius*, p. 317.

bound with iron, and he obtained an order from the pope that no Englishman, out of his country, should be put into bonds for penance.^b

In his way through France, he discovered that senility gave no exemption from love. In July he sued for an alliance with Judith, the daughter of Charles, and in October was married to her by Hincmar. He admitted her to share in the royal dignity, and the diadem was placed on her head. Presents worthy of the high characters concerned were mutually given, and Ethelwulf took shipping for England.ⁱ

Few marriages of our sovereigns have been more important in their consequences to the reputation and happiness of England than this, which at the time might have appeared censurable from the disparity of the ages of the parties, and from our aversion to see the hoary head imitating the youthful bridegroom. It was this lady who began the education of Alfred; and to her therefore may be traced all his literary acquisitions.

But the connubial felicity of Ethelwulf was interrupted by intelligence of a successful conspiracy against his power, which menaced him with deposition and exile. It was conducted by Alstan, the bishop, to whom he owed all his prosperity; and Ethelbald, the eldest of the legitimate princes, was placed at the head. The Earl of Somerset participated in the rebellion. The principal object was to defeat the plans of Ethelwulf in favour of Alfred, and to invest Ethelbald with the crown.^j The popular reason was, the elevation of his new wife to the dignity of queen. The crimes of Eadburga had incited the Anglo-Saxon nation to forbid the wife of any other of their kings to be crowned.^k Ethelwulf's visit to Rome without having resigned his crown may have begun the discontent. Two of the preceding sovereigns of Wessex who had taken this step, Cadwalla and Ina, had first abdicated the throne, though Offa retained it during his journey. But Ethelwulf had been in the church, and had not the warlike character of Offa to impress or satisfy his thanes and eorls. For him therefore to pursue the steps that were so like a re-assumption of his early ecclesiastical character may have dissatisfied the fierce Anglo-Saxons, who thought little of religion until some event roused them to renounce the world altogether.

In Selwood Forest the revolters first assembled in strength. The king's absence favoured the scheme; and as his devotion to

^b Rudborne, 202.

ⁱ *Annales Bertiniani*, p. 72.—Asser, R. The ceremony used at the coronation of Judith yet exists, and may be seen in Du Chesne's *Hist. Franc.* vol. ii. p. 423.

^j *Matt. West.* 308. Rudborne also states, that some write, *quod filii inuixerunt contra patrem propter invidiam quod frater minimus, viz. Alfredus ante omnes inuictus erat in regem jussione paterna*, p. 201.

^k Asser, 10, 11. This degradation of their sovereign's queen was contrary, says Asser, to the custom of all the German nations.

the Roman see, combined with the prospect of a stripling's succession, to the prejudice of brothers, who to priority of birth added maturity of age, may have diminished the general loyalty; so the circumstances of his marriage concurred, fortunately for the conspirators, to complete his unpopularity. When Ethelwulf returned, he found the combination too powerful to be resisted: but the nobles of all Wessex would not permit him to be absolutely dethroned; they promoted an accommodation between the two parties, on the plan, that Ethelbald should be put in possession of West Saxony, the best portion of the monarchy,¹ and that Ethelwulf should be contented with the eastern districts which Ethelstan had enjoyed. The king, averse to war, and perhaps intimidated by the strength of his opponents, submitted to the proposition.²

CHAPTER V.

The Reigns of Ethelbald and Ethelbert.—Alfred's Education.

By wresting the sceptre of Wessex from the hand of his father, Ethelbald gained a very short interval of regal pomp. 856-860. His father survived the disappointment of his hope and the diminution of his power but two years, and Ethelbald outlived him scarcely three more. Ethelwulf, by his will, left landed possessions to three of his sons; and it is a proof of his placable disposition, that Ethelbald was one; the others were Ethelred and Alfred; the survivor of the three was to inherit the bequest.³ His other son, his daughter and kinsmen, and also his nobles, partook of his testamentary liberality. His will displayed both the equity and the piety of his mind.⁴

Soon after Ethelwulf's decease, Ethelbald married his widow, Judith, in defiance of religious institutions and the customs of

¹ Asser, 9. He remarks that *occidentales pars Saxonie semper orientali principiorum est, ibid.*

² There is a complimentary letter of Lupus, a French abbot, to Ethelwulf, still existing, soliciting him to be at the expense of covering the church of his monastery with lead. In this he speaks of the good opinion which had spread of Ethelwulf's government, and of the reputation he had acquired by his exertions against the enemies of Christianity, alluding to his victories over the Northmen. *Epist. Lupi Bib. Mag.* vol. iii. p. 625.

³ See Alfred's will, published by Mr. Astle, which recites this devise.

⁴ He ordered throughout all his lands, that in every ten manors one poor person, either a native or a foreigner, should be maintained in food and clothing, as long as the country contained men and cattle. He left the pope a hundred mancusses, and two hundred to illuminate St. Peter's and St. Paul's churches at Rome on Easter eve and the ensuing dawn. Asser, 13.

every Christian state.* On the exhortations of Swithin, he is represented to have dismissed her, and to have passed the remainder of his short life in reputation and justice.^d He died in 860.

Some time after the death of Ethelbald, Judith sold her possessions in England, and returned to her father; she lived at Senlis with regal dignity. Here she was seen by Baldwin, surnamed the Arm of Iron, whom she married. He was descended from the count, who had cultivated and occupied Flanders.^e The pope reconciled him with the king of France, her father,^f who gave to Baldwin all the region between the Scheld, the Sambre, and the sea, and created him count of the empire, that he might be the bulwark of the French kingdom against the Northmen.^g

Baldwin built Bruges in 856, as a fortress to coerce them, and died in 880, having enjoyed his honours with peculiar celebrity.^h

On the death of Ethelbald, the kingdom of Wessex became the possession of Ethelbert, his brother, who had been already reigning in Kent, Surrey, and Sussex.

In his days, the tranquillity of England was again endangered; a large fleet of the northern vikings suddenly appeared off Winchester and ravaged it; but as they were retiring with their plunder, they were overtaken and chased to their ships by the earls of Hampshire and Berkshire.

Their commander led them from England to France; with above 300 ships they ascended the Seine, and Charles averted their hostilities from his own domains by money. The winter forbidding them to navigate the sea, they dispersed themselves along the Seine and the adjacent shores in different bands.ⁱ Such

* Asser, 23. But this author, and they who follow him, are wrong in stating that this was against the custom of the pagans; for Eadbald, king of Kent, had done the same in 616; and the Saxon Chronicle, in mentioning that event, says, he lived "on hethenum theape swa, that he hæfde his fæder laye to þive," p. 26.

^d Matt. West. 310. Rudborne, 204.

^e *Annales Bertiniani* Bouquet, tom. vii. p. 77.—The *Genealogia comitum Flandriæ scripta seculo 12*, says, A. 792, Lidricus Harlebecensis comes videns Flandriam vacuam et incultam et nemorosam occupavit eam. Ibid. p. 81, he was the great grandfather of Baldwin. Previous to Baldwin, Flanders was in the hands of foresters, Espinoy's Recherches, p. 5.

^f The pope's letters to Charles, and his queen Hermentrude, are in *Miræi opera diplomatica*, i. p. 132. Hincmar's letter to the pope, stating what he had done in obedience to his order, is in the same work, p. 25. The pope hints to Charles, that if his anger lasted, Baldwin might join the Northmen.

^g *Meyer Annales Flandriæ*, 13. For the same purpose, Theodore was made the first count of Holland at this time, *ibid.*

^h The author of the life of S. Winnoc, written in the eleventh century, says, Flanders never had a man his superior in talent and warlike ability, 7 Bouquet, p. 379.

ⁱ *Annales Bertiniani*. One expression of these annals is curious; it says, that the Northmen divided themselves, *secundum suas sodalitates*, as if they had been a union of different companies associated for the expedition.

incursions induced the Flemings to build castles and fortified places.¹

In 864, they wintered in Thanet. While the Kentish men were offering money, to be spared from their ravages, they broke from their camp at night, and ravaged all the east of the country.

866. Ethelbert was, like his brother, taken off prematurely, after a short, but honourable reign of six years, and was buried in Shireburn.² He left some children,¹ but Ethelred, his brother, acceded in their stead.

During the reigns of his brethren, Alfred was quietly advancing into youth and manhood. When an illustrious character excites our attention, it is natural to inquire whether any unusual circumstances distinguished his early years. This curiosity arises, not from the expectation of beholding an extraordinary being, acting to astonish us in the features and dress of infancy, because it is probable, that in the beginning of life no indications of future greatness appear. Healthy children are in general sprightly; and the man destined to interest ages by his mature intellect, cannot be distinguished amid the universal animation and activity of his delighted play-fellows. But as the evolution of genius, and its luxuriant fertility, depend much upon the accidents of its experience, it becomes important to notice those events which have occurred to an illustrious individual, during the first periods of life, that we may trace their influence in producing or determining the tendencies of his manly character, and in shaping his future fortunes. The minds of all men, in every portion of their lives, are composed of the impressions received, and the ideas retained from their preceding experience. As the events of childhood affect its future youth, those of its youth influence its manhood, and that also impresses its subsequent age. Hence they who wish to study the formation of great characters must attentively consider the successive circumstances of their previous stages of life.

The first years of Alfred's life were marked by incidents unusual to youth. When he was but four years old, he was sent by his father to travel by land through France, and over the Alps to Rome, accompanied with a large retinue. He was brought back in safety from this journey; and in his seventh year he attended his father in a similar expedition, and resided with him a year in that distinguished city. Although Alfred at

¹ Ob tam furibundas septentrionalium barbarorum incursiones Flandri in suis pagis castellis qui munitiones facere ceparunt. Meyer. Ann. Fland. 12.

² Asser, 14.

¹ They are mentioned in Alfred's will. About this time, Ruric, a prince of the Wæregi, obtained the empire of Russia, and fixing his seat at Novogardia, which he adorned with buildings, occasioned all Russia to have that name. Chronicon. Theod. Kiow, cited by Langb. i. p. 554.

these periods was but a child, yet the varied succession of scenes and incidents, and the new habits, privations, alarms, and vicissitudes with which such dangerous and toilsome journeys must have abounded, could not occur to his perception without powerfully exciting and instructing his young intellect. His residence twice at Rome, in which so many monuments of ancient art were then visible to rouse the enthusiasm and interest the curiosity of the observer, must have left impressions on his mind, not likely to have forsaken it, of the superiority and civilization of the people, whose celebrity was everywhere resounded, and whose noble works he was contemplating.^m The survey of the ruins of the Capitol has excited some to the arduous toil of literary composition,ⁿ and their remembrance may have produced in the mind of Alfred that eagerness for knowledge which so usefully distinguished his maturer years.

In his eighth year he received a new train of associations from his residence in the court of France, during his father's courtship and marriage with Judith. An urbanity of manners, and a cultivation of knowledge, vigorous because recent, distinguished the Franks at that time from the other Gothic nations. Alfred seems to have been inspired by them with some desire of improvement, though the occupations and contrary tastes of his father confined his wishes to a latent sentiment.

From his eighth year to his twelfth, his biography is less certain. If it be true, as some chronicles intimate, that infirm health occasioned his father, in obedience to the superstition of the day, to send him to Modwenna, a religious lady in Ireland, celebrated into sanctity,^o such an expedition must, by its new and contrasting scenes, have kept his curiosity alive, and have amplified his information. The disposition to improve may also have been increased, if not produced, within him by the reputation of his namesake, Alfred of Northumbria.

But though Alfred's mind may have abounded with excited capability, eager to know, and emulous of distinction,^p it had received none of that fruitful cultivation which is gained in literary education, from the transmitted wisdom of other times; from the unobtrusive eloquence of books. Alfred had been a favourite;

^m Besides the remains of ancient taste, Alfred must have seen there the most perfect productions of the time, as the pope was perpetually receiving a great variety of rich presents from Constantinople, and every other Christian country. See many of these mentioned in Anastasius.

ⁿ Mr. Gibbon mentions that he conceived the first idea of writing his history while sitting on the ruins of the Capitol.

^o *Hist. aurea Johan. Tinmuth*, MSS. in Bib. Bodl. cited by Dugdale, *Monast.* i. p. 197. Higden also mentions it, p. 256.

^p Auser says of him, *cui ab incunabulis ante omnia et cum omnibus presentis vite studii, sapientie desiderium cum nobilitate generis, nobilis mentis ingenium supplevit*, p. 16.

and of such children, indulgences and ignorance are too often the lot. Happily, his father's misfortunes and new connection rescued him from that ruin of temper and mind which sometimes disappoints the fairest promises of nature.

Alfred's intellect first displayed itself in a fondness for the only mental object which then existed to attract it. This was the Anglo-Saxon poetry. It was in a rude and simple state, and barren of all that we now admire in the productions of the muses. But it was stately and heroical. It tended to confer fame, and was therefore adapted to rouse the mind to seek it. Hence to Alfred the Saxon poems, being the best which were then accessible to him, were impressive and delightful. By day and by night, he was an assiduous auditor, whenever they were recited.⁹ As he listened, the first aspirings of a soaring mind seem to have arisen within him; and they prepared him to desire larger draughts of that intellectual fountain, whose scantiest waters were so sweet. He became at last to be a versifier himself. But the great cause of the dearth of intellectual cultivation at that period was, that few would learn to read. Alfred had passed eleven years without having acquired this easy though inestimable accomplishment. A prince, son of a father who had been educated for the church; who had twice visited Rome, and resided at Paris after Charlemagne had improved his people, was yet passing into youth without the simplest of all tuition, which the poorest infant is now invited and urged to attain. That he received it at last was owing to his step-mother, Judith. When Alfred was twelve years old, she was sitting one day, surrounded by her family, with a manuscript of Saxon poetry in her hands. As Aldhelm and Cedmon had written poems of great popularity, it may have contained some of theirs. That she was able to read is not surprising, because she was a Franc, and the Franks had received from the Anglo-Saxons a taste for literary pursuits, and were cultivating them with superior ardour. With a happy judgment she proposed it as a gift to him who would the soonest learn to read it. The whole incident may have been chance play, but it was fruitful of consequences. The elder princes, one then a king, the others in mature youth or manhood, thought the reward inadequate to the task, and were silent. But the mind of Alfred, captivated by the prospect of information, and pleased with the beautiful decoration of the first letter of the writing, inquired if she actually intended to give it to such of her children as would the soonest learn to understand and repeat it. His mother repeating the promise with a smile of joy at the question, he took the book, found out an instructor, and learnt to read it. When his industry had crowned his wishes with suc-

⁹ Asser, p. 16.

cess, he recited it to her.* To this important, though seemingly trivial incident, we owe all the intellectual cultivation, and all the literary works of Alfred; and all the benefit which by these he imparted to his countrymen. If this family conversation had not occurred, Alfred would probably have lived and died as ignorant, as unimportant, and as little known as his three brothers. For the momentous benefit thus begun to Alfred, the memory of Judith deserves our gratitude. His brothers had reached manhood without having been taught letters by their father, who, though he had received an ecclesiastical education, had left both them and Alfred illiterate. Nine years old at his father's death, and yet wholly uninstructed; with one brother on the throne, and two more so near it as ultimately to succeed to it, equally uneducated; and surrounded by nobles as ignorant, and with no lettered clergy about the throne, whence could Alfred have received this necessary introduction to all his improvement, if the more intelligent Judith, the granddaughter of Charlemagne, had not been transplanted by Ethelwulf from Paris to England, and even detained there by Ethelbald. This French princess was the kind Minerva from whom arose the first shoots of that intellectual character which we admire in Alfred. To such remote and apparently unconnected causes do we often owe our greatest blessings.

But in learning to read Saxon, Alfred had only entered a dark and scanty ante-room of knowledge. The Saxon language was not at that day the repository of literature. The learned of the Anglo-Saxons, Bede, Alcuin, and others, had written their useful works in Latin, and translations of the classics had not then been thought of. Alfred's first acquisition was therefore of a nature which rather augmented his own conviction of his ignorance, than supplied him with the treasures which he coveted. He had yet to master the language of ancient Rome, before he could become acquainted with the compositions which contained all the facts of history, the elegance of poetry, and the disquisitions of philosophy. He knew where these invaluable riches lay, but he was unable to appropriate them to his improvement. We are told that it was one of his greatest lamentations, and, as he conceived, among his severest misfortunes, and which he often mentioned with deep sighs, that when he had youth and leisure, and permission to learn, he could not find teachers. No good masters, capable of initiating him in that language, in which the minds he afterwards studied had conversed and written, were at that time to be found in all the kingdom of Wessex.†

His love for knowledge made him neither effeminate nor slothful. The robust labours of the chase engrossed a large portion

* Asser, p. 16.

† Asser, p. 17.

of his leisure ; and he is panegyriſed for his incomparable ſkill and felicity in this rural art.¹ To Alfred, whoſe life was indifferently a life of great warlike exertion, the exerciſe of hunting may have been ſalutary and even needful. Perhaps his commercial and poliſhed poſterity may wiſely permit amuſements more philantrropic, to diminish their attachment to this dubious purſuit.

He followed the labours of the chace as far as Cornwall. His fondneſs for this practice is a ſtriking proof of his activity of diſpoſition, becauſe he appears to have been afflicted with a diſeaſe which would have ſanctioned indolence in a perſon leſs alert. This malady aſſumed the appearance of a ſlow fever, of an unuſual kind, with ſymptoms that made ſome call it the piles. It purſued him from his infancy. But his life and actions ſhow, that, though this debilitating diſeaſe was ſucceeded by another that haunted him inceſſantly with tormenting agony, nothing could ſuppreſs his unwearied and inextinguishable genius. Though environed with difficulties which would have ſhipwrecked any other man, his energetic ſpirit converted them into active inſtruments to advance him to virtue and to fame.

His religious impreſſions led him from his childhood to be a frequent viſiter at ſacred places, for the purpoſes of giving alms, and offering prayer. It was from this practice, that as he was hunting in Cornwall, near Liſkeard, and obſerving a village church near, he diſmounted, and went into it. A Corniſh man of religion, called St. Gueryr, had been buried there. The name implied that he had poſſeſſed medical powers or reputation ; and with a ſudden hope of obtaining relief from his diſtreſſing malady, Alfred proſtrated himſelf there in ſilent prayer to God, and remained a long time mentally petitioning that his ſuffering might be alleviated. He ſolicited any change of the divine viſitations that would not make him uſeleſs in body or contemptible in his perſonal appearance ; for he was afraid of leproſy or blindness, but he implored relief. His devotions ended, he quitted the tomb of the ſaint, and reſumed his journey. No immediate effect followed. He had often prayed before for relief in vain. Happily in no long ſpace afterwards his conſtitution experienced a beneficial alteration, and this complaint entirely ceaſed, though after his marriage it was ſucceeded by another and a worſe, which laſted till his death.²

¹ Aſſer, p. 16. Though men fond of literature have not often excelled in the roueſt exerciſes, yet ſome remarkable characters have been diſtinguiſhed for corporal agility. Thus the great Pythagoras was a ſucceſſful boxer in the Olympic games ; the firſt who boxed according to art. Cleanthes, the Stoic, was a ſimilar adept. His ſcholar, Chryſippus, the ſcuteneſt of the Stoics, was at firſt a racer ; and even Plato himſelf was a wreſtler at the Iſthmian and Pythian games. Bentley on Phalaris, 51-54.

² Aſſer, 46. Flor. Wig. 309. Guerir, in Corniſh, ſignifies to heal or cure. Cam-

For a while we must leave Alfred aspiring to become the student, to describe that storm of desolation and ferocious war which was proceeding from the North to intercept the progress, and disturb the happiness of the future king; and to lay waste the whole island, with havoc the most sanguinary, and ruin the most permanent.

CHAPTER VI.

The Accession of Ethelred, the third Son of Ethelwulf.—The Arrival of the Sons of Ragnar Lodbrog in England. Their Revenge on Ella.—Conquests and Depredations. Ethelred's Death.

As the life of Ragnar Lodbrog had disturbed the peace of many regions of Europe, his death became the source of peculiar evil to England. When his sons heard of his death in the prison in Northumbria, they determined on revenge. Their transient hostilities as sea-kings were laid aside for the gratification of this passion; and as their father's fame was the conversation and pride of the North, they found that wherever they spread news of his fate, and their own resolutions to avenge it, their feelings were applauded, and auxiliaries procured to join them, from every part. Bands of warriors confederated from every region for this vindictive object. Jutes, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, Russians, and others; all the fury and all the valour of the North assembled for the expedition,^a while none of the Anglo-Saxon kings even suspected the preparations.

Eight kings and twenty earls, the children, relatives, and associates of Ragnar, were its leaders.^b Their armament assembled without molestation, and when it had become numerous enough to promise success to their adventure, Halfden, Ingwar, and Hubba, three of Ragnar's sons, assumed the command, sailed out of the Baltic, and conducted it safely to the English coasts. By some error in the pilotage, or accident of weather, or actual policy, it passed Northumbria, and anchored off the shores of East Anglia.

Ethelred was scarcely seated on his brother's throne, before

den places the church near Liskeard. St. Neot lived here after Guovir, and it acquired the name from him of Neotstoke. Whit. Neot. 109.

^a 2 Langb. 278. Saxo, 176. Al. Beverl. 92. Hunt. 347. M. West. 316. Bromton, 803. Sim. Dun. 13. Al. Riv. 353.

^b The kings were Baccseg, Halfden, Ingwar, Ubba, Guhtruma, Oskitel, Amund and Eowla. Al. Bev. 93. Simeon adds to the kings, Sidroc, with a jarl of that name. Frens and Harald, p. 14.

the great confederacy began to arrive. It found the country in a state auspicious to an invasion. Four distinct governments divided its natural force, whose narrow policy saw nothing but triumph and safety in the destruction of each other. One of these, the peculiar object of the hostility of the North, was plunged in a civil warfare.

Of the Anglo-Saxon governments, the kingdom of Northumbria had been always the most perturbed. Usurper murdering usurper, is the pervading incident. A crowd of ghastly monarchs pass swiftly along the page of history as we gaze; and scarcely was the sword of the assassin sheathed before it was drawn against its master, and he was carried to the sepulchre which he had just closed upon another. In this manner, during the last century and a half, no fewer than seventeen sceptered chiefs hurled each other from their joyless throne,^c and the deaths of the greatest number were accompanied by hecatombs of their friends.

When the Northern fleet suddenly appeared off East Anglia, such sanguinary events were still disturbing Northumbria. Osbert had been four years expelled by Ella from the throne which he had usurped from another, and at this juncture was formidable enough to dare his rival again to the ambitious field.

The Danish chieftains who first landed, did not at once rush to their destined prey. Whether accident or policy had occasioned them to disembark in East Anglia, they made it a beneficial event. Awing the country by a force which the winds had never wafted from Denmark before,^d they quietly passed the winter in their camp, collecting provisions and uniting their friends. They demanded a supply of horses from the king, who complied with their request, and mounted the greatest part of their army.^e He attempted no enmity; he suffered them to enjoy their wintry feasts unmolested; no alliance with the other Saxon kingdoms was made during the interval; each state looked on with hope, that the collected tempest was to burst upon another; and as the menaced government was a rival, nothing but advantage was foreseen from its destruction.

The Northern kings must have contemplated this behaviour with all the satisfaction and contempt of meditative mischief and conscious superiority. The Northumbrian usurpers at last sheathed, though tardily, the swords of contending ambition;

^c Ella is called by Huntingdon *degenerem*, 349. Asser describes him as *tyrannum quendam Ella nomine non de regali prosapia progenitum super regni apicem constituerant*, p. 18.

^d *Al. Bev.* 93.

^e Asser, 15. The Icelanders intimate that the Northmen on their first arrival found Ella too powerful; and that Ingwar negotiated with him, and cultivated reasonable intercourse with his subjects, till the complete arrival of the invaders enabled him to prosecute his revenge. 2 *Langb.* 278.

and, on the advice of their nobles, united for their mutual defence and the general safety.^f

The invaders, though in many bands, like the Grecian host before Troy, yet submitted to the predominance of Ingwar and Ubbo, two of the sons of Ragnar. Of these two, 867. Ingwar was distinguished for a commanding genius, and Ubbo for his fortitude; both were highly courageous, and inordinately cruel.^g

In the next spring, the invaders roused from their useful repose, and marched into Yorkshire. The metropolis of the county was their first object; and, on the first of March, it yielded to their attack. Devastation followed their footsteps; they extended their divisions to the Tyne, but, without passing it, returned to York.^h

Osbert and Ella, having completed their pacification, moved forwards, accompanied with eight of their earls, and, on the 12th of April, assaulted the Northmen near York. The Danes, surprised by the attack, fled into the city. The English pursued with the eagerness of anticipated victory, broke down the slight walls,ⁱ and entered, conficting promiscuously with their enemies; but, having abandoned the great advantage of their superior discipline, the English rushed only to destruction. No nation could hope to excel the Northmen in personal intrepidity or manual dexterity; from their childhood they were exercised in single combat and disorderly warfare; the disunited Northumbrians were therefore cut down with irremediable slaughter. Osbert and Ella, their chiefs, and most of their army, perished.^j The sons of Ragnar inflicted a cruel and inhuman retaliation on Ella, for their father's sufferings. They divided his back, spread his ribs into the figure of an eagle, and agonized his lacerated flesh by the addition of the saline stimulant.^k

After this battle, decisive of the fate of Northumbria, it appeared no more as an Anglo-Saxon kingdom. The people beyond the Tyne appointed Egbert as their sovereign, but in a few years he was expelled, and one Ricseg took the shadowy diadem. In 876 he died with grief at the distresses of his coun-

^f Hunt. 347. Asser, 18. So Sim. Dun. 14.

^g Hunt. 348. Ubbo is called chief of the Frisians by Sim. Dun. 70. Adam of Bremen describes Ingwar as the most cruel of all, and as destroying Christians everywhere in torments, p. 14. He is also called Ivar.

^h Sim. Dun. 14. In this year Ealstan died, the celebrated bishop and statesman. Asser, 18.

ⁱ Asser remarks, that York had not at this period walls so firm and stable as in the latter part of Alfred's reign, 18.

^j Asser, 18. Sim. Dun. 14. The place where they fell was in Bromton's time called Ellescrofl. Brompt. 803.

^k Frag. Isl. 2 Lang. 279. Ragnar Saga, ib. The Scald Sigvatr, ib. Saxo Gram. 177. This punishment was often inflicted by these savage conquerors on their enemies. See some instances in Stephanus, 193.

try, and another Egbert obtained the nominal honours.¹ But Ingwar was the Danish chief, who, profiting by his victory, assumed the sceptre of Northumbria from the Humber to the Tyne.²

A dismal sacrifice had been offered up to the manes of Ragnar, yet the invaders did not depart. It was soon evident that their object was to conquer, in order to occupy; desolation followed their victories, because Northmen could not move to battle without it; but while plunder was the concomitant of their march, dominion became the passion of their chiefs.

The country was affected by a great dearth this year, which the presence of such enemies must have enhanced. Alfred had now reached his nineteenth year; he was raised by his brother to an inferior participation of the regal dignity, and he married Ealswitha, the daughter of a Mercian nobleman.³ The earnestness with which Alfred in his *Boetius* speaks of conjugal affection, implies that this union contributed greatly to his felicity.

The Northmen having resolved on their plans of occupation and conquest, began to separate into divisions. One body rebuilt York, cultivated the country round it, and continued to colonize it.⁴ It may be presumed that Ingwar headed these. Other bands devoted themselves to promote the ambition of those chieftains who also aspired to royal settlements.

868. This army passed the Humber into Mercia, and established themselves at Nottingham,⁵ where they wintered. Alarmed by their approach, Burhred, the king, and his nobles, sent an urgent embassy to West Saxony for assistance. Ethelred, with judicious policy, hastened to his wishes. He joined the Mercian with Alfred and the whole force of his dominions; and their united armies marched towards the frontier through which the invaders had penetrated.

They found the Northmen in possession of Nottingham; the Danes discerned the great superiority of the allied armies, and remained within the strong walls and castle of the town.⁶ The

¹ *Sim. Dun.* 14. *Matt. West.* 326, 327, 328. *Leland's Collect.* ii. p. 373.

² The language of the Northern writers is, that Ivar obtained that part of England which his ancestors had possessed. *Ragnar Saga*, in *Torsmus Series Dan. Olaff Tryggv. Saga*, ib. 375. This adds that he reigned a long while, and died without issue, 376. So *Frag. 1al. 2 Langb.* 279.

³ Ethelred, surnamed the Large. The mother of Alfred's queen was Eadburh, of the family of the Mercian kings. Asser frequently saw her before her death, and calls her a venerable woman. Her daughter's merit as a wife leads us to infer the excellence and careful nurture of the mother, 19.

⁴ *Sim. Dun.* *Vita St. Cuthberti.* 71.

⁵ Its British name was *Tiguo Cobauc*, the house of caves. Asser, 19. *Ty*, is a house in Wales now; and *cwh*, a concavity. In the charter of 868, it is called *Sæthryngam*, the house of *Snothryng*; which in the days of Ingulf had become changed to Nottingham, p. 18, 19.

⁶ *Pagani munitione fortissimorum murorum et arcis validissima confidentes.*

Anglo-Saxons were incapable of breaking through these fortifications, and their mutual respect, after an ineffectual struggle, occasioned a pacification, advantageous only to the Danes. The invaders were to retreat to York, and the kings of Wessex, satisfied with having delivered Mercia, and not discerning the danger of suffering the Northmen to remain in any part of the island, returned home.^r

The Northmen retired to York with great booty.^s In this year two of the most terrible calamities to mankind occurred, a great famine, and its inevitable attendant, a mortality of cattle, and of the human race.^t The general misery presented no temptations to the rapacity of the Northmen, and they remained a year in their Yorkshire stations.^u

When spring arrived, they threw off all disguise, and 870. signalized this fourth year of their residence in England by a series of hostilities the most fatal, and of ravages the most cruel. They embarked on the Humber, and sailing to Lincolnshire, landed at Humberstan in Lindsey.^v From this period, language cannot describe their devastations. It can only repeat the words plunder, murder, rape, famine, and distress. It can only enumerate towns, villages, churches and monasteries, harvests, and libraries, ransacked and burnt. But by the incessant repetition, the horrors are diminished; and we read, without emotion, the narration of deeds which rent the hearts of thousands with anguish, and inflicted wounds on human happiness and human improvement, which ages with difficulty healed. Instead, therefore, of general statements, which glide as unimpressively over the mind as the arrow upon ice, it may be preferable to select a few incidents, to imply those scenes of desolation, which, when stated in the aggregate, only confuse and overwhelm the sensibility of our perception.

After destroying the monastery, and slaying all the monks of the then much-admired abbey of Bardenev, they employed the summer in desolating the country around with sword and fire.^w About Michaelmas they passed the Witham, and entered the district of Kesteven^x with the same dismal ministers of fate. The

^r Ingulf, 20. Burred in a charter to Croyland, dated Aug. 1, 868, states himself to have made it at Snothryngam before his brother's friends, and all his people assembled to besiege the pagans.

^s Asser, 20, mentions no conflict: the Saxon Chronicle asserts, that an attack was made on the intrenchments, but disgraces the Anglo-Saxons, by adding, that it was not severe, p. 79. The monk of Croyland praises the young earl Algar, for his prowess in the affair, p. 18.

^t Ingulf, 18-20.

^u Sax. Chron. 80. ^v Asser, 20.

^v Lindsey was the largest of the three parts into which the county of Lincoln was anciently divided.

^w Ingulf, 20.

^x Kesteven was another of the three districts into which Lincolnshire was anciently divided.

sovereign of the country made no effort of defence; but a patriotic few attempted to procure for themselves and the rest, that protection which their government did not impart.

The brave Earl Algar, in September, drew out all the youth of Hoiland;⁷ his two seneschals, Wibert and Leofric, whose names the aged rustics that survived, attached, with grateful memory, to their possessions, which they called Wiberton and Lefrinkton, assembled from Deeping, Langtoft, and Boston, 300 valiant and well-appointed men; 200 more joined him from the Croyland monastery. They were composed chiefly of fugitives, and were led by Tolius, who had assumed the cowl; but who, previous to his entering the sacred profession, had been celebrated for his military character. Morcard, lord of Brunne, added his family, who were undaunted and numerous. Osgot, the sheriff of Lincoln, a courageous and formidable veteran, collected 500 more from the inhabitants of the county. These generous patriots united in Kesteven, with the daring hope of checking, by their valour, the progress of the ferocious invaders.

On the feast of St. Maurice, they attacked the advanced bands of the Northmen with such auspicious bravery, that they slew three of their kings, and many of the soldiers. They chased the rest to the gates of their entrenchments, and, notwithstanding a fierce resistance, they assailed these, till the advance of night compelled the valiant earl to call off his noble army.²

With an unpropitious celerity, the other kings of the Northmen, who had spread themselves over the country to plunder it, Godrun, Bacseg, Oskitul, Halfden, and Amond, together with Frena, Ingwar, Ubbo, and the two Sidrocs, hastened, during the night, to reunite their bands in the camp. An immense booty, and a numerous multitude of women and children, their spoil, accompanied them.

The news of their unfortunate arrival reached the English stations, and produced a lamentable effect; for a large part of the small army, affrighted by the vast disproportion of numbers which in the ensuing morn they must encounter, fled during the darkness of the night. This desertion might have inspired and justified a general flight; but the rest, as though they had felt that their post was the Thermopylæ of England, with generous magnanimity and religious solemnity, prepared themselves to perish for their country and their faith.

The brave Algar managed his diminished force with the wisest

⁷ Hoiland, or Holland; the southern division of Lincolnshire, which extended from the Witham to the Nene. Like the Batavian Holland, it was so moist, that the surface shook if stamped upon, and the print of the feet remained on it. It was composed of two parts, the lower and the upper. The lower was full of impassable marshes; huge banks preserved it from the ocean. Camd. 459.

² Ingulf, 20. Chron. St. Petri de Burgo, 16. The place where these three kings fell, obtained the name of Trekyngham. It was before named Lacundon. Ing. 21.

economy, and with soldierly judgment. He selected the valiant Tolius, and 500 intrepid followers, for the post of the greatest danger, and therefore placed them on his right. Morcard, the lord of Brunne, and his companions in arms, he stationed with them. On the left of his array, Osgot, the illustrious sheriff, with his 500 soldiers, took his allotted post with Harding of Rehale, and the young and impetuous citizens of Stamford. Algar himself, with his seneschals, chose the centre, that they might be ready to aid either division as exigency required.

The Northmen, in the first dawn of light, buried their three kings in the spot thence called Trekyngham, and leaving two other of their royal leaders, with four jarls, to guard their camp and captives, they moved forward with four kings and eight jarls, burning with fury for the disgrace of their friends on the preceding day.

The English, from their small number, contracted themselves into a wedge; against the impetus of the Northern darts, they presented an unpenetrable arch of shields, and they repelled the violence of the horse by a dense arrangement of their spears. Lessoned by their intelligent commanders, they maintained their station immovable the whole day.

Evening advanced, and their unconquered valour had kept off enemies, whose numbers had menaced them with inevitable ruin. The Northmen had spent their darts in vain. Their horsemen were wearied with the ineffectual toil of the day; and their whole army, despairing of success, in feigned confusion withdrew. Elated at the sight of the retreating foe, the English, quitting their array, sprang forwards to complete their conquest. In vain their hoary leaders expostulated, in vain proclaimed ruin if they separated. Intoxicated with the prospect of unhoped success, they forgot that it was the skill of their commanders, which, more than their own bravery, had protected them. They forgot the fewness of their numbers, and the yet immense superiority of their foes. They saw flight, and they thought only of victory. Dispersed in their eager pursuit, they displayed to the Northern chiefs a certain means of conquest. Suddenly the pagans rallied in every part, and rushing upon the scattered English, surrounded them on every side. It was then they saw that fatal rashness had involved in equal ruin their country and themselves. They had almost rescued England from destruction by their valour and conduct; and now, by a moment's folly, all their advantages were lost. For a while, Algar, the undaunted earl, and the self-devoting Tolius, with the other chiefs, discreet even in the midst of approaching ruin, by gaining a little eminence, protracted their fate. But as the dispersed English could not be reunited, as the dissolved arrangement could not be recomposed, the valour and skill of the magnanimous leaders, however exalted and

unexcelled, could only serve to multiply the victims of the day. The possibility of victory was vanished. The six chiefs beheld their followers falling fast around; death approached themselves. Mounting upon the bodies of their friends, they returned blow for blow, till, fainting under innumerable wounds, they expired upon the corpses of their too impetuous companions.^a

A few youths of Sutton and Gedeney threw their arms into the neighbouring wood, and escaping with difficulty in the following night, they communicated the fatal catastrophe to the monastery of Croyland,^b while its abbot and the society were performing matins. The dismal tidings threw terror into every breast; all foreboded that the next stroke of calamity would fall on them. The abbot, retaining with him the aged monks and a few infants, sent away the youthful and the strong, with their relics, jewels, and charters, to hide themselves in the nearest marshes, till the demons of slaughter had passed by. With anxious haste they loaded a boat with their treasures. They threw their domestic property into the waters, but as part of the table of the great altar, plated with gold, rose above the waves, they drew it out, and replaced it in the abbey.

The flames of the villages in Kesteven now gradually spread towards them, and the clamours of the fierce pagans drew nearer. Alarmed, they resumed their boat, and reached the wood of Ancarig near the south of the island.^c Here, with Toretus the anchorite, and his fraternity, they remained four days.

The abbot, and they who were too young or too old to fly, put on their sacred vestments, and assembled in the choir, performing their mass and singing all the Psalter with the faint hope, that unresisting age and harmless childhood would disarm ferocity of its cruelty. Soon a furious torrent of howling barbarians poured in, exulting to find Christian priests to massacre. The venerable abbot was hewed down at the altar by the cruel Oskitul, and the attendant ministers were beheaded after him. The old men and children, who ran affrighted from the choir, were seized and tortured, to discover the treasure of the place. The prior suffered in the vestry, the sub-prior in the refectory; every part of the sacred edifice was stained with blood. One child only, of ten years of age, whose beautiful countenance happened

^a This interesting narrative is in *Inguif*, 20-21.

^b Croyland was one of the islands lying in that tract of the Eastern waters, which, rising from the middle of the country, and spreading above 100 miles, precipitated themselves into the sea with many great rivers. *Malm. Gest. Pont.* 292.

^c Or *Thorn-ey*, the island of Thorns. There was a monastery here. *Malmesbury* exhibits it as the picture of a paradise; amidst the marshes abounding in trees, was a fine green plain, as smooth and level as a stream; every part was cultivated; here apple-trees arose, there vines crept along the fields, or twined round poles. Yet he adds one trait so expressive of loneliness, as to throw a gloom over the charms of nature: "When a man comes he is applauded like an angel." *De Gest. Pont.* 294.

to interest the younger Sidroc,^d was permitted to survive. The spoilers broke down all the tombs and monuments, with the avaricious hope of discovering treasures : and, on the third day, they committed the superb edifice to the flames.

With a great plunder of cattle, the insatiate barbarians marched the next day to Peterborough.^e There stood a monastery, the glory of the architecture of the age, and whose library was a large repository of books, which the anxious labours of two centuries had collected. But arts and science were toys not worthy even to amuse their women, in the estimation of these invaders. They assailed the gates and fastenings, and with their archers and machines attacked the walls. The monks resisted with all their means of annoyance. A brother of Ubbo was carried off to his tent, wounded by the blow of a stone. This incident added a new incentive to the cruel fury of the Northmen. They burst in at the second assault under Ubbo. He slew the hoary abbot, and all the monks, with his own weapon. Every other inhabitant was slaughtered without mercy by his followers. One man only had a gleam of humanity. Sidroc cautioned the little boy, whom he had saved from Croyland, to keep out of the way of Ubbo. The immense booty which they were gorged with did not mitigate their love of ruin. The much-admired monastery, and its valuable and scarcely reparable literary treasures, were soon wrapt in fire. For fifteen days the conflagration continued.

The Northmen, turning to the south, advanced to Huntingdon. The two earls Sidroc were appointed to guard the rear and the baggage over the rivers. As they were passing the Nen,^f after the rest of the army, two cars, laden with vast wealth and property, with all the cattle drawing them, were overturned, at the left of the stone bridge, into a depthless whirlpool. While all the attendants of the younger Sidroc were employed in recovering what was possible of the loss, the child of Croyland ran into the nearest wood, and, walking all night, he beheld the smoky ruins of his monastery at the dawn.

He found that the monks had returned from Incarig the day before, and were laboriously toiling to extinguish the flames,

^d One of the Sidrocs had already distinguished himself for his aggressions on France. In 852, and 855, he entered the Seine with much successful depredation. Chron. Fontanel. Bouquet 7, p. 40-43.

^e This also stands in the land of the Girvii or Fenmen, who occupied those immense marshes, containing millions of acres, where the counties of Lincoln, Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Northampton meet. Camd. 408. The marshes are described by Hugo Candidus as furnishing wood and turf for fire, hay for cattle, reeds for thatching, and fish and water-fowl for subsistence. Peterborough monastery was in the best portion. On one side was a range of water, on the other woods and a cultivated country. It was accessible on all sides but the east, where a boat was requisite.

^f This river runs through Northampton, making many reaches by the winding of its banks. Camden calls it a very noble river, p. 430.

which yet raged in various divisions of the monastery. When they heard from the infant the fate of their superior and elder brethren, unconquerable sorrow suspended their exertions, till wearied nature compelled a remission of their grief. They collected such as they could find of the mutilated and half-consumed bodies, and buried them with sympathetic reverence. Having repaired part of the ruins, they chose another abbot; when the hermits of Incarig came to implore their charitable care for the bodies at Peterborough, which the animals of prey were violating. A deputation of monks was sent, who found the corpses, and interred them in one large grave, with the abbot at the summit. A stony pyramid covered his remains, round which were afterwards engraven their images in memorial of the catastrophe.⁵

Spreading devastation and murder around them as they marched, the Northmen proceeded into Cambridgeshire. Ely and its first Christian church and monastery, with the heroic nuns, who mutilated their faces to preserve their honour, were destroyed by the ruthless enemy; and many other places were desolated.

The sanguinary invaders went afterwards into East Anglia.^b The throne of this kingdom was occupied by Edmund, a man praised for his affability, his gentleness, and humility. He may have merited all the lavish encomiums which he has received for the milder virtues; but he was deficient in those manly energies whose vigorous activity would have met the storm in its fury, and might have disarmed it of its terrors.¹

Ingwar, separating from Ubbo, proceeded to the place where Edmund resided. The picture annexed to his route represents a burning country, the highways strewed with the victims of massacre, violated women, the husband expiring on his own threshold near his wife, and the infant torn from its mother's bosom, and slain before her eyes to increase her screams.² Ingwar had heard a favourable account of Edward's warlike abilities, and by a rapid movement endeavoured, according to the usual plan of the

⁵ Ingulf, 22-24. Chron. Petrib. 18-20.

^b Abbo Floriacensis, who wrote in the tenth century, describes East Anglia as nearly environed with waters; immense marshes, a hundred miles in extent, were on the north; the ocean on the east and south. On the west it was protected from the irruptions of the other members of the octarchy, by a mound of earth like a lofty wall. Its soil was fertile and pleasant; it was full of lakes two or three miles in space; its marshes were peopled with monks. MSS. Cott. Library. Tib. B. 2, p. 3.

¹ One of the fullest accounts of the fate of Edmund, is in the little book of Abbo. He addresses it to the famous Dunstan, from whom he had the particulars he narrates. He intimates that Dunstan used to repeat them with eyes moist with tears, and had learnt them from an old soldier of Edmund's, who simply and faithfully recounted them upon his oath to the illustrious Ethelstan. Abbo's treatise has been printed abroad in *Acta Sanctorum*. Cologne, vol. vi. p. 465-472, ed. 1575.

² "Maritus cum conjuge aut mortuus aut moribundus jacebat in limine; infans raptus a matris uberibus, ut major esset ejulatus, trucidabatur coram maternis obtutibus." Abbo, MSS. p. 3. This author was so well acquainted with Virgil and Horace as to cite them in his little work.

Northmen,^k to surprise the king, before he could present an armed country to repel him. Edmund, though horrors had for some time been raging round his frontiers, was roused to no preparations; had meditated no warfare. He was dwelling quietly in a village near Hagilsdun,^l when the active Dane appeared near him, and he was taken completely unawares.

His earl, Ulfketul, had made one effort to save East Anglia, but it failed. His army was decisively beaten at Thetford with profuse slaughter; and this calamity deeply wounded the mind of Edmund, who did not reflect, that to resist the Danes with energy, was not merely to uphold his own domination, but to protect his people from the most fatal ruin.^m

As Ingwar drew nigh to the royal residence he sent one of his countrymen to the king, with a haughty command, to divide his treasures, submit to his religion, and reign in subjection to his will. "And who are you that should dare to withstand our power! The storm of the ocean deters not our proposed enterprise, but serves us instead of oars. Neither the loud roarings of the sky, nor its darting lightnings have ever injured us. Submit, then, with your subjects, to a master whom even the elements respect."ⁿ

On receiving this imperious message, Edmund held counsel with one of his bishops who enjoyed his confidence. The ecclesiastic, apprehensive of the king's safety, exhorted his compliance. A dialogue ensued, in which Edmund displayed the sensibility of an amiable mind, but not those active talents which would have given safety to his people. He pitied his unhappy subjects, groaning under every evil which a barbarous enemy could inflict, and wished his death could restore them. When the bishop represented to him the ravages which the Northmen had perpetrated, and the danger which impended on himself, and advised his flight, the mild-hearted king exclaimed, "I desire not to survive my dear and faithful subjects. Why do you suggest to me the shame of abandoning my fellow-soldiers? I have always shunned the disgrace of reproach, and especially of cowardly abandoning my knights; because I feel it nobler to die for my country than to forsake it; and shall I now be a

^k Abbo remarks of the Danish nation, "*cum semper studeat raptò vivere, nunquam tamen indicta pugna palam contendit cum hoste, nisi preventa insidiis, ablata spo ad portus navium remeandi*," MSS. p. 6.

^l The Hill of Eagles. It is now, says Bromton, 805, called Horne. It is upon the Waveney, a little river dividing part of Norfolk from Suffolk. It is not far from Dias in Norfolk. Camden names it Hoxon, p. 375.

^m Ingulf, 24. Amsr, 20. Matt. West. 318.

ⁿ "Et quis tu, ut tantis potentibus insolenter audeas contradicere? Marine tempestatis procella nostris servit remigiis, nec movet a proposito directæ intentionis.—Quibus nec ingens mugitus cœli, nec crebri jactus fulminum unquam nocuerunt. Esto itaque, cum tuis omnibus, sub hoc imperatore maximo cui famulantur elementa." Abbo, ib.

voluntary recreant, when the loss of those I loved makes even the light of heaven tedious to me?"^o The Danish envoy was then called in, and Edmund addressed him with an energy that ought to have anticipated such a crisis, and to have influenced his actions. "Stained as you are with the blood of my people, you deserve death; but I will imitate the example of him I venerate, and not pollute my hands with your blood. Tell your commander, I am neither terrified by his threats, nor deluded by his promises. Let his boundless cupidity, which no plunder can satiate, take and consume my treasures. You may destroy this frail and falling body, like a despised vessel; but know, that the freedom of my mind shall never, for an instant, bow before him. It is more honourable to defend our liberties with our lives than to beg mercy with our tears. Death is preferable to servility. Hence! my spirit shall fly to heaven from its prison, contaminated by no degrading submission. How can you allure me by the hope of retained power, as if I could desire a kingdom, when its population has been so destroyed; or a few subjects robbed of every thing that makes life valuable!"^p

This passive fortitude, and these irritating reproaches only goaded the resentment of the Dane, whose rapid hostilities had now made active warfare useless. The king was taken without farther contest. He was bound with close fetters, and severely beaten. He was then dragged to a tree, tied to its trunk, and lacerated with whips. Even these sufferings could not appease the tigers of the Baltic. They aimed their arrows at his body with contending dexterity. At length Ingwar, enraged at his firmness and piety, closed the cruel scene by the amputation of his head.^q

Thus terminated another kingdom of the Anglo-Saxon oc-tarchy, which, as it had been baneful to the happiness of the island by occasioning incessant warfare, was now become wholly incompatible with the security of every individual, while the states of the continent were enlarging, and the North was pouring its throngs around. By annihilating with such total extirpation all the rival dynasties, and the prejudices which supported them, the Danes unconsciously made some atonement for the calamities they diffused. They harassed the Anglo-Saxons into national fraternity, and combined contending sceptres into one well-regulated monarchy.

The Northmen placed Godrun, one of their kings, over East

^o Abbo, *ibid.*

^p This is a literal translation of his speech to the messenger of Ingwar, as given by Abbo, on the authority mentioned in note ^l.

^q The 20th of November was the day of his catastrophe, which was so interesting, that the Islander, Ara Frode, makes it one of the steps of his chronology, p. 7. He was canonized. His memory was much venerated, and his name still exists in our calendar.

Anglia; while the brother of Edmund, terrified at the miseries of the day, fled into Dorset, and there lived an hermitical life on bread and water.^f

Having resolved to attempt the subjection of the island, the Northmen governed their career with policy, as distinguished as their cruelty. They had attacked Mercia, and they beheld the banners of West Saxony waving on its frontiers. If they assailed Wessex, would the Mercian sword be there? Their experience proved that they calculated well on the petty policy of that degraded kingdom. Although the crown of Mercia trembled in every battle in Wessex; though it was impossible for Ethelred to be conquered, and for Burghed to be secure, yet the protecting succour which Mercia had received from the kings of Wessex, was never returned, though common danger claimed it.

Ingwar having completed the conquest of East Anglia, and permitted his associate, Godrun, to assume its sceptre, returned to his brother Ubbo, in Northumbria.^g The rest of the invaders, under the command of Halfden and Bacseg, two of their kings, or sea-kings, hastened from East Anglia to a direct invasion of Wessex.

They penetrated from Norfolk unchecked into Berkshire; they possessed themselves of Reading as soon as they reached it, and continued there many days unmolested.

On the third day after their arrival, their leaders, with a powerful body of cavalry, spread themselves successfully to pillage; the rest dug a trench between the Thames and the Kennet, to the right of the city, to defend their encampments. Ethelwulph, the earl of the county, who had defeated the invaders before, collected the men of the vicinity, and exhorted them to disregard the superiority of the foe. His argument was a popular one: "What though their army is larger than ours, Christ, our general, is stronger than them." His countrymen were convinced by his logic; and, after a long combat, the invaders were repulsed at Inglefield,^h with the loss of Sidroc the elder, the chief who had so much afflicted France.

Four days after this conflict, the kings of Wessex, Ethelred and Alfred, put themselves into motion, with their forces, and joining the Earl Ethelwulph, attacked the Northmen at Reading. They destroyed all the enemies who were out of the citadel; but

^f Malmsh. 250. Bromton, 807.

^g Bromton, 807. Ethelwerd says of him, "Ivar died this year," p. 843. The annals of Ulster state, that he went in this year from Scotland to Dublin with 200 ships, with great booty, and a multitude of English, Welsh, and Pictish prisoners. These annals place his death in 872, thus: "872, Ivar, king of all the Northerns in Ireland and Britain, died," p. 65. His children, sea-kings, like himself, are often mentioned in these Irish Annals.

^h Sax. Chron. 80. Sim. Dun. 125. Asser, 21. Inglefield is a little village in the neighbourhood of Reading. Camden, 142, who, in a small mistake, calls Ethelwulph a king, instead of an earl.

those within rushing from all its gates, a fiercer battle followed, which ended in the death of Ethelwulph, and the retreat of the West Saxons.^u

Taken unawares by the invasion, the West Saxons had rushed to the conflict with a hasty and inadequate force. Four days afterwards, they collected in a more complete and formidable array, and combated the enemy at *Æscedun*, or the Ash-tree Hill.^v The Danes had accumulated all their strength, and with an attempt at tactical arrangement, they divided themselves into two bodies; one, the chief, their two kings conducted; the other moved under the earls. The English imitated their array. Ethelred resolved himself to encounter the northern kings, and appointed Alfred to shock with their earls. Both armies raised their shields into a tortoise-arch, and demanded the battle.

The Northmen were first in the field; for Ethelred, either impressed with that dispiriting belief, which men on the eve of great conflicts sometimes experience, that he should not survive it, or preparing his mind for the worst event, and for its better state, and desirous to obtain the favour of the Lord of all existing worlds, waited to say his prayers in his tent, which he declared he would not leave till the priest had finished. Alfred, more eager for the fray, and provoked by the defying presence of the enemy, was impatient at the delay; his indignant courage forgot the inferiority of the division which he commanded; he led up his troops in condensed order, and disdained to remark that the crafty Danes were waiting on an eminence for an advantageous conflict.^w A solitary tree marked the place of combat, and round this the nations shocked with frightful clamour and equal bravery. The exertions of Alfred were unavailing, though he is stated to have attacked like the chafed boar; he had been too precipitate. The English ranks gave way, when the presence of Ethelred, with his battle, destroyed the inequality of the combatants, and reanimated the fainting spirits of his countrymen. The long and dreadful struggle at last ended in the death of the king *Bacseg*, of the younger *Sidroc*,^x many other earls, and some

^u *Sim. Dun.* 125. *Asser*, 21.

^v *Asser*, 21.

^w *Asser* says he had his account of Alfred's impetuous alacrity from those who saw it, 22. He adds the phrase "aprimo more."

^x *Asser* and the printed copy of the *Saxon Chronicle* place the deaths of both the *Sidrocs* in this battle, although it had recorded the fall of one in the preceding battle. The fine MS. of the *Saxon Chronicle* in the Cotton Library, Tib. B. 4, p. 30, having mentioned the death of one *Sidroc* at *Inglefield*, refers the death of the younger *Sidroc* only to this battle: "and then *Sidroc* re geonga, and *Orbeapn* eopl, and *Fraena* eopl, and *Hapald* eopl." This MS., though in some respect less complete than those which Dr. Gibson edited, is yet more accurate in others. It is remarkably well written, and seems very ancient.

thousands of the Danes, who fled in general rout. The English chased them all night and the next day over the fields of Ashdown till they reached their fortress at Reading.⁷ The slaughter of the day gave it a dismal claim to memory.^a

Fourteen days after this, the Danes collected strength sufficient to defeat the kings of Wessex at Basing.^a An important accession of allies, newly arrived from the North,^b increased the terrors of this defeat, and augured new miseries to the Anglo-Saxons.

The last invaders joined harmoniously with the preceding, because their object was the same. Within two months afterwards the princes of Wessex supported another battle with the recruited confederates at Merton;^c but the conflict, after many changes of victory, was again unfortunate to the English. Ethelred received a wound in it, of which he died soon after Easter, and was interred at Wimburn.^d

CHAPTER VII.

The Reign of Alfred, from his Accession to his Retirement.

THE death of Ethelred raised Alfred to the throne of Wessex. Some children of his elder brother were alive,^e but the crisis was too perilous for the nation to have suffered the 871.

⁷ Asser, 23, 24. Flor. Wig. 307. Sax. Chron. 81.

^a The place of this great battle has been controverted. Aston, near Wallingford, in Berks, has good claims, because the Saxon Chronicle (as its editor observed) mentions *Ecesdun*, on another occasion, as close by Wallingford, p. 135. Dr. Wise, in his letter to Dr. Mead, concerning some antiquities in Berkshire, printed 1738, contends that the famous white horse on the hill was made to commemorate this victory. He says, "I take *Ecesdune* to mean that ridge of hills from Letcombe and thereabouts, going on to Wiltshire, and overlooking the vale with the towns in it. The town formerly called *Ayshesdown*, is now called *Ashbury*; the old name is still preserved hereabouts, the downs being called by the shepherds, *Ashdown*; and about a mile southward from *Ashbury*, is *Ashdown Park*," p. 90. Whitaker prefers the locality of *Aston*, p. 272.

^b Asser, 24.

^c Quo prælio peracto, de ultramarinis partibus alius paganorum exercitus societati se adjunxit. Asser, 24.

^d Sax. Chron. 81. This position of *Meretune* is doubtful. *Merton* in Surrey, *Merden* in Wilts, and *Merton* in Oxfordshire, have been suggested. I am induced to venture a new opinion, that it was *Morton* in Berks, because the *Chronicle of Mailros*, 144, places the battle at *Reading*; and, according to the map, *Morton* hundred joins *Reading*, and contains both *North Merton* and *South Merton*.

^e *Bronnton*, 809. The bishop of *Sherborne* fell in this battle. *Matt. West*. 323. The *Saxon Chronicle* says, that he and many *godna menna* fell in it, 81, whom *Huntingdon* calls *multi proceres Angliæ*, p. 343. *Ethelword*, the chronicler, in mentioning *Ethelred's* death, styles the king his *atarus*, p. 843.

^f Alfred in his will gave eight manors to *Ethelm*, his brother's son, and three

sceptre to be feebly wielded by a juvenile hand. The dangers which environed the country, excited the earls and chiefs of the whole nation, whom we may understand to have been the witenagemot, with the unanimous approbation of the country,^b to choose Alfred for the successor, that they might have a prince who could give them the protection of his abilities.

It is intimated that he hesitated;^c and indeed, every evil that can abate human happiness, seemed to surround the diadem offered to Alfred. It was the defeat and death of a brother which occasioned his accession. The victorious enemies, stronger from their victory, promised to be more formidable to Alfred than to Ethelred. All the causes that had produced their former successes were yet in full operation, while the new sovereign's means of resisting them were not increased. According to the natural course of things his reign could not but be calamitous. Alfred chose to endure the threatening contingencies, and by accepting the throne, began a life of severe military labour, of continual difficulty, and of great mental anxiety, shaded for some time with the deepest gloom of misfortune and personal degradation.

The fiercest and most destructive succession of conflicts which ever saddened a year of human existence, distinguished that of Alfred's accession with peculiar misery. With their own population, the West Saxons maintained eight pitched battles against the Northmen, besides innumerable skirmishes by day and night, with which the nobles and royal officers endeavoured to check their depredations. Many thousands of the invaders fell, but new fleets of adventurers were perpetually shading the German Ocean with their armaments, who supplied the havoc caused by the West Saxon swords.^d It was now become a conflict between the Northman nations and the Anglo-Saxons, for the conquest and occupation of England, like that of their own ancestors against the Britons, and of these against the Romans. The Northman mind had taken a full direction to a forcible settlement in England. It was no longer battles for transient plunder or personal fame. It was for lasting dominion; for the land-inheritance of the country; and for the property and liberty of every individual who possessed any.

manors to Athelwold, his brother's son. He also gave some manors to his cousin Osferth. The end of Athelwold will be seen in Edward's reign.

^b Sim. Dun. 126, 127. Asser, 24.

^c Asser's expression is, that he began to reign quasi invitus, as if unwillingly, because he thought that unless he was supported by the divine assistance, he could not resist such enemies. Vita Alfredi, p. 24.

^d Asser, 25. Flor. Wig. 311. Hoveden, 417. The year 871 is noted as the beginning of Alfred's reign by Asser, the Saxon Chronicle, Mailros, Hoveden, Sim. Dun., and some others. But Ingulf, 25, Malmsh. 42, and Petrib. 21, place his accession in 872.

Within a month after Alfred's accession, the Danes attacked his troops at Wilton,^e in his absence, with such superiority of force, that all the valour of patriotism could not prevent defeat. This made the ninth great battle which had been fought this year in West Saxony, besides the excursions which Alfred and several of the ealdormen and the king's thægns made against the enemy, which were not numbered. Wearied himself, and the country being exhausted by these depopulating conflicts, Alfred made a peace with his enemies, and they quitted his dominions.^f

Yet a peace, with their continuance in the island, could but be a dangerous truce, that would soon end in more dangerous hostilities; and which, in the mean time, surrendered the rest of England into their power. This soon became visible; for the invaders marched immediately, even those who were in Northumberland, to London, and, wintering there, threatened Mercia. Burrhed, its king, twice negotiated with them; but at last, 874. dis regarding all treaties, they entered Mercia, and wintered at Repton in Derbyshire, where they destroyed the celebrated monastery, the sacred mausoleum of all the Mercian kings.^g Burrhed quitted his throne, and, leaving his people to the mercy of the invaders, went disgracefully to Rome, where he soon died, and was buried in the English school.^h

The Danes gave the Mercian crown to Ceolwulf, an officer of Burrhed's court: his capacity was contracted; his disposition mischievous; he swore fidelity to his foreign masters; paid them tribute, and promised to return the power they granted, whenever they required, and to be ready with his forces to co-operate with them. He plundered the poor peasantry, robbed the merchants, and oppressed the unprotected and the clergy; on the wretched monks of the destroyed abbey of Croyland he barbarously imposed a tax of a thousand pounds. But this pageant of tyranny displeased his masters; he was stripped of every thing, and he perished miserably.ⁱ With him ended for ever the Anglo-Saxon

^e Bromton, 809, in a mistake, puts down Walton in Sussex. But Asser, whom the other chroniclers follow, says, Wilton is on the north bank of the river Guilou, from which the whole country is named, p. 25. Guilou means the meandering river.

^f Sax. Ch. 82. Asser, 25. Ethelw. 844. It would seem that Ingwar went to Scotland and Ireland after his conquest of East Anglia; for he is noticed in the Annals of Ulster, as besieging and destroying Alcuith at Dunbarton, and proceeding afterwards to Ireland with a multitude of English, Welsh, and Pictish prisoners. In 872 he is mentioned to have died in Ireland. These Annals style him king of all the Northmen in Ireland and Britain, p. 65.

^g *Monasterium que celeberrimum omnium regum Merciorum sacratissimum mausoleum funditus destruxissent.* Ingulf, 26.

^h In the church of St. Mary there. Asser, 26. Ingulf, who in general is a very valuable authority, here makes a small confusion of dates; he says, Burrhed fled in 874, while Alfred was tarrying in Etheling island. This is not correct. Alfred did not seclude himself till four years afterwards.

ⁱ Ingulf, 27.

octarchy. The kingdom of Mercia never existed again. When the Danish power declined, it was associated by Alfred to Wessex,¹ from which it was never separated again.

England was now become divided between two powers, the West Saxons, and the Northmen, who had subdued all the island but Wessex.

The invaders divided themselves into two bodies. The largest part of their army, under their three kings, Godrun, Oskitul, and Amund, marched from Repton to Cambridge, where they wintered and resided twelve months;² while another division of their forces proceeded to Northumbria under Halfden, to complete the conquest of this kingdom. As yet they had subdued no more of it than Deira. His calamitous invasion subjected the whole kingdom of Northumbria, and harassed the Strathcluyd Britons.¹ Scotland attempted to withstand them, but failed; and the king of Wales fled to Ireland for refuge from their attacks.² Halfden, having completed the conquest of Bernicia, divided it amongst his followers, and tilled and cultivated it. He perished soon afterwards in Ireland.³

The three kings, who had wintered at Cambridge, began their hostilities against Wessex. Leaving their positions at night, 876. they sailed to Dorsetshire, surprised the castle of Wareham, and depopulated the country round. Alfred, after a naval victory, weary of battles and seeking only repose, again negotiated with them to leave his dominions; and he had the impolicy to use money as his peace-maker.⁴ They pledged themselves by their bracelets, the oath most sacred to their feelings, and which they had never plighted before.⁵ But Alfred exacted also an oath on Christian relics. We may smile at the logic of the king, who thought that a Christian oath would impose a stronger obligation on pagan minds, or that the crime of perjury was aggravated by the formalities of the adjuration. But the delusion of his mind in not discerning that the welfare of himself and his country was sacrificed by such treaties is more remarkable; es-

¹ Ingulf, 27. He says, that from the first year of Penda, to the deposition of Ceolwulf, the Mercian throne had lasted about 230 years.

² Ethelward, 844. Asser, 27.

³ Sax. Chron. 83.

⁴ Ann. Ulster. 65. These annals notice some dissensions of the Northmen, in which Halfden killed by stratagem the son of Olaf, one of the kings, or sea-kings, that accompanied Ingwar.

⁵ Sax. Chron. 84. In 876, the Annals of Ulster place the death of Halfden. "Battle at Lochraun, between the Fingals and Dubh-gals, where the latter lost Halfdan their captain," p. 65.

⁶ Ethelward, 844. Before this treaty Alfred attacked the Danes by sea. His ships, meeting six of theirs, took one and dispersed the others. Asser, 27.

⁷ Asser, 28. Their bracelets were highly valued by them, and always buried with them. See Bartholin. 499-503. Joannes Tinmouth says, they were nobilitatis indicium. Hist. MSS. cited by Dougale, i. p. 256; and see Aimon, p. 371, 385.

pecially as Asser mentions that his natural character was to be too warlike.⁹

To punish Northmen by the impositions of oaths, or by hostages, which appear to have been reciprocal,^r was to encourage their depredations by the impunity which attended them. It was binding a giant with a rush, an eagle with a cobweb. Accordingly, in a night quickly succeeding the peace-making solemnity, they rushed clandestinely on the king's forces, and slew all his horsemen.^s They used the steeds to mount a part of their army, which rode immediately to Exeter, and remained there for the winter.^t

The small advantage which the ships of Alfred had obtained over a few Danish vessels, induced him to cause long ships and galleys to be built at the ports of his kingdom; and, as his countrymen were less competent to navigate them, he manned them with such piratical foreigners as would engage in his service.^u They were appointed to cut off all supplies from his invaders. They met a large fleet of Northmen hastening from Warcham, to relieve their countrymen. They flew to arms with the same alacrity with which they prosecuted all their enterprises. The Northmen, half ruined already by a stormy voyage, waged a fruitless battle; their hosts perished, and of their steeds of the ocean, to adopt their favourite metaphor, one hundred and twenty were destroyed at the rock of Swanwick, on the coast of Hampshire.^v

Alfred at last collected his troops, and marched against the Danes in Exeter; but they possessed themselves of the castle before he reached it, and his military skill was unable or unwilling to assault or to besiege it. He contented himself with repeating the illusory policy of exacting new hostages and new oaths, that they should depart from his kingdom.^w

The conduct of Alfred, in the first year of his reign, seems to have been imprudent. While acting with his brother, he was energetic and indefatigable; but after he became possessed of the crown himself, instead of a system of vigilance and vigour against

⁹ "Nimium bellicosus," p. 24.

^r I infer this, because in mentioning Alfred's complete and final conquest of Guthrun, Asser says, he exacted hostages, but gave none. Ille nullum eis daret, p. 34. He adds that this was unusual. Ita tamen qualiter nunquam cum aliquo pacem ante pepigerant. ^s Asser, 28.

^t Named by the Britons, *Caer Wiac*; by the Saxons, *Caſanceapre*. It is, continues Asser, on the eastern bank of the river *Wiac*, near the southern sea, which flows between Gaul and Britain.

^u Asser's expressions are "Impositis que piratis in illis vias maris custodiendas commisit." p. 29.

^v The printed copy of Asser, besides this defeat, makes 120 also to perish in a storm. I follow *Matt. West.* 328, who consolidates the two incidents into one. *Flor. Wig.* 315, *Sax. Ch.* 83, *Ethelw.* 845, and *Hunt.* 350, mention only one loss of 120 vessels. ^w Asser, 28.

his enemies, we find nothing but inert quietude, temporizing pacifications, and transient armaments. The only plan discernible in the first seven years of his reign, was to gain momentary repose. An interval of tranquillity was certainly obtained; but it was a delusive slumber on the precipice of fate.

CHAPTER VIII.

Alfred becomes a Fugitive.—Misconduct imputed to him.

WE now approach the period of Alfred's greatest degradation. The locusts of the Baltic, to use the expressive metaphor of the chronicles, having spread themselves over part of Mercia in the preceding August, and being joined by new swarms, advanced again into Wessex; and in January took possession of Chippenham in Wiltshire, where they passed the winter, and from which they made excursive ravages over the adjacent country. On this decisive invasion, the country found itself so unprotected, from whatever cause, that many of the inhabitants emigrated in penury and terror to other regions. Some fled over sea, and to France; the rest, overawed by the cavalry of the invaders, submitted to their dominion, and Alfred himself was compelled to become a fugitive.^a

These circumstances, which every chronicle states or implies, are so extraordinary, that it is difficult to comprehend them. The Danes invade Wessex, the country falls undefended into their hands, and Alfred preserves his life by such a concealment, that his friends were as ignorant as his enemies both of his residence and fate.^b Such became his distress, that he knew not where to turn;^c such was his poverty, that he had even no subsistence but that which by furtive or open plunder he could extort, not merely from the Danes, but even from those of his subjects who submitted to their government; or by fishing and hunting obtain.^d He

^a Asser, 30. Sax. Chron. 84. Ethelw. 845. Matt. West. 329. Hunt. 350. Asserii Annales, 166. Alur. Bev. 105. Walling. 537, and others.

^b Quare ergo idem sæpèdictus Ælfrèdus in tantam miseriam sæpius incidit ut nemo subjectorum suorum sciret, ubi esset vel quo devenisset. Asser, 32. So Asserii Annales, 166. So Flor. Wig.

^c At rex Ælfrèdus tactus dolore cordis intrinsecus, quid ageret, quo se vorteret ignorabat. Matt. West. 329.

^d Nihil enim habebat quo uteretur, nisi quod a paganis et etiam a Christianis qui se paganorum subdiderant dominio, frequentibus irruptionibus aut clam, aut etiam palam subtraheret. Asser, 30. Flor. Wig.

wandered about in woods and marshes in the greatest penury, with a few companions; sometimes, for greater secrecy, alone.* He had neither territory, nor, for a time, the hope of regaining any.†

To find Alfred and the country in this distress, and at the same time to remark, that no battles are mentioned to have occurred between the arrival of the Northmen at Chippenham, and the flight of the king, or the subjection of the country, are circumstances peculiarly perplexing. It is not stated on this invasion, as it is on every other, that Alfred collected an army, and resisted the Northmen; that he retired at the head of his forces, though defeated; that he posted himself in any fortress,‡ or that he took any measures to defend the country against its enemies. They invade in January; between that month and the following Easter, a very short period, all this disaster occurred.

The power of the Danes may have been formidable, but it had never been found by Alfred to be irresistible; and the events of a few months proved that it was easily assailable. When they attacked his brother, they met a resistance which has been recorded. When they attacked himself in the preceding years, his means of opposition, though not vigorous, are yet noticed. But on this invasion, a most remarkable silence occurs as to any measures of defence. As far as we can penetrate into such an obscured incident, we can discern none; nothing appears but panic and disaffection in the people; inactivity and distress in the king.

To suppose that the Northmen surprised him by a rapid movement into Wessex is no diminution of the difficulty, because they had been eight years in the island, moving about as they pleased; and often with celerity, for the purpose of easier victory. Rapidity of motion was, indeed, a part of their usual tactics, both in England and in France; and not to have prepared against an event that was always possible, and always impending over him, impeaches both the judgment and patriotism of the king at this period of peril.

Before Alfred, from a respected sovereign, would have become a miserable fugitive, we should expect to read of many previous battles; of much patriotic exertion corresponding with his character and dignity, and the duties of his station; and worthy of his intellect. If defeated in one county, we should look for him in another; always with an army, or in a fortress; always withstanding the fierce enemies who assaulted him.

* Asser, 30. Hunt, 350. Mailros, 144. Chron. Sax. 84. Matt. West. 329. Sim. Dun. 18, 71.

† Alor. Bev. 105.

‡ This was remarkable, because Odon's defence in Kynwith, and Alfred's subsequent fortification in Ethelingeay, show how such a retreat would have protected the country. Hoveden says, that his ministers retired to Kynwith, p. 417.

What overwhelmed Alfred with such distress? What drove him so easily from his throne? It could not be, as Sir John Spelman intimates, that the Saxons "were before quite spent and done," because it is not true, that in 876 they fought "seven desperate battles."^b These battles have been placed in this year hitherto erroneously. On comparing every reputable chronicler with Asser, the friend of the king, we find them to have occurred in the last year of Ethelred's reign, and the first of Alfred's. Since that period, though the king sometimes headed armies, no sanguinary conflict is mentioned to have ensued in Wessex. Seven years had now elapsed without one important struggle; the strength of West Saxony was therefore unimpaired, because one-third of the juvenile population, at Alfred's accession, would, in 878, have attained the age of courageous manhood.

That the arrival of new supplies from the Baltic, could not have "broken the spirits of the Saxons" so suddenly, and have "reduced them to despair," is probable, because the West Saxons had not, for the last seven years, "undergone a miserable havoc in their persons and property," and had exerted no "vigorous actions in their own defence." So far from being reduced to the necessity of despair, we shall find that a single summons from their king, when he recovered his self-possession, and resolved to be the heroic patriot, was sufficient to bring them eagerly into the field, though the undisputed occupation of the country for some months must have rendered the collection of an adequate force more difficult, and its hostilities far less availing than before. The king is not stated to have troubled them with exhortations, to defend "their prince, their country, and their liberties,"^c before he retired. And it is remarkable, that the foes whom he had left at Chippenham, he found near Westbury, when he made the effort which produced his restoration. Amid all the confusion, emigration, and dismay, which his seclusion must have produced, twenty miles composed the extent of their intermediate progress. The invaders, whose conquests, when unresisted, were so circumscribed, and whose triumphs were afterwards destroyed by one well-directed effort, could not have exhibited that gigantic port, which intimidates strength into imbecility, and insures destruction, by annihilating the spirit that might avert it.

To understand this obscure incident, it is necessary to notice some charges of misconduct which have been made against Alfred. The improprieties alluded to, are declared to have had political consequences, and have been connected with his mysterious seclusion. It may be most impartial to review the traditional imputations in all their extent, and then to consider, from

^b See his plain but learned and useful life of Alfred, p. 53 and 50. Hume has copied his misconception.

^c This is our Hume's mistaken statement, p. 79, 80.

the confessions of Asser, how much it is reasonable to believe, or to reject.]

An ancient life of Saint Neot, a kinsman of Alfred, exists in Saxon,^k which alludes, though vaguely, to some impropriety in the king's conduct. It says, that Neot chided him with many words, and spoke to him prophetically: "O king, much shalt thou suffer in this life; hereafter so much distress thou shalt abide, that no man's tongue may say it all. Now, loved child, hear me if thou wilt, and turn thy heart to my counsel. Depart entirely from thine unrighteousness, and thy sins with alms redeem, and with tears abolish."^l

Another ancient MS. life of St. Neot^m is somewhat stronger in its expressions of reproach. It states, "that Neot, reproving his bad actions, commanded him to amend; that Alfred, not having wholly followed the rule of reigning justly, pursued the way of depravity:" that one day when the king came, Neot sharply reproached him for the wickedness of his tyranny, and the proud austerity of his government." It declares that Neot foresaw and foretold his misfortunes: "Why do you glory in your misconduct? Why are you powerful but in iniquity? you

§ It would be absurd for me to offer any apology for having ventured to be the first writer in our history that has called the public attention to the faults of Alfred, whose life had been made one continued stream of panegyric. History is only valuable in proportion to its truth, and it is no injustice to any great characters to remark, with due candour, those imperfections which they allowed themselves to commit. Yet Dr. Whitaker accuses of falsehood those who state that Alfred had any defects. A few strokes of his pen demolish authorities as easily as he sometimes unduly stretches them. See his St. Neot, p. 141.

^k It is in MS. in the Cotton Library, Vespasian, D. 14, intitled, "Vita Sancti Neoti Saxonice." It follows an account of Furseus, an East Anglian Saint, and some religious essays of Elfric, all in Saxon. As Elfric wrote the lives of many Saints in Saxon, it is most probably his composition.

^l After mentioning that Alfred came to Neot, emb his þyle theapfe, it adds, he hine eac thepade manega þonden, and him to cp' mid þone witegunge. "Eala thu king, mýcel fcealt thu tholigen on thýrren life, on than toþearþen time fpa micle angrumnyrfe thu gebinden fcealt tha nan mænnyfe tunge hit eall afecgen ne mæg. Nu leof bearn gehor me zýf thu þýlt and thine heorte to mine nebe gecerpe. Læpfe eallinge ffrom thinra unrihterfnyrfe, and thine fýnnen mid ælmefferen aley et mid teapen abigole." MSS. Vesp. p. 145. From Asser's expressions, (ut in Vita Sancti patris Neoti legitur,) p. 30, it seems that a life of Neot had been written before Asser died. The Saxon life above quoted seems to be an epitome of some more ancient one. In this manner Elfric epitomized Abbo's life. See MSS. Julius, E. 7.

^m This is a MS. in the Cotton Library, Claudius, A. 5. It is in Latin, and is intitled, "Vita Sancti Neoti per Will. Abbatem Croylandensem, an. 1180."

ⁿ Prævos etiam ejus redarguens actos jussit in melius converti—nondum ad plenum recte rognandi normam assecutus, viam deservorat pravitate. Claud. MS. 154.

have been exalted, but you shall not continue; you shall be bruised like the ears of wheat. Where then will be your pride? If that is not yet excluded from you, it soon shall be. You shall be deprived of that very sovereignty, of whose vain splendour you are so extravagantly arrogant.”^o

It is in full conformity with these two lives of Neot that those others written by Ramsay in the twelfth century,^p express also inculpations of Alfred. The life composed in prose states that Neot chided him severely for his iniquitous conduct. “You shall be deprived of that kingdom in which you are swelling; in which you are so violently exercising an immoderate tyranny. But if you withdraw yourself from your cruel vices and inordinate passions, you shall find mercy.”^q

The same author’s biography, in Latin verse, reproaches the king’s conduct as “dissolute, cruel, proud, and severe.” It adds, that the king promised to correct himself, but did not; but only added to his misdeeds, and became worse. That Neot again reproved him for “wandering in depraved manners,” and announced his impending calamities.^r

The same ideas are repeated in the fourteenth century by Matthew of Westminster in his history, in phrases like those of Ramsay;^s and John of Tinmouth, about the same period, reiterates the charge in the language of the Claudius MS.^t Another writer of a chronicle, Wallingford, asserts that Alfred, in the beginning of his reign, indulged in luxury and vice; and that the amendment of his conduct was a consequence of his adversity.^u

With these statements from later authorities in our recollection, let us turn to the contemporary evidence of Asser, the confiden-

^o *Quadam denique die solemniv venientem ex more de tirannidis improbitate et de superba regiminis austeritate acriter eum increpavit Neotus.—Apponebat ei sanctum David—regum mansuetissimum et omnibus humilitatis exemplar—afferebat et Saulem superbia reprobatum.—Spiritu attactus prophético, futura ei prædixit infortunia. “Quid gloriaris,” inquit, “in malitia? Quid potens es in iniquitate, elevatus es ad modicum et non subsistes et sicut summitates spicarum conteris. Ubi est gloriatio tua? at si nondum exclusa est, aliquando tamen excludetur. Ipso enim regiminis principatu cujus inani gloriacione te ipsum excedendo superbia, in proximo privaberis,” &c. MS. Claud. p. 154.*

^p Dr. Whitaker has printed these from two MSS. at Oxford, one at the Bodleian, the other in Magdalen College, in the Appendix to his *St. Neot*. He thought them the oldest lives of *St. Neot* now known. The two which I have already quoted are, however, more ancient, especially the Saxon, which preceded the Norman conquest.

^q *Whit. App. p. 347.*

^r *Ibid. p. 348.*

^s See *Matt. West. p. 330*. From the correspondence of his words, he must have had Ramsay’s prose life before him when he wrote.

^t From the very damaged MS. of Tinmouth’s history in the British Museum, *Tiberius, b. 1*, Dr. Whitaker has printed the part which relates to *St. Neot. App. 366*. There is a fine complete MS. of Tinmouth in the Lambeth library, which I have inspected. As I have found, on comparing them, Matthew of Westminster to have copied Ramsay, so I perceive Tinmouth has extracted passages from the older life which I have quoted in notes ^u and ^v.

^u *Wallingford, Chron. 3 Gale, p. 535, 536.*

tial friend as well as the biographer of Alfred, and who declares so repeatedly in his history that he wrote from the information of living eye-witnesses. He loved his royal master, and we cannot read his artless biography of him without perceiving that it is not likely he would have overstated his faults, or have even mentioned them, if they had not been then too well known to have been omitted by an honest writer.

Two words used by Asser are sufficient to remove all doubt on the existence of some great faults in Alfred, in the first part of his reign; and his continuing expressions will assist us in comprehending what they were. Asser says, "We believe that this adversity occurred to the king NOT UNDESERVEDLY." This emphatic admission is followed by these sentences:

"Because, in the first part of his reign, when he was a young man, and governed by a youthful mind; when the men of his kingdom and his subjects came to him and besought his aid in their necessities; when they who were depressed by the powerful, implored his aid and patronage; he would not hear them, nor afford them any assistance, but treated them as of no estimation."^w

Asser continues to state, that "Saint Neot, who was then living, his relation, deeply lamented this, and foretold that the greatest adversity would befall him. But Alfred paid no attention to his admonitions, and treated the prediction with disdain."^x

The guarded expressions of the bishop, writing to his living sovereign, whom he highly venerated, prevent us from deciphering more clearly the exact nature of Alfred's offence. As far as he goes, however, he gives some confirmation to the traditions which have been quoted. He confesses some misconduct in the discharge of the king's royal functions. And, as he adds, that Alfred's punishment was so severe in this world, that his insipientia, his folly, might not be chastised hereafter,^y we may presume that the fault was of magnitude, though he has not more clearly explained it.

The prophetic spirit of Neot could be nothing but his sagacity.

^w *Quam siquidem adversitatem præfato regi illatum non immerito ei evenisse credimus.* Asser, p. 31.

^x *Quia in primo tempore regni sui, cum adhuc juvenis erat, animo quo juvenili detentus fuerat, homines sui regni sibi que subjecti, qui ad eum venerant, et pro necessitatibus suis eum requisierant, et qui depressi, potestatibus erant, suum auxilium ac patrocinium implorabant; ille vero noluit eos audire, nec aliquod auxilium impendebat, sed omnino eos nihili pendebat,* p. 31.

^y *Quod beatissimus vir Neotus adhuc vivens in carne qui erat cognatus suus intime corde doluit; maximamque adversitatem ab hoc ei venturam spiritu prophetico plenus prædixerat. Sed ille et piissimam viri Dei correptionem parvi pendebat et verissimam ejus prophetiam non recipiebat.* Asser, 32.

^z *Quia igitur quicquid ab homine peccator aut hic aut in futuro necesse est ut quolibet modo puniatur; noluit verus et pius judex illam regis insipientiam esse impunitam in hoc seculo quatenus illi parceret in districto judicio.* Asser, 32.

The king's neglect of the complaints and sufferings of his subjects, may have made him unpopular, and Neot may have foreseen the calamities which would result from the displeasure of the people. The activity and power of the Danes could not be resisted with success, without the highest zeal and alacrity of the Saxon people. But if Alfred, by treating their grievances with contempt, had alienated their affections, the strongest fortress of his throne was sapped.

In considering the subject, we must, in justice to Alfred, remember, that all his errors were confined to the first part of his reign, and were nobly amended. It is also fair to state, that the imputed neglect of his people must not be hastily attributed to a tyrannical disposition, because it may be referred to circumstances which better suit his authentic character. It may have arisen from the intellectual disparity between himself and his people. When men begin to acquire knowledge, they sometimes encourage a haughty self-opinion, a craving fondness for their favourite pursuit, and an irritable impatience of every interruption. This hurtful temper, which disappears as the judgment matures, may have accompanied Alfred's first acquisitions of knowledge; and such feelings could only be exasperated, when the duties of his office called him from his studies and meditations into a world of barbarians, who despised books and bookmen, with whom his mind could have no point of contact, whose ignorance provoked his contempt, and whose habits, perhaps, excited his abhorrence. Beginning to meditate, in his private hours, on the illustrious ancients whom he had heard of, his mind aspired to be assimilated to theirs, and could only loathe the rude, martial, and ignorant savages who filled his court, claimed his time, and oppressed his kingdom. Dependant and noble were alike fierce, uninstructed, and gross. How could his emerging mind compare the exalted characters and depicted civilization of Greece and Rome, or the sweet and interesting virtues inculcated by Christianity, without an indignation, impatience, and misanthropy which call for our compassion rather than our reproach! How could he have imbibed an ardent intellectual taste, and have thereby possessed the increasing love of the great, the beautiful, and the good, without being affected by the melancholy contrast between his studies and his experience! Every one who has struggled into taste and knowledge amid the impediments of uncongenial connections and occupations, will have felt, in his own experience, something of that temper of mind which, in circumstances somewhat analogous, seems at first to have actuated Alfred.

Asser connects with the hints about his faults, an intimation, that in this important crisis of his life, he suffered from the disaffection of his subjects. It is expressed obscurely, but the words

are of strong import. He says, "the Lord permitted him to be very often wearied by his enemies, afflicted by adversity, and to be depressed *by the contempt of his people.*"^a He adds to these phrases, the paragraphs already quoted about his faults, and ends the subject by declaring, "*Wherefore* he fell often into such misery, that none of his subjects knew where he was, or what had befallen him."^a

Asser had already declared, that on the invasion of Godrun, many fled into exile; and that "for the greatest part, all the inhabitants of that region submitted to his dominion."^b The inference which seems naturally to result from all his passages is, that Alfred had offended his people, and in this trying emergency was deserted by them. Other authors also declare, that it was their flight or disaffection which produced his.^c

A few other remarks on this subject may be perused in the accompanying note.^d

^a Verum etiam ab hostibus fatigari, adversitatibus affligi, *despectu suorum deprimi*, multotiens eum idem benignus dominus permisit, p. 31.

^a Quare ergo idem espedictus Ælfredus in tantam miseriam sæpius incidit, ut nemo subjectorum suorum sciret, ubi esset vel quo devenisset, p. 32.

^b Asser, p. 30.

^c The chronicle of Mailros says, that Alfred *fugientibus suis* cum paucis relictus est et in nemoribus se abscondebat, p. 144. Wallingford says, Rex vero Ealfredus elegit prophetiæ spiritui cedere quam cum *certo suorum dissidio* sævientibus occurrere. Ingulf declares, that ad tantam tandem exilitatem deductus est ut tribus pagis Hamtoniensi, Wiltoniensi, et Somersata *egre in fide* retentis, p. 26. So Malmesbury, p. 43.

The Latin life of St. Neot says, Rex autem Aluredus audiens barbaricam rabiem atque sævitiam cominus irruisse *suorumque considerans disperationem* huc illucque cœpit animo fluctuare. MSS. Claud. 157. The expression of Asser, in note 32, of *Sæpius*, would lead us to infer that Alfred had been in great difficulties *before* this last distress.

^d We have endeavoured to account for the neglect of his subjects mentioned by Asser; but he is also charged with cruelty and severity, and with immoral conduct, in the ancient lives of St. Neot.

On the last imputation we may observe, that Alfred in his youth felt himself subject to tendencies which induced him to implore from Heaven some disciplining visitation to repress them, that would not make him useless or contemptible among his contemporaries. Asser, p. 41. The accusation of cruelty and severity is more remarkable. On this we may recollect some of his judicial punishments which are mentioned in the old law-book called the "*Mirroi des Justices*," written by Andrew Horne in the reign of Edward the Second. He quotes in this work, Rolls in the time of king Alfred, and, among many other fictions of the king's love of justice, he mentions several executions which appear to have been both summary and arbitrary, and, according to our present notions, cruelly severe. It is true that the minds and habits of every part of society were in those times so violent, that our estimation of the propriety of those judicial severities cannot now be accurately just. But yet, even with this recollection, the capital punishments with which Alfred is stated to have visited the judicial errors, corruptions, incapacity, dishonesty, and violence, which are recorded in the mirror, strike our moral feeling as coming within the expressions of the "*immoderate tyranny*" which he is said to have at first exhibited.

That Alfred should desire the improvement of his people, was the natural result of his own improving mind. But if he at first attempted to effect this by violence; and to precipitate, by pitiless exertions of power, that melioration which time, and adapted education, laws, example, and institutions, only could produce, he acted with

CHAPTER IX.

His Conduct during his Seclusion.

LET us now collect all that the most ancient writers have transmitted to us of this afflictive crisis of Alfred's life. 878. Their statements present us with all that was known or believed on this subject, by our ancestors who lived nearest to the times of our venerable king; and they are too interesting not to merit our careful preservation.

The period of Alfred's humiliation may be divided into four stages. 1st. What occurred between his leaving his throne and his reaching Athelney: 2d. The incidents which happened to him there before he began his active measures against the invaders: 3d. His exertions until he discovered himself again to his subjects: and 4th. The great battle which restored him to his kingdom. On each of these heads we will lay before the reader the circumstances which the best and most ancient authorities that we could explore have transmitted to us.

On the first stage, the oldest authority that now remains is the Saxon life of St. Neot, written before the Conquest. He says of the king, that when the army approached "he was soon lost; he took flight, and left all his warriors, and his commanders, and all his people, his treasures and his treasure vessels, and preserved his life. He went hiding over hedges and ways, woods and wilds, till through the divine guidance he came safe to the isle of Æthelney."

as much real tyranny as if he had shed their blood from the common passions of ordinary despots; but his motives must not be confounded with theirs. He meant well, though he may have acted, in this respect, injudiciously.

Yet no motive can make crime not criminal. However men may palter with the question to serve temporary purposes, no end justifies bad means. Cruelty and violence are always evils, and tend to produce greater ones than those which they correct. We may, therefore, understand from the examples mentioned by Horne, that even Alfred's better purposes, thus executed, may have attached to the beginning of his reign the charges of tyranny and cruelty, and may have produced the temporary aversion of his people. They could not appreciate his great objects. They saw what they hated. They probably misconceived, for a time, his real character, and by their alienation may have contributed to amend it. Virtue, without intending it, will often act viciously from ignorance, prejudice, wrong advice, or undue alarm. Wisdom must unite with virtue to keep it from wrong conduct or deterioration; but true wisdom arises from the best human and divine tuition, and the gradual concurrence of experience. Alfred possessed those in the latter part of his life, but in its earlier periods had not attained them.

“ Tha fe here fpa fctihlic pær, and fpa neh Englelanbe, he fone forpærht, fleamer cepte, hif cempen ealle forlet

The life of St. Neot was first written in Alfred's time, and is quoted by his friend Asser.^b This primitive tract of Neot's biography is not now to be found; but we may reasonably suppose that the ancient lives of this saint which have survived to us were composed from it.

The next work in point of antiquity is the MS. Latin life of the same person in the Cotton Library, ascribed by the title of the MS. to an Abbot of Croyland in 1180. It says:

"The king hearing that the rage and cruelty of the barbarians were rushing immediately upon him, and considering the dispersion of his people, began to fluctuate to and fro in his mind. At length yielding to his discreeter judgment, he retired from his enemies alone and unarmed, and exposed to be the sport of flight. As he was entirely ignorant whither he should turn himself, or where the necessity of his flight should impel him, he let fortune lead him, and came unexpectedly into a place surrounded on all sides with extensive marshes. This place was in the extreme boundary of England, on the borders of Britain, which, in their language is called Ethelingaia, and in ours (Latin) means the royal island."^c

The fuller account of Matthew of Westminster seems to be taken chiefly from Ramsay's Life of St Neot, written within half a century after the preceding.

"In the extreme borders of the English people towards the west, there is a place called Æthelingeie, or the isle of the nobles. It is surrounded by marshes, and so inaccessible that no one can get to it but by a small vessel. It has a great wood of alders, which contains stags and goats, and many animals of that kind. Its solid earth is scarcely two acres in breadth. Alfred having left the few fellow-soldiers whom he had, that he might be concealed from his enemies, sought this place alone, where, seeing the hut of an unknown person, he turned to it, asked and received a shelter. For some days he remained there as a guest and in poverty, and contented with the fewest necessaries. But the king, being asked who he was and what he sought in such a desert place, answered that he was one of the king's thegns, had been conquered with him in battle, and flying from his enemies had reached that place. The herdsman believing his words, and moved with pity, carefully supplied him with the necessaries of life."^d

and his heretogen and eall his theode, madmes and mad-
mpaten and his life gebeaph. Ferde tha lutigende geond
heger and peger, geond puder and peldeþ sþa tha he thuph
Loder þirrunge gerund become to Ætheling-ege. MSS.
British Museum, Vespas. D. 14.

^b Ut in vita sancti patris Neoti legitur. Asser, p. 30. ^c MSS. Claud. A. 5.

^d Matt. West. p. 329, 330.

His first incident is thus described by his friend Asser, with an allusion to a contemporary life of Neot not now extant.

"He led an unquiet life there, at his cowherd's. It happened that on a certain day the rustic wife of this man prepared to bake her bread. The king, sitting then near the hearth, was making ready his bow and arrows, and other warlike instruments, when the ill-tempered woman beheld the loaves burning at the fire. She ran hastily and removed them, scolding the king, and exclaiming 'You man! you will not turn the bread you see burning, but you will be very glad to eat it when done.' This unlucky woman little thought she was addressing the king, Alfred."

The same event is told in the Saxon life thus:

"He took shelter in a swain's house, and also him and his evil wife diligently served. It happened that on one day the swain's wife heated her oven, and the king sat by it warming himself by the fire. She knew not then that he was the king. Then the evil woman was excited, and spoke to the king with an angry mind: 'Turn thou those loaves, that they burn not; for I see daily that thou art a great cater.' He soon obeyed this evil woman, because she would scold. He then, the good king, with great anxiety and sighing, called to his Lord, imploring his pity."

The Latin life gives a little more detail.

"Alfred, a fugitive, and exiled from his people, came by chance and entered the house of a poor herdsman, and there remained some days concealed, poor and unknown.

"It happened that on the Sabbath day, the herdsman as usual led his cattle to their accustomed pastures, and the king remained alone in the cottage with the man's wife. She, as necessity required, placed a few loaves, which some call loudas, on a pan

* Asser, p. 30, 31. Although in the Cotton MSS. of Asser this passage is wanting, yet it was in Camden's ancient MSS., and the preceding words, "apud quondam suum vaccarium" are in the Cotton MS. Dr. Whitaker, in his usual hasty manner, boldly calls it an interpolation taken from Ramsay's Life of St. Neot, which he has printed. But Dr. W. did not know of the earlier life in the Claud. MS., nor of the still more ancient Saxon life, Vesp. D. 14, both of which contain the incident. Malmesbury also mentions the "in silvam profugus," and the subsequent education of the herdsman for the church, and his elevation to the see of Winchester, p. 242.

'And on sumer ƿraner hufe his hleoƿ Ʒernde and eac Ʒƿylce him and his Ʒfele ƿife Ʒeorne herde. Hit Ʒelamp Ʒume berge tha thaer ƿraner ƿif hætte here open and Ʒe king thor big Ʒæt hleoƿinde hine beo than Ʒýne. Than heo Ʒer nýten the he king Ʒere. Tha Ʒearth tha Ʒfele ƿif Ʒæringe aƷtýped and cƷæth to than kinge eorne mode "Wend thu tha hlafes, tha heo ne Ʒorþeornes: Ʒorþam ic Ʒereo berghamlice tha thu mýcel æte eart." Be Ʒer Ʒone Ʒeherrum than Ʒfele ƿife. Forþan the heo nebe Ʒolbe. Be tha, Ʒe Ʒode king, mid mýcelne angrumýrre and Ʒiccetunge to his Drihten clýpode, his mildre biðdende. MSS. Vesp. D. 14.

with fire underneath, to be baked for her husband's repast and her own on his return.

"While she was necessarily busied like peasants on other affairs, she went anxious to the fire and found the bread burning on the other side. She immediately assailed the king with reproaches: 'Why, man! do you sit thinking there, and are too proud to turn the bread? Whatever be your family, with such manners and sloth, what trust can be put in you hereafter? If you were even a nobleman, you will be glad to eat the bread which you neglect to attend to.' The king, though stung by her upbraidings, yet heard her with patience and mildness; and roused by her scolding, took care to bake her bread as she wished."^c

Matthew of Westminster's statement of the same circumstance is to the same effect. "It happened that the herdsman, one day, as usual, led his swine to their accustomed pasture, and the king remained at home alone with the wife. She placed her bread under the ashes of the fire to bake, and was employed in other business, when she saw the loaves burning, and said to the king in her rage: 'You will not turn the bread you see burning, though you will be very glad to eat it when done.' The king, with a submitting countenance, though vexed at her upbraidings, not only turned the bread, but gave them to the woman well baked and unbroken."^h

It is stated, that he afterwards munificently rewarded the peasant, whose name was Denulf. He observed him to be a man of capacity; he recommended him to apply to letters, and to assume the ecclesiastical profession. He afterwards made him bishop of Winchester.ⁱ

The homely taunts of this angry rustic must have sounded harshly to the yet haughty king: but he was now levelled to her condition, or rather he was even more destitute than herself; for he was dependent on the bounty of her poverty, and had no asylum but in her humble cottage. All the honours and all the pleasures of his life had vanished like a dream: self-reproach, if he had only suffered himself to be surprised, and more poignant feelings, if his personal misconduct had driven his subjects to desert him in the hour of need, concurred to aggravate his distress. In the solitude of his retreat, and amid its penury and mortifications, it was natural that he should be pensive and melancholy, and yet improved. It is in its distresses that arrogance learns to know its folly; that man perceives his individual insignificance, discerns the importance of others to his well-being and even existence,

^c MSS. Claud. A. 5. p. 157.

^h Matt. West. 330.

ⁱ Malmab. 242. Flor. Wig. 318. As Florence of Worcester mentions this elevation of Denulf, p. 318, he ought not to have been mentioned as an evidence against the incident as stated by Asser; yet Dr. Whitaker unguardedly so produces him, p. 239. Matt. West. 332. Denulf died bishop of Winchester in 909. Sax. Chron. 102.

and feels the necessity and the comfort of believing or hoping that there exists a Protector more powerful than himself. Humility, urbanity, philanthropy, decorum, and self-coercion, all the virtues which are requisite to produce the good-will of our species, and which the wise and good have in every age adopted in their eclipse.^j The sequel of Alfred's reign, which was a stream of virtue and intelligence, attests that his fortunate humiliation disciplined his temper, softened his heart, increased his piety, and enlightened his understanding.^k His mind was too powerful and too intelligent, either to remain inactive or to fail of discerning the best means of emancipating the country from its barbaric invaders.

His subsequent measures to regain his throne, and to surround it with its natural and impregnable bulwark, the confidence of his people, were judicious and exemplary. And an auspicious incident occurred at this juncture to excite both their courage and his own perseverance.

Ubbo, who, with his brothers Ingwar and Halfden, had conducted the fatal fleet to England, to avenge the death of their father, and who had distinguished himself in the massacre at Peterborough, and who was now the only survivor of those children of Ragnar Lodbrog who had afflicted England, had been harassing the Britons in South Wales, where he had wintered. After much of that slaughter, which always attended their invasions, he returned with twenty-three ships to the English Channel. Sailing by the north of Devonshire, the castle of Kynwith^l attracted his notice, where many of the king's thegns had embraced the protection of the Earl of Devon. The place was unprovided with subsistence. It had no stronger fortification than a Saxon wall;^m but Ubbo found that its rocky situation made it impregnable against all assault, except at the eastern point. He also remarked that no water was near it, and consequently that a short siege would reduce the inhabitants to every misery of thirst and famine. He preferred the certain victory of a blockade to a bloody attack, and surrounded it with his followers.

^j "I honour solitude, the meditating sister of society, and often her legislator, who converts the experience of active life into principles, and its passions into nutritious juices." Herder's *Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Man*, p. 511. Eng. ed. 1800.

^k Asser's reflection at this period of Alfred's life seems to allude to his previous imperfections. He says he was afflicted, "that he might know that there exists one Lord of all to whom every knee must bow; in whose hands are the hearts of kings; who deposes the mighty from their seat, and exalts the humble," p. 31.

^l Risdon places this castle near Aplemore; it is called Henney Castle. *J. Gough's Camden*, p. 40.

^m Asser seems to treat Saxon fortifications with some contempt; for he says, that it was omnino immunizam nisi quod mania nostro more erecta solum modo haberet, p. 39. He says he had seen this castle himself.

Odun saw the extent of his distress, and the inevitable certainty on which the pagans calculated; and determined on a vigorous sally. It was bravely executed. While the dawn was mingling with the darkness, Odun pierced at once to the tent of Ubbo, slew him and his attendants, and turning on the affrighted host, destroyed the largest part; a few reached their vessels and escaped. An immense booty rewarded the victors, among which the capture of their magical standard, the famous Reafan, was to the eye of ignorant superstition a more fatal disaster than even Ubbo's death, and their destructive defeat.^a

When Easter had passed, Alfred, now twenty-eight years of age, began to execute a new plan of operations. The place of his retreat, as already described, was peculiarly fitted to be made a military post of the most defensible nature, and the king fortified it as his place of safety.^o

The fullest account of the exertions of Alfred, during his seclusion in this little island^p is that left by the Abbot of Croyland.

"The king, overwhelmed with the disgrace of poverty and dejection, and instead of his royal palace, being confined to a vile hovel, was one day casually recognised by some of his people, who, being dispersed, and flying all around, stopped where he was. An eager desire then arose both in the king and his knights to devise a remedy for their fugitive condition.

"In a few days they constructed a place of defence as well as they could; and here recovering a little his strength, and comforted by the protection of his few friends, he began to move in warfare against his enemies. His companions were very few in number, compared with the barbarian multitude; nor could they on the first day, or by their first attacks, obtain any advantages: yet they neither quitted the foe nor submitted to their defeats: but, supported by the hope of victory, as their small number gradually increased, they renewed their efforts, and made one battle but the preparation for another.

"Sometimes conquerors, and sometimes conquered, they learnt to overcome time by chances, and chance by time. The king,

^a Asser, 32. The Sax. Chron. makes the number of the slain 840. Flor. Wig. 1200, p. 316. Asser describes the raven as a banner woven by Ubbo's three sisters, the daughters of Ragnar Lodbrog, in one noon-tide. It was believed that the bird appeared as if flying when the Danes were to conquer, but was motionless when they were to be defeated. Asser adds, *et hoc sæpe probatum est*, p. 33. He might have said that nothing was easier to be contrived. Bartholin has collected some traditions concerning such standards, and the raven's prophetic powers, p. 472-480.

^o Dr. Whitaker's account of the present state of this place, of the existing traditions there, and of his own feelings and belief, are worth reading. See his *St. Neot*.

^p A jewel of gold, enamelled like a bulla or amulet, to hang round the neck, circumscribed, *Alfred me gehc gefyrncan*, i. e. *Alfred ordered me to be made*, was found here. It is now in the Ashmolean Museum. 1 Gough's *Camden*, 70. It is engraved in that work, p. 59, and elsewhere.

both when he failed and when he was successful, preserved a cheerful countenance, and supported his friends by his example."⁴

To this natural and intelligible account, we may add, from Asser, that the only land-access to their little island was by one bridge, on which by great labour they raised two defensive towers, or, as we should now call them, *têles du pont*. From this fortified retreat, with his noble vassals in Somersetshire, he was continually assailing the Danes.⁵

The same incidents are implied in the brief narrative of Matthew of Westminster. "While the king remained alone with the herdsman, there came to him many of his warriors; and by his directions they built a fortress with towers and defences, and from thence made continual irruptions on their enemies."⁶

They led here an uncertain and unquiet life. They had no subsistence but what they could obtain by plunder, hunting or fishing,⁷ in the adjoining districts. Here, dispossessed of his kingdom, the king concealed himself with a few of his friends among these woods and marshes, living on the fish they caught⁸ for several weeks. He had none to aid him but a part of his own household.⁹

The plan of Alfred, suggested by the lonesomeness and security of his retreat, was as efficacious as it was wisely adapted to his position and necessities. With a small force he attacked without ceasing his superior enemies, wherever he found any of their parties or camps accessible to his attempts. His object achieved, or repulsed by a superior force, he retired with a celerity which baffled pursuit, to his unknown asylum, and soon harassed the enemy with hostility in a distant quarter. By day and by night, at dawn, in the evening twilight, from woods, and marshes, he was ever rushing on the Northmen with all the advantages of selection and surprise.¹⁰

By these expeditions Alfred provided himself and his party with sustenance; he inured himself to war and skilful generalship; he improved in his knowledge of the country, secured the attachment of his friends, collected others, provided new resources of character for his future life, collected perpetual intelligence of the motions of the Danes, revived the spirit of the country, and prepared it for that grand exploit which was soon to crown his labours.

During his residence in this fenny isle, an incident occurred, which the monks are particular in recording as a proof of the improvement of his disposition; and as it shows both his situation and his benevolent temper, it is worth our reciting, though with-

⁴ MS. Claud. A. 5, p. 157.

⁵ Matt. West. p. 330.

⁶ Ethelred. Abb. p. 353.

⁷ MSS. Claud. Wallingf. p. 537.

⁸ Asser, Vit. p. 60.

⁹ Ran. Higden Polych. p. 257. Brunton, 811.

¹⁰ Ethelwerd, Chron. 845.

out those additions of celestial machinery with which the tenants of the cloister seem to have been as warmly enamoured as any possessor of the epic laurel.

His wife and family had joined him. His friends were abroad in search of food, and his queen and one thegn only were with him.² It was his custom when alone here to be reading the books of scripture, hymns, or the annals of his country, and the actions of illustrious men.⁷ He was sitting by himself reading one of these, when he was interrupted by a feeble knock at his gate, and by the lowly cry of poverty supplicating relief. He remembered the state of penury in which he had reached the same spot : he laid down his book, and called his thegn to give the poor claimant some food. The thegn found only one loaf in their store, which would not suffice for their family on their return from their toilsome expedition, and a little wine. Alfred thought the necessities of the mendicant more urgent than their own, and reserving a part of the pittance for his friends, he presented the beggar with the rest.²

CHAPTER X.

The Battle which produced Alfred's Restoration.

AFTER passing about six months in this retreat,^a Alfred revolved in his mind the means of surprising the main army of the Northmen, which still continued in Wiltshire. It was encamped on and about Bratton Hill, at Eddendun,^b near Westbury. And it is a tradition which some of the most respectable of our ancient chroniclers have recorded, that he resolved to inspect their camp

² Sim. Dun. Hist. Cuthb. p. 71.

⁷ Ingulf, p. 26. Ethel. Abb. 353.

^a Sim. Dun. 71. Ing. 26. Ethel. 353.

^b Mr. Walker, in his notes to Sir John Spelman's *Life of Alfred*, computes, that Alfred's seclusion did not last six months. Chippenham was taken in January, and the great battle which produced his restoration was fought seven weeks after Easter. Easter day was in that year the 23d of March ; p. 30. The seventh week after that would of course be the eleventh of May, which does not allow the retreat to have been five months.

^b A part of Mr. Walker's curious note is worth translating : " Eddendun lies under Bratton Hill, which is lofty, abrupt, and of difficult ascent : on its summit there are yet extant the trenches and ditches of the Danish Camp. Two branches, for the sake of water, spread to the foot of the mountain. Here, weary of the confinement of a camp, and under no alarm of any hostile troops, the Danes diffused themselves to Eddendun, and over the neighbouring plain. It is probable that the king had notice of this descent, and resolved to examine the fact in person. Mr. Walker hints, that the king may have made his attack between their army and the hill, so as to separate them from their encampment." Not. Vit. Ælfrædi, p. 33.

in person, before he made the attempt. His early predilection for the Saxon poetry^c and music, had qualified him to assume the character of a harper; and thus disguised he went to the Danish tents. His harp and singing excited notice; he was admitted to their king's table; he heard their conversation, and contemplated their position unsuspected. He quitted their encampment without molestation, and reached his little isle in safety.^d There is nothing improbable in the incident, nor is it inconsistent with the manners of the time.

It was now Whitsuntide. He sent confidential messengers to his principal friends in the three adjacent counties, Wilts, Hampshire, and Somerset, announcing his existence; declaring his intention of joining them, and requiring them to collect their followers secretly, and to meet him in military array on the east of Selwood Forest.^e A dream, of St. Neot's appearing to him, and promising him both assistance and a great success, is placed at this crisis. It may have been suggested by the king's policy, or may have occurred naturally from his memory of his sacred monitor, and anticipating its encouraging effects, he may have circulated it among his friends.^f

A celebrated place called the stone of Egbert,^g was the appointed place of meeting. As the Anglo-Saxons had suffered severely in his absence, the tidings of his being alive, and the prospect of his re-appearance, filled every bosom with joy. All who were entrusted with the secret crowded enthusiastically to the place appointed, and the horns, trumpets, and clashing of the arms of those who came, and of those who welcomed the loyal patriots, loudly expressed their mutual congratulations and exultations.^h

Two days were passed in these arrivals and rejoicings, and in making the necessary arrangements for the consequential exertion. Some rumours of what was preparing reached the ears of God-

^c See before, p. 324.

^d This incident is mentioned by Ingulf, who was a lad in the reign of Edward the Confessor, p. 26; by Malmesbury, p. 43; both highly respectable chroniclers; and by Higden in his *Polych.* 258. It is also in the *MS. Chronicles of Henry de Silgrave*, Cleop. A. 12, and of Joh. Bever, *Harl. Coll.* 641. That others omit it may be accounted for by their desire of attributing the victory to St. Neot's miraculous interference, rather than to the plans of the king's previously exerted sagacity.

^e This was named in British *Coit mawr*, the great wood. *Aesser*, 33. The county (perhaps from the wood) was anciently called *Sealpuburcine*. *Ethelw.* p. 837. The wood reaches from Frome to Burham, near fifteen miles in length, and six in breadth. I Gough's *Camden*, 76. Seal, in Saxon, is a willow-tree. This was, therefore, a wood of willows; and so the *MSS. Claud.* names it, *syllum salicis*.

^f Both the *MS. lives of St. Neot*, and *Aesser's Annals*, mention this.

^g *Aesser*, 33. *Flor. Wig.* *MSS. Claud.*

^h *MSS. Claud.* p. 158. That Alfred invited Rollo out of France to his aid, and that Rollo came to help him, is a circumstance which I have found in *Wallingford* only (p. 537), and therefore cannot state it as a fact on his single authority. It is not probable of itself; and yet it is difficult to account for its invention, if false.

run, the Danish king,¹ but nothing to explain the meditated blow. He called in his forces to be prepared; but as he saw no collected enemy, he had no object before him to move against.

On the third day Alfred marched his new raised army to *Æcglea*,² seized an adjoining hill; encamped that night there, and again reconnoitred his enemies' position.³ In the morning they advanced rapidly to the place called *Ethandune*, where the northern myriads were overspreading the plain.

Alfred halted to form them into a skilful arrangement, and made a short but impressive address. He reminded them that they were about to combat both for their country and for themselves; he conjured them to act manfully, and he promised them a glorious victory.⁴ They advanced when he had concluded, and soon beheld the invading warriors before them, but whether resting in their camp, or arrayed for battle, is not clearly expressed. The attack was meant, by the secrecy and celerity of the movement, to be a surprise, and most probably was so, and the expressions used by most of the chroniclers imply this circumstance.

The Anglo-Saxons rushed on their enemies with an impetuosity which disordered valour was unable to withstand. It was Alfred who led them on; who seemed to have risen from his grave to destroy them. The discharge of the Anglo-Saxon arrows was succeeded by the attack of their lances, and soon it became a personal combat of swords.⁵ The Northmen resisted with their usual individual intrepidity; but their efforts, though furious, were unavailing. Seeing a standard-bearer leading on one of his divisions with great bravery, Alfred is represented to have pointed him out to his warriors as *St. Neot* himself at their head.⁶ The belief increased their enthusiasm; their resolute attack was everywhere irresistible; and the Northmen gave way. Their bodies strewed the plain, till a part found refuge with their king in a neighbouring fortification; Alfred was thus left the master of that important field, which, from the marshes and penury of *Ethelingy*, exalted him to the throne of England.⁷

¹ MSS. Claud.

² *Asser*, 34. *Ecglea* has been conjectured to be the village *Leigh*. *Gough's Camden*, p. 100. *Dr. Whitaker* prefers *Highley*, near *Whaddon*, p. 266. *Gibson* suggested *Clay Hill*, near *Warminster*.

³ MSS. Claud. p. 158, 159. *Dr. Whitaker* thinks the present *Yatton*, about five miles from *Chippenham*, to be the representative of *Ethandun*. He adds, "But the battle itself was a little lower on the *Avon*, at *Slaughterford*," p. 268. *Gibson* mentions a tradition of the inhabitants, of a great slaughter of the *Danes* at this place. I remark that the place is called *Assandune* by *Sim. Dun.* p. 71: *Edderandun* by *Hoveden*, 417; *Ethandune* by *Ethelwerd*, 845.

⁴ MSS. Claud. p. 59.

⁵ MSS. Claud.

⁶ MSS. Claud. p. 159.

⁷ *Asser*, 34. *Mr. Gough* remarks, that on the southwest face of the hill, near *Edindon*, there is a most curious monument unnoticed by *Bishop Gibson*. It is a

The king, with vigorous judgment, followed the Northmen to their fortress; and contrary to their hopes, encamped himself strongly round it. By this decisive measure he cut them off from all reinforcement, and confined them to the scanty subsistence which happened to be in their station. While the siege lasted, the strength of Alfred augmented in a proportion which destroyed in the Danes every hope of emancipation. They lingered in unavailing distress for fourteen days, and then, oppressed with cold and famine, and worn down by fatigue and dismay, the imprisoned chiefs humbly supplicated the mercy of their conqueror.^p

Thus, after a very doubtful struggle for the sovereignty of the island, during twelve years of peril and calamity, the Anglo-Saxons by this battle triumphed over their enemies, and surmounted one of the most formidable invasions that any nation had experienced. To this great achievement, to the talents which planned, and to the energy which accomplished it, words can add no praise. It was the triumph of mind over barbarian strength; of a wisely conceiving and arranging intelligence over superiority of number, elation from past successes, and a hardihood of personal valour which no competition could excel. It was as complete in its beneficial effects as it was brilliant in its immediate glory.

The immediate conditions which Alfred imposed, were, hostages, which were not reciprocal, and oaths that they should leave his dominions. These, however, were of puerile importance, because Godrun, having got released from his confinement, might have acted with the same contempt of diplomatic and religious faith, for which his countrymen were notorious. Alfred had learnt that oaths and hostages were but bonds of sand, and therefore relied no longer upon these.

His comprehensive mind conceived and executed the magnanimous policy of making Godrun and his followers his allies, and of leading them to agriculture, civilization, and Christianity. To effect this, he persuaded them to exchange their paganism for the Christian religion, and on these terms he admitted them to cultivate and possess East Anglia as peaceful colonists.

After some weeks, Godrun, to whom the conditions were

white horse, in a walking attitude, cut out of the chalk, fifty-four feet high, from his toe to his chest; and to the tip of his ear, near one hundred feet high, and from ear to tail one hundred feet long. The learned editor of Camden thinks, that it was made to commemorate this celebrated victory, p. 100, 101. Yet Whitaker, p. 273, has remarked, that Wise, in 1742, declared it had been wrought by the inhabitants of Westbury in the memory of persons then living.

^p Asser, 34. Flor. Wig. 317. Sax. Chron. 85. Whitaker, p. 269, supposes the fortress to which the Danes fled to have been the double entrenchment in Burywood, which is thus described by Gough: "On Colerne-down, on the fosse near Wrazhall and Slaughterford, in Burywood, is Northwood, a camp of eighteen acres, double works, not Roman: the entrance from Colerne-down." p. 99.

acceptable, went with thirty of his chiefs to Aulre,² near Ethelney, where, Alfred standing as his godfather, he was baptized by the name of Ethelstan. The ceremony was completed a week after at the royal town of Wædmor. He stayed twelve days with the king, as his guest, and received magnificent presents at his departure.³

Such a conversion could be but nominal; but the religious tenets of the unreflective mass of mankind are little else. The object of Alfred was to place them immediately under new habits, which would give them dispositions more compatible with the well-being of society than their ferocious paganism. To time, reflection, and tuition, he left their further progress in the system he revered.

Godrun, to fulfil his engagements with Alfred, left Chippenham, and went into Gloucestershire. He remained at Cirencester⁴ a year, and then marching into East Anglia, he divided it among his soldiers, and they cultivated it.⁵

Although the Northmen came to England as the ministers of vengeance; yet, by residing in it for twelve years, they must have become more sensible to the charms of civilized life. The bands under Halfden attested this impression when they cultivated Northumbria. Having thus turned their swords into ploughshares, they gave no assistance to Godrun in his invasion of Wessex; and if left unmolested, and not endangered, it was probable they would continue to be pacific. By admitting Godrun to imitate their example, Alfred calmed their inquietude; and by giving this occupation to Godrun, he secured safety to himself; the beginning change in the manners of the North, was cherished in its most important crisis; and as the Danes became civilized in East Anglia, they would inevitably, for their own safety, form a barrier, defending the most exposed coast of the island from their more ferocious countrymen.⁶

² Asser, 35. Mr. Walker thinks, it was the modern Aulre, an inconsiderable place near Ethelney. Wedmor was not less than twelve miles from it. At Wedmor, the white garments and mystic veil, then appropriated to baptism, were given. Vit. Ælf. 35.

³ Asser, 35. MSS. Vesp. D. 14. Flor. 318. Sax. Chron. 85.

⁴ Cirrenceastre, qui Britannice Cairceri nominatur, quæ est in meridiana parte Huiciorum; ibique per unum annum mansit. Asser, 35.

⁵ An. 860. Cirrenceastre deserens, ad orientales Anglos perrexit, ipsam quæ regionem dividens, cæpit inhabitare. Asser, 35. *þene for þe þene of Cýrenceastre on East Engle, and geræc the lond, and gedælcde.* Sax. Chron. 86. The printed chronicle dates their occupation of East Anglia in 879. The MS. chronicle places it, like Asser, in 860. Cot. Lib. Tib. B. 4, p. 35.

⁶ Saxo places a Gormo Anglicus soon after Ragnar Lodbrog, p. 178. In the Chronicon of Eric he is surnamed Enske, the Englishman, and is there said to have been baptized in England. I Langb. 156. Hamsfort says, he went to England, and was converted by Alfred; ib. p. 37. If so, he was the Godrun here mentioned.

CHAPTER XI.

Review of the Causes and Consequences of the Northman Invasions.—The Actions of Hastings, and his Invasions of England.—Alfred's death.

ALFRED having permitted Godrun to colonize East Anglia, the limits of their respective territories were settled by a treaty, which still exists.^a By the first article, the boundary was placed in the Thames, the river Lea to its source, and Watling Street to the Ouse.^b The spaces thus marked, contained Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex, part of Hertfordshire, part of Bedfordshire, and a little of Huntingdonshire.^c These regions were subjected to Godrun, and were filled with Danes.^d Northumbria was afterwards put under Guthred, who governed Deira; and Egbert ruled in Bernicia.^e

^a It is in Wilkins's *Leges Anglo-Saxonice*, p. 47. The beginning may be quoted as an intimation of the parties to such transactions: "Thiſ is the fr̄ythe tha Ælfr̄ed c̄yning and Luthrun c̄yning, and ealler Angel c̄ynner witan and eal ſeo theob the on Eart Englum beoth, ealle gecƿeden habbath and mid athum gefærctnoð for hi ſylfe and for heora zingran ge for geborene, ge for ungeborene, the gober miltre necca othche ure."

^b The words are, "Ælfr̄t ymb ure landgemaera upon Temeſe, and thonne upon Ligan and anblang Ligan oth hire æƿyrm, thonne on geriht to Bedanforða, thon upon Ugan oth Wætlingartnet," p. 47.

^c Sir John Spelman places Northumbria also under Godrun, p. 66. He is certainly sanctioned by Malmſbury, p. 43; but Aſſer, 35; Florence, 326; Saxon Chron. 86; Ethelwerd, 845; Hunt. 350; Ingulf, 26; and Mailros, 144, unite in merely ſtating Godrun's occupation of Eaſt Anglia. The grammatical conſtruction of the Saxon treaty appears to me to imply no more.

^d The other articles of the treaty are legal regulations. Spelman's Summary may be cited: They provide "that there ſhall be one and the ſame eſtimation of perſon, both of Engliſh and Dane, and the mulct for ſlaughter of them both alike. That a thane of the king's being queſtioned for manſlaughter or any other offence above four marks, ſhall be tried by twelve of his peers, and others by eleven of their peers, and one of the king's men. That no buying of men, horſe, or oxen, ſhall be juſtifiable without voucher of the ſeller, and his avowing the ſale. And, laſtly, that there ſhall be no licentious intercourſe of the ſoldiers of the one with thoſe of the other army," p. 68, Herne's ed.

^e Mailros, 145. In 890, Godrun died in Eaſt Anglia, Flor. 326; and Guthred in Northumbria died 894. Sim. Dan. 133, and 70. Mailros, 146.

The sovereignty of Mercia, on the defeat of the Danes,^f fell into the power of Alfred. He did not, however, avowedly incorporate it with Wessex. He discontinued its regal honours, and constituted Ethelred its military commander, to whom he afterwards married his daughter, Ethelfleda, when her age permitted.^g

The reign of Alfred, from his restoration to his death, was wise and prosperous. One great object of his care was, to fortify his kingdom against hostile attacks. He rebuilt the cities and castles which had been destroyed, and constructed new fortifications in every useful place; and he divided the country into hundreds and tythings for its better military defence and internal peace, and to repel that disposition for depredation which was prevailing even among his own subjects.^h By these defensive precautions, he gave to the country a new face, and not only kept in awe the Northmen who were in it, but was prepared to wage, with advantage, that defensive war, which the means and disposition of the impetuous invaders could never successfully withstand.

The policy of Alfred's conduct towards Godrun was evinced and rewarded immediately afterwards. A large fleet of Northmen arrived in the Thames, who joined Godrun, as if desirous to unite with him in a new warfare; but, Alfred having pacified his ambition, these adventurers found no encouragement to continue here. They wintered at Fulham, and then followed their leader, the famous Hastings, into Flanders; and remained a year at Ghent.ⁱ

Alfred discerned the inestimable benefit to England of creating a naval armament for the protection of its coast from the adventurers that now swarmed on the ocean. This king, who never used war but from necessity, which he deplored, may be considered as the founder of the English navy. In this, however, he was but the copyist of Charlemagne, whose policy of building ships to repress the northern invasions, has been noticed before. Alfred had already experienced the efficacy of a few ships of

^f Spelman thinks that the superior sovereignty of Alfred was preserved in his treaties with the Danes. He remarks from Malmesbury, that Alfred gave the dominion to Godrun, ut eas sub fidelitate regis jure hereditario teneret, and that the very joining in the laws shows that the one was a vassal, p. 69.

^g It is said in the Saxon life of Neot, that after the pacification, Godrun, with the remains of his army, departed in peace to his own country, "to his agenen eapde mid ealne ribbe," MSS. Vesp. D. 14. This seems to imply a return to Denmark, as East Anglia was not properly his own country.

^h Ingulf, 27. Matt. West. 345.

ⁱ Asser, 35, 36. Malmab. 43.

^j About this time kings seem to have thought of navies. In 868, Mahomet, the Saracen king in Corduba, ordered ships to be built at Corduba, Hispall, and in other places where wood abounded. Of this king it is said, that as he was walking in his garden, a soldier exclaimed, "What a beautiful place! What a delightful day! How charming would life be if death never came!"—"You are wrong," answered Mahomet; "if death never had come, I should not have reigned here." Rod. Tol. Hist. Arab. c. 28, p. 24.

war. In 862, he was prepared to engage in a naval conflict, and took two ships. The chief of two others and the crews, but not until they were all wounded, submitted to him.^k

The army of the Northmen on the Scheld divided into two branches. One moved against Eastern France; the other invaded England, and besieged Rochester. They built a castle against its gate, but the valour of the citizens prolonged their defence, till Alfred, with a great army, approached to relieve them. On the king's sudden presence, the pagans abandoned their tower, all the horses which they had brought from France, and the greatest part of their captives, and fled with precipitation to their ships. Compelled by extreme necessity, they returned in the same summer to France.^l

Alfred, improving the hour of success, directed his fleet, full of warriors, to the East Anglians, where bands of depredation had arrived or were forming. They met thirteen war-ships of the Danes ready for battle. The Saxons attacked and took them, with all their booty; the crews fighting fiercely, till every one perished. But the Saxons forgot the suspicious vigilance which should always be maintained on an enemy's coast. The Danes gathered all their ships together, and coming on the fleet of Alfred, which was at the mouth of the river, they obtained a victory of superiority or surprise.^m The colonizing followers of Godrun broke their treaty with Alfred; but as no account of the consequences is transmitted to us, the peace was probably soon restored.ⁿ

The most brilliant incident in the life of Alfred, was his defence of England against the formidable Hastings, which has not hitherto been sufficiently remarked. In his struggles against the Northmen, over whom he prevailed at Eddinton, he had to oppose power rather than ability; but in resisting Hastings, he had to withstand a skilful veteran, disciplined in all the arts of war by thirty years' practice of it; renowned for his numerous successes in other regions, and putting in action a mass of hostility, which might have destroyed a man of less ability than the Saxon king.

Hastings must have long been a favourite of tradition, because he was one of those heroic and successful adventurers, whom popular fame loves to celebrate, and sometimes to fancy. Time has, however, so much to record, such numerous characters to perpetuate, that it suffers many to fall into the shroud of oblivion, of whom our curiosity would desire a distinct memorial. Hastings

^k Asser, 36. Sax. Chron. 86.

^l Asser, 37.

^m Asser, 38. The Cotton MSS. and the editions of Parker and Camden say, the English fleet dormiret. Florence, in relating the incident, substitutes the word rediret, p. 321; and the Saxon Chron. p. 87, hampearþ þenbon.

ⁿ Asser, 39. A great army of Northmen was at this time attacking the continental Saxons and Frisians, *ibid.* 38.

has scarcely survived the general lot.^o We know him but by a few imperfect fragments: they announce a character of high importance in his day, but they give us little acquaintance with his individual features.

He first appears to us as selected by Ragnar Lodbrog, to initiate his son, Biorn, in the habit of piracy:^p that he possessed the virtues of a viking, intrepidity, activity, and ferocity, is evinced by the office which Ragnar assigned him.

He fulfilled his military duty with distinguished courage; for he led his young pupil into a collision with the Franks: to detail his successful depredations against this powerful nation,^q would be to repeat much of those descriptions with which our annals abound.

Charles at last bought off his hostility, and the ambitious Northman is said to have formed the bold hope of conquering, for his master, the imperial dignity. To accomplish this project, he sailed to Italy,^r and, mistaking the city of Luna^s for Rome, he attacked and obtained it. The geographical error, and his ignorance of the country, occasioned him to return. But the scheme evinces the largeness of ambition, and prospect to which the fame and actions of Ragnar was expanding the Northman mind.

He landed again in France,^t and from him and others, renewed destruction became its fate. The government was weak, and the country factious. Sometimes the assailants were bought off.^u Sometimes the rivers were fortified to prevent their ingress.^v A general assembly of the powerful chiefs was in one year convened, to provide an united defence;^w and an edict was after-

^o Dudo has attempted to draw his character; but he has only recollected and applied to him thirty-two vituperative epithets from the Latin language, strung into hexameters. One of the historian's bright ideas is, that Hastings should be non atramento verum carbone notandus, p. 63.

^p Hastings had been the nutritive of Biorn. Ord. Vital. p. 458. Snorre gives a similar instance, in Olaf Helga's history. This prince first began piracy at the age of twelve, under the tuition of Ran, his foster-father. Hastings is also mentioned by his contemporary Odo, an abbot of Clugny, in his account of St. Martin. 7 Bib. Mag. Pat. p. 637.

^q For his actions, see Gemmeticensis Hist. lib. ii. c. 5, p. 218. Dudo, lib. i. c. 1, p. 63. Ord. Vitalis, lib. iii. p. 458. The chronicles cited by Du Chesne, p. 25, and 32, of his Hist. Norm. Scriptores. The authorities vary much as to the year of the attack. Some place it in 843, others in 851.

^r Chron. Turonense, p. 25. Du Chesne Script. Norm. Chron. Florisc. p. 32, *ibid.* Dudo, p. 64. Gemmet. 220.

^s Luna is mentioned in Strabo, p. 339.

^t Dudo, p. 65. The Gesta Normannorum does not state when they returned from Italy, but mentions that, in 869, part returned to Italy, p. 3.

^u In 869, Charles gave them 4000 pounds of silver, and raised this sum by exacting six denarii from every manso ingenui et de servili tres et de accolis unus et de duobus hospitiibus unus et decima de omnibus quæ negotiatores videbantur habere. Gesta Norman. Du Chesne, p. 3. So in 870, they obtained a great donation of silver, corn, wine, and cattle, p. 4, &c.

^v Ann. Bertiniani, an. 864.

^w In Junio 864, celebrantur Comititia Pistensis quo regem et proceres traxerat

wards passed, awarding death to all who should give breast-plates, arms, or horses, to Northmen, even though it was to procure their own redemption.* But the particular actions of Hastings are not now to be traced, because, though the chronicles of France abound with depredations, they often omit the name of the commanding adventurer.

He appears to us, however, twice by name in the annals of Regino. Once in the year 867, as compelled to fortify himself in a church, sallying from which, he destroyed Count Robert the Strong,⁷ who has been called the greatest captain which France then had.* Again, in the year 874, as hovering about Bretagne, and accepting a defiance from a celebrated Breton warrior, whose courage excited his admiration, and averted or deterred his hostility.^a

In 879 he was in England, as before-mentioned, at Fulham; but as he received no co-operation from Godrun, whom Alfred had wisely pacified, he sailed to Ghent,^b and joined vigorously in those furious assaults by which the kingdom of France was for thirteen years again desolated, and endangered.^c

Defeated at length by the imperial forces, Hastings marched to Boulogne, and constructing there a large fleet,^d he determined 893. to try his fortune against Alfred in England. Perhaps weary of a life of wandering warfare, he now hoped to extort an English kingdom, or to be chosen king of the Anglo-Danes, as no chieftain of the Northmen was now surviving of equal celebrity with himself.

Fifteen years had now elapsed since Alfred's restoration, and he had employed the interval in executing every scheme which his active wisdom could form, for the improvement and protection of his people. His activity in defeating this attempt is a remarkable feature in a character so contemplative. The sudden invasion of Hastings compelled him to abandon literature and

generalis necessitas institucndi munitiones contra Normannos. Capit. Reg. ap. 1 Lang. 558.

* Capit. Reg. ap. 1 Lang. 558. When the Pope Nicolaus cited the bishops of France, they excused themselves on account of the Northmen. 1 Lang. 568.

⁷ Regino, p. 481. Pistor. Script. Germ.

^a Cet fut ainsi que perit alors Robert le Fort le plus grand capitaine qu'il y eust alors en France. Daniel Hist. de France, vol. ii. p. 99.

^b Regino, p. 55.

^c It is Malmabury who has affixed his name to this incident. Asser and others mention the arrival at Fulham, and the departure. Malmabury says, "Cæteri ex Danis qui Christiani esse recusassent, cum Hastingo mare transfretaverant ubi quæ mala fecerunt indignos norunt," p. 43.

^d During this period they were defeated by Louis: a song, in the ancient Teutonic language, written at the time, on this victory, still exists. Their siege of Paris, and its defence in 896, is narrated in a curious poem of Abbo, who was in the scene of action, and who has transmitted to us a full description of the incident. It is in Du Chesne; and 2 Langb. 76-106.

^e Ethelwerd.

ease, for unremitting exertion of sagacity and courage, in the decline of his life, and towards the end of his reign.

Hastings attacked Alfred with peculiar advantages. As the Northmen were in possession of Northumbria and East Anglia, he had only to contend against the strength of Wessex and its dependencies. Godrun was dead;* whose friendship with Alfred might have counteracted his invasion. If his countrymen in England declined to assist him by their active co-operation, he was sure of their neutrality, and he relied on their secret connivance. He shaped his operation in conformity to this political situation. By not landing in East Anglia and Northumbria, he avoided the means of exciting their jealousy; and by directing his fleet to Kent, he was enabled to profit from their vicinity. If he were defeated, they might afford him a shelter; if successful, they could immediately assist. On these occasions we must also recollect, that the assailing force did not merely consist of those who at first invaded. The landing actually made, usually drew to the enterprise many of the independent bands that were floating about. It may have been from these supplies that Hastings continued the struggle so long.

Two hundred and fifty vessels sailed to the southwest coast of Kent, and landed near Romney-marsh, at the eastern termination of the great wood or weald of Anderida.^f They drew up their ships to the weald, four miles from the outward mouth of the river, and there attacked and mastered a fortification which the peasants of the country were constructing in the fens. They built a stronger military work at Apuldre, on the Rother, and ravaged Hampshire and Berkshire.^g

Soon afterwards, Hastings himself appeared with the division he had selected to be under his own command, consisting of eighty ships, in the Thames. He navigated them into the East Swale, landed at Milton, near Sittingbourn, and threw up a strong intrenchment, which continued visible for ages.^h

This distribution of his forces was judicious. The two armies were but twenty miles asunder, and could therefore act separately, or combine for any joint operation which prudence or exigency should direct. The vicinity of their countrymen in Essex secured them from any attacks on the right, and the sea was their frontier on the left. The fertile districts in the east part of Kent became their spoil without a blow; and thus Hastings secured an ample supply, and a safe position, which courage and policy might convert into a kingdom.

* He died 890. Sax. Chron. p. 90.

^f The Saxon Chronicle says, they landed at Limine muthan, p. 91. This authority describes this wood as then being 120 miles long from east to west, and 30 broad.

^g Sax. Chron. 92. Ethelw. 846. Matt. West. 345.

While Alfred prepared for measures of active resistance, he endeavoured to bind the Northumbrians and East Anglians to peace, by oaths and hostages; but the sympathetic temptations to plunder, which the presence and situation of Hastings presented, overcame their young religion and their honour. When the armies of Hastings pervaded the country in occasional excursions, they joined in the enterprise, and sometimes they made aggressions themselves.^a

In this perilous conjuncture, Alfred, with cool judgment, distinguished the dangerous from the temporary attack. He neglected the East Anglians; he left the country which they could infest to the protection of its inhabitants, and the fortified cities which he had provided; and he encamped, with his collected army, between the two divisions of the Danes: the forest on the one side, and waters upon the other, protected his flanks, and gave security to his encampment.ⁱ

By this judicious station he separated the invaders from the East Anglians, and at the same time kept asunder the two armies of the Northmen. He watched their movements, and was prepared to pour his avenging troops on either which should attempt to molest his people beyond the districts in which they resided. They sometimes endeavoured to plunder in places where the royal army was absent; but bands from the neighbouring cities, or Alfred's patrolling parties, both by day and night, chastised their ravages.ⁱ

The king's discretion and activity awed even Hastings. It was so unlike the disorderly warfare which he had experienced in France, that for some time he seemed intimidated by an enemy whose strength was multiplied by his judgment. Alfred's position was too strong to be attacked without assured peril; and as the king despised the valour of temerity, he forebore to assault the Danes in their intrenchments. His hope was to acquire a certain victory from a Fabian caution, combined with a Fabian vigilance.

The plan of Alfred required the aid of time, and a permanent force: but the conditions of military service prevented the Saxon army from being perpetually in the field. To remedy this inconvenience, which would have robbed him of all the advantages he projected, Alfred divided his army into two bodies: of these, he called one to the warlike campaign, while the individuals of the other were enjoying peaceably their private occupations. After a reasonable service, the active portion was allowed to return home, and the rest quitted their domestic hearths to supply the place of their retiring countrymen. Thus while he avoided every

^a Sax. Chron. 92. Flor. Wig. 329.

ⁱ Sax. Chron. 92. Flor. 330. Matt. West. 346.

necessity of rushing to a precipitate attack, he always presented to the invaders a strong and undiminished force.

Surprised at this new phenomenon, Hastings and his confederates remained in their camps, discontented, coerced, and overawed. The East Anglians, who watched the motions of Hastings, forbore any material warfare while he remained inactive.

Weary of this destructive confinement, Hastings resolved at last to emancipate himself. To deceive Alfred, he sent his two sons to be baptized, and promised to leave the kingdom.^j Then, at the same instant that he took to his shipping, as if to fulfil his engagement, his main army suddenly broke up their encampments, and passed beyond the army of Alfred into the interior of the country. Their object was to reach the Thames, where fordable, and to pass into Essex, where they could unite. The celerity of their movements prevented his vigilance, and an ample booty was their first reward. But the wakeful monarch was not long outstripped; he pursued with a speed commensurate to theirs, while his son Edward advanced to the same point with the warriors which he had collected.^k Alfred reached them at Farnham, in Surrey, and hastening into action, with as much judgment as he had before deferred it, he defeated them so decisively, and pursued them with such vigour, that they were compelled to plunge into the Thames, without a ford, for shelter against his sword. Their king, desperately wounded, was saved with difficulty, being carried over the river on horseback. They who could swim, escaped into Middlesex. Alfred followed them through this county into Essex, and drove them across Essex over the Coln. In this point they found a refuge in the Isle of Mersey. The defences of this place secured them from attack, and the king had no ships to make his siege effectual.^l His forces maintained the blockade as long as their time of service, and their provisions allowed them.^m Alfred then marched thither with other forces from the county, whose allotment it was to continue the siege. The king of the Northmen being wounded, they were compelled to stay in their position. They now sued for peace, and agreed to retire from England.ⁿ

^j Matt. West. 346.

^k It is Ethelward who mentions the prince's exertions. His chronicle in this part is obviously the translation of a Saxon song on this struggle, p. 846.

^l Matt. West. 346. Bishop Gibson says of Mersey Island, which contains eight parishes, "It is a place of great strength, and may be almost kept against all the world; for which reason the parliament clapped in a thousand men to guard it from being seized by the Dutch, about the beginning of the Dutch war." Camd. 359.

^m The passage is curious: "Tha beret fjo fynd hie thær utan tha hyle the hie lenceft mete hæfðon. Ac hie hæfðon tha hjoða fteim gefetenne and hjoða mete genotudne." Sax. Chron. 93.

ⁿ Ethelward, 846.

While Alfred was thus victoriously employed, the exhortations of Hastings produced at last their effect on the Danish colonists of Northumbria and East Anglia. Unable to resist the wish of seeing a countryman on the throne of Wessex, they combined their exertions to make two diversions in favour of the invaders. With a hundred ships they passed the North Foreland, and sailed along the southern coasts, while a fleet of forty vessels successfully attempted a passage round the north of the island. Their scheme was to attack in two points. The larger armament besieged Exeter; the other, reaching the Bristol Channel, surrounded a fortress in the north part of the county.*

The king was preparing to renew the blockade of Mersey, when the intelligence reached him of these invasions in the west. The possession of Devonshire was perilous to his best interests. The Welsh might be stimulated to take advantage of his difficulties; and if this county had been occupied by Danes, from its maritime conveniences, it might be difficult to dislodge them. Alfred therefore determined, at every hazard, to have Exeter relieved. He left his eastern troops to proceed to the siege of Mersey; and he hastened to protect his endangered fortresses in Devonshire.

In the meantime, Hastings had been more fortunate in his movement than his discomfited friends. He got out of the Swale, and crossing the Thames, he established himself at South Benfleet, near the Canvey Isle, in Essex; but he had not been able to abandon Kent with total impunity. The same superintending genius which had chased the invaders from Farnham to Mersey, had watched the paths of Hastings, and as soon as he had left his entrenched camp it was immediately attacked, and all his wealth and booty that it contained were taken, with his wife and children. Alfred baptized the boys; and, hoping to overcome the enmity of his competitor by liberality, he restored the captives with great presents.^p But the delicate emotions of cultivated sentiment could not operate on the furious ambition of a sea-king, who subsisted by his army and his ravages. If he could not conquer a territorial settlement, he must pirate or perish. His friendship, therefore, did not survive his fear; nor were the promises he made to quit the kingdom performed; on the contrary, as soon as he had disembarked on Essex, instead of quitting the island, he prepared for new aggressions. His friends at Mersey, hearing of his arrival, joined him on the coast.

Alarmed into caution, by the skill of Alfred, he built a strong fortification at Benfleet, and from this sent out powerful detachments to forage and devastate. The acquisition of provisions

* Sax. Chron. 93. Flor. Wig. 330.

^p Sax. Chron. 94. Alfred and his son-in-law, Ethered, stood sponsors. Flor. 331.

was as necessary as, from the precautionary measures of Alfred, it was difficult. The country was no longer open to incursions as formerly; a regular communication of defence, and a vigilant armed peasantry, directed by able men, secured the property of the country, and straitened the supplies of the invader. Hastings had to conquer, before he could subsist.

From his stronghold at Benfleet, Hastings marched with a portion of his united army to spread his depredations through Mercia. This excursion was fortunate for Alfred. The troops which he had allotted to act against the enemy in Mersey proceeded through London, and were joined by the warlike citizens. While Hastings was abroad, the Anglo-Saxons attacked those who remained in the entrenchment, forced their defence, threw them into complete confusion, and again carried away their wealth, women, and children, to London. Of the ships which lay under the protection of the fort, they broke up some, burnt others, and sailed with the rest to London and Rochester.⁴

The wife and children of Hastings were again sent to Alfred. The king was strongly urged to put them to death, as an act of vengeance for the perfidy and cruelty of Hastings; but Alfred's nobler mind consulted only its generosity, and with that benevolent magnanimity so rare, not only in barbarous ages, but in civilized war, and yet which sheds new glory round the illustrious character who displays it, he loaded them with presents, and again sent them free to his rival.⁵

During these transactions Alfred had reached Exeter with so much expedition, that the invaders, disconcerted by his unexpected presence, raised the siege of the town with precipitation, hastened to their ships, and committed themselves once more to the chance of the ocean. On their return round the southern shore, they attacked Chichester, on the coast of Sussex; but the brave citizens repulsed them to the sea, slaying many hundreds, and taking some ships.⁶

Before Alfred could return from Devonshire, Hastings had collected again his defeated army, and keeping still on the sea-coast, where he might receive the supplies he needed, he erected a strong fortress at South Shobery, near the southeastern point of Essex: there he was joined by numbers from Northumbria and East Anglia, and by another descendant from Ragnar Lodbrog.⁷ Confident from his numbers, and dissatisfied with his frustrated plan of defensive settlement, he appears to have adopted

⁴ Sax. Chron. 94.

⁵ Sax. Chron. 94. Matt. West. 347. Flor. 331.

⁶ Sax. Chron. 94, 96. Flor. 331.

⁷ Ethelwerd mentions that Sigfert came to him with a powerful fleet from Northumbria, p. 847. The annals of Ulster, p. 65, mention Sigfred, the son of Ingwar, as roaming about the British isles at this period. Ethelwerd notices the death of Guthfred, king of Northumbria at this time, and his burial at York, p. 847. As Sigfred is stated, in the Ulster Annals, to have killed his brother Godfred about this period, p. 65, they are probably the Sigfert and Guthfred of Ethelwerd.

a new scheme of operations, in which rapid enterprize was the predominant feature.

Hastings sailed up the Thames into the heart of the king's dominions, and spread his forces over Mercia.* By this intrepid measure, he had often scattered terror through France, and enriched himself with booty.

He proceeded through Mercia to the Severn. But his presence roused to their duty the military commanders of every district which he traversed. Ethered, the governor of Mercia, two other aldermen, and the king's thanes, who were residing in the strongholds which he had erected, summoned the people of every borough from the east of Pedridan, the west of Selwood, and the east and north of the Thames, to the west of the Severn, with some portion of the North Welsh. The willing citizens united to protect their families and their property. Alfred advanced to join them, pursued the bold invaders to Buttington, on the Severn, and besieged them in their fortress, both by land and on the river.

Surrounded by the hostility of the country, and without shipping, they were obliged to submit to the blockade. They were lodged on both banks of the Severn, and they remained confined to their post for several weeks, enduring every extremity of distress. They killed a great part of their horses for their subsistence, and yet many perished by famine.†

The success with which the generals of Alfred, and their hasty levies, compelled such a spirit as that of Hastings to submit to a calamitous confinement, announces highly the energy and wisdom of the regulations by which Alfred had provided for the defence of his people.

Roused by their sufferings, the Northmen attempted to burst from their prison. They threw themselves upon the Anglo-Saxons, who occupied the eastern part of the blockade, and an ardent conflict ensued, in which several royal thanes perished; the Northmen were repulsed, many drowned, and some thousands were slain; but the rest effected their escape. These went directly forwards to Essex, and reached their entrenchments, and the ships they had abandoned, without further molestation.‡

Although their bold enterprise, which had carried devastation into the centre of England, had ended in disaster, yet their spirit of adventure was not quelled. They were educated to exist with the most excited and most pleasurable vitality in the tempests of war, and no failure deterred them, because, having no homes but their ships, or a conquered country, no profession but piracy, no provisions but their spoils, they had no chances of enjoyment, or

* Ethelward says he extended his ravages to Stamford, between the Weald and the thick wood called Ceoffesbe, p. 847.

† Sax. Chron. 95. M. West. 348.

‡ Sax. Chron. 95. Florence, 332.

even existence, but from the battle. It was dreadful to have such an enemy to encounter, who must gain his point or perish; because there is a vivaciousness in his despair, which no danger can intimidate, no defeat, less than total annihilation, can destroy. He must act offensively while he lives. Desperate, and therefore fearless, he delights to multiply contests, because every encounter, presenting a possibility of success, is to him an advantage, and to his opponent a peril.

The ruined bands of Hastings were in this situation when they regained their station in Essex. He might have manned his vessels, and sought the smiles of fortune on more prosperous shores; but wherever he went he must extort subsistence from plunder, and win his fortune with his sword. England had charms which overbalanced the discouragement of his discomfiture; and he resolved to wrestle with Alfred for the sceptre again.*

Before the winter came on, Hastings had raised a large army from the East Anglians and Northumbrians. Their wives, their shipping, and their wealth, they confided to the East Anglians, and marching with that vigorous rapidity from which Hastings and the Northmen had so often derived their surest advantages, they rested neither night nor day till they had reached and fortified Chester in the Wirall.† Alfred was active to pursue, but he did not overtake them till they had surrounded themselves with fortifications, which the military knowledge of that day respected as impregnable. Alfred, for two days, besieged them, drove away all the cattle in the vicinity, slew every enemy who ventured beyond the encampment, and burnt and consumed all the corn of the district.‡

From Chester, Hastings led his bands for subsistence into North Wales: he plundered, and then quitted it, with his booty; but not daring to molest West Saxony, or Mercia, where the troops of Alfred were watching his progress, he made a circuit through Northumbria, and East Anglia, and proceeded till he reached Mersey, in Essex. He seems to have always made this a favourite point of retreat or rallying. It was favoura-

* Hastings is thus far distinctly mentioned. M. Westm. states him to have led the Northmen from Benfleet to the Severn, p. 347, 348, and carries on the history of the same army to Cwatbridge, 349. Hence there can be no doubt that he was still the chief leader.

† Spelman, who, in his Life of Alfred, is generally accurate, construed *Lega-œaster* to mean Leicester, but this town is spelt with an *r* before *œaster*, as *Legerœaster*, *Legrœaster*. Sax. Chron. 25, and 106. The Wirall is thus described by Camden: "From the city (Chester) there runneth out a Chersonese into the sea, inclosed on one side with the ætuary Dee, and on the other with the river Mersey; we call it Wirall; the Welsh, because it is a corner, Killgury. This was all heretofore a desolate forest, and not inhabited (as the natives say); but king Edward disforested it. Now it is well furnished with towns." Brit. Chesh.

‡ Sax. Chron. 95.

ble for the junction of other adventurers, and it seems to have been his wish to have founded a little kingdom here. Before the winter, he drew his ships from the Thames up the Lea.^a

To protect their fleet, they built a fortress on the Lea, twenty miles above London. This distance suits either Ware or Hartford.^b To have maintained this position would have been to have secured the establishment they wished in Essex. In the summer, a great number of the citizens of London, and many from its neighbourhood, attacked the Danish stronghold; but the Northmen repulsed them with the loss of four king's thanes. This disaster required the presence and ability of Alfred to repair. In autumn he encamped near the discomfited city, at the time when the harvest ripened, that the invaders might not deprive the Londoners of their subsistence. One day, the king musing on some decisive blow against his pertinacious enemy, rode to the river, and conceived the practicability of a plan of so affecting the stream, that the ships might be prevented from coming out. He executed his skilful project. By digging three new channels below, he drew off so much water as to leave the ships aground;^c and to protect his new works, he built a castle on each side of the river, and encamped in the vicinity.

Finding that they could not get out their ships, the Northmen abandoned them, and, desirous to escape from the nets of destruction with which the active mind of Alfred was encompassing them, they had again recourse to that celerity of movement which had so often rescued them from impending ruin. Sending their wives to their countrymen in East Anglia,^d they suddenly broke up from their entrenchments at night, and, out-flying Alfred, they again traversed Mercia, from the Lea to the Severn, and settling themselves at Bridgenorth,^e they defended their encampments, as usual, by an immediate fortification.

The idea of always protecting their positions by military defences, and the facility with which they raised such as Alfred dared not assault, augur favourably of the warlike knowledge of the invaders, or of their veteran chieftain.

The army of Alfred followed Hastings to the Severn, but re-

^a Flor. Wig. 333. The Lea (Ligan) is the little river which divides Essex from Middlesex, as the Stour separates it from Suffolk, and the Stort from Hertfordshire.

^b Camden mentions Ware; Spelman, Hartford.

^c I insert this account on the authority of Huntingdon, because his statement is adopted by Camden and Spelman. The Saxon Chronicle and Florence imply, that Alfred made the Danish ships useless by obstructions, by building two works (geweorc & C. obstructuram F.) below the part where the vessels lay.

^d Flor. Wig. 334. Sax. Chron. 97.

^e The Saxon Ch. says, Cƿatbricge bƿ Seƿern, 97. The ancient name of Bridgenorth in the Saxon annals is Bricge, and in ancient records it is called Bridge. Two towns near it are called Quatford and Quat, which is a fact, implying that Cwatbridge should not be far off. Gibson's add. to Camden, 552. Spelman placed it in this part, p. 86. Camden and Somner sought for it at Cambridge, and in Gloucestershire, which is less probable. M. West. spells it Quantebrige, p. 349.

spected his entrenchments so highly as to permit him to pass the winter unmolested. In the meantime, the citizens of London seized the ships on the Lea; such as they could bring away were carried to London, with their contents; the others were destroyed.

For three years had Hastings, undismayed, contended against Alfred;^f and, notwithstanding the power, skill, and victories of the West Saxon king, had always recruited his losses, and maintained his invasion; but his spirit now began to bend under the genius of his master. All that energy, and valour, and labour, could effect, he had used in vain. He had, as the Saxon Chronicle intimates, made great devastations, and weakened the English nation, by the destruction of much of its population, but he had not "broken it up." Hastings therefore at last yielded indignantly to his evil fortune. The Northmen now disbanded; some withdrew to East Anglia, some to Northumbria. They who had no resources to expect from these regions, made ships; and, stimulated by want, crossed the ocean, and attempted plunder on the Seine.^g

One feeble attempt terminated this invasion, which must have been prodigal of human life. The depredators, who had retired beyond the Humber and the Ouse, embarked in long, well-constructed ships, to revenge themselves by piracy on the coast of Wessex. But even through the ocean the genius of Alfred pursued them. He was skilled in domestic architecture; and he applied his talents to the improvement of his ships; he caused vessels to be built against the Northmen, full-nigh twice as long as theirs, swifter, higher, and less unsteady. In some he put sixty rowers, in others more. They were neither like Frisian nor Danish ships, which then excelled all others in Europe. They were made on that plan which the judgment of Alfred, enlightened by his knowledge and experience, discerned to be more useful than either.^h Six Danish vessels ravaged the Isle of Wight and

^f The Saxon Chronicle says, "This was about the third year since they came hither, over the sea to Limene-mouth," p. 97; thus expressing that the invaders at Cwatbridge were the same who had come from Boulogne.

^g Sax. Chron. 97. Flor. Wig. 334. Hastings is not mentioned in the Saxon Chronicle by name as having accompanied these, because the Chronicles rarely mention the king or chiefs of the Northmen. Hence it was with some troubles that I have been enabled to trace a connected history of his warfare against Alfred. But the fact in our chroniclers of part of the army he had acted with going afterwards to the Seine, suits the intimation in the French Chronicles, that he obtained at last a settlement there. See further, note ¹. Since the above remarks were written, I perceive a passage in the Annals of Asser, which justifies our ascribing the incidents of this long-contested invasion to Hastings, and which distinctly states him to have begun it, and to have retired with the army to the Seine, 895. *Hastingsus cum exercitibus sibi adherentibus, tertio anno postquam venerunt in ostium Tamensis, et in ostium fluminis, mare transiit, sine lucro et sine honore, sed multis perditis ex sociis suis applicuit in ostium Sequane fluminis, p. 172.*

^h This important passage deserves to be transcribed, in its original language: "Tha het Alfred cýning tumberian lange fcpu ongen tha

Devonshire, and the intervening coast. The king ordered nine ships of his new naval architecture, manned with Frisians and English, to pursue them; with the orders to take all alive they could.¹ The king's fleet found the Northmen's six near the shore; three of these were aground, the other three went out and endured the combat: two were taken: the third escaped with only five men. The conquering English sailed to the bay, where the others were detained; but the inconstant waters betrayed them into peril. The unexpected retreat of the waves separated the English fleet into two portions; one, consisting of three ships, remained fixed close by the enemy, the rest were kept asunder on another part, and could not move to the support of their friends. The wary Danes embraced the opportunity, and attacked the three ships which the waters had placed near them. Lucumon, the king's geref, perished, with Æthelferth, his geneat or herdsman, three Frisian chiefs, and sixty-two of the crew. Of the Danes, 120 fell. The battle seems to have been indecisive; but the tide first releasing the Danish ships, they sailed into the ocean. They were, however, so injured, that two were afterwards cast on the English shore, and their crews were ordered to execution. The same year, twenty more of their ships were taken, and the men were punished as pirates.²

Thus terminated the formidable attempt of Hastings. As far as we can distinguish the last incidents of his life, he returned to France, and obtained from the king the gift of some territory, where he passed the remainder of his life in peaceful privacy.¹ His memory was honoured by the encomium of a warrior, in a future age, whose invasion of England was successful, but who had not to encounter the abilities of an Alfred.² The defence of England against Hastings was a greater evidence of Alfred's military talents than his triumph over the armies which had harassed the first part of his reign.

Notwithstanding the vigilance and ability of Alfred, it was

ærfar. Tha wæron ful neah tva fpa lange fpa tha othru. Sume hæfdon 60 ara, fume ma. Tha wæron ægther ge ffriftran, ge unwealtan, ge eac hyran thonne tha othru. Næron hie narther ne on Fferifc gefcæpene ne on Dænifc bute fpa him felfum thuhte, thæt hie nýtfrþhorþe beon meahon." *Sax. Chron.* 98.

¹ Fl. Wig. 335.

² *Sax. Chron.* 99. *Flor. Wig.* 335.

¹ Hastingus vero Karolum Francorum regem adiens, pacem petit, quam adipiscens, urbem Carnotensem stipendii munere ab ipso accepit. *Wil. Gem.* 221. He is mentioned for the last time on Rollo's invasion and acquisition of Normandy, as residing at this place. *Ibid.* p. 228; and *Dudo*, p. 76.

² William the Conqueror, in his address to his troops, as stated by *Brompton*, says, "Quid potuit rex Francorum bellis proficere cum omni gente que est a Lotaringia usque ad Hispaniam contra Hasting antecessorem vestrum, qui sibi quantum de Francia voluit acquisivit, quantum voluit regi permisit, dum placuit tenuit, dum sancitatus est ad majora anelans reliquit?" p. 959.

impossible that such a dangerous contest could have existed without great detriment to his people.^a The ravages and depopulation caused by Hastings and his associates, in their persisting invasion and extensive movements, are spoken of very strongly by the chroniclers. But the miseries of this warfare were exceeded by the dreadful calamity which attended its conclusion. A pestilence which raged for three years filled the nation with death; even the highest ranks were thinned by its destruction.^o

The sovereignty of Alfred was not only established over the Anglo-Saxons,^p but even the Cymry in Wales acknowledged his power, and sought his alliance. The rest of his life was tranquil. He continued to prosecute all his plans for the improvement of his shipping and the defence and education of his kingdom. His reputation increased with his life. All sought his friendship, and none in vain. He gave land and money to those who desired them, and his personal friendship to those who aspired to it. All experienced that love, vigilance and protection, with which the king defended himself, and those attached to him.^q But at last the progress of human destiny deprived the world of its then most beneficent luminary. After a life of the most active utility, he was taken from the world, on the 20th day of October, in the year 900, or 901.^r His great character has been praised by many,^s but, by none more than it has merited. Its best panegyric will be an impartial consideration of it, under three divisions, of his intellectual, moral, and political exertions.

^a The exclamation of the monk of Worcester is forcible: "O quam crebris vexationibus, quam gravibus laboribus, quam diris et lamentalibus modis, non solum a Danis, qui partes Angliæ tunc temporis occupaverant, verum etiam ab his Sætanis filiis tota vexata est Anglia," p. 334. *Matt. West.* has copied it, p. 348.

^o Some of the noblemen who perished are named in *Sax. Chron.* p. 97; and *Flor. Wig.* 335.

^p In 836 Alfred besieged London (*Ethelw.* 846), rebuilt it with honour, made it habitable, and subjected it to Ethelred's dominion. It is added, that all the Anglo-Saxons, not under the dominion of the Danes, submitted to Alfred. *Flor. Wig.* 322. *Sax. Chron.* 88.

^q *Asser.* 50.

^r The year of his death is variously given. *Matt. West.* 350, *Ing.* 28, and *Rad. Dic.* 452, place it in 900. *The Sax. Chron.* 99; *Malma.* 46; *Maitron.* 146; *Florence.* 336; *Petrib. Ch. 2.* affix it to the year 901. So *Hen. Silgrave*, *MSS. Cleop. A. 12.* and others.

^s Alfred has been highly extolled by foreigners. The following extracts show the opinions of a Frenchman and German on his character:—"Je ne sçais s'il y a jamais eu sur la terre un homme plus digne des respects de la posterité qu' Alfred le grand, qui rendit ces services à sa patrie supposé que tout ce qu'on raconte de lui soit véritable.—*Voltaire, Essai sur les Mœurs*, vol. xvi. c. 26, p. 473, ed. 1785.—"But as the greatest minds display themselves in the most turbulent storms on the call of necessity, so England has to boast, among others, her Alfred; a pattern for kings in a time of extremity, a bright star in the history of mankind. Living a century after Charlemagne, he was, perhaps, a greater man in a circle happily more limited." *Herder's Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, p. 547, 548. The celebrated *Mirabeau*, in a *Discourse Preliminaire*, published under his name, to a translation of *Mrs. Macaulay's History*, draws with a liberality that does him credit, a parallel between Alfred and Charlemagne, and gives the superiority to the Anglo-Saxon.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER I.

Alfred's intellectual Character.—State of the Anglo-Saxon Mind.—Illiteracy of its Clergy.—Alfred's Self-education.—His subsequent Instructors.—His invitation of Asser and of Grimbald.—His attainment of the Latin language.—His Preface to Gregory's Pastorals.

THE incidents which principally contributed to excite Alfred's infant mind into activity,^a and to give it ideas, more varied and numerous than childhood usually obtains, have been noticed in the preceding pages; as well as the fact, that he was passing the first twelve years of his life without any education.^b But although thus neglected, his intellectual faculty was too powerful to be indolent, or to be contented with the illiterate pursuits which were the fashion of the day. It turned, from its own energies and sympathies, towards mental cultivation; and attached itself to that species of it, which, without the aid of others, it could by its own industry obtain. This was the Saxon popular poetry. In all the nations of the north, whether from the Keltic or Teutonic stock, persons were continually emerging, who pursued the art of arranging words into metrical composition, and of applying this arrangement to express their own feelings, or to perpetuate the favourite subjects of their contemporaries or patrons. By this verbal rhythm, however imperfect; by the emotions which it breathed or caused; or by the themes with which it has been

^a Alfred had the felicity of possessing a literary friend, Asser, of Saint David's, who composed some biographical sketches of his great master's life and manners. His work is somewhat rude and incomplete; but it is estimable for its apparent candour and unaffected simplicity. It is the effusion of a sensible, honest, observing mind. The information which it conveys has never been contradicted, and harmonises with every other history or tradition, that has been preserved concerning Alfred. The merits of Alfred, therefore, are supported by a degree of evidence which seldom attends the characters of ancient days. But we shall be able to exhibit him in this edition still more satisfactorily, in his own words from his own works.

^b See before, p. 324. Asser, 16, Malmsh. 45, Jam duodenis omnis literaturæ expers fuit.

connected, the rudest minds, that have been most adverse to literature, have been always found to be impressible. Hence, before Alfred's birth, Saxon poems had been written; and, in the court of his father and brothers, there were men who were fond of repeating them. Wherever they were recited, either by day or night, Alfred is recorded to have been, before he could read, an eager auditor, and was industrious to commit them to his memory.^c This fondness for poetry continued with him through life. It was always one of his principal pleasures to learn Saxon poems, and to teach them to others;^d and we have specimens of his own efforts to compose them, in his translation of the metres of Boetius. The memory of his children was also chiefly exercised in this captivating art.^e It had a powerful effect on Alfred's mind: it kindled a desire of being sung and celebrated himself: it created a wish for further knowledge; and began a taste for intellectual compositions. The muses have in every age had these effects. Their lays have always been found to be most captivating and most exciting to the young mind. They are the most comprehensible form of lettered intellect; and being, in their rudest state, the effusions of the feelings of the day, they excite congenial feelings in those who hear and read them. Poetry is sympathy addressing sympathy; and if its subjects were but worthy of its excellences, it would lead the human mind to every attainable perfection. Alfred, though young, felt forcibly its silent appeal to the noble nature that lived within him; and when his mother promised the book of poems, already mentioned, to her son, who could read it, he sought an instructor, and never ceased his exertions till he had enabled himself to read.^f

The merit of Alfred in voluntarily attaining this important though now infantile art, was more peculiar, because not only his royal brothers, and most, if not all, of the contemporary kings were without it; but even that venerated class of the nation, in whom the largest part of the learning of their age usually concentrates, was, in general, ignorant of it. Such facts induce us to

^c Sed Saxonica poemata die noctuque solers auditor relatu aliorum empissime audiens, docibills memoriter retinebat. *Aaser*, 16.

^d Et maxime carmina Saxonica memoriter discere, aliis imperare. *Aaser*, 43. Many princes were at this period fond of poetry. Eginhard mentions of Charlemagne, that he transcribed and learnt the barbaræ et antiquissima carmina quibus veterum regum actus et bella canebantur, p. 11. In 844 died Abdalla, son of Taher, a Persian king, in Chorasán, who composed some Arabic poems, and was celebrated for his talents in many elegies, by the poets who survived him. *Mirchond*, *Hist. Reg. Pers.* p. 9. In 862, Mustansir Billa, the caliph of the Saracens, died by poison; he wrote verses, of which Elmacin has preserved two. *Hist. Sarac.* c. xii. p. 154. Wacic, the caliph, who died 845, was a poet. Elmacin cites some of his verses. His dying words were, "O thou, whose kingdom never passes away, pity one whose dignity is so transient," *ib.* His successor, Mutewakel, was also poetical.

^e Et maxime Saxonica carmina studiosè dedicere et frequentissime libris utantur. *Aaser*, 43.

^f *Aaser*, 16. *Malmob.* 45.

consider our ancestors with too much contempt. But we may recollect that literature was not despised by them from want of natural talent, or from intellectual torpidity. Their minds were vigorous, and in great and continued exertion; but the exertion was confined within the horizon, and directed to the objects, around them. The ancient world stood, in its recording memorials, like an unknown continent before them, shrouded from their sight by its clouds and distance, and kept so by the belief of its inutility. It was too unlike their own world, and too little connected with their immediate pursuits, for them to value or explore. They did not want its remains for their jurisprudence; their landed property; the rules of their nobility and feudal rights; their municipal institutions; their religion; their morals; their internal traffic, manners, amusements, or favourite pursuits. On most of these points, and in their legislative assemblies and laws, as well as in their private and public wars, they were so dissimilar to the Greeks and Romans, that the classical authors were as un-serviceable to them as those of the Chinese are to us. Hence although a magician had offered them a fairy wand, by which, at their own pleasure, they could have transported themselves to the busy streets of Athens or Rome, to have heard Demosthenes harangue, or Socrates teach, or Cato censure; or to have made all the past ages live again before their sight, with all their applauded characters, they would not have welcomed the stupendous gift; not from mere ignorance or stupidity, but because it would not have suited their wants, nor have promoted their interests. Classical literature could have then been only a subject of speculative curiosity, inapplicable to any of their worldly pursuits, and rather impeding than assisting the devotion of their monasteries. For their religion and morals they had higher sources in their revered Scriptures; and for their rites and ceremonies they had sufficient teachers, occasionally from Rome, and generally in their native clergy. To these indeed, a small portion of Latin was necessary, for the correct reading and due understanding of their breviaries. But to the rest of society it was not more practically essential than the scientific astronomy of a Newton or La Place to ourselves. It would have improved their minds, and enlarged their knowledge, and produced beneficial effects; but all the daily business of their lives could be, and was, very ably transacted without it. Hence the intellects of our ancestors are no more to be impeached for their ignorance of classical literature, than ours are for the absence of that great mass of discoveries and improvements, which we hope that a few more centuries will add to the stock we now possess. There is indeed no convincing evidence, that the Anglo-Saxon public were much more deficient in the art or habit of reading, than the public of the Roman empire, whom the Gothic nations subdued. We too gratuitously ascribe a lite-

rary cultivation to the Grecian and Roman population. But we must not take the writers in the Latin language that have survived to us, as the general sample of their contemporaries. The more this subject is studied, the more clearly it will be perceived, that there was less difference between the intellectual state of the mass of the people before and after the Gothic irruptions than has been usually supposed. It is the art of printing which has created that vast distinction, in this respect, which we now observe, and in which we so justly exult; and yet, until lately, how many, even amongst ourselves, have passed through life, not unreputably, without that instruction, for the absence of which our predecessors have been so strongly arraigned!

But in this state, even before increased wealth and population had given to some part of society both leisure and desire for objects of mere intellectual curiosity, a few soaring minds occasionally emerged among the Anglo-Saxons, who became inquisitive beyond the precincts of their day. One of these was Alfred. Led by the encouragement of his step-mother to attain the art of reading, it was happy for his country that he endeavoured to pursue it. If he had not made this acquisition, he would have been no more than many of the race of Cerdic had been before him. But the love of study arising within him, and gradually bringing to his view the anterior ages of human history, and all their immortalized characters, the spark of moral emulation kindled within him; he strove for virtues which he could not else have conceived; he aspired to the fame which only these will bestow; and became a model of wisdom and excellence himself, for other generations to resemble. In no instance has an immortal renown been more clearly the result of literary cultivation than in our venerated Alfred. It was his intellectual improvement which raised him from a half-barbaric Saxon to a high-minded, patriotic, and benevolent sage, whose wisdom, as will be presently shown, still lives to instruct and interest even an age so superior as our own.

But the Anglo-Saxon poetry, to which Alfred first directed his application, was but scanty and barren, and must have been soon exhausted. To gratify his increasing intellectual propensities, he had to go far beyond his contemporaries, and to become himself the architect of his knowledge. Modern education deprives modern men of this merit, because all parents are at present anxious to have their children taught whatever it is honourable to know. To be intelligent now is even more necessary than to be affluent, because Mind has become the invisible sovereign of the world, and they who cultivate its progress, being diffused everywhere in society, are the real tutors of the human race; they dictate the opinions, they fashion the conduct of all men. To be illiterate, or to be imbecile in this illumined day, is to be despised

and trodden down in that tumultuous struggle for wealth, power, or reputation, in which every individual is too eagerly conflicting. In the days of Alfred, the intellect was a faculty which no one considered distinct from the pursuits of life, and therefore few thought of cultivating it separately from them, or even knew that they possessed it as a distinct property of their nature.

It is difficult to conceive how much even churchmen partook of the most gross ignorance of the times. "Very few were they," says Alfred, "on this side the Humber (the most improved parts of England) who could understand their daily prayers in English, or translate any letter from the Latin. I think there were not many beyond the Humber; they were so few, that I indeed cannot recollect *one single instance* on the south of the Thames, when I took the kingdom."^a On less authority than his own, we could hardly believe such a general illiteracy among the clergy, even of that day: it is so contrary to all our present experience. The earls, governors, and servants of Alfred, were as uninformed. When the king's wise severity afterwards compelled them to study reading and literature, or to be degraded, they lamented that in their youth they had not been instructed; they thought their children happy who could be taught the liberal arts, and mourned their own misfortune, who had not learnt in their youth; because in advanced life they felt themselves too old to acquire what Alfred's commands imposed as a duty, and by his example had made a wish.^b

When Alfred began his own education, he had not only to find the stimulus in himself, to cherish it in opposition to the prejudices and practice of his countrymen, and to search out his own means, but he had also to struggle against difficulties which would have extinguished the infant desire in a mind of less energy. His principal obstacle was the want of instructors. "What," says his friend, who happily for posterity has made us acquainted with the private feelings as well as public pursuits of this noble-minded sovereign, "what of all his troubles and difficulties, he affirmed with frequent complaint and the deep lamentations of his heart, to have been the greatest, was, that when he had the age, permission, and ability to learn, he could find no masters."^c When Alfred had attained the age of maturity, and by the dignity to which he succeeded, had gained the means of obtaining instruc-

^a *Syðthe feaƿe ƿæron behronan dumbre the hrona thenunga cuthen underƿendan on Englisc oðthe ƿurthum an ærenbgeƿrit of Lædene on Englisc æreccan and ic ƿene thæt te nauht monige begeonðan dumbre næren: ƿƿa feaƿe hrona ƿæron thæt ic ƿurthum anne anleƿne ne mæg geþencean be ƿurthan Temeƿe tha tha ic to ƿice feng.*
Alfred's Preface, p. 82. Wisc's Anec.

^b Anec, 71.

^c Ibid. 17.

tion, he was almost disabled from profiting by the advantage. A disease, his daily and nightly tormentor, which his physicians could neither remedy nor explore; the duties and anxieties inseparable from his royal station; the fierce aggressions of the Northmen, which on sea and land demanded his presence and exertions, so afflicted and consumed his future life, that though he got a few masters and writers, he was unable to enjoy their tuition.^j It is admirable to see, that notwithstanding impediments, which to most would have been insuperable, Alfred persevered in his pursuit of improvement. The desire of knowledge, that inborn instinct of the truly great, which no gratifications could saturate, no obstacles discourage, never left him but with life.^k If Alfred succeeded in his mental cultivation, who should despair?

It has been already hinted, that the Anglo-Saxon language had been at this period very little applied to the purposes of literature. In their vernacular tongue, Cedmon and Aldhelm had sung, but almost all the learning of the nation was clothed in the Latin phrase. Bede had in this composed his history, and his multifarious treatises on chronology, grammar, rhetoric, and other subjects of erudition. The other lettered monks of that day, also expressed themselves in the language, though not with the eloquence of Cicero. In the same tongue the polished Alcuin expressed all the effusions of his cultivated mind. The immortalized classics had not been as yet familiarized to our ancestors by translations; he, therefore, who knew not Latin, could not know much.

From the period of his father's death, in 858, to his accession in 871, Alfred had no opportunity of procuring that knowledge which he coveted. Such feelings as his could not be cherished by elder brothers, who were unacquainted with them, or by a nation who despised them. When he verged towards manhood he was still unable to obtain instructors, because his influence was small, and his patrimony was withheld.^l The hostilities of the Northmen augmented every obstacle: on every occasion they burnt the books which the Anglo-Saxons had collected, and destroyed the men who could use them, in their promiscuous persecution of the Christian clergy. Their presence also compelled Alfred repeatedly into the martial field, and from these united causes his ardent thirst for knowledge remained ungratified, until the possession of the crown invested him with the wealth and influence of the West-Saxon kings.

^j Asser, 17.

^k *Ibid.* 17.

^l Alfred details the particulars in his will: he says, that Ethelwulf left his inheritance to Ethelbald, Ethelred, and Alfred, and to the survivor of them; and that on Ethelbald's death, Ethelred and Alfred gave it to Ethelbert their brother, on condition of receiving it again at his decease; when Ethelred succeeded, Alfred requested of him, before all the nobles, to divide the inheritance, that Alfred might have his share, but Ethelred refused.

But on receiving the crown, he exerted himself to remove the ignorance of divine and human learning which he had been so long lamenting in himself. He sent at various intervals to every part, abroad and at home, for instructors capable of translating the learned languages. Like the sagacious bee, says his honoured friend, which, springing in the dawn of summer from its beloved cells, wheels its swift flight through the trackless air, descends on the shrubs and flowers of vegetable nature, selects what it prefers, and brings home the grateful load; so Alfred, directing afar his intellectual eye, sought elsewhere for the treasure which his own kingdom did not afford.^m

His first acquisitions were, Werfrith, the bishop of Worcester, a man skilled in the Scriptures; Plegmund, a Mercian, who was made archbishop of Canterbury, a wise and venerable man; Ethelstan and Werwulf, also Mercians, and priests. He invited them to his court, and endowed them munificently with promotions; and by their incessant exertions, the studious passion of Alfred was appeased. By day and by night, whenever he could create leisure to listen, they recited or interpreted to him the books he commanded; he was never without one of them near him: and by this indefatigable application, though he could not himself understand the learned languages as yet, he obtained a general knowledge of all that books contained.ⁿ

The information which the king acquired, rather disclosed him the vast repositories of knowledge, of which he was ignorant, than satisfied him with its attainment. The more he knew, the more tuition he craved. He sent ambassadors over the sea into France, to inquire for teachers there. He obtained from that country, Grimbold, the priest and monk, who had treated him kindly in his journeys, and who is described as a respected man, learned in the writings he revered, adorned with every moral excellence, and skilled in vocal music. He obtained another literary friend, of talents and acquisitions much superior, and indeed worthy of Alfred's society. This was Johannes Erigena, or John the Irishman, a monk of most penetrating intellect, acquainted with all the treasures of literature, versed in many languages, and accomplished in many other arts. By these acquisitions the mind of Alfred was greatly expanded and enriched, and he rewarded their friendship with princely liberality.^o

The merit of Asser also reached the king's ear, which was open to every rumour of extraordinary merit.

"I was called by the king," says this plain, but interesting biographer, "from the western extremities of Wales. I accompanied my conductors to Sussex, and first saw him in the royal city of Dene. I was benignantly received by him. Amongst

^m Asser, p. 45.

ⁿ Ibid. p. 46.

^o Ibid. p. 46, 47.

other conversation, he asked me earnestly to devote myself to his service, and to become his companion. He requested me to leave all my preferments beyond the Severn, and he promised to compensate them to me by greater possessions."¶ Asser expressed a hesitation at quitting without necessity, and merely for profit, the places where he had been nourished, and taken orders. Alfred replied, "If this will not suit you, accommodate me with at least half of your time. Be with me six months, and pass the rest in Wales." Asser declined to engage himself till he had consulted his friends. The king condescended to repeat his solicitations, and Asser promised to return to him within half a year; a day was fixed with a pledge for his visit; and, on the fourth day of their interview, Asser quitted him to go home.⁴

A fever seized the Welshman at Winton, and continued to oppress him for a year.⁵ The king, not seeing him at the appointed day, sent letters to inquire into the cause of his tarrying, and to accelerate his journey. Asser, unable to stir, wrote to acquaint him with the disease; but, on his recovery, he advised with his friends, and, on receiving their assent, he attached himself to Alfred for a moiety of every year. The clergy of St. David's expected that Alfred's friendship for Asser would preserve their patrimony from the depredations of Hemeid.⁶ "I was honourably received in the royal city of Leonaford," says Asser, "and that time stayed eight months in his court. I translated and read to him whatever books he wished, which were within our reach; for it was his peculiar and perpetual custom, day and night, amidst all his other afflictions of mind and body, either to read books himself, or to have them read to him by others." Asser states the donations with which Alfred remunerated his attachment.⁷ No eloquence can do more honour to any human character, than this unadorned narration. The condescension, benignity, the desire of improvement, and the wise liberality of Alfred, are qualities so estimable, as to insure the veneration of every reader.

The manner of his obtaining the society of Grimbald, was an evidence of the respect and delicacy with which he treated those

¶ Asser, 47.

⁴ Ibid. 47, 48.

⁵ Ibid. 48.

⁶ Asser, 49. Hemeid was one of the Welsh princes contiguous to St. David's.

⁷ Asser, 50. On the morning of Christmas eve, when Asser was determining to visit Walca, the king gave him two writings, containing a list of the things which were in the two monasteries of Ambresbury in Wiltshire, and Banwell in Somerset. In the same day, Alfred gave him those two monasteries, and all that they contained, a silk pall, very precious, and as much incense as a strong man could carry; adding, that he did not give him these trifles as if he was unwilling to give him greater things. On Asser's next visit, the king gave him Exeter, with all the parish belonging to it in Saxony and Cornwall, besides innumerable daily gifts of all sorts of worldly wealth. He gave him immediate permission of riding to the two monasteries, and then of returning home, p. 50, 51.

whom he selected for his literary companions. He sent an honourable embassy of bishops, presbyters, deacons, and religious laymen, to Fulco, the archbishop of Rheims, within whose district Grimbold resided.^u He accompanied his mission with munificent presents,^v and his petition was, that Grimbold might be permitted to leave his functions in France, and to reside in England. The ambassadors engaged for Alfred, that Grimbold should be treated with distinguished honour during the rest of his life.^w The archbishop, in his letter to Alfred, speaks highly of the king's administration of his government,^x and commends the merit of Grimbold.^y Fulco adds, that it was with great personal pain that he permitted him to be taken from France. The liberality of Alfred overcame his reluctance, and Grimbold became a companion of the king of Wessex.

In 887, Alfred obtained the happiness he had long coveted, of reading the Latin authors in their original language. Asser has noted the date of the circumstance, and described its occurrence. As the monarch and his friend were sitting together, and, as usual, discoursing in the royal apartments, it happened that Asser made a quotation. The king was struck with it, and taking from his bosom his little book of devotion, he required that it might be inserted in it. Asser found no room in the little manual of his piety, and, after some hesitation, calculated to increase his desire, proposed to put a few other leaves together, for the purpose of preserving any passages that might please the king. Alfred assented; the new book was made; the quotation was entered, and soon two more, as they occurred in the conversation. The king, pleased with the sentiments, began to translate them into Saxon. The book became full of diversified extracts. The first were from the Scriptures, others from all subjects. Alfred was delighted with his new talent; and the book became a perpetual companion, in which he declared he had no small recreation.^z

To John Erigena, to Grimbold, to Asser, and Plegmund, Alfred himself ascribes his acquisition of the Latin language.^a

^u Fulco's letter to Alfred on this subject is yet extant. It is printed at the end of Wise's Asser, p. 123-129. He says, p. 127, "Eum ad vos mittendum cum suis electoribus et cum nonnullis regni vestri proceribus vel optimatibus tam episcopis scilicet, presbyteris Diaconibus, quam etiam religiosis Laicis." &c. In p. 126, he starts a curious metaphor. He says, "Misistes siquidem nobis licet generosos et optimos tamen corporales atque mortales canes." This rhetorical metamorphosis is pursued for thirteen lines. These noble dogs were to drive away the irreligious wolves; and he says they came to desire some other dogs, not the dumb dogs mentioned by the prophet, but good noisy dogs who could bark heartily, "Pro domino suo magnos latratus fundero." One of these was Grimbold. Fulco may have strayed into a joke, but he intended a serious compliment.

^v Ibid. p. 126.

^w Ibid. p. 128.

^x Ibid. p. 123.

^y Ibid. p. 127.

^z Asser, 56, 57. In quo non mediocre, sicut tunc aiebat, habebat solatium.

^a Spe ƿƿe ic hre geleornode æt Plegmunde, minum ænƿe-
byrcepe; and æt Arƿenre, mine byrcepe; and æt Lrimbolde,

His desire to improve his people was so ardent, that he had scarcely made the attainment before he was active to make it of public utility. He beheld his subjects ignorant and barbarous, and he wisely judged that he should best amend their condition by informing their minds. Let us hear his own mind giving voice to his patriotic and intelligent feelings.

He first recalls to the mind of his correspondent, that even the Anglo-Saxons had once been more learned than he found them. "I wish thee to know that it comes very often into my mind what wise men there were in England, both laymen and ecclesiastics, and how happy those times were to England! how the kings, who then had the government of the people, obeyed God and his messengers! how they both preserved their peace, their customs, and their power at home, and increased their territory abroad, and how they prospered both in wisdom and in war! The sacred profession was diligent both to teach and to learn, and in all the offices which they should do to God. Men from abroad sought wisdom and learning hither in this country, though we now must go out of it to obtain knowledge, if we should wish to have it."^b

The king contrasts with this account the state of England in his time.

"So clean was it fallen out of England, that there are very few on this side of the Humber who understand to say their prayers in English, or to translate any letter from Latin into English; and I know that there were not many beyond the Humber; so few were they, that I indeed cannot think of a single instance south of the Thames, when I took the kingdom."

Recollecting here the success of his own exertions, he exclaims, "Thanks be to Almighty God, that we have now some teachers in our stalls!"^c

The father of his people, and the benevolent man, appear strikingly in the expressions which he continues to use: "Therefore I direct that you do, as I believe that you will, that you who have leisure for the things of this world, as often as you can, impart that wisdom which God has given you, wherever you can impart it. Think what punishments will come upon us from this world, if we shall have neither loved it ourselves, nor left it to others: we shall have had only the name of Christians, and very few of their proper habits.

"When I recollect all this, I also remember how I saw, before that every thing was ravaged and burnt, that the churches

minum merre p̄eorte; and æt Johanne, minum merre p̄eop̄e.
 p̄te. Alfred's Preface to his Gregory's Pastoral. Wise, p. 85.

^b This preface is published by Wise, at the end of his Life of Asser, from the Bodleian MSS. Jun. 53.

^c Wise, p. 82.

through all the English nation stood full of vessels and books, and also of a great many of the servants of God."

This statement alludes to the times in which Bede flourished, and when Alcuin was educated; but after that period, the Saxon mind declined from its beginning literature. Other occupations occurred during the interval in which their octarchy was passing into a monarchy, from the feuds and wars, and mutations of fortune which this political crisis occasioned, which the Northmen's invasions increased, and which monopolized their time, passions, and activity.

"They knew very little of the use of their books, because they could not understand any thing in them, as these were not written in their own language, which they spoke. Our ancestors, that held these places before, loved wisdom, and through this they obtained abundance of it, and left it to us. Here we may yet see their treasures, though we are unable to explore them; therefore we have now lost both their wealth and their wisdom, because we have not been willing with our minds to tread their steps.^d

"When I remembered all this, then I wondered greatly that of those good wise men who were formerly in our nation, and who had all learnt fully these books, none would translate any part into their own language; but I soon answered myself, and said, they never thought that men would be so reckless, and that learning would be so fallen. They intentionally omitted it, and wished that there should be more wisdom in the land, by many languages being known.

"I then recollected how the law was first revealed in the Hebrew tongue, and that after the Greeks had learned it, they turned it all into their own language, and also other books; and the Latin men likewise, when they had learned it, they, by wise foreigners, turned it into their tongue; and also every other Christian nation translated some part."

The wise, the active-minded, but unassuming king, proceeds modestly to say to the bishop he addresses, "Therefore I think it better, if you think so, that we also translate some books, the most necessary for all men to know, into our own language, that we all may know them; and we may do this, with God's help, very easily, if we have stillness; so that all the youth that now are in England, who are free men, and have so much wealth as that they may satisfy themselves, be committed to learning, so that for a time they may apply to no other duty till they first well know to read English writing. Let them learn further the Latin language, they who will further learn, and will advance to a higher condition."^e

"When I remembered how the learning of the Latin tongue

^d Wise, p. 83.

^e Ibid. p. 84.

^f Ibid. p. 85.

before this was fallen through the English nation, and yet many could read English, then began I, among much other manifold business of this kingdom, to turn into English the book named *Pastoralis*, or the Herdsman's Book, sometimes word for word, sometimes sense for sense, so as I had learned of Plegmund, my archbishop; and of Asser, my bishop; of Grimbold, my mass priest; and of John, my mass priest; and as I understood and could most intellectually express it, I have turned it into English."^g

What a sublime, yet unostentatious, character appears to us in these artless effusions! A king, though in nation, age, and education, almost a barbarian himself, yet not merely calmly planning to raise his people from their ignorance, but amid anxiety, business, and disease, sitting down himself to level the obstacles by his own personal labour, and to lead them, by his own practice, to the improvements he wished!

We proceed to notice the translations of Alfred. The preceding preface mentions his determination to translate some books. The *Life of St. Neot* says, that he made many books.^h *Malmsbury* affirms, that he put into English a great part of the Roman compositions;ⁱ and the more ancient *Ethelwerd* declares, that the number of his versions was not known.^k The first of these, which we shall consider as the most expressive exhibition of his own genuine mind, is his translation of *Boetius*.

^g Asser. He concludes with, "I will send one copy to every bishop's seat in my kingdom; and on every one there shall be an *æstel* that shall be of fifty manscuses; and I entreat, in God's name, that no man take the *æstel* from the book, nor the book from the minster. It is uncertain how long there may be learned bishops such as now, thank God, there are everywhere. Hence I wish that they should always be at these places, unless the bishops should desire to have it with them, or to lend it anywhere, or to write another from it." *Ibid.* p. 86. What the *æstel* meant that was to be so costly is not precisely known.

^h "Eac is to pýtene tha fe king Ælfræd manega bæc thurh Iroder garc gedýhte." *Vita Sancti Neoti*, p. 147. MSS. Cott. Vesp. D. 14.

ⁱ *Malmsb.* p. 45.

^k Nam ex Latino rhetorico fasmate in propriam verterat linguam volumina, numero ignoto, &c. *Ethelwerd*, 847.

CHAPTER II.

Alfred's Translation of Boetius's Consolations of Philosophy.—Alfred considered as a Moral Essayist.—His thoughts, Tales, and Dialogues on various Subjects.

BOETIUS flourished at the close of the fifth century.^a He was master of the offices to Theodoric, king of the Goths, who had the discernment to appreciate his intellectual acquisitions,^b but who at last destroyed him, from a political suspicion, in 524.^c While he was in prison on this charge, he wrote his celebrated book, *de Consolatione Philosophiæ*, whose object is to diminish the influence of riches, dignity, power, pleasure, or glory; and to prove their inadequacy to produce happiness.

He fancies that philosophy visits him in prison, and by expanding these views, reconciles his mind to the adversity he was suffering. The Author of existence is suggested to be the sovereign good,^d and all the reasonings of a Cicero could supply is adduced to show that worldly prosperity is, of itself, as inferior in value and comfort as it is uncertain in its duration, and capricious in its favours.

The book of Boetius is praised by the Erigena whom Alfred admitted into his friendship.^e That the king translated it, is stated by Ethelwerd,^f who was his kinsman, and almost his contemporary; by Malmsbury,^g and by other chroniclers;^h and by the

^a See Gibbon on the character, studies, honours, and death of Boetius, vol. iv. p. 33–39.

^b The letter of Theodoric to Boetius, full of panegyric on his studies, yet exists among the *Ep. Cassiod.* lib. i. ep. 45, p. 33.

^c *Fab. Bib. Med.* vol. i. p. 687.

^d The first and last part of his address to the Supreme, is thus beautifully translated by our great moralist and critic:

O Thou, whose power o'er moving worlds presides :
Whose voice created, and whose wisdom guides ;
On darkling man, in pure effulgence, shine :
And cheer the clouded mind with light divine.
'Tis thine alone to calm the pious breast,
With silent confidence and holy rest.
From thee, great God ! we spring ; to thee we tend ;
Path ; motive ; guide ; Original, and End.

Rembler, No. 7.

^e See his *Div. Natura*, p. 32, 34, 113, and 174. Gibbon calls the book of Boetius "a golden volume, not unworthy of the leisure of Plato, or Tully." *Hist. Decl.* vol. iv. p. 38.

^f *Ethel. Hist.* p. 847.

^g *Malm.* p. 45, and 248.

^h *Henry de Silgrave* ; *MSS. Cott. Cleop. A.* xii. p. 15, and *Joh. Bever. MSS. Harl.* 641, p. 21.

Saxon preface to the work itself, which reads like the king's own language.¹ A MS. of the Anglo-Saxon translation exists in the Bodleian library, with the metrum rendered in prose.² Another copy existed in the Cotton library with the metrum in Anglo-Saxon verse,³ the preface to which also mentions Alfred as the translator.¹

In this translation of Boetius there is a value which has been hitherto unnoticed. It is that Alfred has taken occasion to insert, in various parts, many of his own thoughts and feelings. He has thus composed several little moral essays, and by them has transmitted himself to posterity in his own words and manner,

It is highly interesting, at the distance of nearly one thousand years, to hear, as it were, our most revered sovereign speaking to us in his own language, on some of the most important topics of human life. Right feeling and true wisdom appear in all these effusions, and entitle him to be deemed the first moral essayist of our island. As this is new ground, which has been hitherto unexplored, we will extract and translate literally several of the passages which Alfred has added to his version.

Boetius had made philosophy call upon him to remember that, amidst his misfortunes, he had comfort yet left him—a celebrated father-in-law, his wife, and children.

Alfred, after adding, "It is untrue, as thou thinkest, that thou art unhappy," proceeds to enlarge on the short description of Boetius with such emphatic repetition, that it may be read as his own feeling of the value of an affectionate wife.

The passages in italics are the additions of Alfred:

"Liveth not thy wife also! She is exceedingly prudent, and very modest. She has excelled all other women in purity. I may, in a few words, express

¹ Its literal translation is:—

"Alfred, King, was the translator of this book; and from book-latin into English turned it, as it now is done. Awhile he put down word for word: awhile sense for sense, so as he the most manifestly and intellectually might explain it for the various and manifold worldly occupations that oft, both in mind and in body, busied him. These occupations are very difficult for us to number, which in his days came on this kingdom which he had undertaken. He learned this book, and turned it from Latin to the English phrase, and made it again into song, so as it is now done.

"And now may it be, and for God's name let him beseech every one of those that desire to read this book, that they pray for him, and do not blame him if they should more rightly understand it than he could: because that every man should according to the condition of his understanding, and from his leisure, speak what he speaks, and do that which he doeth." See the original in Rawlinson's edition.

² See Wanley's Catal. p. 64, 65. From this Rawlinson published his printed work.

³ It was MS. Otho. A. 6, when it was collated by Rawlinson. It has been since burnt. Wanley thought this MS. was one written in Alfred's lifetime. The versification of the metrum seems to be what the prose preface alludes to—"and made it again into song."

The plan of Boetius is to add to each division of his prose dialogue a metrum on the same subject in Latin verse.

¹ See Rawlinson.

all her merit: this is, that in all her manners she is like her father. She lives now for thee; thee alone. Hence she loves nought else but thee. She has enough of every good in this present life, but she has despised it all for thee alone. She has shunned it all because only she has not thee also. This one thing is now wanting to her. Thine absence makes her think that all which she possesses is nothing. Hence for thy love she is wasting, and full nigh dead with tears and sorrow."^m

Alfred dwells on the "vivit tibi" of Boetius with manifest delight, and dilates upon the thought as if with fond recollections of the conduct of his own wife, who shared his adversity with him.

Congenial with this subject is the narration which he has given of Orpheus and Eurydice. Boetius, in a metrum of Latin verse, has in a more general manner described the incident. But Alfred tells the story so completely in his own way, and with so many of his own little touches and additions, as to make his account an original tale :

"It happened formerly, that there was a harper in that nation which is called Thracia. It was a country in Greece. This harper was incomprehensibly good. His name was Orpheus; he had an incomparable wife: she was called Eurydice.

"Men then began to say of that harper, that he could harp so, that the woods danced, and the stones moved, from its sound. The wild deer would run to him, and stand as if they were tame; so still, that though men or hounds came against them, they would not shun them.

"They mention also that this harper's wife died, and her soul was led into hell. Then the harper became very sorry, so that he could not be among other men. But he withdrew to the woods, and sat upon the mountains both day and night, and wept and harped. Then the woods trembled, and the rivers stopped, and no hart shunned the lion; no hare the hound. No cattle knew any mistrust or fear of others, from the power of his songs.

"Then the harper thought that nothing pleased him in this world. Then he thought that he would seek the gates of hell, and begin to soothe with his harp, and pray that they would give him his wife again.

"When he came there where he should come, that hellhound, whose name was Cerberus attacked him. He had three heads, but he began to sport with his tail, and to play with him for his harping. There was also there a very terrible gate-warder: his name should be Caron: he had also three heads, and he was very fierce. Then began the harper to supplicate him for his protection while he was there, and that he should be brought out from thence sound. Caron promised him this, because he was pleased with his uncommon song.

"Then he went on further, till he met the grim goddesses that the multitude call Parcas. They say that they provide honour to no men, but punish every man according to his deserts, and that they govern every man's fortune.

"Then he began to entreat their mercy, and they began to weep with him. Then he went further, and all the citizens of hell ran against him, and led him to their king. And all began to talk with him, and to ask what he prayed.

"The restless wheel that Ixion was bound to, the king of Larista, for his guilt, stood still for his harping; Tantalus, the king that in this world was immoderately covetous, and whom the same evil passion followed, his cove-

^m Alfred's Boet. p. 17. Rawl. Ed. Boet. lib. ii. prosa 4.

toneness was stayed; and the vulture forbore to tear the liver of Titius, the king that before was thus punished; and all hell's citizens rested from their torments while he harped before the king.

"When he had long and long harped, the king of the citizens of hell called him and said, 'Let us give this slave his wife, for he hath earned her by his harping. Bid him, then, that he may well know, that he must never look back after he is gone from hence;' and he said, 'If he look back, he shall lose this woman.'

"But men can with great difficulty forbid love. Wel-a-way! What! Orpheus then led his wife with him, till he came to the boundary of light and darkness, then his wife went after him: then he came forth unto the light: then he looked back towards the woman, and she died away from him."^a

In another part we have his sentiments on riches. He has added to the reflections of Boetius the several following passages:

Boetius has merely said—

"Are riches precious in their own nature, or in yours? Which of them do you prefer, gold or accumulated money? But these shine more by being poured out than by being heaped up; for avarice makes us always odious, but liberality illustrious."^b

On this text Alfred has expatiated into these effusions:

"Tell me now whether thy riches, that in thine own thought are so precious, be so from their own nature. But yet, I tell thee that what is so of its own nature, is not so from thee. If then of its own nature it be so, and not of thine, why art thou then ever the better for its good.

"Tell me now which of these thou thinkest the most dear. Is it gold? I know that gold avails something. But though it now be gold, and dear to us, yet he will be more renowned, and more beloved, who gives it, than he who gathereth it, or plunders it from others. So riches are more reputable and estimable when men give them, than they are when men gather and hold them.

"Hence covetousness maketh the avaricious odious both to God and man; while bounty maketh us always pleasing and famous, and worthy both to God and to men who love it.

^a P. 100. I have made the translation strictly literal; and will add as literal a one of the original of Boetius, that the reader may observe for himself what Alfred has made his own. "Formerly the Thracian poet, mourning the death of his wife, afterwards compelled, by his plaintive measures, the woods to run, and the movable rivers to stand: the hind joined her intrepid side to the cruel lion's; nor did the hare fear the visible dog, made placid by the song. When the interior ferour of his bosom burnt more violent, those strains which subdued all could not soothe the'r master. Complaining of the cruel deities, he went to the infernal regions. There attempting his bland lays to the sounding strings, whatever he had imbibed from the chief fountains of the goddess mother; what impotent grief gave; what love, groaning in grief, wept, he expressed; and moving Tanarus, solicited with a sweet prayer the lords of the shades. Caught by the new song, the threefold porter was stupified. The guilty, whom the goddesses, avengers of crimes, agitate with fear, now sorrowful, dissolve in tears. The swift wheel revolves not the head of Ixion; and Tantalus, perishing with thirst, despises the long streams. The vulture, satisfied with the harmony, drew not the liver of Titius. At length, 'We are conquered!' exclaims the pitying arbiter of the shades; 'Let us give the man his companion, his wife, bought by his song.' But a law restricted the gift, that while he should leave Tartarus he should not bend back his eyes. Who shall give a law to lovers? Love is a greater law to itself. Alas! near the borders of night, Orpheus saw, lost, and killed his Eurydice." Lib. iii. met. 12.

^b Boet. lib. ii. proma 5.

"Now as property may then belong both to those who give it, and to those who take it away, it is therefore always better and more valuable when given than when held."^p

On this subject a passage may be read as an instance of the intelligent ease and force, with which the king partly translates, and partly imitates his author when he means to render him exactly.

Boetius says—

"Your riches, unless broken into pieces, cannot pass to many, and when this is done they must make those poor whom they quit. O narrow and impotent riches, which cannot be had entire by many, and yet cannot come to each without the poverty of the rest!"

Alfred's version is :

"Though thou shouldst divide them as small as dust, yet thou couldst not make all men to possess them equally; and when thou hadst divided them all, thou wouldest then be poor thyself. So worthy of a man are the riches of this world! No man may fully have them. They can make no man happy except they make others poor."

Alfred has taken occasion to insert the following thoughts from his own mind, on reputation, obviously expressing his own feelings of the value of that blessing which has accompanied his memory :

"This is clear enough, that a good word, and good fame, are better and more precious to every man than any riches. The word filleth the ear of all who hear it; and it thrives not the less with those who speak it. It openeth the vacancy of the heart; it pierces through other hearts that are locked up, and in its progress among them it is never diminished. No one can slay it with a sword, nor bind it with a rope, nor ever kill it."^q

He has so expanded the thought of Boetius on the value of jewels, with turns and feelings of his own, and expressed them with so much more energy than his author, as to be in a great measure original even where he copies :

"Why should the beauty of gems draw your eyes to them to wonder at them, as I know they do? What is then the nobility of that beauty which is in gems? It is theirs; not yours. At this I am most exceedingly astonished, why you should think this irrational, created good, better than your own excellence: why should you so exceedingly admire these gems, or any of those dead like-things that have not reason; because they can, by no right, deserve that you should wonder at them. Though they be God's creatures, they are not to be measured with you; because one of two things occurs; either they are not good for you themselves, or but for a little good compared with you. We too much undervalue ourselves when we love that which is inferior to us, and in our power, more than ourselves, or the Lord that has made us and given us all these goods."^r

^p Alfred's Boet. p. 23, 24.

^q Alfred, p. 24.

^r Alfred, p. 24. The literal English of Boetius is:—"Does the brightness of gems attract your eyes? But the chief part of the splendour with them is the light itself of the jewels, not of the men, which indeed I wonder that any should vehemently

Alfred's translation of the passages on the other advantages possessed by the rich is also so animated, that we quote it as a specimen of his own genuine feelings on the subject, with a version of the Latin,* that the reader may make his own comparison :

“Dost thou like fair lands ?”

“Then Mind answered to Reason and said—

“Why should I not like fair lands ! How ! Is not that the fairest part of God's creation ? Full oft we rejoice at the mild sea, and also admire the beauty of the sun, and the moon, and all the stars.”

“Then answered Wisdom and Reason to the Mind, and thus said :

“How belongeth heaven's fairness to thee ! Durst thou glory that its beauty is thine ? It is not, it is not. How ! Knowest thou not that thou madest none of them. If thou wilt glory, glory in God.

“Whether now dost thou rejoice in the fairer blossoms of Easter, as if thou hadst made them ; canst thou now make any such ? or hast thou made them ? Not so, not so. Do not thou thus. Is it now from thy power that the harvest is so rich in fruits ? Do I not know that this is not in thy power ? Why art thou then inflamed with such an idle joy ? or why lovest thou strange goods so immeasurably as if they now had been thy own ?

“Thinkest thou that fortune may do for thee, that those things be thine own, which of their own nature are made foreign to thee ? Not so, not so. It is not natural to thee that thou should possess them ; nor does it belong to them that they should follow thee. But the heavenly things they are natural to thee : not these earth-like ones.

“The earthly fruits are made for animals to subsist on ; and the riches of the world are made to deceive those men that are like animals ; that are unrighteous and insatiable. To these they also oftenest come.

“If thou wilt then have this moderation, and wilt know what necessity requires ; this is, that meat and drink, and clothes, and tools for such craft as thou knowest are natural to thee, and are what it is right for thee to have. What advantage is it to thee that thou should desire these temporal riches above measure, when they can neither help thee nor themselves. With very little of them hath nature enough : with so much she has enough, as we before mentioned. If thou usest more of them, one of two things happen : either they hurt thee ; or they are unpleasant. Inconvenient or dangerous is all

admire ; for what is there in that which wants the motion of the soul, and the combination of limbs ; which can seem by right to be beautiful to animate and rational nature ? Although they are the works of the Creator, and by this distinction attract something of the final beauty, yet placed below your excellence, they by no means deserve your admiration.” Lib. ii. pr. 5.

* The passage in Boetius is :—“Does the beauty of the fields delight you ? Why not ? It is a fair portion of the fairest work. So sometimes we delight in the face of the serene sea. So we admire the sky, the stars, the sun, and the moon. But does any of these touch you ? Do you dare to boast of the splendour of any such ?” Boet. lib. ii. pr. 5.

“Are you yourself distinguished by the vernal flowers ? Or does your abundance swell in the summer fruits ? Why are you carried away by empty joys ? Why do you embrace external goods for your own ? Will fortune make those things to be yours which by the nature of things she has made foreign to you ?” Boet. lib. ii. pr. 5.

“The fruits of the earth indeed are, without doubt, provided for the nourishment of animals. But if you wish to supply your wants by what is sufficient for nature, there is no reason that you should seek the affluence of fortune, for nature is contented with very little ; whom if you urge into avarice by superfluities, what you shall pour in becomes unpleasant and hurtful.” Boet. lib. ii. pr. 5.

that thou now doest beyond moderation. If thou eatest now, or drinkest immoderately; or hast more clothes on than thou needest, the excess becomes to thee either sorrow or nauseous, or unsuitable or dangerous.

“If thou thinkest that extraordinary apparel be any honour, then I assert the honour to belong to the workman who wrought it, and not to thee. The workman is God, whose skill I praise in it.

“Thinkest thou that a great company of thy servants will make thee happy? Not so, not so. But if they be evil, then are they more dangerous to thee; and more troublesome, if bound to you, than if you had them not, because evil *thegns* will always be their lord's enemies. If they be good and faithful to their lord, and not of double mind—How! Is not this their virtue? It is not thine. How canst thou possess their virtue? If thou now gloriest in this—How! Dost thou not glory in their merit? It is not thine.”

Alfred has added the following remarks of his own on the intrinsic value of worldly advantages:

“Now then, now, every creature shunneth that which is contrary to it, and toils very diligently that it be removed from him. But what two are more contrary between themselves than good and evil? They never will be harmonious together.

“By this thou mayest understand, that if the prosperities of this present life, through themselves, possessed power of themselves, and were good from their own nature; they would then always cleave to those who work with them good, and not evil.

“But there, where they be a good, then are they good through the goodness of the good man that doth good with them; and he is good through God. If then a bad man hath them, then are they evil through the badness of that man who doeth evil with them; and through the devil.”^x

He has followed up these remarks by adding to Boetius's metrum on Nero, the following observations:

“What cruelties; what adulteries; and what crimes; and what impiety, that unrighteous Cæsar Nero committed!

“He commanded at some time that all Rome city should be burnt after the example, formerly, when Troy's city burnt. It pleased him also to see how it burnt, and how long, and how light, compared with that other.

“Thinkest now that the Divine power could not have removed the dominion from this unrighteous Cæsar, and have restrained him from that evil if he would? Yea. Oh yes! I know that he might if he had willed. Oh! how heavy a yoke he slipped on all that in his times were living on the earth, and how oft his sword was sullied with guiltless blood! How! Was it not there clear enough that power, of its own worth, is not good, when he is not good to whom it comes!”^y

He has enlarged on the remark of Boetius on power, so as to exhibit his own sentiments in addition to those of his original.

^x “Do you think it beautiful to shine in various garments? But if their appearances be agreeable to look at, I would admire either the nature of the materials, or the ingenuity of the artificer.” *Ibid.*

^y “But will a long train of servants make you happy? who, if they be vicious in morals, are the pernicious burthen of a house, and grievously an enemy to their lord himself. If honest, how can another's probity be reckoned among your wealth?” *Ibid.*

^x Alfred, p. 34, 35.

^y Alfred, p. 36.

Boetius had only said :

“ If ever, which is very rare, honours are conferred on the upright, what is pleasing in them but the integrity of those who use them ? Thus honour accrues not to the virtues from the dignity, but to the dignity from the virtues.”^a

Alfred, a king, expands this to insert his own feelings on this subject.

“ If then it should ever happen, as it very seldom happens, that power and dignity come to good men, and to wise ones, what is there then worthy of pleasing but the goodness and dignity of these persons : of the good king, not of the power. Hence power is never a good, unless he be good that has it ; and that is the good of the man, not of the power. If power be goodness, why then is it that no man by his dominion can come to the virtues and to merit ; but by his virtues and merit he comes to dominion and power. Thus no man is better for his power ; but if he be good, it is from his virtues that he is good. From his virtues he becomes worthy of power, if he be worthy of it.”^b

He adds to this, entirely his own, and as if he intended it to be the announcement to his people of his own principle of government :

“ Learn therefore wisdom, and when ye have learned it, do not neglect it. I tell you then, without any doubt, that by that you may come to power, though you should not desire the power. You need not be solicitous about power, nor strive after it. If you be wise and good, it will follow you, though you should not wish it.”^c

Connected with the subject of power, Alfred has in another place inserted these passages of his own :

“ If thou now saw some very wise man that had very good qualities, but was nevertheless very poor, and very unhappy, whether wouldst thou say that he was unworthy of power and dignity ?”

“ Then answered Boetius and said—‘ Not so, Oh, not so. If I found him such, I would never say that he was unworthy of power or dignity, for me thinketh that he would be worthy of every honour that is in this world.’ ”^d

With the same freedom he amplifies another idea of Boetius, and applies it to express his own high estimate of the human mind.

His author says :

“ If you saw among mice, one claiming a right to himself, and power over the rest, to what a horse-laugh would you be moved ? But if you look at the body, what can you find weaker than man, whom a bite of his flesh, or of something within secretly creeping destroys !”^e

Alfred's paraphrase :

“ If you now saw a mouse that was lord over another mouse, and established laws for him, and compelled him to pay taxes, how wonderlike you would think it ! What derision you would have of this ; and to how much laughter would you not be excited. How much more then would it be so to compare the body of man with the mind, than the mouse with the man ! You may

^a Boet. lib. ii. pr. 6.

^b Alfred, p. 31.

^c Alfred, p. 31, 32.

^d Ibid., p. 59, 60.

^e Boet. lib. ii. pr. 6.

easily conceive it. If you will diligently inquire about it, and investigate, you will find that no creature's body is tenderer than that of man's. The least fly may hurt it, and the gnats with their little stings may injure it; and also the small worms that crawl within and without him, even sometimes nearly kill him. Indeed the little fleas may sometimes destroy him. Every living thing may hurt him, either inside or out."

He then adds, partly translating and partly imitating Boetius:

"But where can a man hurt another except in his body, or in that wealth which we call happiness? No one can injure the reasoning mind, nor make it that it should not be what it is."

We now come to a noble effusion of Alfred's mind and heart, on his own power and government.

Boetius had said:

"You know that the ambition of mortal things governed us but little; but we desired materials for acting, that virtue might not grow old in silence."

On these few words Alfred has thus expatiated, to express from himself, and on his own situation, his views and feelings as a king, and his principles of conduct. We cannot avoid remembering, on reading this, that he hesitated about accepting the crown at his accession. He seems to allude to this circumstance:

"O Reason! thou knowest that covetousness and the possession of this earthly power, I did not well like, nor strongly desired at all this earthly kingdom, except—Oh! I desired materials for the work that I was commanded to do. This was that I might unfractiously and becomingly steer and rule the power that was committed to me—What! thou knowest that no man may know any craft or rule, or steer any power without tools and materials. There are materials for every craft, without which a man cannot work in that craft.

"These are the materials of a king's work, and his tools to govern with; that he may have his land fully peopled; that he should have prayer-men, and army-men, and workmen. What! thou knowest that without these tools no king may show his skill.

"These are also his materials, that with these tools he should have provision for these three classes; and their provision then is, land to inhabit, and gifts, and weapons, and meat, and ale, and clothes, and what else that these three classes need; nor can he without these keep his tools; nor without these tools can he work any of those things that it is commanded to him to do.

"For this purpose I desired materials to govern that power with, that my skill and power might not be given up and concealed. But every virtue and every power will soon become oldened and silenced if they be without wisdom. Therefore no man can bring forth any virtue without wisdom: hence whatsoever is done through folly, man can never make that to be virtue.

"This I can now most truly say, that I HAVE DESIRED TO LIVE WORTHILY WHILE I LIVED, AND AFTER MY LIFE TO LEAVE TO THE MEN THAT SHOULD BE AFTER ME A REMEMBRANCE IN GOOD WORKS."

It may amuse us to read Alfred's picture of the Golden Age, in which he has added some marking circumstances of his own sentiments to his author's description.

"Oh, how happy was the first age of this world, when every man thought

* Alfred, p. 32.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid, p. 36, 37.

he had enough in the fruits of the earth!¹ There were no rich homes, nor various sweet dainties, nor drinks. They required no expensive garments, because there were none then; they saw no such things, nor heard of them. They cared not for luxury; but they lived naturally and temperately. They always ate but once a day, and that was in the evening. They ate the fruits of trees and herba. They drank no pure wine. They knew not to mix liquor with their honey. They required not silken clothing with varied colours. They always slept out under the shade of trees. The water of the clear springs they drank. They saw no merchant from island or shore, nor did any one hear of ship-armies, nor speak of battle, nor was the earth yet stained with the blood of slain men, nor were men then wounded, nor did they behold evil-willing men, nor had they any dignities, nor did men love them. Oh, that our times now might be such! but now man's rapacity is as burning as flame, in that hell which is in the mount called Etna, in the island named Sicilia. That mountain is always burning with sulphur, and it consumes all the places near and about it. Oh! the first covetous man was he that the earliest began to delve the earth after gold, and after gems; and found those dangerous valuables which before were hidden and covered by the earth."²

This sentence of Boetius—

"There is one thing which can seduce even minds excellent in their nature but not yet brought to the full perfection of their virtues, that is the desire of glory, and the fame of the greatest merit towards the state; consider how slender and light a thing this is."

Alfred has thus amplified:

"Oh, mind! one! oh! one evil is very much to be shunned. This is that which very unceasingly and very heavily deceiveth the mind of all those men who in their nature are select, and yet be not come to the roof of their full-framed virtues. This is then the desire of false glory, and of unrighteous power, and of immoderate fame of good works above all people; for many men desire power that they may have a good fame, though they be unworthy of it; and even the worst of all desire the same. But he that will wisely and diligently seek after this fame, let him very truly perceive how little it is, and how slight, and how tender, and how distinct from every good!"³

Boetius, after remarking that but a fourth part of the earth was inhabited, continues:

"And that many nations, differing in language, manners, and all the habits of life, inhabit this small inclosure, which, from the difficulty of the journey,

¹ Boetius's lines are: "Thou happy was the prior age, contented with their faithful ploughs, nor lost in sluggish luxury: it was accustomed to end its late feasts with the ready acorn; nor knew how to confuse the present of Bacchus with liquid honey; nor to mingle the bright fleece of the Seres with the Tyrian poison. The grass gave them healthful slumbers. The gliding river their drink. The loftiest pines their shades. They did not yet cut the depths of the sea; nor did the stranger see new shores with his merchandize collected from every side. The cruel trumpets were silent; nor did the effused blood with bitter hatred tinge horrid arms. Why should an ancient fury move any army against enemies, when no cruel wounds, and no rewards of blood were seen? I wish our times could return to the ancient manners. But the raging love of possessing burns fiercer than the fires of Etna. Alas! who was he that first dug up the weight of the covered gold and gems, desiring to be hid,—those precious dangers?" Boet. lib. ii. met. 5.

² Alfred, p. 29, 30.

³ Boetius, lib. ii. pr. 7.

⁴ Alfred, p. 37, 38.

as well as from the diversity of their speech, and want of commerce, the fame not only of each man, but even of cities cannot reach."¹

Alfred has thus enlarged upon this sentiment, with the insertion of more knowledge as to the number of the languages of the world.

"Why desire ye then, so immoderately, that you should spread your name over the tenth part! for with the sea, with fens, and with all else, there is not more.

"Bethink ye, also, that in this little park many nations dwell, and various ones: and very unlike both in speech and customs, and in all their manners, are all these nations, that you now so immoderately desire that you should spread your name over. This you can never do; because their speech is divided into two and seventy languages, and each of these is divided among many nations. They are distinguished and separated by sea, and by woods, and by mountains, and by fens, and by many and various wastes and unfrequented lands, so that merchants indeed do not go to them.

"But how can then the name of any powerful man come there separately, when they do not indeed hear there the name of his city, nor of the people where his home is fixed. This I know, with what folly you are yearning, when you would extend your name over the whole earth. This you can never do, nor indeed never nearly so."²

Boetius having said, from Cicero, that the Roman name had not passed Mount Caucasus, Alfred, exhibiting his own study of geography, adds:

"Nor among the Scythians who dwell on the other side of these mountains; where they had not heard of the names of the cities nor of the people of Rome."³

"No man hath the like praise in every land; because that which they do not like in some lands, they like in others.

"Writers, from their negligence and from carelessness, have left unwritten the manners and deeds of those men, who, in their days, were the worthiest and most illustrious."⁴

Boetius having said—

"What is there that attaches from fame to the eminent men who seek glory by virtue, after the dissolution of their body!"⁵

Alfred thus dilates the thought:

"What then has it profited the best men that have been before us, that they so very much desired this idle glory, and this fame after their death; or what will it profit those who now exist!

"There is more need to every man that he should desire good qualities than false fame. What will he have from that fame, after the separation of the body and the soul. How! do we not know, that all men die bodily, and yet their soul will be living. But the soul departs very free-like to Heaven. Then the mind will itself be a witness of God's will."⁶

Boetius in the accompanying metrum had impressively sang:

"Why do the proud strive to raise their necks from this mortal yoke in

¹ Boetius, lib. ii. pr. 7.

² Alfred, p. 39.

³ Boetius, lib. ii. pr. 2, met. 7.

⁴ Alfred, p. 39.

⁵ Ibid. p. 40.

⁶ Alfred, p. 42.

vain! Though their diffused fame, pervading many people, should be expressed in their languages, and the great family should shine with illustrious titles, death spurns the lofty glory; alike involves the high and humble head, and equals the lowest with the greatest. Where now lie the bones of the faithful Fabricius, or Brutus, or the rigid Cato!"*

Alfred has thus expanded, and added to these suggestions, with a little error as to Brutus and Cassius:

"Oh, ye proud! why do you desire to put this death-like yoke upon your neck? or, why regard such idle toil, to spread your name among so many people?"

"Though it now should happen that the uttermost nations should upheave your name, and celebrate you in many countries, and though any one should increase his birth with much nobility, and flourish in all wealth, and in all honours, yet death careth not for such; but he despiseth the noble, and de-voureth alike the rich and the poor, and thus equals the powerful with the low.

"Where are now the illustrious and the wise goldsmith's (Fabricius) bones, the foreigner? Hence I say the wise man; hence the skilful can never lose his skill; nor can men take it away from him easier than they can turn the sun from his place.

"Where are now the foreigner's bones, or who knows now where they were? or, where is now the illustrious and recorded Roman citizens, the heretoga, that was called Brutus, his other name Cassius? or, the wise and steadfast Cato? he was also a Roman heretoga: he was openly a philosopher. How! did they not anciently die, and no man knoweth where they now are?"

He exclaims from himself in another part:

"Oh, glory of this world! why do silly men with a false voice call thee glory? Now thou art not so; for more men have much pomp, and much glory, and much worship, from the opinion of foolish people, than they have from their own works."

Alfred adds on adverse fortune:

"I dread it not myself; for it often happens, that deceitful fortune can neither give man any help, nor take any away."—Adverse fortune is the true happiness, though one does not think so; for it is to be depended upon, and always promises what is true."

Boetius remarks:

"Departing fortune takes away her own creatures and leaves thine. For how much would you, when entire, and as you seemed to yourself, fortunate, have bought this? Cease now to seek after your lost wealth; you have found friends, which are the most precious kind of wealth."

Alfred reiterates the thought; and, by the emphasis of his repetitions, displays strongly his own sensibility, and probably his own experience of the different value of false and real friends:

"But the false riches, when they depart from thee, they take away their men with them, and leave thy few true ones with thee. How wouldest thou now have bought this, when thou wert the most happy, and thought that thy

* Boetius, lib. ii. met. 7.

† Ibid. p. 66.

‡ Ibid. p. 43, 44.

* Alfred, p. 42, 43.

† Ibid. p. 43.

‡ Boetius, lib. ii. pr. 2, met. 8.

fortune went most to thy will? With how much property wouldest thou have purchased this, that thou mightest manifestly know thy friends from thine enemies? I know, that with great property, thou wouldest have bought this, that thou mightest know to discriminate them well. Although thou thinkest that thou hast now lost a precious property, yet thou hast bought with it one much more valuable. These are true friends. These thou mayest now know, and thou perceivest what thou hast of them. This is of all things the dearest possession.”*

In another part he takes occasion to add to his original the same feelings:

“ True friends! I say then, that this is the most precious of all the riches of the world. They are not even to be reckoned among the goods of the world, but as divine ones; because false fortune can neither bring nor take them away.

“ Nature attracts and limes friends together with inseparable love. But with the riches of this world, and by our present prosperity, men oftener make an enemy than a friend.†

“ The friends that loved him before for his wealth, they depart away with that wealth, and then become enemies; but the few that loved him from affection, and with truth, they would love him still, though he were needy. They would remain with him.”‡

Alfred, from the text of the eighth metre of Boetius, has taken occasion to enlarge upon it, to express his philosophical views of the divine government of nature:

“ One Creator is beyond any doubt; and he is also the Governor of heaven, and earth, and of all creatures visible and invisible. This is God ALMIGHTY. All things serve Him that serve thee; both those that know thee and those that do not know thee; both they which understand that they serve Him, and they which do not perceive it. The same has appointed unchangeable laws and customs, and also a natural harmony among all His creatures, that they should now stand in the world as He hath willed, and as long as He wills.

“ The motions of all active creatures cannot be stilled, nor even altered from their course, and from the arrangement which is provided for them. But He hath power over all His creatures; and, as with his bridle, confines, restrains, and admonishes them; so that they can neither be still, nor more strongly stir, than the space of His ruling reins permits. The Almighty God hath so coerced all his creatures with his dominion, that each of them striveth against the other; and yet it is so wreathed with it, that they may not slide away from each other, but are turned again to that same course that they ran before. Thus will it be again renewed. Thus he varies it, that although the elements of a contrary kind contend betwixt themselves, yet they also hold a firm peace together. Thus do fire and water, now, and sea and earth, and many other substances. They will always be as discordant among themselves, as they are now; and yet they are so harmonized, that they can not only be companions, but this further happens, that indeed none can exist without the rest. The one contrariety for ever restrains the other contrariety.

“ So the Almighty God has most wisely and pertinently established the successive changes of all things. Thus now spring and harvest. In spring things grow. In harvest they become yellow. Again, summer and winter. In summer it is warm, and in winter cold. So the sun bringeth light days,

* Alfred, p. 45.

† Ibid. p. 51.

‡ Ibid. p. 68.

and the moon enlightens the night through the same Deity's might. So the same Power admonishes the sea, that it must not overstep the threshold of the earth. But he hath appointed its boundaries that it may not extend its limits over the quiet earth.

"By the same government is the like interchange directed of the flood and the ebb. He permits this appointment to stand as long as he wills it. But then if ever he should let go the reins of those bridles with which he has now restrained his creations, the contrariety of which we have before spoken, if he were to allow it to escape, would destroy the peace that he now maintains. Each of them would contend with the other after his own will, and lose their combination, and destroy all this world, and bring themselves to nothing. The same God combines people in friendship together, and associates their families with purer love. He unites friends and companions, so that they truly retain their peace and attachment. How happy would mankind be from this, if their minds were as right, and as established, and as well ordered, as those of other creatures are!"*

He tells the story of Ulysses and Circe in his own way, and with his own additions, which will show the nature of his historical knowledge :

"There happened formerly, in the Trojan war, that there was a king of the name of Aulixes (Ulysses). He had two nations under the Cæsar. These were called Ithacige and Retie, and the Cæsar's name was Agamemnon. Then Aulixes went with that Cæsar to that battle. He had then some hundred ships. Then were they some ten years in that war.

"Then the king returned home from that Cæsar, when they had won the country. He had not then more ships than one ; but that was a three-rouer. Then a high tempest and a stormy sea withstood him, and he was driven into an island beyond the Wendel Sea. There lived a daughter of Apolline, the son of Job (Jove).

"This Job was their king, and it pleased them that he should be their highest god, and these foolish men believed in him because he was of a kingly race, and they knew no other god in that time, but they worshipped their kings for gods. Then should Job's father be also a god. His name was Saturnus, and they had him also the same for a god : and one of them was the Apolline that we have mentioned.

"This Apolline's daughter should be a goddess. Her name was Kirke. They said she was a very great magician ; and she lived in that island that the king was driven on. She had there a great retinue of her thegns, and also of other maidens.

"Soon as she saw the forth-driven king, that we spoke of before, whose name was Aulixes, she began to love him, and each of them the other, so immoderately, that he for love of her abandoned all his kingdom and his family, and remained with her, till the time that his thegns would not stay longer with him ; but for love of their country, and from being exiled from it, they resolved to leave him. Then began false men to make spells, and they said, that by their magic they would spread and turn these men into the bodies of wild animals ; and afterwards throw them into chains and fetters.

"Some they said they should transform into lions, and when they should speak then they roared. Some became boars, and when they lamented their sorrow they furiously grunted. Some were changed into wolves, and, when they thought to speak, they howled. Some were turned to that deer kind, which men call tigers. Thus were all the company transformed into various

* Alfred, p. 45, 46. A comparison with *Boetius*, lib. ii. met. 8, will show Alfred's great additions.

kinds of deer, every one to some deer, except only the king. They shunned every meat that men eat, and desired those things which the deer eat. They had no likeness of man, neither in their body, nor in their voice; yet every one knew in his understanding as he did before. This understanding sorrowed very much for the miseries which they suffered."^b

He has inserted the following observations of his own, on the Supreme Good :

"This blessedness is then God. He is the beginning and the end of every good, and he is the highest happiness.

"There is no man that needs not some increase, but God alone. He hath enough in his own self. He needs nothing but that which he has in himself.

"By these things, we may manifestly understand, that every man desires this, that he may obtain the Supreme Good, where he can know it, or is enabled to seek it rightly. But they seek it not in the most right way. It is not in this world.

"There is no creature made, which does not desire that it may proceed thither, from whence it came before. This is to rest and felicity. Its rest is with God, and that is God."^c

He has added these remarks on wisdom :

"Wisdom is the highest virtue, and he hath in him four other virtues. One of these is prudence; another moderation; the third is courage; the fourth is righteousness. Wisdom maketh those that love it wise, and worthy, and constant, and patient, and righteous, and with every good habit filleth him that loveth it. They cannot do this who have the power of this world; nor can they give any virtue from their wealth to those who love them, if they have it not in their nature. From this it is very evident, that the powerful in this world's wealth have no appropriate virtue from it; but their wealth comes to them from without, and they can have nothing from without which is their own."^d

He turns a sentence of Boetius,^e which he enlarges on, into a commendation of wisdom :

"Do you see any thing in your body greater than the elephant; or stronger than the lion, or the bull; or swifter than that deer, the tiger? But if thou wert the fairest of all men in beauty, and shouldst diligently inquire after wisdom, until thou fully right understood it, then mightest thou clearly comprehend that all the power and excellence which we have just mentioned, are not to be compared with the one virtue of the soul. Now wisdom is this one single virtue of the soul; and we all know that it is better than all the other excellencies that we have before spoken about."^f

He pursues the next sentence of Boetius,^g with his own original sentiments.

"Behold now the spaciousness, and the constancy, and the swiftness of the

^b Alfred, p. 115. See Boetius, lib. iv. met. 3.

^c Alfred, p. 49. 53, 54, 55.

^d Alfred, p. 60.

^e The passage in Boetius is: "Can you excel elephants in bulk, or bulls in strength, or precede tigers in swiftness?" Lib. iii. prosa 8.

^f Alfred, p. 70.

^g The words in Boetius are only: "Survey the space, firmness, and rapidity of the heavens, and cease sometimes to admire vile things." Boetius, lib. iii. prosa 8.

heavens. Yet we may understand that all this is not to be compared with its creator and its governor. But why do ye not let yourselves be weary of admiring and praising that which is unprofitable : this is worldly riches. For as heaven is better and loftier, and fairer than all within it, except man alone ; so is man's body better and more precious than all his possessions. But how much more bethink thee, is the soul better and more valuable than the body. Every existence is to be honoured according to its proportion, and always the highest most. Therefore the divine power is to be honoured, admired, and worshipped above all other existences."^h

His free translation of the eighth metrum of Boetiusⁱ is a specimen of his easy and flowing style, and at the same time a picture of the manners of his time. In this he also turns the ideas of his author, to express his own sublime piety and moral energy.

"Oh ! wo ! how heavy and how dangerous the folly is, which misleads unhappy men, and draws them from the right way. This way is God. Do ye now seek gold on trees ? I know that you do not seek it there ; nor find it on them, because all men know that it does not grow there. No more do jewels grow in vineyards. Do you now set your nets on the highest mountains when you would fish ? I know indeed that you do not place them there. Do you lead your hounds and your nets out into the sea, when you would hunt ? I think you would set them on hills and in woods. It is wonderful that industrious men understand that they must seek by sea-voyages, and on the banks of rivers, for both white gems and red ones, and jewels of every kind. They also know on what waters, and at the mouths of what rivers, they should seek for fishes ; and where they should search for all their present wealth ; and most unweariedly they seek it. But it is a very pitiable thing, that weak men are so blind of all judgment, that they do not perceive where the true riches lie hid, and have no pleasure in inquiring for them. Yet they think, that in these frail and mortal things, they may find out the true good, which is God, I know not how I can express their folly so clearly, nor tell it so strongly as I would ; because they are more deplorable, and sillier, and unhappier than I am able to explain. They desire wealth and dignity, and when they have them, they irrationally think that they possess true happiness."^j

Boetius had merely said :

"If any one, who had enjoyed several consulships, should go by chance among barbarous nations, would his honours make him venerated by them ?"^k

Alfred on this brief passage pours out the following ideas :

"If any powerful man should be driven from his country, or should go on

^h Alfred, p. 70.

ⁱ The Latin of Boetius is : "Oh, how ignorance leads wretched men from their right way ! You do not seek gold on the green tree, nor pluck gems from the vine. You do not place nets on high mountains to enrich your tables with fish ; nor if you wish to follow the ree, do you hunt the Tuscan waves. Men know the recesses of the sea, that are hidden by the waves ; and which wave is more fruitful of the snowy gems ; which, of the blushing purple ; and what shores excel in the tender fish, or the rough shell-fish. But how is it they who desire good, blindly endure to be ignorant of it, and, degraded, seek that on earth which lies beyond the starry pole ? What that is worthy shall I implore for the foolish minds ? They crave wealth and honours ; and when they have prepared the false things in a great mass, let them then discern the true goods of life." *Lih. iii. met. 8.*

^j Alfred, p. 71, 72.

^k Boetius, *lih. iii. prom. 2.*

his lord's errand, and should then come to a foreign people, where no man knew him, nor he any one, nor indeed the language; dost thou think that his greatness would make him honourable in that land? But I know that it could not. If, then, dignity were natural to power, and were its own; or if the wealth of the rich were their own affluence, then they could not lose it. Were a person on any land soever, he would be there with what he possessed. His riches and his dignity would be with him; but because wealth and power have no merit of their own, they abandon him; and hence they have no natural good in themselves. Hence he loseth them, like a shadow or smoke, though false hope and imagination of weak men make power to be their highest good.

"Great men will be in one or two conditions, either in a foreign country, or in their own nation, with reasonable men; but both with these wise men, and with the foreigner, their power would be deemed nothing, after they had understood that they had not received it for any virtues; but from the praises of silly men. Yet, if wealth had any excellence of its own, or of nature, in its power, they would have it within them. Though they should lose their territory, they could not lose a natural good; but this would always follow them, and make them worthy in whatsoever land they were."

The following extract shows the ease with which he translates his author when he chooses to adhere to him. Boetius has a passage on the effect of the vices on the characters of men,^m which Alfred thus expresses with a little expansion:

"But as the goodness of men raiseth them above human nature, to this that they be exalted to divine; so also their evilness converts them into something below human nature, to the degree that they may be named devils. This we say should not be so; for if thou findest a man so corrupted, as that he be turned wholly from good to evil, thou canst not with right name him a man, but an animal. If thou perceivest of any man that he be covetous, and a plunderer, thou shalt not call him a man, but a wolf. And the fierce person that is restless, thou shalt call a hound, not a man. And the false, crafty one, a fox. He that is extremely moody, and enraged, and hath too great fury, thou shalt call a lion, not a man. The slothful that is too slow, thou shalt term an ass, more than a man. The unseasonably fearful person, who dreads more than he needs, thou mayest call a hare, rather than man. Thou mayest say of the innocent and light-minded, that they are more like the winds or the unquiet fowls, than steady men. And if thou perceivest one that pursues the lusts of his body he is most like fat swine, who always desire to lay down in foul soils, and will not wash themselves in clear waters; or if they should, by a rare chance, be swimming in them, they throw themselves again on their mire, and wallow therein."ⁿ

Alfred adds much of his own to Boetius's remarks on nobility, as:

"Think now first of noble birth. If any one should glory in this, how idle

ⁱ Alfred, p. 61.

^m In Boetius it is: "As probity alone can raise any one above humanity, it follows that those whom wickedness throws down from the human condition, it lowers below the merit of a man. Therefore when you see any one transformed by vices, you cannot think him a man. Does a violent plunderer of another's property glow with avarice? You may say he is like a wolf. Does a fierce and unquiet one exercise his tongue in strife? He is to be compared to a dog. Does a betrayer rejoice to have surprised by secret fraud? He is on a level with foxes. Does he rage with intemperate anger? Believe that he carries the soul of a lion;" &c. &c. lib. iv. pr. 3.

ⁿ Alfred, p. 113, 114.

and how fruitless would that glory be! Because every one knows that all men come from one father and one mother."

This reason is the addition of Alfred: he also inserts the following passages from himself:

"Or again of fame among the multitude, or their praise. I know that we rejoice at this; although those persons now seem illustrious, whom the people praise, yet they are more illustrious and more justly to be applauded, when they are made worthy by their virtues; for no man is so by right from any other advantage.

"Art thou more beautiful for other men's beauty? A man will be full little the better, because he hath a good father, if he himself is but nought.

"Therefore, I teach, that thou mayest rejoice in other men's goods, and their nobility; for this chiefly, that thou art thereby exempt from toiling thy own self; because every man's good and nobility is more in his mind than in his flesh."

He now adds, paraphrasing the words of Boetius:^p

"This alone I yet know to be good in nobility; that it makes many men ashamed of being worse than their elders were; and therefore they strive all their power, that they may become better in some habits, and may increase their virtues."

With the same nobleness of mind, he paraphrases and adds sentiments to the sixth metrum of Boetius,^q which would surprise us from any other king, than the great-minded, wise, and moral Alfred:

"What! all men had a like beginning; because they all come of one father and one mother. They all are yet born alike. This is no wonder: because God alone is the father of all creatures. He made them all and governs all. He gave us the sun's light, and the moon, and placed all the stars. He created men on the earth. He has connected together the soul and the body by his power, and made all men equally noble in their first nature. Why then do ye arrogate over other men for your birth without works? Now you can find none unnoble. But all are equally noble, if you will think of your beginning creation, and the Creator, and afterwards of your own nativity; yet the right nobility is in the mind. It is not in the flesh, as we said before. But every man that is at all subjected to his vices, forsakes his Creator, and his first creation, and his nobility; and thence becomes more ignoble than if he were not nobly born."

Alfred adapts to his own times a passage of Boetius, which he rather imitates than translates, and thereby gives us a lively pic-

^o Alfred, p. 66, 67.

^p Which are: "If there be any good in nobility, I think it is this alone, that a necessity seems to be imposed on the noble, that they should not degenerate from the virtue of their ancestors." Lib. iii. prosa 6.

^q Boetius says: "All the human race arises on earth from a like origin. There is one Father of things: one administers all things. He gave the sun his rays, and he gave the moon her horns. He gave men to the earth, and stars to the sky. He has inclosed in limbs, souls derived from a lofty seat. Therefore a noble germ has produced all mortals. Why do you boast of your race and ancestors? If you look at your beginnings and your Author, God, you would perceive that no one lives ignobly born." Lib. iii. met. 6.

^r Alfred, p. 67.

ture of the habits and pursuits of his day, with an allusion to his own sufferings :

"Dost thou then mean to be covetous for money? Now thou mayest no how else get it, except *thou steal it, or plunder it, or find it hidden*, or there increase thyself with it, where you lessen it to others.

"Woudest thou now be foremost in dignities? But if thou wilt have them, thou must flatter very miserably and very humbly those that may assist thee to them. If thou wilt make thyself better and worthier than many, then shalt thou let thyself be worse than some. How! is not this then some portion of unhappiness, that a man so brave should cringe to those that can give it?

"Desirest thou power? But thou shalt never obtain it free from sorrows *from foreign nations, and yet more from thine own men and kindred*.

"Yearnest thou for glory? But thou canst never have it without vexations; for thou wilt always have something contrary and displeasing.

"Dost thou wish to enjoy thine unrestrained desires? But then thou wilt despise God's commandments, and thy wearied flesh will have the command of thee; not thou of that. How can a man become more wretched, than by being subject to his wearying flesh, and not to his reasoning soul?"^a

We now come to a series of thoughts on kings, in which Alfred largely adds to those of Boetius.^b They display his feelings on kingly power used for oppression; his magnanimity in alluding to his own anxieties and vicissitudes; his estimate of sovereign greatness; his reasoning cast, and effusion of consecutive thought, and his flowing style:

"Dost thou now think that the friendship and society of kings, and the wealth and power which they give to their favourites, may make any man happy or powerful?

"Then answered I, and said, 'Why may they not? What is in this present life more pleasant and better than the retinue of the king, and to be near him and the wealth and power that follow.'

"Then answered Wisdom, and said: 'Tell me, now, whether thou ever heardest, that these things always continued with those who have been before us; or dost thou think that any may always keep what they now possess? Dost thou not know that all books are full of the examples of men that lived before us; and every man knows, that of those who now are alive, the power and affluence have changed with many kings, till they have become poor again.

"Oh, this is a very admirable felicity, that neither may support itself nor its lord, so that he need no more help, or that they be both retained!

"How! is your highest happiness in the power of kings, and yet, if there be any failure of his will to any king, then that diminishes his power and increaseth his misery! Hence this your happiness will always be in some things unblest.

^a Alfred, p. 69, 70.

^b The passage of Boetius is: "Do kingdoms or the familiarity of kings make you powerful? Why not? Since their felicity lasts perpetually. But antiquity is full of examples, the present age is full of them, in which the felicity of kings has been changed by calamity. Oh, excellent power! which is not found to be sufficiently efficacious to its own preservation. Yet if this power of kingdoms were the author of blessedness, would it not, if failing in any part, lessen our felicity and introduce misery. But though human empire should be widely spread, yet it must abandon many nations, over whom every king cannot reign. Wherever the power that makes us happy ceases, that impotence enters which makes us miserable. Therefore kings must have a larger portion of misery." Boetius, lib. iii. prosa 5.

"But kings! though they rule many nations, yet they rule not all those that they would govern; and for this they are so wretched in their minds; because they have not something which they would have.

"Therefore, I know, that the king who is rapacious hath more misery than power."

Alfred continues the theme with direct allusion to himself:

"Thus is it said, formerly, of a king that unrightfully seized his power. Oh! what a happy man was he, that always had a naked sword hanging over his head from a small thread! so as to me it always yet did.

"How! dost thou think now that wealth and power are pleasing, when they are never without fear, and difficulties, and sorrows? What! thou knowest that every king would wish to be without these, and yet have power, if he might; but I know that he cannot.

"This I wonder at; why they should glory in such power.

"Whether dost thou think now, that a man who has much power is very happy, that always desires what he may not obtain; or believest thou that he is very happy that always goes out with a great train; or, again, he that dreads both those who dread him, and those who fear him not.

"Whether dost thou think that the man has much power, who himself fancies that he has none, as now many believe that they have none, except they have many persons to obey them.

"What need we now more speak of kings and their followers, except that every wise man may know that they be full wretched and full unmighty. How can kings deny or conceal their unmightiness, when they cannot display their dignity without the help of their thanes."

He enlarges greatly on the short metre of Boetius, on tyrannical kings,* and describes them with the costume of his own times. A sovereign himself, he displays the superior nobility of his mind in perceiving so impartially, and painting so strongly the vicious feelings of bad and weak-minded rulers.

"Hear now a discourse on proud and unrighteous kings. We see them sitting on the highest high seats. They shine in garments of many kinds, and are with a great company of their thegns standing about them; who are

* Alfred, p. 62, 63.

† The Latin original of this part expresses "The tyrant who had experienced this sort of danger, compared his fear to the terror of a sword hanging over his head. What then is this power which cannot expel the gnawings of cares, nor the stings of apprehensions? They who wished to have lived secure could not, and yet boast of their power. Do you think him powerful who you see wishes what he cannot effect? Do you think him powerful who surrounds his side with a guard; who himself dreads those whom he terrifies; who, however powerful he may seem, is placed in the hands of his servants? Why should I dissent on the companions of kings, when I have shown their own government to be so full of imbecillity." Boetius, lib. iii. prosa 5.

‡ Alfred, p. 63, 64.

§ The English of Boetius is: "If, from the proud kings whom you see sitting on the lofty summit of the throne, splendid in their shining purple; hedged with sad arms; threatening with their stern countenance; breathless with the fury of their hearts; any one should draw aside the coverings of a vain dress, you would see the lord loaded with strong chains within. Here the lust of rapacity pours its poison on their hearts. Here turbid wrath raising its waves lashes their minds, or grief wearies its captive, or disappointing hope torments them. Then as you see one single head bears so many tyrants, how can he that is oppressed by such wicked masters do what he wishes." Boetius, lib. iv. met. 2.

adorned with belts, and golden-hilted swords, and manifold warlike appendages. They threaten all mankind with their majesty; and of those they govern, they care neither for friend nor foe, no more than a maddened hound. They are very incomprehensibly puffed up in their minds from their immoderate power.

"But if men should divest them of their clothes, and withdraw from them their retinue and their power, then might thou see that they be very like some of their thegns that serve them, except that they be worse. And if it was now to happen to them that their retinue was a while taken away, and their dress and their power, they would think that they were brought into a prison, or were in bondage; because from their excessive and unreasonable apparel; from their sweetmeats, and from the various drinks of their cup, the raging course of their luxury is excited, and would very powerfully torment their minds. Then would increase both their pride and their inquietude; then would they be enraged; then would their minds be lashed with the fervour of their hot-heartedness, till they were overcome with their own sadness, and were made captives. After this were done, the hope of their revenge would begin to cheat them, and whatsoever their anger desired they would promise themselves that this would be their security.

"I told thee formerly in this same book, that all creatures desire some good from nature: but unrighteous kings can do no good. Hence I said it to thee. This is no wonder, because they subject themselves to all the vices that I before named to thee. Thus they are necessarily under the power of these masters, whom at first they might have subdued. And, what is worse, they will not oppose these when they might begin to do it; and thus cannot continue in the struggle, though then they would have had no guilt."

The warmth of feeling, and voluntary additions and amplifications here exhibited by Alfred, on this delicate subject, in which he was so personally involved, tempt one to recollect his own faults in the first part of his reign, and to believe that he is describing, with a generous self-reproach, some of his own former tendencies and imperfections, and some of the effects of his own humiliations.

The freedom which Alfred has taken in adding to his author what he pleases; in substituting opinions and reasoning of his own instead of those he found; and of enlarging upon the topics that pleased him, makes this work a record of the king's own feelings. Hence many parts in which the king paraphrases his original become interesting to us as evidences of his own sentiments, although the substance of them be found in Boetius. One of these is the conversation on adversity. Alfred had become well acquainted with this unwelcome visiter, and he repeats, enlarges, and sometimes alters what Boetius had said upon it, sufficiently to show that he has given us the effusions of his own heart and mind upon the subject. From a king who did not write, like Seneca, in the full enjoyment of every luxury, which he never lessened; but who formed and penned his thoughts amid vicissitudes, difficulties, privations and dangers that would have overwhelmed most other men, a statement of the uses of adversity is peculiarly valuable for its sincerity, as well as its practical

wisdom. Nor are the ease and breaks of the dialogue, and flow of style, less remarkable than the justness of the feeling, in the following passages :*

“ Dost thou now understand whither this discourse will lead us ?”

“ Tell me whither it will.”

“ I would say, that every fortune is good ; whether men think it good, or whether they think it evil.”

“ I imagine it may easily be so, though we should at times think otherwise.”

“ There is no doubt that every fortune is good in those things that be right and useful ; for this reason, every fortune, whether it be pleasant, or whether it be unpleasant, cometh to the good for the purpose that it may do one of two things : either it urges them to this, that they should act better than they did before, or it rewards them for what they have done well before. And again, every fortune of those things that come to evil men, cometh for these two purposes, whether it be severe, or whether it be pleasant ; if severe fortune cometh to evil men, it comes as a retribution for their evils, or for correction, and to teach them that they do not act so again.”

“ Then I began to wonder, and said—

“ Is it from inwardly right observation that thou explainest this so ?”

“ It is as thou sayest. But I would, if thou art willing, that we turn a little while to the popular discourse on this subject, lest they should say that we are talking above man’s understanding.”

“ Speak as you wish.”

“ Dost thou suppose that that is not good which is useful ?”

“ I suppose that it is good.”

“ Then every fortune is useful that happens to thee. It either teaches, or it punishes.”

“ This is true.”

“ Adverse fortune is a good to those who strive against vices, and inclineth them to good.”

“ I cannot contradict this.”

“ What dost thou suppose of that good fortune which comes often to good men in this world so as to be a foretoken of eternal blessings ? Whether can people say of this that it is evil fortune ?”

“ Then I smiled and said—

“ No man would say that, but would declare that it is very good. So also it would be.”

“ What thinkest thou of that invisible fortune that often threatens the evil to punish them ? Whether would this folk suppose that that was good fortune ?”

“ They would not suppose that it was good, but would think that it was very miserable.”

“ Let us then pause, that we may not think so as the people think ; if we should think on this as the people suppose, then we should lose all reason and all rightwiseness.”

“ Why should we lose these ever the more ?”

“ Because the populace say that every severe and unpleasant fortune is an evil. But we should not believe this ; because that every fortune is good, as we before mentioned, whether it be severe, or whether it be pleasant.”

“ Then I was afraid, and said—

“ That is true which thou sayest. Yet, I know not how I dare to mention it to foolish men, because no foolish man can believe it.”

“ Then Wisdom severely opposed, and said—

* To see how much Alfred has added of his own, both of dialogue and sentiment, on this part, the reader may compare *Boswell*, lib. iv. *prosa* 7.

“For this reason no wise man should tremble or lament at what may happen to him in this way, whether severe or agreeable fortune comes to him, no more than a brave vassal should lament about how often he must fight. Nor will his praise be less. But the hope is that all will be greater. So also will the meed of the wise be greater, the more angry and severer fortune that befalls him. No wise man should desire a soft life, if he careth for any virtues or any worship here from the world, or for eternal life after this world. But every wise man should struggle both against hard fortune and against a pleasant one: lest he should presume upon his good fortune, or despair of his bad one. But it is needful to him that he should find out the middle way between severe and agreeable fortune, that he may not desire a more pleasant one, nor more enjoyment than will be suitable to him; nor again, a severer fortune; for this reason, that he may not suffer any thing unbecoming. But it is in their own power which of these they should choose. If then they will find out this middle path, then shall they themselves moderate their good fortune, and their enjoyments. Then will God mitigate to them all severe fortune, both in this world and in that which is to come, so as that they may bear it.”^a

Alfred now omits all the seventh metre of Boetius but the last three verses and a half;^b and these he enlarges upon into this animated exhortation, which obviously issues from his heart:

“Well! O wise men! Well! Go all into the way which the illustrious examples of those good men, and those worthy heroes that were before you, lead you. Oh! ye slothful and idle loiterers, why will ye be so unprofitable and so enervated? Why will ye not ask after the wise and worthy; such as they were that lived before you? and why will ye not then, after you have inquired into their customs, listen to them the most earnestly you may? For they struggled after worship in this world, and toiled for a good fame by good works, and wrought a good example for those that should be after them. Hence they dwell now above the stars in everlasting blessedness for their good works.”^c

After a discussion that the five most desired things of human life are, wealth, power, worship, fame, and pleasure; and that all these fail to give true happiness, their conversation turns upon what is the supreme good in which this can be obtained. All this part is translated by Alfred with the same spirit and freedom, and vivacity of dialogue, of which we have already given specimens. Alfred, at length, adds of his own:

“That, methinketh, would be the true and perfect felicity, that would give to its followers permanent affluence and eternal power, and perpetual reverence, and everlasting fame, and fulness of joy;”

and asks Wisdom to inform him where this is to be found; who, reminding him that Plato advised us to implore the Divine help in small things as well as in great, proceeds to utter that noble address to the Deity, of which Dr. Johnson has so finely trans-

^a Alfred, 136-138.

^b There are in Boetius: “Go now, ye brave! where the lofty way of a great example leads you. Why should you, inert, uncover your backs? The earth, when conquered, gives us the stars.” *Lib. iv. met. 7.*

^c Alfred, p. 138.

lated the beginning and the conclusion into those beautiful lines already cited.

Parts of this address are very fine in Boetius, but the whole is finer in Alfred; for it is made more natural, more flowing from the heart, and more expanded, both in the feeling and the illustrations. It is a noble specimen of Alfred's lofty and enlarged, and even philosophical theism—the best foundation, and most attractive support of Christianity. He mingles with his devotion all the natural philosophy he possessed. Our ancient king has added to it so much of his own as to make it almost his original composition.

The extent of his additions will be perceived when the reader is told that the passage occupies 28 lines in Boetius,^d and 131 in Alfred:

"O Lord! How great and how wonderful art thou! Thou! that all thy creature, visible and also invisible, hast wonderfully made, and wisely dost govern. Thou! who the courses of time, from the beginning of the world to the end, hast established in such order, that from Thee they all proceed, and to Thee return. Thou! that all moving creatures stirrest to thy will, while thou Thyself remainest ever tranquil and unchangeable. Hence none exists mightier than THOU art; none like THEE. No necessity has taught Thee to make what thou hast made; but, of Thine own will, and by Thy own power, THOU hast created all things. Yet THOU hast no need of any.

"Most wonderful is the nature of Thy goodness, for it is all one, Thou and Thy goodness. Good comes not from without to THEE; but it is Thine own, and all that we have of good in this world, and that is coming to us from without, proceeds from THEE. Thou hast no envy towards any thing.

"None, therefore,^e is more skillful than THOU art. No one is like Thee; because Thou hast conceived and made all good from thine own thought. No man has given Thee a pattern; for none of these things existed before Thee to create any thing or not. But THOU hast created all things very good and very fair; and THOU Thyself art the highest and the fairest good.

"As THOU Thyself didst conceive, so hast Thou made this world; and Thou rulest it as Thou dost will; and Thou distributest Thyself all good as Thou pleasest. Thou hast made all creatures alike, or in some things unlike, but Thou hast named them with one name. Thou hast named them collectively, and called them the World. Yet this single name Thou hast divided into four elements.^f One of these is Earth; another, Water; the third, Air;

^d That the reader may perceive what is Alfred's own, we shall add a version of his original. It begins, "O THOU, who governest the world with continual reason! Author of the earth and heaven! who commandest time to move from eternity, and stable and enduring thyself, givest all things to be moved! Whom external causes have not impelled to form the work of flowing matter, but the innate form of the supreme good, void of all envy." Boet. lib. iii. met. 9.

^e Boetius proceeds: "Thou leadest all things by thy superior example. Fairest of all thyself! Thou bearest the fair world in thy mind, forming it in a resembling image, and commanding the perfect to have perfect parts." Lib. iii. met. 9.

^f "Thou bindest the elements by numbers, that cold may suit with flame, and the dry with the liquid, lest the purer fire should fly off, or their weight lead the earth to be submerged. Thou connecting the middle soul that moves all things of three-fold nature, resolvest it through consonant members. When divided, it assembles motion into two orbs, goes on to return into itself, circles round the profound mind, and turns heaven with a similar impress." Boetius, *ibid.*

the fourth, Fire. To each of these Thou hast established his own separate position; yet, each is classed with the other; and so harmoniously bound by Thy commandment, that none of them intrudes on the limits of the other. The cold striveth with the heat, and the wet with the dry. The nature of the earth and water is to be cold. The earth is dry and cold; the water wet and cold. The air then is called either cold, or wet, or warm; nor is this a wonder, because it is made in the middle between the dry and the cold earth, and the hot fire. The fire is the uppermost of all this world's creations.

"Wonder-like is Thy plan, which Thou hast executed, both that created things should have limits between them, and be also intermingled; the dry and cold earth under the cold and wet water, so that the soft and flowing water should have a floor on the firm earth, because it cannot of itself stand. But the earth preserves it, and absorbs a portion, and by thus imbibing it the ground is watered till it grows and blossoms, and brings forth fruits. But if the water did not thus moisten it, the earth would be dried up and driven away by the wind like dust and ashes.

"Nor could any living creature enjoy the earth, or the water, or any earthly thing, for the cold, if Thou didst not a little intermix it with fire. Wonderful the skill with which Thou hast created that the fire should not burn the water and the earth. It is now mingled with both. Nor, again, can the water and the earth entirely extinguish the fire. The water's own country is on the earth, and also in the air, and again, above the sky: but the fire's own place is over all the visible creatures of the world; and though it is mingled with all the elements, yet it cannot entirely overcome any of them; because it has not the leave of the Almighty.

"The earth, then, is heavier and thicker than the other elements, because it is lower than any other except the sky. Hence the sky is every day on its exterior; yet it no where more approaches it, but in every place it is equally nigh both above and below.

"Each of the elements that we formerly spoke about has its own station apart, and though each is mingled with the other, so that none of them can exist without the other, yet they are not perceptible within the rest. Thus water and earth are very difficult to be seen, or to be comprehended by unwise men, in fire, and yet they are therewith commingled. So is also the fire in stones and water very difficult to be perceived; but it is there.

"Thou bindest fire with very indissoluble chains, that it may not go to its own station, which is the mightiest fire that exists above us, lest it should abandon the earth, and all other creatures should be destroyed from extreme cold in case it should wholly depart.

"Thou hast most wonderfully and firmly established the earth, so that it halts on no side, and no earthly thing falls from it; but all earth-like things it holds, that they cannot leave it. Nor is it easier to them to fall off downwards than upwards.

"Thou also stirrest the threefold soul in accordant limbs, so that there is no less of that soul in the least finger than in all the body. By this I know that the soul is threefold, because foreign writers say that it hath three natures. One of these natures, is that it desires; another, that it becomes angry; the third, that it is rational. Two of these natures animals possess the same as men: one is desire, the other is anger. But man alone has reason, no other creature has it. Hence he hath excelled all earthly creatures in thought and understanding; because reason shall govern both desire and wrath. It is the distinguishing virtue of the soul.

"Thou hast so made the soul that she should always revolve upon herself as all this sky turneth, or as a wheel rolls round, inquiring about her Creator or herself, or about the creatures on the earth. When she inquireth about her Creator she rises above herself; when she searches into herself, then she is within herself; and she becomes below herself when she loves earthly things, and wonders at them.

"Thou, O LORD! wilt grant the soul a dwelling in the heavens,^c and wilt endow it there with worthy gifts, to every one according to their deserts. Thou wilt make it to shine very bright, and yet with brightness very various; some more splendidly, some less bright, as the stars are, each according to his earning.

"Thou, O LORD! gatherest the heaven-like souls, and the earth-like bodies; and Thou minglest them in this world so that they come hither from Thee, and to Thee again from hence aspire. Thou hast filled the earth with animals of various kinds, and then sowed it with different seeds of trees and herba.

"Grant now, O LORD,^b to our minds that they may ascend to Thee from the difficulties of this world; that from the occupations here they may come to Thee. With the opened eyes of our mind may we behold the noble fountain of all good! *THOU ART TRIS.* Give us then a healthy sight to our understanding, that we may fasten it upon *TRIS.* Drive away this mist that now hangs before our mental vision, and enlighten our eyes with Thy light. For *THOU* art the brightness of the true light. Thou art the soft rest of the just. Thou causest them to see it. Thou art the beginning of all things, and their end. Thou supportest all things without fatigue. Thou art the path and the leader, and the place to which the path conducts us. All men tend to *TRIS.*"

One of the most curious parts of Alfred's Boetius is his metaphysical reasoning.

When he comes to the fifth book, he leaves off translating his author, and indulges his own meditations on chance, free will, the Divine prescience, providence, the perceptions of animals; on the difference betwixt human reason and the understanding of angels; and on the Divine nature.

That an Anglo-Saxon, when his whole nation was so illiterate, and both public and private affairs so disturbed, should attend at all to metaphysical studies is extraordinary; but that Alfred, the king whose life was so embarrassed by disease and warlike tumult, should have had either leisure or inclination to cultivate them, and should have reasoned upon them with so much concise good sense as the following extracts will show that he did, is not the least surprising circumstance in his character. But a sagacious judgment attended him in every thing that he attempted.

How clearly has Alfred apprehended, and with what congenial enlargement and philosophy of mind has he in his own way stated and condensed the reasoning, more diffused and not so clear, of Boetius, on chance. The sentence in italics is rather implied than expressed, in Boetius^d

^c Boetius adds: "Thou with like causes conveyest souls and inferior life, and adapting the sublime beings to lighter chariots, thou sowest them in heaven and in earth, and by a benign law maketh them, converging, to be brought back to Thee like the flame of a torch." *Boet. lib. iii. met. 9.*

^b This, which is the best part of the metrum of Boetius, is literally thus: "Grant my mind, O Father! to ascend to thine august seat. Grant it to survey the sources of good; grant it, with the attained light, to fix the visible eyes of its intellect on Thee. Cast off the clouds and weight of this terrestrial mass, and shine on it in thy splendour; for *THOU* art serenity; thou art rest to the pious. To behold Thee is our end, O origin, supporter, leader, path, and termination!" *Ibid.*

^d Alfred, p. 77-80. May we not say, without exaggeration, that Alfred has improved upon his original? ! See *Boet. lib. v. prom. 1.*

“It is nought when men say that any thing happens by chance, because every thing comes from some other things or causes, therefore it has not happened from chance; but if it came not from any thing, then it would have occurred from chance.”

“Then, said I, ‘whence first came the name?’ Then, quoth he, ‘My darling, Aristotle mentioned it in the book that is called *Fisica*.’ Then said I, ‘how does he explain it?’ He answered, ‘Men said formerly, when any thing happened to them unexpectedly, that this was by chance. As if any one should now dig the earth, and find there a treasure of gold, and should then say that this happened by chance. But yet, I know that, if the digger had not dug into the earth, and no man before had hidden the gold there, he would by no means have found it. Therefore it was not found by chance.’”^x

Could any reasoner have put this philosophical doctrine more correctly or concisely?

In the fifth book, we have Alfred’s thoughts on the liberty of human actions. They are founded on the suggestions of Boetius;¹ but he not only selects from his original what he liked on this subject, and compressed what he found diffused, into a small and expressive compass, but he states it so much in his own manner, as to show that he had well considered the subject, and has given us his genuine sentiments upon it:

“I would ask thee, whether we have any freedom or any power, what we should do, or what we should not do? or does the Divine preordination or fate compel us to that which we wish?

“Then, said he, ‘We have much power. There is no rational creature which has not freedom. He that hath reason may judge and discriminate what he should will, and what he should shun; and every man hath this freedom, that he knows what he should will and what he should not will. All rational creatures have a like freedom. Angels have right judgments, and good will, and all that they desire they obtain very easily, because they wish nothing wrong. But no creature hath freedom and reason, except angels and men. Men have always freedom; and the more of it as they lead their minds towards divine things. But they have less freedom when they incline their minds near to this world’s wealth and honours. They have no freedom when they themselves subject their own wills to the vices; but, so soon as they turn away their mind from good, they are blinded with unwisdom.’”^a

All the good sense of this much-agitated discussion seems to be condensed in these clear and forcible passages.

Alfred, instead of translating the subsequent observations of Boetius, has inserted the following questions, and their answers from his own mind. The answer contains an illustration, that strongly shows his own high-mindedness as a king, in loving to have free men in his court:

“I said, ‘I am sometimes very much disturbed.’ Quoth he, ‘At what?’ I answered:

“It is at this which thou sayest, that God gives to every one freedom to do evil, as well as good, whichever he will; and thou sayest also, that God knoweth every thing before it happens; and, thou also sayest, that nothing

^x Alfred, p. 120.

¹ In his fifth book.

^a Alfred, p. 140.

happens, but that God wills, or consents to it: and thou sayest that it shall all go as he has appointed. Now, I wonder at this: why he should consent that evil men should have freedom that they may do evil, as well as good whichsoever they will, when he knew before that they would do evil.

"Then quoth he, 'I may very easily answer thee this remark. How would it now look to you, if there were any very powerful king, and he had no freemen in all his kingdom, but that all were slaves?'

"Then said I, 'It would not be thought by me right, nor also reasonable, if servile men only should attend upon him.'

"Then quoth he, 'It would be more unnatural, if God, in all his kingdom, had no free creature under his power. Therefore he made two rational creatures free; angels and men. He gave them the great gift of freedom. Hence they could do evil as well as good, whichsoever they would. He gave this very fixed gift, and a very fixed law with that gift to every man unto his end. The freedom is, that man may do what he will; and the law is, that he will render to every man according to his works, either in this world or in the future one; good or evil, whichsoever he doth. Men may obtain through this freedom whatsoever they will; but they cannot escape death, though they may by good conduct hinder it, so that it shall come later. Indeed, they may defer it to old age, if they do not want good will for good works.'

"Then said I, 'Thou hast well removed that doubt.'"

This solution of the difficulty proposed, shows that Alfred was the true king of an English people. He felt from his own great heart, that the Divine Sovereign must prefer to govern freemen rather than slaves; because such were his own sentiments as a king. The force of his answer rested on this noble feeling. If it be derogatory to the dignity of an earthly monarch, to have only slaves for his subjects, how much more unnatural would it be, that the King of kings should have no creatures with free will.

The following passages on the same metaphysical subject are also Alfred's own compositions, which he inserts instead of the reasoning of Boetius. They obviously express his own feelings, and investigations, and the arguments by which his doubts were satisfied:

"But I am yet grieved with much more trouble, even to sadness.

"What is thy grief about?

"It is about the Divine Providence. Because we heard it, some while since, said, that all shall happen as God, at the beginning had appointed, and that no man can change it. Now methinketh, that he errs, when he honoureth the good, and also when he punishes the evil; if it be true, that it was so shaped by him, that they cannot do otherwise. We labour unnecessarily when we pray, and when we fast, or give alms; if we have no more merit from it, than those that in all things proceed according to their own will, and run after their bodily pleasures."

The answer begins by a reference to Cicero, whom Boetius had cited for the argument, for which Alfred had substituted his own difficulty. But he deviates immediately into reasoning of his own.

"I tell thee, if this be true, we ought to say, that it was an unnecessary commandment in the divine books, that God should order man to forsake evil and

^a Alfred, p. 141, 142.

do good : and, again, the saying which he expressed, that the more a man laboureth the greater reward he shall receive. I wonder why thou hast forgotten all that we spoke about before. We said before, that the Divine Providence wrought every good and no evil, nor appointed any to be made, nor ever made any ; but that indeed we are directed to good.

“ It is thought evil by common people that He should avenge or punish any one for his evil.

“ But ! did we not also say in this same book, that God had appointed freedom to be given to men, and made them free ; and that if they held this freedom well, he would greatly dignify them with everlasting power ; and that if they injured this freedom, that he would then punish them with death ?

“ He has appointed, that if they sin in any thing against this freedom, they shall, by penitence, compensate for it, to recover that freedom ; and if any of them will be so hard-hearted, that he would do no repentance, that he shall then have a just punishment.

“ He has appointed all creatures to be servants, except angels and men, and hence they are the servants of these other creatures. They have their ministerial duties till dooms-day. But men and angels, they are free. He dispenses with their servitude.

“ What ! can men say, that the Divine Providence has appointed this, that they should not fulfil these duties, or how ? May they neglect them ; that they may not do good ? Now it is written that God will render to every man according to his works. Why then should any man be idle, that he work not !—

“ Then said I, ‘ It is obvious enough to me, that God knew it all before, both good and evil, before it happened. But I know not, whether that shall all happen unchangeably, which he knows and has appointed.’

“ Then quoth he, ‘ THERE IS NO NEED THAT ALL SHOULD HAPPEN UNCHANGEABLY : though some of it shall happen unchangeably. This will be that, which will be best for our necessities ; and that will be his will. But there are some so instructed that there is no necessity for this, and though its being done would neither injure, nor benefit, nor be any harm, yet it will not be done.’

“ Think now, by thyself, whether thou hast appointed any thing so firmly, that thou thinkest that it shall never be changed by thy will, nor that thou canst be without it : or whether thou again art so divided in opinion, on any thought, whether it shall happen to help thee, or whether it shall not. Many are the things which God knows before they happen : and he knows also whether it will hurt his creatures that they should happen. But he knows not this for the purpose of willing that they should happen, but that he may take previous care that they should not happen. Thus a good ship-steerer perceives many a stormy wind before it occurs, and folds his sail, and awhile also lays down his mast, and then abides the beating, if, before the threatening of the adverse wind, he can warn himself against the weather.”

In this train of original reasoning, it is remarkable that Alfred’s sound and practical understanding has fixed itself on the true solution of this difficult question. The Divine prescience foresees all things that can happen, not that every thing which he foresees should happen ; but that he may select out of the possibilities which his foresight anticipates, those things which it will be most beneficial to his creation to take place ; nor does he even will these unalterably. He binds himself in no chains. His laws are not like those of the Medes and Persians, immutable, when the

course and changes of circumstances make alteration advisable. "There is no need," as our royal sage intimates, "that all things should unchangeably happen." He felt it to be wiser, from his own experience, to reserve and exercise the right of making new determinations and arrangements as new exigencies occurred; and he has reasonably applied the same principle to the Divine government. The Deity could make all things unchangeable if he pleased, and could from all eternity have so appointed them. But there was no need for his doing this. It was wiser and more expedient that he should not do so. He is under no necessity, at all times, or at any time, to exert all his possibilities of power. He uses on every occasion so much of it as that occasion requires, and no more. He involves himself in no fetters of necessity. He is always doing what it is the best and fittest to do, and reserves to himself the right and the freedom of making at every period what new arrangement the progress or the new positions and the welfare of his creation requires.

Thus Alfred has hit upon the real wisdom of opinion on this contested subject, which both theologians and metaphysicians have failed to attain. He could not have left a more impressive instance of the penetrating sagacity of his clear and honest mind.

Boetius was advancing to the point but missed it; for he seems to have thought, that whatever was foreseen must occur. Alfred's idea of an exerted foresight to choose from, without the necessity of the thing foreseen therefore unalterably occurring; was a beautiful distinction of his correct judgment.

Instead of the reasoning of Boetius, in the fifth *prosa* of his last book, Alfred substitutes the following of his own.

"Then, said I, 'Thou hast very well helped me by this speech. I wonder why so many wise men should have laboured so much on this subject, and have found out so little that was wise.'

"Then, quoth he, 'Why wonderest thou so much? Is it so easy to be understood? How! knowest thou not, that many things are not understood so as they exist; but according to the quality of the understanding of him that inquires after them. Such is wisdom. No man from this world can understand it, such as it really is; though every one strives according to the quality of his understanding, that he may perceive it if he can. Wisdom may entirely comprehend us, such as we are, though we may not wholly comprehend that, such as it is in itself; because wisdom is God. He seeth all our works, both good and evil, before they are done, or for this purpose, thought. But he compels us not to this, that we must necessarily do the good; nor prevents us from doing evil; because he has given us freedom. I can teach thee also some examples, by which thou mayest the easier understand this speech. What! thou knowest the sight, and the hearing, and the taste: they perceive the body of man, and yet they perceive it not alike. The ears perceive so that they hear, but they perceive not yet the body entirely as it is; our sense of feeling must touch it, and feel that it is the body. We cannot feel whether this be black or white, fair or not fair; but the sight at the beginning turns to these points; and as the eyes look on things, they perceive all the appearance

of the body. But I will give thee some further explanation, that thou mayest know that which thou wonderest at.'

"Then said I, 'What is this?'

"He said: 'It is that man understands only that which he separately perceives in others. He perceives separately through his eyes; separately through his ears; separately through his nostrils; separately by his reason; separately by his wise comprehension. There are many living things that are unmoving, such as shell-fish are; and these have yet some portion of perception; or they would not else live, if they had no grain of perception. Some can see, some can hear, some taste, some smell; but the moving animals are more like man, because they have all that the unmoving creatures have, and also more too. This is that they obey men. They love what loves them, and hate what hates them; and they fly from what they hate, and seek what they love. But men have all that we have before mentioned, and also add to them the great gift of reason. Angels have a still wiser understanding.

"Hence are these creatures thus made, that the unmoving shall not exalt themselves above the moving ones, nor contend with them; nor the moving ones above men; nor men above angels; nor angels strive against God.

"But this is miserable, that the greatest part of men look not to that which is above them, which is what angels and wise men have; this is a wise understanding. But most men now move with cattle, in this, that they desire the lusts of the world like cattle. If we now had any portion of an unhesitating understanding, such as angels have, then we might perceive that such an understanding would be much better than our reason. Though we investigate many things, we have little ready knowledge free from doubt. But to angels there is no doubt of any of those things which they know, because their ready knowledge is much better than our reasoning; as our reasoning is better than the perception of animals. Any portion of understanding that is given to them, is either to those that are prone, or to those that are erect. But let us now elevate our minds as supremely as we may towards the high roof of the highest understanding, that thou mayest most swiftly and most easily come to thine own kindred from whence thou camest before. There may thy mind and thy reason see openly that which they now doubt about;—every thing, whether of the divine prescience, which we have been discoursing on, or of our freedom, or of all such things.'"^p

What an easy flow of reasoning, on topics, which the Aristotelian schoolmen afterwards bewildered without improving!

If it be interesting to read the philosophical reasonings of great men on the sublime subject of Deity, and on that which constitutes the supreme good, it is peculiarly so to observe how Alfred treats of it, when we recollect the age he lived in, and the barbaric minds with which he was surrounded. He has enlarged so copiously on the suggestions of Boetius,^q added so much to his text, inserted so much vigour of reasoning, and also thrown it so much more into dialogue, that it claims our attention as another specimen of his original composition. He argues and thinks like a Platonic philosopher.

"I would ask thee first one thing. Whether thinkest thou that any thing in this world is so good as that it may give us full happiness? I ask this of thee. I do not wish that any false likeness should deceive you and me, instead of the

^p Alfred, p. 144-146.

^q The reader may compare, with the king's effusion, Boetius, lib. iii. proem 10.

true comfort; for no man can deny that some good must be the most superior. Just as there is some great and deep fountain, from which many brooks and rivers run. Hence men say of some advantages, that they are not complete good, because there is some little deficiency in them, which they are not entirely without. Yet every thing would go to naught, if it had not some good in it.

"From this you may understand, that from the greatest good come the less goods; not the greatest from the less: no more than the river can be the spring and source, though the spring may flow into a river. As the river may return again to the spring, so every good cometh from God, and returns to him; and he is the full and the perfect good; and there is no deficiency of will in him. Now you may clearly understand that this is God himself.

"Then answered I, and said, 'Thou hast very rightly and very rationally overcome and convinced me. I cannot deny this, nor indeed think otherwise, but that it is all so as thou sayest.'

"Then said Wisdom, 'Now I would that thou shouldest think carefully till thou understand where true happiness is. How! knowest thou not, that all mankind are with one mind consenting that God is the beginning of all good things, and the governor of all creatures? He is the supreme good. No man now doubts this, because he knows nothing better, and indeed nothing equally good. Hence every reasoning tells us, and all men confess the same, that God is the highest good. Thus they signify that all good is in him; for if it were not, then he would not be that which he is called; but something has existed before him or is more excellent. Then that would be better than he is; but nothing was ever before him, nor more excellent than he is, nor more precious than himself. Hence he is the beginning, and the fountain, and the roof of all good. This is clear enough. Now it is openly shown, that the true felicities are in no other existing thing but in God.'

"Then said I, 'I am consenting to this.'

"Then he answered, 'I conjure thee that thou rationally understand this; that God is full of every perfection, and of every good, and of every happiness.'

"I then replied, 'I cannot fully understand it. Wherefore tell me again, the same that thou didst mention before.'

"He said, 'Then I will say it again. I would not that thou shouldest think this, that God is the father and the origin of all creatures, and yet that his supreme goodness, of which he is full, comes to him from anywhere from without. I also would not have thee think that any other can be his good and happiness but himself; because, if thou supposest that the good which he hath, comes to him anywhere from without, then that thing from which it comes to him would be better than he, if there were such. But it is very silly, and a very great sin, that men should think so of God; either to suppose again, that any thing were before him, or better than he is, or like him. But we should agree that he is the best of all things.'

"If thou now believest that God exists so as men are, either he is a man that hath soul and body, or his goodness is that which gathereth good elsewhere, and then holds it together, and rules it. If thou then believest that it is so with God, then shalt thou necessarily believe that some power is greater than his, which it so unites as that it maketh the course of things. But whatever thing is divided from others is distinct,—is another thing, though they may be placed together. If, then, any thing be divided from the highest good, it will not be that highest good. Yet it would be a great sin to think of God that there could be any good without him, or any separated from him. Hence nothing is better than He is, or even as good. What thing can be better than its creator? Hence I say, with juster reason, that He is the supreme good in his own nature, which is the origin of all things.'

"Then I said, 'Now thou hast very rightly convinced me.'

"Then quoth he, 'Did I not before tell thee that the supreme good, and the highest happiness were one?' I answered, 'So it is.' He replied, 'Shall we then say that this is any thing else but God?' I said, 'I cannot deny this; because I assented to it before.'"

The following passages are from Alfred's own pen. Speaking of the Deity, he adds:

"He is the stem and the foundation of all blessings. From Him all good cometh, and every thing tends to Him again. He governs them. Thus He is the beginning, and the support of all blessings. They resemble Him so as the light and brightness of the planets come from the sun: some are brighter, some are less bright. So also the moon; he enlightens as much as the sun shines on him. When she shineth all over him, then is he all bright."

"When I heard these observations I was then astonished, and much awed, and exclaimed, 'This is a wonderful and delightful, and reasonable observation which thou now exprestest to me!'"

"He answered, 'It is not more pleasant nor wiser than the thing that thy discourse was about. We will now talk about that; but methinketh it good that we connect this with the former.' Then replied I, 'What is that?'"

After this, the concise question of Boetius, whether "the several things of which beatitude consists, do not unite, as it were, in one body of blessedness, with a certain variety of parts or whether any one of them hath it complete to which the rest may be referred," is thus amplified and commented upon by Alfred with his own illustrations and reasonings:

"What I expressed to thee before was, that God was happiness; and that from this true felicity come all the other goods that we discoursed about before; and return to him. Thus from the sea the water cometh into the earth, and there freshens itself. It proceedeth then up into a spring; it goeth then into a brook; then into a river; then along the river till it floweth again into the sea. But I would now ask thee how thou hast understood this assertion? Whether dost thou suppose that the five goods which we have often mentioned before, that is, power, dignities, celebrity, abundance, and bliss;—I would know whether you suppose that those goods were limbs of the true felicity, so as a man's limbs are those of one person, and belong all to one body? Or dost thou think that some one of the five goods makes the true felicity, and afterwards that the four others become its goods: as now the soul and body compose one man?"

"The one man hath many limbs, and yet to these two, that is, to the soul and the body, belong all this man's comforts both spiritual and corporeal. It is now the good of the body that a man be fair and strong, and long and broad, with many other excellences beside these. Yet they are not the body itself; because, though he should lose any of these good things, he would still be what he was before. Then the excellences of the soul are, prudence, moderation, patience, righteousness, and wisdom, and many such virtues; and yet, as the soul is one thing, so the virtues are another."

"I then said, 'I wish that thou wouldst explain to me yet more clearly, about the other goods that belong to the true felicity.'"

"He answered, 'Did I not inform thee before that the true happiness is God?' 'Yes,' I replied, 'Thou hast said he was the supreme good.' Then

* Alfred, p. 81-83.

* Ibid. p. 84.

* Boet. lib. iii. pr. 10.

quoth he, 'Art thou now consenting that power, and dignities, and fame, and plenty, and joy, and happiness, and the supreme good, are all one; and that this one must be the Deity?'

"I said, 'How should I now deny this?' Then he answered, 'Whether dost thou think that those things which are the limbs of the true felicity is that felicity itself?'

"I replied, 'I know now what thou wouldest say; but it will please me better that you should speak to me some while about it than ask me.' He then said, 'How! couldest thou not reflect that if these goods were limbs of the true felicity, they would be somewhat distinct from it as a man's limbs are from his body? But the nature of these limbs is that they make up one body, and yet are not wholly alike.'

"I then remarked, 'Thou needest no more speak about it. Thou hast explained it to me clearly enough that these goods are no-whit separated from the true felicity.'

"Then quoth he, 'Thou comprehendest it right enough. Thou now understandest that all good is the same that happiness is, and this happiness is the supreme good, and the supreme good is God, and God is always inseparably one.'

"I said, 'There is no doubt of it. But I wish you now to discourse to me a little of what is unknown.'"

All the preceding is the addition of Alfred to the short suggestion already given from Boetius.

Shortly after the above occurs the tenth metrum of Boetius,* which Alfred paraphrases, or rather imitates, so as to make the whole of it, in point of composition, his own, and nearly so in its thoughts.

It is Alfred's corollary from the preceding dialogue.

"Well! O men; Well! Every one of you that be free, tend to this good, and to this felicity: and he that is now in bondage with the fruitless love of this world let him seek liberty; that he may come to this felicity. For this is the only rest of all our labours. This is the only port always calm after the storms and billows of our toils. This is the only station of peace; the only comforter of grief after all the sorrows of the present life. The golden stones and the silvery ones, and jewels of all kinds, and all the riches before us, will not enlighten the eyes of the mind, nor improve their acuteness to perceive the appearance of the true felicity. They rather blind the mind's eyes than make them sharper; because all things that please here, in this present life, are earthly; because they are flying. But the admirable brightness that brightens all things and governs all, it will not destroy the soul, but will enlighten it. If, then, any man could perceive the splendour of the heavenly light with the pure eyes of his mind, he would then say that the radiance of

* Alfred, p. 84-86.

† The original is: "Come here, all ye that are thus captivated; whom deceitful desire, dulling your earthly minds, binds with its wicked chains; here will be rest from your labours; here, a serene part where you may remain quiet. This is the only asylum open to the wretched. Taurus never gave any thing in its golden sands, nor Herms from his ruddy bank, or Indus near the heated circle, mingling green with white stones. They blaze to the sight, and the more conceal the blinded mind within their darkness. In this, whatever pleases and excites the mind, the low earth nourishes in its caverns. The splendour with which heaven is governed and flourishes, shuns the obscure ruins of the soul. Whoever can note this light, will deny the bright rays of Phœbus." Boet. lib. iii. met. 10.

the shining of the sun is not superior to this,—is not to be compared to the everlasting brightness of God.”^v

The last chapter of his Boetius is Alfred’s composition. He has taken a few hints from his original,^z but he has made what he has borrowed his own, by his mode of expression, and he has added from his own mind all the rest. It is a fine exhibition of his enlightened views and feelings on that great subject, which has, in every age, so much interested the truly philosophical mind; and we may add, that no one has contemplated it with more sympathy, rationality, and even sublimity, than our illustrious king. His description of the Deity is entirely his own :

“Hence we should with all our power inquire after God, that we may know what he is. Though it should not be our lot to know what He is, yet we should from the dignity of the understanding which he has given us, try to explore it.

“Every creature, both rational and irrational, discovers this! that God is eternal. Because so many creatures, so great and so fair, could never be subject to less creatures and to less power than they all are, nor indeed to many equal ones.

“Then said I, ‘What is eternity?’

“He answered, ‘Thou hast asked me a great and difficult thing to comprehend. If thou wilt understand it, thou must first have the eyes of thy mind clean and lucid. I may not conceal from thee what I know of this.

“‘Know thou that there are three things in this world: one is temporary; to this there is both a beginning and an end: and I do not know any creature that is temporary, but hath his beginning and his end. Another thing is eternal which hath a beginning, but hath not an end: I know not when it began, but I know that it will never end: such are angels and the souls of men. The third thing is eternal without end, as without beginning: this is God. Between these three there is a very great discrimination. If we were to investigate all this subject we should come late to the end of this book, or never.

“‘But one thing thou must necessarily know of this previously—Why is God called the highest eternity?’

“Then said I, ‘Why?’

“Then quoth he, ‘Because we know very little of that which was before us, except by memory and by asking; and yet we know less of that which will be after us. That alone exists rationally to us which is present; but to Him all is present, as well that which was before, as that which now is; and that which after us will be. All of it is present to Him.

“‘His riches increase not, nor do they ever diminish. He never remembers any thing, because He never forgets aught: He seeks nothing, nor inquires, because He knows it all: He searches for nothing, because He loses nothing: He pursues no creature, because none can fly from Him: He dreads nothing, because He knows no one more powerful than Himself, nor even like Him. He is always giving, and never wants. He is always Almighty, because He always wishes good, and never evil. To Him there is no need of any thing. He is always seeing: He never sleeps: He is always alike mild and kind: He will always be eternal. Hence there never was a time that He was not, nor ever will be. He is always free. He is

^v Alfred, p. 87, 88.

^z How few these are may be seen by those who read the last chapter of Boetius. Lib. v. pr. 6.

not compelled to any work. From His divine power He is everywhere present. His greatness no man can measure. He is not to be conceived bodily, but spiritually, so as now wisdom is and reason. But He is wisdom: He is reason itself.'⁷

We can scarcely believe that we are perusing the written thoughts of an Anglo-Saxon of the ninth century, who could not even read till he was twelve years old; who could then find no instructors to teach him what he wished; whose kingdom was overrun by the fiercest and most ignorant of barbarian invaders; whose life was either continual battle or continual disease; and who had to make both his own mind and the minds of all about him. How great must have been Alfred's genius, that, under circumstances so disadvantageous, could attain to such great and enlightened conceptions!

CHAPTER III.

Alfred's Geographical, Historical, Astronomical, Botanical, and other Knowledge.

ALFRED'S translation of Orosius⁸ is peculiarly valuable for the new geographical matter which he inserted in it.⁹ This consists of a sketch of the chief German nations in his time, and an account of the voyages of Ohthere to the North Pole, and of Wulfstan to the Baltic, during his reign. Alfred does in this as in all his translations: he omits some chapters, abbreviates others; sometimes rather imitates than translates; and often inserts new paragraphs of his own.

It is clear, from these additions, that Alfred was fond of geography, and was active both to increase and diffuse the knowledge of it. Some little insertions in his Boetius implied this fact; for he introduces there a notice of the positions of the Scythians,¹⁰ and derives the Goths from them;¹¹ and mentions Ptolemy's description of the world.¹² But it is in his Orosius that the extent of his

⁷ Alfred, p. 147, 148.

⁸ Orosius ends his summary of ancient history and geography in 416, when he was alive. He quotes some historians now lost; as Claudius on the Roman conquest of Macedonia, and Antias on the war with the Cimbri and Teutones; and appears to have read Tubero's history, and an ancient history of Carthage.

⁹ The principal MS. of Alfred's translation is in the Cotton library, Tiber. b. i. which is very ancient and well written. A transcript of this, with a translation, was printed by Mr. Daines Barrington in 1773.

¹⁰ Alfred's Boet. p. 39.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 1.

¹² Ibid. p. 38. He enlarges on Boetius's account of Etna.

researches is most displayed. The first part of his original is a geographical summary of the nations and kingdoms of the world in the fifth century. Alfred has interspersed in this some few particulars,^f which prove that he had sought elsewhere for the information he loved. Having done this, he goes beyond his original, and inserts a geographical review of Germany, as it was peopled in his time; which is not only curious as coming from his pen, and as giving a chronological map of the Germanic continent of the ninth century, which is nowhere else to be met with of that period; but also as exhibiting his enlarged views and indefatigable intellect. No common labour must have been exerted to have collected, in that illiterate age, in which intercourse was so rare and difficult, so much geographical information. It is too honourable to his memory to be omitted in this delineation of his intellectual pursuits.

"Then north against the source of the Donua (Danube), and to the east of the Rhine, are the East Francon; south of them are the Swæfas (Swabians); on the other part of the Danube, and south of them, and to the east, are the Bæghthware (Bavarians), in the part which men call Regnes-burh;^g right east of them are the Beme (Bohemians); and to the northeast the Thyringas (Thuringians); north of them are Eald Seaxan; and northwest of them are the Frysian (Frisians).

"West of the Eald Seaxum is the mouth of the Ælfe River (the Elbe) and Frysland; and thence westnorth, is that land which men call Angle and Sillende (Zealand), and some part of Dena (Denmark); north of them is Adprede;^h and eastnorth the Wilds that men call Æfeldan; and east o' them is Wineda land, that men call Sysyle (Silesians), and southeast over some part Maroaro (the Moravians); and these Maroaro have west of them the Thyringas and Behemas (Bohemians), and half of the Bavarians; south of them, on other half of the river Danube, is the land Carendre (Carinthia). South to the mountains that men call Alpia. To these same mountains lie the boundaries of the Bavarians' land, and Swabians; and then by the east of Carendra land, beyond the deserts, is Pulgara land (Bulgaria); east of this is Creca land (Greece); east of Maroaro land is Wisleland;ⁱ east of this is Datia, where formerly were the Gotta (the Goths).

^f Thus Orosius says, Asia is surrounded on three sides by the ocean. Alfred adds, on the south, north and east. What Orosius calls "our sea," meaning the Mediterranean, Alfred names *Wenbel ƿæ*. Sarmaticus, he translates *ƿep-nombiƿc*. O. speaks of Albania. A. says it is so named in Latin, "and *ƿe hƿ hatath nu Liobene*." O. mentions the boundaries of Europe; A. gives them in different phrases, mentions the source of the Rhine and Danube, and names the *Cƿæn ƿæ*. Speaking of Gades, he adds, "On thæm ilcan *Wenbel ƿæ on hƿne Weƿtenbe iƿ Scotland*." He adds also of the Tygris, that it flows south into the Red Sea. Several little traits of this sort may be observed.

^g Ratisbon; the Germans call it Regensburgh. The modern names added to this extract are from J. R. Forster's notes. I have in this, as in all the extracts from Alfred's works, made the translation as literal as possible, that the exact phrases may be seen.

^h The Obotrites settled in Mecklenburgh.

ⁱ Wisleland is that part of Poland which is commonly called Little Poland, for here the Vistula rises, which in Polish is called *Wisla*.

" Northeast of Moarara are the Dalamensan ;^j and east of the Dalamensan are the Horithi ; and north of the Dalamensan are the Surpe,^k and west of them are the Sysele. North of the Horiti is Mægthaland ; and north of Mægthalande is Sermende (the Sarmatæ), to the Rifin (Riphean) mountains.

" Southwest of the Denum is that arm of the ocean which lieth about the land Britannia, and north of them is that arm of the sea which men call Ost sea.^l To the east of them, and to the north of them, are North Dene, both on the greater lands and on the islands ; and east of them are the Affrede ; south of them is the mouth of the river Ælfe, and some part of Eald Seaxna.

" The North Dene have on their north that same arm of the sea which men call Ost ; and east of them are the Osti^m nation, and Affrede on the south. The Osti have on the north of them the same arm of the sea, and the Winedas and Burgendas ;ⁿ and south of them are the Hæfeldan.

" The Burgendan have the same arm of the sea west of them, and the Sweon (Swedes) on the north ; east of them are Sermende ; south of them are the Surfe. The Sweon have to the south of them the Osti arm of the sea ; east of them are the Sermende ; and north over the wastes is Cwenland ; northwest are the Scride Finnas ; and west, the Northmenn."

Such is the notitia of Germany, which Alfred has inserted in his Orosius. As it displays the ideas of an inquisitive king on the positions of the German nations in the ninth century, it is valuable to geographers.

To this delineation of Germany, Alfred adds an interesting account of the voyage of Ohthere towards the North Pole,^o and the voyage of Wulfstan in the Baltic. As it is the king's composition, and gives a curious sketch of several nations in the ninth century, we think it a duty to insert it.

" Ohthere said to his lord, king Ælfréd, that he abode the northmost of all the Northmen. He declared, that he abode on those lands northward against the West Sea. He said, that that land is very long to the north, and is all waste, except in few places ; the Finnas dwell scattered about ; they hunt in winter, and in summer they fish in the sea.

" He said, that on some occasion he wished to find out how long that land stretched to the north, or whether any man abode to the north of those wastes. Then went he right north of those lands, leaving the waste land all the way on the starboard, and the wide sea on the back-board (larboard). He was for three days as far north as the whale-hunters farthest go. Then went he yet right north as far as he might sail for three other days ; the land bent there right east, or the sea in on that land ; he knew not whether ; but he knew, that he there expected a west wind, or a little to the north. He sailed thence east of the land, so as he might in four days sail. Then should he there abide a right north wind, because that inclined right south, or the sea in on that

^j Dalamensæ are those Sclavonians who formerly inhabited Silesia from Moravia, as far as Glogau, along the Oder. Wittekind calls them Sclavi Dalamanti.

^k The Sorabi, Sorbi, or Sorvi, who lived in Lusatis, and Misnia, and part of Brandenburg and Silesia, below Glogau ; their capital was Soraw, a town which still exists. I vary the orthography as the MS. does.

^l The Germans have for the Baltic no other name than the Ost Sea.

^m The same whom Wulfstan calls the Estum. The northernmost part of Livonia still bears the name of Estland.

ⁿ Bornholm, the contraction of Borgundeholm, Wulfstan calls Burgundaland.

^o Whoever now reads Ohthere's voyage, will hardly think it possible that any one could have so mistaken it, as to say it was a voyage to discover a northern passage to the East Indies. Yet so Mallet and Voltaire have represented it.

land, he knew not whether. (He knew not whether it was a mere bay or the open sea.)

"Then sailed he thence right south of the land, so as he might in five days sail. Then lay there a great river up in that land. Then returned they up from that river, because they durst not sail forth on that river from hostility, for that land was all inhabited on the other side of the river. Nor had he met before any inhabited land, since he went from his own home, but to him all the way was waste land on the starboard, except the fishers, fowlers, and hunters; and these were all Finnas; on his larboard, there was a wide sea.

"The Beormas had very well inhabited their land, and he durst not come there; but Terfinna land was all waste, except where the hunters, or the fishers, or the fowlers settled.

"The Beormas told him many accounts both of their own lands, and of the lands that were about them; but he knew not what was truth, because he did not see it himself. He thought the Finnas and the Beormas nearly spoke one language. He went chiefly thither to each of these lands looking for the horse-whales, because they have very good bone in their teeth. He brought some of the teeth to the king; the hides are very good for ship ropes. These whales are much less than the other whales; they are not longer than seven ells long.

"On his own land are the best whales hunted; they are forty-eight ells long, and the largest fifty ells. Of these, he said, that he was one of six who alew sixty in two days.

"He was a very wealthy man in those possessions that be their wealth; that is, in wild deer. He had then yet when he sought the king 600 unbought tame deer; these deers they call hranas (rain-deer.) There were six decoy hranas; they are very dear amid the Finnas, because they take the wild hranas with them.

"He was amid the first men in those lands, though he had not more than twenty horned cattle, and twenty sheep, and twenty swine; and the little that he ploughed, he ploughed with horses. But their wealth is most in those gafol that the Finnas pay to them. These gafol are in deer skins, and in birds' feathers, and whales' bones, and in the ship ropes that be made of the whales' hides, and of seals.

"Every one pays according to his birth. The best born (or richest) shall pay fifteen martens' skins, and five hranas, and one bear skin, and ten ambra of feathers, and a kyrtel of bears' or otters' skin, and two ship ropes, each to be sixty ells long; some are made of whales' hide, some of seals.

"He said, that Northmanna land was very long and very small; all that men could use of it for pasture or plough, lay against the sea, and even this is in some places very stony. Wild moors lay against the east, and along the inhabited lands. In these moors the Finnas dwell.

"The inhabited land is broadest eastward, but northward becomes continually smaller. Eastward, it may be sixty miles broad, or a little broader: midway thirty or broader; and to the north, he said, where it was smallest, it might be three miles broad to the moors. The moors are in some places so broad, that a man might be two weeks in passing over them. In some places their breadth was such that a man might go over them in six days.

"Even with these lands, southward, on the other side of the moors is Sweo-land; to that land, northward, and even with those northward lands, is Cwena-land. The Cwenas make depredations, sometimes on the Northmen over the moors (sometimes the Northmen on them); and there are many great fresh lakes over these moors, and the Cwenas carry their ships over land to the lakes, and thence plunder the Northmen. They have ships very little and very light.

"Othhere said the shire was called Halgoiland that he abode in. He declared that no man abode north of him. There is one port on the southward

of these lands; this men call Sciringes-heale; thither he said a man might not sail in a month, if he rested at night, and every day had a favourable wind; all the while he shall sail by the land and on the starboard, the first to him would be Iraland, and then the islands that are betwixt Iraland and this land; then is this land till he comes to Sciringes-heale.

"All the way on the larboard is Norway; against the south of Sciringes-heale a very great sea falleth upon that land. It is broader than any man may see over. Gotland is opposite on the other side, afterwards Sillende. The sea lieth many hundred miles up in on that land.

"He said, he sailed from Sciringes-heale in five days to that port which men call set Hethum. It stands between the Winedum and Saxons and Angles, and belongs to Denmark.

"When he thitherward sailed from Sciringes-heale, Denmark was on his larboard, and on his starboard was a wide sea for three days; and then two days before he came to Hæthum. Gothland was on his starboard, and Sillende and many islands; on those lands the Engle dwelt before they came to this country; and for two days the islands were on his larboard that belong to Denmark."

This voyage of Ohthere presents us with an interesting and authentic picture of the manners and political state of a great portion of the north. The next is the voyage of Wulfstan towards the east of the Baltic.

"Wulfstan said, that he went from Hæthum; that in seven days and nights he was in Truso; that the ship was all the way running under sail. Weonothland was to him on the starboard, and on his larboard was Langaland and Leland, and Falster and Sconeg, and all these lands belong to Denmark; and then Burgenda land was to us on the larboard, and they have to themselves a king.

"Then after Burgenda land were to us those lands that were called first Blecinga-eg and Meore, and Eowland and Gotland on the larboard. These lands belong to Sweon. Weonod land was all the way to us on starboard to the mouth of the Wisla. The Wisla is a very great river, and towards it lieth Witland and Weonod land. This Witland belongeth to the Estum, and the Wisle flows out of Weonodland, and flows in the East Lake. The East Lake is at least fifteen miles broad.

"Then cometh the Ilfing east into the East Lake. Truso stands on the banks of this lake, and the Ilfing cometh out in East Lake, east of Eastlande, together with the Wisla south of Winodland; and then Wisla takes away the name of Ilfing, and tends west of this lake, and north into the sea; therefore men call it the mouth of the Wisla.

"This Eastlande is very large, and there be a great many towns, and in every town there is a king; and there is a great quantity of honey and fish. The king and the richest men drink mare's milk, and the poor and the slaves drink mead. There be very many battles between them. There is no ale brewed amid the Estum, but there is mead enough.

"And there is a custom amid the Estum, that when there is a man dead, he lieth within, unburnt, a month amid his relations and friends—sometimes two months; and the kings and the other principal men so much longer, as they have more wealth: sometimes they be half a year unburnt. They lie above the earth in their house, and all the while that the body is within, there shall be drink and plays until the day that they burn them.

"Then the same day that they choose to bear them to the pile, his property that remains after this drink and play is divided into five or six parts, sometimes more, as the proportion of his wealth admits. They lay these along, a mile apart, the greatest portion from the town, then another, then a third, till

it be all laid at one mile asunder; and the least part shall be nearest to the town where the dead man lieth.

"Then shall be collected all the men that have the swiftest horses in the land, for the way of five miles or six miles from the property. Then run they all together to the property. Then cometh the man that hath the swiftest horse to the farthest portion and to the greatest, and so on one after the other, till all be taken away; he taketh the least who is nearest the town, and runs to it; then each rides away with his prize, and may have it all; and because of this custom the swift horse is inconceivably dear.

"And when the wealth is all thus spent, then they bear the man out and burn him, with his weapons and garments. Most frequently all his wealth is spent during the long lying of the dead man within. What they lay by the way, strangers run for and take it.

"This is the custom with the Estum, that the men of every nation shall be burnt; and if a man finds a bone unburnt, it much enrages him. There is with the Estum the power of producing cold, so that there the dead man may lie thus long and not be foul; and they make such cold among them, that if any one sets two vessels full of ale or water, they so do, that these shall be frozen the same in summer as in winter."^p

The attachment of Alfred to history appears, from his translations of Orosius's Abridgment of the History of the World, and of Bede's History of the Anglo-Saxon Nation, and from his short sketch of the History of Theodoric the Gothic King, by whose order Boetius was confined.^q But from the want of proper books, Alfred's acquaintance with ancient history appears, from his allusions to it in his Boetius,^r to have been but slight, and not always accurate.

His great historical work was his version of Bede's history into Saxon.^s In this he omits or abridges sometimes single passages, and sometimes whole chapters. He frequently gives the sense of the Latin in fewer and simpler words; but he for the most part renders his original with sufficient exactness. The style of the translation is more stately^t than the dialogues of his Boetius, and therefore has not the charm of their lively ease and graceful freedom; but it shows the variety of his powers of composition.

^p For a commentary on this periplus, the reader may consult 2 Langbeck's Script. Dan. p. 106-123, and the notes of Mr. Foster added to Barrington's Orosius. As it would occupy too large a portion of this work to do it justice, I have not attempted it here.

^q Alf. Boet. p. 1.

^r Thus he mentions, p. 39, Cicero's other names; touches on the Trojan war, p. 114; on the hydra, p. 126; notices Virgil, p. 140; and adds a few additional circumstances in other places, to the names of the persons mentioned by Boetius.

^s This translation was formerly published by Wheloc, from three MSS., two at Cambridge, and one in the Cotton Library; but the best edition of it is that appended by Smith to his Latin Bede, Cantab. 1722, with the various readings and a few notes. Alfred's translation is mentioned by Elfric, who lived in 994, in his Anglo-Saxon Homily on St. Gregory, "and eac iƿtorſia Anglorum tha the Aelfred cýning of Leben on Englisc aƿend." Elstob. Sax. Hom. p. 2.

^t Dr. Hickes says of it, that neither Cæsar nor Cicero ever wrote more perfectly in the middle species of composition. Prof. Gram. Angl. Sax. This is too warm an encomium for a translation.

His attention to astronomy appears from his translation of a metrum of Boetius, in which he rather imitates than translates his original, and expresses a few more astronomical ideas than he found there.^u

"Which of the unlearned wonder not at the journeying and swiftness of the firmament? How he every day revolves round all this world, outside! Or who does not admire that some stars have shorter revolutions than others have, as the stars have that we call the Waggon-shafts? They have a short circuit, because they are near the north end of that axis on which all the firmament revolves. Or, who is not amazed, except those only who know it, that some stars have a longer circuit than others have, and the longest, those which revolve round the axis midway, as now Boetius doth? So the planet Saturn comes not where he was before till about thirty winters. Or, who does not wonder at some stars departing under the sea, as some men think the sun doth, when she goeth to rest? But she is not nearer the sea than she was at mid-day. Who is not amazed at this, that the full moon is covered over with darkness? or, again, that the stars shine before the moon, but do not shine before the sun?

"They wonder at this" and many such like things, and do not wonder that men and all living animals have perpetual and unnecessary enmities betwixt themselves. Or, why should they wonder at this, that it sometimes thunders, and sometimes that there begins a conflict of the sea and the winds, and the waves and the land? or why that this should be; and again, that the sun should shine according to his own nature? But the unsteady folk wonder enough at that which they most seldom see, though this is less surprising. They think that all else is but old creation, but that the casual is something new. Yet, when they become curious, and begin to learn, if God takes from their mind the folly that it was covered with before, then they wonder not at many things which now amaze them."^w

This latter part, in which he has enlarged upon his concise original, shows how much his mind rose above the superstitions both of his own times and of the ancient world on the phenomena of nature.

The additions which he has made to a passage in Boetius show that botany, as then known, had been an object of his attention and acquisition. The sentences in italics are the additions of Alfred, and evince that he had interested himself with studying the progress of vegetation, as far as its process was then known, and as its principles could from that knowledge be understood:

^u The passage in Boetius is: "If any one should not know that the stars of Arcturus glide near the pole; or why Boetes slowly drives his wain, and immerses his fires late in the sea, while he urges rapid their ascent; he will wonder at the law of the lofty sky. The horns of the full moon may grow pale, affected by the departure of the dark night, and Phebe, overshadowed herself, discovers the stars which her radiant face had concealed. A general error then disturbs the nations, and they tire their cymbals with frequent blows."

^v "Yet no one wonders that the breath of the northwest wind beats the shore with the raging wave, nor that the frozen mass of snow is dissolved by the fervour of Phebus. Here the mind is alert to perceive causes; there the unknown disturbs it, and what is rare amazes the movable vulgar. Let the errors of ignorance depart with their clouds, and the wonderful cease to amaze." Boet. lib. iv. met. 5.

^w Alf. Boet. p. 125, 126.

"I said, I cannot understand of any living thing; of that which knows what it will and what it does not will, that un-compelled it should desire to perish; because every creature wishes to be healthy and to live, of those that I think alive; excepting that I know not how it may be with trees and herbs, and such substances that have no soul."

"Then he smiled and said, 'Thou needest not doubt it of these creatures, any more than of others. *How! canst thou not see, that every herb and every tree grows on the richest land that best suits it, and that is natural and customary to it, and there it hastens to grow the most quickly, that it may, and the latest decays? The soil of some herbs and some woods is on hills; of some in marshes; of some in moors; of some on rocks; some on bare sands.*

"Take any wood or herb whatsoever thou wilt from the place that is its earth and country to grow on, and set it in a place unnatural to it, then it will not grow there, but will fade away; for the nature of every land is, that it nourishes like herbs and like trees; and it so doeth, that it defends and sustains them very carefully, so long as it is their nature that they may grow.

"What thinkest thou? Hence every seed grows within the earth, and becometh grass and roots in the earth without. For this they are appointed, that the stem and the stalk may fasten and longer stand.

"Why canst thou not comprehend, though thou mayest not see it, that all the portions of these trees, which increases in twelve months, begins from the roots, and so groweth upwards to the stem, and then along the pith, and along the rind to the stalk, and then afterwards to the boughs, till it springs out into leaves, and blossoms, and fruit?

"Why may you not understand, that every living thing is tenderest inward, and its unbroken outside the hardest? Thou canst see how the trees are clothed without, and protected by their bark against winter, and against stark storms, and also against the sun's heat in summer. Who may not wonder at such works of our Creator, and not less their Creator? And though we may admire it now, which of us can properly explain our Creator's will and power, and how his creatures increase and again decline? When that time cometh, it occurs again, that from their seed they are renewed. They then become regenerated, to be what they then should be again, and become also in this respect alike: such they will be for ever, for every year their regeneration goes on.'"²

The book written by Pope Gregory, for the instruction of the bishops of the church, called his *Liber Pastoralis Curæ*, was much valued in Christendom at that period.⁷ It was the best book at that time accessible to him, by which he could educate his higher clergy to fulfil their duties;⁸ and though it tends to make them too inquisitive into human actions, and would insensibly lead them to erect a tyranny over the human mind, incompatible with its improvement or its happiness; yet as it contains many moral counsels and regulations, and was written by the Pope, who was called the Apostle of the English, and no other book was then at his hand which was equally popular or likely to be as effectual,

² Alf. Boet. p. 89, 90. Boet. lib. iii. pr. 11.

⁷ Alcuin twice praises it. The council of Toledo ordered that it should be studied by all bishops.

⁸ The MSS. of it in the Cotton Library, Tiber, B. 11, was supposed to be the copy which Plegmund possessed. It is nearly destroyed by fire. There is another ancient MS. of it in the Bodleian, Hatton, 83.

it was an act of patriotism and philanthropy in the king to translate it.^a

It was not Alfred, but his Bishop Werfrith, who translated the Dialogues of Gregory. The king directed the translation, and afterwards recommended it to his clergy.^b The subjects are chiefly the miracles stated to be performed in Italy by religious men. They display the pious feeling of the age, but these words comprise almost the whole of their merit; for the piety is unhappily connected with so much ignorance, superstition, credulity, and defective reasoning, that we are surprised it should have interested the attention of Alfred. But as it had not then been determined what was true, or what was false in history, geography, philology, or philosophy, criticism was not at that time practicable. The weight of evidence, the natural guide of the human belief, was then its only criterion; and as Gregory professed to relate what he himself had known concerning perfect and approved men, or what he had received from the attestations of good and faithful persons, these legends seemed to have an adequate support of human testimony. We are now wise with the experience, thought, reading, comparisons, and inferences of a thousand additional years; and with this knowledge, the slowly-formed creation of so many centuries beyond the time of Alfred, we can detect those errors of judgment and of vulgar tradition, which he had no materials that enabled him to question.

Let us, however, not impeach our Anglo-Saxon ancestors for peculiar credulity, nor consider it as an index of their barbarism. They believed nothing on these points, but such things as came recommended to them by the analogous belief of the classical and Roman empire which had preceded them. What Athens and Rome alike supposed of the powers and agencies of their gods and goddesses, heroes, demons, and genii, the imperial Christians attributed to their saints and most venerated clergy. Pope Gregory was not more credulous in his religion than the Emperor Julian was in his paganism; or Apuleius, and perhaps even Lucian, in common with his age, of witchcraft;^c Philostratus, Jamblichus, Porphyry, Ammonius, and other heathen philosophers, of the third and fourth centuries, in their belief of the miracles achieved by the sages whom they patronized,^d were the precur-

^a Alfred had complained to Fulco, archbishop of Rheims, that "the ecclesiastical order, from the frequent irruptions and attacks of the Northmen, or from age, or the carelessness of the prelates and the ignorance of the people, had declined in many." Ep. Fulc. p. 124.

^b Alfred's recommendation of this work appears in the preface which he prefixed to it, and which is printed by Wanley, p. 71, from the Bodleian MS. Hatton. 100.

^c Julian's works show abundant evidences of his credulity, and Lucian describes the powers of witchcraft as fully, and with as much seriousness, as Apuleius.

^d See Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius Tyanæus*; Jamblichus's *Life of Pythagoras*; Porphyry's *de anto nympharum*, and other remains; and for other philosophers, see Brucker and his abridger Dr. Enfield in his *History of Philosophy*.

sors of the Catholic biographers of their respected saints; and our Alfred may be pardoned for following the stream, not only of his own age, but of the most cultivated classical periods, in believing such wonders on the authority of Gregory, which every age of the world had concurred to admit to be both practicable and practised, by those whom its different sects and parties revered. With such sanction, from both philosophical and popular belief, it then seemed irrational to doubt them.* One of Alfred's favourite objects was the moral improvement of his people. He wisely considered religion to be the most efficacious instrument of his benevolence, and Gregory's dialogues were as adapted to excite pious feelings at that time, as they would now operate rather to diminish them. We feel that piety allied with nonsense or with falsehood, only degrades the Majestic Being whom it professes to extol. He whose wisdom is the most perfect intelligence and the fountain of all knowledge to us; He whose creations display a sagacity that has no limit but space, and which appears in forms as multifarious as the countless objects that pervade it, should be adored with our sublimest reason and knowledge, united with our purest sensibility. Alfred possessed this noble feeling in its full aspiration, but he was compelled to use the materials which his age afforded. He chose the best within his reach, which was all that was within his power. That they were not better was his misfortune, but leaves no imputation on his judgment.

In the Cotton Library there is an Anglo-Saxon MS. of some selections from St. Austin's soliloquies,^f or, as the manuscript expresses it, "The gathering of the flowers," from St. Austin's work. At the end of these flowers is this imperfect sentence, "Here end the sayings that King Alfred selected from those books that we call——."† Here the manuscript terminates.

Malmsbury mentions that Alfred began to translate the Hymns of David, but that he had hardly finished the first part when he

* So much self-delusion and mistake have been connected with miracles; so many are resolvable into accidents, natural agencies, imagination, false perceptions, erroneous judgments, and popular exaggeration, independent of wilful falsehood, that the cautious mind will believe none but those mentioned in the Scriptures, as no others have that accumulation of evidence both direct and inferential, which impresses these upon our belief.

^f It is in Vitellius, A. 15. After three pages of preface, it says, "Angustinus Captama biceop porhte ƿƿa bæc be hir egnum Ʒethance; tha bæc ƿint gehatene Ʒolliquoium, tha ƿ be moder ƿineauŷe Ʒ tƿeounga."

[†] Æp endiath tha cƿiðar the Elƿned Kining alar of thære bæc the ƿe hatath on—MS. p. 56. Wanley says of this MS. "Tractatus iste quondam fuit ecclesie, B. Marie de Suwika ut patet ex. fol. 2. litteris Normunno-Saxonice post conquestum scriptus," p. 218. A transcript of this MS. made by Janius, is in the Bodleian Library, Jun. 70, and this has the same abrupt ending. Wanley, 96.

died.^b There are many MSS. of the Anglo-Saxon translation of the Psalter extant;^c but it is not in our power to discriminate the performance of Alfred.

That the king translated the Bible or Testament into Anglo-Saxon has been stated on some authorities, but the selections which he made for his own use appear to have been confounded with a general translation.^d

In the Harleian Library there is a MS. of a translation of fables styled *Æsop's*, into French romance verse. At the conclusion of her work, the author^e asserts that Alfred the king translated the fables from the Latin into English, from which version she turned them into French verse.^f Mary, the French translator, lived in the thirteenth century. The evidence of her assertion, as to Alfred being the English translator of the fables, can certainly only have the force of her individual belief; and as this belief may have been merely founded on popular tradition, it cannot be considered as decisive evidence. Such an assertion and belief, however, of an authoress of the thirteenth century, must be allowed to have so much weight as to be entitled to no-

^b *Psalterium transferre aggressus vix prima parte explicata vivendi finem fecit.* *Malmsh.* 45.

^c Wanley says, p. 182, there is a MS. very elegantly written about the time of Ethelstan, which contains Jerome's Latin Psalter, with an interlineary Saxon version, in the King's Library. There is another interlineary version in the Cotton Library, *Vesp. A. 1*, written 1000 years ago, very elegantly, in capital letters. *Wanley*, 222. There is another written before the conquest, in *Tiberius*, C. 6, p. 934. This contains many figures of musical instruments, alleged to be Jewish, and several coloured drawings on religious subjects. There is another interlineary version in the Lambeth Library, written in Edgar's reign, or a little before, which contains the curious and valuable addition of ancient musical notes. *Wanley*, 268. *Spelman* has published an Anglo-Saxon Psalter.

^d *Flor. Wig.* says, that in 887, on the feast of St. Martin, he began it. It is clear, on comparing the passages, that he only meant what Assor had mentioned, p. 57, that he then began to translate some parts. The history of Ely asserts, that he translated all the Bible; but *Boston of Bury* says, that it was "almost all the Testament." *Spelman's Life*, p. 213. Yet as no MSS. of such a work have been seen, we cannot accredit the fact beyond the limits mentioned in the text.

^e This author was Mary, an Anglo-Norman poetess. She states herself to have been born in France, and she seems to have visited England. The thirteenth volume of the *Archæologia*, published by the Antiquarian Society, contains a dissertation upon her life and writings, by the *Abbé La Rue*, p. 36-67.

^f Mary's words are:

"Por amor le cunte Willame
Le plus vaillant de nul realme
Meinteneur de cest livre feire
E del Engleis en romans treire
Æsops apelum cest livre
Qu'il translata e fist escrire
Del griu en Latin le turna
Li reis Alarez qui mut l'ama
Le translata puis en Engleis.
E ico lai rimée en Franceis."

Harl. MS. 978, p. 87.

tice here.^m The completest MS. of Mary's translation contains an hundred and four fables, out of which thirty-one only are Æsop's.ⁿ

But it would seem that Alfred's extensive mind had even condescended to write on one of the rural sports of his day; for in the catalogue of MSS. which in 1315 were in the Christ Church library, we find a treatise of this king on keeping hawks mentioned. "Liber Alured, regis, de custodiendis accipitribus."^o This book corresponds with the fact mentioned by Asser, that Alfred was accustomed "to teach his falconers and hawkers, and hound-trainers."^p

It has been declared that the Parables of Alfred had great edification, beauty, pleasantry, and nobleness.^q It is a great loss to our curiosity, perhaps to our education, that we have not these tales, or moral apologues, which were existing in the reign of Henry the Second.^r

Alfred is also praised for his excellence in proverbial sayings.^s Some collections of this sort have been noticed by his biographer, Spelman, which may perhaps contain some of his ideas, as they were preserved by tradition, and in a later age committed to writing; but they are probably not wholly in the phrases of his own composition.^t

^m Mons. La Rue thinks, that Alfred was not the author of the English translation which Mary used. His reasons are by no means conclusive: 1st. Asser mentions no translations of Alfred's, and therefore his omission of Æsop is of no consequence. 2d. Though Malmesbury does not particularize Æsop among the translations he enumerates, this argument is indecisive, because Malmesbury expressly states, that the king translated more books than those which he enumerates. His words are, "Denique plurimam partem Romanæ Bibliothecæ Anglorum auribus decit, — cujus præcipui sunt libri Orosius," &c. Malmesbury only names the chief of his translations; a monk would have hardly ranked Æsop in this honourable class. 3d. The abbé's doubt, whether Mary could, in the thirteenth century, have understood Alfred's language, is of no great force, because we cannot think it unlikely that there should be persons in England who knew both Norman and Saxon, or that Mary should have learnt Saxon if she wished it. 4th. As to the feudal expressions which Mary uses, as we have not the English MSS. which she translated, and therefore cannot know what were the actual expressions in that, I think no argument can be rested on them. Alfred, in his Boetius, puts king in one place, and heretogas in another, for Roman consuls.

ⁿ Archæologia, p. 53.

^o Wanley's preface.

^p Asser, 43.

^q So the MSS. Chron. Joan. Oxonensis says:

"Parabolæ ejus plurimum habentes edificationis, venustatis, jocunditatis et nobilitatis." Cott. Lib. MSS. Nero, D. 2.

^r Ail. Riev., who then lived, declares, "Extant parabolæ ejus," &c., using nearly the same words as Oronedes, p. 355.

^s "In proverbis ita enituit ut nemo post illum amplius." Ann. Eccl. Wint. 1 Angl. Sacra, p. 289. Some of these are noticed in the old English dialogue between the owl and the nightingale.

^t One of these, the least likely to be Alfred's, may be seen in Dr. Hickea's Anglo-Saxon Grammar, p. 323. The other, which suits better Alfred's wisdom, has been quoted by Spelman, in his Life of Alfred, and translated from the MS. in the Cotton Library. See p. 94, of Walker's edition, and 127, of Hearn's. Spelman's extracts may be more valued, as the Cotton MS. of Galba, A. 19, was ruined by the fire which destroyed much valuable antiquity.

Of Alfred's manual or memorandum book, which seems to have existed in Malmsbury's days,^u and which would have been such a curiosity to modern times, not even a remnant has been found.

The genius of Alfred was not confined to literature: it also extended to the arts; and in three of these, architecture, ship-building, and gold and silver workmanship, he obtained an excellence which corresponded with his other talents.

Asser mentions, that he caused edifices to be constructed from his own new designs, more venerable and precious than those which his predecessors had raised.^v These not only consisted of halls and royal apartments, made of wood or stone, in pursuance of his directions, to the surprise of his contemporaries, but he also formed cities and towns, some of which he repaired, and others built; some he destroyed on their ancient sites, to raise them of stone, in positions more useful and appropriate.^w He was so earnest in these improvements, that he procured from many nations numerous artificers, versed in every sort of building, and he regularly appropriated a sixth of his yearly revenues to pay their expenses, and remunerate their labour.^x

His talent and cultivation of naval architecture have been already noticed.

He also taught his artisans and workers in gold,^y and by his instructions, occasioned many things to be incomparably executed (we use the epithet of his contemporary) in gold and silver.^z One specimen of his talent in this art yet exists to us in a jewel of gold, which was found near Athelney.^a

In the less valuable pursuits of hunting, falconry, hawking, and coursing, he was also distinguished.^b

^u Malmsbury's references to this, show, that it was not a mere receptacle for devout extracts, but was rather a general commonplace book; for he cites from it some traits of biography, and observations on a piece of poetry. "Qui enim legit manualem librum regis Elfredi, reperiet Kenterum Beati Aldelmi patrum non fuisse regis Inæ germanum sed arctissima necessitudine consanguineum." lib. v. De Pont. 341. Again, speaking of Aldhelm, he says, he cultivated Anglo-Saxon poetry, "Adeo ut, teste libro Elfredi, de quo superius dixi, nullo unquam ætatis parci fuerit quinquam possin Anglicam posse facere, tantum componere, eadem apposite vel canere vel dicere. Denique commemorat Elfredus carmen triviale quod adhuc vulgo cantatur Aldelmu fuisse." By the next paragraph, Alfred seems to have reasoned upon the subject. His manual was therefore the repository of his own occasional literary reflections; for Malmsbury adds, speaking still of Alfred, *Adjuvans causam que probet rationabiliter, tantum virum his que videantur frivola, instituisse populum eo tempore scimbarbarum, parum divinis sermonibus intentam, statim cantatis missis, cursitare solitum,*" p. 342.

^v Et edificia supra omnem antecessorum suorum consuetudinem venerabiliora et pretiosiora nova sua machinationes facere. Asser, 43.

^w Asser, 58.

^x Ibid. 66.

^y Ibid. 43.

^z Ibid. 58.

^a On one side is a rude outline of a human figure apparently sitting, and holding what seem like two flowers. On the other side is a flower; it is much ornamented, and the workmanship is said to be excellent. The inscription expresses, that it was made by Alfred's orders.

^b Asser, 43.

CHAPTER IV.

Alfred's Poetical Composition.

To the other accomplishments of his mind Alfred endeavoured to add that of poetry. Fond of Saxon poems from his infancy, he found pleasure in attempting to compose them; and the metrum of Boetius afforded him the opportunity of practising his powers of language in this interesting art.

The great characteristic of Saxon versification was the position of a few words in short lines, with a rhythmical effect. As far as we can now discern, there were no rules of artificial prosody to be observed; but the ear was to be gratified by a rhythm or musical effect in the pronunciation; and any brief sequence of syllables that would produce this pleasure was used and permitted.

It would be presumptuous, now that the Anglo-Saxon has so long ceased to be spoken, to decide peremptorily on the merit of Alfred's versification, which must have depended so much on the colloquial tones and cadences of his day. But as far as can be judged from a comparison of it with the compositions of Cedmon, the odes in the Saxon Chronicle, and the poem on Beowulf, it has not their general strength and fulness of rhythm. Though at times sufficiently successful, it is weaker and less elevated than their style, and is not often much more musical than his own prose. Of its poetical feeling and mind we can better judge, as he has translated the metrum also into prose; and it may be said, without injustice, that his verse has less intellectual energy than his prose. The diction is amplified to admit of its being made nearer to poetry, but it is rather diluted than improved. Here and there a few expressions of greater vigour occur, but, in general, the prose is not only more concise, but also more spirited and more clear.

Yet it is only in comparison with his own prose that the merit of Alfred's poetry is thus questioned. His superior intellect in imitating and emulating, and sometimes passing beyond his original, has given it a value of thought and feeling, an infusion of moral mind, and a graceful ease of diction, which we shall look for in vain, to the same degree and effect, among the other remains of the Anglo-Saxon poetry.

The reader who compares the description of the Golden Age, and the stories of Eurydice and Circe, inserted before from Alfred's prose, with his translations of the same into verse, will

perceive that his poetry has not increased their interest. They are too long to be inserted here. But it will be a just respect to his memory to insert some of his other versifications of the metrum of Boetius, as specimens of the usual style of his poetical diction. He has so amplified and varied his originals as to make much of them his own compositions. The amount of the poetry of the king's mind will best appear from comparing the following effusions with the originals in Boetius, which are also given :

ON SERENITY OF MIND.

Alfred.

Thou mightest of the sun
Manifestly think ;
And of all the other stars ;
Of those that behind cities
Shine the brightest,
That if before them wan
The atmosphere should hang,
They cannot then
Send forth the beams of their light
While the thick mist prevails.

So often the mild sea,
Clear as gray glass,
The southern wind
Grimly disturbs ;
Then mingle
The mighty waves :
The great whales rear up.
Then rough that becomes,
Which before serene
Was to the sight.

So often a spring
Wells up from a hoary cliff,
Cool and clear,
And flows spaciouly right on.
It runneth over the earth
Till it gets within it.
Great stones from the mountains fall,
And in the midst of it
Lie, trundled
From the rock.
In two parts afterwards
It becomes divided.
The transparent is disturbed ;
The streams mingle ;
The brook is turned aside
From its right course,
Flowing into rivers.

So now the darkness
Of thy heart

Boetius.

With black clouds hidden, no light
can the stars emit. Lib. i. met. 7.

If the rolling sea the turbid south
wind should mingle, the wave, before
glassy and serene, sordid with dif-
fused mud, would obstruct the sight.
Ibid.

As wandering from the lofty moun-
tains, the devious river is often resist-
ed by the obstructing stone, loosened
from the rock. Lib. i. met. 7.

If thou also wilt, with a clear light,
behold the truth, in the right path

Alfred.

Will of my light
 The doctrine withstand,
 And thy mind's thoughts
 Greatly disturb.
 But if now thou desirest
 That thou mayest well
 This true light clearly know;
 To believe in that light
 Thou must dismiss
 The idle excess of riches:
 Unprofitable joy.
 Thou must also the evil
 Fear wholly dismiss
 Of the world's difficulties.
 Nor must thou be for them
 At all in despair:
 Nor do thou ever let
 Prosperity weaken thee;
 Lest thou shouldst become,
 With arrogance from that,
 Again confounded;
 And be too elevated
 By the enjoyments
 Of this world's riches.

Nor, again, too weakly
 Despair of any good
 When in the world,
 Adversity of most things
 Oppresses thee;
 And thou thyself
 Most strongly prearest forwards.
 Because always is
 The mind's thought
 Much bound with sorrow
 If these evils can disturb it
 With which it struggles within.
 Because both these two
 Draw together, over the mind
 The mists of error;
 So that on it the eternal sun
 May not hence shine upon it
 On account of the black mists
 Before that it has become
 strengthened. P. 155.

ON THE NATURAL EQUALITY OF MANKIND.

The citizens of earth,
 Inhabitants of the ground,
 All had
 One like beginning.
 They of two only
 All came;
 Men and women,
 Within the world.

Boetius.

direct your steps: drive away joys;
 drive away fear; chase hope. *Ibid.*

Nor let grief be present. The mind
 is in a cloud, and bound with chains
 where these reign. *Lib. i. met. 7.*

All the human race arises on the
 earth from a like origin. There is
 one father of events: one administers
 all things.

Alfred.

And they also now yet
 All alike
 Come into the world
 The splendid and the lowly.
 This is no wonder,
 Because all know
 That there is one God
 Of all creatures;
 Lord of mankind:
 The Father and the Creator.

He the sun's light
 Giveth from the heavens;
 The moon, and this
 Of the greater stars.

He made
 Men on the earth;
 And united
 The soul to the body.
 At the first beginning
 The folk under the skies
 He made equally noble;
 Every sort of men.

Why then do ye ever
 Over other men
 Thus arrogate
 Without cause?
 Now you do not find
 Any not noble.
 Why do ye from nobility
 Now exalt yourselves?
 In his mind let
 Every one of men
 Be rightly noble,
 As I have mentioned to thee,
 The inhabitants of the earth
 Nor only in the flesh;
 But yet every man
 That is by all
 His vices subdued
 First abandons
 His origin of life,
 And his own
 Nobility from himself;
 And also which the Father
 At the beginning made for him.
 For this, will
 The Almighty God
 Unnoble him;
 That he noble no more
 Thenceforth might be,
 In the world;
 Nor come to glory. P. 171.

VOL. I.

Boetius.

He gave to Phœbus his rays, and
 to the moon her horns.

He gave men to the earth, and the
 stars to the sky. He inclosed in
 limbs the minds sought from the lofty
 seat. Therefore he made all mortals
 a noble race.

Why do you clamour on your birth
 and ancestors! If you consider your
 beginning and your author, God, no
 one exists that is not noble. Lib. iii.
 met. 6.

ON TYRANTS.

Alfred.

Hear now one discourse
Of those proud,
Unrighteous
Kings of the earth,
That now here with many
And various garments,
Bright in beauty,
Wonderously shine
On high seats;
Clothed in gold
And jewels.
Without these stand around
Innumerable
Thegns and earls
That are adorned
With warlike decorations;
Illustrious in battle;
With swords and belts
Very glittering;
And who attend him
With great glory.
They threaten everywhere
The surrounding
Other nations;
And the lord careth not,
That governs this army,
For either friends' or enemies'
Life or possessions;
But he, a fierce mind,
Rests on every one,
Likest of any thing
To a fierce hound.
He is exalted
Within in his mind
For that power
That to him every one
Of his dear princes
Gives and supports.

If men then would
Wind off from him
These kingly ornaments,
Each of his garments,
And him then divest
Of that retinue
And that power
That he before had,
Then thou shouldst see
That he would be very like
Some of those men
That most diligently
Now, with their services,
Press round about him.
If he be not worse

Boetius.

The kings whom you see sitting
on the lofty elevation of the throne,
splendid with their shining purple;
hedged with dismal weapons; threat-
ening with grim countenance; breath-
less with the rage of the heart.

If from these proud ones any one
should draw aside the covering of
their gaudy apparel, he will see that
the lords are bound with chains within.

Alfred.

I think he will be no better.
 If to him then ever,
 Unexpectedly, chance should happen
 That he should be deprived
 Of that glory, and garments,
 And retinue, and that power
 That we have spoken about;
 If from him any of these things
 Were taken away,
 I know that he would think
 Then he was crawling in a prison,
 Or indeed bound with ropes.

I can assert
 That from this excess of every thing
 Of food and clothes, wine, drinks,
 And sweetmeats,
 Most strongly would increase
 Of that luxurioseness
 The great furious course.
 Much disturbed would be
 His intellectual mind.
 To every man
 Thence must come
 Extraordinary evils,
 And useless quarrels;
 Then they become angry.
 To them it happens in their hearts
 That within are afflicted,
 Their thoughts in their minds
 With this strong fire
 Of hot-heartedness,
 And afterwards fierce sorrow
 Also bindeth them
 Hard imprisoned.
 Then afterwards beginneth
 Hope to some
 Greatly to lie
 About that revenge of battle
 Which the anger desireth
 Of one and of the other,
 It promises them all
 Which their contempt
 Of right may enjoin.

I told thee before
 In this same book,
 That of the various creatures
 Each single one
 Some good
 Always desired
 From his own
 Ancient nature;
 But the unrighteous
 Kings of the earth
 Cannot ever
 Accomplish any good

Boetius.

For here greedy lust pours venom on
 their hearts: here turbid anger, rais-
 ing its waves, lashes the mind; or
 sorrow wearies her captives; or de-
 ceitful hope torments them.

Since, then, you see that one head
 has so many tyrants, pressed by their
 iniquitous sway, it performs not what
 it wishes. Lib. iv. met. 2.

Alfred.

From the evil
That I have mentioned.
It is no wonder,
Because they love the vices
Which I named before,
And to which only
They are always subject. P. 186.

Boetius.

ON COVETOUSNESS.

What will the rich man be,
The worldly, covetous one,
In his mind the better,
Though he should much possess
Of gold and gems
And of every good :
Possessions innumerable ;
And for him men
Should plough every day
A thousand acres !

Though the rich miser should be in
a flowing whirlpool of gold, he could
not satisfy his appetite for wealth.
Let him adorn his neck with the ber-
ries of the Red Sea, and cleave his
rich soils with a hundred oxen.

Though this world
And this race of men
Should be under the sun
South, west, and east,
To his power
All subjected,
He could not
Of these acquisitions
Hence lead away
From this world
Any thing more
Of his treasured property
Than he hither brought. P. 169.

Biting cares will not quit him while
he lives, nor can his trivial riches
accompany him when dead. Lib. iii.
met. 3.

ON SELF-GOVERNMENT.

He that would
Possess power,
Then let him first toil
That he of his self
In his mind have
Power within ;
Unless he ever
Would be to his vices
Entirely subjected :
Let him expel from his mind
Many of those
Various anxieties
That to him are useless :
Let him dismiss some
Of his complaints and miseries.

He that would be powerful, let him
tame his fierce mind, nor submit to foul
reins his neck bowed down by lust.

Though to him should
All this world,
So as the great streams
Surround it without,

For though the remote Indian earth
should tremble at thy command, and
farthest Thule serve thee, yet it is not
in their power to expel gloomy care,

Alfred.

Be given to his possession,
 Even so wide
 As now westmost is,
 Where an island lieth
 Out on the ocean ;
 In which is no
 Night in summer,
 Nor more in winter
 Of any day
 Distinguished by time ;
 Which is called Tile.
 Though now any alone
 Governed all
 To this island ;
 And also thence
 To India eastward ;
 Though he now all that
 Might possess,
 Why should his power be
 Ought the greater
 If he afterwards hath not
 Power over himself
 In his thoughts,
 And does not earnestly
 Guard himself well
 In words and deeds
 Against the vices
 That we before have mentioned !

P. 170.

Boetius.

nor to drive away your miserable complaints. Lib. iii. met. 5.

THE EXCURSIVENESS OF THE MIND.

I have wings
 Swifter than the birds ;
 With them I can fly
 Far from the earth,
 Over the high roof
 Of this heaven.
 And there I now must
 Wing thy mind,
 With my feathers,
 To look forth
 Till that thou mayest
 This world
 And every earthly thing
 Entirely overlook :
 Thou mayest over the skies
 Extensively
 Sport with thy wings,
 Far up over
 The heavens to wind
 Afterwards to view
 Above over all.
 Thou mayest also go
 Above the fire
 That many years ascends far

I have rapid wings that can ascend
 the heights of the pole, which the swift
 mind puts on when she looks down on
 the hated earth, surmounts the globe
 of the immense air, and sees the clouds
 behind her.

Alfred.

Betwixt the air and the firmament
So as to it at the beginning
The Father appointed.

That thou mayest afterwards
With the Sun
Go betwixt
The other stars.
Thou mightest full soon
In the firmament
Above afterwards advance ;
And then continuously
To the coldest
Only star
That outmost is
Of all the stars.
This Saturnus
The inhabitants of the sea call
Under the heavens.
He is the cold
All icy planet.
He wanders outmost
Over all,
Above the other stars.
Afterwards thou then
From this may upheave thyself
To go forth ;
Thou mayest proceed farther ;
Then wouldst thou afterwards soon
Ascend above the firmament
In its swift course.
If thou goest on right
Thou wouldst then the highest
Heaven leave behind.
Then mightest thou afterwards
Of the true light
Have thy portion.
Whence the Only King
Widely governs,
Above the firmament.
And below ;
And in like manner rules
All the creatures
Of the world.

This is the Wise King,
This is he that governs
Over the nations of men,
And all the other
Kings of the earth.
He with his bridle
Hath restrained around
All the revolutions
Of earth and heaven.
He his governing reins
Well coerces.
He governs ever

Boetius.

Warmed by the motion of the agile
ether, it transcends the vortex of fire,
till it rises to the star-bearing domes,
and touches on the paths of Phœbus.

Or it may accompany the journey of
the chill old man, as a soldier of the
radiant star ; or shining wherever night
is painted, it may retrace the circle of
the star ; and when sufficiently satiated,
it may leave the extremity of the pole ;
and, partaker of the revered light, press
towards the summit of the swift ether.

Here the Lord of Kings holds the
sceptre and governs the reins of the
world, and, stable himself, rules the
swift car, the splendid arbiter of things.

Alfred.

Through his strong might
 All the swift cars
 Of heaven and earth.
 He the only judge is steadfast,
 Unchangeable,
 Beauteous, and great.

If thou turnest right in thy way
 Up to that country,
 Thou wilt find it
 A noble place:
 Though thou now yet
 Hast not obtained it.
 If thou ever again
 There canst come,
 Then wilt thou say,
 And soon declare:—

“This is entirely
 My own kindred,
 Earth, and country.
 Formerly from hence
 I came, and was born
 Through the might of this artificer.
 I will never
 Depart hence from it,
 But I always here
 Will softly
 With my wings desire
 Firmly to stand.”

If to thee then
 It should ever again happen,
 That thou wilt or must
 The world's darkness
 Again try;
 Thou mightest easily look on
 The unrighteous kings of the earth,
 And the other arrogant rich,
 That this weary folk
 Worst torment.
 And see that always
 They be very wretched;
 Unmighty
 In every thing;
 Even the same
 That they, wretched folk,
 Some while now
 Most strongly dreaded. P. 184.

HIS PICTURE OF FUTURITY.

O children of men,
 Over the world!
 Every one of the free!
 Try for that eternal good
 That we have spoken of,

Boetius.

If that road should meet thee return-
 ing, which now forgetful you inquire
 for, you may say:—

“I remember that this is my country;
 this is my birth-place: here I will rest.”

If you should like to revisit the earth-
 ly night you have left, you would see
 what fierce banished tyrants the mis-
 erable people fear. Lib. iv. met. 1.

Hither come, all ye captives, whom
 deceitful desire, blunting your earthly
 minds, binds in its vicious chains!

Alfred.

And for those riches
That we have mentioned.
He that then now is
Narrowly bound
With the useless love
Of this large world,
Let him seek speedily
Full freedom,
That he may advance
To the riches
Of the soul's wisdom.

Because this is
The only rest of all labours;
A desirable port
To high ships;
Of our mind
The great and mild habitation.
This is the only port
That will last for ever;
After the waves
Of our troubles,
Of every storm,
Always mild.
This is the place of peace,
And the only comforter
Of all distresses,
After this world's troubles.

This is the pleasant station
After these miseries
To possess.
And I earnestly know
That the gilded vessel,
The silvery treasure,
The stone fortress of gems,
Or riches of the world
To the mind's eye
Can never bring any light.
Nothing can recompense
Its acuteness,
But the contemplation
Of the truer riches;

But such things strongly
The mind's eye
Of every one of men
Blind in their breast,
When they to it
Are made brighter.
But all things
That in this present
Life so please,
Are slender,
Earthly things,
And to be fled from.

Boetius.

Here will be the rest to your labours.
Here, the serene port; a tranquil abode.
Here, the only asylum open to the
wretched.

Not all that Tagus may give in its
golden sands, or Hermus from its glittering
bank, or Indus near the warm
circle mingling green gems with white,
can enlighten the sight; but they make
the mind more blind from their dark-
ening effects.

Whatever of these pleases and excites
the mind, earth nourishes in its lowest
caverns.

Alfred.

But wonderful is that
 Beauty and brightness,
 With every creature
 Which beauty illuminates,
 And after that
 Governs all:
 This Governor will not
 That we should destroy
 Our souls,
 But he himself will them
 Enlighten with light;
 The Ruler of life.

If then any man
 With the clear eyes
 Of his mind,
 May ever behold
 Of heaven's light
 The lucid brightness,
 Then he will say,
 That the brightness of the sun
 Will be darkness,
 If any man
 Should compare it
 With the superior light
 Of God Almighty.
 That will be to every spirit
 Eternal without end;
 To happy souls. P. 181, 182.

HIS ADDRESS TO THE DEITY.

O thou Creator!
 Of the shining stars;
 Of heaven and the earth:
 Thou on high throne
 Eternal governest,
 And thou swiftly all
 The heaven turnest round,
 And through thy
 Holy might
 Compellest the stars
 That they should obey thee.
 Thus the sun
 Of the black night
 The darkness extinguishes
 Through thy might.

With pale light
 The bright planets
 The moon tempers
 Through the effect of thy power.
 A while also the sun
 Bereaveth that of its
 Bright light.
 When it may happen
 That near enough
 It necessarily comes.

Boetius.

The radiance by which Heaven is
 governed and flourishes, shines the ob-
 scured ruins of the soul.

Whoever can remark this light will
 deny the beams of Phœbus their lustre.
 Lib. iii. met. 10.

Oh Framer of the starry world! who,
 resting on thy perpetual throne, turnest
 the heaven with a rapid whirl, and com-
 pellest the stars to endure a law Lib. i.
 m. 5.

As now the moon, with her full horn
 of light imbibing all her brother's flames,
 hideth the lesser stars: now pale with
 obscure horn, nearer to Phœbus loses
 her lustre.

Alfred.

So the greater
 Morning star
 That we with another name
 The evening star
 Here named :
 Thou compellest this
 That he the sun's
 Path should precede,
 Every year
 He shall go on
 Before him to advance.

Thou, O Father,
 Makest of summer
 The long days
 Very hot.
 To the winter days,
 Wonderously short
 Times hast thou appointed.

Thou, to the trees
 Givest the south and west,
 Which before, black storms
 From the north and east
 Had deprived
 Of every leaf
 By the more hostile wind.

Oh ! how on earth
 All creatures
 Obey thy command
 As in the heavens
 Some do
 In mind and power.
 But men only
 Against thy will
 Oftencst struggle.
 Hail ! Oh thou Eternal,
 And thou Almighty,
 Of all creatures
 Creator and ruler.
 Pardon thy wretched
 Children of the earth,
 Mankind
 In the course of thy might.

Why, O eternal God !
 Wouldst thou ever
 That fortune
 At her will
 Should go
 To evil men ?
 That in every way so strongly
 She full oft
 Should hurt the guiltless.

Boetius.

As Hesperus in the first hours of night
 Emerges with chilling beams ; and again
 As the morning star, when Phœbus rises,
 Changes his accustomed rule.

Thou, with the cold of the leaf-flow-
 ing frost, confinest the light to a shorter
 stay : Thou, when the fervid summer
 shall come, dividest the active hours of
 the night.

Thy power tempers the various year,
 so that the leaves which the breath of
 Boreas takes away, the mild zephyr re-
 clothes ; and the seeds which Arcturus
 beheld, Sirius burns in their tall har-
 vest.

Nothing, forsaking its ancient law,
 quits the work of its own station. Go-
 verning all things with a certain end,
 Thou, deservedly our ruler ! disdainest
 to restrain the actions of men only.

Why should slippery fortune take so
 many turns ? Noxious pain due to
 crime presses the innocent.

Alfred.

Evil men sit
Over the earth's kingdoms
On high seats.
They tread down the holy
Under their feet
Who know no crimes.

Why should fortune
Move so perversely ?
Thus are hidden
Here on the world
Over many cities
The bright arts.
The unrighteous always
Have in contempt
Those that are, than them
Wiser in right ;
Worthier of power.
The false lot is
A long while
Covered by frauds.

Now, in the world here,
Impious oaths
Hurt not man.
If thou now, O Ruler,
Wilt not steer fortune,
But at her self-will
Lettest her triumph,
Then I know
That thee will
Worldly men doubt
Over the parts of the globe,
Except a few only.

Oh, my Lord !
Thou that overseest all
Of the world's creatures,
Look now on mankind
With mild eyes.
Now they here in many
Of the world's waves
Struggle and labour,
Miserable earth citizens !
Forgive them now. P. 153.

Boetius.

But perverse manners sit on the lofty
throne, and the guilty tread on the
righteous neck by an unjust change.

Virtue hidden in obscurity lives un-
seen, bright in its darkness. The just
endure the crime of the wicked.

These, no perjury, no fraud, dressed
with falsehood, hurt ; but when they
choose to use their strength, they re-
joice to subdue the greatest kings,
whom innumerable people fear.

O now behold thy wretched earth,
who connectest the union of all things.
We mankind, not a vile part of so great
a work, are shaken by the sea of fortune.
O Ruler, repress the rapid waves, and
with the law that rules the immense
heaven, keep steady thy solid earth.

The preceding facts of Alfred's studies, translations, additions, and compositions, enable us to perceive the great improvements which they diffused upon the intellect of the Anglo-Saxon nation. By his Orosius and Bede, he made the general history and geography of the world, and the particular history of England, a part of the mind of his countrymen ; and, by his Bede, he made historical fame an object of ambition to his royal successors ; for that exhibited to their own eyesight how their predecessors had

been recorded and applauded. By transmitting to posterity the detail of Ohthere and Wulfstan's voyages, he made such expeditions interesting to the nation, fixed them in their memory, and insured their future imitation. By his Boetius he poured a great number of moral thoughts and feelings among his rude Anglo-Saxons, which they had never considered or experienced before; and by cultivating poetical versification he increased the popularity and improvement of that pleasing art. He found the English mind unformed and barren, and he led it to knowledge, civility, moral sentiment, and moral reasoning. His attachment to religion increased its influence among his descendants and in his country.

But there is another point of view in which the intellectual benefit that Alfred conferred upon his country has not yet been considered. This is the easy, fluent, and lively prose style, which it may be seen from the extracts already given, that he so peculiarly contributed to form by his translations and additions to Boetius. The work is not a mere literal version of the Latin diction, into a servile corresponding one, as the Anglo-Saxon Psalter, published by Spelman, in which every Latin word is rendered, however harshly, by a similar English one. Alfred's Boetius, even where he translates exactly, is done with the freedom of a master, who uses his own style without departing from his author's meaning. The best prose style of all countries is that which men of superior intellect use, who, to much literary cultivation, add much intercourse with public affairs, and with the highest classes of the society in which they live. The activity of their daily life gives a spirit and freedom to their minds and thoughts, which pervade their colloquial diction; and this, when polished by the most cultivated urbanity of the day, and enlarged by the more extensive subjects of their studies, and the greater correctness of meditative composition, becomes superior to any that the world or the closet can singly create. Alfred's Boetius in every part displays these excellencies. Its form of dialogue favoured their union. It is clear, easy, animated, attractive, and impressive. It comes the nearest to our present best English prose style of all the Anglo-Saxon prose writings that have survived to us, and entitles Alfred to be considered as the venerable father of our best English diction, as well as our first moral essayist.

We may close our review of his intellectual character with remarking, as an additional subject for our admiration, that not above two centuries and a half elapsed, between the first appearance of literature among the Anglo-Saxons, and the formation of Alfred's mind. Has any country, within so short a period, produced in itself an intellect amongst its sovereigns, that combined so many excellencies?

CHAPTER V.

Alfred's Moral Character.

WE have contemplated Alfred as the student, and the man of literature, and in his public character. Let us proceed to review his conduct in more interesting relations.

To educate our children in the best improvements and noblest virtues of our times, is to perform a duty the most sacred which we owe to society, and its Parent. If as reason hopes, and revelation assures us, He, who called man into being, is interested in his concerns, no event can more propitiate his favour, than the gradual improvement of his creation. If one idea can predominate over others in the divine economy of human affairs, it is reasonable to believe, that it must be the plan of our moral and intellectual progression. Whoever leaves his offspring more informed and more virtuous than himself, accelerates this favourite scheme of supreme goodness, and claims the gratitude of society whom he benefits.

Alfred was a great example to posterity in this path of duty. He was as solicitous to improve his family as himself. He had several children; some died in their infancy.^a Æthelfleda, Edward, Ethelgiva, Alfritha, and Æthelweard, survived him. Edward and Alfritha were educated in the royal court with great attention. They were accustomed to filial duty towards their parent, and to behave with mildness and affability towards others, whether strangers or natives. Asser remarks, that they retained these estimable qualities at the period in which he wrote. They were induced to improve their minds with all the liberal learning which could then be obtained. Besides the hymns of devotion, they were studiously taught Saxon books, and particularly Saxon poetry; and they were accustomed to frequent reading.^b

Æthelweard, his youngest son, received a sort of public education; he was committed to the diligent care of proper teachers, with almost all the noble children of the province, and with many

^a Asser, mentioning his living children, adds, "Exceptis his qui in infantia morte præveniente præoccupati sunt," p. 42. Rudborne mentions that Edmund was his first-born, whom his father had crowned as his intended successor. He died a little before his father, and was buried in the old monastery at Winchester, "as appears," says Rudborne, "by his marble on his tomb, on the north side of the altar, which is inscribed, *Hic jacet Edmundus Rex, filii Alfredi regia.*" *Hist. Mag. Wint.* p. 207.

^b Asser, 43.

of inferior ranks. There they were all assiduously instructed in Latin and Saxon: they learned also the art of writing, to which literature owes its existence. By these institutions, the season of their youth was employed to inform and enlarge their minds. When their matured age gave the requisite strength, they were exercised in hunting and those robust arts, which by the habits of society at that time, were made honourable and popular.^c

The most exquisite luxury which aged parents can enjoy, when the charms of life and all the pleasures of sense are fast fading around them, is to see their parental care rewarded by a dutiful, affectionate, and intelligent offspring. Alfred enjoyed this happiness, which he had so well merited. Æthelfleda, his eldest, became a woman of very superior mind: such were its energies, that they even reached a masculine strength. She is extolled, in the ancient chronicles, as the wisest lady in England. Her brother Edward governed his life in its best actions by her counsels. After she was married to Ethelred, the governor of Mercia, she built several cities, and upon all occasions displayed a statesman's skill, and an Amazonian activity.^d

The reign of Edward was distinguished by its vigour and prosperity. Some of the last instructions of Alfred to his son have been popularly preserved,^e and they deserve to be quoted, for their pathetic simplicity, their political wisdom, and the proof which they afford of this monarch's anxiety for the welfare of his subjects.

"Thou," saith Alfred, "my dear son, set thee now beside me, and I will deliver thee true instructions. My son, I feel that my hour is coming. My countenance is wan. My days are almost done. We must now part. I shall to another world, and thou shalt be left alone in all my wealth. I pray thee (for thou art my dear child) strive to be a father, and a lord to thy people. Be

^c Asser, 43. Æthelweard lived twenty-one years after his father, and died 922, in the beginning of the reign of Athelstan. Matt. West. 359.

^d The difficulty and sufferings of her first parturition, deterred her from the chance of a repetition. She protested that it did not become a king's daughter to pursue any pleasure which was attended with such inconvenience. Malmsh. 46. He describes her, "Favor civium, pavor hostium, immodici cordis femina.—Virago potentissima multum fratrem juvare consilia, in urbibus extruendis non minus valere, non discernas potiore fortuna, an virtute; ut mulier viros domesticos protegeret, alienos tereret." Ib. 46. The Chronicle MS. Nero. A. 6, says of her, "Per cujus animum frater suus Edwardus multo melius in regno actus suos dirigebat." p. 6.

^e This is the conclusion of the Cotton MSS. mentioned before, p. 440. Of this work Spelman says, fairly, "I cannot think it fit to offer them into the world as an instance of what the king composed; for they are not his very work in the Saxon tongue, but a miscellany collection of some later author, who, according to his own faculty, hath, in a broken English, put together such of the sayings of king Alfred, as he met withal." p. 125. Wanley says, the fragment is in Norman Saxon, "circa tempus Henrici II. aut Richardi I. conscriptum in quo continentur quedam ex proverbii et apothegmatis Ælfredi regis sapientissimi," p. 231. A copy of the Galba MS. of this work is stated to exist in MS. at Oxford, in the Bodleian Library.

thou the children's father, and the widow's friend. Comfort thou the poor, and shelter the weak; and, with all thy might, right that which is wrong. And, son, govern thyself, by law; then shall the Lord love thee, and God above all things shall be thy reward. Call thou upon him to advise thee in all thy need, and so shall he help thee, the better to compass that which thou wouldest."^r

Æthelweard became a man celebrated for his learning.^s

Alfritha obtained an honourable marriage.^b We have mentioned, in a preceding chapter,ⁱ Baldwin, with the iron arm, count of Flanders, who carried off, with friendly violence, Judith, the widow of Ethelwulf, and of Alfred's brother Ethelbald. The son of this marriage, which the king of France at last sanctioned, was Baldwin the Bald. It was he who obtained the hand of Alfritha; their offspring was Arnulf,^j who is mentioned with expressions of celebrity, and who succeeded his father in 918.^k From a descendant of Arnulf was born Mathilda, the wife of William the Conqueror.

It is the invariable dictate of benevolence, never to be inattentive to the comforts of others. Alfred displayed this accomplished temper in his arrangement of his household. He divided all his noble attendants into three bodies, and he regulated their

ⁱ Spelman, p. 131. This collection begins thus:

“Ac Siƿƿonð ƿeten Thamer manre,
Fele Biscopereƿ and fele boc leƿeð,
Eƿlere ƿƿude ƿ Knihƿer egloche.
Ther ƿer Eƿle Alƿrih of the lage ƿƿuth ƿife,
And ec Alƿreð ƿ Engle hƿrde, Engle ðarling.
On Englonð he ƿar king. ðem he gan leƿen
Sƿo him heƿen mihten, hu hi heƿe liƿ leðen ƿcolðen.

Alfred he was on Englelonð a king well swithe strong.

He was king and clerk. Well he luvied God's werk :

He was wise on his word, and war on his speeche.

He was the wiseste man that was on Englelonð.” Ibid. p. 127.

The 5th article is worth quoting in Spelman's translation. “Thus,” quoth Alfred, “without wisdom, wealth is worth little. Though a man had an hundred and seventy acres sown with gold, and all grew like corn, yet were all that wealth worth nothing unless that of an enemy one could make it become his friend. For what differs gold from a stone, but by discreet using of it?” p. 130.

^k To this son, Alfred, by his will, devised land in seventeen places, beside that of the Weal district, and 500 pounds.

^l Alfred bequeathed to her 100 pounds, and three manors. ⁱ Vol. i. p. 321.

^j Her relation Ethelweard, thus speaks of this marriage: “Alfred misit Alfbrythe filiam suam ad partes Germaniæ Baldwin in matrimonium qui genuit ab ea filios duos, Athulfum et Earnulfum; duas filias quoque, Ealshwid et Earmentroth.” Prologus Ethelw. p. 831. The Chronicon Sithense in Bouquet's Recueil, tom. ix. p. 74, places the marriage in 896. The Chronicon Alberici mistakes both the name and parentage of the lady, for it calls her Ethelwinda, and makes her Alfred's granddaughter, filiam filiam suam. Bouq. tom. ix. p. 61.

^k Bouquet's Recueil, tom. ix. p. 152.

personal services with a kind regard to their convenience, as well as to his own. He exacted the attendance of one of the divisions for a month, and afterwards allowed the persons who composed it to return home to their families and affairs, while another supplied their place for the same period.¹ By this regular routine, Alfred was carefully served, and an ample time was afforded to his attendants to watch over their private concerns. He was also scrupulously exact in the distribution and application of his yearly revenue. He ordered his officers to divide it into two general portions. These portions he again subdivided, and appropriated each division to a peculiar and inalienable service.

One of his allotments, a sixth of his income, he set apart for his warriors and noble attendants; he gave to each according to his dignity and to his services. Another sixth he devoted to the workmen in architecture, whom he collected from several nations. Another sixth he appropriated to foreigners who came to him, whatever might be their country, whether remote or near, whether they claimed his bounty, or awaited its voluntary descent; they received each a portion according to their worthiness, which was given with admirable discretion.²

The other half of his revenue was consecrated to religious objects. This he also separated again, and commanded his officers to put it into four shares. One of these, being one-eighth of his whole income, was prudently administered to the poor of every nation who came to him. In distributing this, he remembered the axiom of Pope Gregory; "Give not little to him who needs much, nor much to him who needs little; refuse not to the man who should have something, and give not to him who deserves nothing." Another eighth was paid to the two monasteries he built, for their maintenance. Another eighth was for the school which he had diligently made up from many nobles of his nation. Another eighth was dispersed among the neighbouring monasteries of West Saxony and Mercia. In some years he made donations to the churches and clergy in Wales, Cornwall, France, Bretagne, Northumbria, and Ireland, according to his ability.³

Alfred was an exact economist of his time, without which indeed nothing great can be achieved. He had not those heralds of its lapse which we can make so minute and exact; but he was sensible, that to do all he projected, he must divide his day, and appropriate every part.

The darkness of the night afforded him no natural means of measuring the progress of the revolving globe; and as clouds and rain often concealed the sun, which is the only chronometer of uncultivated man, he was compelled to frame some method of

¹ Amer, 65.² Ibid, 65, 66. Florence.³ Amer, 67.

marking his day into regular intervals.* Mechanics were then so little known, either in theory or practice, that Alfred had not the aid of this science, from which most of our comforts, both domestic and political, have arisen. He used a simple expedient: his chaplains, by his orders, procured wax, and he ordered seventy-two denarii of it to be made into six equal candles, each candle to be twelve inches long, which were separately marked. These candles, successively used, lasted through the whole twenty-four hours, and of course every inch marked the lapse of twenty minutes; but sometimes the wind rushing in through the windows and doors, the numerous chinks of the walls,^p or the slender covering of the tents, consumed the candles with undue celerity. To cure this evil, which confused his calculation, he thought skilfully and wisely, says Asser;^q and the result of this skill and wisdom was the invention of lanthorns. He found that the white horn became pellucid like glass,^r and with this and wood, a case for his candle was (mirabiliter) admirably made. By these schemes, which our clocks and watches make us deride, he obtained what he wanted, an exact admeasurement of the lapse of time. We have not a correct detail of its appropriation. Asser's general statement, that he consecrated half the time to God,^s gives no distinct idea, because we find, that his liberal mind, in the distribution of his revenue, thought that to apportion money for a school, was devoting it to the Supreme. Malmesbury's account is, that one-third of the natural day and night was given to sleep and refreshment; one third to the affairs of his kingdom; and one-third to those duties which he considered as sacred.^t This indistinct statement cannot now be amplified.

He had been fond of hunting and sporting; but as he became older, we may infer, from his paraphrase of Boetius's conditional assertion, that if a man rode for his health, he did not desire the motion but its effect, that our afflicted king did not take this exercise for pleasure. He says:—

“No man rides out because it pleases him to ride; but he rides because by the excursion he earns something. Some earn by it that they shall be healthier; some that they shall be more active; and some because they would come to some other place which they desire to be at.”^u

* The king of the Franks had an advantage in this respect above Alfred; for, in 807, Charlemagne was presented by the king of Persia with a superb clock. “Horologium ex orichalco, arte mechanica mirifice compositum, in quo duodecim horarum cursus ad clepsidram vertebatur, cum totidem æreis pilulis, quæ ad completionem horarum decidebant et casu suo subjectum sibi cymbalum tinnire faciebant; additis in eodem ejusdem numeri equitibus qui per 12 fenestras completis horis exibent et impulsu egressionis suæ totidem fenestras quæ prius erant apertæ, clauderant.” *Annales Car. Mag. Astron.* p. 35. Reuberi.

^p This is curious language of a royal palace.

^q Consilio quæ artificiosè atque sapienter invento, p. 68.

^r Asser, 67.

^s Malmesbury, 45.

^t Alf. Boet. p. 20.

One of the principal features of Alfred's useful life, was his earnest piety. From the gross and illiberal superstitions which have been connected with religion, and from the frauds and hypocrisy which have been sometimes practised under her venerable name, piety, although one of the native flowers of the uncorrupted heart, has lost much of its influence upon mankind. Philosophy has justly taught us to discredit priestcraft; and the dread of the evils which this has produced, has greatly alienated many from religion itself. Whenever a mischief tends to accompany a blessing, the good is undervalued till the evil can be removed.

But although this state of opinion results, not unnaturally, from some part of the former experience of mankind, it is not a decision which wisdom and knowledge will ultimately sanction. Religion is as necessary to the happiness and improvement of man, and to the healthful continuance and expected melioration of society, as superstition, artifice, tyranny, and ignorance are injurious and debasing; and of all religions none can be compared with Christianity, either in intellect, morals, or beneficence. It has raised the kingdoms where it has prevailed, to a proud superiority over the rest of the world; and it has given a beauty, a richness, and an utility to the human character, which we shall in vain look for under any other system. No religion is either in spirit or in precept more adverse to those systems of delusion and selfishness to which it has been perverted, and from which it is ever appealing; none can better claim the support of the wise, and the sympathy of the good.

Religion was one of the earliest offsprings of the human intellect, and cannot long be separated from it without certain deterioration to both. As it is the best guide and guardian of mind as well as of virtue, if it be allied with our reason, and enriched with our knowledge, many of the greatest characters of their day have in all ages upheld it. But there are some dispositions to whom it is peculiarly congenial and gratifying; and Alfred was one of that order of intelligence which has delighted in its exercise.

By other men, piety may have been taken up as a mask, or worn as a habit; by Alfred it was applied to its great and proper use, to the correction of immorality, to the advancement of virtue, to the encouragement of knowledge, and to become the asylum of happiness.

Alfred, like other men, inherited the passions and frailties of mortality: he felt immoral tendencies prevalent in his constitution, and he found that he could not restrain his objectionable desires. With this experience mankind in general rest satisfied: they feel themselves prompted to vicious gratifications: they take the tendencies of nature as their excuse, and they freely indulge.

But the mind of Alfred emancipated itself from such sophistry: he disdained to palter with his moral sense: he knew that his pro-

passions were immoral; and though a prince, he determined not to be their slave. He found the power of his reason to be inadequate to subdue them; and he therefore had recourse to the aids of religion. His honoured friend assures us, that to protect himself from vice, he rose alone at the first dawn of day, and privately visited churches and their shrines, for the sake of prayer. There, long prostrate, he besought the great moral Legislator to strengthen his good intentions. So sincere was his virtuous determination, that he even implored the dispensation of some affliction which he could support, and which would not, like blindness or leprosy, make him useless and contemptible in society, as an assistant to his virtue. With frequent and earnest devotion, he preferred this request; and when at no long interval the disorder of the ficus came upon him, he welcomed its occurrence, and converted it to a moral utility, though it attacked him severely.¹ However variously with our present habits, we may appreciate the remedy with which Alfred chose to combat his too ardent passions, we cannot refuse our applause to his magnanimity. His abhorrence of vice, his zeal for practical virtue, would do honour to any private man of the most regular habits: but in a prince who lives in that sphere of society where every object and every associate tempt the passions, and seduce the reason, it was one of those noble exertions of soul which humanity rarely yet displays, and which words cannot adequately applaud.

Asser repeatedly describes his sovereign's religious disposition: "He was accustomed to hear divine service, especially the mass, every day, and to repeat psalms and prayers, and the devotions for the hours of the day and for night; and he often frequented churches alone, without his state, in the night time, for the sake of praying."²

Asser also adds: "It was his habit, attentively and solicitously, to hear the sacred Scriptures read by his own subjects, or by foreigners when any came to him from abroad, and also prayers.

"He lamented continually, with sorrow and sighing, to all who were admitted into his intimacy, that the Deity had made him void of Divine wisdom and the liberal arts. But He who beholds the internal mind, and promotes every virtuous meditation and good inclination, increased this inward impulse, till the king had acquired, from every quarter within his reach, coadjutors of this pious disposition who were able to assist him in the wisdom he desired, and to conduct him to the proficiency he coveted."³

In another place Asser informs us that Alfred carefully carried in his bosom a little book, in which were written the daily offices of prayer, and some psalms and pious supplications which he had read in his youth.⁴

¹ Asser, 41, 42.

² These are Asser's words, p. 45.

³ Asser, p. 44.

⁴ Asser, p. 55.

Asser intimates that one of the king's first uses of his knowledge of Latin, and his mode of learning it, was to translate passages of the sacred Scriptures, and to insert them in the book which he called his manual, because he had it always in his hand, and from which he then said he derived no small comfort.⁷

Nearly a thousand years have elapsed since Alfred's reign, and yet no plan of acquiring moral and philosophical wisdom has been suggested which will be found to be more efficacious than this invaluable habit of our Anglo-Saxon king. They who have profited from it, can attest its efficacy.

But, independently of Asser's account, we have two written records still remaining of the pious feelings of this admirable king, from his own heart and pen, in his Anglo-Saxon selections and translations from St. Austin's meditations, and in his additions to his version of Boetius. As the truth is every day becoming more apparent, and will be ere long admitted by the most philosophical, that enlightened religion is the best guide to wisdom, virtue, and social order, and their surest basis, we will make no apology for adding a few extracts on this subject.

Alfred's imitation of the fourth metrum of Boetius consists chiefly of the additions of his own piety :

"He that would firmly build his house, he should not set it upon the highest hill ; and he that would seek heavenly wisdom must not be arrogant. And again,

"As he that would firmly build his house will not place it upon sand-hills, so if thou wouldst build wisdom, set it not up on covetousness ; for as the drinking sand swalloweth the rain, so covetousness absorbs the frail happiness of this world, because it will be always thirsty.

"Nor can a house stand long on a high mountain if a full raging wind presses on it. Nor hath it on the drinking sand that which will continue against violent rain.

"So also the mind of man is undermined and agitated from its place, when the wind of strong troubles or the rain of immeasurable anxiety shake it.

"But he that will have the eternal riches, he will fly from the dangerous beauty of this middle earth, and build the house of his mind on the fast stone of lowliness ; for Christ dwelt in the valley of humility and in the meditation of wisdom.

"Hence the wise man will lead all his life to the joy that is unchangeable, endless, and without care. Then he will despise both earthly good, and evil also ; and hope for the future, which will be eternal. Because God, who for ever abides, will preserve him everywhere in the riches of his mind, though the wind of this world's difficulties, and the perpetual cares of its prosperities should blow on him."⁸

From the diffuse meditations of St. Austin,⁹ Alfred selected the parts which most pleased him, and has translated these into Saxon, with that freedom, and with those additions which make his ver-

⁷ Asser, p. 57.

⁸ Alfred's Boet. p. 22. The two last paragraphs, and some phrases of the others, are Alfred's own composition.

⁹ MSS. Brit. Mus. Vitell. A. 15.

sions so often breathe his own feelings. As the king's heart is laid open before us in these chosen effusions, it may not be uninteresting to insert some extracts from them, as a further delineation of his real character :

" Lord ! Thou who art the maker of all creation, grant me first that I may rightly know Thee and rationally address Thee ; then may I earn that I shall become worthy that Thou, from thy mild-heartedness, shouldst redeem and free me.

" I call to Thee, Lord ! Thou that abandonest none of thy creatures to become nought. To Thee I call ; Thou that lovest all that can love Thee ; both those which know that they should love and those which do not.

" O Thou ! that didst make all creatures very good without any evil ! Thou ! who wilt not openly show thyself to any others but to those who are cleansed in their mind ! To Thee, O Lord ! I call, because Thou art the father of sincerity and wisdom, and true life, and of the supreme life and the supreme felicity, and of the highest good and the supreme brightness, and of intellectual light.

" O Thou who art the Father of that Son which has awakned us, and yet urgeth us out of the sleep of our sins, and exhorteth us, that we become thine ; to Thee, Lord ! I pray, who art the supreme truth, for all the truth that is, is truth from Thee.

" Thee, I implore, O Lord ! who art the highest wisdom. Through Thee are wise all those that are so. Thou art the true life, and through Thee all that live subsist. Thou art the supreme felicity, and from Thee all have become happy that are so. Thou art the highest good, and from Thee all beauty springs. Thou art the intellectual light, and from Thee man derives his understanding !

" He that loveth Thee, seeketh Thee : he that followeth Thee, he will obtain Thee."

After indulging in these lofty feelings awhile, he proceeds more earnestly :

" Come now to help me, O Thou, who art the only Eternal ; the true God of glory : Father and Son, and so art now ; and Holy Spirit, without any separation or mutability, and without any necessity or diminution of power, and who never diest. Thou art always dwelling in the highest brightness, and in highest happiness ; in perfect unanimity, and in the fullest abundance. With Thee there is no deficiency of good, but Thou art ever abiding, replete with every felicity, through endless time.

" To Thee, O God ! I call and speak. Hear, O hear me ! Lord ! for Thou art my God and my Lord ; my father and my creator ; my ruler, and my hope ; my wealth and my honour ; my house ; my country ; my salvation, and my life ! Hear, hear me, O Lord ! Few of thy servants comprehend Thee. But Thee alone I love, indeed, above all other things ; Thee I seek ; Thee I will follow ; Thee I am ready to serve. Under Thy power I desire to abide, for Thou alone art the sovereign of all. I pray Thee to command me as Thou wilt."

One extract more, breathing the same warmth of feeling, may be added :

" Now I have sought Thee : unlock thy door and teach me how I may come to Thee. I have nothing to bring to Thee but my good will, but I myself have nothing else. I know nothing that is better than to love Thee, the heavenly and the spiritual One, above all earthly things. Thus I also do, Good Father ! because I know of nothing better than myself.

"But I know not how I can come to Thee unless Thou permittest me. Teach it to me, and help me. If those through Thee find the truth who find Thee, give me that truth. If they through Thee obtain any virtue who obtain Thee, impart that virtue to me. If wisdom, grant me that wisdom. Add to me the hope of the everlasting life, and pour thy love upon me.

"Oh! how Thy goodness is to be admired, for it is unlike all other goods. I wish to come to Thee, and the more earnestly, because of all things I need this path. My desire is to Thee, and this most chiefly because without Thee I cannot come to Thee. If thou abandonest me, then I shall be removed from Thee; but I know that Thou wilt not forsake me unless I forsake Thee. But I will not forsake Thee, because Thou art the highest good. There is none of those who seek Thee rightly that may not find Thee. But they only will seek Thee rightly whom Thou instructest to seek Thee, and teachest how to find Thee."^b

From the preceding extracts, and from those before given from his Boetius, it will appear that Alfred connected his belief in Christianity with high-minded feelings. In his Boetius he takes repeated occasions, and with a peculiar pleasure, to expatiate upon the power, perfections, and providence of the Deity, with all the clearness of perception, and largeness of thought, and warmth of sentiment, of a Platonic or Pythagorean philosopher, though with the superior light of a Christian thinker.

The subject never occurs to his pen but he dilates upon it with such visible affection, as to show that it was the habitual and predominant feeling of his cultivated mind. Yet, frequently as he has discussed it, he never betrays any narrow-minded superstition. All his conceptions are intelligent and expanded. He views the greatest of beings not only as the sovereign, but as the father, the guide, the instructor, and the benefactor of his creatures. He loves to contemplate this awful theme, and to interest others with his contemplations. It is surprising, in an age so dark and tumultuous, and amid cares and employments so harassing and multifarious, and when relics and rites were the religion that was most valued, that the mind of Alfred could have thus enlarged its religious meditations, have conceived them so justly, and expressed them so rationally, and yet so fervently. Nothing displays more emphatically the habitual greatness of his mind than his pure, and lofty, and affectionate theism, and the natural and earnest diction into which it effuses.

That Alfred, who lost both his parents before he was ten years old; who was on the throne at the age of twenty-one, and was immersed so long in the occupations and vicissitudes of the most deadly warfares; who lived amid such desolations and ignorance, and had no education but such as in his maturer life he was enabled to give himself, should yet have formed his mind to that admirable combination of great piety with great wisdom, enlarged intellect, liberal feelings, and as much knowledge as his inquisi-

^b These extracts are taken from the Cotton MSS. Vitell. A. 15.

tive curiosity could obtain, is a phenomenon that, in far happier times, has rarely, if ever, been exhibited on the throne. As all effects have adequate causes, we are led to inquire into the origin, or first author, of this attainment. The individual within his reach to whom the commencement of his religious feelings can be most justly attributed is his kinsman, St. Neot.^c Alfred is declared to have frequently visited this pious man; to have conversed much with him on devotional subjects; to have profited greatly, both in his moral conduct and knowledge of Christianity,^d from these interviews; and to have been reproved by him, as already mentioned, for his faults.

It is not clear whether St. Neot was his brother or his uncle.^e He was king before he abandoned the world,^f but as to what province he reigned in England, and of his former name, we have no satisfactory information; and where this is wanting, no conjecture, however ingenious, can in history be substituted for it.^h But of his spirit and subsequent conduct the details are clear and abundant.

Neot is described to have been a very meek and mild man: to have become a monk at Glastonbury; to have visited Rome seven times; and to have retired to a wild solitude in Cornwall, which

^c Asser calls Neot, "Cognatus suus," p. 32. Ingulf says, he was frequently at the feet of St. Neot and Werefrith, p. 27.

^d The Saxon life of Neot says, "On than time þær Ælfred king and to than halgen zelomen (often) com emb his þære theære." MS. Vesp. D. 14, p. 145. The oldest Latin life adds, that Neot received him as his lord with honour, and as his brother with love, blessed him, taught and instructed him, and showed him the way of prudence. Claud. A. 5, p. 153. Ramsay's prose life mentions that Neot taught him "multa in divinis et quæ Christianismo pertinebant, regi diseruit." Whit. Neot, p. 347. His metrical life mentions that "ad sanctum *peræpe* requirit." Ibid. p. 334.

^e The MSS. Claud. A. 5, makes him the son of Ethelwulph, and therefore brother of Alfred. So does the metrical life of Ramsay, Whit. p. 318, and the lives of St. Neot, extracted by Leland in his Collect. vol. iv. p. 13, and so Leland himself. De Script. Brit. p. 143. Other authorities state him to be the son of Egbert. I think if he had been Alfred's brother, Asser would have hardly called him "cognatus."

^f So the Claudius MS. intimates: "Neque enim alienus vel ipso genere inferior sanctus erat Neotus: sed *ex eodem sanguine creatus rex.*" p. 153. One of the inscriptions on the window in his Cornish church was, "Hic tradidit coronam fratri suo juniori." Whit. Neot. p. 74.

^g Ramsay's prose life implies East Anglia, p. 340, and so Leland understood it. Itin. iv. p. 135.

^h Dr. Whitaker's theory is, that he was Ethelstan, the son of Ethelwulph, and king of Kent, p. 73. It is a very spirited conjecture, and not wholly improbable; but Malmabury has declared that he did not know what end Ethelstan had; and the Saxon life says of Neot, "He was in his youth addicted to book-like learning, and to religious practices, and diligently inquired about the eternal life, and how he might most firmly live for God." MSS. Vesp. This does not exactly suit with Ethelstan's reign in Kent, and battle in 851 with the Danes. See before, p. 315. Fordun, who mentions his death in a conflict with the Scots, does not state his earlier authority for this incident. On the whole, we cannot identify the saint with the king as an historical certainty.

he afterwards quitted to build a monastery.¹ He died before 878. The principal feature in his moral character is the resolution which he formed of copying the predominant virtue of every person in his cloister that had any,—the continence of one man, the pleasantness of another, the suavity of a third; the seriousness, humanity, good nature, and love of singing, and of study, in others. Hence the summary of his character is thus transmitted to us: “Humble to all, affable in conversation, mild in transaction of business, venerable in aspect, serene in countenance, moderate even in his walk, sincere, upright, calm, temperate, and charitable.”²

It is extraordinary that such a man should have led the mind of Alfred to favourable impressions of sincere religion.

It is an agreeable instance of Alfred's good humour, that after his restoration, he was in the habit of narrating to his friends the adventures of his adversity, with lively pleasantry.³

There is one little incident attached to the memory of Alfred, which, as it exists in an author who seems to have been curious in searching into ancient remains,⁴ may be mentioned here, that nothing concerning so great a man be lost.

One day he was hunting in a wood, he heard the cry of an infant in a tree, and ordered his huntsmen to examine the place. They ascended the branches, and found at top, in an eagle's nest, a beautiful child, dressed in purple, with golden bracelets, the marks of nobility, on his arms. The king had him brought down and baptized, and well educated; from the accident, he named the foundling Nestingum. His grandson's daughter is stated to have been one of the ladies for whom Edgar indulged an improper passion.

We will close our account of Alfred's moral character by one remarkable trait. An author who lived at the period of the Norman conquest, in mentioning some of the preceding kings with short appropriate epithets, names Alfred, with the simple but expressive addition of “the truth teller,”⁵ as if it had been his traditional character.

¹ See the preceding lives, and Whitaker's account.

² Ramsay's Life, p. 341; Whitaker, p. 93; and see his further account, p. 94, 95.

³ Malmesbury, 43.

⁴ This is Johannes Tismuth, whose MSS. have not yet been published, though they appear to contain some curious particulars. I find an extract from his history in the Bodleian Library, lib. xxi. quoted by Dugdale, *Monasticon*, 1, p. 256.

⁵ *Hermann's miracula Edmundi script. circa 1070. MS. Cotton Library, Tibernice, b. ii.* It follows Abbo's life of this king. It is very beautifully written. P. 21, he says “*Elueredi Veridici.*” In his epithets of the kings, he seems to have closely followed their traditional biography, for he calls Edred, “*debilis pedibus,*” which is a very marking trait.

CHAPTER VI.

Alfred's Public Conduct.

THE conduct of kings affects the whole nation which contemplates it. The fortunes of human nature are in their hands. Virtue and intellect flourish as their conduct is wise and moral; and nations prosper or decline, as the measures of the executive authority are salutary or ignoble.

Although his conduct in the first part of his reign was objectionable, few sovereigns have shaped their conduct with more regard to the public happiness than Alfred, after his restoration. He seems to have considered his life but as a trust to be used for the benefit of his people; and his plans for their welfare were intelligent and great. His military exertions for the benefit of the nation, and their final successes, have been already commemorated. But although performed by him as necessary duties, they were uncongential with his heart and mind. These turned, as soon as they were at liberty to pursue their natural bias, to nobler objects than war and bloodshed.

His predominant wish was the mental and moral improvement of his countrymen. His letter to his bishop, prefixed to his translation of Gregory's Pastorals, and already cited,^a breathes this principle throughout. To communicate to others the knowledge which we possess, he even states to be a religious duty. He laments the ignorance which overspread his land; he desires that all the youth, who had pecuniary means, should learn to read English; he gently censures former students who had not put their knowledge into a popular form, by translating it into the vernacular tongue; he devotes his own leisure, and he calls upon his literary clergy to devote theirs, to the translating into English the books they possessed. He led the way with taste and judgment in his historical and philosophical translations: he seems to place his glory in the intellectual advancement of his rude countrymen.

His correspondent, the French archbishop, also bears testimony to the same spirit.^b The translation of Gregory's Pastorals could have no other meaning than to rouse the clergy to labour for the moral emendation of his people; and, at the same time that we surrender this book to disapprobation, for its tendency to enchain

^a From p. 391, of this volume.

^b See before, p. 390.

the mind, it may be proper to remark, that the principle upon which the king recommended it to his clergy was unquestionably just. We cannot look round the world without perceiving how much the morality of a people depends upon the sagacity, the knowledge, and the virtue of its sacred preceptors. Why is the fair influence of true religion lessening among us, but because the appointed guardians of our morals are not always careful to acquire the talents, to display the enlarged views, and to exert the conduct which will interest the thoughtless, impress the dissolute, and satisfy the doubting? In every age the world requires, from its moral teachers, example, persuasion, and conviction. The clergy of Alfred were not distinguished for either, and the king knew no other book which at all aimed at educating them, to influence honourably, as well as to exhort; nor was any other way at that time likely to be more efficacious than to increase the influence of the ecclesiastical order.

In the first days of society, and in its most improved period, when religion and philosophy have become duly united and firmly seated in the heart, the patriarchal and the priestly character may be often most usefully united; but in the intermediate eras, when so many myriads are ignorant of religion, or indifferent to it, or prejudiced against it, if there be not a well educated, respected, and authorized clergy, it will depart from the young intellect amid the pressure of worldly objects, and become associated with degrading superstitions in the vulgar and older minds. Alfred could not at that time have pursued a wiser or more patriotic object than that of endeavouring to enlighten and improve the ecclesiastical body.

The school which he established for his nobles,^c and the masters which he provided for high and low, who were educated with his son Æthelward,^d are proofs of his desire to augment the knowledge of his country.

His invitations to his court, of learned foreigners and skilful artisans; his search around his dominions for men of literary attainments; and his munificent patronage to all whose talents came within his notice, concur to demonstrate his laudable anxiety to improve his people.

He lived in an age, when to promote the general welfare was an idea which seldom influenced the conduct.^e His plans to benefit his subjects were therefore counteracted by their prejudices and their ignorance. Many of his royal exhortations were

^c *Scholæ quam ex multis suis propriis gentis nobilibus studiosissime congregaverat.* Asser, 67.

^d *Cum omnibus pene totius regionis nobilibus infantibus et etiam multis ignobilibus, sub diligenti magistrorum cura traditus est.* Asser, 43.

^e This is a feature which Asser gives of his contemporaries, "Qui nullum aut parvum voluntarie pro communi regni necessitate vellent subire laborem," p. 58.

not obeyed; even the castles which he advised, or ordered his nobility to build, to protect their own lands, against the Northmen, were reluctantly begun. It often happened that the ravages, which his advice was meant to prevent, occurred before the landholders would obey his foresight. Then, when they had lost their families and property, they mourned their folly with a repentance, says Asser, that could neither restore their slain relations, redeem their captive friends, nor even support themselves with common subsistence.^f

But Alfred was not discouraged by the tardiness of his subjects. By mild expostulation, by reasoning, by gentle flattery, or by express command; or, in case of obstinate disobedience, by severe chastisement, he overcame the pertinacity of vulgar folly; and wisely made his bishops, earls, ministers, and public officers, exert themselves for the common benefit of all his kingdom.^g Among other things, he was inflexible in exacting from all a competence for their offices. To produce this, he compelled them to study literature. Even they who had been illiterate from their infancy, earls, governors, and ministers, were compelled to learn to read and write,^h choosing rather to endure the painful toil, than to lose their preferment. If from age, or peculiar dullness of intellect, they could not be taught themselves, their son or some kinsman, or if none, some freeman or slave, educated for the purpose, was ordered to recite before them Saxon books, both day and night.ⁱ

His public demeanour was very affable, mixed with decorous pleasantry; he was eager to join in the investigation of things unknown,^j for the curiosity of his mind was insuppressible.

Many Franks, Frisians, and other neighbouring nations, willingly came to submit to his authority, both noble and ignoble. He loved them all like his own people, received them honourably, and gave them both money and power.^k

His bishops and clergy, his nobles and servants, he treated with paternal affection; he was indefatigable in his endeavours to educate such of their children as were in the royal court, in every valuable morality; and he himself did not disdain to assist in their scholastic tuition.^l

His embassy to India, to the shrine of St. Thomas, is as expressive of his mind and public spirit as any other action of his life. No other potentate in Europe could in that day have con-

^f Asser, 60.

^g Ibid. 59.

^h So I construe the expressions, "Literatorie arti studerent." Asser, 71.

ⁱ Asser, 71. These passages of Asser are very curious.

^j Et maxima et incomparabili contra omnes homines affabilitate atque jocunditate et ignotarum rerum investigationi solerter se jungebat. Asser, 44.

^k Asser, 44.

^l This I presume is the meaning of omnibus bonis moribus institueret et literis imbueret solus die noctaque inter cetera non desinebat. Asser, 44.

ceived it; because no other had acquired that knowledge which would have interested them in a country so remote and unknown. The embassy displays not only the extent of Alfred's information, but that searching curiosity, which characterized his understanding.

The journey is stated by several chroniclers. The Saxon Chronicle,^m Florence of Worcester,ⁿ Radulph,^o and Bromton,^p simply mention, that Suithelm, the bishop of Shireburn, carried the benevolence of Alfred to India, to St. Thomas, and returned in safety. Huntingdon,^q and Alured of Beverley,^r express that the embassy was sent in a discharge of a vow which the king had made. Matthew of Westminster,^s and Malmsbury, mention the curiosities which Suithelm brought back with him.

Malmsbury, who gives the fullest account of the incident, says that the king sent many presents over sea to Rome, and to St. Thomas in India; that Sighelm, the bishop of Shireburn, was his ambassador, who penetrated with great success to India, to the admiration of the age; and that he brought with him, on his return, many foreign gems and aromatic liquors, the produce of the country.^t In another passage, Malmsbury declares, that some of those gems were to be seen in his days, in the monuments of the church.^u

In the former editions of this work, for the purpose of verifying this extraordinary incident, a careful investigation was pursued, in order to show that it was long before believed that Saint Thomas had been in India; that in the age of Alfred he was presumed to have died there; and that at that time there were Christians living there. It was also proved that such journeys were in those days attempted, and the inference was drawn from these facts, that the assertions of our chroniclers were not counteracted by any improbability in their assertions of this remarkable embassy.

^m Sax. Chron. p. 86.

ⁿ 863. *Assero Scireburnensi episcopo defuncto succedit Suithelmus qui regis Alfredi elemosynam ad S. Thomam, Indiam detulit, indeque prospere retulit.* Flor. Wig. 320.

^o Rad. Dic. 451. He dates it 887.

^p Bromton, 812.

^q *Alfredus autem misit elemosynam suam Romæ et etiam in Indiam ad S. Thomam secundum votum quod fecerat quando hostilis exercitus hyemavit apud Londoniam.* Hunt. 350.

^r Lib. vii. p. 106.

^s Matt. West. 333. He says that Suithelm brought back precious stones. Malm. calls him Sighelm.

^t *Et trans mare Romam et ad Sanctum Thomam in Indiam multa munera misit. Legatus in hoc missus Sigelmus Scireburnensis episcopus cum magna prosperitate, quod quisvis hoc seculo miretur, Indiam penetravit: inde rediens exoticos splendoros gemmarum et liqores aromatum, quorum illa humus ferax est, reportavit.* De Gentis, p. 44.

^u *Nonnullæ illarum adhuc in ecclesiis monumentis visuntur.* Malms. De Pont. 248.

But the journeys and writings of the late Claudius Buchanan, and of other travellers; and the subsequent efforts and correspondence of our Bible and Missionary Societies, have so completely confirmed the facts, not only that Syrian Christian churches were early founded in the Indian peninsula, but are still existing in the same parts, that it is unnecessary now to repeat our former collection of authorities.*

No others of Alfred's foreign correspondencies have been transmitted to us, besides the compliment from the Jerusalem patriarch; except some donations from the pope,^w and several messages and presents from Alfred to Rome. The king appears to have sent embassies or couriers to Rome, in several successive years.^x

* In Alfred's reign, the following journey to Egypt and Palestine occurred. In 870, three monks, desirous to see the places so celebrated in the Christian writings, undertook a journey thither. Their itinerary, written by Bernard, one of the travellers, is extant. They first went to Mount Garganum, in which they found the church of St. Michael. This is near the Gulf of Manfredonia. An hundred and fifty miles brought them to Barre, then a city of the Saracens, but which had once been subject to the Beneventans. This is on the southeast side of Italy; they sought admission to the prince of the city, who was called a Suldan, and obtained leave to prosecute their journey with letters to the chief of Alexandria and Babylon, describing their countenances, and the object of their journey.

From Barre, they walked ninety miles to the port of Tarentum, where they found six ships, two going to Tripoli, and two to other parts of Africa, with some captives. After thirty days' sailing they reached Alexandria; here the master of the ship exacted six pieces of gold before he would let them leave it.

They produced to the governor of Alexandria the letter of the sultan of Barre, but it did them no good; a present of thirteen denarii a piece was more serviceable. Bernard remarks, that it was the custom of Alexandria to take the money by weight; he says, six of the solidi and denarii, which they carried out with them, weighed only three of those at Alexandria. The governor gave them letters to the chief of Babylon; but by Babylon, it is obvious that Bernard means the city of that name in Egypt, and not the famous Babylon which spread along the Euphrates.

Sailing up the Nile south for six days, they came to the city of Egyptian Babylon. The guards of the place conducted them to the governor; their letters were useless, and they were sent to prison; a present of denarii, as before, released them. In return for this, he made them out letters, which, he said, whoever saw, would in no place or town exact any more. They could not leave this Babylon without a sealed permission, which some more denarii were required to obtain.

Bernard proceeds to describe his journey from Egypt to Jerusalem. It is shortly; back up the Nile in three days to Sitnuth, thence to Maalla; thence they sailed to Amiamate. *Que habuit ab aquilone mare*; thence sailed to Tanis, to Farama; here was a multitude of camels. The desert of six days' journey began from this city; it had only palm-trees; in the middle were two hospitia; the earth was fertile to Gaza; thence to Alariza, to Ramula, to Emaus Castle, to Jerusalem. He mentions one trait of Jerusalem, which shows that some intercourse was maintained by devotion between these distant places, and the west of Europe. He says, "we were received there in the mansion of hospitality of the most glorious Charlemagne, in which all are received who visit this place for devotion, and who speak the Roman language." He says there was a church near it, with a most noble library from the same empire. From Jerusalem they sailed in sixty days, with an unfavourable wind, to Italy.

^w *Asser*, 39. The pope, at Alfred's request, liberated the Saxon school in Rome from all pecuniary payments. *Ib.*

^x *Asser*, 53. The Saxon Chronicle states, that in the years 863, 867, 868, 869, 870, Alfred's alms or letters were sent to Rome.

When the measures are mentioned by which Alfred endeavoured to excite in his subjects a love of letters, it will not be forgotten that the University of Oxford has been connected with his memory.

The concurring testimonies of some respectable authors seem to prove, that he founded public schools in this city; and therefore the University, which has long existed with high celebrity, and which has enriched every department of literature and science by the talents it has nourished, may claim Alfred as one of its authors, and original benefactors.

But this incident, plain and intelligible as it appears to be, is environed with a controversy which demands some consideration; for it involves nothing less than the decision of the superior antiquity of the two Universities of England. We leave to abler pens the determination of the dispute, and shall only notice in the note a few particulars concerning the first periods of the contest, and the point on which it turned.⁷

This indefatigable king made also a code of laws, with the concurrence of his *witena-gemot* or parliament, which has been called his *Dom-boc*. In this, for the first time, he introduced into the Anglo-Saxon legislation, not only the decalogue, but also the principal provisions of the Mosaic legislation, contained in the three chapters which follow the decalogue, with such modifications as were necessary to adapt them to the Anglo-Saxon manners. In the laws attached to those, he mentions, that, with the concurrence of his *witena-gemot*, he had collected together, and committed to writing, the regulations which his ancestors had established; selected such of them as he approved, and rejected the rest. He adds, that he showed them to all his *witena*, who declared that it pleased them all that these should be observed. Forty heads of laws then follow, on the most important subjects of the Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence and legislation, obviously tending to increase the national civilization.⁸

When Alfred regained his throne, and with that, the kingdom of Mercia, he found that the Danish invasions had so destroyed the ancient police of the kingdom, and regular habits of the inhabitants, that the Anglo-Saxons were infesting each other with predatory depredations.⁹

The means which he took to remedy this evil, and also to provide an efficient force to repress the Danes, are stated to have been some modification of the ancient provincial divisions of

⁷ See note 1 at the end of this chapter.

⁸ See those in Wilkins's *Leg. Sax.* p. 26-46. I cannot doubt that these compose the *dom-boc* which some ancient writers alluded to.

⁹ *Inguif*, 26; *Malsbury*, 44; and the *Chronicle of Joannes de Oxenedes*. *Cott. MSS.* Nero, D. 2. This chronicle is not much more than an abridgment of *Malsbury*.

England, which had long before been known as shires. The alterations which he made with these are not detailed. But it is expressly declared that he began the system of dividing them into hundreds, and these into ten parts or tithings. Under these nominal divisions, the population of the country was arranged. Every person was directed to belong to some hundred or tithing. Every hundred and tithing were pledged to the preservation of the public peace and security in their districts, and were made answerable for the conduct of their several inhabitants. In consequence of this arrangement, the inhabitants were speedily called out to repel an invader, and every criminal accused was sure to be apprehended. If he was not produced by the hundred or tithing to which he was attached, the inhabitants of these divisions incurred a general mulct. Thus every person in the district was interested in seizing or discovering the offender. If he fled, he must go to other districts, where, not having been marshalled within their jurisdiction, he would be known and punished as an outlaw, because unpledged; for he who was not pledged by some hundred and tithing, experienced all the severity of the law.^b It is added to this statement, that Alfred divided the provincial prefects into two officers, judges and sheriffs.^c Until his time there were only sheriffs. He separated, by the appointment of justices or judges, the judicial from the executing department of the law, and thus provided an improved administration of law and justice. That golden bracelets were hung up in the public roads, and were not pilfered, is mentioned as a fact, which evidenced the efficacy of his police.

The unsettled state of society in Saxon-England, and that twilight of mind, which everywhere appears at this period, may have justified these severe provisions. They are, however, liable to such objections, that though we may admit them to have been necessary to Alfred, no modern government can wish to have them imitated. They may have suppressed robbery; they may have perpetuated public peace; but they were calculated to keep society in a bondage the most pernicious. They must have prevented that free intercourse, that incessant communication, that unrestricted travelling, which have produced so much of our

^b Ingulf, 28. Malsmb. 44.

^c Prefectos vero provinciarum qui antea vicedomini vocabantur in due officia divisit, id est, in iudices quos nunc justiciarios vocamus et in vico comites qui adhuc idem nomen retinent. Ingulf, 28. We will briefly remark here, that the Welsh anciently had the territorial divisions of cantref, a hundred, which contained two cymmwd; each of these had twelve maesawr, and two tref; in every maesawr were four tref, or towns; in every town four gafael, each of which contained four rhandir; every rhandir was composed of sixteen acres. Thus every cantref contained, as the name imports, a hundred towns, or 25,000 acres. *Leges Wallicæ*, p. 157, 158. The preface to these laws states South Wales to have contained sixty-four cantrefe, and North Wales eighteen. *Ibid.* p. 1. The cantref and the cymmwd had each a court to determine controversies. *Ibid.* p. 389.

political and literary prosperity. They made every hundred and tithing little insulated populations, to which all strangers were odious. By causing every member of each district to become responsible for the conduct of every other, they converted neighbours into spies; they incited curiosity to pry into private conduct; and as selfishness is generally malignant, when in danger of meeting injury, they must have tended to legalize habits of censoriousness and acrimonious calumny.

That Alfred was assiduous to procure to his people the blessing of a correct and able administration of justice, we have the general testimony of Asser. He not only gave the precept, but he exhibited the example; he was a patient and minute arbiter in judicial investigations, and this, chiefly for the sake of the poor, to whose affairs, amongst his other duties, he day and night earnestly applied himself.^d

When we reflect that Alfred had, in the beginning of his reign, transgressed on this point, he claims our applause for his noble self-correction. It was highly salutary to his subjects; "for," says Asser, "in all his kingdom, the poor had no helpers, or very few besides him. The rich and powerful, engrossed with their own concerns, were inattentive to their inferiors. They studied their private, not the public good."^e

Alfred applied to the administration of justice, because it was then so little understood, and so little valued by the people, that both noble and inferior persons were accustomed to dispute pertinaciously with each other in the very tribunals of justice. What the earls and legal officers adjudged, was disregarded. All resorted to the king's judgment, which was then respectfully fulfilled. Burthensome as so many legal appeals must have been, he never hesitated to sacrifice his own comfort for the welfare of his subjects. With great discernment, and wonderful patience, he examined every dispute; he reviewed the adjudications made by others in his absence. When he saw that the judges had erred, he called them mildly to him, and either personally, or by confidential persons, inquired if they had erred from ignorance, or malevolence, or avarice. When he found that ignorance had produced a wrong decision, he rebuked the judges for accepting an office for which they were unqualified, and commanded them to improve themselves by study, or to abandon their offices.^f

The statement of Asser is in general terms. We have already alluded to the ancient law-book, the *Mirror des Justices*, which presents to us many instances of Alfred's punishing judges for misconduct. Andrew Horne, who wrote this work in Norman French, in the time of Edward the Second,^g has been attacked, with severity, by Dr. Hickes, because he makes the institution of

^d Asser, 69.

^e *Ibid.*

^f *Ibid.* 70, 71.

^g It was printed in London, 1642. A translation appeared in 1646.

juries to be anterior to the conquest.^b The objections of this respectable critic are, however, weakened by the recollections that lord Coke and Spelman, before Hickes wrote, and bishop Nicholsonⁱ since, have maintained, with others, that the Anglo-Saxons had juries, and that Horne professes to have taken his facts from the records of the court.

Some of the cases stated in the Mirror, show that Alfred was assiduous in protecting the independence, the purity, and the rights of jurymen. He punished capitally some judges for deciding criminal cases by an arbitrary violation of the right of jury.

"He hanged Cadwine, because he condemned Hachwy to death without the assent of all the jurors, in a case where he put himself upon the jury of twelve men, and because Cadwine removed three who wished to save him against the nine, for three others into whose jury this Hachwy did not put himself."

"He hanged Markes, because he adjudged During to death by twelve men not sworn."

"He hanged Freberne, because he adjudged Harpin to death when the jurors were in doubt about their verdict; for when in doubt, we ought rather to save than condemn."^j

The numerous occupations, both public and private, to which this active-minded king directed his attention, seem sufficient to have occupied the longevity of a Nestor. Yet Alfred died at the age of fifty-two, and his life was literally a life of disease.

The ficus molested him severely in his childhood.^k After distressing him for many years, this malady disappeared, but at the age of twenty was replaced by another of the most tormenting nature. It attacked him, before all the people, suddenly with an immense pain, during, and probably caused by, the protracted banquets, "day and night," of his nuptial festivities; and never left him.^l Its seat was internal and invisible;^m but its agony was incessant. Such was the dreadful anguish it perpetually produced, that if for one short hour it happened to intermit, the dread and horror of its inevitable return poisoned the little interval of ease.ⁿ The skill of his Saxon physicians was unable to detect its nature, or

^b See Hickes's *Dissertatio Epistolaria*, p. 34-43.

ⁱ See the bishop's preface to Wilkins's *Leges Anglo-Saxonice*.

^j Mirror, p. 296-298.

^k Asser, p. 40.

^l Post diuturna die noctuque convivia subito et immensa atque omnibus medicis incognito confestim coram omni populo correptus est dolor. Asser, 40. It was afflicting him in the forty-fifth year of his life, when Asser wrote the paragraph which mentioned it. The expressions of Asser, "daily banquets by day and night," imply that they were continued for some days; and this exhausting continuation may have given Alfred's constitution the irremediable blow.

^m Asser describes it as incognitum enim erat omnibus qui tunc aderant et etiam huc usque quotidie cernentibus, p. 40.

ⁿ Sed si aliquando Dei misericordia unius diei aut noctis vel etiam unius horæ intervallo illa infirmitas sēposita fuerat, timor tamen ac tremor illius execrabilis doloris unquam eam non deserit. Asser, 48.

to alleviate its pain. Alfred had to endure it unrelieved.* It is not among the least admirable circumstances of this extraordinary man, that he withstood the fiercest hostilities that ever distressed a nation, cultivated literature, discharged his public duties, and executed all his schemes for the improvement of his people, amid a perpetual agony, so distressing, that it would have disabled a common man from the least exertion.†

* From this disorder continuing so long with such acute pain, without destroying him sooner; from the period of his life when it began; from its internal situation; from its horrible agony, and from its not appearing to have ceased till his death, some conjecture may be formed of it; at least, I understand, there are some diseases incident to the human frame, as internal cancer, or some derangement of the biliary functions, to which these circumstances are applicable.

† We have referred to this place a cursory review of the former discussions between Oxford and Cambridge, which have been connected with the memory of Alfred. This dispute did not burst out publicly till the reign of Elizabeth. When the queen visited Cambridge in 1564, the orator of the university unfortunately declared in his harangue, that Cambridge truly claimed a superior antiquity to Oxford. Enraged that an attempt should have been insidiously made to prepossess the ear of majesty to its prejudice, Oxford retaliated the aggression, by asserting, in a written composition, to the queen, when she came to the university in 1566, that it was Oxford, and Oxford only, which could truly boast the earliest foundation.

Wars, horrid wars! became thence the business and the amusement of every student. Cantabs and Oxonians arranged themselves to battle, and every weapon of polemical erudition and polemical fury, was raised against each other.

Caius, one of the leaders in this discussion, published a quarto, in defence of Cambridge, in 1574. He said, he came to restore peace; as if, by assuring the world that Cambridge was in the right, he could ever give tranquillity to Oxford.

Oxford denied the right of an insidious partisan to be a peace-maker; and at last Brian Twyne appeared, with a book as large and as full as that of Caius, in which the glory of Oxford was sturdily and angrily maintained. Many combatants at various intervals succeeded, and the conflict became as ardent as, from the fragility of the materials, it was ineffectual.

Some of the friends of Cambridge managed to see the first stones of their university laid in the 173d year after the flood. Others, however, who were not blessed with optics which had the faculty of seeing what had never been visible, very wisely postponed the existence of their favourite till about four centuries before the Christian era. At that period, they found out that one Cantaber, a royal Spanish emigrant, who came to England in the days of Gurguntius, had sent for Greek philosophers from Athens, and given to Cambridge a local habitation, and a name.

It was easy for Oxford to object, that Cantaber was but one of those airy nothings which the poet or the antiquary, in his phrenzy, discerns. It was not more difficult to laugh at the wise and learned giants, who were placed as the aborigines of our island, and who first cultivated letters. But the Oxonian champion did not content himself with destroying all the superstructures of Cambridge vanity. The heralds of national ancestry are as fond of their own chimeras, as they are intolerant of the antiquarian progeny of others. Hence, though the advocates of Oxford denied to Cambridge its Cantaber, he conceived it to be just to claim for Oxford a colony of Greek philosophers, who came into the island with Brutus, and established a college at Cricklade, which was afterwards translated to Bello Sitarum, where Oxford now stands. See Caius Ant. Cantab. and Twyne's Antiq. Acad. Oxon.

The fame of Oxford was, however, not wholly intrusted to phantoms. A basis more secure was found for it in a passage printed under the name of Asser; and it is this unfortunate passage which has connected the dispute with the history of Alfred.

An edition of Asser was published from a MS. of Camden, in 1603; in which a paragraph appeared, stating, that in 886, a discord arose at Oxford between Grymbold and his learned friends whom he had brought with him, and those ancient

schoolmen whom he found there, and who refused to obey entirely his institutions. Three years the dissension lasted. Alfred, to appease it, went to Oxford. The ancient schoolmen contended, that before the arrival of Grymbold, letters had flourished there, though the scholars had been fewer; and they proved by the indubitable testimony of ancient annals, that the ordinations and institutes of this place had been established by some pious and erudite men, as Gildas, Melkin, Nennius, Kentigern, and others, who there grew old in letters; and that St. Germain, who resided half a year at Oxford, had also approved of them. The king recommended peace; but Grymbold, dissatisfied, withdrew to Winchester.

Such is the import of this contested paragraph. If it had been genuine, it gave the evidence of Asser, that there had been public schools at Oxford, at least in the fifth and sixth centuries, when Germain and others lived. Now Cambridge had no such plausible document as this. Its friends had indeed talked of Arthur's charters, but these were soon decried as surreptitious. The most ancient historical dress that it could assume, with any decorous attention to probability, was Bede's paragraph, about Sigebert establishing schools in East Anglia; and Sigebert lived above a century after Gildas.

But unfortunately for the fame of Oxford, Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, had published, in Saxon types, an edition of Asser, in 1574, from a MS. in which this passage was not to be found. The ancient MS. of Asser, in the Cotton Library, which has been thought to have been written within a century after its author's death, was also without this clause. It was Otho, A. 12, since burnt.

Here, then, was the point of an elaborate controversy; was this passage written by Asser? Did Parker insidiously omit it, or did Camden surreptitiously insert it, or was it really wanting in the one MS. and really existing in the other? The controversy had begun before Parker published his Asser, but it was then in its infancy. When Camden's Asser appeared, it was raging in all its violence. Camden's MS. which he thought to have been of the age of Richard II. was never produced after it was printed; and no other MSS. can now be obtained to determine the question. See Wood, *Hist. Oxf.* p. 9.

Oxford and Cambridge have since produced such great scholars in every department of knowledge, and such distinguished men in the most honourable paths of active life, that controversies like these are felt to be unworthy of their attention, and are not now even thought of. The point of emulation is known to be, which can now produce the ablest men; not which first began their formation.

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER I.

The Reign of Edward the Elder.

ALFRED had been called to the crown in preference to the children of his elder brother. Their pretensions were equally neglected at his death; and Edward, his son, who had distinguished himself against Hastings, was chosen by the nobles as their king.^a

Ethelwold, one of the disregarded princes, in opposition to the decision of the Anglo-Saxon witenas, aspired to the crown, and seized Wimburn, declaring that he would keep it or perish.^b But when the king advanced with an army against him, he fled, at night, to the Northumbrian Danes; and exciting their sympathy, was appointed their sovereign at York, over all their other kings and chiefs.^c

By this incident he became formidable both to Edward and his people. The Northmen colonists, by occupying all Northumbria and East Anglia, independently of Edward, possessed one-third part of England; and if Ethelwold's abilities had equalled his ambition, or if Edward had been a weaker character, the Northmen might have gained the sovereignty of the island. But Ethelwold seems not to have long pleased his subjects; for he was afterwards on the seas a pirate,^d and sailed to France in quest of partisans to distress the king.^e He returned with a great fleet, and subdued Essex; ^f persuading the East Anglian Danes to join him, he entered Mercia, and ravaged as far as Cricklade. He even passed the Thames into Wessex, and plundered in Wiltshire; but the Anglo-Saxons not supporting him, he returned. The army

^a *A primatis electus.* Ethelwerd, 847. He was crowned at the Whitsuntide after his father's death. *Ibid.*

^b *Sax. Ch.* 100. *Hen. Hunt.* 352. *Matt. West.* 351. At Wimburn, he possessed himself of a nun by force, and married her. *Ibid.*

^c *Hen. Hunt.* 352. *Matt. West.* 351. *Sax. Ch.* 100. *Flor.* 337. The king replaced the nun in her retreat.

^d *In exilium trusus piratas adduxerat.* *Malm.* 46.

^e *Matt. West.* 351.

^f *Hunt.* 352. *Sax. Ch.* 100.

of Edward followed him, and ravaged, in retaliation, to the fens of Lincolnshire. When the king withdrew, he directed his forces not to separate. The Kentish troops neglected his orders, and remained after the others had retired. Ethelwold eagerly attacked them with superior numbers. The Kentish men were overpowered, but their defence was desperate. Their chiefs fell; and the author of the quarrel also perished in his victory.^a His fate released the island from the destructive competition; and a peace, two years afterwards, restored amity between the Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Danes.^b

But war was soon renewed between the rival powers. With his Mercians and West Saxons, Edward, in a five weeks' depredation of Northumbria, destroyed and plundered extensively. In the next year, the Northerns devastated Mercia.^c A misconception of the Danes brought them within the reach of the king's sword. While he was tarrying in Kent, he collected one hundred ships, which he sent to guard the southeastern coast,^d probably to prevent new invasions. The Danes, fancying the great body of his forces to be on the seas, advanced into the country to the Avon, and plundered without apprehension, and passed onwards to the Severn. Edward immediately sent a powerful army to attack them; his orders were obeyed. The Northerns were surprised into a fixed battle at Wodensfield, and were defeated, with the slaughter of many thousands. Two of their kings fell, brothers of the celebrated Ingwar, and therefore children of Ragnar Lodbrog, and many earls and officers.^e The Anglo-Saxons sung hymns on their great victory.^f

The event of this battle established the superiority of Edward over his dangerous neighbours, and checked the progress of their power. He pursued the plans which Alfred had devised for the protection of his throne. As the Danes possessed the north of England, from the Humber to the Tweed, and the eastern districts,

^a Sax. Ch. 101. Hunt. 352. Eohric, the Anglo-Danish king, fell in the struggle. Ethelwold places this battle at Holme, 848. *Hulme in Saxon means a river island.* In Lincolnshire there is one called Axelholme. Camd. 474. The printed Saxon Chronicle makes a battle at Holme in 902, besides the battle wherein Ethelwold fell; but the MS. Chron. Tib. b. iv. omits the battle in 902. So the MS. Tib. b. i. With these Florence agrees; and therefore the passage of 902, in the printed Chronicle, may be deemed a mistake.

^b Sax. Chron. Matt. West. adds, that the king immediately afterwards reduced those who had rebelled against him: *Et maxime cives Londonienses et Oxonienses*, p. 352. In 905, Ealhwythe, the widow of Alfred, died; and her brother, Athulf, an ealdorman, in 903. Sax. Ch. 101. She had founded a monastery of nuns at Winchester. Mailros, 146.

^c Sax. Ch. 102. Hunt. 352. The MS. Saxon Chronicles mention, that the English defeated at this time the Danes at Totanheale. Florence and Hovedon place this conflict and place in Staffordshire.

^d Sax. Ch. 102.

^e Flo. 340. Ethelw. 848. Sax. Ch. 103.

^f Hunt. 353. Ethelwold's account of Edward's battles have several poetical phrases, as if he had translated some fragments of these songs.

from the Ouse to the sea, he protected his own frontiers by a line of fortresses. In the places where irruptions into Mercia and Wessex were most practicable, and therefore where a prepared defence was more needed, he built burghs or fortifications. He filled these with appointed soldiers, who, when invaders approached, marched out in conjunction with the provincials, to chastise them. No time was lost in waiting for the presence of the king, or of the earls of the county: they were empowered to act of themselves on every emergency; and by this plan of vigilance, energy, and co-operation, the invaders were so easily defeated, that they became a derision to the English soldiery.^m Ethelfleda co-operated in thus fortifying the country. She became a widow in 912; but she continued in the sovereignty of Mercia,ⁿ and displayed great warlike activity.

The positions of these fortresses, which soon became inhabited towns, demonstrates their utility. Wigmore, in Herefordshire; Bridgnorth and Cherbury, in Shropshire; Edesbury, in Cheshire; and Stafford and Wedesborough, in Staffordshire; were well chosen to coerce the Welsh upon the western limits. Runcorne and Thelwall, in Cheshire, and Bakewell, in Derbyshire, answered the double purpose of awing Wales, and of protecting that part of the north frontier of Mercia from the incursions of the Northumbrian Danes. Manchester, Tamworth in Staffordshire, Leicester, Nottingham, and Warwick, assisted to strengthen Mercia on this northern frontier; and Stamford, Towcester, Bedford, Hartford, Colchester, Witham, and Malden, presented a strong boundary of defence against the hostilities of the East Anglian Danes. The three last places watched three rivers important for their affording an easy debarkation from foreign parts.

The strength of Edward was tried by an invasion of Northmen from Armorica, and his military policy was evidenced
918. by its issue. Two chieftains led the hostile fleet round Cornwall into the Severn, and devastated North Wales. They debarked, and plundered in Herefordshire. The men of Hereford, Gloucester, and the nearest burghs or fortified places, defeated them with the loss of one of their chiefs, and the brother of the other, and drove the rest into a wood, which they besieged. Edward directed armed bodies to watch the Severn, from Cornwall to the Avon. The enemy endeavoured one night to escape in two divisions, but the English overtook them in Somersetshire. One was destroyed in Watchet; the other in Porlock bay. The remainder sheltered themselves in a neighbouring island, till urged by famine, they fled to South Wales, whence in the autumn they sailed to Ireland.*

^m Malmsb. 46.

ⁿ Sax. Ch. 103. Ethelred, her husband, had been long infirm before his death.
Hunt. 353.

* Sax. Chron. 105. Flor. 343.

The Anglo-Saxon monarchy received new security from Edward's incorporation of Mercia with Wessex, on Ethelfleda's death. 990.

Both Edward and Ethelfleda had many struggles with the Northmen in England; but their triumphs were easy, for they attacked enemies, not in their compact strength, but in their scattered positions. Thus Ethelfleda warred with them in Derby. In assaulting the castle, four of her bravest and most esteemed generals fell; but she still urged the combat, and at last mastered the place: she also obtained Leicester,^p Derby, and even York.

Edward endured, and perhaps provoked similar conflicts. The Danes attacked his fortress at Towcester, but the garrison and the provincials repulsed them. In Buckinghamshire, the invasion was formidable, and many districts were overrun, till Edward rescued his people by new victories. In some parts they seemed to copy his policy. They built hostile fortresses at Huntingdon, and at Temesford in Bedfordshire, and assailed Bedford; but the garrison and its supporters defeated them with slaughter.^q

A peculiar spirit of hostility seemed in the latter years of his reign to have excited the Anglo-Danes; for scarcely had they experienced the defeats already noticed, before another aggression was attempted, and was punished.^r The progress of Edward's power endangering their own, may have caused their animosity. But happily for the Anglo-Saxons and Edward, their love of freedom, and the independence of their chiefs, made their kings weak in actual power, and prevented their permanent union under one sovereign. Before they retrieved their former disasters, the king collected a large army from the burghs nearest his object, and attacked them at Temesford. A king, and some earls, perished against him; the survivors were taken, with the city. Pressing on his advantages, he raised another powerful force from Kent, Surrey, Essex, and their burghs, and stormed and mastered Colchester. The East Anglian Danes marched against Malden, in alliance with some vikings, whom they had invited from the seas;^s but they failed. Edward secured his conquests by new fortifications: and the submission of many districts augmented his realms, and enfeebled his competitor.^t

^p Hunt. 353, 354. Sax. Chron. 106. Ingulf says of her: " Ipsam etiam urbibus extruendis castellis muniendis, ac exercitiis decendis deditam, saxum mutasse putatis," p. 28.

^q Matt. West. 358. Sax. Chron. 107.

^r See Sax. Chron. 108, 109.

^s *Legabrode micel here hine of East Englum, ægthen ge thæf land here, ge thara Wicynfa the hie him to fultume apnanen hæfðon.* Sax. Chron. 108.

^t Sax. Chron. 109. Thus the king went to Pasham in Northamptonshire, and

The East Anglian Danes not only swore to him "that they would will what he should will,"^u and promised immunity to all who were living under his protection; but the Danish army at Cambridge separately chose him for their lord and patron.^v

These examples of submission spread. When the king was at Stamford, constructing a burgh, all the people, about the north of the river, received his dominion. The Welsh kings yielded to his power. Howel, Cledauc, and Jeothwe^l, with their subjects, submitted to him as their chief lord.^w

924. and the king of the Scots chose him for his father and lord. If princes almost beyond the reach of his ambition acquiesced in his superiority, it is not surprising that the kings of Northumbria and the Strathclyud population should follow the same impulse.^x After these successes, Edward died at Farrington in Berkshire.^y

Edward the Elder must be ranked among the founders of the English monarchy. He executed with judicious vigour the military plans of his father; and not only secured the Anglo-Saxons from a Danish sovereignty, but even prepared the way for that destruction of the Anglo-Danish power which his descendants achieved.

It has been said of Edward, that he was inferior to his father in letters, but superior to him in war, glory, and power.^z This assertion is rather an oratorical point than an historical one. Edward had never to struggle with such warfare as that during which Alfred ascended his throne, in which he lost it, and by whose suppression he regained it. Edward encountered not the fragments of that tremendous mass which Alfred first broke.

stayed there while a burgh was made at Towcester; then Thurferth Eorl and his followers, and all the army from Northampton to the river Weland in that county, sought him to Hlaforde, and to Mundboran. Sax. Chron. 109.

^u Tha hie eall tha poldon tha he polde. Ibid. 109.

^v Dine gecear pynþelice him to blapode and to Mundboran. Sax. Chron. 109.

^w Sax. Chron. 110. The Welsh had previously suffered from the warlike Ethelreda. She took Brecon and a Welsh queen, and signalized herself afterwards by another invasion. Howel was the celebrated Howel Dha, the legislator of Wales. He held both Powys and South Wales. Clydauc was his brother. See June's Hist. 44, 45. Powys and Dindefawr were tributary to the king of Aberffraw. The laws of Howel Dha mention the tribute to the king of London thus: "Sixty-three pounds is the tribute from the king of Aberffraw to the king of London, when he took his kingdom from him; and besides this, except dogs, hawks, and horses, nothing else shall be exacted." I. b. iii. c. 2, p. 199. Wotton's edition.

^x Mallron, 147. Saxon Chron. 110. Flor. 347. Matt. West. 359. Hoveden, 492. Malmabury, 46. Ingulf, 28. Bromton, 835.

^y The year of his death is differently stated; 924 is given by Matt. West. 359; Bromton, 837; Flor. 347; Malm. 48; Mail. 147; Chron. Petrib. 25; and by the MS. Chron. Tib. b. i. and also b. iv. The printed Saxon Chronicle has 925, p. 110. Hoveden puts 919, and Ethelwerd 926. The authorities for 924 preponderate.

^z Malmab. 46. Flor. 336. Ingulf, 28.

Edward had many children besides Athelstan. He was twice married. His first marriage produced two sons, Ethelward and Edwin, and six daughters. Four of the latter were united to continental potentates.^a His second union^b was followed by the birth of two more sons, Edmund and Edred, who in the course of time succeeded to his sceptre; and of three daughters. One of these, a lady of exquisite beauty,^c was wedded to the prince of Aquitain.

Edward imitated his father as well in his plan of education as in his government. The first part of his daughters' lives was devoted to letters: they were afterwards taught to use the needle, and the distaff. His sons received the best literary education of the day, that they might be well qualified for the offices of government to which they were born.^d

CHAPTER II.

The Reign of Athelstan.

IMMEDIATELY after Edward's interment, Ethelward, the eldest son of his first marriage, the pattern of the illustrious Alfred, in manners, countenance, and acquisitions, was taken away from the hopes of his countrymen.^e On his death, the Anglo-Saxon sceptre was given by the witenagemot to Athelstan, and he was crowned at Kingston. He was thirty years of age at his accession. His father's will directed the choice of the approving nobles.^f

Athelstan, the eldest but illegitimate son^g of Edward, was born

^a Malmsh. 47.

^b His second wife was Edgifu, whose will is printed in Saxon, with a Latin translation, in the appendix to Lye's Saxon dictionary.

^c Edgiva: the most eximia mulierem. Malmsh. 47.

^d Malmsh. 47. Edward was for some time under an excommunication from Rome, leaving his bishopric vacant. The king appeased the pope by filling seven sees in one day. Malmsh. 48. Edward was buried in the same monastery where his father and brother Ethelward lay. Ibid.

^e Malmsh. 46. Flor. 347. Sax. Ch. 111. Malmsh. says, the prince died in a few days after his father. The MS. Saxon Chronicle, Tib. b. iv. particularizes sixteen days, "pýthe hræbe then gepor ýmbe 16 dagar æt Oxanforða."

^f Malmsh. 48, 49.

^g His mother was a shepherd's daughter, of extraordinary beauty. Malmsh. 52. Bromton, 831. Matt. West. 351. She is called Egwina, illustris femina, by H. Bl. grave, MS. Cloop. A. 12, and in J. Bever's Chron. MSS. Harl. 641. It was her daughter who married Sigtryg. Ibid.

in Alfred's lifetime. He could be only six years of age when his grandfather died, and yet, interested by his beauty and manners, Alfred had invested him prematurely with the dignity of knighthood, and given him a purple vestment, a jewelled belt, and a Saxon sword, with a golden sheath. His aunt, Ethelfleda, joined with her husband in superintending his education; and the attainments of Athelstan reflected honour on their attentions."^d

The Anglo-Saxon sovereign became a character of dignity and consequence in Europe, in the person of Athelstan. His connections with the most respectable personages on the Continent, give to his reign a political importance.

Sigtryg, the son of Ingwar,^e and grandson of Ragnar Lodbrog, was a reigning king in Northumbria at the accession of Athelstan. He is chiefly known in the Saxon annals, for having murdered his brother;^f and in Irish history, for his piratical depredations.^g He, therefore, deserves the character of barbarian, both in mind and in nation.^h Athelstan, however, to conciliate his friendship during the first years of his government, gave him his own sister in marriage. Their nuptials were celebrated with magnificence.ⁱ Perhaps the circumstance of the king's birth, and the existence of legitimate brethren, disposed him to court the alliance, rather than to encounter the enmity, of the Anglo-Danes, while his power was young. Sigtryg embraced Christianity on the occasion; but soon repenting, put away his wife, and resumed his idolatry.^j Roused by the insult, Athelstan prepared to attack him; but Sigtryg died before he invaded.^k His sons fled before the king; the warlike Anlaf into Ireland, and Godefrid into Scotland.

Athelstan pursued Godefrid; he sent messages to Eugenius, king of the Cumbri, and to Constantine king of the Scots, to demand the fugitives. The Scottish prince obeyed the necessity, and came with homage to England. Godefrid, with a friend, escaped during the journey; and endeavoured, but in vain, to interest York in his favour. Retiring from this city, he was be-

^d Malmsh. 49.

^e He is named the son of Ivar in the annals of Ulster. See them, p. 65, 66, 67.

^f 914. *Niel rex occisus est a fratre Sihtrico.* Sim. Dun. 133. So Huntingdon, 354. The Annals of Ulster contain a similar incident, which they date in 867, p. 65. They call the brother Godfred. Whether this is a misnomer, or whether Sigtryg perpetrated two fratricides, I cannot decide.

^g See the Annals of Ulster.

^h So Malmesbury entitles him, *gente et animo barbarus*, p. 50.

ⁱ Hoveden, 428. Flor. 328. The MS. Chronicle, Tib. b. iv. mentions the place and the day of this marriage. It says that the two kings met and concluded the nuptials at Tamworth, on the 30th of January, "925, hæp Æthelstan cýning 7 Sihtric Northhýmbra cýning heo zesamnodon æt Tameweortheige, 3 kal. Februan 7 Æthelstan his zefeoron him zongear." MSS. Tib. b. iv.

^j Mett. West. 360.

^k 926. *Sihtricus vita decemvit.* Flor. 348. The Annals of Ulster express it thus: "926, Sigtryg O'Ivar died in his old age." p. 67.

sieged, but again eluded the danger. His friend perished at sea; the prince, after as much misery on the waters as upon land, submitted to Athelstan, and was honourably received at his court. Four days' enjoyment satiated him with the charms of civilized life. His early habits impelled him to abandon that tranquillity which is so grateful to the cultured mind, and he fled to maritime piracy.¹

Athelstan exerted his power with an effect to which Edward's superiority had never reached. He drove Ealdred from Bebbanburgh, demolished the castle at York,² and added Northumbria to his paternal dominions.³

But Athelstan was not permitted to enjoy his triumph unmolested. The Northmen chieftains saw that the progress of Athelstan's power was advancing to their complete subjection. The states on the Baltic were still full of fierce and active adventurers who had to seek fame and fortune in other regions; and descendants of Ragnar Lodbrog yet existed, both enterprising and popular. These circumstances occasioned a great effort to be made against Athelstan, which not only threatened to emancipate Northumbria from his authority, but to overwhelm his inherited government. The greatness of the confederacy, and the preparations by which it was supported, excited great attention in Europe, as well as in England. It is narrated in a Northern Saga, as well as in the English Chronicles; and, from a careful comparison of all the documents, the following facts seem to be an authentic detail.

In 934, Athelstan had ravaged Scotland with his army, as far as Dunfoeder and Wertmore, while his fleet spread dismay to Caithness.⁴ Constantine was then unable to withstand the storm, but he prepared for a day of retaliation. Anlaf also, the son of Sigtryg, though he had obtained a sovereignty in Ireland, was planning to regain his power in Northumbria. In Wales, the

¹ Malmsh. 50.

² Malmsh. 50. In Edward's reign Reginwald, a pagan king, came with a great fleet and conquered York. Two of his leaders are mentioned, Soula, and the cruel Onlafald, to whom he gave possessions. He drove out Aldred and his brother, and defeated Constantine. *Ibid.* 74. *Sim. Dun.* 23. This was in 919. *Ibid.* 133. Reginwald had before attacked Dublin. *Ibid.* In 921, he submitted to Edward. *Ibid.* 153. The Annals of Ulster state, in 917, that the Gala, from Ireland, attacked the Scotch, and Northern Saxons, and that Reginald MacBoolach, one of the leaders of the Gala, attacked the Scotch and Saxons in the rear with great slaughter, p. 66.

³ *Matt. West.* 360. *Flor.* 348. The MS. Tib. b. iv. gives a passage in Saxon not in the printed Chronicle, but of the same import with the Latin of Florence, ad an. 926. On comparing the two MS. Chronicles of Tib. b. i. and Tib. b. iv. I find that they contain in several places passages which are nowhere else preserved, but in Florence, or Matthew of Westminster, Hoveden, or in Huntingdon. The Annals of these writers, and of Ethelward, seem, therefore, to be but Latin translations of Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, some of which are now lost.

⁴ Mailron, 147. *Sax. Chron.* 111. *Sim. Dun.* 134. The cause of the invasion was Constantine's violation of his treaty. The Scottish king gave up his son as a hostage, with many presents. *Sax. Chron.* 349.

princes, humbled by Athelstan,^p were ready to co-operate for the diminution of his strength. The Anglo-Danes (as, for convenience and despatch, we will hereafter term the descendants of the Northern colonists of Northumbria and East Anglia) beheld with displeasure the preponderance of the Saxon sovereign, and the petty state of Cumbria had no choice but to follow the impulse of the potent neighbours who surrounded it. All these powers confederated^q against Athelstan, and the united mass of their hostilities was increased by fleets of warriors from Norway and the Baltic.^r By an attack of this magnitude, it seemed a certain calculation that the single force of Athelstan must be overthrown. England had never been assailed before with a confederacy of so much power, formed with so much skill, and consisting of so many parts.

Such a combination of hostility could not be completed, and the armaments, necessary for its successful explosion, could not be collected, without Athelstan's knowledge.

He prepared to meet the storm with firmness and energy; and, to multiply his own means of defence, he circulated promises of high reward to every warrior who should join his standard.^s

Thorolf and Egil, two of those navigating vikings whose weapons were ready for any enterprise, heard the tidings as they sailed by Saxony and Flanders. They came in the autumn with three hundred companions, to proffer their services to Athelstan, who gladly received them.^t And Rollo assisted him from Normandy.

Anlaf^u commenced the warfare, by entering the Humber with

^p Florence mentions the prior subjection of Huwal, king of the West Britons, and Wer, the king of Gwent, in 926, p. 348. Matt. West. names these princes Hunwall and Wilferth, p. 360.

^q The members of the confederacy are stated from Ingulf, 29, 37; Flor. Wig. 349; Sax. Chron. 111-114; Hoveden, 422; and the Egilli-Saga, in Johnstone's *Celts Scandinavici*, p. 31. Florence, Alured Bev. and Hoveden, say, that Constantine incited Anlaf to the attempt.

^r The British Chronicle in the Cotton library, MS. Cleopatra, b. v. says, "Ac y doeth gwyr Denmarc y geisiaw goreagyn yr ynys y arnaw." 'And the men of Denmark came who sought to conquer the island from him.' It adds, "Ac y rodes ynter kyfranc ydunt ac yny kyffranc hwnnw y llas brenhin yr yscottieit, phymp brenbin o Denmarc." 'And he gave them battle, and in this battle were slain the king of Scotland, and five kings of Denmark.' This Chronicle ends near the year 1200. The Saxon song mentions Northmanna to have been in the battle, "Thær geflemed þærth Northmanna þnegu," p. 113. The Annals of Ulster call the struggle, "a great and destructive war between the Saxons and Normans," p. 67. So Hunt. mentions Froda as ductor Normannus, p. 354. Ingulf mentions Danorum and Norreganorum, 37.

^s Adalsteinn autem copias sibi contraxit, præbuitque stipendia omnibus, exteris et indigenis, qui hoc pacto rem facere cupiebant. Egilli Skallagrími Saga, p. 31.

^t Egilli Saga, p. 31, 32. They are called Vikingum in p. 43. On Rollo, see W. Gem. 229, and Dudo.

^u In the Egilli Saga, he is called Olaf. In the Annals of Ulster, Olave, p. 67. In the *Brat Jeanan Breckfa*, Awlaff, p. 485. In Bromton, Anlaf. Other English chronicles call him Anlaf, Anlavus, Analeph, and Onlaf.

a fleet of 615 ships.^v The governors, whom Athelstan had left in Northumbria are named Alfgeirr, and Gudrekr. Their forces were soon overpowered. Gudrekr fell, and Alfgeirr fled to his sovereign with the tidings.^w Among the allies of Anlaf, the Northern Saga names Hryngr, and Adils, as British princes. The latter perhaps may have been Edwal, the son of Anarawd, who was reigning in North Wales at this period;^x but it is probable, that Hryngr was a Danish leader.^y

The Northern account states, that the first array collected by the friends of Athelstan, being unequal to a contest, pretended negotiations, and that fictitious offers of money, were made by the Anglo-Saxons, to gain time till all their army could be assembled.^z When their preparations were complete, Athelstan closed the intercourse by a message to Anlaf,^a that he should have permission to withdraw from England unmolested, if he restored his plunder, and would acknowledge himself the subject of the Saxon king.

The messengers reached Anlaf's camp at night; he arose from his bed and assembled his earls. The tidings were added, that Athelstan had that day marched into the city a powerful host. The Welsh prince exclaimed, that the negotiations had been mere artifice; and proposed, that he and Hryngr should attempt a night attack on the advanced part of Athelstan's army, commanded by Alfgeirr and Thorolf.^b

Anlaf, brave and active, resolved to inspect the army before he attempted the surprise, that the blow might be directed to the most important quarter. He put off his regal vestments, and concealing himself under the disguise of a harper, he went singing through the Saxon army, till he reached the royal tent. His music and dancing gratified Athelstan, till the business of the camp demanded his presence. The minstrel was then dismissed with presents, but his pride revolted against accepting a gift from

^v Mailros, 147, and Sim. Dun. 25. Hoveden, 422. The ship in which Egil afterwards left England, contained one hundred men or more. Egil. Saga, p. 55. If Anlaf's ships were of this size, his army must have been sixty thousand. We may take forty thousand as a safer average.

^w Egilli Saga, 33, 34.

^x Eidwal Foel acceded in 913, on the death of Anarawd. Brut y Tywys, p. 485. He fell against the Saxons in 941. MS. Cleop. 5.

^y There is an Icelandic fragment which expressly states, that Harald Blastand, or Blue Tooth, sent his son Hryngr with an army to England; but that Hryngr there, *dolo circumventus et occisus est.* 1 Langb. 149. Now as the old Icelandic Annals (1 Langb. 187,) place the accession of Harald in 907, and as he was reigning at the time of this battle, I think it highly probable, that Hryngr, the son of Harald, was the opponent of Athelstan. Langbeck wants to make this son of Harald, the Eric who will be mentioned in the reign of Edred; but that Eric was unquestionably the son of Harald Harfragre.

^z Egilli Saga, 38, 39.

^a The Saga says, Adils, but the meeting seems to imply Anlaf.

^b Egilli Saga, 40, 42.

Athelstan. He took it to avoid detection, but he disdained to keep it, and he buried it in the sand as he left the encampment.

A soldier in the outer stations observed his movements, and knew him in his disguise. He did not betray him; but he hastened with the tidings to Athelstan. To a rebuke for not having seized him, he answered, "O king, the oath which I have lately taken to you, I once gave to Anlaf. If I had broken it to him, I might have been faithless to you; but deign to hear a servant's counsel and remove your tent to another quarter." Athelstan thought the advice sagacious, and the royal residence was placed in a distant part. The bishop of Sherborne soon after arriving with his soldiers, was lodged in the plain which the king had quitted.^c

At night Adils and Hryngr embodied their forces, and marched on the Saxon camp. The bishop was the victim of surprise.^d But Thorolf and Alfgeirr, who commanded in the district, roused their warriors, and supported the attack. Adils assaulted the division of Alfgeirr, and Hryngr directed himself to the allied vikings.

Vanquished by the impetuosity of his assailant, Alfgeirr fled from the field, and eventually the country. Adils, flushed with his victory, turned on the others. Thorolf directed his colleague, Egils, to meet him; he exhorted his troops to stand close, and if overpowered to retreat to the wood. Egils obeyed, though with a force inferior.

The battle became warm. Thorolf fought with all the fury of valour, which was the pride of the day; he threw his shield behind him, and, grasping his huge weapon with both hands,^e he prostrated the enemies with an irresistible strength. He forced his way at last to the standard of his adversary; he reached and killed him. His success animated his followers, and Adils, mourning the death of Hryngr, gave way, and the combat discontinued.^f

Athelstan, hearing of this affair, united, and arranged all his forces for a decisive engagement. Anlaf did the same. A night of rest preceded the awful conflict. Athelstan formed his array of battle. In the front he placed his bravest troops, with Egils at

^c Malmab. 48 and 248.

^d Ingulf, 37. Malmab. 48, 248.

^e The sword wielded with both hands, was used by the ancient natives of the Hebrides. They called it the glaymore, the great sword. See Boswell's Tour, p. 210, 230. It was a weapon of most barbarous nations.

^f Egil's Saga, 44, 45. I do not give the whole detail of the Saga; I select the circumstances which are most entitled to notice, and which harmonize best with the Saxon descriptions. No two nations describe the same particulars of a battle, although the narration of each is intended to be authentic. A great battle is composed of a multiplicity of incidents. Individuals, in different stations of the field, notice different circumstances. The Saga is minute about the part where Thorolf and Egils fought. The Saxons neglect these warriors, to record their Tarketul and Athelstan. This is natural and allowable, perhaps inevitable.

their head. He let Thorolf head his own band, with an addition of Anglo-Saxons, to oppose the irregular Irish, who always flew from point to point; nowhere steady, yet often injuring the unguarded.⁵ The warriors of Mercia and London, who were conducted by the valiant Turketul, the chancellor of the kingdom, he directed to oppose themselves to the national force of Constantine. He chose his own West Saxons to endure the struggle with Anlaf, his competitor.⁶ Anlaf, observing his disposition, in part imitated it. He obeyed the impulse of his hopes and his courage, and placed himself against Athelstan. One of his wings stretched to the wood against the battalia of Thorolf; it was very numerous, and consisted of the disorderly Irish.¹

Brunanburh^j was the scene of action; and Thorolf began the battle he loved; he rushed forward to the wood, hoping to turn the enemy's flank; his courage was too impetuous and indiscriminate; his eagerness for the fray impelled him beyond his companions. Both were pressing fiercely and blindly onward, when Adils darted from his ambush in the wood, and destroyed Thorolf and his foremost friends. Egils heard the outcries of alarm; he looked to that quarter, and saw the banner of Thorolf retreating. Satisfied from this circumstance that Thorolf was not with it, he flew to the spot, encouraged his party, and renewed the battle. Adils fell in the struggle.^k

At this crisis, while the conflict was raging with all the obstinacy of determined patriotism and courageous ambition; when missile weapons had been mutually abandoned; when foot was planted against foot, shield forced against shield, and manual vigour was exerted with every energy of destruction; when chiefs and vassals were perishing in the all-levelling confusion of war,^l and the numbers cut down were fiercely supplied with new crowds of warriors hastening to become victims, the chancellor

⁵ Egil's Saga, 46, 47.

⁶ Ingulf, 37.

¹ Egil's Saga, 47.

^j It is singular that the position of this famous battle is not ascertained. The Saxon song says, it was at Brunanburh; Ethelwerd, a cotemporary, names the place Brunandune; Simeon of Durham, Weondune or Ethrunnanwerch, or Brunnan byrge; Malmesbury, Brunford; Ingulf says, Brunford in Northumbria. These, of course, imply the same place: but where was it? Camden thought it was at Ford, near Bromeridge, in Northumberland. Gibbon mentions, that in Cheshire there is a place called Brunburh. I observe that the Villare mentions a Brunton in Northumberland.

^k Egil's Saga, 48, 49. In a MS. in the British Museum, Galba, A. 14, the prayer of Athelstan before the battle of Brunanburh is preserved. It begins, "Æla, thu Ðrihten! Æla, thu Ælmihtiga Irob! Æla Ling ealra Lýninga, and Ðlaford ealra waldendra! On þær mihta punath ælc frige, and ælc gefin weoroth to brýc," &c.

^l *Cessantibus cito frontarius armis, pede pes, et cuspidè cuspis umboque umbone pellebatur. Cæsi multi mortales, confusæque cadavera regum et pauperum corruabant.* Ingulf, 37.

Turketul made an attack which influenced the fortune of the day. He selected from the combatants some citizens of London, on whose veteran valour he could rely: to these he added the men of Worcestershire, and their leader, who is called the magnanimous Singin. He formed those chosen troops into a firm and compact body, and placing his vast muscular figure at their head, he chose a peculiar quarter of attack, and rushed impetuously on his prey.

The hostile ranks fell before him. He pierced the circle of the Picts and the Orkney-men, and, heedless of the wood of arrows and spears which fastened in his armour, he even penetrated to the Cumbrians and the Scots. He beheld Constantine, the king of the Grampian hills, and he pressed forward to assail him. Constantine was too brave to decline his daring adversary. The assault fell first upon his son, who was unhorsed; with renovated fury the battle then began to rage. Every heart beat vehement; every arm was impatient to rescue or to take the prince. The Scots, with noble loyalty, precipitated themselves on the Saxons, to preserve their leader. Turketul would not forego the expected prize. Such, however, was the fury of his assailants; so many weapons surrounded the Saxon chancellor, that his life began to be endangered, and he repented of his daring. He was nearly oppressed; the prince was just released; when Singin, with a desperate blow, terminated his contested life. New courage rushed into the bosoms of the Saxons on this event. Grief and panic as suddenly overwhelmed their enemies. The Scots in consternation withdrew, and Turketul triumphed in his hard-earned victory.^m

Athelstan and his brother Edmund,ⁿ were, during these events, engaged with Anlaf. In the hottest season of the conflict, the sword of Athelstan broke at the handle, while his enemies were pressing fiercely upon him. He was speedily supplied with another,^o and the conflict continued to be balanced.

After the battle had long raged, Egils and Turketul, pursuing the retreating Scots, charged suddenly upon Anlaf's rear. It was then that his determined bands began to be shaken;^p slaughter thinned their ranks; many fled, and the assailants cried out "Victory!" Athelstan exhorted his men to profit by the auspicious

^m Ingulf, 37. Malmesbury and Ingulf, and the Welsh Chronicle, Cleop. A. 5. (*ylas brenhin yr yscottieit*) assert, that Constantine fell; but I think the Saxon poem a better, because a contemporary evidence, that it was his son that perished. This says of Constantine, *7 his sunu forlet on pæl ptole, pundum forgrunden geonge æt gūthe*, p. 113. The Scottish history confirms the escape of Constantine.

ⁿ The Saxon song attests the presence of Edmund in the battle, p. 112.

^o This incident was thought of consequence enough to be dignified by a miracle, which the prayers of Odo produced. See his life by Osberne; and see Bromton, p. 839, 863.

^p Egilli Saga, 49.

cious moment. He commanded his banner to be carried into the midst of the enemy. He made a deep impression on their front, and a general ruin followed. The soldiers of Anlaf fled on every side, and the death of pursuit filled the plain with their dead bodies.¹

Thus terminated this dangerous and important conflict. Its successful issue was of such consequence, that it raised Athelstan to a most venerated dignity in the eyes of all Europe. The kings of the continent sought his friendship,² and England began to assume a majestic port amid the other nations of the West. Among the Anglo-Saxons it excited such rejoicings, that not only their poets aspired to commemorate it, but the songs were so popular, that one of them is inserted in the Saxon Chronicle, as the best memorial of the event.³

It celebrates both Athelstan and Edmund, the nobles, and the valour of the West Saxons and Mercians; it states the battle to have lasted from sunrise to sunset; it mentions the death of five kings; the flight of Anlaf, and the fall of seven of his earls; the flight of Froda; the retreat of Constantine, and the death of his son: it concludes with declaring, that the books of the old writers had never mentioned a greater slaughter in this island "since the Angles and the Saxons hither came from the East over the broad ocean, and sought Britain; when the illustrious war-smiths overcame the Welsh; when the earls, excelling in honour, obtained the country."⁴

Northumbria and Wales⁵ fell into the power of Athelstan, by

¹ Egilli Saga, 50. Ingulf, 37.

² Hac itaque victoria per universam Christianitatem citius ventilata, desiderabant omnes reges terræ cum Athelstano rege amicitias facere et quocunque modo sacra fœdera pacis inire. Ingulf, 37. Ethelwerd, who ends his chronicle with Eadgar, says, that, to his day, it was popularly called the great battle, p. 848.

³ Sax. Chron. p. 112-114. The song is also in the two MSS. Tib. B. 1, and B. 4, with frequent variations in orthography from the printed copy. The MS. B. 1, puts it to the year 937; and, among other readings, instead of] heopa land, p. 113. l. 30, has eft Ynaland. So the MS. B. 4, instead of boþþ-peal, p. 112. l. 12, has heoþþ peal: for eal-gobon, afterwards gealgoben, and many similar differences, which are worth collating, because in some instances, as in Ynaland and heoþþ peal, they improve the sense. Langbeck has published it, with notes, and with three versions, v. 2, p. 412. Henry of Huntingdon has inserted an ancient Latin version of it in his history, p. 354. Malmesbury has preserved a portion of another poem, written also on this occasion, p. 51, 52.

⁴ Sax. Chron. 114. The ancient supplement to Snorre, Sturleson says, "Angli hoc prœlium unum censuerunt inter maxima et acerrima quæ unquam cum Normannis aut Danis commiserunt." 2 Langb. 419.

⁵ Ac ef a ýstýngawd ýdaw holl brenhined Kymre ac aberys ydunt talu teyrngæt ydaw megýs ý talawd brenhin Nortwei ýdaw. Sef oed býnny trý chant punt o ariant ac ngaent punt o cun a phymp mí gwarthec pob bliwýdýn. MS. of British History, Cleop B. 5. "And he became possessed of all the kingdom of Wales, and it was made to pay a tribute to him like the payment of the king of Norway to him. This was 300 pounds of silver, and 100

this victory. It effectually secured to him the throne of his ancestors; and the subjugation of the Anglo-Danes was so decisive, that he has received the fame of being the founder of the English monarchy.

The claims of Egbert to this honour are unquestionably surreptitious. The competition can only be between Alfred and Athelstan. Our old chronicles vary on this subject: some denominate Alfred the first monarcha; some give it to Athelstan.* The truth seems to be, that Alfred was the first monarch of the Anglo-Saxons, but Athelstan was the first monarch of England. The Danish sovereigns, to whose colonies Alfred chose or was compelled to yield Northumbria and East Anglia, divided the island with him; therefore, though he first reigned monarch over the Anglo-Saxons, from the utter destruction of the octarchy, it was not until Athelstan completely subjugated the Anglo-Danish power, that the monarchy of England arose. After the battle of Brunanburh, Athelstan had no competitor: he was the immediate sovereign of all England. He was even nominal lord of Wales and Scotland.

The fame of Athelstan extended beyond the island he governed. His accomplishments, his talents, and his successes, interested Europe in his favour, and he received many proofs of the respect with which foreigners regarded him. He had connections with Bretagne, France, Germany, Norway, and Normandy; and from this period England began to lose its insular seclusion, and to be concerned with the current transactions of Europe.

When the Northmen who had settled in Normandy, overran Bretagne, the sovereign, Mathuedoi, escaped to England with his family. The Breton lords followed; and all who preferred

pounds of wool, and 5000 cows every year." Caradoc gives this tribute somewhat different. He says, "20 pounds in gold, 300 in silver, and 200 head of cattle." Wynne, 48.

* *Matt. West.* 340. So the *Chronicon de regibus Angliæ a Petro de Ickham*. MS. Cotton. Lib. Domit. A. 3. *Primus regum Anglorum super totam Angliam solus regnare cepit.* So the *Chronicon Johannis de Taxton, ab initio mundi ad Ed. I.* MS. Cotton, Julius, A. 1. *Alfredus exinde regnum Anglorum solus omnium regem obtinuit.* So *Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes monachi S. Benedicti de Hulmo ab adventu Saxonum ad A. D. 1293.* MS. Cotton, Nero, D. 2, ad regem Aluredum primum monarcham totius Angliæ.—So a MS. in the same volume, p. 243. *Aluredus rex qui primus totum regnum Angliæ possedit.*—So the *Chronicon Roffense*, ib. p. 79. *Iste Alfredus primus monarcha fuit regni Angliæ; and many others.*

† Edgar, in one of his charters, says of Athelstan, "Qui primus regum Anglorum omnes nationes qui Britanniam incolunt sibi armis subegit," 1 *Dugdale, Monast.* 140; and see *Alured. Beverl.* 110; *Sim. Dunelm.* p. 18, and 24; and *Stubb's Acta Pont. Ebor.* 1698. So the *Compendium Hist. de Regibus, Anglo-Saxon* MS. Cott. Domit. A. 8, p. 5. *Athelstanus qui primus regum ex Angliæ totius Britanniam monarchiam habuit.* So the *Chronica of Tewksbury*, MS. Cleop. C. 3, and cited in *Dugdale's Monasticon*, vol. i. p. 154, has, "Adelstani regis qui primus monarcha fuit." So the *Historia Ramesiensis*, 3 Gall. 367, calls him *Æthelstani totius olim Angliæ Basilei Hermannus*, who wrote 1070, says, *Ædelstanus regnat Angliamque diu partitam solus sibi subjugat.* MS. Tib. B. 2, p. 22.

honourable poverty to the loss of liberty, swelled the emigration. Athelstan received the wretched exiles, who came to him under the same circumstances as those in which their ancestors had fled to Bretagne, with that humanity which ennobles the benefactor.

The young Alan, the son of Mathuedoi, by the daughter of the celebrated Alain, he took into his palace, and was the sponsor at his baptism. Nourished and educated by Athelstan's liberality, the young Alan grew up to manhood with ability and honour. He beheld indignantly the sufferings of his country; he projected a day of retribution. As soon as his age would permit, he assembled the surviving Bretons who had emigrated, and directed his course to the shores of Bretagne. He surprised Dol and St. Brieux. His appearance and first successes revived both patriotism and hope; he was numerously joined; he drove the Northmen from his country and from the Loire, and received the sceptre of Bretagne as his well-merited reward.²

When Charles the Simple, the king of France, was imprisoned and dethroned, his queen Edgiva fled into England to her father Edward the Elder, carrying over her son Louis, but three years old.⁷

The queen and her son continued the guests of Athelstan, who treated his unfortunate sister with affection and respect.

Rodolf, a Frankish noble, who had assumed the throne of Charles, governed France, full of seditions, revolts, and hostilities, with those talents which gave celebrity to their possessor, and happiness to the people.² In 926, an intercourse was opened with Athelstan by Hugues the son of Robert, whose dignity had been so fleeting. Hugues requested of Athelstan, his sister, Ethilda, in marriage. This was a very delicate negotiation. Hugues had co-operated with the other chiefs, that had dethroned and still kept imprisoned the king, who had married the sister of the lady he wooed. This sister was with Athelstan, with her infant child. Hugues, however, persevered in his suit, and conducted it with dexterity. He obtained for his ambassador, Adulf, the son of the count of Flanders, and of Alfred's daughter, the aunt of Athelstan.² The affinity of Adulf must have given interest to his nego-

² *Chronicon Namnetense restitutum*, in the appendix to Lobineau, vol. ii. p. 45; and in Bouquet, vol. viii. p. 276; and *Flodoard Chron. ib.* Such was the desolation which had attended the Northman invasion, that the civitas Namnetica sine ullo habitatore vacua et omnino longo tempore deserta remansit. *Ib.* Of Alanus, the *Chronicon* says, "fuit vir potens ac valde adversus inimicos suos belligerator fortis habens et possidens omnem Britanniam, fugatis inde Normannis sibi subditam et Redonicam et Namneticum et etiam trans Ligerim Medalgicum, Theofalgicum et Herbadilicum." 8 Bouquet, 276.

⁷ Daniel, 236.

² His successful wars, the humiliation of the vassals of the crown, thirteen years' possession of an usurped throne, and la France pacifiée malgré tant d'esprits inquiets, sont des preuves très certaines de sa prudence, de son courage, de sa fermeté et de ce génie supérieur qui fait les grands hommes et les héros. Daniel, 250.

² Malmesbury, 51. The *British Chronicle*, Cleop. B. 5, mentions this: "Ac y daeth Edulf iarll Boloyrn ap Baudewine iarll Flandrys ac aurec gan Hugos."

tiation. Splendid presents enforced the request; perfumes never seen in England before; emeralds of fascinating verdure; many fine coursers with rich caparisons; a vase of onyx, so beautifully carved, that the corn, vines, and men seemed animated, and so polished, that it reflected like a mirror; the sword of Constantine the Great; the conquering lance of Charlemagne; a diadem of gold and gems, so radiant as to dazzle; and some venerated relics, composed the splendid gift.^b Policy, perhaps, taught the importance, even to the dethroned Charles, or to his family, of making Hugues a friend. His wishes were therefore gratified, and he became the brother-in-law of Athelstan.^c

When Rodolf died without male issue, the competition for the crown was renewed between Hugues and Vermandois. 936. Their factions were too equally balanced to admit either to reign. Some persons, remembering the family of Charles, proposed the election of his son. Hugues, despairing of his own elevation, inclined to this idea. Athelstan understanding the circumstances, exerted himself in behalf of Louis, the young prince, who was still at his court. He sent an embassy to the duke of Normandy,^d to engage his influence with the Frankish lords, who at last resolved to send to England to offer the crown to Louis.^e

The deputies, one of whom was the archbishop of Sens, reached England in 936, and supplicated Athelstan, on the part of the states of France, to permit their chosen king to join them. Athelstan had the glory of receiving this address, and of expressing, in return, his joy at the event, and his anxiety for the safety of the young prince. The French ambassadors plighted their oaths, and saluted him king. Athelstan allowed him to depart a few days afterwards, and sent many Anglo-Saxon bishops and lords to accompany him in honour. Hugues and the nobles of France received him at Boulogne, and he was crowned at Laon.^f

The reign of Louis was not attended with the friendship of Hugues. Differences, in time, arose, and Hugues increased his consequence by marrying Hadwida, the daughter of Henry the First, emperor of Germany.^g Louis, to collect a power capable

^b The presents are enumerated by Malmesbury, p. 51, who says, "Equos plurimos." The British Chronicle specifies, but with apparent amplification, "Try chant enmys ac eu gwisgoed," "three hundred coursers with their trappings." MSS. Cleop. B. 5.

^c Athelstan returned the courtesy with non minoribus beneficiis, in addition to the lady. Malmesb. 51.

^d Dudo de Act. Norman. lib. iii. p. 97.

^e Hugo comes trans mare mittit pro accersendo Ludovico Caroli filio quem rex Alstannus avunculus ipsius nutriebat. Flodoardi Hist. Eccles. Rbem. lib. iv. c. 26.

^f Flodoardi, *ibid.* Louis, from his residence in England, was surnamed Transmarinus, or Outremer.

^g Chronicon Flodoardi, 8. Bouquet, 184. By her he had Hugh Capet, who completed the deposition of the family of Charlemagne, which his ancestors had begun, and whose dynasty, that seemed violently terminated in our days, has been since restored.

of securing himself against the aspiring nobles, procured the alliance of Athelstan, who promised to send a fleet to his succour. "This is the first example," says a modern French historian, "which we have in our history, not only of an offensive league between France and England, but it is also the first treaty by which these two kingdoms concerned themselves about each other's welfare. Until this event, the two nations had considered themselves as two worlds, which had no connection but that of commerce to maintain, and had no interest to cultivate either friendship or equity in other concerns."^b

Athelstan performed his engagements. When Otho passed the Rhine, in 939, Louis claimed of England the stipulated aid. The Anglo-Saxon fleet sailed immediately for his support. It appeared off the coast of Flanders, and protected the maritime cities: it ravaged some territories of the enemy, but returned to England without having had the opportunity of any important achievement.ⁱ

So much was Athelstan considered abroad, that Arnulf, the count of Flanders, having taken the fortress of the count Herluin, in 939, sent his captive wife and children to Athelstan.^j

The emperor of Germany, Henry the First, permitted his son, Otho, afterwards surnamed the Great, to solicit a sister of Athelstan in marriage.

In 919, the dignity of emperor was conferred on the prince nominated by Conrad, who has become illustriously known to posterity under the title of Henry the First, or the Fowler.

The wars of Henry with the barbarous nations of Hungary, with the Danes, Bavarians, Suabians, Bohemians, Vandals, Dalmatians, and Franks, by their successful issue, produced to him a high reputation, and gave new dignity and power to the imperial crown; but his mind soared above the praise of a barbarous conqueror. Such characters have a thousand rivals. The catalogue of men, whose successful courage or tactical management has decided fields of battle in their favour, is as extensive as time itself. Wars have everywhere deformed the world, and conquerors may of course everywhere be found. It is for those who display a cultured intellect and useful virtues; whose lives have added something to the stock of human happiness; and whose characters therefore present to us the visions of true greatness, that history must reserve its frugal panegyrics: Henry the Fowler was one of these most fortunate personages. He found his German subjects wedded to their barbarism by their agricultural and pastoral habits; and while he provided for their safety he laboured to improve both their morals and their mind.^k

^b Daniel, p. 256. ⁱ Chronicon Flodoardi. 8 Bouquet, 193. ^j Ibid. 192.

^k Conrad seems to have foreseen this disposition in Henry, for it is his reason for selecting the Saxon duke: "Sunt nobis, frater, copiam exercitus congregandi atque

He determined, for this purpose, to draw the population of Germany from their rude, unsocial, and exposed villages, into towns ;¹ into those happy approximations of society which present a barrier to the sword of war, which are the nurseries of the middle orders of men, which tame the ferocities of the human passions, give dominion to moral sympathy, communicate cultivation and knowledge by perpetual contagion, and cause the virtues to blossom amid general emulation, by daily lessons of their necessity, their diffusion, and their fame. These towns he fortified with skilful labour.²

To effect his purpose, he commanded, that of the men in the villages who bore arms, a ninth should be placed in towns, for whose benefit the rest should cultivate the labours of husbandry. The townsmen were to receive a third of the collected harvest ; and, in return, they built barns and habitations, within the city, for the peasants. When war summoned, the burghers hastened to the defence of their country. By this institution the ravages of enemies never introduced famine, because the granaries in the cities were an ultimate supply, and warriors were always ready to fly to the field when exigency called.³

To induce the people to make towns their voluntary residence, he forbid suburbs ; and ordered that the country habitations should be few and mean. He ordered all solemn meetings, the festivities of marriage, and the traffic of merchandize, to be held in towns ; he directed the citizens to improve themselves by useful industry, and, in peace, to learn those arts which they might practise to their benefit.⁴

By his regulations, by his personal diligence, and by their own beneficial experience, the Germans gradually laid aside their aversion to live in towns, and these important seminaries of human improvement perpetually increased.⁵

Henry, during his life, extended his communications to Eng-

duocendi, sunt urbes et arma cum regalibus insigniis et omne quod decus regium deposcit, præter fortunam atque mores. Fortuna, frater, cum nobilissimis moribus, Henrico cedit. Wittichind, p. 10.

¹ "Before this period, excepting the castles on the mountains, the seats of the nobility, and convents, which happened to be surrounded with walls, there were only lonely farms and villages." Pütter's Historical Development, vol. 1, p. 114.

² "In this respect Germany has undergone but little alteration. Most of the ancient cities, and even inconsiderable towns, are surrounded with walls, towers, &c. which give them a singular and dismal appearance." Pütter, ed. note, p. 115.

³ See the *Instituta* of Henry apud Goldastum, sub anno 924. I find them cited in the *Aquila Saxonica*, p. 24, ed. Venet. 1673. Wittichind mentions them briefly, p. 13.

⁴ *Instituta Henrici in Aquila Sax.* p. 24. The latter precept is enforced by a moral observation: "Disciplina animi et labor magnum ad virtutem afferunt momentum." *Ibid.*

⁵ Soest, in Westphalia, is probably one of the first cities founded by Henry. Next to this town, the most ancient are supposed to be Quedlinburg, Nordhausen, Duderstadt, Merseberg, &c. Pütter, note 117.

land; and, in 932, by his permission, Otho sought a wife from the sisters of Athelstan.

Editha was residing in her brother Athelstan's court, when the ambassadors of Henry arrived to request her for his son. Athelstan received them benignly, his sister assented,⁴ and a magnificent attendance, which his chancellor, Turketul, headed,⁵ conducted her to her royal lover. Her sister Adiva went with her, that Otho might be more honoured, and might take his choice.⁶ Editha was preferred by the too highly honoured Otho, and her sister was married to a prince near the Alps, who was one of the emperor's court.⁷

Athelstan's transactions with Norway were also interesting.

In the reign of Edward, and at the accession of Athelstan, Harald Harfragre was reigning the monarch of Norway. He had subdued all the little kings, who had divided it into many small states, and his victories had never been reversed.

Harald, though a barbarian, was not merely the brutal soldier. The spirit of improvement, which at this period influenced an Alfred and a Henry, seems to have been communicated to him. He also aspired to legislate as well as to conquer." He endeavoured to civilize the countries he subdued.

The wars of Harald, though inevitably productive of much individual misery, have the great excuse, that defence first compelled him into the martial field.⁸ In a general view, his conquests had a beneficial effect. They dispersed several portions of the Norwegian population into countries then uninhabited. Thus Iceland,⁹ the Orkneys,¹⁰ the Shetland, and the Feroe islands,¹¹ date their inhabitation in his reign, as well as Jamtia and Helsingia, provinces of Sweden.¹² But his principal merit was his prohibition of piracy, and the termination of much of the bloodshed of the North, by conquering all the petty princes, and establishing a monarchy in Norway.

⁴ Hrosvida. Poem de gestis Oddonis, p. 165. She calls our island, *terram est deliciosam*.

⁵ Ingulf, p. 38

⁶ Hrosvida, p. 165.

⁷ Ethelwerd's proface. Ingulf, 38, and Malmsh. 47. Hrosvida mourns the death of Editha with great expressions of sorrow, p. 171.

⁸ Snorre has preserved some of the laws of Harald, in his Harald's Saga, c. vi. p. 79.

⁹ Post obitum Halfdani Nigri regnum ab eo relictum invasere principum multi. Snorre, Harald's Saga, c. i. p. 75. He details the invasions, their issue, and Harald's retaliations.

¹⁰ Islandia inhabitatur primum a Norwegis diebus Haraldis Harfrager. Ara Frode, c. i. p. 6. Eo tempore erat Islandia sylvis concreta, c. ii. p. 10. The Norwegian emigrants found some Christians in it, who went away on their arrival, leaving some Irish books behind. Ibid. Ara Frode was born 1060. Snorre says, he was the first of all who wrote hac in regione sermone Norwegico tam princi quam recentioris svi monumenta. Preface, p. 3.

¹¹ Orkneyinga Saga, p. 3. ed. Hafniz, 1780.

¹² Snorre, Harald's Saga, c. 20, p. 96.

¹³ Snorre, ib.

The piracy of the North was a very active agent in perpetuating that barbarism and ferocity of which it was also the consequence. Like our modern slave traffic, wherever it came it desolated; and while it reigned, it kept down the human capacity in the bondage of the most destructive warfare, penury, and blood.

That hour was therefore auspicious to man when the abolition of the petty kingships, the aggregation of dominion, and the rise of monarchies, created at once both the power and the desire to suppress these pirates. When Harald had stretched his sceptre over all Norway, every aggression of piracy was an attack on some of his subjects; and as he raised a contribution from their labours, every act of plunder upon them was a diminution of his revenues.

Harald therefore published an edict, prohibiting piratical excursions on any part of his dominions.^b He enforced his law by a vindictive pursuit of the race he discountenanced. He prepared armaments; they fled; he chased them from his own dominions; he followed them to Shetland, to the Orkneys, and to the Hebrides; he overtook and destroyed them.^c These exertions drove Rollo or Hrolfr from his dominions, and occasioned the Northman colonization of Normandy.

The life of Harald stretched into the reign of Athelstan. It is said, that Athelstan had, in his youth, visited Denmark.^d It is, however, certain, that when the Anglo-Saxon was on his throne, an intercourse, which announced high friendship, commenced between the two sovereigns. Harald sent to Athelstan his son Haco, to be educated, and to learn the customs of the English nation.* The Anglo-Saxons were so much higher in the scale of civilization than the Norwegians, who were but just emerging into visible humanity, that we may easily conceive that Haco was sent to Athelstan for his personal improvement, as in our days, Peter the Great, for the same purpose, travelled Europe. This simple explanation may be allowed to displace the narration of Snorre, which, on this subject, resembles more a chapter in the Edda than a historical chronicle. He talks of Athelstan sending ambassadors to present Harald with a sword, that when

^a It was one of his laws that *Regique census fundi solverent coloni omnes, ditiores æque ac pauperes*. Snorre, *Harald's Saga*, p. 80. He deputed to his Iarla, whom he placed over every fylki, the power of collecting the taxation, of which they received a third to support their rank and expenditure. *Ibid*.

^b *Harald's Saga*, c. 24, p. 100.

^c Snorre, p. 98.

^d It is Wallingford who affirms this, in his *Chronica*, though from what more ancient authority I know not: "*Descenderat enim aliquando in tempore patris sui ad Gytrum in Daciam*," p. 540.

* Theodoric, one of the most ancient historians of Norway, so informs us: "*Haraldus miserat unum ex filiis suis Halstano regi Anglorum Hoccon nomine ut nutriretur et disceret morem gentis*." *Hist. Norw.* c. ii. p. 7.

the Norwegians handled it, they might exclaim, "You are now his thane, because you have taken his sword." To return the polite joke, Harald is stated to have sent his officer to England with his son. The officer placed the child on the knee of Athelstan, and said, "Harald commands you to nourish his illegitimate child."^f

The simple expressions of Theodric, "ut disceret morem gentis," discountenance these idle fables—the children of ignorant rumour. That Athelstan caused his ward to be taught every becoming accomplishment, that he loved him, and that Haco excelled in his studies and exercises are circumstances not repugnant to our belief. Harald sent to Athelstan the present of a magnificent ship, with a golden beak and purple sails, surrounded with shields, internally gilt.^g Haco received from Athelstan a sword, which he kept to his death.^h

Harald had seven wives, and a numerous progeny.ⁱ When his death approached, he selected his son Eric to be his successor. He divided some portions of his dominions among his other children.^j Their ambition was dissatisfied, and enmities and contests succeeded. Eric, like a crowd of others, saw no crime in actions which secured his greatness, and therefore earned the horrible surname of the slayer of his brothers.^k The Norwegian people had more morality than their sovereign, and invited Haco to release them from such a monster.^l Athelstan provided his pupil with an equipped fleet and warriors; and with these Haco sailed to Tronheim.^m Haco's countenance was beautiful, his person robust, his mind disciplined, his manners popular.ⁿ He was received with joy. The chiefs and people deserted Eric, and Haco was chosen king in his stead.^o His conduct and laws displayed the benefit he had received from the superior civilization of the court of Athelstan. He was rewarded for a virtuous reign, by a permanent and invaluable epithet. Though ten centuries divide him from us, his title still survives—"Haco the Good."

^f Snorre, *Harald's Saga*, c. xli. xlii. p. 119, 120.

^g Malmesbury, 51.

^h Snorre, c. xliii. p. 121.

ⁱ They are enumerated by Snorre, p. 97.

^j Snorre, p. 112, 113.

^k Theodoric, c. ii. p. 7. Snorre, in the last chapter of his *Harald's Saga*, p. 123, states his fatal warfare against two of his brethren.

^l Theodoric, c. ii. p. 7.

^m Snorre, *Saga Hakonar Goda*, c. i. p. 125. *Itineri in Norvegiam hinc mox accingitur, ad quod et copiiis et classe bene armata, omnibusque rebus, necessariis, ope Adalsteini regis magnifice instruitur.*

ⁿ Theodoric, c. iv. p. 9.

^o Snorre, *Hakonar Goda*, c. i.; and Theodoric, c. 2. His reign occupies the *Saga* of Snorre, called *Saga Hakonar Goda*, p. 125-164. The agriculture and trade of his subjects particularly prospered in the tranquillity of his reign. His modesty, benignity, prudence, and legislative wisdom are extolled, 135; yet *Ad. Brem.* calls him "cruel," p. 25.

Thus it became the glory of Athelstan, that he nurtured and enthroned three kings in Europe. He educated and established Alan of Bretagne, Louis of France, and Haco of Norway; and these actions are not recorded by English writers,^p but are attested by the chronicles of the countries benefited by his liberality. Our own authors, by omitting these circumstances, have concealed part of his fame; but this moderation entitles them to credit in other similar events. We may therefore believe, on their evidence, that he returned to Howel the kingdom of Wales, and to Constantine the kingdom of Scotland, declaring that he would rather bestow kingdoms than enjoy them.^q He gave another proof of his magnanimity in this respect, in his reception of Eric, whom, at the call of Norway and of humanity, he had assisted to dethrone. When Eric abandoned the sceptre of Norway, he went to the Orkneys, and having collected a great army, he plundered along Scotland. Athelstan heard of his vicinity, and sent a message to him, that his father and himself had been united in bonds of the strictest friendship, and that he wished to show his esteem for Harald in kindnesses to his son.^r

Eric gladly accepted his favours, and Athelstan placed him in Northumbria, to reign in feudal subordination to himself.^s Eric was baptized, and fixed his habitation at York.^t Eric is drawn by Snorre as a tall, active, powerful man; formidable and usually successful in war; fierce, precipitate, selfish, and silent.^u His wife Gunnhilda, has obtained a niche in the uncouth temple of Norwegian history. She was uncommonly beautiful, very intelligent and engaging; but nature had placed her among barbarians; and her talents only augmented her power of mischief. She became notorious for her cruelty and deceit.^v

^p For this reason they have been hitherto neglected by our historians. When we recollect the benefits which Athelstan produced to other sovereigns, and the numerous embassies to himself, we must feel that it is not with rhetorical praise that the abbot of Peterborough says, "Rex Adalsteinus omnium ore laudatur; felicem se credebat quisquis regum exterorum ei affinitate vel fœdere sociari posset." Chron. Petri de Burgo, p. 25.

^q Malmesbury, lib. ii. c. 6, p. 48, says, "Quos—miseratione infractus in antiquum statum sub se regnatos constituit, gloriosius esse pronuncians regem facere quam regem esse." Hume, with more national feeling than we should have suspected from his philosophy, disbelieves the fact of Constantine, because his countrymen deny it, p. 105; as if they were less interested to disavow, than the Saxons to affirm it.

^r Snorre, Hakonar Gods, c. iii.

^s Saga Hakonar, c. iii. Theodoric says, "Ipse vero Ericus ad Angliam navigavit et a rege honorifice susceptus ibidem diem obiit," c. ii. p. 7.

^t Snorre says at Iorvik (York) "Ubi sedem olim habuisse feruntur Lodbroki filii." Saga Hakonar, c. iii. p. 128. He adds, "Northumbria autem maximam partem erat a Nordmannis habitata. Lingue Norvegicæ nomina plurima ejus regionis ferunt loca, Grimbar utpote, Haukafiot aliaque multa." Ib.

^u Harald's Saga, c. xvi. p. 24.

^v Harald's Saga, ib. She is often mentioned in the Norwegian history, at this period. She poisoned her husband's brother, Halfdan. Harald's Saga, p. 122.

Athelstan maintained a friendship with Rollo of Normandy, and improved Exeter, which he separated from the British kingdom of Cornwall.

Athelstan is represented to have been a great benefactor to the monastic institutions. He rebuilt many; he was liberal to most, of books, ornaments, or endowments.*

Athelstan had received, by his father's care, a lettered education.† His subsequent cultivation of knowledge has not been transmitted to us; but there is a little catalogue of his books extant, which may not be unworthy of notice.‡

Athelstan, amid his greatness, remembered the poor. He de-

* Malmsh. 48. There are two curious MSS. in the Cotton Library, which were presents of Athelstan. One, Tiberius, A. 2, is a MS. of the Latin Gospels. Before them is a page of Latin in Saxon characters, of which the first part is, "Volumen hoc evangelii Æthelstan Anglorum basyleos et curagulus totius Britannie devota mente Dorobernensis cathedre primatui tribuit." One page is occupied by the letters LIB. in large gilt capitals, and by the rest of the first verse, in small gilt capitals, on a lilac ground. The following verses, containing the genealogy, are in gilt capitals, on dark blue ground. The first verses of the three other Gospels are in gilt capitals, on the uncoloured parchment. To each a painting of the evangelist is prefixed. The rest is written in ink, without abbreviations. In the beginning of the Gospels is a page with "Incipit evangelium secundum Mattheum," in large gilt capitals. Below these words are two crosses; opposite to one, is, ODDA REX, and to the other, MIHTHILD MATER REGIS. I am particular in describing the book, because it is declared to have been used for the coronation oath of our Anglo-Saxon kings, and because, from the names of Odda and Mithild, I would venture to conjecture, that it was a present from Otho of Germany, who married Athelstan's sister, and from Mathilda, the empress of Henry, and mother of Otho. Hrævida, his contemporary, spells Otho's name Oddo. Reub. 164. There is also in the Cotton Library a MS. Claudius, B. 5, which contains the proceedings of the sixth synod of Constantinople, in the seventh century. The first page of this exhibits part of the title in very large capitals, partly red. The next page has the rest of the title in smaller capitals, and below these, in Saxon characters, are these words: "Hunc codicem Æthelstanus rex tradidit Deo et almæ Christi genitrici Sanctisquo Petro et Benedicto in Bathoniæ civitatis cœnobio ob remunerationem suæ animæ et quisquis hos legerit caracteres omnipotenti pro eo proque suis amicis fundat preces." At the end of the MS. is a paragraph, stating, that it was written in the time of pope Sergius. A marginal note is inserted by Sir Robert Cotton, stating that as Sergius was pope in 690, and the synod was held in 681, the book must have been written in the tenth year after the synod. In the same valuable library, Galba, A. 18, is a small sized MS. which has come down to us as the Psalter used by Athelstan. In the beginning is a very ancient calendar in Saxon letters, written in 703, ut apparet in codice. The rest is composed of prayers in the Latin Psalter, and several other hymns, very handsomely written. Every psalm is begun with gilt capitals, with a title preceding in red letters. It has several ornamental paintings. In the British Museum, among the MSS. of the Bibliotheca Regia, I. A. 18, is a MS. of the Gospels in Latin, with this remark, "Hunc codicem Æthelstan Rex devota mente Dorobernensis tribuit ecclesiæ."

† Malmsh. p. 49.

‡ It is in Saxon characters in the Cotton Library, Domitian, A. 1. in these words: *This rýndon tha bec the Æthelstanes þeþan. De natura rerum; Persius, de arte metrica; Donatum minorem; Excerptiones de metrica arte; Apocalypsin; Donatum majorum; Alcuinum; Glossa super Catonem; Libellum de grammatica arte qui sic incipit. &c. Sedulium ʒ I gērim þær Alþpolder þreortær, Glossa super Donatum, Dialogorum.*" MSS. p. 55.

creed, that each of his gerefas should feed in all ways one poor Englishman, if any such they either had or could find. He ordered that, from every two of his farms, one measure of meal, one gammon of bacon, or a ram worth four pennies, should be monthly given; and clothing for twelve months, every year. He also commanded each of them yearly to redeem one miserable being who had forfeited his liberty by a penal adjudication. He left not these charities as mere precepts, which might be executed or neglected without consequences. He attached the interest of his gerefas to their obedience. "If any gerefas shall disregard this, he shall be fined thirty shillings, and the money shall be divided among the needy of the town."^a

It was a common saying of the Anglo-Saxons of Athelstan, that no one more legally or more learnedly conducted a government.^a It is not at all surprising, that he was a favourite both among his own people and in Europe.^b He was certainly a great and illustrious character. He appears to have been as amiable as great. To the clergy he was attentive and mild; to his people affable and pleasant. With the great he was dignified; with others he laid aside his state, and was condescending and decently familiar. His stature was almost the middle size; his hair yellowish, twisted with golden threads. His people loved him for his bravery and humility; but his enemies felt his wrath.^c

The memory of Athelstan is stained with the murder of his brother. When Athelstan acceded, his elevation was opposed by one Alfred, who disdained his authority. On his apprehension, there appeared persons who arraigned Edwin, then a youth, the brother of Athelstan, as an accomplice in the rebellion. Edwin, by himself and his friends, implored the confidence of the king, and denied the charge by his oath. But Athelstan ordered Edwin, with one attendant, to be put to sea in a shattered boat without oars. For some time the prince continued in sight of land, but the winds at last rose, and he was carried over the ocean out of hope. In despair, he sprung upon the waves, and was their immediate victim. His body was brought to shore between Dover and Whitsand. For seven years Athelstan mourned his death with a penitence^d which proved that he gained nothing by the crime, but self-reproach and infelicity—the most usual consequence of guilt!

^a Wilkins, 56.

^a Malmeb. 49.

^b *Tota Europa laudes ejus prædicabat, virtutem in oculum ferebat, &c.* Malmeb. 51.

^c Malmesbury has given us this portrait, p. 50.

^d Malmeb. 48, 53, 251; Sim. Dun. 134, 154; Hoveden, 422; Hunt. 354; Matt. West. 363; and Bromton, 836.

APPENDIX

TO

THE REIGN OF ATHELSTAN,

BOOK VI. CHAP. II.

As the authentic history of Bretagne is almost unknown, it may be gratifying to the curious reader, if I add some particulars concerning it which I collected, with some labour and research, and printed in my first edition, but afterwards expunged as an episode; but as they may save future students some trouble, I will reprint them here.

SKETCH OF THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF BRETAGNE AND ATHELSTAN'S
RECEPTION OF ITS CHIEFS.

The event which connects the reign of Athelstan with the history of Bretagne, was the appearance in England of the descendants of the expatriated Britons, who had retreated from the Saxon conquest into Armorica, now flying from the Northmen's swords to seek an asylum, and a country, from the descendants of their hated foes the Anglo-Saxons, who had driven their ancestors from their native soil.

This incident may be allowed to interest us so far with the history of these emigrants, as to admit an episode to be devoted to their memory. It is the more necessary, because the first British colonists of Armorica have hitherto been almost excluded from European history. Wherever they have at all appeared, fable has wrapped the narration with her clouds,* and conceals

* See the *Histoire de Bretagne par Bertrand d'Argentre*, 1618. He begins with the fabulous Conan, the ally of Maximus. He mentions seriously about Hercules falling in love with Celtina, daughter of Britannus, a king of Gaul, and that their issue was Caltes, the father of the Celtic nation, p. 4. He asserts it to be true history that the inhabitants of Britain came from Armorica! p. 19.

or disfigures that mild illumination with which their forgotten tombs ought in justice to be accompanied. The Armorican exiles were the countrymen of Arthur; they were of the race of the Aborigines of the island, and they lost their country, because they spurned a foreign yoke. Though powerful and ambitious governments surrounded and oppressed them, they preserved themselves a distinct nation under their own chieftains, till the close of the fifteenth century. Such actions deserve a recording memorial in the temples of history. Their more recent transactions have been interwoven with our annals. It is their earliest fortunes that will here be traced.^b

The provinces of Gaul on the sea-coast, between the Seine and the Loire, were called Armorica by the Celtic natives, in the days of Cæsar.^c He enumerates seven states which were included in that name, of which the modern Quimper, Rennes, and Vannes, are part.^d Excepting the single incident of the conquest of the Venetian territory by the people of Vannes, 164, U. C. they are not mentioned in existing history before the expeditions of the conqueror of Gaul.^e

Of the Armorican districts, Vannes was at that period the most distinguished. It excelled the others in the science and use of navigation. It possessed many ships, by which it carried on an intercourse with Britain, a region then as unknown to Rome, as Otaheite was to England, in the reign of George the First. The few ports which on this coast afforded a shelter from an impetuous sea, were in the command of the people of Vannes, and their importance enabled them to exact a tribute from all who frequented the adjoining ocean.^f

The inhabitants of Vannes detained two Roman envoys, and excited a confederacy of their neighbours against Cæsar. The issue was disastrous to the defenders of their country. Part was destroyed; the rest submitted: the conqueror, unpitying, ordered their senate and the inhabitants to be rigorously punished.^g The

^b Though the ancient Britons have appeared little in history, one work of considerable merit has been devoted to their nation, which alludes to their early state, with more judgment and knowledge than I have elsewhere seen. I mean, Lobineau's *Histoire de Bretagne*, 2 vols. fol. He states the great researches which the literary patronage of a bishop of Quimper caused to be made through Bretagne, for ancient documents of its history. The valuable work of Lobineau was one of the consequences. Vertot's book is rather the performance of a political controversialist than an impartial historian.

^c L. 7, c. 69. He mentions them again, l. 5, c. 44, and Hirtius, his continuator, in l. 8, c. 25. Cellarius places the Armorican tract inter Ligerim et Sequanam. *Vid. Geog. ant. v. i. p. 125.*

^d See Cæsar's names, l. 7, c. 69. Pliny, l. 4, c. 31, is alone in extending Armorica to the Pyrenees. He and Rutilius, l. 1, v. 213, and Sidonius Paneg. *Avit. v. 369*, spell the word *Aremorica*. This exactly suits the meaning of the original British, *ar y mor uch*, on the sea-cliffs.

^e Lobineau *Hist. v. 1, p. 2.*

^f Cæsar, l. 3, c. 8.

^g Cæsar, l. 3, c. 16. His reason for the severity was, that the *barbaricus* might in future respect the *jus legatorum*.

natives of Britain aided them in their struggle;^a and this assistance, and some similar act of friendship, became the pretext for Cæsar's aggression upon our island.¹

The subsequent revolts of Armorica were easily suppressed by Cæsar, and it withstood the Romans no more. Augustus, in his distribution of the provinces of Gaul, comprehended Armorica under the Lyonnoise. Adrian divided this region into two districts, and put Armorica into the second. This second province experienced another subdivision, of which Tours was the capital; and the commander of Tours superintended Bretagne as well as other districts.²

Armorica remained in subjection to the Romans until its revolt and temporary independence in 410,^k when Britain also seceded from the empire; but this freedom was of short duration. Rutilius, in his poetical itineracy, in the year 416, informs us that Exuperantius was teaching the Armoricans to love the returning wanderer, peace;^l that he had restored the laws, and brought back liberty—expressions which imply that they had re-admitted the Roman government. About the year 435, they aided the revolt of Sibaton, and the faction of the Bagaude. We find that Ætius, offended at what the author who has preserved the incident calls the insolence of the proud region, has commissioned Eocharich, the ferocious king of the Alamanni, to attack them for their rebellion. The interposition of St. Germain appeased the storm.^m Three or four years afterwards they revolted again, and Eocharich then fulfilled his mission with all the cruelty of barbarian avarice.ⁿ The same author describes the Armoricans as an excitable and undisciplined people; and another, after marking their locality as confined between two rivers, characterizes them as fierce, stern, light, petulant, rebellious, and inconstant; perpetually inconsistent, from their love of novelty; prodigal of words, but sparing of deeds.^o

In 452, they assisted in the defeat of Attila. In 477 we read of this province being again subdued by Littorius, who led his forces against the Visigoths.^p From all these circumstances, though we cannot accredit the system of Du Bos, who erects an unshaken republic in Armorica, from the period of its revolt to the successes of Clovis,^q yet we may perceive that its subjection

^a L. 3. c. 9. Auxilia ex Britannia—accersunt.

¹ L. 4. c. 18.

² Lobineau, p. 2.

^k See p. 126, 127, of this volume, and Zosimus, l. 6, p. 376.

^l His expression is, postliminium pacis, v. 213.

^m Lobineau, p. 3.

ⁿ Constantius vita S. Germani, cited by Mascoü in his history, v. i. p. 476. This author wrote in 488, 3 Gibbon, 274.

^o Erricus Mon. Vit. Germ. l. 5, cited by Gibbon, p. 274.

^p 1 Mascoü, 477.

^q Du Bos, l. p. 224. Montesquieu, in attacking Du Bos's opinion that the Franks did not hold Gaul by right of conquest but by invitation, takes occasion to intimate a disbelief that the Armoricans, during all this period, formed a particular republic. *Esprit des Loix*, l. 30, c. 24.

to Rome was not constant, nor were its liberties destroyed with impunity.

About the year 500, the Armoricans were fighting for the empire against the Franks. This rising nation was then conducted by Clovis, the founder of the French monarchy, who reproached the Armoricans for deserting the liberty of their ancestors. They maintained their struggle with successful bravery against the Salian king, who at last proposed to them an alliance and a conubial connection. On the conversion of Clovis, the proposed incorporation took place.^r

These sketches of history relate to the Armorican Celtæ. In the commencement of the sixth century they received a new colony of British Celtæ, and it is this event which gives us peculiar interest in the history of the fortunes of Armorica.

That Armorica and the opposite district of Britain, had very anciently a friendly intercourse, is declared by Cæsar, and this may have continued during their Roman subjection.

The actual emigration of Britons has been dated from the year 383, when Conan Meriadoc and his followers are reported to have left Britain with Maximus.^s But this fable must be rejected from true history. It has been discarded by the best historian of Bretagne, whose reasons are decisive.^t

While the Anglo-Saxons were prevailing in Britain, several assemblages of the natives quitted their paternal soil, and established

^r Procopius de bell. Got. l. 1, c. 12. The consent, almost unanimous, of the learned has approved of the substitution of Ἀρμερικῶσι for Ἀρβερικῶσι in the passage of Procopius.

^s There is a curious traditional account of Meriadoc in an old Latin parchment MS. in the British Museum, Faustina, B. 6. It is intitled, "Vita Meriadoci Regis Cambriæ." This life is in direct contradiction to the Jeffry Chronology of Conan's accompanying Maximus. According to this MS. Meriadoc was the son of Caradoc, a king in Wales, whose seat was penes nivalem montem qui Kambrice Snaudone resonat. Caradoc was assassinated by his brother. Meriadoc and his sister were sent away to the wood Arglud to be killed. The king's huntsman found them alive, and brought them up secretly. Urien, the northern king, travelling with Kaius, one of Arthur's household, saw the children. They were afterwards brought up with Arthur and Urien. Arthur punishes the assassination of Caradoc. The MS. ends with an account of Meriadoc's expedition to the continent. I mention these particulars, merely to remark, that this MS. which is full of fables, yet places Meriadoc not in the fourth, but in the sixth century, his true era; for it makes him a boy when Arthur and Urien were men.

^t Lobineau declines the insertion of it, because it is incompatible with the real expedition of Maximus, which disembarked at the mouth of the Rhine, and not in Armorica; with the state of Gaul and Armorica, under Theodosius, and his children, after the defeat of Maximus and Eugenius; with the Notitia of the empire, which places Roman garrisons not only in Rennes, and Vannes, but even about Brest; with the Armorican revolt in 406, and the punishment inflicted by Ætius in 436, and 439; with the aid given by the Armoricans against Attila in 452; with the government of this district given to Exuperantius, before 419; with what Gildas and Bede state of the true passage of the Britons; and with the existence of Judichæus, king of the Britons in 630, and of all his ancestors up to Ruval; whose lives are authenticated by all the French authors of the 7th century, and by every thing that can be collected from the British legends.

themselves in Armorica.* Their new settlements were in general named Llydaw;† but each particular district received its appellation from the insular principality or residence of the general of the colony.

The few cities which, in the authors of this period, are mentioned on this coast, warrant the belief, that a large part of Llydaw was uninhabited.‡ This supposition accounts for the selection of the spot, and for the ease with which the Britons effected their establishments.

The regions which the Britons colonized were literally Llydaw, or on the sea-shore. Dol, St. Malo, St. Brieux, Tréguier, St. Pol de Léon, Brest, Quimper, and Vannes, which now appear along the peninsula of Bretagne, mark the districts on which the Britons first disembarked. As their population and power increased, they stretched into the interior of the country to Rennes, and southward to Nantz.§ It is not known with what degree of violence they effected their occupation of the country.

As soon as the first colonies had settled, new adventurers were incessantly arriving. The names of Devonshire and Cornwall, which some of the emigrants imposed on the districts they seized, are evidences that a large portion of the colonists were from these counties in Britain.¶

The leader placed at the head of the earliest emigrants is Ruval, who settled himself in all the north part of the province, from Leon to Dol.‡ In the time of Gildas, we also find Conomer, a British king, in the upper regions of Bretagne;§ and Weroc, who governed at Vannes.¶ When Gildas followed his countrymen to Llydaw, he passed a solitary life in the island of Houath. Grallon, a British prince, is then mentioned, who built a monastery for Gildas.‡

The pestilence denominated the yellow plague, from the colour of its victims,‡ raged in the British island at the era of the Anglo-

* I have mentioned the authorities for adopting the year 513, as the year when the Britons arrived in Armorica, in this volume, p. 115. I cannot assent to Lobineau's date in 458. It is much too early.

† Llydaw implying, as it is said, the sea-coast, is little else than a synonyme to Armorica. The author of the life of Gildas says, "In Armoricam quondam Gallie regionem tunc autem a Britannia a quibus possidebatur Letavia dicebatur." Bouquet, 3, 449. The MS. Vita Cadoci says, "Provincia quondam Armorica, deinde Littau, nunc Britannia minor vocatur." Cotton Library, Vesp. A. 14, p. 32.

‡ Lobineau, p. 6.

§ Lobineau, p. 1, and 7; and Adelmus Benedictus, in the Corp. Franc. Hist. p. 396.

¶ Lobineau, p. 6. ‡ Lob. 6, 7.

§ Vita Gildæ, p. 456. Gregory of Tours calls him Chonobri, l. 4, c. 20.

¶ Vita Gild. ib. After 530, Eusebius is mentioned as a king of Vannes. Vita S. Melanii. Acta Sanct. Boll. Jan. 331.

‡ Acta Sanct. 2, Jan. p. 954. The writers of these lives who lived near the times they speak of, though no authority for the facts of their legends, yet often preserve some curious historical traits.

§ Pectis autem illa flava vocabatur eo quod flavos et exanguos universos quos in-

Saxon successes, and accelerated the Armorican emigrations.* The British chieftains were the most conspicuous among the crowding exiles. Fracanus, of noble descent, the cousin of Cato, a British king, went at this period with his family to Armorica,^f the region where safety and tranquillity seemed then to reside.^g He found unoccupied a tract surrounded with wood and bushes, which had been fertilized by an inundation of the adjoining river. In this spot he fixed his habitation.^h

Grallon is mentioned with the epithet of the Great.ⁱ He governed in that part of Bretagne called Cornwall.^j This was the district near Brest.^k Quimper was its metropolis.^l Grallon is also characterized for his ferocious mind.^m During his government, the city of Ys, near Quimper, is said to have fallen a prey to the invading waters.ⁿ

About the same time that Grallon and the other British princes in Armorica are mentioned, we also hear of Budic, a king in these regions. It is indeed obvious, from the tenor of the fragments of history and tradition which have come down to us on this subject, that the British settlers in Armorica reached it at different periods, and remained at first disparted into many petty, but independent sovereignties.^o

vasit efficiobat—sæviente enim in hominibus et jumentis illa peste. Vita S. Teliavi, Ap. Bolland. 1 Feb. 308. It was to escape this plague, that Teliavi went to Armorica.

* Tandem ob pestis late grassantis luem atque etiam irrupentem hostium vim coacti incolæ ac precipice quidem nobiles alienas petivero terras. Life of S. Winwaloc, an Armorican MS. printed in Boll. Act. Sanct. 1 Martii, 256.

^f This emigration is worth noticing in its particulars, as a probable specimen of many others: "Vir in prædicta insula perillustri Fracanus Catonis regis Britannici consobrinus—per id tempus quo grassaretur pestis exiit de terra et de cognatione sua cum geminis suis natis Guethenoco et Jacobo cum uxore sua quæ Alba dicebatur; conscensa itaque rate contendit in Armoricam." Vit. Winwaloc, 256.

^g Ubi tunc temporis alta quies vigore putabatur. Ib.

^h Fundum ibi quendam sylvis dumisque alte circumseptum roperit qui ex inundatione fluvii cui nomen sanguis locuples est. Hunc habitare cœpit securus a morbis. Ib.

ⁱ Gradlonus appellatus magnus. Vit. Winwal. 259.

^j Regem occiduorum Cornubiensium. Ib. 259.

^k Solum Cornubiensæ non procul a Brestiensis tractu. Vit. S. David, MS. of Utrecht, Ap. Bol. 1 Mart. 139.

^l The editors of the Acta Sanctorum (1 Feb. 305) remark, that part of Armorica was called Cornwallia; they state, (1 Mart. 246) that the bishop of the district is still intitled, "Episcopus Cornugallie vulgo de Cornouaille." In Feb. 1, 602, they express that some call Grallon, "Regem Cornubiæ cujus ditionis metropolis est Quimper Corentin."

^m So the life of S. Winwal. 254. Gradlon.

ⁿ Argentre Hist. 114. He adds, "Et encore aujourd'hui les habitans montrent les ruines de le reste des murailles si bien cimentées que la mer n'a peu les emporter." My authority must be responsible for the circumstance.

^o It has been asserted by some, that these Bretons were never under independent sovereigns, but always subjected to the Frankish kings. The passages of Gregory of Tours on this subject are rather contradictory. Valesius, who considered the question maturely, decides, that the Bretons, though often subdued, yet were never subject to the Merovingian or Carlovingian families, by any certa imperii confes-

Grallon is mentioned with so many epithets and allusions which imply conquests, that it is probable that his contemporaries felt the effects of his power.²

In the middle of the sixth century, a British king, who had been the friend of Arthur, also emigrated to Armorica. This was Caradoc Vreich-yras, a prince of great notoriety in the Welsh traditions.³ He had governed Cornwall under Arthur,⁴ and he is often mentioned with encomiastic epithets in the Triads.⁵ He obtained a settlement of dignity among the Armorican Britons.

What scene can appeal so forcibly to our compassionate feelings, as little colonies of families driven by the sword of invasive war from their paternal homes, and seeking an asylum and subsistence on some foreign shore? Have we not often followed the interesting Eneas and his exiled friends, with the warmest glow of heart, with the most ardent hopes of their final tranquillity? Emigrants, like the Britons, who go to colonize a foreign soil, reach their new country in misery the most afflicting. They have not only their luxuries, but every convenience to create. Long before they can even hope to enjoy comfort, they must extort from the uncultured soil the indispensable aliment of the passing day. The cottage must be built; the wood must be cut down; the marsh must be drained; the town must be raised. These considerations would lead us to expect an age of peace, till happiness had produced satiety. What leisure can expropriated penury afford for civil feud? what temptation can it present to ambitious war? Alas! misery is unfriendly both to virtue and to peace. It indurates the heart; it clouds the mind; it engenders cruelty, ferocity, and turbulence: it exiles benevolence; it cherishes malignity. Man therefore has seldom been in any states of want and pain, but his actions and his history have become too faithful mirrors of his misfortunes and his depravity.

sione. See the note in Bouquet's Recueil, v. iii. p. 205. Their governors are called kings oftener than dukes at first. I cannot avoid coinciding with Valesius.

² The Vita Winwal. says of Grallon, "Qui post devictas gentes inimicas sibi duces subduxerat," p. 259. So the ancient Breviary of Bretagne styles him, Grallonus Britonum rex, qui tunc temporis illius gentis monarchiam tenebat, Boll. 1. June 84. There is a grant of Gradlon to St. Guengalocus, in Lobineau, ii. p. 17, wherein he styles himself, "Ego Gradlonus gratia Dei rex Britonum."

³ In illis diebus Caradoc cognomento Brechbras—ad Letaviam veniens illam cepit imperio. Vita Paterni MS. Cott. Lib. Vesp. A. 14, p. 79. So the Breviarium Venetense, "Caradoco Britannia subjugata ad Letaviam quoque debellandam mare transgresso." Boll. 2 April, p. 381. These lives of saints are certainly among the least eligible documents for history; but on this period of the Breton history we have little else; and we must admit, that however inventive they may be in their miraculous circumstances, they had no motive to be intentionally false in such collateral historical hints as are quoted here.

⁴ Trioedd ynys Prydain, vii. Arch. Welsh, ii. p. 3.

⁵ The 23d Triad styles him one of the chadfarhawe, or the knights of battle of Britain; another calls him the pillar of Wales. The 19th Triad mentions his son Chawrdaf; and the 9th Trioedd y meirch, notices his daughter Llugor.

The British emigrants soon augmented the evils which accompanied their exile by political calamities. Their history is confused by their numerous assassinations, wars, and usurpations. Soon after their full establishment, we read of Chanao, one of the princely exiles, killing his three brothers, and imprisoning Macliau the other. Macliau being liberated, rebels, flies, conceals himself from his pursuers in a chest within a tomb, turns monk and bishop; but on Chanao's death, takes his wife and kingdom.¹

We hear also of crimes like those of Arabian romance attached to the character of Conomer, or Conon Mawr, or the Great, another chieftain. As soon as his wives became pregnant, the wild tradition transformed into fable assert, that he destroyed them.² His political cruelties, the crimes of his ambition, are more probable, because more common. He killed Iena, the grandson of Ruval, and by submitting himself to the Frankish king, he sought safety from the enmity of his countrymen. Judual, the son of Iena, flew to the court of Childebert to escape the search of murder.³ Conon is also stated to have destroyed Canao, his wife, and son.⁴ The Frankish sword, in 560, at last relieved Bretagne from his oppressions.⁵

Soon afterwards Macliau expelled his nephew Theodoric, who, in return, in 577, killed his uncle and cousin. Waroc succeeded to the part of Bretagne which his father Macliau had held, and Theodoric to the other.⁶ Waroc defeated the Frankish confederacy, and destroyed the Saxons of Bayeux.⁷ Contests then ensued in the efforts of Waroc to possess himself of Rennes and Nantz.⁸

In 590, Judual was reigning in Armorican Devonshire, and Waroc in Vannes.⁹ Judual was succeeded by his son Judichael, whose moral and religious character impresses us like an apparition of benign beauty in a stormy night. At first he retired to a cloister on his father's death, but he was persuaded to accept the crown. In his time, about 635, some Bretons made incursions on the frontiers of Dagobert; but Judichael, after receiving an

¹ Gregory of Tours, l. 4, c. 4, p. 70. Ed. Hanov. 1613.

² Vita Gildæ, written by Monacho Ruyensi about 1008. Boll. 2 Jan. 961.

³ Lobineau, i. p. 9.

⁴ Lobineau, p. 10.

⁵ Gregory of Tours, l. 4, c. 20. Gregory names this person sometimes Conomer, and sometimes Conober; but so he calls Bobolen, l. 8, c. 32. Beppolen in c. 43. This diversity of orthography is inseparable from this period.

⁶ Gregory, p. 101.

⁷ When the Saxons invaded Britain, some went towards Armorica, and settled near Nantz and Bayeux. They mingled with the ancient inhabitants, and had a common appellation with them. Charles the Bald, in his laws, names their language the linguam Saxonican. They were called Saxones Bajocassimi. Bouquet, v. ii. p. 250, and 489.

⁸ Gregory 108, 109, 110, 199, 224.

⁹ Lobineau, 90. After Conon's death, Judual in toto cum sua sobole regnavit Domnonia. Vit. Samsoni, by a contemporary in Bouquet, v. iii. p. 433.

embassy of expostulation,* paid a visit of peace to the Frankish court.^d

The good Judichael, in 636, choosing to secede from the cares and employments of royalty, wished to transfer his power to his brother Judoc; but this prince had imbibed the love of a private life so strongly, that he fled to avoid the honours intended for him.^e These unambitious characters are so rare, and the want of them sometimes causes such calamity, that whenever they appear they ought to be extolled.

Of Judichael's children, we only know that he had two sons; "by whom," says Ingomar, "long after his death, the Breton nation was so irradiated, that every province and country in their occupation continued to be governed by their descendants."^f

The kingdom or country of Armorican Cornwall has escaped the notice of the old annalists, who have reached us. We have a catalogue of its chiefs, written in the twelfth century, but no narration accompanies it.^g The ancient romances of the country indeed abound with matter. The heroic actions of Daniel Dremruz transcend in glory the greatest achievements that have amazed us; but fiction has written in the page which history left a blank. We can only assert with truth, that Breton Cornwall had always its own counts to the time of Alain Cagnart; and that in the eleventh century they rose from the possession of an inferior province of Bretagne to the government of all the country.^h

In 753, the Bretons were defeated by Pepin, but not subdued. Under Charlemagne there was a Comte des Marches de Bretagne. This Comte was the famous Roland, who fell in 778, at the well-known battle of Ronceval, and whose memory has been consc-

* Eligius was the Frankish ambassador, an ecclesiastic of much skill in the goldsmith's art, and of much moral merit. See his life, Bouquet, iii. 552.

^d Aimonius de Gest. Franc. Bouquet, iii. 132. St. Ouen, the chancellor of France, who was present at the interview, has mentioned it in his life of Eloi. Ib. The Cronicon. Britannicum, from the ancient MS. of the church of Nantz, dates this peace in 643. See it in Lobineau, v. ii. p. 30.

^e See the Vita Judoci, by an author of the eighth century, in Bouquet, iii. p. 519.

^f Lobineau, i. p. 26.

^g It may be worth inserting from Lobineau, ii. p. 17. "Catalogue des Comtes de Cornouaille tiré des Cartulaires de Landevenec et Quimper écrits dans le douzième siècle :"

Riwelen Murmarthou
Marthou

Concar
Gradlon Mur
Daniel Dremrud, Alamannis rex fuit
Bodie et Maxenti duo fratres
Johan Rheith
Daniel Unva
Gradlon flam
Concar Cherennoe

Bodie Mur
Fragual Findleac
Gradlon pluenevor
— Ulfres Alesrada
Diles Heirguer Ehebre
Bodie
Binidic
Alan Canhaiart (died 1058)
Houel.

^h Lobineau, i. p. 27.

crated by the genius of romance, and the admiration of our forefathers.¹

We are trespassing with an episode of some length, but we now hasten to its close. Charlemagne appointed the Count Gui, a potent warrior, to watch the frontiers of Bretagne. The endangered people, instead of repulsing their general enemy, wasted their strength in civil wars, and for the first time, *all* Bretagne was conquered and subjected to France by the indefatigable Gui. The troops were joined to the imperial armies, and disdaining a long submission, they revolted. Vannes had been for 200 years the object of war between the Bretons and the French. It was the key of Bretagne, by which the French could enter at their pleasure into the very heart of the kingdom. The most violent efforts were therefore made to take and to keep this city. The Bretons mastered it in 809; the army of Charlemagne retook it in 811. The miseries which this nation suffered at last ended their civil dissensions. In 814, Jarnithin was reigning in Britain, and afterwards Morvan.^k

Louis le Débonnaire twice subdued Bretagne,¹ and made Nominoe its lieutenant governor.^m In 848, Nominoe was consecrated king of Bretagne at Dol.ⁿ He baffled three Frankish expeditions of Charles the Bald.^o In 851 he died, the most prosperous and powerful prince which the Bretons had yet enjoyed.^p At his accession, the history of Bretagne breaks out into distinct notice, and flows into a clear and regular stream.

His son Erispoe, defeated Charles again; who, in revengeful policy, supported Salomon, the heir of Erispoe's eldest brother, against him. Erispoe allowed Salomon to govern subordinately the county of Rennes.^q In 857, Salomon, by an atrocious act (he killed his cousin,^r) began a reign of ability, but of guilt.

Salomon, assuming the sovereignty of all Bretagne, conciliated the French king, who, for his services against the Northmen, sent him a crown enriched with gold and jewelry, and also the ornaments of regal dignity;^s but in 874, he experienced the instability of all power which has been obtained by crime. So many minds are depraved by the example, and encouraged by the success, that usurpation is generally dethroned by usurpation, till it ceases to be enviable. Pasquitan, count of Vannes, and also Gurvaint, the count of Rennes, who has obtained by his bravery a ray of

¹ Lobineau, i. 27.

^j Lob. p. 28. Eginhart, 5.

^k Lob. p. 28.

^l Ib.

^m Lob. 30

ⁿ Lob. 47.

^o Lob. 40-49, and see Daniel, *Histoire de France*, v. ii. p. 42, 43, 46.

^p Lob. p. 50.

^q Lob. p. 52.

^r Lob. p. 54.

^s Lob. 62. Daniel states, 66, that the Council of Savoniera, held 859, mentioned Salomon with the periphrasis *qui Britannorum tenet regionem*, to avoid calling him king. The Council of Soissons afterwards styled him merely duke. Father Daniel follows this obligatory authority, and gives no higher title to any ruler in Bretagne.

fame, because all was gloom around him, caballed against Salomon and destroyed him.⁴ The revolters then fought for the undivided sovereignty, and both perished in 877.⁵

Alain, brother of Pasquitan, succeeded at Vannes; and Judichail, son of Erispoe's daughter, at Rennes. Their civil discord was overawed by a Northman invasion. They united for the time; but in 878, Judichail, too eager for glory, fought alone with the enemy and perished. Alain, with better collected strength, conquered them, with decisive slaughter, and was acknowledged the sovereign of all Bretagne.⁶ He reigned till 907 with splendour and tranquillity. He attained the surname of the Great; but not great from overpowering intellect, or mighty achievements; not great because he was a giant, but because his countrymen were dwarfs.

We now approach the incident which has connected the history of Bretagne with the reign of Athelstan. After Alain's death, one passing cloud has shaded the affinity of his successor; but we find Gurmhailon, called the monarch of Bretagne,⁷ living in amity with Rivalt the count of Vannes, and Mathuedoi, the count of Poher.⁸

Mathuedoi had married the daughter of Alain the Great; but the throne of Alain was suddenly swept away by the furious torrent of the Northmen, now becoming Normans under Rollo, who in the beginning of the tenth century burst upon Bretagne with desolation and ruin. No exertion could check its approaches: it overwhelmed the sovereignty and the people with destruction, and Mathuedoi escaped to England with his family, and was received by Athelstan as already mentioned.

⁴ Lob. 66. Gurvaint, called by Regino, Vurfandus, challenged Hastings. See Regino's detailed account in 874, p. 43.

⁵ Lob. 67, 68.

⁶ *Annales Metenses Bouquet*, viii. p. 71: they state, that out of 15,000 Northmen, with whom Alain fought, 400 only escaped. *Le sejour ordinaire d'Alain le grand estoit au Chateau de Ricux pres de Redon.* 1 Lob. 70.

⁷ Some make him son of Alain; some of Pasquitanus. He was evidently the superior prince, because Mathuedoi mesme a recours a lui pour faire confirmer les donations qu'il fait aux Eglises, Lob. p. 70. *The Chronicle of Nantz etates*, that the sons of Alain the Great minime patris vestigia sequentes omnino defecti fuerunt. ⁸ *Bouquet*, 276.

⁹ There may be some foundation for the remark of Daniel:—*Il semble mesme que depuis la mort du duc Alain, prince vaillant il y avoit une espèce d'anarchie, et que les contes du Pais s'etoient rendus maistres chacun dans leur canton,*" p. 221; but there is not foundation for his pertinacity in maintaining the courtly proposition: "*Que ce duché estoit toujours tributaire de la France, et sujet à l'hommage.*" *Ib.*

CHAPTER III.

Edmund the Elder.

ÆTHELSTAN having left no children, his brother Edmund succeeded at the age of eighteen.^a

Anlaf, the Northumbrian prince, who had fought the battle of Brunanburh against Athelstan, renewed his competition with Edmund. The Anglo-Danes of Northumbria encouraged his hopes; they invited him from Ireland, and appointed him their king.^b

Collecting a great armament, he sailed to York, and thence marched towards Mercia, to wrest the crown of England from the head of Edmund.^c He assaulted Tamworth. Edmund, whom the Saxon song styles "the lord of the English—the protector of his relations—the author of mighty deeds," armed on the hostility, and marched against Anlaf to the "way of the White Wells, and where the broad stream of the Humber flowed."^d

Edmund had less abilities or less fortune than Athelstan; or the power of the Anglo-Danes had increased, for Anlaf was victorious at Tamworth.^e But the Anglo-Saxon government had been

^a Flor. Wig. 350; Sax. Chron. 114; Al. Bev. 110; Ing. 29. The Sax. Chron. Tib. B. 4. dates Athelstan's death in 940. So Tib. B. 1.

^b Malmsh. 53. Flor. Wig. 350. The MS. Saxon Chronicle, Tib. B. 4, has this passage, which is not in the printed one: "941, heƿ Northýmbra alugon hira gætreopatha 7 Anlaf of Yrlande him to cinge gecuron."

^c Matt. West. 365.

^d The first paragraph of the reign of Edmund, in the Saxon Chronicle, is obviously an extract from a poem:

heƿ Edmund cýning,
Engla theoden,
Daga munbbora
Dýnce geeode:
Dýne dæb fnuma
Spaþor ꝥcabeth
bytan pýllef-geat
7 dumbra ea
Bnaba brým ꝥream. P. 114.

* I have seen this fact no where mentioned but in the MS. Saxon Chronicle, Tiberius, B. 4. "948, heƿ Anlaf abnæc Tameþurthe 7 micel pæl gefeol on ægthra hand 7 tha denan riþe ahton 7 micel hepe huþe mid him aþeg læddon. Thæƿ paƿ Wulfƿun genumen on thære heþgunge." Hoveden hints, that he advanced to Tamwre, and plundered, p. 423; but neither mentions the Danish victory, nor the capture of Wulfrun.

so fortified by the wise administration of three able sovereigns, that the first successes of Anlaf could not overwhelm it. - At Leicester, the king surrounded the invader and his friend Wulfstan, the ambitious and turbulent archbishop of York; but they burst at night out of the city.^f A battle ensued, in which the skill and activity of an earl, whose daughter he had married, gave to Anlaf the palm of victory, after a day of conflict.^g

These defeats inclined Edmund to listen to the negotiation of the archbishops of Canterbury and York. A peace was concluded between the princely rivals, on terms highly honourable to Anlaf, but less creditable to Edmund. To Anlaf was surrendered all that part of England which extended north of Watling Street. Edmund contented himself with the southern regions. But a condition, still more humiliating to the Anglo-Saxons, was added:—whoever survived the other was to be the monarch of the whole.^h It happened that Anlaf died in the following year; but he must have had great power, or great talents capable of creating power, to have established for himself so near a chance of the crown of England.

The death of Anlaf removed a perilous competitor, and Edmund availed himself of the casualty to recover the possession of Northumbria.ⁱ He also terminated the dangerous independence of the five cities which the Danes had long occupied on the northern frontiers of Mercia and East Anglia. These were Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Stamford, and Lincoln. The preceding kings seem to have suffered the Danes to retain them; but “the heir of the warriors of Edward,”^j adopted a new policy. He expelled the Northmen, and peopled them with Saxons.^k Two fleeting kings attempted, but in vain, to be permanent in Northumbria.

Edmund extended his conquests to Cumbria, in 946: with the help of the king of the South Wales, he ravaged the little kingdom; he cruelly blinded the two sons of Dunmail, who reigned

^f This incident appears only in the MS. Saxon Chronicle, Tib. B. 4. It is not in the printed one, nor in Matthew, nor Florence, nor Hoveden, nor Huntingdon, nor Malmsbury, nor Ethelwerd, nor Ingulf. The passage in the MS. Chronicle is thus: “*þær Eadmund cýning ýmbræc Anlaf cýning 7 Wulfstan arcebrýcop on Leagræceartre 7 he hý zepýlbon meachte næpe tha hi on niht ut ne ætburfton of thære býrig.*”

^g Matt. West. 365.

^h Matt. West. 365. Hoveden, 423, admits the peace, but omits the last condition. So Mailros, 148, and Sim. Dun. 134.

ⁱ Matt. West. 365; the Sax. Chron., Mailros, and others, place Anlaf's death at this time.

^j So the Saxon Chronicle styles him in a passage, which seems to be a part of an Anglo-Saxon song.

Wiggenbna hleoafena Eðparber.

Sax. Chron. 114.

^k Huntingdon, p. 355.

there, and gave it to Malcolm of Scotland, on condition of defending the north of the island against invaders.¹

In the height of his prosperity the king was suddenly killed. The circumstances of his death, however, vary more than a transaction so simple, and so affecting, could be thought to occasion. At Canterbury, according to some;² at Windechirche, according to another;³ at Michelesberith, as named by a third;⁴ at Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire, between the Avon and the Severn, according to others;⁵ the king was feasting on the day of Saint Augustine, which was always commemorated by the Anglo-Saxons. A man, one Leof, appeared among the company, whom Edmund had six years before banished for pillage. Warmed with the liquor which he had been drinking, the king jumped from his seat, seized the man by the hair, and threw him on the ground;⁶ others state, that Leof had quarrelled with the king's cup-bearer, and was about to destroy him, when Edmund interfered;⁷ another, perhaps more truly, mentions, that amidst the bacchanalian jollity, a discord, as generally happens, suddenly arose among the guests. In the midst of their fury, the king rose from table to appease, perhaps to share in the tumult, when the exiled robber stabbed him with a dagger which he had secreted.⁸ It is, however, singular, that, on an incident so palpable and so impressive, such a contrariety of rumours became popular, that Malmsbury states, that his death opened the door for fable all over England;⁹ and Wallingford was so perplexed as to aver, that it was to his

¹ Matt. West. 366. The condition in the Saxon Chronicle, which dates the event, in 945, is, that Malcolm should be his *mīd p̄p̄hta* both on sea and land, p. 115. The Welsh Chronicle places it in 944: "Ac y diffeithwyt Strat-clut y gan y saeson." "Strat-clut was ravaged by the Saxons." MS. Cleop. b. v. The MS. Cleop. states the death of Edwal and Elised against the Saxons.

² Thorn. Ch. p. 1779; Bromton, 858; Hist. Rames. 389. So the Welsh MS. "945, yd oed Edmund Vrenhin yn kynnol gwled yn manachloes Seint Austyn ynkeint." Cleop. b. v.

³ Mailros, 148.

⁴ Matt. West. 366.

⁵ Malmsb. 54. Al. Bev. 111. Hoveden, 423. Ing. 29.

⁶ Malmsb. 54. So the Welsh Chronicle: "Ac val y deod yn bwrw golwc ar hyt y neuad ef a wlel Lleidyr a rydarod y dehol or yn̄ys k̄yno h̄ynn̄y ar brenhin a gynodes y v̄n̄y ac a doeth h̄yt yn lle y doed y lleid̄yr ac y mavael ac ef ger wallt y ben āy d̄ynn̄v dros y bwr̄t." "And, as he was casting his eye along the hall, he saw a robber, who had been given over to banishment from the island before. The king arose immediately, and went to the place where the robber was, and laid hold of him by the hair of his head to draw him over the table." MS. Cleop. b. v.

⁷ Flor. Wig. 352. Hoveden, 423. It is said by Allur. Bev. 111, that the king wished to save his *Dapifer* from the hands of his enemies. Matt. West. narrates, that the king, seeing Leof, nodded to his cup-bearer to turn him out. Leof resisting, Edmund rushed in anger upon him, p. 366.

⁸ Hist. Rames. 389.

⁹ Quo vulnere examinatus fabulae januam in omnem Angliam de interitu suo patefecit, p. 54.

day uncertain who was the murderer, or what was the cause." Instances like these, which often occur in the history of man, prove the truth of the observation of our intelligent moralist, that "the usual character of human testimony is substantial truth under circumstantial variety."^v

CHAPTER IV.

The Reign of Edred.

EDRED, who succeeded Edmund, was the third son of Edward, who had reigned after his father, Alfred. As the preceding king, the elder brother of Edred, was but eighteen years of age when he acceded, Edred must have been less than twenty-three at his elevation. His reign was short. Disease produced to him that crisis which the arm of violence had occasioned to his predecessor.

The most remarkable circumstance of Edred's short reign was, the complete incorporation of Northumbria. It had been often conquered before. Its independence was now entirely annihilated.

It has been mentioned, that Athelstan gave the Northumbrian crown to Eric, the son of Harald of Norway, who had been expelled his paternal inheritance, for his fratricides and cruelty. But peaceful dignity can have no charms except for the cultivated mind, the sensualist, or the timid. It is only a scene of apathy to those who have been accustomed to the violent agitations of barbarian life; whose noblest hope has been an ample plunder; whose most pleasurable excitations have arisen from the exertion and the triumphs of war. Eric therefore still loved the activity of depredation. The numerous friends, with kindred feelings, who crowded to him from Norway, displeased or disappointed with the government of Haco, cherished his turbulent feelings; and to feed, to employ, or to emulate them, he amused his summer months by pirating on Scotland, the Hebrides, Ire-

^v Sed qua ratione vel a quo occisus fuit usque ad præsens incertum habetur. Chron. p. 541. The MS. Saxon Chronicle has a passage on Edmund's death, not in the printed one: "Tha pær pibe cuth hu he hif bagan geenbode tha liofa hine ærftang æt Pulcan cýncan." Tib. b. iv.

^v Paley's View of the Evidences of Christianity, vol. ii. p. 289, 5th ed. 8vo.; a work which displays a highly accomplished and candid mind in the full exertion of its enlightened energies.

land, and Wales.^a In the reign of Edmund, perceiving that this king or his unquiet subjects desired a new regent, he hastened to his beloved ocean and its plunder. From the Orkneys he collected some companions. In the Hebrides he found many vikingr and sea-kings,^b who joined their forces to aid his fortunes. He led them first to Ireland; thence to Wales; and, at last, reaching England, he plundered extensively. The Northumbrians again received him as their king,^c and Eric became formidable to the Anglo-Saxons.

It had happened that before this event, this people had sworn fidelity to Edred, at Tadwine's Cliffe.^d Provoked by this rebellion, Edred assembled an army, and spread devastation over Northumbria. As he returned, the Northmen warily followed him from York, and at Casterford surprised and destroyed his rear guard. Enraged at the disaster, the king stopped his retreat, and again sought Northumbria with augmented fury. Terrified at his power and its effects, the people threw off Eric, and appeased Edred with great pecuniary sacrifices.^e

But Eric was not to be discarded with impunity. He collected his forces, and gave battle to the revolters. Snorre mentions Olaf as the friend of Edred.^f Simeon of Durham omits him, but notices his son Maccus.^g The Icelander states the battle to have lasted the whole day, and that Eric and five other kings, among whom he names Gothorm, and his sons Ivar and Harekr, probably sea-kings, perished; Rognvalldr and others also fell.^h Our chronicler, Matthew, admits such a catastrophe, but states that Osulf betrayed Eric, and that Maccus fraudulently killed him in a desert.ⁱ

Edred improved the moment by exerting all the power of conquest. He carried away in bonds the proudest nobles of the country, and overspread it with devastation;^j he imprisoned Wulfstan,

^a Snorre, *Saga Hakonar Gods*, c. iv. p. 128.

^b Snorre, *ibid.*

^c *Flor. Wig.* 352. He calls him Ircus. *Saxon Chronicle* says, Yric, the son of Harold, p. 115. So Wallingford, 541. The *Chronicle of Mailros* also calls him Eyrice the son of Harold, p. 148. Ingulf names him Hircius, p. 30. Simeon calls him Eiric, a Dane, 134. *Matt. West.* has Elric, p. 368.

^d Hoveden, 423. *Flor.* 352. The printed chronicle has nothing of this. The *MS. Chronicle*, Tib. b. iv. states it.

^e *Flor. Wig.* 352, 353. Hoveden, 423. The *MS. Saxon Chronicle*, Tib. b. iv. supplies on this incident the silence of the one printed, by a long passage, of which the paragraphs in Florence and Hoveden seem to be a translation. In the *MS. Tib. b. i.* there is a blank from 946 to 956.

^f *Hakonar Saga*, p. 129.

^g Simeon, 204.

^h Snorre, 129. He errs in placing the catastrophe under Edmund.

ⁱ *Matt. West.* 369. *Sim.* 204. Matthew says, "That with Eric fell his son Henricus, and his brother Reginaldus." He perhaps means the Harekr and Rognvalldr of Snorre. Our writers mention no battle; but this additional incident is highly credible. *Mailros* calls Eric the last king of Northumbria, 148.

^j Ingulf, 41. He adds a strong picture of Edred's invasion: "Erassque tota terra et in cineres redacta ita ut multis milliariis longo tempore sequenti solitudo foret."

the turbulent archbishop;* he annexed Northumbria inseparably to his dominions; and to govern it the more easily, he partitioned it into baronies and counties, over which he placed officers of his own appointment.¹ Osulf, whose treachery had produced the destruction of Eric, was the first earl; to whom in another reign Oslac was added.^m

In 955, Edred died; but not worn out by old age, as some have dreamt.ⁿ One expression has descended to us concerning him, *debilis pedibus*, weak in the feet.^o We also learn from the writing of an author, almost, if not quite, his contemporary, that his indisposition, rather an offensive one, lasted all his reign; and, by a gradual wasting, produced his death.^p

CHAPTER V.

The Reign of Edwin.

EDWIN,^q who has been usually called Edwy, the eldest son of

* Flor. 353. Matt. West. 369. The MS. Chronicle, Tib. b. iv. is like the passage in Florence.

¹ Wallingford, 541.

^m Mailros, 148. Sim. Dun. 904.

ⁿ It is curious to read in Wallingford, p. 542, that old age greatly vexed Edred, and that multis incommodis quæ senes solent circumvenire ad extrema deduxit. Among these evils of senility, he particularizes the loss of teeth, debility and the frequent cough, familiaris sonibus. Yet this *old* man could not have been much above thirty; for he was under twenty-three at his accession, and he reigned nine years. The chronicler mistook the consequences of disease, for the natural effects of old age.

^o It is Hermannus who has left us this trait. His MS. is in the Cotton Library, Tib. b. ii.

^p Vita Dunstani, p. 75. MS. Cotton Library, Cleopatra, b. xiii.

^q He is commonly called Edwy; but the old authorities are numerous, which express his name to have been Edwin. Of chroniclers that have been printed, he is styled Edwin—by Ingulf, p. 41; by Alured of Beverley, p. 111; by Simeon Dunelm, p. 135; by Wallingford, 541; by Ethelridus Rievallensis, 359; by Knighton, 2312; by Hoveden, 425; by Bronton, 863; by Malmesbury, 901; by the Hist. Ramesiensis, 389; by Thorn, 2243; by Higden, 263; by Radulf de Diceto, 455; and by the authors in Leland's Collectanea, vol. i. p. 241, 260, 304, and vol. iii. p. 399. Rudborne says, Edwyi, sive Edwini, p. 217. The unpublished MSS. in the Cotton Library, that I have seen, which name him Edwin, are also numerous. The Chronicles in Dom. A. xii. p. 62; Dom. A. 3; Peter de Ickham, p. 24; Vesp. E. iv. p. 110; Faustini, A. viii. p. 77, and b. vi. p. 66; Thomas de Elmham; Claudius, E. p. 54; Nero, A. vi. p. 9; Vesp. b. xl. p. 1, and 73; Cleop. b. xiii. p. 130; Vesp. A. xvi. p. 43; and Joh. Oxenodes, Nero, D. ii. p. 215; Calig. A. iii. p. 19; also, in the King's Library, 13, D. 1; so the Welsh Chron. Cleop. b. v. But the Saxon Chronicle, 115; Ethelwerd, 649; and a coin (see it in Gough's Camden, cv.) have Eadwig. Matt. West. printed, has Edwius. A MS. of part of his book, erroneously entitled Godofrid of Malmesbury, has Edwinus. Vesp. D. iv. p. 96. Edwin and Edwig have the same meaning—"prosperous in battle." On the whole it appears to me, that Edwy, Edwin, and Edwig, are the same name; but as Edwy is apparently

Edmund the Elder, succeeded his uncle Edred, at the age of sixteen.^b

It was his misfortune to live in one of those periods, which have frequently occurred in the history of mankind, when new opinions and new systems are introduced into society, which essentially counteract the subsisting establishments. The ardour of the discussions, and the opposition of interests and prejudices, inflame the mind and passions of the country; cruelty and persecution, hatred and revenge, usually accompany the conflict, and both the advocates for the revolution and its opponents become alike fanatical, ferocious, unjust, and implacable.

In the tenth century, a new religious discipline was spreading in Europe, which occasioned the misfortunes of the reign of Edwin. This was the Benedictine order of monks—an order which in the course of time, became celebrated in Europe beyond every other.^c

It is a fact perpetually pressed upon the notice of the historian, that individuals often appear who seem to act at random, yet whose notions are destined to affect ages and nations. One of these was Benedict, an Italian, born 480,^d whose peculiar associations of thought induced him to descend into a deep cavern in a desert, and to reside there for several years, known only to a friend, who let down his provisions. His singularities attracted notice, and, being connected with a piety that seems to have been genuine, though enthusiastic, at last produced veneration. His admiring spectators were so numerous, that he was enabled to found many monasteries near him. He afterwards went to mount Cassin, in the kingdom of Naples, destroyed some temples of idolatry which he found there, erected a monastery, and laid down a new series of rules for its governance.^e

a familiar abbreviation, it cannot be entitled to a place in history any more than Willy or Harry: I have therefore inserted Edwin, which has most authorities in its favour.

^b For Edwin to have been sixteen at his accession, his father must have married at fifteen, because Edmund was eighteen in 941. This seems almost too early to be true; and yet there is no alternative, for Edwin, at his coronation, appears to us also as married. It shows us, indeed, how early the Anglo-Saxons sometimes united—Edmund at fifteen; his son Edwin at sixteen. If there be an error anywhere, it must be in Edmund's age at his accession, for that makes him and Edred to have been born in the two last years of their father's reign; yet Edmund's age is attested by Ingulf, Flor. Al. Bev. already quoted, and also by the Sax. Chron. 144; Sim. Dun. 155; Malmsh. 53; and others. Eadgiva, the mother of Edwin and Edgar, left a will, which yet exists: in this she mentions Edwin, and she calls him a child. See it in the appendix to Lye's Saxon Dictionary.

^c It is not, however, safe to adopt implicitly the statement of Trithemius, p. 238, though Baronius follows it. This enumerates eighteen popes, above 200 cardinals, 1600 archbishops, about 4000 bishops, 15,700 abbots, and 15,600 monks, to have been of the order before his time, who was born 1462.

^d Dupin, vol. ii. p. 45, sixth century. Fab. Bib. Med. I. p. 533.

^e The rule is in the Bibliotheca Magna Patrum, vol. xv. p. 690. There are also

Benedict died about 543.^f Soon afterwards the Lombards destroyed his monastery at Mount Cassin. The monks fled to Pope Pelagius, who, by giving them an asylum, kept alive an institution destined to overspread the West.

The memory of Benedict was preserved, and peculiarly honoured by the famous Pope Gregory, who admired his regulations, and devoted one book of dialogues to record his supposed miracles.^g By the influence of the third Gregory, who died 742, the monastery at Mount Cassin was rebuilt, and this new construction first began the establishment of its fame. Zachary, the following pope, sent them the MS. rule of Benedict, and gave them, as a mark of his favour, the important and attractive privilege of being under no bishop, and no jurisdiction but that of the pope.^h

The Benedictine rule began now to diffuse itself beyond Italy. Boniface, the Anglo-Saxon missionary to Germany, built a Benedictine monastery in Fulda, which the pope sanctioned, and which Pepin exempted from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, but the papal.ⁱ Boniface describes his monks as men of strict abstinence, who used neither flesh, wine, nor strong drink, nor servants, but who were contented with the produce of their own labour.^j He interested Carloman so much in his favour, that in his reign the clergy of Gaul were urged to patronize it.^k

The order increased, though slowly, till the beginning of the tenth century. Beruo, preferring it to other monastic rules, introduced it at Clugny in 910. One of his pupils was Odo, who succeeded him, and who seconded his partiality to this order; added something to its regulations, and endeavoured to introduce it at Fleury, whither the body of Benedict had been transported from Cassin.^l

Fleury having been plundered by the Normans, the monks who returned to it were living irregularly when Odo began his attempt. They opposed him at first even with weapons. His eloquence or sagacity so changed their feelings, that before his death, in 944, it was so firmly established at Fleury, that this place became the chief seminary from which it was diffused through the West.

Its success as an instrument of discipline; the sanctified cele-

some Anglo-Saxon translations of it in the Cotton Library; and one exposition of it by Dunstan, with his picture. Bib. Reg. 10, A. 13.

^f Fabricius mentions that others talk of 542, and 547.

^g Gregory's Dial. lib. ii. Gregory characterizes his rule as, *discretionis præcipuam sermone luculentam*. Dial. p. 275.

^h See Marsham's *Περὶ Βλαστῶν*, prefixed to Dugdale's *Monasticon*, vol. i.

ⁱ See the letters of Boniface and Zachary, 16. Mag. Bib. Pat. 115, and of Pepin, p. 121. Our countryman describes the place thus: "Est præterea locus sylvaticus in eremo vastissimæ solitudinis." Ibid. 115.

^j Bonif. *ibid.*

^k See the two councils held in 742, in Bib. Mss. Pat. p. 84, 85.

^l Marsham *ubi sup.* There is a MS. of one of Odo's works. Bib. Reg. 6, D. 5.

brity of its author ; the necessity of some reformation among the monks and clergy, and the novelty of this, gave it a sudden and extending popularity. Fleury became famous for its superior discipline and virtues, and its monks were sent for to other places, to reform and to regulate them. Thus it perpetually happens in human life, that new plans become popular, and spread far beyond their intrinsic merit, because they happen to soothe some momentary feeling, promote some meditated interest, or supply an existing deficiency. In the present case, it seems, that the Benedictine discipline, however objectionable it may appear to us, was the best form of monastic life which had then been conceived; and was therefore wisely adopted by those who valued monastic institutions. Hence the spirit of improvement at the same time passed also into Flanders, and eighteen monasteries there were reformed by the exertions of Abbot Gerard.

The monastery of Fleury was eagerly encouraging the rule, when Odo, an ecclesiastic in England, was offered the see of Canterbury. He was the son of one of those ferocious Northmen who had infested England under Ingwar and Ubbo.^m He had been himself a soldier in the first part of life, in the reign of Edward,ⁿ and he quitted the military profession to assume the ecclesiastic. He attended Athelstan in the battle of Brunanburh; and, as other bishops often combated at that time, and as it is confessed that he knew immediately of the king's sword breaking in the conflict, and supplied the loss, it is probable that he partook of the fray,^o though his encomiasts talk only of his prayers. These circumstances may be worth noticing, as they explain that stern severity of temper which was so unhappily exerted against Edwin and Elgiva. He was raised through other gradations to the primacy of England.

When Odo was offered the see of Canterbury, he was unwilling to accept it, from his enthusiastic zeal for the new system, until he had become a monk; and he selected Fleury as the place wherein he chose to make his profession.^p

Odo came to his metropolitan dignity a decisive friend, and an aspiring patron of the Benedictine order, from its superior piety and judicious discipline: but though high in favour with several sovereigns, he made no effort to compel the English to adopt the reform of Fleury. A letter of his to the clergy of the country, exhorting them to discharge their duty with zealous care, yet exists;^q but it does not even mention the Benedictine system.

^m Malmsh. 200. Osberne, 2 Ang. Sax. p. 78. ⁿ Malmsh. 200. Matt. West. 359.

^o Though councils and kings expressly forbade ecclesiastics to mix in battle, (see Pope Zachary's letter to the bishops, 16 Mag. Bib. Pat. p. 110-116, and Boniface, *ibid.* p. 106,) yet it was very frequent at this time.

^p Chron. Petrik. 26. Malmsh. 200.

^q See it in Malmsh. de Pont. p. 200. Its first phrase is an unfortunate attempt

The man whose more active mind roused England to establish the new discipline among its clergy was Dunstan, a character formed by nature to act a distinguished part in the varied theatre of life.* The following review of his life is made with a desire to be just towards him, without abandoning the right of free judgment on his actions, and of fair inference as to the principles by which they were to be directed.

He was born in 925.[†] His parents were Heortan and Cyne-thryth,[‡] who seem to have lived near Glastonbury.[§] He frequently visited the old British church there.[¶] It is said that he had here a vision of his future greatness, and that a venerable phantom pointed out the place where he was to build a superb monastery.^{**} Ambitious talents, meditating much on the honours they covet, may experience sometimes such illusions amid the nightly chimeras of the reposing though disturbed imagination.

His parents encouraged him to study, and his penetrating abili-

at eloquent latinity. "Mirabili cuncti potentis præsulis polorum clementia opitulante, Ego Odo," &c. Another sentence expresses something of his temper, "Spirituali charitate, etiam comitatus rigore." There is another letter of his in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii. p. 50.

[†] There are several lives of Dunstan extant. One written by Osborne, who flourished about the year 1070. See it in Wharton's *Anglia Sacra*, vol. ii. p. 88. One also by Eadmer, p. 211. There are two ancient ones in the Cotton library. One, Nero, C. 7, was written by Adalardus Blandiniensis Monachus, in the tenth century, or in the beginning of the eleventh, addressed to Elphegus, the archbishop of Canterbury, and composed at his request. But the author says, "Scias autem in opere isto historiam vitæ ejus non contineri sed ex eadem vita quasi brevem sermonis versiculum," &c. This life is full of miracles and panegyric, with scarcely any biographical notices. The most curious and ancient life of Dunstan is in the same library, Cleopatra, B. 13. It was written by a person who was his contemporary, or nearly so. For, speaking of an incident in his monastery, he says, it happened when all the monks were absent, except Dunstan, parvoque scholastico qui postea pontifex effectus hæc nobis intimavit. It has plenty of flattery and wonder, but it contains some curious traits of biography, which enable us to sketch his mind. Matthew of Westminster, Malmsbury, and Osborne, have taken many things from it. It seems to be the one mentioned by Wharton, with the name of Bridferth; and so printed in the *Acta Sanctorum*.

[‡] In the year of Athelstan's accession, which some place 924, and some 925. *Matt. West.* 360.

[§] MSS. Cleop. B. 13. Adelard, in Nero, C. 7, is so impatient to get at his miracles, that he annexes one to Dunstan before he was born.

[¶] *Erat autem regalis in confinio ejusdem præfati viri insula antiquo vicinorum vocabulo Glastonia nuncupata.* MSS. Cleop. B. 13. This life of Dunstan had been read by Malmsbury, for he quotes this passage from it; and says, he saw the book at St. Augustin's in Canterbury, and at another place. *De Ant. Glast.* p. 293. The MS. in the Cotton Library, is probably the identical book which our Malmsbury saw; for the Joecelin has written upon it, that in August, 1565, he found it among other old MSS. at the Augustine monastery at Canterbury. Usher has added a note making the same inference.

^{**} The author's phrase is, that the first Neophytes found there an old church not built with human hands. I translate his words to mean, that the Anglo-Saxons found one there ready built, and of course by the Britons.

^{††} MSS. Cleop.

ties enabled him to excel his companions, and to run with easy rapidity through the course of his studies.^a

A fever interrupted his advancement, and all the horrors of a temporary frenzy ensued, accompanied with that debility which in this disease sometimes announces the departure of life, and sometimes a crisis which is to end in convalescence. In this state a sudden access of delirium came on. He leapt from his bed, eluded his nurse, and seizing a stick which was near him, he ran over the neighbouring plains and mountains, fancying that wild dogs were pursuing him. His wanderings led him towards night near the church. Workmen, during the day, had been mending the roof. Dunstan ran wildly up their scaffold, roamed over the top, and with that casual felicity which frenzy sometimes experiences, got unconsciously to the bottom of the church, where a heavy sleep concluded his delirious excursion.⁷ He waked with returned intellect, and was surprised at his new situation. As the church doors had not been opened, both he and the attendants of the place wondered how he got there.^a

His parents obtained for him an introduction into the ecclesiastical establishment at Glastonbury. He continued his studious applications, and there is no reason to disbelieve the statement, that his conduct at this time was moral and religious.^a

Some Irish ecclesiastics had settled at Glastonbury, and were teaching the liberal studies to the children of the nobility. Dunstan attached himself to their instructions, and diligently explored their books.^b

The first part of his life was a laborious cultivation of mind, and he seems to have attained all the knowledge to which it was

^a Adelard calls him, *indole acerrimus*. Nero, C. 7. The MS. Cleop. B. 13, says, *coetaneos quoque præcellerat et suorum tempora studiorum facili cursu transiiret.*

⁷ This is the statement in the MS. Cleop. B. 13, which I think to be peculiarly valuable, because it shows us the simple and natural truth of an incident which the future biographers of Dunstan have converted into an elaborate and ridiculous miracle. It gives a good specimen how monastic fancy, by its peculiar machinery, has transformed natural incidents into celestial achievements. When reflection sobers the mind of Achilles, it is Pallas who descends to whisper in his ear; when Dunstan runs over a church in a delirium, angels are called down to protect him from the devil, to burst the roof, and to place him safely on the pavement.

^a This ancient life gives to this event none of those appendages of angels and devils, which credulity afterwards added. After mentioning his sleep, it merely says, *Exurgens autem post momenti spatium ammirari admodum una cum custodibus cooperat, quo pacto, quove ingenio introierat, cernens etiam quod templi ostium clausum munitumque extiterat.* MS. Cleop. Its next phrase, that Dunstan acknowledged the hand of Providence in his preservation, merely expresses his pious feelings. It does not invest it with the miraculous colouring of later writers. The wonderful was, however, soon added, for we find it in Adelard; and yet even his statement reveals the truth, and shows that the falsehood was the creature of ignorance. *"Ubi mane inventus cum consuleretur qualiter ille incolumis adveniret, qui aere pene contiguus morti extarius erat relictus, hoc se ignorare, respondit et rumorum miraculi gratis ignorantie curat."* Adelard, MSS. Nero, C. 7.

^a MSS. Cleop. B. 13.

^b Osborne *Vita Dunstani*, p. 92. MS. Cleop. B. 13.

possible for him to gain access. He mastered such of the mathematical sciences as were then taught; he excelled in music; he accomplished himself in writing, painting and engraving; he acquired also the manual skill of working in gold and silver, and even copper and iron.^c These arts had not at that day reached any pre-eminent merit, but it was uncommon that a man should practise himself in all. To have excelled his contemporaries in mental pursuits, in the fine arts, though then imperfectly practised, and in mechanical labours, is evidence of an activity of intellect, and an ardour for improvement, which proclaim him to have been a superior personage, whose talents might have blessed the world.

When his age admitted, he commenced his career of public life as a courtier. Some relation introduced him into the royal palace, and his musical talents interested and often recreated the king.^d

No circumstance can more impressively attest the superiority of Dunstan's attainments than his having been accused, while at court, of demoniacal arts.^e Such charges give demonstration of the talents and knowledge of the person so accused. In the very same century another man of eminence suffered under a similar imputation, because he had made a sphere, invented clocks, and attempted a telescope.^f The charge of magic was of all others the most destructive, because the most difficult to repel. Every exertion of superior intellect in defence was misconstrued to be preternatural, and confirmed the imputation.

His enemies were successful. The king was influenced against him, and Dunstan was driven from court;^g—from that Eden of

^c Osberne, 93, 94. His attainments are thus enumerated in the MS. Cleop. B. 13: "Hic itaque inter sacra literarum studia—artem scribendi nec ne citharizandi pariterque pingendi peritiam diligenter excoluit, atque ut ita dicam, omnium rerum utentium vigil inspector fuit." This MS. mentions a particular instance of his painting and embroidery: "Quandam stolam diversis formularum scematibus perpingeret quam postea posset auro gemmisque variando pompare." It also mentions, that he took with him ex more cytharam suam quam, lingua paterna, *Aearpam* vocamus.

^d Adelard says, "De Glastonia egressus Archo Dorobernensi Adelmo patroo scilicet suo se junxit et cohabitare cepit—in palatio cum presentavit et regi Athelstano—magno affectu commendavit." Nero, C. 7. Osberne implies the same, p. 94. But I think the king should be Edmund. The MS. Cleop. B. 13, mentions his living in Edmund's palace, where plans were formed against him.

^e Asserentes illum malis artibus imbutum, nec quicquam divino auxilio sed pleaque demonum præstigio operari, Osb. 95. The MS. Cleop. B. 13, thus expresses it: "Dicentes, eum ex libris salutaribus et viris peritis non saluti animæ profutura sed avitæ gentilitatis vanissima didicisse carmina et histriarum colere incantationes."

^f This was Gerbert, who became archbishop of Rheims and of Ravenna; and in 999 was made pope, under the name of Sylvester II. "He had learned the mathematics in Spain: his knowledge made him pass for a magician, and gave rise to the fable of his being promoted to the papal chair by a contract which he made with the devil." Dupin, 10 cen. p. 44; and see Matt. West. 348, and Malmob. 65.

^g MS. Cleop. B. 13.

his hopes, where, like another Wolsey, he was planning to be naturalized.

His courtly rivals were not content with his disgrace: they insulted as well as supplanted him; they pursued and threw him into a miry marsh. He extricated himself on their retreat, and reached a friend's house about a mile distant.^b

Thus far Dunstan appears neither unamiable nor uninteresting. Youthful ambition is the parent of much excellence; while subordinate to reason and duty it is an honourable energy in the spring-time of life, when the buds of expectation are incessantly shooting. Dunstan's pursuit of distinction, though perhaps questionable as to its prudence, was no immoral impulse. His means were the most honourable he could employ—the cultivation of his mind, the increase of his knowledge, and the fair exertion of his beneficial acquisitions.

To be checked in the first madness of our juvenile ambition, may often introduce the invaluable treasures of moderate wishes, moral prudence, and becoming humility. There is no evidence that the effects of Dunstan's disgrace were at first any other. He was repelled from the paths of political greatness, and he submitted to the necessity; he turned his eye from the proud but tempestuous mountains of life to its lowly but pleasant vales, where happiness loves to abide, the companion of the industrious, the contented and the good. After he left the court, he formed an attachment to a maiden whom he wished to marry.ⁱ

It is with regret we read that such honourable impressions were deemed to be diabolical suggestions by the relations and biographers of Dunstan. The bishop Ælfheag, his relation, opposed them. Attached by his own taste and habits to the ecclesiastical order, he conjured him to become a monk, a character then much venerated, and, notwithstanding its superstitions, allied to many virtues.

Dunstan was at first insensible to his oratory. He replied to Ælfheag's reasoning, that the man who lived from choice regularly in the world, was of greater excellence than he who, having entered a monastery, could not avoid doing what his order enjoined. The man in the world displays moral freedom and voluntary rectitude; the monk was a creature of compulsion and necessity. Ælfheag opposed the discriminating remark, by arguing on the future punishment, on the importance of extin-

^b MS. Cleop.

ⁱ It is the MS. Cleop. which informs us of this curious circumstance. It says, the devil primum enim mulierum illi injectit amorem, quo per familiares earum amplexus mundanis oblectamentis fruereetur. Interea propinquus ipsius Ælfheagus, cognomine Calvus, presulque fidelis, petitionibus multis et spiritualibus monitis eum rogavit ut fieret monachus. Quod ille instinctu præfati fraudatoris renuntians, melius sponere juvenulam, cujus cotidie blanditiis foveretur, quam in re monachorum bidentinis indui pannicula.

guishing the fire of passion, and of avoiding its incitements by withdrawing from the world.¹ Dunstan still resisted; his relation continued to importune him.

These unfortunate entreaties disturbed the mind of Dunstan. He became agitated by a tumult of contending passions. With the monastic habit were connected all the internal enjoyments of piety to those who valued them, and to those who were less devout it gave a release from the dread of futurity, the reputation and the means of peculiar sanctity, and an impressive empire over the minds of men. But it exacted a renunciation of the charms of mutual affection, of the delights of a growing family, and of those numerous gratifications with which social life in every age abounds. His health was unequal to the conflict: a dangerous disease attacked him* before he could decide, and his life was despaired of. He lay without a prospect of recovery, and so senseless, that the pulse of life seemed to have ceased: at last it slowly returned, and life renewed in gradual convalescence. But he rose from the bed of sickness with an altered mind. He renounced the flattering world, assumed the monastic habit, and condemned himself to celibacy.¹

But to give new directions to our feelings, by the violence of terror, is to produce changes of thought and action, neither salutary to our moral principles, nor calculable in their consequences. Dunstan, while ardent with passions not dishonourable in youth, was driven forcibly from civil honours, and was afterwards excluded from social life. In obedience to duty, fear, importunity, and some new impressions, but in direct contradiction to his own earlier wishes and prospects, he became a monk. Does the incessant experience of human nature teach us to expect that an amiable, benevolent, or virtuous character, would result from these compulsions? Checked in our dearest, and not immoral propensities, are we never soured by the disappointment, never irritated by the injustice? Driven by violence into the schemes of others, will not individuals of strong feelings become artificial characters? harshly coerced themselves, will they not be indurated towards others? Is not selfishness, with all its power of mischief, most likely to become afterwards the ruling principle? It is, indeed, true, that exalted virtue will rise superior to every temptation to misanthropy and vice. Many are the glorious minds who have withstood the fiery trial; and whoever loves virtue as he ought, will pursue it, unaffected by the follies of

¹ Osberne, 95.

² MS. Cloop. And see Osberne's statement, p. 96.

³ MS. Cloop. B. 13. Osberne, 96. Mr. Lingard talks of the "*smile credulity*" of Osberne. His epithets are just; but how can he apply them fairly to Osberne, and not extend them to all, or nearly all, the legends of his church which crowd the hundred volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists? Is Osberne more anile than almost all the writers of the Catholic Hagiography?

man, or the accidents of life. Many, however, fall the victims of their vicissitudes; and the remainder of Dunstan's life will best show how far he was of the number.

The predominant features in Dunstan's character, in addition to strong religious impressions, were energy and ambition. The path of life to which he was forced did not extinguish these tendencies, though it may have added peculiarity and severity. His superior mind and all its acquisitions still remained: but it was necessary that all its peculiarities should thereafter be displayed in the language, garb, and manners of a monk. The aspiring soldier seeks distinction in the field of battle by excelling in courage: the ambitious recluse pursues the phantom in a lonely cell, by extraordinary penances, and a superior superstition. Dunstan had now only this way to fame; and from his future actions we infer that he pursued it with an earnestness which every year became more separated from moral principle, and which at last poisoned his mind and injured his contemporaries, but gratified his passion.

He made with his own hands a subterraneous cave or cell, so unlike any thing of the sort, that his biographer, who had seen it, knew not what to call it.^m It was more like a grave than a human habitation. Cells were commonly dug in an eminence, or raised from the earth: this was the earth itself excavated. It was five feet long and two and a half wide. Its height was the stature of a man standing in the excavation. Its only wall was its door, which covered the whole, and in this was a small aperture to admit light and air.ⁿ

Do not such singularities as these reveal either an inflamed imagination in the sincere, or a crafty ambition in the hypocritical? Genuine piety is modest, private, and unaffected. Piety, when assumed as a mask to cover or to assist inordinate ambition, or connected with a disordered fancy, labours to be ostentatious, absurd, extravagant, and frantically superstitious. If Dunstan's mind had been of weak texture, the selection of such a cell might be referred to its imperfections; but in a man of his talents, it is more likely to have been the deliberate choice of his secret policy.

One of the legendary tales which has been used to exalt his

^m Non enim invenio qua id appellatione quam proxime vocem; cum non tam humani habitaculi quam formam gerat sepulchri, propriis laboribus fabricavit. Osberne, 96.

ⁿ Osberne, 96. This author's additional exclamation is worth translating, for its singularity: "Wretch and sinner as I am; I confess that I have seen this holy place of his residence. I have seen the works of his hands. I have touched them with sinful hands, have brought them to my eyes, watered them with my tears, and adored them with bended knees. I remembered how often he has heard my petitions in my perils, and therefore I did not refrain my tears; nor if I could have avoided it, would I have left the place." Ibid.

fame, shows, if it ever happened, the arts by which he gained it. Dunstan carried to his sepulchral cell a fragment of his former disposition. He exercised himself in working on metals. One night all the neighbourhood was alarmed by the most terrific howlings, which seemed to issue from his abode. In the morning they flocked to him to inquire the cause; he told them that the devil had intruded his head into his window to tempt him while he was heating his work; that he had seized him by the nose with his red-hot tongs, and that the noise was Satan's roaring at the pain.^o The simple people are stated to have venerated the recluse for this amazing exploit. They forgot to recollect that he might himself have made the clamour, to extort their morning wonder at his fabricated tale.

All ages and ranks united to spread his fame,^p and a substantial benefit soon accrued. A noble lady, Ethelfleda, of royal descent, who was passing a quiet life of widowhood, was attracted into the vicinity, was charmed by his conversation, and religiously loved him. She introduced him to the king, who visited her; and what gave him immediately an importance of the most interesting nature, she left him at her death, which happened soon afterwards, the heir of all her wealth.^q It is stated that he distributed his acquisitions among the poor.

Dunstan's reputation and connection made him known to Edmund, who invited him to court.^r He eagerly obeyed. The prospects of his youth began to shine again; but he beheld them with very different feelings. The world, and all its pleasures, would then have been his harvest; but now the peculiar path of monastic life was that which he had to tread.

At court, though he had many friends, he had also many enemies. He surmounted, however, all opposition; for the chancellor Turketul supported him,^s and the first step of his future aggrandizement was laid by the acquisition of the monastery of Glastonbury, to which he was appointed abbot by the king.^t

The Benedictine order being now, from its real merits, so popular in Europe, Dunstan introduced it into his monastery,^u and made himself its most active patron.

The new abbot gained so rapidly upon the prejudices of his age, that his youth was no impediment to his aggrandizement.

^o Osberne, 96, 97.

^p *Ibid.* 97.

^q MS. Cleop. B. 13. Osberne, 97.

^r *Ibid.* 99.

^s Ingulf, 38.

^t MS. Cleop. This says, that the king took him to Glastonbury, et apprehensa ejus dextra causa placationis seu etiam dignitatis oculus est illum. And see Adlard, Nero, C. 7.

^u MS. Cleop. MS. Nero; and Osberne. Ingulf says, that Dunstan went to Fleury, to be initiated, p. 29. Dunstan's expositio of the rule of Benedict, with his portrait, is in the British Museum. MSS. Bib. Reg. 10. A. 13.

If the year of his birth is truly stated,* he could be only twenty-two at the accession of Edred, and thirty-one at his demise; yet before Edred's coronation, he was made abbot of Glastonbury, and he was afterwards chosen by Edred for his confidential friend and counsellor. To him, this king sent all his choicest treasures, and those amassed by the preceding sovereigns, to be kept in his monastery under his inspection.†

From the next incident the policy of Dunstan seems to have been foreseeing and refined. The see of Winchester was offered to him by the king; but he refused it, on the pretence of unfitness. The king entreated his mother to invite him to dinner, and to add her persuasions; but Dunstan declared he could not leave the king, and would not, in his days, even accept the metropolitan honour.‡

He went home. In the morning he told the king he had seen a vision, in which Saint Peter struck him, and said, "This is your punishment for your refusal, and a token to you not to decline hereafter the primacy of England." The king saw not the art of his friend, but interpreting the vision to his wishes, declared that it foretold he was to be archbishop of Canterbury.¶

From an impartial consideration of all these circumstances, will it be injustice to the memory of Dunstan to infer, that, as by his refusal of the dignity of Winchester, by the communication of this vision, and from its result, he acquired the credit of humility, of a divine communication, and a royal prediction of the highest grandeur to which he could attain, he had these objects in previous contemplation? If not, the coincidence and complexion of the incidents are unlike the usual course of accidental things. It need only be added, that Odo, who then governed the see of Canterbury, was very old.

Edred, who had been ailing all his reign, felt an alarming crisis to be approaching, and desired his treasures to be collected, that he might dispose of them before he died. Dunstan went to bring those entrusted to him. Edred expired before he returned; and the monk was either credulous or bold enough to assert, and the Anglo-Saxons were weak enough to believe, that on the road an ethereal voice had, in thunder, announced to him the royal demise.‡

The immature age of Edwin was tempting to a man of ambi-

* That he was born in the year of Athelstan's accession, is declared by Sax. Chron. 111; Flor. 348; Hoveden, 422; Osb. 90.

† MS. Cloop. B. 13.

‡ MS. Cloop. B. 13; Adelard; Nero, C. 7.

¶ Osberna, 103. Adelard.

‡ MS. Cloop.; Adelard; Nero.

tious politics. A minor's reign is a favourable opportunity, which has never been neglected by those who covet power. 955. The royal temper once subdued into obedience to any one, the government of England would be in that person's hands. We cannot penetrate into the motives of Dunstan's heart; but if the ordinary spirit of the aspiring statesman prevailed in his breast above the purer objects of the saint, it is not improbable that projects of this sort had impressed his imagination, or why should he have attempted to coerce the king, so early as the day of his coronation!

On this day, Edwin, after the ceremony, quitted the festive table at which the chief nobles and clergy were regaling,^a and retired to his apartments. Odo, who saw that the company were displeased, ordered some persons to go and bring back the king to partake of their conviviality.^b The persons addressed excused themselves; but at last they chose two who were known to be the most intrepid—Dunstan, and his relation Cynesius, a bishop—who were to bring back the king, either willingly or otherwise, to his deserted seat.^c

Dunstan and his friend, careless of the consequences, penetrated to the king's private apartments. He found him in company with Ethelgiva, or Elgiva, his wife; but who being within the prohibited degrees of affinity, is ranked, by the monastic writers, as his mistress.^d The mother of the lady was also

^a The earliest account of this incident is first entitled to notice; it is in the life of Dunstan, Cleop. B. 13. "Post regale sacre institutionis unguentum repente prosiluit lascivus linquens læta convivio." Malmesbury wishes to intimate that affairs of business were debating when the king retired, p. 55. But the other authorities agree in stating, that they were at table. Matt. West. says, læta relinquit convivio, p. 369. Osborne has jam pransus; and Wallingford declares that they were at their cups, quibus Angli nimis sunt assueti, p. 542.

^b Et cum vidisset summus pontificum Odo regis petulantiam maxime in consecrationis sue die omni per gyrum considerenti senatui displicere, ait coepiscopis suis et cæteris principibus. "Eant quæso quilibet ex vobis ad reducendum regem quo sit, ut conduct in hoc regali convivio suorum satellitum jocundus concessor." MSS. Cleop.

^c Ad extremum vero eligerunt ex omnibus duos quos animo constantissimos noverant, Dunstanum scilicet abbatem et Cynesium episcopum ejus consanguineum, ut omnium jussui obtemperantes, regem volentem vel nolentem reducerent ad relictam sedem. MSS. Cleop. On contrasting this account with the chroniclers, some variations of the circumstances occur, which is a very common accident to a popular story, narrated in a distant age. It seems safest to prefer the earliest account, when it carries the marks of internal probability.

^d Malmesbury 55; Hist. Rames, 390; and Wallingford, 543; speak of her as married to Edwin, but as his relation. A charter in the Hist. Abbend. MSS. Claud. c. ix. states the same fact. "Testes autem fuerunt hujus commutationis Ælfgiva regis uxor et Æthelgifa mater ejus." p. 112. Had this charter been even forged, the monks would have taken care that the names appended were correct. The author of the MSS. Cleop. obviously intimates the marriage, though he affixes a doubt whether the wife was the mother or the daughter. His words are, "quo sese vel etiam natam suam sub conjugali titulo illi innectendo sociaret." MS. The sentence on the divorce of Edwin in the MS. Chronicle, quoted in note ^b, p. 535, implies also the act of the marriage. It seems to me to be sufficiently clear, that when the monkish annalists

present.* That in a visit to the beloved of his heart, the king should have lain aside the pomp of majesty, or have caressed her, are circumstances so natural, that we cannot but wonder at the temper which has so emphatically described, that the royal crown was on the ground,^f or that the king was toying with her when Dunstan entered. He exhorted the king not to disdain to be present among his nobles at the festivities of the day.^g

Whether Edwin disliked the drunkenness of an Anglo-Saxon festival, or whether he preferred the society of his Elgiva, it must be admitted that his retirement was indecorous according to the customs of the age. That Dunstan, as the ambassador of the nobles, should solicit the king's return, was not improper, though it seems rather a forward and disrespectful action to have forced himself into his private apartments. But with the delivery of their message, his commission must have terminated; and on the king's refusal, it was his duty to have retired. As an ecclesiastic, he should not have compelled him to a scene of inebriety; as a subject, it was treasonable to offer violence to his prince.

But Dunstan chose to forget both Edwin's rights as a man, and his dignity as a sovereign. As if he had embraced the opportunity of breaking the royal spirit of independence, by a violent insult, he poured out his invectives against the ladies; and because the king would not leave his seat, he pulled him from it; he forced the diadem on his head, and indecently dragged him to the riotous hall.^h To the most private individual this insolence would have been unauthorized. To his sovereign, just consecrated, it was unpardonable. Elgiva reproached the monk for intruding so daringly on the king's retirement; and Dunstan, after the festival, thought proper to return to his abbey.

call the lady his mistress, they do not mean to deny her actual, but her legitimate marriage. Deeming the marriage unlawful from their relationship, they considered her only as his mistress.

* MSS. Cleop. B. 13; Matt. West. 369; and Osberne, 105, state this important fact. Their indecent additions of Edwin's behaviour to both mother and daughter in each other's presence are incredible, and, if true, could not at all contribute to the justification of Dunstan's and Odo's conduct. Nor can I believe, with Mr. Lingard, that "moderate readers will feel inclined to applaud the promptitude with which he taught his pupil to respect the laws of decorum," by invading his sovereign's privacy and insulting Elgiva.

^f By this contemporary author of the MS. Cleop. the crown is thus described: *Quæ miro metallo auri vel argenti gemmarumque vario nitore conserta splendebat.*

^g *Et ne spernas optimatam tuorum lætis interesse convivis.* MSS. Cleop.

^h At Dunstanus primum increpitans mulierum ineptias, manu sua dum nollet exurgere, extraxit eum de mœchæli generarum occubitu, impositoque diademate, duxit eum secum licet vi a mulieribus raptum ad regale consortium. MS. Cleop.; Malmesbury, 55; Osberne, 105; Wallingford, 542; and Matt. West. 370; state the violence strongly.

ⁱ MSS. Cleop. This author, and Adelard, Nero, C. 7, politely attach to the lady's name such epithets as *impudens virago*, *Jezabel*, &c. Osberne uses the delicate phrase of, *nefandæ meretricis*, and sagaciously informs us, that the *devi* was her tutor, "*Mulieris animum instigat Diabolus,*" p. 105.

Dunstan had acted impetuously, but not with judgment. The king was not a sickly Edred. He displayed a spirit of independence and generous feeling, on which Dunstan had not calculated. Wounded in every sentiment of becoming pride and kingly honour, Edwin was alive only to his resentment. He deprived Dunstan of his honours and wealth, and condemned him to banishment.

Dunstan fled before the increasing storm; and so severe was the royal indignation, that the monk was scarcely three miles from the shore, on his voyage to Flanders, when messengers reached it, who, it was said, would have deprived him of sight, if he had been found in the country.^j

It was unfortunate for Edwin, that he suffered his angry passions to be his counsellors. When Dunstan presumed to dictate insultingly to his sovereign, he was not the mere abbot of a distant monastery; he was not an insulated individual, whom the arm of justice could safely reach; he was enshrined in the prejudices of the people; he had the friendship of Turketul, the venerable chancellor, whose fame had become more sacred by his retreat to Croyland; and he was supported by Odo, the primate of England. It was also probable, that most of the clergy and nobles, who had feasted on the coronation, conceived themselves bound to protect him, as his punishment arose from executing, however offensively, their commission.

The detail of the conspiracy against Edwin is not stated, but some of the operations of Odo, whose fierce temper made him among the most prominent in avenging his friend, have been noticed. He divorced the king from his wife, on the plea of their kinship.^k So powerful was his party, that soldiers were sent to the palace to seize the queen: she was taken violently from it; her face was branded with red-hot iron, and she was banished to Ireland.^l What duty of an archbishop could dictate this conduct? It is not denied by the old chroniclers, that Odo was active in those measures; why else is the passage added immediately after the murder, stating his being the inflexible enemy of all vice? Elgiva found no charms in her exile, and, nature healing her wounds, she returned to Gloucester in all her

^j MSS. Cleop. Edwin drove the Benedictine monks, introduced by Dunstan, from the two monasteries of Glastonbury and Abingdon. The loose language of Osberne implies, that many monasteries were put down; but Wharton, on the authority of John of Tinmouth and Wolstan, judiciously reduces the many to these two.

^k The MS. Saxon Chronicle, Tib. B. 4, has a paragraph on Edwin's divorce, which is not in the printed one: "958, on thýrrum gearo Oða arcebyrcop totwæmbe Eadwi cýning 7 Ælgýfe for thæm the hi wæron to gearýbbe."

^l *Missa militibus, a curia regis in qua mansitabat, violenter adduxit et eam in facie deturpatam ac candenti ferro denotatam perpetua in Hiberniam exillii relegatione detrahit.* Osberne, 84.

beauty.^m She was pursued and seized, and the nerves and muscles of her legs were divided, that she might wander from the vengeance of her enemies no more!ⁿ But extreme cruelty cannot long retain its victim. Her sufferings at last terminated. Death at last released her from her murderers, whom no beauty could interest, no sympathy assuage.

To reflect that men have connected piety with these horrors; and that their authors or abettors perpetrated them under His sacred name, whose creation displays goodness ever flowing, and whose religion enjoins philanthropy the most benign, is to feel human nature in all its depravity and madness. They may have been imitated. Marats and Robespierres may have even exceeded them in atrocity; but the agents of cruelty, under whatever garb, whatever system, or whatever pretexts, are the enemies of mankind, and will never be remembered, unless to be abhorred.

The remainder of Edwin's reign is not distinctly narrated. But the main results are clear. The Mercians and Northumbrians rebelled against him, drove him beyond the Thames, and appointed Edgar, his brother, a boy but thirteen years of age, to govern them in his stead. Dunstan was immediately afterwards recalled with honour.

It is probable that the popularity of the Benedictine reformation, of which Dunstan had made himself both the champion and the martyr, was the great engine by which Edwin was oppressed. At length the kingdom was divided between him and Edgar: the Thames was made the bounding line. Edwin retained only the southern provinces of England, and but for a short interval. Three

957. years after the rebellion of his subjects, his death occurred. One author even states, that he was killed in Gloucestershire.^o If from the want of fuller evidence we hesitate at believing this, we must, at least, admit the affecting account, that his spirit was so wounded by his persecutions, that, unable to endure unmerited odium, deprivation of power, a brother's rebellion,

^m *Que tamen cum nonnullum temporis intervallum, jam obducta in cicatricem corporis forma, sed adhuc hianto impudicæ mentis deformitate, relicta Hibernia, Angliam rediit et Glocestam cæcati cordis obscuritate imbuta pervenit.* Osberne, 84.

ⁿ *Ubi ab hominibus servis Dei comprehensa, et ne meretricio more ulterius vaga discurreret, subnervata, post dies aliquot mala morte præsentis vitæ sublata est.* Osberne, 84.

^o I derive the knowledge of this new and probable fact from the express assertion of an old MS. Chronicle in the Cotton Library, the author of which was no friend to the king. Yet he says, *Rex West-Saxonum Edwinus, in pago Gloucestrensi interfectus fuit.* Nero, A. 6, p. 9. I never met with any other authority which so explicitly affirmed the fact. But yet the expressions of the MS. Cleop. B. 13, rather countenance it. This says, "*Interea germanus ejusdem Eadgari qui justa Dei sui judicia deviendo dereliquit novissimum flatum misera morte exspiravit.*" Osberne comes near this: "*Edwyo inquam rege regno pro suis criminibus eliminato et misera morte damnato.*" p. 84. The Hist. Ramæ. implies a violent death: "*Fatali sorte sublato,*" p. 393.

and the murder of his beloved wife, he sunk pining into death, before he had reached the full age of manhood.^p 959.

The monks, with indefinite phrase, declaim against Edwin as an unworthy voluptuary. But they have judged him, not impartially as between man and man, but with a professional antipathy from his opposition to Dunstan. We know too little of his actions to decide with certainty on his real character; but it is just to him to remark, that some annalists of high authority, and apparently less prejudiced, state that he was an amiable prince, whose conduct gave the promise of an honourable reign.^q

His youth was the source of his calamities; a king of sixteen was incompetent to wage a war of policy and popularity with the hoary advocates of a new system, whose fanaticism envenomed their hostility: whose affiliation and credit multiplied their power. The opinions of a calumniated and untried youth, had no weight with the nation, in opposition to all that they revered and obeyed. Had he complied a while with the imperious necessity, and waited till, by manly prudence, he had acquired character, convinced the people of his good qualities, enforced habits of respect, and created friends capable of defending him, his ambitious dictators would have been baffled and humiliated.

His catastrophe was a misfortune both to England and Europe. It made the enmity of the ecclesiastical power an object of terror. It exhibited a precedent of a king insulted, injured, persecuted, and dethroned by the agency or effects of sacerdotal enmity; and as his successor obeyed the dictates or favoured the plans of the monastic leaders, it must have given a consequence to their future influence, which occasionally subjected even courts to their control.

^p Pro dolore tanti infortunii usque ad mortem infirmatus. Ingulf. 41. Qua percussus injuria vivendi finem fecit. Malmsh. 55.

^q The simple epithet of the ancient Ethelwerd is peculiarly forcible: "Tenuit namque quadrennio per regnum *amandus*," p. 849. Huntingdon had also spirit enough to declare that Edwin, "*non illaudabiliter regni infulam tenuit*," p. 356. He adds, that as, "in principio regnum ejus decentissime floreret, prospera et letabunda exordia mors immatura perrupit." Ibid. To the same purport, and with an imitation of phrase, Oxenedes says, "Cum in principio regni sui omnia prospera et letabunda florerent exordia." MSS. Cotton Lib. Nero, D. 2, p. 215.—Edwin, from his extreme beauty, obtained the name Περνελαος, or all fair. Ethelw. 849.

CHAPTER VI.

The Reign of Edgar.

EDGAR, at the age of sixteen, succeeded to all the Anglo-Saxon dominion. He has been much extolled, but he was rather the king of a prosperous nation in a fortunate era, than a great prince himself. His actions display a character ambiguous and mixed. His policy sometimes breathes a liberal and enlarged spirit. At other periods he was mean, arrogant, and vicious; and the hyperboles of praise, by which monastic gratitude has emblazoned him, are as questionable as to their truth, as they are repugnant to common sense and good taste.^a On the whole, if we recollect what he inherited, we must say that it was the fortuitous chronology of his existence, rather than his own bravery and wisdom, which has adorned his name with a celebrity, that in the pages of fanaticism even obscures, by its excess, those illustrious characters from whose exertions his empire had arisen.^b

Obtruded unjustly upon a brother's throne by vindictive partisans, his reign became their reign rather than his own: and the great object of the policy of the new government was to convert the clergy into monks, and to fill the nation with Benedictine institutions! The patrons of the measure may have intended the moral improvement of the country, and it may have raised a superior description of ecclesiastics in the nation; but their means were violent, and their conduct unjust to the parochial clergy.

Dunstan was made bishop of Worcester, and afterwards of London.^c His acquisition of metropolitan honours was at first checked. Odo had died before Edwin;^d and this indignant king appointed another bishop to succeed him. But the policy of the Roman pontiffs had established a custom, that all metropolitans should visit Rome to receive there the pallium, the little ornament

^a For instance. *Eo namque regnante sol videbatur esse serenior, maris unda pacatior, terra fecundior, et totius regni facies abundantior, decore venustior.* Ethelr. Abb. Riv. 359.

^b Malmesbury is not content with saying once, that *nullus enim unquam regum Anglorum potuit certare laudibus Edgari*, 3 Gale, 319; but in another place he deliberately affirms, that *nullum nec ejus nec superioris ætatis regem in Anglia recto et æquilibri judicio Edgario comparandum.* De Gest. Reg. 60. Was not Alfred, in just and equal judgment, to be compared with Edgar?

^c MS. Cleop. B. 13. Osb. 108. He seems to have held both sees at the same time.

^d Odo died 958. Matt. West. 369. Flor. 355.

on their shoulders, which gave and announced their dignity. In crossing the Alps, the archbishop nominated by Edwin perished amid the snow.^e Another was appointed in his stead. But Edgar now reigned, and it was discovered that the new dignitary was a man of mild, modest, humble, and benign temper.^f The expected consequence occurred: Byrhtelm was compelled to abdicate his promotion, and to retire to his former see. Dunstan was appointed the primate of the Anglo-Saxons,^g and, in 960, he hastened to Rome.^h He received the completing honour from the hands of the ambitious and unprincipled John the Twelfth.ⁱ 960.

The coadjutors of Dunstan, in effecting his ecclesiastical reformation, were Oswald and Ethelwold. Oswald, a Dane by birth, and a kinsman of Odo, who had educated him, had received the habit at Fleury.^j Dunstan represented him to the king as a meek and humble monk, well worthy of the bishopric of Worcester.^k The king, though he had allowed meekness and humility to degrade a metropolitan, plainly admitted them to be the proper virtues of a bishop, and gave to Oswald the honour requested. Oswald was, however, not more attached to the gentle virtues than Dunstan, or at least did not allow them to interrupt the prosecution of his patron's plans.

Three years afterwards, Dunstan raised to the see of Winchester Ethelwold, abbot of Abingdon, who had been bred up by himself.^l Ethelwold, who adopted the feelings of Dunstan and enforced his plans, was decided and impetuous in prosecuting the monastic reformation of the clergy. He may have conscientiously believed this to have been his duty; but it was carried into effect with a tyrannical severity: and if a renovation of ecclesiastical piety was its object, its success in this point was of small duration; for within a century after this Benedictine reformation, the manners of the clergy are represented as unfavourably as at its commencement. The more pleasing part of Ethelwold's character was his attention to the literary education of the youth at Winchester.^m These three the king made his counsellors and friends.

^e MSS. Cleop. B. 13. So Matt. West. 369. Flor. 355.

^f MSS. Cleop. So Matt. West. 371; who seems often to copy this author.

^g Matt. West. 369. Flor. 355. Such was his cupidity of power, that he held also the see of Rochester. Osb. 110.

^h Matt. West. 370. Flor. 356.

ⁱ That John XII. ruled at this period, see Dupin, tenth century, p. 10.

^j Hist. Rames. 391. ^k Flor. Wig. 356.

^l Flor. 357. So Adelard says, "Beato igitur Athelwoldo a se educato." MS. Nero, C. 7, p. 75. Edgar made Dunstan, Oswald, and Ethelwold his counsellors and friends. See Edgar's charter, Dugdale, 140.

^m Wolstan says of him, "It was always delightful to him to teach children and youth, and to construe Latin books to them in English, and explain to them the rules of grammar and Latin versification, and to exhort them to better things by his pleasant conversations. Hence many of his disciples became priests, abbots, bishops, and even archbishops." Wolst. Vit. Ethelwold.

The schemes of Dunstan to perpetuate his power and popularity cannot at this distant period be detailed, but the nature of them may be conjectured by one faculty which he claimed, and which has been transmitted to us from his own authority. The best part of Dunstan's character was his taste for knowledge and the civilizing arts. The questionable features are those of his politics, and real or pretended enthusiasm. The Catholic hierarchy may accredit his supernatural gifts, but our sober reason cannot read but with surprise, that he claimed the power of conversing with the spiritual world. "I can relate one thing from himself," says his biographer, "that though he lived confined by a veil of flesh, yet whether awake or asleep, he was always abiding with the powers above."^a Hence he learned many heavenly songs. A particular instance is added of a vision, which announces such extraordinary pretensions in Dunstan, that if it had not come from his friend and contemporary, we might disbelieve the possibility that such presumption could have either occurred or been countenanced.

In this vision, he declared he saw his own mother married to the venerated Saviour of the Christian world, with every nuptial pomp.^b Amid the singing, a heavenly youth asked Dunstan, why he did not join in the rejoicings of so great a marriage for his mother; and, on his mentioning his ignorance, taught him a song.^c

Dunstan promulgated this by summoning a monk to attend him on his pretended waking, who, from his dictation, committed the song to writing. All the monks, subject to him, were commanded in the morning to learn and to sing it; while Dunstan shouted his protestation of the truth of the vision.^d

To the credulous, the assertion of Dunstan was sufficient evidence of this impious story. The more investigating were silenced by attempts to allegorize it. The mother so married, was Dunstan's church in its new reformation.^e Thus, whether it was believed literally, or interpreted allegorically, Dunstan derived from it the benefit he wished. It would seem that many thought him mad; but as his madness was systematical, persevering, and popular, it was more generally believed to be prophetic intuition.^f

The first object of Dunstan was to expel the relaxed ecclesiastics from the monasteries, to diffuse everywhere the Benedictine rule, and to give them the predominance in the estimation of the nation.

^a *Unum autem ex ipso me posse referre profiteor, quod quamvis hic carneo septus velamine degisset, in imis, mente tamen, sive vigilaret, sive somno detentus quiescerat, semper manebat in superis.* MS. Cleop. B. 13, p. 81.

^b MS. Cleop.; and see Osberne, 114; and Eadmer Vit. Dunst. 217.

^c MSS. Cleop.

^d Sed continuo jussit eam litterarum in memoria priusque oblivioni daretur conscribere et consecratam cuidam monacho tam recentem discere, &c. &c. MSS. Cleop.

^e MSS. Cleop.

^f MSS. Cleop.

But Edgar did not leave his Benedictine friends to attack the existing clergy by their own influence and means of aggression. He degraded majesty so far as to become himself the persecuting tool of Dunstan. He himself assumed the sword against a portion of his subjects,¹ who were respectable from their profession, and who could have no protection, but in the popular favour, or in his justice.

At a public synod, convened to propagate the Benedictine revolution, Edgar delivered a speech² for the party he espoused. In consequence of which, the clergy experienced a general 969. persecution, and the monks were everywhere diffused with honour.³ Edgar took such pride in his Benedictine scheme, that, in 964, he boasted of having made forty-seven monasteries, and declared his intentions to increase them to fifty.⁴

Edgar talks proudly, in one of his charters, that he had subdued all the islands of the ocean, with their ferocious kings, as far as Norway, and the greatest part of Ireland, with its most noble city, Dublin.⁵ No wars, however, have been particularized to have been waged by him but his ecclesiastical ones, except an invasion of Wales.⁶

To complete the subjugation of Northumbria, he convoked the barons, and divided the province into two counties. The Tees was the river of separation. The districts beyond its southern bank to the Humber were entrusted to Oslach. From the northern bank to Mereforth, in the maritime part of Deira, the earl Eadulf governed.⁷

It is stated, that with a great fleet Edgar sailed to Chester on the Dec, and that eight kings, Kenneth king of Scotland, Malcolm of Cumbria, Macchus of Anglesey and the Isles,⁸ three kings of

¹ In his charter to the monastery at Hyde, in the year 966, he says, "Vitorum cuneos canonicorum e diversis nostri regiminis Cænobiis Christi vicarius eliminavi." Spelman Concil. 438. In the 16th article the monks are engaged to defend him from devils, and in the seventeenth he contracts to defend them from men. Ib. 440.

² See it in Ethelred, p. 360.

³ See Spelman's Concilia, 479; Ingulf, 45; Osberne, 111; Eadmer, 219; Hoveden, 425; Matt. West. 372, 374; and Hist. Ramea. 393, 394, 400.

⁴ See Dugdale, Monast. i. p. 140.

⁵ Mihi autem concessit propitia divinitas cum Anglorum imperio omnia regna insularum oceani cum suis ferocissimis regibus usque Norregiam, maximamque partem Hiberniæ cum sua nobilissima civitate Dublinia Anglorum regno subjugare. 1 Dugdale, 140.

⁶ Caradoc mentions this in 965, and says, it produced the Welsh tribute of 300 wolves, p. 56.

⁷ Wallingford, 544.

⁸ Matt. West. 375, so entitles him, "Macone rege Monæ et plurimarum insularum." Malmesbury calls him Archipræta, p. 56. In 971, he witnessed one of Edgar's charters, with that epithet added to his signature. Spelman, 436. Who this Macchus was we learn from the Welsh Chronicle, often already quoted. This says, 969, "y diffeithwyf Penn Mon y gan y Paganyeit a Mac' vab Harald." 'The promontory of Anglesey was ravaged by the Pagans under Macchus the son of Harald.' In 970, he made it tributary. MS. Cleop. B. 5. On referring to Adam Bremenensis,

Wales, and two others,^b repaired thither at his command, to do him homage. He was not satisfied with this confession of his power; his puerile vanity demanded a more painful sacrifice; he ascended a large vessel with his nobles and officers; and he stationed himself at the helm, while the eight kings, who had come to do him honour, were compelled to take the seats of the watermen, and to row him down the Dee.^c Such actions are not the evidences of true greatness, and never confer a lasting dignity.

Edgar was as tyrannical in the indulgence of his other passions: he had sent one of his earls, named Athelwold, on a visit to Ordgar, earl of Devonshire, to examine if the beauty of his daughter, Elfrida, was as great as fame reported. Athelwold saw her, and falsified his trust. He reported her unfavourably to the king, then courted her for himself, and married her.

Courtiers are busy to supplant, and Edgar soon heard the truth. He dissembled his anger, and announced to Athelwold his intention to see the lady. Alarmed at his danger, the nobleman

97 entreated his wife to deform herself; but Elfrida was weary of domestic privacy, and, on the day of the royal visit, she added every charm of art to give brilliancy to her beauty. She excited Edgar's passions. He caused Athelwold to be assassinated in a wood, and then married Elfrida.^d

At another time he had the brutality to violate a lady of noble birth, who used a nun's veil as an expected, but an unavailing protection.^e

A third incident of his contempt for the welfare of others, when his own gratification was in question, has been recorded. Visiting at Andover, he commanded a nobleman to bring him his daughter, whose person had been praised to him, but the mother of the young lady sent her attendant to personate her daughter.^f

p. 25, we find two lines which express that Harald Blastand, king of Denmark, sent his son Hiring to England, who having conquered the island, was betrayed in Northumbria. So the Icelandic fragment in Langbeck, ii. p. 148. I have already, in p. 520, stated from Snorre, the death of Eric, son of Harald Harfagre, whom Langbeck wishes to make this Hiring or Hringr, son of the Danish king. I think Snorre is correct, and that Mactus, the son of Harald, was the son of Harald Blastand the Dane; not of Harfagre the Norwegian. In 946, there was another Mactus, son of Eric. See before, p. 520. The Danish Maccus did homage to Edgar. Wallingford spells his name Oriccus, p. 545, which comes nearer to Hiring or Hringr.

^b Matt. West. styles these, *Jacobo rege Galwallis et Jukil Westmaris*, p. 375.

^c Malmeb. 56; Mailros, 150; Hoveden, 426; Sim. Dun. 159; Al. Bev. 112; Flor. 359. Nothing can more strongly display Edgar's vanity than the pompous and boastful titles which he assumes in his charters. They sometimes run to the length of fifteen or eighteen lines. How different from Alfred's *Ego occidentalium Saxonum Rex*!

^d Malmba. 59. Bromton gives the incident more in detail, 865, 866.

^e Malmeb. 60. This was in his first wife's time. Eadmer. Vit. Dunst. 219.

^f Malmeb. 60. This author's expressions, *nam cæteris infamias—magis respererunt cantilenis*, p. 56, imply, that the Anglo-Saxon poets made Edgar's dissolute conduct the subject of their poetry.

For these actions Dunstan imposed only trifling penances on Edgar.^f

Yet amid these defects, some traits of an enlarged and liberal policy appear, which reflect credit on Edgar or his ministers. The most important of these was his patronage of foreigners and trade. People from Saxony, Flanders, and Denmark, frequently came to him;^g whom he received so well as to excite a censure from one monkish chronicler, that he loved them too much,^h and from another, that they injured his people by the vices they imported.ⁱ He showed his care of trade by his exemplary punishment of the people of Thanet, who had seized and plundered some merchants coming from York.^k His commuting the tribute from Wales into three hundred wolves' heads,^l in order to extirpate these animals from the country, was a scheme of sound wisdom and generous policy. His reformation of his coin was also intelligent. It had become so diminished in weight, by the fraud of clipping, that the actual value was very inferior to the nominal; he therefore had new coins made all over England.^m

He is said to have stationed three fleets of 1200 ships each on the east, west, and south coasts of the island, for the defence of the kingdom.ⁿ This, however, looks more like idle parade than public utility; for England was threatened with no foreign hostility in his reign, and one-third of the number would have guarded the coast. There was more true glory obtained by his

^f As occasional fasting, and not to wear his crown for seven years. Malsb. 60. Osb. 111. One part of the penance was artfully chosen to promote the monk's purposes. The king was to lavish his treasures upon a nunnery, to expel the clergy with new vigour, and to introduce monks. Osb.

^g Malsb. 56. The Welsh Chronicle, MS. Cleop. B. 5, says: "Canys canneat agavas gwyr Denmarc ar drigaw yn yr-ynys honn tra vynynt y gan Edgar vrenhin Lloegyrr."—Because to the men of Denmark leave was granted by Edgar king of England, on their request, to dwell in this island.

^h Extraneos huc adductos plus æquo diligens. Hunt. 356.

ⁱ Malsbury says: "A Saxonibus animorum inconditam ferocitatem, a Flandritis corporum enervem mollietiem, a Danis potationem discerent. Homines ante hæc in talibus integri et naturali simplicitate sua defensare, aliena non mirari," p. 56. The Welsh Chronicle adds to the last passage quoted, another, which states, that the Danes became so numerous, that they were in every city and town in England; that they gave themselves up to such drinking and idolatry, that they could not be governed; and that this occasioned nails to be put in their cups, to mark the quantity they were to drink. MS. Cleop. B. 5. Malsbury says of Dunstan, that he caused silver or gold nails to be put into the drinking vessels, to prevent drunkenness and quarrels, p. 56.

^k Matt. West. 374.

^l Malsbury says, the tribute ceased on the fourth year, for want of wolves, p. 59.

^m Matt. West. 375. Dunstan may have influenced him in this law; for it is stated in his life, that finding three coiners of false money not punished on the appointed day, because it was Whitsunday, he ordered the day not to be regarded; "for," said he, "coiners are thieves, and I know of no thieves more harmful. They disturb the country, and injure both rich and poor." Eadmer, p. 216.

ⁿ Mailros, 150. Matt. West. makes 4800 ships, by adding a Northern fleet. Perhaps either number is an exaggeration. Malsbury says, that every Easter they sailed round the island, p. 59.

practice, every spring and winter, of riding through his provinces, to examine the conduct of the powerful, to protect the weak, and to punish every violation of law.^o This attention to the wants and relief of his people merits our applause; and whether Dunstan's solicitude for popularity,^p or the king's noble feelings occasioned the custom, it ought not to be mentioned without high praise. His vigilant policy freed the kingdom from robbers.^q

Edgar was generous to his friends. To Kenneth of Scotland, who visited him, he not only gave the county of Louth, but one hundred ounces of pure gold, many silken ornaments, and rings, with precious stones.^r

The person of Edgar was small and thin; and Kenneth one day remarked, that it was wonderful that so many provinces should obey a man so insignificant. These words were carried to the king. He led Kenneth apart into a wood, and bade him take one of two swords which he produced. "Our arms shall decide which ought to obey the other; for it will be base to have asserted that at a feast, which you cannot support with your sword." Kenneth confused, recollected his hasty remark, and apologized for it as a joke.^s There is such an energy and a magnanimity in this incident, that if Edgar had attained his power at a later age, or had possessed better counsellors, he might have displayed a nobler character.

Edgar was twice married. By his first wife, Elfreda the Fair, daughter of Ordmer, he had Edward, his successor, and a daughter, who became a nun. Elfrida, whom he had made the widow of Athelwold,^t that had deceived him, bore him two sons; Edmund, who died before him; and Ethelred, who also obtained the crown.

Edgar's reign has been celebrated as the most glorious of all the Anglo-Saxon kings. No other sovereign indeed converted
 975. his prosperity into such personal pomp; but no other sovereign was more degraded in his posterity. With his short life, for he died at thirty-two, the gaudy pageantry ceased; and all the dominion in which he had so ostentatiously exulted, vanished from his children's grasp. His eldest son perished by the scheme of his beloved Elfrida; his youngest reigned only to show, that one weak reign is sufficient to ruin even a brave and great people.

^o Malmsh. 59. Mailros, 150. Matt. West. 375.

^p After Dunstan had become a metropolitan, he hastened to travel through every city in the kingdom, to preach to it; and such was his acuteness and eloquence, says his biographer, that nothing could be wiser, or more pleasant. Osborne, 110.

^q Malmsh. 59.

^r Matt. West. says, Louth was given on condition that Kenneth should come every year to Edgar's principal feasts. The king gave him several houses for his entertainment during his journey.

^s Malmsh. 59.

^t The Saxon Chron. MS. Tib. B. 4, dates Edgar's marriage with Elfrida in 965.

Edgar made kings his watermen. The son of his love five times bought his kingdom from Danish rovers, was the fool of traitors, and surrendered his throne to a foreign invader. Of Edgar's grandsons, one perished violently soon after his accession. The other was the last of his race who ruled the Anglo-Saxon nation.

CHAPTER VII.

Edward the Martyr, or Edward the Second of the Anglo-Saxon Kings.

DUNSTAN had used the power of Edgar to plant England with the new monks, and to exclude from their seats the ancient clergy; but he had not reconciled all the nation to the severity of the measure, or to his own administration; for on Edgar's death an attempt was made to humble his power, and to restore the clergy. As Edward appeared subservient to the views of Dunstan, his accession was disputed. Some chose him, and others Ethelred.^a But Edward had been named by his father as successor, and Dunstan took the shortest road to his object. He and Oswald assembled their ecclesiastical friends and some dukes, and crowned Edward.^b Edward, like all the kings since Athelstan, was very young at his accession.

The quarrel between the two systems grew more vehement. The governor of Mercia turned out all the monks.^c The governor of East Anglia supported them.^d Many tumults ensued.^e The clergy got hold of the monastic possessions, which they distributed to the governors in return for their protection.^f

Elfrida opposed Dunstan. She joined the party of the clergy, and endeavoured to bias the minds of the great in favour of her son Ethelred.

Though Dunstan had got Edward crowned, he could not recover the alienated mind of the nobility. He attempted to govern them by the influence of superstition. He forcibly expelled the clergy, who had been reinstated; and to quiet the discontents at his violence, he convened a synod at Winchester. While the opinions were forming, and the assembly expected his answer to

^a Flor. Wig. 361. Mailros, 151.

^b Hist. Rames. 413. Mailros, 151. Eadmer, Vit. D. 220.

^c Ingulf, 54. Malmab. 61.

^d Hist. Rames, 412.

^e Multus inde tumultus in omni angulo Angliæ factus est. Ingulf, 54.

^f Ingulf, 54. One author says, he cannot express the sufferings of the monks. Hist. Rames. 412.

a peculiar appeal which had been made to him, the crucifix in the wall became vocal. It commended the former proceedings: it forbade a change. "What wish ye more?" exclaimed Dunstan, immediately; "the divine voice determines the affair."^a

This artifice, for, unless we believe it to have been a miracle, no other name can be given to it, did not fully succeed. It was followed by another event, which, taken in conjunction with the preceding, leads the impartial mind to the strongest suspicion of its having been a scheme of the most atrocious nature. The candid historian will always regret when the nature of the incidents compel him to infer bad motives. But some facts justify the imputation; and the following events, unless extreme charity can believe them to have been accidental, or credulity can suppose them to have been miraculous, announce premeditated plans of the most flagitious nature. A council of the nobles was summoned at Calne. It was managed that the king should be absent, on account of his age. While the senators of England were conversing unsuspectingly on the question then agitated, and were reproaching Dunstan, he gave a short reply, which ended with these remarkable words: "I confess that I am unwilling to be overcome. I commit the cause of the church to the decision of Christ."

As these words, which of themselves imply all that we would impute, were uttered, the floor and its beams and rafters gave way, and precipitated the company with the ruins to the earth below. The seat of Dunstan only was unmoved. Many of the nobles were killed upon the spot; the others were grievously hurt by wounds which kept them long confined.^b If no other achievement had revealed Dunstan's character, would not this be sufficient to startle the unprejudiced reader into a doubt of its sanctity? It was followed by another circumstance, which leaves us no alternative between the supposition of a purposed falsehood or an unworthy miracle.

On the death of his friend and pupil Athelwold, the see of Winchester became vacant. As from the avowed dissatisfaction of the nobles, Dunstan's power was insecure, it became expedient that he should guard it by filling every high office with his friends. He fixed upon Elphegus as the successor, and, to abolish all oppo-

^a Malmsh. 61. Bromton, 870. Gervase, 1647. Osberne, 112. Eadmer, 219. The two latter place it under Edgar's reign, which is less probable than the chronology of the others, because Edgar's attachment to Dunstan and power made such aids useless. Whatever affects the character of Dunstan, Mr. Lingard wishes to believe a mere popular tale. If Dunstan's enemies had written his life, Mr. Lingard's incredulity would be a fair exertion of cautious though arbitrary pyrrhonism. But all that we know of Dunstan comes from his friends and panegyrista. It is our moral sympathies that have improved, not our historical evidence that has diminished.

^b Malmsh. 61. Flor. Wig. 361. Sim. Dun. 160.

sition, he boldly declared that Saint Andrew had appeared to him, and commanded him to consecrate Elphegus to the vacant see.¹

Such proceedings at last taught others to fight him with the weapons of crime. The subjection of Edward to his will gave a perpetuity to his power; but there was a person existing as ambitious as himself, and indifferent to the means of gratifying that ambition. This was Elfrida. I know not whether we can credit all the wickedness attributed to her. It is stated in the records of the abbey of Ely, that its first abbot, Brithonod, was seen by Elfrida in the New Forest. He went to the royal court on the business of his church, and at his departure took leave also of her. She desired a private conversation with him on affairs of conscience, and in the interview she acted the wife of Potiphar. The abbot emulated the virtue of Joseph; and the disappointed Elfrida procured his assassination. The power of the queen-dowager compelled his monastery to indulge their suspicions in silence; but in her days of penitence she acknowledged the crime.²

It is also declared of Elfrida, that Edward gave her all Dorsetshire as a dower, with a royal dignity annexed to it.³

The state of the kingdom gave power to her malice. However the proceedings at Calne may have affected the credulous people, the surviving sufferers and their friends could hardly have been deceived: and if they believed the catastrophe to have been the effect of design, we may assume that they meditated to avenge it on Dunstan. But he was protected by the favour of his sovereign; Edward therefore became the first object of attack. A combination against him was formed; and with no scruples as to the means. It is stated, that Elfrida and some princes conspired together to dethrone Edward in favour of Ethelred, and that the death of the king was the crime devised for the accomplishment of their purpose. The unsuspecting king facilitated the execution of the guilty plot. He was hunting in Dorsetshire, near Wareham, a few miles from which stood Corfe Castle the residence of Elfrida and her son. His companions were dispersed in pursuit of the game, and in the course of the sport, Edward beheld the conspicuous walls of the castle.⁴ He rode thither to visit Ethelred and his mother. On the tidings of his arrival, she hastily settled her plan. She went out and received him with hypocritical kindness, and invited him in. The king declined to alight; but desired some refreshment, and re-

¹ Osberne, 114. The history of Dunstan is remarkably certain; from the facts against him being stated and proved by his friends and encomiasts.

² This incident has escaped the notice of our historians. It is in the *Historia Eliensis*. 3 Gale, 491, 492.

³ Wallingford, 545.

⁴ The interesting ruins of Corfe Castle still remain.

quested to see his brother. A cup of drink was brought to him but while he was raising it to his lips, a wretch, stealing behind, stabbed him in the back. Feeling the wound, he spurred his horse to escape the assassin, but the blow had been too successful: he fell from his seat; his feet hung in the stirrups, and the frightened steed dragged his expiring lord over the rugged way. His friends traced him by his blood, and found at last his disfigured corpse. It was burnt and its ashes buried at Wareham.^m

CHAPTER VIII.

Review of the State and History of Denmark and Norway at the Accession of Ethelred, and of the last Stage of the Northern Piracy.

As the second year of the reign of Ethelred was distinguished by the re-appearance of those enemies whom the courage and wisdom of Alfred and his successors had subdued or driven from the English coasts, and who now succeeded in obtaining the English crown, it is expedient that we should turn our eyes upon the Baltic, and inquire what nations and what sovereigns possessed at this time the means of such formidable aggressions.

DENMARK.

The history of Denmark, from the death of Ragnar Lodbrog to the accession of Harald Blaatand, or Blue Tooth, is confused and inaccurate.^a Harald was the son of Gormo the aged, and Thyra the Saviour of Denmark. He acceded in 936, on his father's demise. He suffered from a calamitous invasion of Jutland by the Emperor Otho,^b who married Athelstan's sister.

He built the famous city of Jomsburg^c near the great Pomeranian lake, made by three rivers in their conflux to the sea.

^m Malmsh. 61. Ingulf, 54. Mailros, 151. The chroniclers say, he was buried; but Lupus, in his sermon, says, *occisus est et postea combustus*. Hicke's Thea.

^a The confusion of this part of Danish history was observed and complained of by Adam of Bremen. "*Tanti autem reges, immo tyranni Danorum, utrum simul aliqui regnaverunt, an alter post alterum brevi tempore vixit incertum est.*" c. xliv. p. 17. Many chronicles and histories have appeared since Adam's time, but they have only made the confusion of the period more visible to all who collate their accounts.

^b To protect Denmark from the Germans, he completed the celebrated trench and wall called *Dannevirke*. See Snorre's description of it, vol. i. p. 217; and see Stephanus, 199-201.

^c Saxo. 182.

This city became very distinguished for the courage of its inhabitants, their depredations and opulence.^d It was perhaps the only instance in the world of a government of pirates.^e Its first legislator, Palnatoko, enacted it as one of his laws, that no man should live at Jomsburg who breathed a word of fear, or who showed the least apprehension in the most critical danger.^f Their depredations were conducted on a principle of equality; for all the plunder, whether small or great, was brought to the spear and divided.^g The modern Wollin, which has succeeded the ancient city, is not one-thirtieth part of its size. Ploughs now cut the soil on which splendid buildings stood. It became the emporium of the north. It was the last state of the north which admitted Christianity. All nations but Christians, who were interdicted on pain of death, were allowed to inhabit it, and each people had a separate street. They were idolaters, and for the most part polygamists.^h Their riches at last introduced factions, disorders, and civil fury, till Waldemar took and destroyed it in 1170.ⁱ

Harald Blaataud had a successful war with Haco of Norway;^j but towards the close of his life, the discontent of his subjects, enabled his son Svein to commence an unnatural warfare against him.^k Svein required of his father a share of his dominions.^l This demand being refused, he pretended to be collecting a fleet against the pirates, and with this surprised Harald. The old king fled to Normandy with sixty ships, and the son of Rollo entertained him hospitably, until he prepared a fleet capable of regaining his kingdom.^m A reconciliation for a while suspended the immoral war,ⁿ and Harald gratefully returned to Richard of

^d See Bartholin, 446.

^e Inter omnes vero Vikings quos historiam nostram colebant famosissimi erant Jomsvikings dicti qui Julini olim Jomsburg sedem fixam et rempublicam certis ac firmis legibus constitutam habebant. Wormius Mon. Dan. 270.

^f Jomsvikings Saga. c. xiv. cited by Bartholin, p. 3. This Saga gives a curious account of the answers of eight men of Jomsburg who were captives, on their being brought out to be slaughtered. Bartholin, 41-51. If they can be credited, they evince a horrible fearlessness. They were taken prisoners in a great invasion of Norway by their countrymen. Snorre narrates the aggression, p. 231-240, and gives extracts from the Scalds who mention it.

^g Bartholin gives extracts from the Hirdskra and the Jomsvikings Saga, on this subject, p. 16.

^h See the descriptions of Munster and Chrytæus, cited by Stephanus, 197, 198. Chrytæus was so interested by it, as to make a particular survey of its site and remains.

ⁱ The ancient Sveino Aggo thus mentions its fate: "Whose walls I Sveino beheld levelled to the ground by the archbishop Absalom," c. iv. p. 51.

^j Sveino Aggo, p. 51. Saxo, p. 165.

^k Adam Brem. 25.

^l Snorre, vol. i. p. 229.

^m Will. Gemmet. lib. iii. c. ix. p. 237. Pontanus dates Harald's arrival in Normandy in 943. Hist. Dan. lib. v. p. 135.

ⁿ Will. Gemmet. lib. iv. c. ix. p. 243. Sveino mentions the agreement, though, in his additions to it, I think he confuses several distinct incidents.

Normandy the aid which he had received from his father.^o The conflict was soon renewed between Harald and Svein, whose tutor, Palnatoko, in revenge of an injury^p which he had endured, stabbed Harald. The wounded king fled to Jomsburg, where he soon died, in 985.^q

Svein, who has received the surnames of Otto from the emperor Otho, and Tiugoskegg from the shape of his beard, became now the undisputed master of a throne, which he had so foully earned. His life was romantic; but at a period when the manners of society, viewed with the eye of reason, seem unnatural and distorted, the actions will be often extravagant. He was three times taken prisoner by the Jomsburgers, and was three times redeemed. His last liberation was accomplished by the generosity of that sex, whose pity is never asked in vain; whom nature has made lovely in person, but still more lovely in heart.^r

New misfortunes divested the ill-gotten crown of its expected charms. Eric, the prevailing king in Sweden, invaded Scania, and after many battles expelled Svein, and for many years remained the master of the Danish isles.^s

The exiled Svein fled humbly to Tryggva of Norway, but was disdainfully spurned. England was his next resource, but Ethelred, offended at incursions of the Northmen, with which he had been harassed, would not admit him. He then sailed to Scotland, and there met an asylum, and a hospitable friend.^t He resided there fourteen years.

On the death of his enemy he returned to Denmark, but was driven out again by the son of Eric, who at last reinstated him, and gave him Syritha his mother in marriage.^u Soon after this period England felt his power.

NORWAY.

Haco the Good was reigning in the time of Athelstan. His character is interesting and great; his hilarity of mind was pecu-

^o Dudo, lib. iii. p. 122. Gemmet. p. 246.

^p This injury, as related by Saxo, p. 184, is the story of William Tell and Geisler. Toko was a famous archer, and boasted of his skill. Harald bid him with his first arrow, on pain of death, pierce an apple on his son's head. Toko, compelled to obey, exhorted his son not to stir. He took out three arrows. The first was successful. The king inquired why three arrows—"To have shot you if I had killed my son." Saxo lived long before William Tell.

^q Saxo, 186; and see Ad. Brem. 25, Helmodus, p. 14, Snorre, and 2 Langb. 149, for some variation in the circumstances. I take the date from the ancient Icelandic annals. 2 Langb. 169.

^r On these incidents, see Saxo, 186; Sveno, 54; Chron. Ericsi, 298; Adam Brem. 26. Saxo and Sveno mention, in that grateful return, the ladies were presented with a law entitling them to a share of their paternal property, from which till then they had been excluded.

^s Ad. Brem. c. lxxii. p. 26. Frag. Isl. 2 Langb. 150. Saxo, 188.

^t Ad. Brem. p. 27, says, Thrucco of Norway. Saxo, his son Olavo, p. 189. Saxo, and Hector Boethius, mention Edward as the English king. This is wrong. Adam is correct in stating Ethelred, who began his reign in 978.

^u Adam, p. 28; and see Saxo, 139.

liar; his eloquence, his prudence, and his modesty, were equally distinguished. Peace, with her abundance and felicity, blessed both the agriculturist and the merchant of Norway during his reign, and he was diligent in his legislation. Two laws are particularized which he made, like the Anglo-Saxon kings, with the advice of his wisest men.^v Among others, he provided for the defence of the maritime regions of Norway by a sort of coast militia. The country on the shore, and as far up the river as salmon ascended, he divided into provinces, and these into territories, each of which was to be provided with a definite number of war-ships, of a stated size. The population of the district was to be always ready to act in these vessels whenever a hostile force drew near.^w To give celerity to their movement he established a sort of telegraph. On high mountains, piles of wood of the largest trees, to be fired on exigency, were so placed as to be visible from mountain to mountain; by these means in seven days the news was transmitted from one end of Norway to the other.^x

Haco retaliated the invasion of the Danes on Vikia, by driving them into Halland and Jutland.^y He passed into Zealand with successful outrage, took eleven vikingr ships, and obtained great booty from the island; he then turned his conquering arms upon Scania, and even ventured to attack, with equal good fortune, the Swedish province of Gothland. In the following autumn he returned to Vikia with an immense burthen of booty.^z

Harald Blaatand, who at this time ruled Denmark, beheld, with unavailing displeasure, the desolating victories of Haco. To humble the Norwegian, he admitted into his kingdom the children of Eric, the expelled king of Norway, whom Haco had succeeded, whom Athelstan had received into Northumbria, and who at last had perished there. Harald gave them possessions, and permitted them to pirate.^a Thus encouraged and supported, the sons of Eric assailed Haco;^b but the star of his prosperity still continued to beam.

Haco had long cherished a love for Christianity in secret. When he thought his power consolidated, he sent to England^c

^v Snorre Hakonar Gods, p. 135.

^w Ibid. 146.

^x Ut in montibus excelis ex ingentibus arboribus pyræ ita struerentur (s. angari) ut ab una pyra ad alteram facilis et liber esset prospectus. Excitatus hoc pacto hostilis irruptionis nuntius, a prima in extremo regni ad meridiem angulo extracta pyra, ad remotissimum boream versus publicorum comitorium in Halogalandia locum 7 dierum spatio volitasse fertur. Snorre, Ibid. c. xxi. p. 146.

^y The Scald Guthormr Sindri records this invasion in his Hakonar Drapa. Snorre has quoted one of his verses. Saga Hak. c. vi. p. 131.

^z Saga Hak. c. vii. p. 132, 133.

^a Saga Hak. c. x. p. 134.

^b Ibid. c. xx. p. 145.

^c Missis in Angliam nuntiis, episcopus aliosque doctores accessivit post quorum in Norwegiam adventum mentem suam aperuit rex Hakonus. Snorre, p. 136.

for ecclesiastics capable of teaching the religion to the Norwegians. On their arrival he avowed his wishes, and exhorted the nation, in a public assembly, to adopt his faith; but he experienced from the peasantry such a decided opposition, that he was even compelled by them to assist in their idolatrous superstitions.^d

Tryggvi, the son of one of those children of Harald Harfrage who fell by the hostilities of their brother Eric, so often mentioned in this history, obtained from Hakon the Good some little principalities towards the south of Norway, for which he assisted Hakon against his enemies, the children of Eric.^e These restless enemies were frequently assaulting Hakon with various devices, but he reigned prosperously for twenty years.^f

At last Harald, the eldest of these sons of Eric, surprised Hakon at a disadvantage. He fought with his usual success, but a dart wounded him under the arm. He retired to his ship; no art could stop the blood, and Hakon the Good sunk gradually into death. Friends and enemies enshrined his memory with a general lamentation. The exclamation was unanimous, that no king, his equal in virtue, would again bless Norway.^g Eyvind the Scald has honoured his memory with an ode, which gives dignity to the character of Norwegian poetry.^h The civilization of every country has been of such tardy vegetation, that such kings as Hakon must be hailed with blessings, for to them the precious plant owes principally its preservation and progress, during these dark and stormy ages.

On Hakon's death the sons of Eric predominated in Norway, and their mother Gunilda shared in the government; but they held at first only the middle regions, for three others were governing in other parts of Norway; as Tryggvi in the southeast; Gudrod in Westfold; and Sigurd Jarl in Thronheim.ⁱ

Gunilda stimulated her sons to destroy Sigurd Jarl, as a step to the monarchy of Norway. Her soliciting prevailed. The brother of Sigurd was seduced to conspire against him. The Jarl was surprised at a feast, and burnt alive, with the edifice, two years after Hakon's death.^j

^d Snorro, 139-143.

^e Snorro, 121-135.

^f See one of the schemes to baffle the effect of Hakon's telegraphs. Snorro, 147-152.

^g Snorro, 155-161. One of his last actions was to request the sons of Eric to spare his friends and relations, p. 160. The Icelandic Annals place his death in 961. 2 Langb. 188.

^h Snorro, 161-165. This fine Runic ode is better known by the name of the Elogy or Eulogium of Hakon.

ⁱ Snorro Saga af Haralldi Graffeld oc Hakoni Jarli, p. 165. Glimr the scald of Harald, by his verses, excited Eyvindr to an emulating eulogium of Hakon. This offended Harald, but his displeasure was appeased by Eyvindr becoming his scald, and resounding his fame, 166.

^j Snorro, 170-173. Sigurd had greatly assisted in the elevation of Hakon the

The indignant people of Throndeim chose Hakon, surnamed the Jarl, the son of Sigurd, their leader, and frustrated the ambition of the sons of Gunilda. Many battles ensued: it was at last settled that Hakon should enjoy Throndeim, and the other kings were to possess the rest of the dominions of Hakon the Good.^k 968.

The future enmities between Hakon Jarl, and the sons of Eric, need not be detailed.^l They enabled Harald Blaatand to subject Norway, who sometimes was the friend, and sometimes was the enemy of Hakon Jarl.^m This prince, who has come down to us with a fame so eclipsed as to be called Hakon the Bad, became at last the monarch of Norway.ⁿ After a life of great warlike exertions, he fell, in his age, before a new competitor for the movable crown; this was Olave the son of Tryggva. The aggressions of Olave on England connect his actions with the reign of Ethelred, and demand a corner in the history of the Anglo-Saxons. The little sketch will forcibly express the state of manners in these districts.

In 969, Tryggva his father suffered that death of violence which usually closed the lives of those inhabitants of the north who stepped out of the path of industry into the adventures of heroism. His widow fled, pregnant with Olaf, and he was born on an island in the lake where she was concealed.^p In his childhood he was captured by Eastmen pirates, and was sold. He was afterwards purchased and carried to Russia.^q He was there brought up by Waldemar, who employed him in his army.

His favour declining, he quitted the Russian court, sailed to the Baltic, and settling in the isle of Bornholm, he began the dismal profession of a viking.^r After marrying a queen, on whose coast he landed, he commenced depredations on Scania and Gothland.^s On her death he extended the scene of his piracy, and Friesland, Saxony, and Flanders, mourned his visitations. From these the unwearied sea-king turned towards England, and

Good, who, in return, made him Jarl of Throndeim. He is called by Snorre the wisest of the Norwegians, 125.

^k Snorre, p. 175.

^l See Snorre, 175-184, and also his *Saga of Olasi Tryggva*, 195-203. Snorre adduces *Ara Frode* as an evidence on this subject.

^m Snorre, 202, 203, 230.

ⁿ Snorre, 245. In Hakon's reign Greenland was discovered and colonized by the Icelanders. Eric the Red first saw and gave it that name, in hopes that a country with an epithet so pleasing might attract settlers. He found the traces of men both in the east and west regions, et assamenta fracta et lapidarum opera unde cognoscere-
rent quod ejus generis ibi vixerunt qui Vinlandiam incoluerint et quos Islandi vocant Scerlingos. *Ara Frode*, c. vi. p. 40.

^o Snorre, p. 177. *Island. Ann.* 2 Langb. 189.

^p Snorre, *Saga, Olaf's Tryg.* c. i. p. 167.

^q *Ibid.* 211-213.

^r Snorre, 192, 193.

^s *Ibid.* 215.

attacked Northumbria. As fortunate as enterprising, he made Scotland, the Hebrides, Ireland, Wales, Cumbria, and Normandy, feel the exertions of his valour.¹

Great and ardent spirits are liable to be impressed by the peculiar and the interesting. Olaf anchoring once off the Scilly isles, was converted to Christianity by the lessons of a hermit, whose age and seclusion had won from the rude population the fame of a seer.²

But although this warrior was daring every danger that storms and battles could present, his rigid heart was found penetrable by the shafts of love. A princess of Dublin had promised her chiefs to choose a husband: they assembled that she might select, and Olaf, though uninvited, joined the meeting. The movements of the tender passions are more eccentric than the wanderings of the heathy meteor. Clothed in rough garments, made to keep off rain, and wrapped in a hairy gown, the figure of Olaf was not the vision of a Cupid. But it was uncouth, and when Gyda's eye roved anxiously around, it arrested her notice: "Who are you?" "Olaf, a stranger." It was enough; and if Snorre has not slandered the lady, love, instantaneous love, supplied every other explanation. With all the simplicity of rude nature, she exclaimed, "If you desire me for your wife, I will choose you for my husband."

Olaf was, however, less impetuous or less philosophical than the lady. He had the caution to inquire who she was, her name, and parentage: she declared her birth, and Olaf contemplated her again. She was young and beautiful. At last his tardy sensibility was kindled, and he became her husband, after conquering a rival.³

The reputation of Olaf roused the crafty and cruel mind of Hakon the Bad, who sent a favourite to discover and to circumvent him.⁴ But Hakon's disorderly passions had offended the chiefs whose families he had dared to violate, and they were in insurrection against him, when Olaf, led by his pretended friend, was approaching Norway. Hakon had fled before the chiefs when Olaf landed. The Norwegians eagerly placed the crown on his head, as a descendant of Harald Harfragre; and thus, in 995, Olaf became the monarch of Norway.⁵

One of Olaf's most zealous occupations was, to convert Norway. He proceeded, with this desire, from province to province, and at last accomplished it, but by methods repugnant to that freedom of mind which is man's dearest birthright, and as odious

¹ Snorre, 231, 232.

² *Ibid.* 235, 236.

³ Snorre, 247-253. Hakon the Bad was killed in his hiding-place. I take the date from the *Jal. Ann.* 130.

⁴ *Ibid.* 223, 224.

⁵ *Ibid.* 245.

to the spirit and lessons of Christianity as the paganism he abolished.⁷

Ethelred is stated to have sent the archbishop of York and two priests to Sweden to convert the natives. Olaf was baptized by him.⁸

Harald Harfrage had pursued the vikingr with a perseverance which promised to annihilate the custom, but on his death they flourished again. His son Eric, after his deposition, occupied his summers in depredations on the British islands to maintain his associates.^a In the reign of Edmund they again abounded, and made the Hebrides their resort.^b On Eric's death his sons passed their winters on the Orkney and Shetland isles, but devoted their summers to piracies on Scotland and Ireland.^c The Northern kings sometimes sailed against them with fleets of punishment to revenge aggressions on their own dominions. Thus Hakon the Good attacked eleven vikingr in Oresound, and hanged all those whom he met off Scania;^d but no combined system existed of repressing them. The practice, though from the rise of monarchies it was less frequent, had not yet excited the decided abhorrence of the northern society; therefore Harald Blaatand^e of Denmark, and Tryggvi Gudrawd, and Harald Graffeld, three kings in Norway, indulged themselves in the practice.^f

Olaf the son of Tryggvi was a sort of new Ragnar Lodbrog, in the activity, extent, and success of his marauding exploits. Bornholm, Scania, Gothland, Friesland, Saxony, Flanders, Normandy, and all the British islands, suffered from his presence.^g The son of Hakon Jarl was a sea-king, whose summers were devoted to enterprises as fearless;^h but it is needless to multiply instances. The vikingr, who have been mentioned, were men of rank in their society, who flourished between 930 and 1000; and their habits show, that, notwithstanding the checks which the direful custom had experienced, it was again becoming prevalent and respectable.

But yet while piracy was revivifying, other habits were also growing up which were destined to destroy it.

The continuance of piracy had a tendency to preclude all traffic; but wherever profit is seen to glitter, though danger guard

⁷ Snorre, 258-266. Among Olaf's Voyages, Snorre mentions his expedition to Vinland. As this was a country west of Greenland, it is obvious that the Norwegians or their colonies discovered and settled in part of North America in the tenth century.

^a Locc. Hist. S. p. 52; and Ver. Saigoth. p. 50.

^b Snorre, p. 128.

^c Ibid.

^d Tunc autem Orcales et Hialldtlandiam cum dittonis fecere Eiriki filii, census inde parcientes, ibique per hyemes commorantes. Per cetates autem mare occidentale piratica infestum reddidere preedas agentes circa littora Scotiae atque Hibernia. Snorre, p. 130.

^e Ibid. p. 132.

^f Saxo Grammat. 169.

^g Snorre, 136-177.

^h See before.

ⁱ Snorre, 295.

every avenue, and the spectre of death even hovers over the path, men will hasten to tread it, and dare the chances of its evils. Rude as the Northmen were in manners, arts, and virtues, they wanted commodities from each other, which the productive industry or resources of any one place could not supply. Hence skins for clothing were carried from Iceland to Norway.¹ Fish, cattle, and corn, their food, were often, from partial famines, required to be interchanged.² Hemp, or seal skins, or whale hides, were needed for ropes.³ Captives were to be sold, and, of course, slaves to be purchased;⁴ besides many articles of war and luxury.

The necessity of conveying from coast to coast the wanted commodities, turned a part of society into merchants: their places of resort became noted. Thus Tunsberg in Norway was much frequented by merchant ships, which came to it not only from the adjoining Vikia, and the more northern regions; but from Denmark and Saxony.⁵ Birca in Sweden was another considerable emporium, in which vessels of merchandise came from all parts of the Baltic to acquire or to exchange the necessaries of life,⁶ though its wealth and excellent harbours perpetually invited depredations of the vikingr.⁷ Our Dublin was in those days much frequented for trade.⁸

It was auspicious to the future predominance of civilized habits that commerce became *honourable*. This circumstance in such an age of general warfare is as remarkable as beneficial. Perhaps, the honour attached to commerce arose partly from the vikingr disposing of their spoils themselves, and partly from the necessity they felt for the objects of traffic. The merchants who ventured to sail through such ambushes of pirates could not at first have been very numerous, and this rarity gave them increased value, and even dignity. In time also kings became their patrons.

Commerce was, however, in such credit, that Biorn, prince of Westfold, the son of Harald Harfragre, became a merchant, and by his more warlike brothers was distinguished by that title.⁹

¹ Snorre, 176.

² Thus the Scald Eyvind, when a famine oppressed Norway, pecora emit familiæ sustentandæ necessaria. He sent his ships to purchase herrings, and for that purpose parted with his property, and even with his arrows. Snorre, 186.

³ See Olther's Voyage.

⁴ Lodinus was a rich man. Accidit quadam æstate ut mercatum profectus Lodi- nus navi quæ ejus unius erat, mercibusque dives, cursum ad Esthoniæ dirigeret, ubi per metatam mercatorum operam dedit. Dum celebrantur nundinæ ad quas comparatæ sunt merces omnis generis, ducti etiam multi homines venales, p. 256.

⁵ Tunsbergam plurimæ tunc mercatoris frequentabant naves tam ex Vikia et borealibus regionibus Norwegiæ quam ex Danis et Saxonia. Snorre, 115.

⁶ Adam. Brem. 18, 19. Helmoldus, p. 9. Rembert in 1 Langb. 444.

⁷ Biorni etiam piratarum excursionibus quorum ibi magna copia est, sæpius im- pregnati. Adam. Brem. 18.

⁸ Hanc—jussit Hakonus Jarl Dublinum ire mercatorem, id quod plurimis tunc temporis frequens erat. Snorre, 246.

⁹ Biorno regi sum etiam erant naves mercatoris quæ in comœata exteras ad

Others also, of illustrious ancestry, were traders, and are mentioned for the affluence acquired by it.^a

Traffic being thus respectable, it is no wonder that another circumstance arose which operated to suppress piracy. This was the remarkable fact that the two professions of pirate and merchant came in many instances to be blended. The same persons were at one time roaming to plunder, at another voyaging to trade: thus the people of Vikia are described as very commercial, at the same time that many of them were vikings.^b Thus the friend whom Hakon the Bad had selected to circumvent Olaf, the son of Tryggva, had been long a pirate, but he was also a merchant, and was employed to visit Dublin in that capacity.^c Thus Lodin, though he had sometimes pirated, was a merchant, and in his mercantile character visited Estland.^d Biorn, surnamed the Trader, had also practised piracy.^e Thus the celebrated men of Jomsburg were as eminent for their commercial as for their depredatory activity. It was perhaps from their martial habits and equipments, arising from this alternation of pursuit, that merchants were enabled to combat with the pirates who attacked them.^f They sometimes secured the success of their defensive exertions by voyaging in companies.

When we read that the pirates seized every movable commodity where they invaded, and destroyed by fire the habitations and growing produce of the field, when they could not remove it; that part of the inhabitants they slew on the spot, and carried away the others for slaves, sharing them by lot;^g that of these captives they killed such as were too old for labour, and were therefore unsaleable;^h and that they exposed the others to the public market so unsparingly, that we find, at one time, a queen, pale, worn out with fatigue and sufferings, and squalidly clothed;ⁱ

regiones, varias res ingentis pretii que plura quam necessaria videbantur illo advehabant. Illum igitur navigatorem aut morcatorum (farmann eda Kaupmann) nominarunt ejus fratres. Snorre, 115.

^a Snorre, 256, 257.

^b Ipsi enim Vikveriensis in mercatura erant frequentes in Angliam et Saxoniam aut in Flandriam, aut in Daniam: quidam autem piraticam exercebant, hyemis in Christianorum terris transigentes. Snorre Saga, Olaf's Helga, vol. ii. p. 71.

^c Diu hic in piratica, interdum etiam in morcatura versatus. Snorre, vol. i. p. 240.

^d Sæpe ille in mercatura versabatur, interdum etiam in piratica. Snorre, vol. i. p. 256.

^e Biorno—in piratica parum frequens. Snorre, 115.

^f Rembert, who lived in the tenth century, mentions a conflict of this sort. 1 Langb. 444. Snorre also mentions a merchant ship which endured a long conflict with a sea-king, vol. i. p. 215. So the Niala Saga says, "Piratis in morcatores tela jacentibus, prælium oritur, hique se pulchre tutantur." Celto Scand. p. 63. This was in the year 992.

^g Mare orientem versus sulcantes aggressi piratæ quidam Estenses homines captivos ducunt, bona diripiunt, occisus nonnulli, alios quos inter se sortiti in servitatem abstractis. Snorre, vol. i. p. 192.

^h Visus est Klerono ætate jam provector Thoralfes quam et servus esse posset, nec laboribus satis idoneus; quare eum occidit. Ibid.

ⁱ Snorre, p. 256.

and, on another occasion, a prince,^b standing up to be purchased like cattle; when we see, that from the plentiful supply, so low was the price, that Olaf the prince, who afterwards became king of Norway, and the invader of England, was sold for a garment;^c and that a collection of boys were disposed of for a fine goat;^d when we discover such things to be frequent, it seems absurd to look into the north for increased civilization.

And yet the happy change was beginning to emerge. The principle of improvement was in existence, and its vegetation, though slow, was incessant and effectual.

As soon as the vikingr stooped from the pursuit of sanguinary glory to collect profit from traffic, piracy, as a laudable custom, must have begun to be undermined. It must have received another fatal blow, as soon as agriculture became reputable. Though valour was still the pride of the day, many chiefs were perpetually arising of peaceable and unwarlike habits.^e At the period of which we now speak, one Sigurd Syr the king, who educated Saint Olave of Norway, is particularly described to us as assiduous in his domestic occupations; who often surveyed his fields and meadows, and flocks and herds, and who was fond of frequenting the places where the handicraft labours were carried on.^f His pupil, Olave, though in the first part of his life he became a sea-king, yet among other things was educated to manual arts as well as warlike exercises.^g The sweets of landed property and peaceable occupations once experienced, the impulse of nature would urge the chiefs to favour husbandry, and to induce or to compel a part, ever increasing, of the northern population to pursue the labours of the field in preference to war. Every regular and settled monarch favoured the new habit. Though the disorderly reigns which followed Harald Harfragre made his law against pirates almost obsolete, yet as soon as the government of Norway became established in Saint Olave, he revived the prohibition. He forbade all rapine.^h He enforced his law so rigorously, that though the vikingr were the children of the most potent chiefs, he punished the offenders by the loss of life or limb; nor could prayers or money avert the penalty.ⁱ One of the Canutes was equally hostile to the habits of the vikingr. He prohibited all rapine and violence throughout his kingdom, and was highly displeased that Egill should have pirated in the summer.

^b *Ibid.* 193.

^c *Ibid.* 192.

^d *Ibid.* 192.

^e Many of these are noticed in Snorre's *Heimskringla*.

^f Snorre's *Saga*, Olaf's *Helga*, c. i. p. 1, and p. 31.

^g Arcum tractandi atque natandi imprimis peritus, in pilis et missilibus manu jaculandis eximius, ad artes fabriles a natura formatus, lyncosique oculis ad ea omnia que vel ipse vel alii fabricaverant. Snorre. Olaf's *Helga*, p. 1.

^h Snorre, tom. I. p. 315.

ⁱ *Ibid.* 316.

“In addicting yourself to piracy,” said the king, “you have done an abominable thing. It is a pagan custom, and I forbid it.”¹

It was indeed a custom which had been so familiar and so extolled, that its suppression was difficult. Olaf’s severity against it excited an insurrection in his dominions.² But though interested men struggled hard to uphold it, the good sense of mankind awaking, however tardily, to their real interests, was combating against it. The benefits emanating to all from the cultivation of agriculture were announced in terror the most impressive, by the dismal famines which afflicted them. The augmented power, the more striking dignity, and the permanent happiness accruing to the chiefs from a numerous clan of quiet peasantry, from the annual riches of tillage, and the mercantile importation of every other luxury; the lessons, though rude, of their new Christian clergy; the natural indolence and quietude of human nature, when permitted to follow its own tendencies, and when freed from the goading stings of want, by the fruitful harvest of regular labour, must have alienated a large part of the northern society from the practice of their ancestors, and must have made piracy, in an accumulating ratio, unpopular and dishonourable. Human reason is never slow to amend its erring associations, when once a new beam of life occurs to it; and nothing can more strongly paint the progressive change of manners, than the rapid degradation of the meaning of the word *vikingr*. At first designating a soldier, it became appropriated by pirates, when every warrior pirated. But now that the condemning voice of society was raising against rapine, the *vikingr* hastened fast to become a synonyme of the robber.³ Poets, who often stamp the morals of ages, and who always influence the population of the day, began to brand it with that opprobrium, which, from their numbers, falls with the most deterring effect.⁴

The improved feelings of society on this subject could not accumulate without communicating some contagion to the *vikingr* themselves. Though the novel sentiment might be unable to annihilate their evil habits, it awakened, in their fierce bosoms, a little sense of moral distinction; it compelled them to seek some shield of merit to avert that most terrible of all ills, the contempt and hatred of the society to which we belong. They began to

¹ *Knytlinga Saga*, ap. Bartholin, 453.

² *Snorre*, p. 317.

³ The editors of the *Gunnlaugi Saga* give many examples of this, p. 298-300.

⁴ Thus *Sighvatr*, the scald of Olave, sang:

Rapine ita pati leti homines sum
 Pœnam debuere—
 Scelerorum genus et nequam hominum,
 Ille sic furta est amolitus.
 Sexcentis jussit patriæ terras
 Custos, armis et gladiis præcidi
 Piratis et hostibus capta regni.

Snorre, 316, tom. ii.

HISTORY OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS.

feel that it was not honourable for a brave man to prey upon the peaceful merchant, who feeds and benefits his contemporaries, nor to murder the unoffending passenger whom various necessities enforce to roam. A new sort of pirates then appeared, more suitable to the new-born morality of their feelings, and to the mental revolutions of the day. The peculiar and self-chosen task of these meritorious warriors was to protect the defenceless navigator, and to seek and assail the indiscriminate plunderer.^a The exact chronology of these new characters is not clear, but they seem reasonably to belong to the last age of piracy. Their existence was, above all laws, efficacious in destroying piracy. They executed what society sighed for, and what wise kings enacted, and their appearance must have hastened the odium of the indiscriminate pirate, who became gradually hunted down as the general enemy of the human race. It is pleasing to read of this distinction in so many authors. Some men associated with the solemnity of an oath, that they would in piracy acquire money honourably, because they would exterminate the berserkir and the malignant, and give safety to the merchant.^b So others pursued piracy to deprive the plundering vikingr of the spoil they had torn from the husbandman and merchants.^c With the same character, Eric the Good is exhibited in the *Knyttlinga Saga*.^d

By the laws of the pirate Hialmar, we see that they bound themselves to protect trade and agriculture, not to plunder women, nor to force them to their ships if unwilling, nor to eat raw flesh, which was the practice of the savage pirate.^e

On the whole, we may state, that after the tenth century piracy became discreditable, and that in every succeeding reign it approached nearer to its extinction, until it was completely superseded by the influence of commerce, the firmer establishment of legal governments, improved notions of morality, and the experience of the superior comforts of social order, industry, and peaceful pursuits.

^a See the *Torsteins Saga*, ap. Vorelius. *Herw. Saga*, 47.

^b *Das Saga*, ap. Barth. 457.

^c *The Vatzdala*, ap. Barth. 458.

^d *Knyttlinga Saga*, ap. Barth. 459.

^e Bartholin states these laws from the *Orvar Oddr Saga*, p. 456; and see the laws of the sea-king Half, another of this band of naval chivalry, in Bartho. 455. Sazo also describes another set of heroes, who, in the following age, fought against the common pirates, lib. xiv. p. 259.

