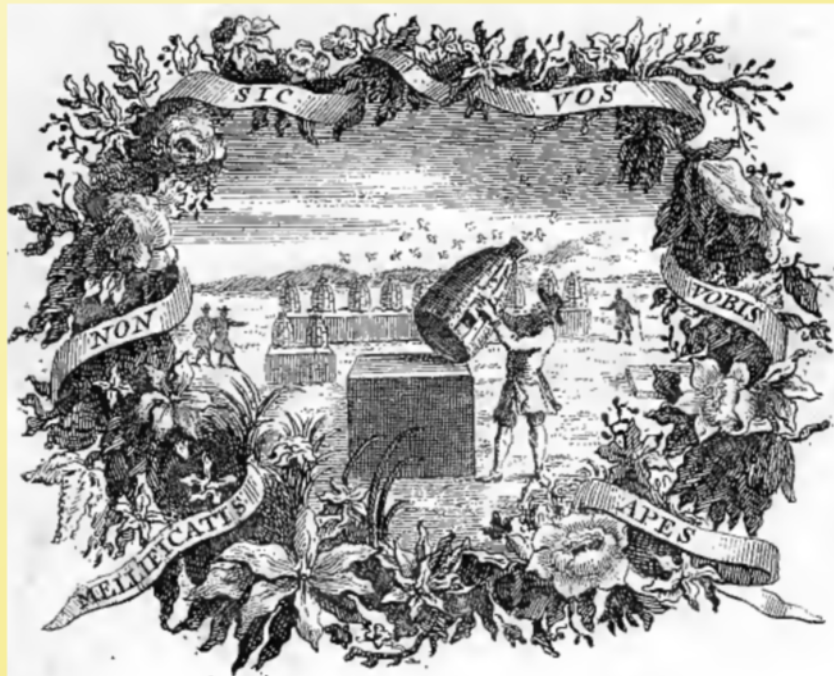


Rapin's History of England



Book Five

Containing the reigns of the kings of
England, from Ethelred II to the Norman
Conquest, a period of about eighty-eight years.

**The History
of
England
Written in French
By
Mr. Rapin de Thoyras**

Translated from French

By

N. Tyndal M. A. Vicar

Of

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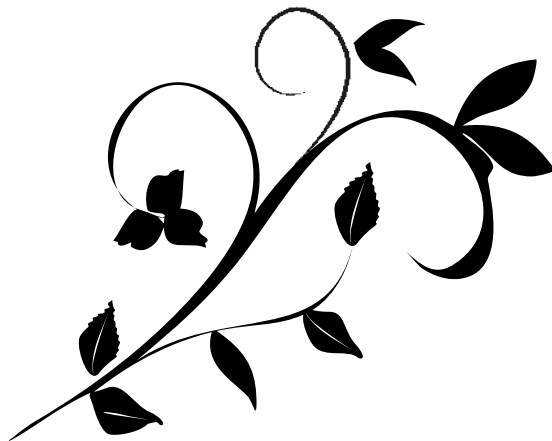
Paternosta Row

London

1733

A decorative banner with the word "CONTENTS" in a serif font. The banner is adorned with intricate floral and vine patterns, including leaves and small flowers, extending from both sides of the central text box.

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Book Five

Ethelred II to The Norman Conquest



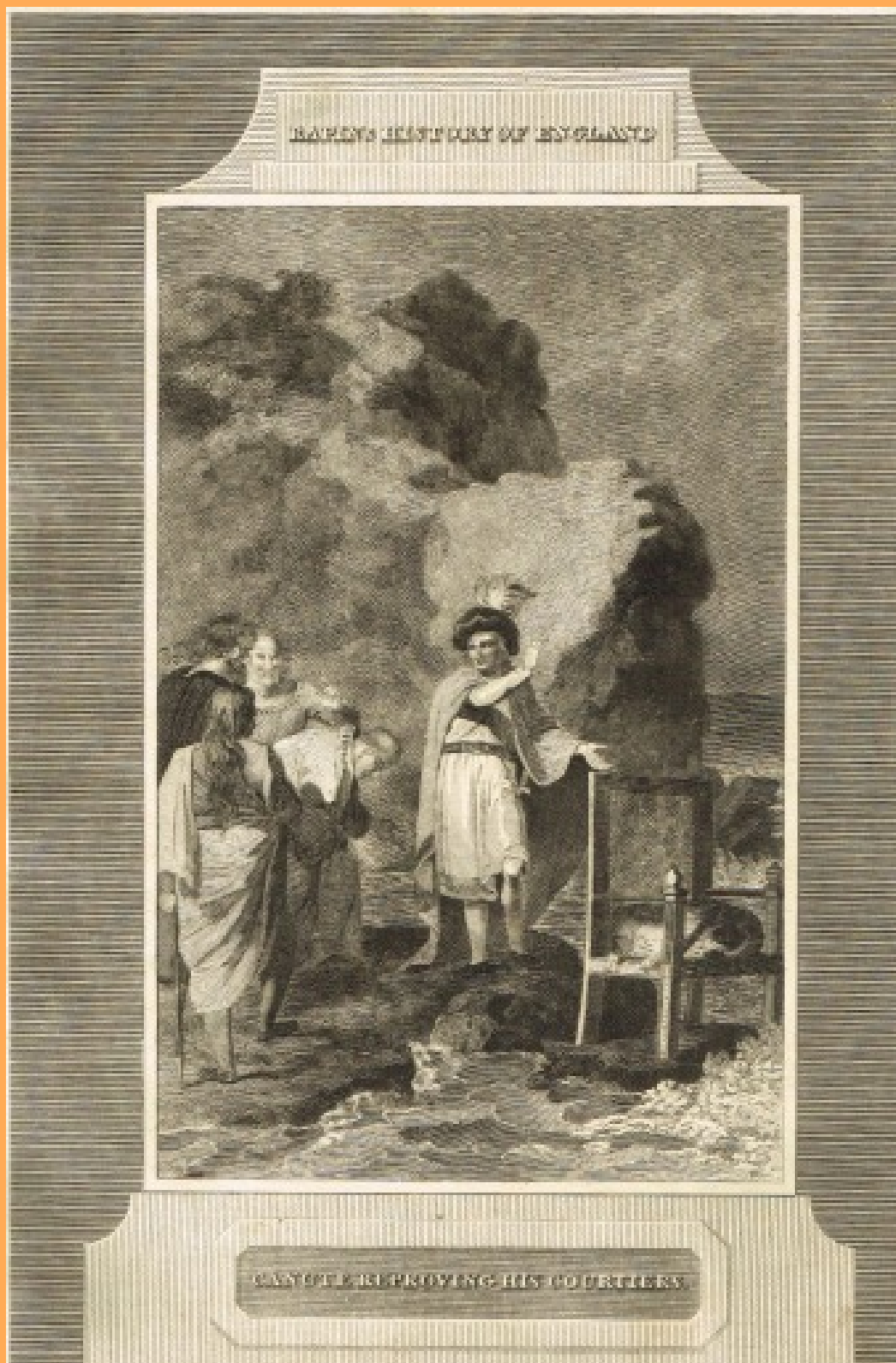
**CONTAINING THE REIGNS OF THE
KINGS OF ENGLAND, FROM
ETHELRED II TO THE NORMAN
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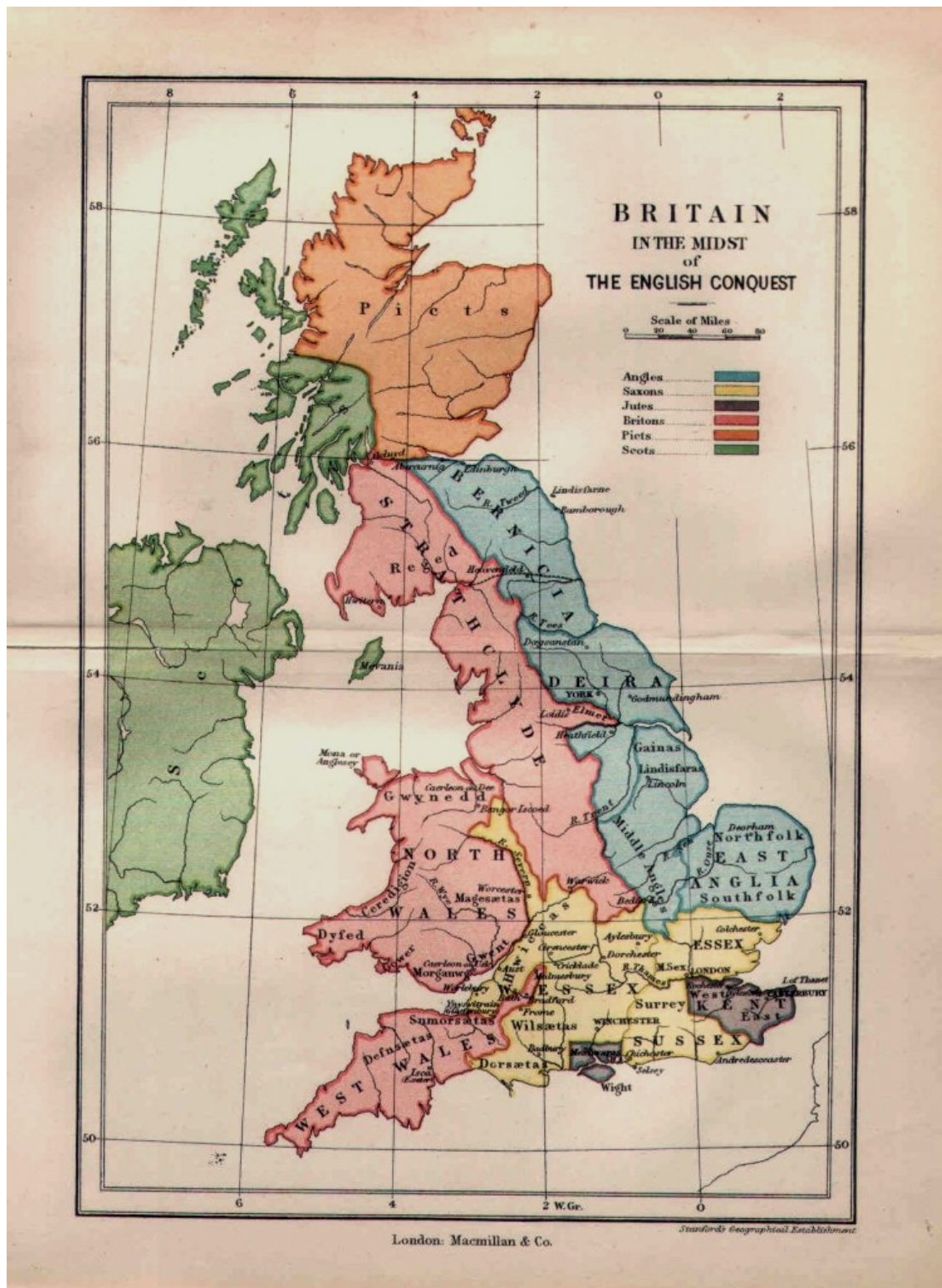


King Canute





Canute Reproving His Courtiers



Saxon England Map



BOOK V

CONTAINING THE REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF ENGLAND, FROM ETHELRED II TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST, A PERIOD OF ABOUT EIGHTY-EIGHT YEARS.

ETHELRED II AD 978



A**FTER** the murder of Edward, there was not the least pretence to refuse the crown to his brother Ethelred, who was the only prince of the royal family, and too young to be accused of partaking in his mother's crime. Accordingly, Dunstan could not help crowning him[1], being then but twelve years of age, though he plainly foresaw it would prove fatal to his whole party.

It is affirmed, that Dunstan at his coronation foretold, by the spirit of prophecy, the calamities which England would be exposed to in his reign. But predictions of this nature are always to be suspected, when attributed to saints, such as Dunstan, by authors who wrote after the event. The people, however, flattered themselves, they were about to enjoy a state of tranquillity, under a prince who had already given an instance of his good nature, in bitterly lamenting the death of the king his brother, though it procured him the crown. His tears, we are told, appeared so unseasonable to his mother, that catching up a wax taper in a passion, she beat him so unmercifully with it, that he could not endure the sight of a wax light ever after.

The first thing Ethelred did after his coronation, was to remove the body of the late king to Shaftsbury church. Hardly had he performed this office, but he found himself attacked by the Danes, who suffered him to enjoy no repose during the residue of his life. If this prince had followed the steps of his predecessors, perhaps he would have caused these old invaders to lay aside all thoughts of any new attempts upon England. But his natural cowardice, joined to an extreme sluggishness, an insatiable avarice, and many other failings, soon let them see, he was not likely to prove a very formidable enemy.

For sixty years past they seemed to have forgotten England, and the English on their side, to have lost all remembrance of the calamities, they had suffered from the hands of those cruel enemies. However, after so long an interval, during which the Danes, settled in England, seemed to have entertained the same affection for this their second country, as the natives themselves, the foreign Danes thought proper to renew their invasions. They no sooner

appeared, but the others joined them, in order to improve the present opportunity, and free themselves from the dominion of the English.

AD 981] The Danish rovers made their first attempt on Southampton, where they arrived with seven ships, and after plundering the town and the adjacent country[2], they carried the same devastations into Cornwall.

This year another band landing at Portland, pillaged, and sacked the country round about, after which they proceeded elsewhere to increase their spoils[3].

AD 982] These frequent descents were so much the more incommodious to the English, as having so much coast to guard, they knew not where to assemble and expect the enemy. If at any time they happened to have it in their power to give them battle, all the advantage they could gain, in case fortune favoured them, was to recover the plunder. But when they were worsted, the country was sure to be exposed to all imaginable cruelties before another army could be drawn together.

Very often, whilst the English troops were upon the march, to oppose one of these bands, they were forced to change their route, and march where the danger seemed more pressing. Thus, what care soever might be taken, one part of the kingdom was always exposed, as there was no foreseeing where the pirates would land. There was but one way to remedy this inconvenience, which was, to keep a fleet at sea strong enough to engage the Danes, before they disembarked their troops. But a time of minority was not very proper to take such a precaution.

In this manner passed the first ten years of this reign. It would be needless to describe at length the ravages committed by the Danes during that time. It is easy to imagine the whole kingdom was a scene of murders, conflagrations, plunderings, and other devastation, which, after some short intermissions, were continually renewed.

During these troubles, Elfric, duke of Mercia, one of the best supports of his country, died in 983. Alfric his son succeeded him[4] The next year, Ethelwald bishop of Winchester, one of Dunstan's confidants, and a great friend of the monks also departed this life. He is said to have founded a dozen monasteries.

The credit of the monks declined very much in the reign of Ethelred, as well by reason of the frequent invasions of the Danes, as because the people, full of their misfortunes, were regardless of every thing else. Nay, they began to mistrust the sanctity of the monks not being able to forbear wondering, that men who had obtained from heaven so many miracles on their own private account, could not by their merits and prayers secure the kingdom from the calamities it was incessantly exposed to. On the other hand, as their credit with the former kings had helped to acquire them a great reputation, so this king's disinclination to them turned greatly to their prejudice. Ethelred, whose thoughts were not taken up with religion, put the monks and other ecclesiastics upon a level with the rest of his subjects.

He gave a convincing proof how little he regarded the clergy, in a difference between him and the bishop of Rochester.[5] The bishop having haughtily refused to comply with some demand of the king's, he ordered the soldiers to lay waste the lands belonging to the cathedral dedicated to St. Andrew[6]. In vain did the bishop threaten him with vengeance from the apostle, and cause archbishop Dunstan to interpose in his quarrel; Ethelred, slighted both, nor could be appeased but by money.

Dunstan, displeased to the highest degree at this behaviour, denounced upon the king and his council the judgments of God, ready to fall on their heads for presuming to lay sacrilegious hands on the church's property; but he was not heard. His credit was sunk so low, that hardly was he known to be alive, so careful were the new ministers to depress him. He died quickly after in the

year 988, not so much of old age, as of grief and vexation to see himself no longer distinguished as formerly.

Oswald, archbishop of York, soon followed him. He was his particular friend, and one of the three prelates that governed the church during the reign of Edgar. The death of these patrons of the monks, a contagious distemper, which swept away multitudes, and moreover, the continual invasions of the Danes, put an end to the quarrel between the secular and regular clergy, in such manner, that it was never more heard of.

After the Danes had pillaged the coasts of England during ten years, they gave over their ravages for. about two years. This intermission gave the English hopes of future quiet. But these hopes were short-lived. In 991, Justin and Guthmund, two Danish captains, landed a great body of troops at Gipswick[7]. Whilst they were busy in plundering, Brithnoth, duke of East-Anglia, advanced towards them, in expectation to surprise them, but found them too well prepared. He was overthrown, and his defeat exposed the adjacent country to greater devastations. The victorious Danes having nothing more to fear, penetrated still farther into the country, where they committed terrible ravages.

Ethelred being without an army, and unable to stop their progress, was persuaded by Syric, archbishop of Canterbury, to give them ten thousand pounds to be rid of them. The present given to this band, served only to allure others, who being no less greedy of money, thought they had an equal right to make an advantage of the weakness of the English.

AD 993] Two years after, another of their fleets sailing up the Humber, the pirates landed on the north side, and ravaged in a merciless manner all that belonged to the English in those quarters. Ethelred sent an army against them, under the command of three earls, Froena, Fritheest, and Godwin. But the generals having led their forces in sight of the enemies, were the first that turned their backs, and by their shameful cowardice occasioned the loss of the army. The king had imprudently trusted these three lords with his troops, who, being of Danish extraction, were suspected of treachery.

AD 994] How great soever the miseries inflicted hitherto on England by these foreigners might be, it is certain, they were nothing in comparison of what followed. Sweyn, king of Denmark, and Olaüs, king of Norway, allured by the good success of their subjects in England, wanted to share in the spoil brought from thence every year. To that purpose, fitting out a numerous fleet, they entered the Thames, and landed their troops near London. They made several attempts to become masters of the city, but meeting with a braver resistance than they imagined, retired.

To make themselves amends for the time spent in vain before London, they went and plundered Kent, Hampshire, and Sussex, threatening to lay waste the whole kingdom. Ethelred, who was as deficient in conduct as in courage, not knowing how to put a stop to these ravages, had recourse to the same means made use of before on a like occasion. He bound himself by a treaty to pay the sum of sixteen thousand pounds within such a time, on condition they left his subjects unmolested, and departed the kingdom.

Whereupon the two foreign kings caused all hostilities to cease, and retired to Southampton. Shortly after the king of Norway paid a visit to Ethelred, who persuaded him to be baptized, and stood himself godfather. At his departure, Olaüs obliged himself by oath never to infest England more, and he performed his promise.

It would have been happy for the English, if Sweyn, who departed at the same time, would have followed his example. When he sailed for Denmark he left a fleet at Southampton, to keep the English in awe, and oblige them to perform the articles of the treaty. After his departure, his admiral very earnestly pressed the payment of the money. But as there was no haste made to comply with his demands, he took their delay for a refusal, and he resolved to renew the war.

Meanwhile[8], to deceive the vigilance of the English, he set sail, apparently for Denmark, but on a sudden, he unexpectedly entered the Severn, and after destroying the country of the Welsh with fire and sword, crossed the river and penetrated into Dorsetshire[9], where he committed the same ravages[10]. All the forces that could be brought against the Danes were as soon defeated as levied. They sacked whole counties, it being impossible to oppose them.

At last, finding nothing more to plunder in those parts, they put to sea again and landed in Kent: The inhabitants by endeavouring to make some resistance, only increased the fury of their enemies, who treated them with the utmost barbarity. To complete their misfortunes, a fleet equipped by Ethelred to engage them at sea, was rendered useless by the dissensions and un-skillfulness of the commanders[11].

In, this melancholy situation, England would have irretrievably perished, if the Danes, by a lucky and unexpected accident, had not been called to the assistance of Richard II duke of Normandy, whom the king of France would have dispossessed of his dominions. Ethelred took this opportunity to go and ravage Cumberland, but for what reason is unknown[12]. After that, he returned to London,[13] where he kept his usual residence.

AD 1001] The quiet which Ethelred enjoyed was of short continuance; the Danes, staying in Normandy no longer than was necessary to put the young duke out of danger, returned into England. Cornwall felt the first effects of their fury; then entering Wessex, they became masters of Exeter. In fine, the Danes, ever victorious, got possession of the Isle of Wight, Hampshire, and Dorsetshire, where they had their magazines, and thence they made continual incursions into the neighbouring counties.

In this extremity, Ethelred consented to pay the Danes[14] thirty thousand-pounds.[15] This sum, which in those days was very considerable, was levied by a tax, called Dane geld, that is, Danish money, or money for the Danes[16]. This was the original of that famous tax which afterwards became so extremely burthensome to the nation, even long after the Danes had quitted England. But the clergy and monks always found means to be exempted.

The Danes, satisfied with this agreement, ceased their ravages, and returned home. However, abundance of them, perceiving England to be much preferable to Denmark, stayed behind, and lived among the English. Their number indeed was not so great as to render them very formidable, considering they were dispersed; but then they were supported by their countrymen of Northumberland and East-Anglia. Besides, the English dreaded nothing so much as the renewal of the war, which made the Danes very insolent. They did what they pleased, without any control.

The English, dispirited by their past calamities, were afraid, on the least occasion, of drawing into the kingdom fresh armies of foreigners. Thus whilst the Danes, abounding in wealth and ease, passed their time agreeably, the English were forced to labour and toil incessantly, to satisfy the avarice of their new masters. In short, the whole kingdom stood in such fear of the Danes, that they had always the appellation Lord-Danes; and, at this day, in some parts of England, a rich idle man that takes upon him, is, by way of derision, called a lurdane.

Elgiva, Ethelred's queen, dying, whilst the Danes were thus insolently domineering in England, the king demanded Emma[17], sister of Richard II duke of Normandy, in marriage. His suit being granted, and her marriage consummated, he thought himself out of danger, depending upon the assistance of the duke his brother-in-law, when there should be occasion. This expectation inspired him with the barbarous and furious resolution of destroying the Danes by a general massacre.

To execute this project, orders were sent so privately, throughout the kingdom, that in one day all the Danes were slain with such implacable fury and cruelty, that the particulars cannot be read without horror. Sweyn's sister[18], who was married to an English lord, having at first been

spared, Ethelred barbarously caused her children to be murdered in her presence, and then her head to be cut off. This princess, who met her death with heroic constancy, foretold, in her last agonies, that her murder would soon be avenged, by the total ruin of the English nation.

This bloody tragedy, acted on the thirteenth of November, 1002[19] was very like the massacre of the Romans by the Britons under Boadicea; not only the same barbarities, but the same consequences also attended both. The English, as the old Britons, were so far from throwing off their yoke by this wicked expedient, that it served only to make it more heavy and insupportable. Though historians assure us, all the Danes in England were massacred on this occasion, it is hard to conceive how this could be effected in Northumberland and East-Anglia, where the Danes were most powerful. It is probable, that by all the Danes, we are to understand only those lately settled in England, and dispersed in Wessex and Mercia.

Sweyn received the news of this massacre by some Danes, who escaped by getting on board a vessel ready to sail for Denmark. Their relation of the cruelties of the English to those of his nation would have been sufficient to throw him into resolutions fatal to England; but when he was informed of his sister's death, and the barbarous manner thereof, he was seized with a raging fury. Every thing conspiring to excite his revenge, he solemnly swore he would never rest till he had satisfaction for so bloody an outrage.

It was not therefore with intent to plunder, that he made a second expedition into England, but to destroy the whole country with fire and sword. However, as he did not doubt but Ethelred had taken all possible precautions to oppose his entrance, he would not sail without being certain of a place, where he might safely land his troops. Cornwall was then governed by Earl Hugh, a Norman, whom the queen had placed in that post, as a man the king might perfectly confide in.

To this governor Sweyn dispatched a trusty messenger, to endeavour to gain him to his interest, by the offer of a great reward. Hugh, yielding to the temptation, promised to admit the Danish fleet into his ports, and suffer the troops to land without molestation.

Sweyn, having equipped a fleet of three hundred sail, accordingly landed in Cornwall with a numerous army, and meeting with no opposition, marched directly to Exeter, and, putting the inhabitants to the sword, reduced it to ashes[20]. This first exploit was followed by several others, no less fatal to England. Wherever Sweyn carried his arms, revenge and not conquest being his chief aim, he destroyed all with fire and sword.

Towards the end of the summer, being informed that Alfric, duke of Mercia, was advancing with a powerful army, to give him battle, he resolved to meet him. Ethelred acted unadvisedly in giving the command of his army to this lord, whom he had formerly banished the kingdom out of caprice, and whose son's eyes he had ordered to be put out. The remembrance of this injury being still fresh in the duke's mind, as soon as he was in sight of the enemy, he suddenly feigned himself sick, and pretending he was unable to fight, ordered a retreat, which he took care to make with so much confusion that the Danes very easily routed his army. After this, Sweyn took several towns, with an immense booty. But as he had no design to keep them, he set them on fire, and went and passed the winter in Denmark.

The calm which England enjoyed upon Sweyn's departure, lasted not long. In the following spring he landed in East-Anglia, and taking Norwich, burnt the whole town to the ground. Ulfketel, governor of East-Anglia, unable to resist him, gave him a great sum of money, to prevent his doing any farther mischief. But upon receipt of the money, Sweyn broke the treaty, and took Thetford by surprise, a town then of great note, and served it as he had done Norwich. Incensed at this breach of faith, Ulfketel levied some troops with wonderful expedition, and posted himself between the Danish army and fleet. Sweyn, perceiving he intended to cut off his retreat, marched back to give him battle. He found the English very advantageously encamped, expecting him with a resolution to stand their ground, and exert their utmost in defence of their goods and

chattels, which their enemies were carrying off before their faces. The ill fortune of the English again attended them.

The Danes obtained a signal victory, though not without great loss. They even owned they were never in more danger of being defeated. Ulfketel, though of Danish race, was the faithfullest as well as the bravest of all Ethelred's subjects, and did him the most service.[21] The famine that happened soon after, would have completed the misfortunes of the English, had it not accidentally proved the occasion of Sweyn's returning to Denmark for want of subsistence in England.

Upon the retreat of the Danes and ceasing of the famine, the English began to entertain hopes of enjoying some tranquillity, when they saw another Danish fleet arrive at Sandwich in Kent. Ethelred immediately levied an army[22] to give the new invaders battle: but after committing some ravages, they retired to the Isle of Thanet, where it was not possible to attack them. They knew the English army, consisting only of volunteers who served at their own expense, would soon disband themselves, as it actually fell out.

Winter coming on, the English returned to their homes, it not being in the power of the king to keep them any longer together. Then the Danes issued from their retreat, and renewed their ravages[23] well assured they should meet with no opposition.[24] Ethelred saw no other course to stop the progress of a mischief that threatened the whole kingdom, but to give them the sum of thirty thousand pounds.

The king, freed from this encumbrance, celebrated the wedding of one of his daughters with Edric surnamed Streon, a very powerful lord, whom he had just made duke of Mercia. If hitherto Ethelred had lived in continual fears and troubles, it was nothing in comparison of the misfortunes, he drew on himself by this fatal marriage. He had inconsiderately taken into his family a traitor sold to the Danes, who never failed on all occasions to betray the king and kingdom to the foreigners.

AD 1008] Hardly was a year passed since the last treaty with the Danes, when they demanded the same sum again, pretending it to be a yearly tribute due by contract from Ethelred. This demand was accompanied with threats of destroying the whole kingdom with fire and sword, if the money was not immediately paid. This new pretension of the Danes convincing the king and his council, there was no possibility of ever contenting their insatiable avarice, it was judged that the money would be better laid out in equipping a fleet capable of defending the kingdom from their incursions. Necessity made them put this resolution so speedily in practice, that quickly after, the king had a fleet well manned and victualled[25], the command whereof was given to Brithric, brother of Edric Streon, duke of Mercia. These measures obliged the Danes to retire, for fear of being forced to a sea engagement, which their ships were not so fit for as those of the English[26].

The first thing Brithric did, after his being made admiral, was to use all his interest to ruin Ulnoth, a lord of distinguished quality[27], but his enemy. He accused him to the king of numerous crimes, of which Ulnoth did not think fit to purge himself by a public trial, being sensible that his condemnation was already concerted. He resolved, therefore, upon a voluntary exile, to screen himself from this persecution; and persuaded several captains to follow him with their ships. After which he infested the English coasts, and did as much mischief as the Danes.

Brithric, enraged at his enemy's escape, and his daring to brave him thus, put to sea with eighty sail to give him chase, and endeavour to seize him alive or dead. But he met with so violent a storm, that the greatest part of his ships were lost or fell into the hands of Ulnoth. Thus this great fleet, which could not have been fitted out, without a prodigious expense, was rendered unserviceable. The loss became still more irretrievable, by the dissension among the sea officers; several of whom went and joined Ulnoth.

AD 1009] In the mean time, the Danes took advantage of these disorders. The next spring two of their fleets arrived in England, one in East-Anglia, under Turkil, another in the Isle of Thanet, under Heming and Anlaff. These leaders joining their forces in Kent, plundered the country, and then laid siege to Canterbury. The city would have infallibly fallen into the hands of the Danes, if the inhabitants had not purchased a peace by paying the sum of 3000 pounds[28].

Whilst the Danes were pillaging the country, Ethelred drew an army together to oppose their ravages. As soon as he was ready, he posted himself between them and their ships, to prevent their embarking and carrying off their booty. In all appearance, he would have executed his project, and perhaps gained some further considerable advantage, considering the superiority of his forces, if Edric had not found means to bring off the Danes. The traitor perceiving their danger, represented to the king, his father-in-law, that it would be more advantageous to let them retire than hazard a battle, which might prove fatal to him.

This pernicious advice made such impression on the king, that he suffered them to march by, with all their plunder, unmolested. But instead of sailing for Denmark, as was expected, they threw themselves into the Isle of Thanet; from whence, during the whole winter, they made incursions into the neighbouring counties, They even made several attempts upon London; but were always repulsed. Meanwhile, Ulfketel, duke of East-Anglia, willing once more to try the fortune of a battle in defence of his government, had the misfortune to be overthrown, and by his defeat left them masters of the country, he intended to defend.

Hitherto the Danes wanted cavalry, by reason of the difficulty of transporting horses from Denmark. But as soon as they were in possession of East-Anglia, a country abounding with horses, they mounted part of their troops, and by that means extended their conquests. Shortly after, they subdued Essex, Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire[29], Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Devonshire, whilst Ethelred; who had scarcely any thing left, kept himself shut up in London, without daring to take the field and stop their progress: In all the above-named counties, London and Canterbury, were the only places in the king's power.[30]

But at length they attacked the last so vigorously, that they took, plundered, and reduced it to ashes. Elphegus the archbishop being taken prisoner, was afterwards murdered by these barbarians[31]. They proceeded with the same cruelty towards the monks of St. Augustin's, whom they put under a decimation, destroying nine parts in ten[32].

England being reduced to this deplorable state, the great men of the kingdom assembled at London, with the king, to consult upon a remedy. The best expedient they could find, was to bribe these foreigners with money to leave the kingdom. The sum agreed upon amounted to 48,000 pounds, which having received they departed with their booty.

AD 1013] Though the retreat of the Danes cost England dear, the people thought themselves happy to be thus freed from their enemies, hoping they should repair by a peace, the damages sustained by the war. But they were far from seeing yet the end of their miseries. Hardly had they enjoyed any quiet, when news came that Sweyn[33] had entered the Humber[34] with a powerful fleet, threatening the whole kingdom with desolation and ruin.

As this prince found the country unprovided with troops and unable to defend itself, he quickly became master of Northumberland, East-Anglia, and of all the counties, lying north of Watling-street. But these conquests not satisfying his ambition, he took hostages of all the principal towns, and leaving his son Canute to command the newly conquered counties, he advanced southward, and laid siege to London, where Ethelred was shut up. Though he was but ill provided with necessaries to besiege in form a place of that importance, he imagined the citizens would be terrified at his menaces.

But finding they were not moved by them, he desisted from his enterprise, and went and ravaged the western parts of Wessex, where he found no opposition to his arms. However, as he could not be easy, whilst London was out of his power, he resolved to besiege it again. But whilst he was preparing for the siege with greater precaution than before, he had information of Ethelred's departure from thence.

This unfortunate prince, ever dreading to fall into the hands of an enemy he had so heinously injured, and perceiving himself unsafe at London, retired into Normandy with all his family[35]. hereupon the Londoners, being left to take care of themselves, judged it a rash undertaking to maintain alone the rights of a prince relinquished by himself. They resolved, therefore, to submit to the king of Denmark, to whom all the rest of the kingdom was now subject. Shortly after the surrender of London, Sweyn was proclaimed king of England without any opposition, no person in the kingdom daring to dispute his title.

Notes to Ethelred II

1. He was crowned at Kingston, April 25.
2. They either slew, or carried captive, almost all the inhabitants. They came from thence to the Isle of Thanet, and plundered it; and another band ravaged Chester.
3. This year also the City of London was destroyed by fire, but by what accident is unknown
4. A. D. 984.
5. A. D. 986
6. He first laid siege to Rochester, but not being able to take it, he wasted the lands of the Cathedral,
7. Ipswich in Suffolk, wherein are twelve parish churches. In Camden's time it had fourteen. As for the antiquity, we find no mention of it before this Danish invasion.
8. A. D. 997.
9. As also in Devon and Somersetshire.
10. A. D. 998
11. A. D. 999.
12. John Fordun, in the Scotch history, gives this account of it: Ethelred having paid large sums to the Danes, sent to Malcolm prince of Cumberland, under Gryme king of Scotland, to pay his share; which he refusing to do, and asserting he was only bound to make war with the rest of the kingdom, when required, Ethelred invading Ids country, on pretence he favoured the Danes; but presently after the two princes made peace, and became friends.
13. A. D. 1000
14. All historians agree, that it was done by the advice of the Wittena-Gemot, or council.
15. A. D. 1002.
16. For the payment of this money every hide of land was taxed yearly twelve-pence. A hide of land is such a quantity of land as may be ploughed with one plough in a year. Bede reckons it as much. as will maintain a family. Some say it was a hundred acres, others that it contained no

certain number of acres. The distribution of England by hides of land is very ancient, mention being made of it in the laws of Ina. Danegeld was the first land-tax in England. It was afterwards called Hidagium, which name remained afterwards upon all taxes and subsidies imposed on lands. The Normans called those sometimes taxes, sometimes tallages, and auxilla and subsidia. The Saxon kings before this had their levies of money and personal services, towards the building and repairing cities, castles, bridges, military expeditions, &c. which from the word bote, that is, repair, were termed Burghbote, Brigbote, Heregeld, &c. Danegeld was released by Edward the Confessor, but levied again by William I. and II. Then it was released again by Henry 1, and finally by king Stephen. This ancient tax probably might be a precedent for our land-tax, when first granted.

17. She was called from her beauty, the pearl of Normandy.

18. Her name was Guanilda; she is said to have been married to a noble Dane of great power and wealth, Who had been settled for some time in England; his name was Paleng. She was a Christian, and had been a great instrument in making peace between the English and Danes.

19. On the feast of St. Brice, upon a Sunday.

20. If the following statement by a contemporary historian, relating to one of the fleets with which Sweyn invaded England, be correct, it would prove that the Danes had made greater progress in the arts, at this period, than is generally believed.—"So great were the splendour and beauty of the ships of his mighty fleet, that they dazzled the eyes, and struck terror into the hearts of the beholders: for the rays of the sun reflected from the bright shields and polished arms of the soldiers, and the sides of the ships, gilded with gold and silver, exhibited a spectacle equally terrible and magnificent; for on the top of the mast. of every ship was the gilded figure of some bird, which turning on a spindle with the winds, discovered from whence they blew. The sterns of the ships were adorned with various figures cast in metal, and gilded with gold and silver. On one you might behold the statue of a man, with a countenance as fierce and menacing as though he had been alive; on another a most terrible golden lion; on a third a dragon of burnished brass; and on a fourth a furious bull with gilded horns, in act to rush on the terrified spectators. In a word, the appearance of this fleet was at once so grand and formidable, that it filled all who saw it with dread and admiration of the prince to whom it belonged; and his enemies were more than half vanquished by their eyes, before they came to blows."

21. A. D. 1005.

22. Consisting of the militia of Wessex and Mercia.

23. They plundered Hampshire and Berkshire, as far as Reading, and burnt Wallingford, which was stationed at Sandwich.

24. A. D. 1007

25. The Saxon annals tell us, this was the largest and best fleet England had ever seen. It was built after this manner all over England every hundred and thirty hides of land were obliged to find one ship and every eight hides a helmet and breast-plate. An. MVIII. MIX It must be observed, that the annals tell us, the several sums paid to the Danes, as well as this tax for building a fleet, were all levied with the joint consent of the king, and his great council, or Wittena-Gemot

26. Thane of Sussex, earl Godwin's father.

27. After they had got these three thousand pounds, they sailed round to the Isle of Wight, and plundered Sussex, Hampshire, and Berkshire, burning several towns; and here it was that Ethelred drew an army against them.

28. Oxford being burnt that year by the Danes, all studies ceased there till the year 1133.

29. He was killed at Greenwich, to which place, the station of their ships, they had brought him prisoner. And, therefore, in the present church of Greenwich, on the top of the partition wall, between the nave of the church and the chancel, is this inscription: this church was erected and dedicated to the glory of God, and the memory of St. Alphage, archbishop of Canterbury, here slain by the Danes; because he would not ransom his life by an unreasonable sum of money. AD 1012. He was first buried at St. Paul's in London, and afterwards removed to Canterbury. He was honoured as a martyr, and stands in the Roman martyrology on the 19th of April.

30. A. D. 1012

31. Florence of Worcester says, the Burghers were served in the same manner; so that only four monks, and about eight hundred laymen were left alive. Lambarde supposes there were about forty-three thousand two hundred persons massacred.

32. Forty-five of their ships submitted to Ethelred, and promised to defend the kingdom, provided he would allow them victuals and clothes.

33. The English historians have not told us the reason why Sweyn staid away so long, as from 1005 to 1013, eight years.

34. He came first to Sandwich, and from thence sailing to the mouth of the Humber, he went up the Trent, as far as Gainsborough.

35. Richard, duke of Normandy, received his unhappy guests with generosity which does honour to his memory.



Ethelred II (The Unready) Silver Penny Obverse





SWEYN KING OF DENMARK, AND FIRST OF THE DANISH KINGS IN ENGLAND



THE first act of sovereignty exercised by the new king was an immense tax on the kingdom for payment of the Danish troops, who assisted him in his conquests[1]. No historian mentions the coronation of this prince. Perhaps he neglected this solemnity, believing it unnecessary, or it may be, matters of greater importance, afforded him no time to think of it, during his short reign of a few months. He died suddenly,[2] a circumstance which gave occasion to the legend writers to say he was killed with a club or lance by St. Edmund, formerly king of East-Anglia. It is pretended, this saint did it to save the town, where his body lay buried[3], from being plundered for refusing to pay the tax imposed by the new king. The extreme shortness of his reign, and perhaps his not having been crowned, are the reasons for which historians, have not reckoned this prince in the number of the kings of England.

Notes to Sweyn

1. St. Edmund's-bury.
2. A. D. 1014
3. St. Edmund's-bury.



King Sweyn (Forkbeard)





ETHELRED II - RESTORED

AD 1014



UPON the death of Sweyn, his son Canute was proclaimed king of England by the Danes. But the English recalled Ethelred, promising to support him on the throne, against all the attempts of the Danes, whose government was become insupportable.

Ethelred, encouraged by the good reception his son met with, whom he had sent before to sound the people's inclinations, returned to England. He was received with great demonstrations of joy; and his subjects swore allegiance to him again, as though he had begun a new reign, his flight being considered as a sort of

abdication of the crown.

The eagerness of the English to throw off a foreign yoke, made them flock to the king with such zeal and haste, that he soon found himself at the head of a powerful army. His first expedition plainly shewed, his misfortunes had made no great alteration in him. Instead of marching against the Danes, he made use of his forces to be revenged on the men of Lindsey[1], who had some way displeased him. After he had gratified his passion by the chastisement of these people, he prepared to march and fight the Danes, who little expected so sudden a revolution. Though Canute had for him all the Danes, and the same forces which his father Sweyn had conquered England with, he did not think fit to hazard a battle. On the contrary, before Ethelred was advanced near enough to oblige him to fight, he led his troops to the sea-side, and embarking them, set sail for Denmark. But before his departure, he ordered the hands and feet of the hostages, he had in his power, to be cut off, leaving them thus mangled on the shore.

Canute, it appears, had a younger brother, named Harold, who being regent in the absence of his father Sweyn, had seized upon the kingdom for himself. This obliged Canute to leave England, with a precipitation which seemed to be an effect of fear rather than sound policy, as it really was. This prince did not believe he ought to abandon the kingdom of his ancestors, for the sake of a strange and newly conquered country, ripe for a general defection.

As soon as Ethelred saw himself freed from the Danes, he resumed his old maxims, and imposed, on several pretences, excessive taxes[2], which raised great murmurings among the nobles and people.

To these occasions of public complaint, he added others of a more private nature, which destroyed all the hopes entertained of his amendment. Morkard and Sifferth, lords of Danish extraction, who had firmly adhered to the interest of the king and their new country, were sacrificed to his avarice. To draw these two earls into his snare, the king convened a great council at Oxford, where he caused them to be murdered, and then seized their estates, as though they had been condemned by the common forms of justice[3]. Alghitha, widow of Sifferth, was shut up in a monastery, to which confinement she was indebted for her after greatness.

Edmund, the king's eldest son, passing that way, some time after, had a mind to see a lady so renowned for her beauty, and became so enamoured of her, that he married her, against his father's consent.

A.D 1016] The calm which England enjoyed after the retreat of the Danes, lasted but one year. Canute, having got possession of the throne of Denmark, immediately set out for England, and, when least expected, landed a numerous army at Sandwich. Ethelred, being then indisposed, Edmund his son, with Streon duke of Mercia, his son-in-law, had the command of the army against the Danes. Edmund soon perceived his brother-in-law was a friend to Canute.

This discovery induced him to divide the army into two bodies, that he might be separated from him, not daring to punish the traitor, for fear of exciting a revolt in Mercia. Besides, He dreaded his father's displeasure, who would never be persuaded, that his son-in-law held intelligence with the Danes. Canute, taking advantage of this division of the English forces, made large conquests immediately; and the treacherous Edric, who had joined Edmund with no other view but to betray him, finding he had lost his aim, openly declared for Canute. This would have been rather an advantage than a detriment to the king's affairs, if the traitor had not carried with him a considerable body of troops, with forty ships of war. This desertion, which proved very serviceable to Canute, was a mortal blow to Ethelred. The people went over in crowds to the Danes, in proportion as the king's affairs fell to decay.

Canute's expectations daily increasing by these successes, he turned his arms against those of the Mercians, who continued in their allegiance to the king, and at length, with the assistance of Streon, entirely subdued them. After which, he formed a design to attack Ethelred in Wessex itself. He had the more reason to expect success in this enterprise, as Edric had artfully instilled into the Mercians that were in the English army, a notion that it was a sin to bear arms against a prince, in possession of their country.

All that Edmund could obtain of these troops, was, that they would follow the king when he commanded the army in person, refusing to fight under any other general. In this extremity, Edmund used all possible endeavours to persuade the king his father, who feigned himself sick at London, to take the command of the army. But the more Ethelred was pressed, the more he was confirmed in his suspicion of a design to deliver him to the Danes, imagining the English had no other way to make a peace with them. As he durst not quit London, where he thought himself safe, he refused to go to the army; and the prince his son had the vexation to see his troops disperse, without being able to oblige them to stand a battle.

In these wretched circumstances, Edmund saw no remedy but to go himself to London, and try to persuade the king to head the army. He prevailed at last with great difficulty, and by his extraordinary care raised another army more numerous than the former: His design was to give Canute battle, persuaded as he was, that nothing but a signal victory could retrieve the affairs of the English. Ethelred came to the army according to his promise, but upon his arrival was seized by his usual fears, and returned to London with all imaginable speed.

After his departure, the army being much weakened by the retreat of the Mercians, who obstinately refused to fight without the king at their head, Edmund was obliged to keep at a distance from the Danes, for fear of engaging at a great disadvantage. Canute finding no farther opposition, soon saw himself in condition to complete the conquest of the whole kingdom.

Edmund perceiving he was unable to stop the progress of the enemy, resolved to go and join Uthred earl of Northumberland, who had levied some troops in the north. They ravaged together those parts of the country that sided with the Danes[4], whilst Canute and the duke of Mercia laid waste the southern counties that persisted in their obedience to Ethelred[5]. But Canute did not long suffer his friends to be exposed to the ravages of the English. The moment he was informed of what passed in the north, he marched thither with the utmost expedition, and

compelled Edmund and Uthred to retire into Lancashire. Uthred, finding he was no match for Canute, thought best to submit to the Danish king, who continued him in his government, though but for a short time. As he plainly saw the Earl had changed sides merely by compulsion, and had reason to fear he would not remain faithful, he caused him to be put to death; and placed Eric a Danish lord in his room.

Edmund being at a loss how to act, retired to his father at London, and earnestly pressed him to exert himself on the present occasion; but all to no purposes. Ethelred, who till then had feigned himself sick, fell dangerously ill in reality, and died soon after, in the fiftieth year of his age, and the thirty-seventh of his reign[6]. Never was England in a more deplorable state; than in the reign of this prince.

He had by his first wife Elgiva, Edmund, who succeeded him; Athelstan, who died in his childhood; another son called Edwy, and three daughters. Edgiva the eldest was married to an English earl, who was slain in battle. Edgith his second, had the misfortune to fall to the lot of the traitor Edric duke of Mercia. Edgina the youngest was wife of Uthred earl of Northumberland. By Emma of Normandy his second wife, he had Alfred and Edward, and daughter named Goda, who was first married to Walter earl of Mantes; and, afterwards, to Eustachius earl of Boulogne. Ethelred has commonly the surname of the Unready given him by historians, either because he was often surprised by the Danes, or was never ready when he was to go to the wars. At his coming to the crown; he found the kingdom in a rich and flourishing condition, but left it at his death in extreme poverty and desolation.

Notes to Ethelred II Restored

1. One of the three divisions of Lincolnshire, viz. Holland, Kesteven and Lindsey. The Saxon annals tell us, the men of Lindsey had provided the Danes with horses, and designed to join with them in their ravages.

2. Particularly twenty-one thousand pounds, for his fleet and army, at Greenwich. Anno. 1014. Sept. 28, there was such an inundation of the sea, that it overflowed several towns, and drowned great numbers of people.

3. Florence of Worcester, and Matthew of Westminster relate, that these two earls were privately accused by Edric, who wished for their estates, of treasonable practices against Ethelred, by whose order Edric invited them to a feast, where he caused them to be treacherously murdered. Their dependents, who went about to revenge their deaths, were forced to fly into St. Fridesvide's church in Oxford, which being set on fire, they perished in the flames.

4. Staffordshire, Shropshire, and Leicestershire.

5. Buckingham, Bedford, Huntingdon, Lincoln, Nottinghamshire; and so through Northumbria towards York.

6. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral.





EDMUND II - SURNAMED IRONSIDE



AFTER Ethelred's death, the city of London and all the lords there present proclaimed his son Edmund king of England. But the Danes, and all the counties in their possession, declared for Canute[1]. However, as the English obeyed him against their will, abundance of them came and offered their service to Edmund; whom they regarded as their lawful prince. By this means the two kings were more upon an equality, which occasioned many engagements with various success, that served only to prolong the war, but not to decide the quarrel.

The city of London being a great support to Edmund, the Danish king thought of taking it from him, believing the depriving him of his chief strength would put a speedy end to the war. With this view, whilst Edmund was elsewhere employed, he approached London, and forming the siege, carried it on vigorously. But the brave resistance of the citizens giving Edmund time to throw in succours from the other side of the Thames, Canute saw himself obliged to raise the siege. Having thus lost his aim, he used many stratagems to surprise the enemy, or draw him off from London. This last project succeeding he went and laid siege a second time to the city. But he met with the same difficulties as before; the inhabitants, by a very obstinate defence, giving Edmund time to come to their relief.

Canute, in consequence, suddenly raised the siege, to go and offer Edmund battle, who was no less desirous of deciding the quarrel by a single action, and therefore, instead of retreating, marched towards him. In this battle, which was very bloody, they both gave signal proofs of conduct and courage; but after a long fight, they were obliged to part with almost an equal loss. The English army, however, had like to have been worsted by the artifice of Edric Streon, who was on the side of the Danes. This lord perceiving that the English troops, contrary to his expectation, fought in such a manner as made the victory dubious, cut off the head of one Osmer a soldier, who very much resembled Edmund, and fixing it on the top of his lance, advanced to the foremost ranks, and exposing it to the view of the English, cried out aloud, Fly, fly, you scoundrels, behold the head of your king, in whom you trust.

The English were thunderstruck at this sight, which would have occasioned their defeat, had not the king shown himself with his helmet off to his astonished troops, and by that means revived their courage. The battle lasting till night, without any visible advantage on either side, Edmund prepared to renew the fight next morning. But Canute, who had other designs, retired, during the night[2], to his fleet that expected him, and embarking his troops, rowed along the coast for some time, to amuse the enemy, who could not guess his intention. When he thought he had deceived Edmund, he landed his forces, and besieged London a third time. But succeeding no better than formerly, he retired.

We meet with extreme confusion in this part of the English history. What may be gathered from historians for certain,[3] is that the two Contending princes fought within the space of one year, five pitched battles. One of these battles, fought in Essex, would have infallibly proved fatal to Canute, had it not been for the pernicious advice of Edric Streon, who, continually changing

sides, was then in the English army. Edmund had been so generous as to pardon him, and so easy as to give credit to his oaths of being entirely devoted to his service for the future. Nevertheless, this traitor let no opportunity slip of serving the Danes. As he saw the Danes, hard pressed by the English, retreating in great disorder, he artfully persuaded Edmund to stop the pursuit of the fugitives, by making him apprehensive their despair might cause them to rally, and the victory, by some unforeseen accident be snatched out of his hand.

This artifice, which had formerly taken effect with Ethelred, wrought also with Edmund, who suffered himself to be guided by this fatal advice. Tired at length with dissembling his real sentiments, Edric threw away the mask in the last battle near Assandun[4]. Whilst the two armies were engaged, he suddenly deserted his post, and joined the Danes. This treachery caused such consternation among the English, that throwing down their arms, they thought of nothing but saving themselves by flight.

Edmund's loss upon this occasion was irretrievable, the flower of the English nobility being slain in this unfortunate battle. The earls Alfric, Godwin, Ulfketel, Ethelward, all of distinguished valour and loyalty, fell that day with their swords in their hands in defence of their king and country.

After this important victory, Canute considered himself as irresistible. He could not conceive, that Edmund would ever be able to bring another army into the field that durst look him in the face. But as the English were in extreme danger, they made extraordinary efforts for their deliverance. Edmund had for him the hearts of his subjects, and particularly the Londoners, who were always ready to give him effectual proofs of their affection and loyalty. Therefore, so far was he from being depressed by this grievous misfortune, that he rallied his dispersed troops, and drawing together a more powerful army than what he had lost, went in quest of his enemy, who was marching to Gloucester.

Canute, unwilling to give him time to augment his forces, made haste to meet him with intent to offer him battle. The two king's stood in sight of each other for some time, at the head of their respective armies[5], without either giving the signal of battle. The dread of the event held them equally in suspense. Edmund was sensible, he should be irretrievably undone, if he lost the day; and Canute foresaw a general defection of the English, should he be vanquished. At last, Edmund, who was strong and robust of body, and for that reason surnamed ironside, sent Canute word, that to prevent the great effusion of blood, that was about to be spilt, he judged it proper for them two to decide the quarrel by single combat.

Canute returned in answer, that, though he came not behind his antagonist in courage, being of a weak constitution and small stature, he should take care how he engaged in so unequal a combat. Adding, if Edmund were desirous to prevent any further effusion of blood, he was ready to refer the decision of matters to the principal officers of the two armies. This proposal was received with joy by the nobles of Edmund's party, who anxiously desired to find some expedient to put an end to so fatal a war. Edmund, on the contrary, would fain have decided the quarrel by arms, but durst not oppose the nobility.

Plenipotentiaries, therefore, were nominated on both sides, who met in a little isle in the Severn, called Alney, over against Gloucester, to consult about settling the pretensions of the two princes. After a short conference, the peace was concluded by the partition of the kingdom. Wessex, that is, all the country south of the Thames, with the city of London, and part of the ancient kingdom of Essex, was assigned to Edmund. Canute had for his share the kingdom of Mercia, including Northumberland and East-Anglia. Every thing being settled, the two kings met in the Isle of Alney; and mutually swearing to preserve the peace, Edmund retired into Wessex, and Canute into Mercia.

AD 1017] Edmund did not long enjoy the peace, that cost him so much pains. Edric Streon, his brother-in-law, fearing the union of the two kings might, prove fatal to him, bribed two of the king's chamberlains to assassinate him. Thus died that brave prince, who deserved a better fate. He had not sat on the throne a whole year. But in so short a reign, he had given frequent proofs of an undaunted courage, a consummate prudence, and a generous temper.

He left, by Alghitha his wife, two sons, Edmund and Edward, of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. He had also a natural son, named Edwy, who was afterwards put to death by Canute.

The duke of Mercia, who was greatly pleased with doing Canute so signal a service, made haste to bring him the first news of it; but Canute detested so barbarous a deed. However, he concealed his sentiments, because he thought he should have farther occasion for the traitor, and he even promised to advance him above all the peers of the realm.

Notes to Edmund II

1. Simeon of Durham, and others, say, that the bishops, abbots, and many of the English nobles, coming to Southampton, abjured the race of Ethelred, at the same time that they chose Canute for their king, and swore fealty to him; who also swore to them in matters ecclesiastical and civil, to be their faithful lord.

2. This battle was fought at Seorstan, which Camden supposes to be Sherston in Wiltshire; others think it to be the place where four stones, called shire-stones, part the four counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Worcester, and Warwick. Milton makes the battle to have lasted two whole days, and Canute to have marched off the second night; so doth Matthew of Westminster, and he relates Edric's stratagem under the second day.

3. A. D. 1016

4. Ashdon in Essex near Walden. Canute built a church here in memory of this battle, to pray for the souls of the slain; and caused four hillocks to be thrown up, as monuments of those that were killed' in battle. Two of the monuments being opened, and searched into, there were found three stone-coffins, with abundance of pieces of bones in them, and many chains of iron, like those on horses' bits. These hills are commonly called Bartlow hills, though they lie in Ashdon parish. Some think it was Bartlow church that was built by Canute.

5. The place was Deerhurst in Gloucestershire.





CANUTE THE GREAT THE SECOND DANISH KING OF ENGLAND

A. D. 1017



THE death of Edmund furnished Canute with an opportunity and pretence of becoming master of Wessex, which the lawful heirs were little able to dispute with him. It was not properly by force of arms, that he undertook to carry his point, but by extorting the consent of the nobles. How averse soever the English might be to the Danish government, he was in hopes, the dread of plunging the kingdom into fresh calamities, would make a still deeper impression on them, and constrain them to comply with his desires.

Wherefore he required a general assembly to be held in London, in order to set forth his claim. Edmund having left two sons and two brothers, Canute did not seem to have any right to pretend to the crown. But he maintained, that in the treaty of the Isle of Alney, the agreement was, that the survivor of the two kings should succeed the other. He moreover plainly intimated, that he should not stand to the determination of the assembly, if the matter were decided against him.

In this perplexity, they were contented with intimating that they would agree, that Canute should be declared protector of Edmund's children, till the eldest was of age to govern. By this means, though they placed not these princes on the throne, at least they preserved their rights entire. But Canute was not satisfied with a borrowed power. He was willing to succeed Edmund in his own right, by virtue of the treaty of Alney; a right, which though all did not acknowledge, none durst openly contest. His reasons were thought, or feigned to be thought, very solid; and without a closer examination, he was acknowledged and proclaimed king of all England, and all the lords, both English and Danish, swore allegiance to him.

Then he was crowned, and immediately after, he divided the kingdom into four governments, Mercia, Northumberland, East-Anglia, and Wessex. The first he gave to Edric Streon, the second to Eric, the third to Turkill, reserving Wessex to himself, without appointing either duke or earl. Canute was too politic not to perceive the motive of the English in acknowledging him for their sovereign. Though all that came near him took care to hide their sentiments, he was sensible that an enmity of nearly two hundred years standing, and fomented by continual wars, could not be extinguished in so short a time. For this reason, he resolved to use all possible precautions to hinder the revolt of the English.

To this end two things were equally necessary, namely, the gaining the affection of his new subjects, and the getting rid of those that could give him any uneasiness. As he well knew, the most effectual means of becoming popular, was to cause justice to be administered fairly and impartially, he publicly declared there should be, for the future, no distinction between the English and Danes. After this he published an edict, ordering that every county should be governed by the same laws as in the time of the Saxon kings. He excepted, however, the northern counties, because they were peopled with scarcely any other but Danes, who had introduced particular

laws of their own, which there was no occasion to alter. The same edict denounced the severest punishments against malefactors, of what nation soever; the king's aim being to let the English see, they had no reason to fear any respect of persons. These wise precautions produced the intended effect. The people were never weary of testifying their satisfaction to see themselves governed by their ancient laws, under the protection of an equitable prince, who seemed to have no other view but the happiness of his subjects.

As soon as Canute saw the progress he had made in the hearts of the English, he believed he might venture without danger upon the second branch of his project, the freeing himself from those that gave him most uneasiness, and particularly the Saxon princes. Alfred and Edward, brothers of the late king, were retired into Normandy, with their mother Emma, plainly foreseeing it would not be in the power of the West-Saxons to do justice to the royal family.

As for Edmund's two sons, they remained in England, being too young to think of providing for their safety. These two princes, notwithstanding their youth, made the new king somewhat uneasy, by reason of the people's affection for them. He would not have scrupled to put them to death; but he could not take such a step in England, without running the risk of becoming odious to the English. However, as he did not think himself perfectly safe, whilst these two princes were alive, he gave them in charge to one of his domestics to carry them into Denmark, under colour of sending them abroad to travel. But in reality it was only to have it in his power the more easily to dispatch them out of the way, when their absence should have lessened the affection of the people.

The person entrusted with the princes, being conscious of the king's designs, instead of carrying them to Denmark, conducted them to the king of Sweden, discovering at the same time his master's intentions. The king of Sweden gave the English princes a very kind reception; but, not to quarrel with Canute, he sent them to the court of Solomon, king of Hungary, his relation, who undertook to provide for their education.

In process of time, Solomon gave one of his daughters in marriage to Edmund, and to Edward, his sister-in-law Agitha, daughter of the emperor Henry II. Edmund died soon after his marriage; but Edward had five children, of whom two died in Hungary: the rest were, Edgar Atheling, Margaret, and Christian.

There were still in England two sons of Ethelred II both named Edwy, of whom one was born in wedlock, the other a bastard. Canute was no less troubled about these than the other princes; and therefore, to make himself easy, he banished them the realm. Sometime after, recalling the first, under pretence of being reconciled, he found means to dispatch him out of the way. The other, after enduring many hardships in his exile, returned into England, where he kept himself concealed, being privately supplied by his friends with necessaries for his subsistence.

Canute would have been glad to be freed with the same ease, from the trouble occasioned by Alfred and Edward, brothers of king Edmund, who had retired into Normandy with their mother. But he knew not how to get them out of the hands of duke Richard II their uncle. He was even apprehensive, that the duke, whose forces were not to be despised, would one day espouse their cause. To prevent this danger, he bethought himself of gaining the duke of Normandy to his interests, by demanding in marriage his sister Emma, widow of Ethelred II. and by offering him at the same time Estritha one of his sisters.

These proposals being accepted, the two marriage solemnities were celebrated in a magnificent manner. If Emma were pleased with being once more queen of England, it was not so with Alfred and Edward her sons, who openly showed their dislike. Edward especially, never forgave her for thus scandalously espousing their mortal enemy of her first husband. Both of them were extremely incensed against her for consenting, that the succession to the crown of England should

be settled by the marriage-articles, on the heirs of her body by Canute. This was cutting off, as far as lay in her power, from the family of Ethelred, all hopes of ever mounting the throne.

After Canute had, by these precautions, secured himself from all danger from the Saxon princes, bethought it time to get rid of some lords, whose fidelity he suspected, or whose power made him uneasy. The three principal ones were the duke of Mercia, the duke of East-Anglia, and the earl of Northumberland. These lords had done him signal services, and this it was that rendered them formidable to him, being sensible how it lay in their power to hurt him, if they should undertake it. He knew Edric Streon was a villain, and as he could not rely on his fidelity, he resolved to begin with him.

He quickly found a fair opportunity to execute this design, by even doing an act of justice very acceptable to the English. This lord, having one day the insolence to upbraid him publicly, for not rewarding him for his past services, and particularly for freeing him from so formidable a rival as Edmund, affording him the pretence he had some time been seeking. Edric had no sooner dropped these words, but the king answered in a rage, since he was so audacious as openly to avow so black a treason, of which he had hitherto been only suspected, he should receive his due punishment.

At the same instant, without giving him time to reply, he commanded him to be immediately beheaded, and his body to be thrown into the Thames. It is said, he ordered his head to be fixed on the highest tower in London, that he might perform his promise to the traitor, to raise him above all the peers of the realm. Thus Edric received at last the just reward of his treacheries. Eric, earl of Northumberland, was banished the kingdom shortly after, Turkil, duke of East-Anglia, terrified at these examples, voluntarily absented himself. Several other lords of less note falling in like manner a sacrifice to the king's jealousy or suspicions, their posts were filled with those in whom he placed greater confidence.

From this time the English began to enjoy a state of tranquillity, which appeared the sweeter to them, as they had been many years strangers to it, and had no reason to expect. However, they were forced to pay a tax of fourscore thousand pounds[1], for the arrears due to the Danish army, great part of whom were sent back to Denmark[2].

AD 1019] Canute finding the whole kingdom in profound tranquillity, and having no reason to fear a revolt, resolved upon a voyage to Denmark. His presence was absolutely necessary there, on account of the Danes and Vandals being at war. He took with him such of the English lords as he suspected, lest his absence should encourage them to raise disturbances in the kingdom. For this reason also he carried with him the flower of the English troops, under the command of earl Godwin, son of Ulnoth, mentioned in the reign of Ethelred II.

Godwin, who. was a person of great experience signalised himself in this war, by a very bold and successful action. The two armies of the Danes and Vandals being near each other, Canute designed to attack the enemy early the next morning. Whilst his troops were refreshing themselves, in expectation of the battle, Godwin privately withdrawing from the camp, with the body under his command, fell upon the Vandals in the night, and putting them in disorder by this sudden attack, made great slaughter of them, and routed the whole army.

At break of day, Canute preparing for the battle, and not finding the English at their station, did not question but they were revolted to the enemy. While he was perplexed in his thoughts at his unexpected accident, he saw the English general arrive, who was come himself to bring him news of his victory. Though this action was of dangerous consequence, the king was very willing, upon this occasion, to dispense with the rules of military discipline, which required that Godwin should be punished for daring to fight without orders. He received him with abundance of caresses, and as a reward for so signal a service, created him earl of Kent. This earl became at length the greatest lord in England.

This war being happily ended, Canute returned into England, where immediately after his arrival he convened the great council[3], to confirm the Danish laws, which, for some time, had been observed in part of the kingdom, and particularly in Northumberland. There were then in England three sorts of laws, namely, the West-Saxons, Mercian, and Danish laws[4]. But these last had not the sanction of public authority, till Canute, at his return from Denmark, put them upon a level with the ancient laws of England.

AD 1025] Canute, after his return into England, lived in profound tranquillity, wholly employed in causing justice and peace to flourish, and rendering his subjects happy. But some time after he was obliged to discontinue these pacific employments, and take a second voyage to Denmark, then invaded by the Swedes. This expedition was not very prosperous. The English troops he carried with him were great sufferers; and he had the mortification to meet with misfortunes, which he had not been used to.

Two years after, unmindful of his ill success in the last war with the Swedes, he entered into another, which made him ample amends for his former losses. He resolved to revive some old pretensions to Norway, which had never been fully cleared. Ohms, who then sat on the throne of Norway, was a weak and un-war like prince. Canute thought it would be easier for him to prosecute his pretensions in the reign of such a prince, than at any other time. He began the execution of his design with privately forming a strong party among the Norwegian lords.

As soon as matters were ripe, he sailed for Denmark with a considerable body of English troops, and suddenly landed them in Norway. Olaus, who had no intelligence of his intention, surprised at this attack, and more so, to see the major part of his subjects side with the enemy, found there was no remedy but to abandon his kingdom, and save himself by flight. Upon his retreat, Canute was crowned king of Norway. Two years after, the dispossessed prince, attempting to recover his dominions, was slain by his own subjects, and Canute remained peaceable possessor of the kingdom.

Olaus, after his death, was ranked among the saints, and honoured with the title of martyr. The Conquest of Norway fully satisfied Canute's ambition. From that time, laying aside all thoughts of warlike affairs, he gave himself up to acts of devotion, and made it his principal business to enrich the churches and monasteries. Among other things he took particular care to give public marks of his respect to St. Edmund, formerly king of East-Anglia, slain by the Danes. Perhaps he gave some credit to the story of his father Sweyn's being killed by that saint, or rather, was willing to stifle the report. However this be, he built a stately church over the grave of that prince, and very much enlarged the town where his body lay buried, which from him had the name of St. Edmundsbury.

The monastery, which was in the same place, and called Bredicsworth, had been endowed by Edward the Elder. Canute enlarging the building, and augmenting the revenues, this religious house became one of the finest and richest in the kingdom[5].

After he had shown these marks of his devotion, he resolved upon a journey to Rome, which he performed in 1031. Whilst he staid there, he made many rich presents to the churches, and confirmed all the grants of his predecessors to the church of Rome and the English College. He obtained certain privileges for the English churches, and some advantages for those who came to visit the tombs of the apostles. But the most material privilege, procured for the English, was an exemption from paying toll as they passed through Italy.

The emperor Conradus I, who was then at Rome, and with whom he had contracted a strict friendship, granted him the same privilege. The king of France was pleased also, to grant the same favour to the English in his dominions. By this means the English pilgrims and travellers were eased of a great expense, and freed from a thousand insults and oppressions to which they were liable in France, Italy, and Germany[6].

Having spent some years longer in continual acts of devotion[7], he died in 1036, in the nineteenth year of his reign[8].

Historians have not failed to give this prince the surname of Great, a title which seems peculiar to conquerors, as if true grandeur consisted in invading the rights and properties of others. But, not to confine grandeur within such narrow bounds, Canute may be said to merit this glorious title, if we consider only the latter part of his reign. The latter end of his was very different from the beginning.

It might have been thought he had not been the same prince, who, to gain kingdoms that belonged not to him, had caused so much blood to be spilt, and trampled upon religion and justice. Some years before his death, he became humble, modest, just, and truly religious. If there be no exaggeration in what historians say of him, from the time he was thoroughly settled on the throne of England, he gave daily marks of piety, justice, and moderation, which gained him the affection of his subjects, and an universal esteem among foreigners.

We have the following story of him, which shows at once his good sense, and to what height courtiers are apt to carry their flatteries. One day, as he was walking by the seaside, at Southampton, his attendants, extolled him to the skies, and even proceeded to compare him to God himself. Offended at these extravagant praises, and willing to convince them of their folly and impiety, he ordered a chair to be brought, and seating himself in a place where the tide was about to flow, he turned to the sea, and said; "O sea, thou art under my dominion, and the land I sit on is mine: I charge thee not to presume to approach any further, nor to dare to wet the feet of thy sovereign." Having said this, he sat still for some time, as expecting the sea should obey his commands. But the tide advancing as usual, he took occasion from thence, to let his base flatterers know, that the titles of Lord and Master belong only to Him whom the land and the sea obey. He is said, from that moment never to have worn his crown again, but ordered it to be put on the head of the crucifix at Winchester.

He left three sons, all of a fit age to govern, to whom he bequeathed his three kingdoms by will. Sweyn the eldest, and a bastard, had Norway for his share. To Harold his second son by the same woman, he gave England; and to Canute or Hardicanute, whom he had by Emma of Normandy, the kingdom of Denmark. Gunilda, his daughter by the same princess, was wife of the emperor Henry IV.

As we shall soon have occasion to mix the affairs of Normandy with those of England, it will not be improper here to give some account of what passed among the Normans.

Richard II, duke of Normandy, dying in 1026, Richard III, his son, succeeded him, who reigned but one year, and by his death left the dukedom to Robert his brother; who was no sooner in possession, but he showed an inclination to espouse the interest of Alfred and Edward his cousins, sons of his aunt Emma and Ethelred II. As they were both at his court, and he could not help pitying their case, he believed his recommendation might procure them some favour in England. Persuaded of this, as soon as he heard of the death of Edmund's son, he sent ambassadors to Canute, to entreat him to give the two princes some part of the kingdom of their ancestors.

This embassy arrived in England, when Canute found himself so firmly seated in his throne, that he thought he might safely disregard the solicitations of the duke of Normandy. Robert was so incensed at his refusal, that he resolved to compel him to do justice to the English princes. To that purpose he fitted out a powerful fleet, and embarking with a numerous army, resolved to make a descent upon England, where he did not question but the English would readily join him. But meeting with a violent storm, he had the mortification to behold the greatest part of his fleet perish; a loss which could not be easily retrieved. In the mean time, these preparations satisfying Canute, that the duke of Normandy really intended to attempt the restoration of his cousins, he endeavoured to amuse him with offering them part of the kingdom of Wessex.

But Robert would not have been imposed upon by this offer, had not his misfortune at sea constrained him to suspend the execution of his design, as it induced Canute also to go from his word. Some time after, Robert took a resolution to go in pilgrimage to Jerusalem, deferring, till his return, his intended invasion of England. But he died in his way home. He left only a natural son, called William, on whom, before his departure, he settled the succession. This is the same William the bastard, whom we shall see hereafter ascend the throne of England.

Notes to Canute The Great

1. The Saxon Annals, say; it was seventy two thousand pounds, Huntingd. and Brompt. eighty thousand pounds, besides eleven (Florence says fifteen) thousand paid by the city of London. Hence may be seen the flourishing condition of that city in those days, since it could pay almost a sixth part of this great tax.

2. By the persuasion of queen Emma. Canute kept forty ships in England.

3. At Cirencester, at Easter. Flor. Worc. says it was at Oxford, and that the English and Danes unanimously agreed to observe the laws of Edgar.

4. West-Saxonlaga, Merchenlaga, and Denalaga. Bishop Nicolson in his letter to Dr. Wilkins, prefixed to his edition of the Saxon laws, makes it appear that this threefold division of the English laws is imaginary, and proceeded from the Norman interpreters mistaking the meaning of the word laga, which they thought was the same with lay or law. Whereas laga signifies region, territory, or province, as is plain from several places in the Saxon laws, wherein Denalaga means the same as among the Danes, or in the territories of the Danes.

5. Leland, who was an eye-witness of this town and monastery in their splendour, gives this description of them. "A city more neatly seated the sun never saw, hanging upon a gentle descent, with a little river on its east-side; nor a monastery more great and stately, whether we consider the endowments, largeness, or unparalleled magnificence. The monastery itself looks like a city, so many gates it has (some whereof are brass) so many towers, and a church, than which nothing can be more stately, to which as appendages, there are three more of admirable beauty and workmanship in the same church-yard. There are two still entire, viz. St. Mary's, and St. James's; the third, which lies in ruins, was the great church of the monastery. Besides the immense value of the gifts at St. Edmund's tomb, the revenues at the dissolution amounted to one thousand five hundred and sixty pounds a year."

6. The only memorable action which Canute performed, after his return from Rome, was an expedition against Malcolm, king of Scotland, whom he compelled to pay homage, for the exercise of sovereignty in Cumberland, as a prisoner of England.

7. He founded also the noted Abbey of St. Bonnet's in Holme in Norfolk. He gave rich and extraordinary jewels to the church of Winchester, of which one is recorded to be a cross, worth one year's revenue of the kingdom. It was consumed with the Abbey by fire, in Henry I's time. He gave also to Coventry the arm of St. Augustin the great doctor, which he bought at Pavia in his return from Rome, and is said to have given for it a hundred talents of Silver and one of Gold.

8. He died at Shaftsbury the 12th of November, and was buried in the old monastery in Winchester.





HAROLD I. SIRNAMED HAREFOOT, THIRD DANISH KING OF ENGLAND

A. D. 1039



WHEN Canute espoused the princess of Normandy, it was agreed, that the children by that marriage should succeed to the crown of England. Notwithstanding this agreement, Canute left England to his son Harold, born in Denmark, and gave Denmark to Hardicanute, his son by Emma of Normandy[1]. He probably did not think the English had been sufficiently inured to the Danish yoke, to venture to place on their throne his youngest son, who was not above fifteen or sixteen years of age, and possessing no extraordinary genius.

However, that article of his will met with great opposition from the English. They looked upon Hardicanute, born in England, of a lawful wife, widow of one of their kings, as the only person capable of succeeding; whereas Harold was considered but as a foreigner and a bastard. The Danes, on the contrary, were firmly bent to perform Canute's last will and testament. This difference might have been of ill consequence, if Harold had not with the utmost expedition seized the treasure laid up by the king his father at Winchester[2].

By the help of this, he was enabled to make himself feared, and to gain several of his opposers. Consequently, in a general assembly in Mercia, he secured a majority of voices, and caused himself to be proclaimed king of England. The Danes were all for him, and the English on the north of the Thames, who, looking upon the Danes as their masters, durst not directly oppose their will.

Meantime, the West-Saxons convened an assembly of the states of Wessex, and by the management of earl Godwin, Hardicanute was elected and proclaimed king of Wessex, the West-Saxons leaving the Mercians free to acknowledge Harold for their king.

Hardicanute, who was in Denmark, made no haste to come and take possession of the crown of Wessex. During his absence, earl Godwin held the reins of the government in an absolute manner, independent of Emma, the queen-mother, who was not beloved by the West-Saxons. Meanwhile Harold was contriving to gain by secret practices, a kingdom which he found himself unable to subdue by arms. As he had been deprived of it by the sole credit of earl Godwin, he believed there was no readier way to ascend the throne of that kingdom than by gaining the earl to his interest.

He took advantage therefore of his brother's absence, to make Godwin his friend, by promising, as it is said, to marry his daughter. Godwin, finding his account in what was proposed by Harold,

promised to place him on the throne of Wessex. This affair was so dexterously managed, that suddenly, on pretence that Hardicanute neglected to come into England, Godwin procured Harold to be acknowledged king of Wessex.

Emma, mother of Hardicanute, perceived, as matters stood, there was no possibility of recovering the crown for her son Hardicanute; and therefore, turning her thoughts another way, she formed a project, the execution whereof seemed to her very practicable, which was, to cause one of her sons by Ethelred, to mount the throne. To succeed in this design, there was need of great prudence and dissimulation. Accordingly she feigned to be unconcerned at the expulsion of Hardicanute, confining herself to Winchester, where she daily frequented the churches, and seemed to be wholly taken up with devotion. When she imagined the king was sufficiently convinced of her disregard of state affairs, she begged leave to send for the two princes her sons at Winchester, whom she had not seen since her second marriage.

Her request being granted, Alfred and Edward arrived soon after in England, without discovering any other intention but to visit their mother. Godwin, ascertaining the queen's design, acquainted Harold, who seemed startled, but the earl, not easily alarmed, gave him to understand, that the conspiracy was yet only in embryo, and might with ease be prevented; that the difficulty did not lie so much in avoiding the present, as in guarding against future danger; and that, to secure himself, it would be policy to make away with the two Saxon princes.

Harold, approving of this project, appeared ignorant of the queen's designs, and the two princes continued some time at Winchester, without his showing the least uneasiness upon their account: At length, he invited them to come and pass a few days at court, before they returned into Normandy, whither, he affected to believe, they intended shortly to return. Emma, in great suspense on this occasion, sent Alfred her eldest Son to the king, and detained Edward under some pretence she imagined in case Harold had any ill design, he would defer the execution he had both the brothers in his power, seeing it would be to no purpose to make away with one, whilst the other was alive. Godwin, pleased that his advice had thus far succeeded, managed so that he was sent to meet Alfred, Alfred's train, composed of Normans, were at first charmed with the respect Godwin paid to the prince. But their satisfaction was quickly turned into great consternation, when the prince and all his attendants were stopped at Guilford castle, whither they had been carried under colour of refreshing themselves.

Alfred was immediately conducted to Ely, and, after his eyes were put out, shut up in a monastery[3]. The unhappy prince[4] had scarcely time to be sensible of his misfortune, as he died a few days after, either from grief, or by some more violent means. Godwin was afterwards charged with his murder. As soon as Edward was informed of his brother's tragical death he speedily returned into Normandy, for fear of the like treatment. Shortly after, Emma, receiving orders to depart the kingdom, retired to Baldwin earl of Flanders, who assigned her the city of Bruges to reside in.

Whilst these things were transacting, Hardicanute, waking at length from his lethargy, formed a design of recovering the kingdom of Wessex. For that purpose he came to Bruges, to consult with the queen his mother.

He would probably have found it very difficult to execute this design, had not the opportune death of Harold removed all difficulties. This prince died in 1039, without issue, and without having done any thing memorable[5]. He was surnamed Harefoot, because his foot was all over hairy, or, as others affirm, because he was light and swift of foot. His death happened in one of the hardest winters that had ever been known in England.

Notes to Harold I

1. She is called Elgiva by the Saxon Annals and others, which is the Saxon name for Emma.

2. And which he had left to his queen Emma.

3. His attendants were tortured in the most cruel manner, by Godwin's order, and decimated; that is, nine were killed, and the tenth only saved; six hundred are said to have been put to death in that manner.

4. A. D. 1037

5. He laid a tax of eight marks on every port, towards fitting out sixteen ships. He made but one law, mentioned by Selden, which was, that if any Welshman coming into England without leave, was taken on this side Offa's ditch, he should have his right hand cut off by the king's officer.



Harold Harefoot





CANUTE II OR HARDICANUTE THE FOURTH DANISH KING OF ENGLAND

A. D. 1039



AFTER the death of Harold, the great men of both nations, unanimously made an offer of the crown to Canute, surnamed the Hardy, not to denote his courage, but his strong constitution. He was then at Bruges, concerting measures with the queen his mother, for the recovery of the kingdom of Wessex, by means of a powerful aid promised him by the earl of Flanders. The news of Harold's death putting an end to their consultations, he came to England with forty ships, which he had brought from Denmark[1].

He was received with great demonstrations of joy, both by the English and Danes. Earl Godwin himself, was even the foremost to do him homage.

The new king began his reign with an uncommon act of cruelty. The ceremony of his coronation was hardly over, when out of impatience to be revenged on his brother, though dead, he commanded his body to be dug up and thrown into the Thames[2]. But all his care to prevent the body from being buried again, proved ineffectual. Some fishermen finding the corpse floating on the water, delivered it to the Danes, who interred it in the burying place of their nation in London[3]. It is further added, the king being informed of it, ordered the body to be thrown once more into the river; but, being found again, it was privately buried at Westminster.

AD 1040.] Shortly after, Hardicanute imposed an exorbitant tax on the kingdom[4], for the payment of the fleet sent back to Denmark. The inhabitants of Worcester opposed the levying this tax with the greatest heat. They even proceeded so far as to kill two of the collectors. Whereupon the king immediately ordered Godwin duke of Wessex, Leofric duke of Mercia, and Siward earl of Northumberland, to draw their forces together, march to Worcester, and destroy the city with fire and sword. The city was accordingly burnt, after having been plundered four days; but the inhabitants had leave to retire into a small island in the Severn, named Bevercy, till the king was appeased.

Not long after prince Edward; son of Ethelred and brother of the king by the same mother, appeared at court. Meeting with a kind reception, he demanded justice against Godwin, charging him with the murder of his brother Alfred. The king was pleased with having an opportunity to punish the earl, and so much perhaps for the death of prince Alfred, as for What he had done in favour of the late king. He was cited therefore, to appear and answer to what was alleged against him. But Godwin, who knew the covetous temper of the king, wisely diverted the storm by a magnificent present.

This present was a galley, with a gilt stern, manned with fourscore choice soldiers, each. of whom had upon his arm a gold bracelet weighing sixteen ounces, with helmets and swords all gilded, and a Danish battle-axe adorned with gold and silver, hanging on his left shoulder, and a lance

of the same in his right hand. Every thing in the galley was answerable to this magnificence. By means of this noble present, the earl was acquitted, upon taking his oath, that he had no concern in the death of prince Alfred[5].

AD 1041] Hardicanute did not long enjoy a crown which he was unworthy to wear. He died suddenly in the second year of his reign, at the nuptial feast of Danish lord at Lambeth. Perhaps his death was hastened by poison[5]; but his excessive cruelty and gluttony, rendered him so odious, that he died unlamented, nor was any enquiry made into the manner of his death.

Notes to Canute II or Hardcastle

1. And lauded at Sandwich, seven days before Midsummer.
2. Earl Godwin is said to have been a principal instrument in this brutal transaction.
3. Which constant tradition affirms to be the church and churchyard of St. Clement Danes.
4. Of twenty one thousand and ninety nine pounds, For the army; and eleven thousand forty eight pounds, for his thirty two ships.
5. This year also, as Brompton tell us, Hardicanute sent over his sister Gunilda to the emperor Henry, to whom she had been betrothed in her father's time; before she went, the king kept her nuptial feast with that magnificence, in cloaths, equipage, and feasting: that Matthew Westminster says, it was remembered in his days, and sung by musicians at all great entertainments. After the princess had been sometime in Germany, she was accused of adultery, and could find, it seems, no better champion than Municon, a little page she had brought with her from England, to vindicate her honour. She took it so heinously to be accused, that she forsook her husband, and retired to a monastery, where she ended her days.
6. He was buried in the old monastery in Winchester, by his father Canute.



CANUTE II OR HARDICANUTE





EDWARD III - THE CONFESSOR



HARDICANTUTE leaving no issue, Edward, son of Ethelred II, and Emma of Normandy, was the only prince then in England that had any pretensions to the crown. It was reasonable that the race of the Saxon kings should be restored to the throne of which they had been unjustly dispossessed. It seemed no less right also to recall out of Hungary prince Edward, son of Edmund Ironside, and place him on the throne preferably to his uncle, who was one degree farther removed.

On the other hand, the uninterrupted succession of four Danish kings, who had possessed the throne for the space of twenty-eight years, with the consent of the English, presented another difficulty, as Sweyn, son of Canute the Great, was still alive. It is true, he was reckoned by some as a bastard[1]. It was, therefore, no easy thing to settle the succession. Edward, son of Ethelred II, having spent most part of his days in Normandy, was little known in England. Besides, his merit, which was not very conspicuous, was incapable of adding any thing to his right. However, a fortunate advice, which necessity constrained him to follow, procured him a support, by which alone he was enabled to maintain his pretensions: Though it was but a few months since, that Edward had prosecuted earl Godwin as the murderer of his brother, he was advised to court his protection, which he succeeded in obtaining. However, before Godwin engaged in Edward's cause, he required certain conditions, and made him swear to marry his daughter Editha. The prince complied with these terms, notwithstanding his inward reluctance to espouse the daughter of a thane, whom he looked upon as the murderer of his brother Alfred.

As soon as Godwin had received from Edward the assurances he demanded, he convened a general assembly at Gillingham, where, by his management, that prince was acknowledged and proclaimed king[2], with unanimous consent.

The triumph of the English, upon this signal and decisive advantage, was at first attended with some insult and violence against the Danes; but the king, by the mildness of his character, soon reconciled the latter to his administration and the distinction between the two nations gradually disappeared.

Finding the crown much impoverished by the profuse grants of the late kings, Edward made a general revocation of those grants, and thus obtained a great accession of both wealth and power. This was indeed a severe blow to many families; but as it fell chiefly upon the Danes, they met with little pity, and no redress. He also filled his coffers, and increased his revenues, by seizing the treasures, and confiscating the estates, of his mother queen Emma, who, he considered, had treated him very unkindly in his adversity[3]. These methods of enriching the crown, however, exceptionable in themselves, became popular, by enabling Edward to take off the odious and ignominious tax called Danegelt, under which the English had so long groaned.

Edward fulfilled his engagements to earl Godwin, by marrying his daughter Editha; but though that lady was one of the most amiable and accomplished of her sex, both in mind and person, it was an unhappy and unfruitful marriage, owing, if the monkish historians are to be believed, to a vow of chastity which the king had made; for which he is highly commended by those writers, esteemed a saint, and surnamed the Confessor.

Edward at length received advice, that Sweyn, king of Norway, son of Canute the Great, designing to prosecute his claim to the crown of England, was preparing for an invasion. No less terrified than his subjects, he made some preparations to repulse an attack at which he was extremely alarmed. Gunilda, niece of Canute the Great, fell a sacrifice to his fears. She was constrained to abandon the kingdom and her family, to prevent her contriving a war, which, however, suddenly arose between the kings of Denmark and Norway, broke the measures of the latter, and brought peace to the English contrary to their expectation.

Some time after, Sweyn was deposed by Magnus son of Olaus the martyr, whom Canute by Magnus dispossessed of Norway. Magnus was no sooner master of that kingdom, but he carried the war into Denmark; with intent to dethrone the king, whose name was also Sweyn. This last demanding assistance of England, Godwin was of opinion, that to keep up the war between these two princes, an aid of fifty sail should, be sent him. But Syward and Leofric, for reasons unknown, prevented the council from coming to this resolution. For want of this assistance, Sweyn was dethroned, but restored to his kingdom, after the, death of his enemy.

The troubles in Denmark hindered not the Danish pirates from putting to sea, and carrying terror to the English coasts. In the year 1046 twenty-five sail of Danes arrived unexpectedly at Sandwich, whence they carried off a great booty. Then sailing for Essex, they carried away great numbers of slaves of both sexes and all conditions. The English were exceedingly terrified; but Godwin, Syward, and Leofric, took such just measures that the Danes hastily retired. Their retreat, however, did not entirely restore peace to the kingdom, the coasts being that same year infested by a new enemy. Swane, son of Godwin, having seduced an abbess[4], with whom he was in love, and not daring to stay in England after such an act, retired into Denmark, where he in vain expected his pardon, by the mediation of the earl his father.

But whether Godwin was willing he should be chastised, or found the king inexorable, Swane was not able to procure a pardon so soon as he imagined. When he saw that he was made to wait for it, he manned eight ships, and made open war upon the English, plundering the merchants, and committing such barbarities on the inhabitants of the sea-coasts, as exceeded those of the most cruel enemies. His insolence gave Godwin's enemies a great advantage, who took occasion from thence to exasperate the king yet more against the earl and his family. To free himself from this situation, he desired earl Beorn, son of Ulphon and Estrith, sister of Canute the Great, to use his interest with the king in behalf of his rebellious son.

Though Beorn had openly declared against Swane, he was prevailed with by Godwin to speak to the king, who complied with his request. upon certain conditions. The matter being so far adjusted, Beorn went to Swane, to persuade him to submit to the king's mercy; but Beorn was ill rewarded for his pains. Swane imagining the earl was come to betray him, slew him with his own hand, and ordered his body to be thrown into the sea. This brutal action prevented a reconciliation for the present; but the king afterwards forgave him.

AD 1048] Godwin had also to deal with other enemies, who were continually stirring up the king against him. The Normans, who were very numerous at court, looked upon Godwin as a professed enemy, because he loudly complained of the great regard the king had for them, and made no scruple to say, they would soon become as troublesome as the Danes. His complaints were not altogether groundless. Edward; who was educated among the Normans, went into all their manners, and expressed such an affection for them, as raised the jealousy of the English.

The Norman language was more generally spoken at court than the Saxon. The king's favour to the Normans rendering them insolent, they would have had all the world cringe to them. Godwin, instead of seeking their protection, affected, by his continual raileries, to show, he thought it not in their power to hurt him. Robert, archbishop of Canterbury, of all the Normans, was in greatest credit at court. The king had taken him from a monastery in Normandy to promote him to the bishopric of London, and afterwards to the archbishopric of Canterbury, to the great regret of several English bishops, who aspired to that dignity. This prelate, who was naturally haughty, and whom the royal favour made still more arrogant, kept no measures with Godwin, who, on his part, showed the utmost contempt for him.

Matters standing thus at court, an accident happened when least expected, which brought earl Godwin to the brink of destruction. Eustace, earl of Boulogne[5], being come to visit the king his brother-in-law, was honourably and kindly received, Edward having a particular affection for him. Some time after, as he was on the road, in his return to France, one of his people, who had been sent before to provide lodgings at Dover, quarrelled with a townsman and killed him. The inhabitants ran to arms, to seize the murderer, who stood upon his defence, with some of the earl's domestics that were with him. Eustace, entering the town in the midst of this tumult, and seeing his people attacked, was obliged to take their part, without having time to enquire into the occasion of the quarrel. But being overpowered with numbers, twenty of his retinue were killed on the spot, and himself narrowly escaped with his life.

Enraged at this affront, he returned to the king at Gloucester, where the court then resided, and loudly demanded satisfaction. Edward, willing to do him justice, ordered Godwin to march immediately with some forces, and chastise the rioters that were under his government. But instead of obeying the king's order, the earl warmly replied, "It was not the custom in England to punish people unheard, and the rights and privileges of the subjects ought not to be violated; that the accused should be summoned, and make satisfaction with their bodies or estates if guilty, or if innocent, should be discharged." Adding, in a very haughty tone, "that being earl of Kent, it was his business to protect those that were under his government, against the insults of foreigners."

Some say, he even charged the king to deliver up the earl of Boulogne into his hands, that he might be punished upon the spot, if found guilty of this riot. Edward was extremely provoked with this bold answer, which was not only a refusal to obey his commands, but a stinging reproach for his partiality to foreigners. The archbishop and the rest of the Normans eagerly improved this occasion to exasperate him against the earl.

How angry soever the king might be, he was forced to conceal it, not being in condition to punish on the spot, a lord who rivaled him in power. Syward and Leofric being absent, there was no appearance of succeeding, should he attempt any thing against Godwin, without being first assured of their concurrence. Meanwhile, as he was in the utmost impatience to be revenged, he dispatched trusty messengers to these two lords, to inform them of his resolution to chastise Godwin, and to order or rather desire them, to repair to him immediately. How privately soever this matter was transacted, Godwin having notice of his design, took his measures accordingly, and drew together some troops which were soon reinforced with others from his son's government. An incursion of the Welsh at the same time into Herefordshire, furnished him with a pretence to levy his army.

In the interim, the king causing him to be summoned before a general assembly convened at Gloucester, he came with his sons, but so well attended, that he had nothing to fear. Thus guarded as he was, it would have been so dangerous to call him to an account, that the king was advised by the most prudent to hide his resentments; and in pursuance of this advice, such a peace was accordingly patched up, but proved of no long continuance. Edward, who could not digest the affront he had received, took new measures against Godwin, in gaining some of his principal friends by presents and promises. He at length convened a general assembly, where Godwin and

his sons were summoned to appear. Being informed that a design was laid to apprehend them, they refused to come, without a safe conduct and hostages for their security. They were consequently banished the kingdom, and the combination against them was so strong, that they saw themselves suddenly abandoned by their principal adherents, and forced to submit to the sentence passed upon them. Edward not content with being thus freed from Godwin, shut up the queen in the nunnery of Wharwel, in Hampshire, of which his sister was abbess. Godwin retired to the earl of Flanders, father-in-law of his son Toston, and Harold sailed for Ireland, where he hoped to meet with assistance. To deprive the earl and his sons of all hopes of returning, the king disposed of all their posts, the chief whereof were conferred on Alfgar son of Leofric.

AD 1052] In the mean time, Godwin took measures to right himself by arms. The earl of Flanders furnishing him with some ships, he infested the eastern coasts of England, whilst Harold his eldest son did the same to the western. But these faint attempts answering little purpose, Godwin returned to Flanders, where for two years together, he left no stone unturned to influence the earl his protector. Baldwin at length granted him an aid capable of rendering him formidable, whilst, on the other hand, Harold equipped a good number of ships in Ireland. Edward having intelligence of these proceedings, fitted out a fleet, the command of which was given to Randolph of Nantes his nephew[6], and another lord named Odda.

These two admirals hearing Godwin had been seen off Rumney point, resolved to go and attack him; but he had time to retire, and, his measures being thus broken by the king's expedition, he steered his course again for Flanders, and sent back Harold into Ireland. Meanwhile, he kept his fleet always ready, that he might improve any occasions that should offer; and, shortly after, one presented itself. Whether the two admirals were wanting in point of duty or conduct, or through court intrigues, which history has not taken care to discover, Edward on a sudden removed these two lords from the command of the fleet.

This alteration, and the breaking of some of the inferior officers, raised such discontents among the sailors, that they deserted in crowds. Thus the king's ships not being in condition to keep the sea; were brought up the Thames in order to be new manned. Godwin by his spies being informed of this disorder, put to sea, and made a descent on the Isle of Wight, where he extorted great sums from the inhabitants, whilst he waited for his son Harold to join him. After their junction, they sailed up the Thames, and advanced towards London, where the king's fleet lay.

Edward would have gone himself with such ships as were ready, and tried the fortune of a battle; but his council opposed it. They represented to him, that instead of hazarding his person in an action, the consequences whereof might prove very fatal, it would be more for his own and the kingdom's advantage, to try to make Godwin return to his obedience, by gentler methods. This was wholesome advice; but the king would hardly have followed it, had not Godwin, who was informed of what was transacting at court, smoothed the way, by saving him the shame of making the first advances.

He sent the king word, that he was not come to fight against his sovereign, but most humbly to entreat him to hear his justification: that his coming thus armed was only to defend himself against the insults of his enemies, and he should always glory in being the most faithful of his subjects. Edward, however, refused to hearken to any accommodation; affirming, he could not resolve to pardon his brother's murderer. His obstinacy had nearly produced a fatal effect. Godwin's army, entirely consisting of foreigners, who were in hopes of enriching themselves with the plunder of London, they were for engaging the king's fleet without delay.

But the earl, who was perfectly informed how the council stood disposed, checked the ardour of his soldiers, and behaved in a very submissive manner with regard to the king. His moderation was attended at last with the success he expected. Edward was prevailed with by the principal lords, and especially Stigand bishop of Winchester, to receive the earl into favour again. He even agreed, he should be acquitted, by the general assembly of the kingdom, of the murder of prince

Alfred, which he was charged with afresh, but on condition he should give hostages for his good behaviour for the future. Godwin submitting to the king's terms, put into his hands his son Ulnoth, and his grandson Hacune, who were immediately sent into Normandy; Edward not thinking he could secure them in England. Godwin and his sons were reinstated in their estates and dignities, and the king' restored the queen his wife.

Upon the first news of the agreement between the king and the earl, the archbishop of Canterbury retired to the monastery of Jumiege in Normandy. Shortly after his departure, he was banished the kingdom by an assembly general, as an incendiary and fomenter of divisions between the king and his subjects. Stigand was made archbishop in his room, on supposition that the see was become vacant by his banishment, a supposition which the court of Rome would not allow. Thus ended the affair of Godwin.

This lord seemingly was, undone for ever; but, contrary to the expectations of his enemies, his disgrace tended only to render him more powerful and formidable. This same year he lost his third son Swane, who going on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, died on the road in some place in Syria, where he fell into the hands of robbers[7].

The court of England enjoying a profound quiet, William the bastard, duke of Normandy, took this opportunity to pay a visit to Edward[8]. Some say, Edward sent him word by archbishop Robert, that he designed to make him his heir, and that his aim in this visit was to get a confirmation of this promise. However that be, during William's stay in England, the king took a pleasure in showing his gratitude for all the civilities he had received both from him and the duke his father. It is pretended, after having thus publicly testified his gratitude, he privately gave him a more substantial mark of his affection, by making his will, and nominating him his heir and successor[9].

If it be true that Edward made such a will, which, however; no body ever saw, it is more probable he did it at this time, than when he was in Normandy. Whilst the throne of England was filled by the Danes; whilst Alfred his eldest brother, and also the children of Edmund Ironside were alive; how could Edward foresee he should ever be king of England? But at the time William the bastard was in England; Edward, bearing still a mortal hatred to Godwin, notwithstanding their feigned reconciliation, might suspect the earl of aspiring to the crown, and hope by this settlement to break his measures. But after all, it is much more probable he made no will; but contented himself with giving the duke of Normandy some verbal promise.

However this be, it was this will, real or forged, or this verbal promise, that furnished the duke with a pretence of becoming master of England after the death of Edward. But it is very likely, Godwin knew nothing of this will, or verbal promise; which may be plainly inferred from his taking no measures to prevent a Norman prince from reigning over the English, though he was a sworn enemy to the Norman nation. The situation of affairs then in England, where Godwin almost equalled the king himself in power, also renders incredible what some have ventured to advance, that Edward got his will in favour of duke William confirmed by a general assembly.

AD 1053] Edward in vain used all means to obstruct Godwin's advancement. His power was grown to such a height, that it might have proved of dangerous consequence, had not death freed the king from this formidable subject. If we believe certain historians, Godwin's death was attended with extraordinary circumstances.

They say as the king was one day sitting at table with the earl, he let fall some words, which plainly showed, the murder of the prince his brother was not yet thoroughly blotted out of his mind. Godwin rose up, and addressing himself to the king, "I perceive, my lord, (says he, with great emotion) by what you just now said, you still think me guilty of the death of the prince your brother, though I have been publicly acquitted of it. But to give you a fresh proof of my innocence, I pray God that this morsel I am going to eat may choak me this moment, if I had any

hand in the death of that prince." It is pretended, that upon saying these words, he went to swallow the fatal morsel, but it stuck in his throat and choked him instantaneously. It is agreed, however, that Godwin died suddenly, as he sat at table with the king. Harold his eldest son succeeded him in all his posts, those he had himself before his father's death being given to Alfgar, son of Leofric duke of Mercia.

The death of Godwin caused no great alteration. Harold had the same friends, and the same creatures, and the same interest as the earl his father when alive. All the difference to be observed between the father and son, was, that the son was of a temper more courteous and pliable, carried himself with much less pride, and behaved in a more respectful and submissive manner to the king. Of as great parts and abilities, as his father, but withal of more honour and virtue, Harold firmly gained to his interest both the nobles and people, by his civil obliging behaviour; whereas Godwin's haughtiness and pride frequently lost him many friends.

AD 1054] The tranquillity of Edward's reign, was now a little disturbed by a quarrel with Macbeth king of Scotland, who had made himself master of Cumberland. This little kingdom, which had been long under the protection of the crown of England, was contended for between Macbeth, and Malcolm, a lord of the royal family of Cumberland. Edward, espousing the cause of Malcolm, commissioned Siward to restore him to his kingdom. This war was of short duration.

Siward by one decisive battle obliged Macbeth to abandon Cumberland, and leave his rival in possession[10]. Siward had scarcely finished this affair,[11] when he was seized with a distemper which laid him in his grave. When he found he was near his end, he caused his armour to be put on, and thus expired, declaring it dishonourable for a brave man to die in his bed. After the death of Siward, the government of Northumberland was conferred on Toston, brother of Harold.

It was not only by the king's favours that earl Harold daily got ground. His personal merit and liberal temper daily procured him such friends, as were able to support him against the attempts of the king himself. Alfgar son of the duke of Mercia, being of a restless and turbulent spirit, entered into a dangerous conspiracy; and privately held intelligence with Griffin king of Wales. Edward being informed of it, caused him to be accused of treason, and condemned to banishment. Alfgar retired to his friend Griffin, who received him with open arms, and cherished his discontent to the utmost of his power: Some time after they made an inroad together into Herefordshire and defeated Randolph of Mantes earl of that county, who had attempted to drive them thence.

Encouraged by this success, they began to make farther advances[12], when they met earl Harold, who stopped their career, put them to rout, and compelled them to retire into Wales, whence they durst not come forth any more. A peace being the consequence of this victory, Harold made use of all his interest to obtain a pardon for Alfgar, and got him restored to his estate and honours. By this uncommon act of generosity, he gained the friendship of Alfgar, and exceedingly increased the esteem people already had for him.

AD 1057] The reputation acquired by Harold in his last expedition, his generosity to Alfgar, his affable and obliging behaviour, his beneficent temper, gained him the hearts of the people. It began to be the subject of public discourse, that since the king had no heirs, no one was more worthy to succeed him than Harold. Hitherto Edward seems to have intended to leave the crown to the duke of Normandy; for, though he was not ignorant, that he had a nephew in Hungary, he had never once thought of recalling him, and securing him the succession.

But the moment he found, that earl Harold aspired to the crown, or at least, that the people marked him out for his successor, he judged it would be very difficult to set up a foreign prince, against an English earl of so great power and credit. This consideration probably induced him at last to send for his nephew Edward, son of Edmund Ironside, out of Hungary. Prince Edward came into England, bringing with him his young son Edgar, with Margaret and Christina his daughters, all three born in Hungary.

The arrival of this prince, son of a king of England, whose memory was dear to the nation, could not but be very agreeable to the English; and, therefore, without hesitation, they considered him as the king's presumptive heir, their esteem for Harold giving place to their affection for the royal family. But this prince, who seemed designed for the crown, died soon after his arrival in England, leaving his just, though empty title, to Edgar his son, surnamed Atheling[13].

Leofric, duke of Mercia, quickly followed him, this same year[14]. Historians give this lord a great character; but especially they extol Godiva his wife, above all the women of her time. It is related of this lady, that in order to free the inhabitants of Coventry from a heavy tax laid on them by her husband, she readily consented to a very extraordinary condition, on which the earl promised to ease them of their burden, namely, that she should ride stark naked from one end of the town to the other. This condition gave the Burghers little hopes of being relieved. But Godiva performed it, covering her body with her hair, and commanding all persons to keep within doors and from their windows, on pain of death. Notwithstanding this severe penalty, there was one, who could not forbear giving a look, out of curiosity, but it cost him his life. In memory of this event, there is a statue of a man looking out of a window, always kept in a certain house at Coventry[15]. Alfgar succeeded to his father's earldom, by Harold's interest, who earnestly interceded for him[16].

AD 1062] Harold's ambition and hopes were revived by prince Edward's death. That prince had left a son who inherited all his rights, but so young, that it seemed very easy to supplant him. Besides, he might possibly die before the king. Accordingly, Harold resolved to improve the present favourable conjuncture. But before he openly discovered his designs, he thought it requisite to get out of the hands of the duke of Normandy, Ulnoth his brother and Hacune his nephew, whom the earl his father had given for hostages to the king. But though he demanded them very urgently, alleging, since Godwin was dead, there was no reason to detain them, and unjustly deprive them of the benefits of an English education, he could not prevail with the king.

Edward always excused himself with saying, they were not in his power, but the duke of Normandy's, and therefore to that prince he must make application. At length, Harold perceiving he could obtain no other answer from the king, desired leave to go into Normandy, and solicit the duke for their deliverance. His request was readily granted. Nothing could be more agreeable to the king, than the earl's resolution of going to Normandy, where he did not question but the duke would detain him. At least, he hoped duke William would take such measures as would free him from all obstacles the earl might lay in his way.

Harold having obtained the king's consent, embarked for Rouen, with a numerous and splendid retinue, without the least suspicion of the danger he was running into, being ignorant of the king's intention concerning the succession[17]. Hardly was he at sea, when a tempest arose, which drove him into Picardy, and compelled him to put in at one of the ports of the earl of Ponthieu, where he was immediately seized. As soon as he was known, he was carried to the earl of Ponthieu, who, glad to find himself master of so rich a prize, resolved to set a round price on his head.

It would have been difficult for Harold to get off, had he not, whilst he pretended to treat about his ransom, found means to inform the duke of Normandy of the accident befallen him. As soon as the duke received the news, he sent and demanded the prisoner of the earl of Ponthieu, telling him he had no right to detain a stranger that was coming to Rouen, and by a tempest cast on his coasts. The earl not daring to dispute with the duke, set the prisoner at liberty, who immediately went on to Rouen.

Duke William not being ignorant of Harold's design with respect to the crown of England, was at a loss how to act. He had but two ways to take, both equally dangerous. Harold was either to be detained by force, or gained by fair means. If he took the first method, he was apprehensive of declaring too soon, as it was not for his interest, that the English should yet know, he had any

thoughts of the crown. Besides, Harold had so many friends in the kingdom, that it was to be feared; his detention would occasion a rupture between England and Normandy, which would break all the measures the king should take in his favour. And indeed, in case Edward died during the war, how was it possible for him to leave the crown to a prince actually in arms against the English nation? Moreover, Harold being duke of Wessex and earl of Kent, all the strong places in the southern parts were in the hands of his creatures; and it was this chiefly that could most obstruct the duke's designs.

In fine, the Duke had not perfect information what steps Harold had made to pave his way to the crown; as on his part, Harold was ignorant of the designs of the king and duke. The duke considered further that by detaining Harold, he should break the most sacred rights of hospitality, which a great soul cannot be guilty of without offering extreme violence to itself. These considerations induced him to take the other courses though it was no less dangerous. By discovering his intentions to Harold, he put it in his power to prevent their execution. However, believing he should gain him by this proof of his confidence, he plainly told him his hopes of one day mounting the throne of England, founded on the goodwill the king bore him[18].

This disclosure was followed with promises, in case he would support his pretensions, and the assurance of a reward proportionate to so important a service. He let him know moreover, that his ambition to aspire to the crown, though not of the royal family, was no secret to him, and endeavoured to make him sensible; how difficult it would be to attain his ends. To divert him from his purpose, he represented to him all the obstacles he was of course to expect, as well from Edgar, as the other English lords, who would look on his ambition with a jealous eye.

To these considerations he added another that was no less urgent. He plainly told him, though he should be so fortunate, as to surmount all other obstacles, he would still find in him an enemy, who wanted neither money, nor arms, nor friends to support a right he was resolved to defend to the last drop of his blood. In short, he represented to him, that if he was bent to pursue his first project, instead of securing, as it was in his power, a grandeur, second to none but the supreme, he hazarded a certain good; for a very uncertain prospect.

Harold .was too wise not to see, that, on this occasion, he had but one course to take; which was, to pretend to be convinced by the reasons the Duke had alleged. He returned him therefore in answer, that indeed, before the arrival of prince Edward, he had believed if the king died without heirs, he was as worthy to ascend the throne as any other nobleman of the kingdom; He even owned, he had begun to take some measures, which inspired him with hopes of success, but had dropped his design since the coming of Edward, being sensible there was no room to pretend to the crown, as long as there were princes of the royal family in England. He added, since he was acquainted with his pretensions, and the king's pleasure, which till then he had been ignorant of, he had much rather the kingdom should be governed by so great a prince as the duke, than by Edgar Atheling, who scarcely knew how to govern himself.

To convince him the more of his sincerity, he required certain conditions, and among others, demanded one of his daughters in marriage, as a reward for his future service. Whatever Harold required was immediately and gladly complied with. But as the princess, the duke designed for him, was too young, the intended marriage was deferred till a more convenient time. Meanwhile, duke William not trusting wholly to Harold's bare word, made him swear on the Gospels, that he would punctually perform his promises, especially, that he would never attempt to mount the throne of England[19].

This agreement being made, they parted, both of them extremely well satisfied in outward appearance, and Harold returned into England[20]. He was no sooner at liberty, but he looked upon his oath as extorted, and consequently not binding. He could not understand upon what foundation the duke of Normandy pretended to the crown or England, or by what right Edward could transfer it to a foreigner. And therefore, so far was he from any thoughts of standing to his

engagements, that he resolved to take advantage of the duke's confidence, and contrive juster measures to frustrate his designs. If hitherto he had entertained any scruple with regard to prince Edgar, it entirely vanished upon consideration that in mounting the throne himself he should do no injury to that prince, as the crown would be otherwise disposed of even by his. uncle the king. He laboured therefore more and more to secure an interest in all the great lords of the kingdom. The duke of Normandy was absent, and but little known in England, where moreover the Normans were extremely odious.

Prince Edgar, by reason of his youth, was in no condition to oppose designs so detrimental to him. As for the king, he was so unresolved in the .affair of the succession, that he promoted the interest neither of the prince his nephew, nor of the duke. He was no doubt at a loss how to reconcile his promise to the duke of Normandy, with his recalling his nephew from Hungary. He thought only of passing his days in peace, without troubling himself about what should happen after his death[21]. Thus every thing concurring to favour Harold's designs, he neglected nothing that might confirm the good opinion conceived of him by the English. Two opportunities that offered themselves presently after, were extremely favourable to him.

AD 1063] The Welsh renewing their incursions under the conduct of Griffin their king, Harold and Toston joined their forces to repulse them. They were so fortunate in their expedition, that, after several advantages gained upon the Welsh, they compelled them to dethrone Griffin, and become tributary to England. Griffin being afterwards restored, and renewing the war with the English. Harold marched to the frontiers, and struck such a terror into the Welsh, that they sent him the head of their king[22].

This event, which showed how formidable Harold was to the enemies of the state, confirmed the English in their opinion, that he, who knew so well how to defend, deserved to wear the crown.

Harold had another opportunity to add lustre to his glory, as it enabled him to give proofs of his moderation and equity, as he had lately done of his valour and conduct. Toston his brother, earl of Northumberland, treated the Northumbrians with such severity, and committed so many acts of injustice, that at last, the people not being able to bear his oppressions any longer, took up arms against him, and expelled him from Northumberland. This action being of dangerous consequence, Harold was ordered to chastise them, and restore his brother.

As soon as he approached the borders, the Northumbrians sent deputies to inform him of the reasons of their insurrection. They told him, they had no design of withdrawing their obedience from the king, but only from an unjust and cruel governor, who exercised over them a tyrannical power, to which neither they nor their forefathers had ever been subject. Intimating withal, they were resolved to hazard their lives, rather than submit to the like power again.

However, they solemnly protested, provided the king would set over them one that would govern them according to the laws and customs of their country, nothing should shake their fidelity. To these remonstrances they added a long list of the grievances they had suffered under Toston, and entreated Harold to prefer the good of the public before the. interest of his own family. Harold finding this affair related chiefly to Toston, and that the king was not directly concerned in it, sent an impartial account of the whole matter to the court. At the same time he interceded for the Northumbrians, and, not content with obtaining their pardon, procured them Morkar, son of Alfgar duke of Mercia, for their governor[23].

By this equitable proceeding he entirely gained the affection of the northern people, and contracted a stricter friendship with Alfgar than before[24]. This union was absolutely necessary for the execution of his project. If this action strengthened the people's esteem and affection for him, it exasperated to the last degree his brother Toston, who never forgave him. But as it was not in his power to vent his fury on Harold's person, he turned his rage upon some of his

domestics, whom he caused to be cut in pieces, barrell'd up, and sent to his brother for a present. After so barbarous a deed, not daring to stay any longer in England; he retired into Flanders to earl Baldwin his father-in-law.

Whilst Harold was thus paving his way to the crown, Edward's thoughts were wholly employed about the structure of the church and monastery of Westminster, on which he laid out the money he had vowed to expend on a journey to Rome, which was dispensed with by the pope upon that condition. There was formerly in the same place, called Thorney by the Saxons, a famous temple sacred to Apollo. Sebert, king of Essex, embracing the Gospel, converted this Pagan temple into a Christian church, which was destroyed by the Danes: This church having been long buried in its ruins, Edward undertook to rebuild it, with an adjoining monastery, which from its lying west of London; was called Westminster[25].

The church and monastery being finished about the latter end of the year 1065, Edward was desirous the dedication should be performed in a very solemn manner[26]. To this end he summoned to meet at London a general assembly, at which were present all the bishops and great men of the kingdom. At this very time it was, that the king was seized with a sudden illness, of which he died in a few days. As soon as he found the time of his dissolution approaching, his principal care was to finish the ceremony for which the great men were assembled[27].

Meanwhile, Harold was not idle. Almost all the lords of the kingdom, both spiritual. and temporal, being then assembled at London, he found means to induce them to act in his favour, and come to a resolution of sending deputies to the dying king to entreat him to name a successor. But withal, these deputies had orders to insinuate to the king, that in case he nominated any but Harold, he would infallibly involve the kingdom in endless troubles, which would be inconsistent with his wisdom, and the affection he had all along expressed for his people.

Edward, not being then in a condition to examine a proposal of this nature, replied, that since they were met in a body, he left it to them to chuse the person they judged most worthy to rule over them. He died few moments after[28], leaving the succession as unsettled at his death as it was during his life.

This prince, who was born at Gisleip[29], near Oxford, reigned twenty-four years, without ever suffering any misfortune from foreign enemies: However, he cannot be said to have reigned happily, as he lived in continual fears, occasioned by the overgrown power of earl Godwin and his family. He was remarkable neither for his virtues nor vices; and his natural parts were but mean. His piety however, has been exceedingly extolled, and it is certain, he was very charitable, and expended in alms the sums lavished away by other princes upon their pleasure. This joined to his good nature, of which he gave from time to time uncommon instances, made him pass for a saint among the people; and particularly among the monks, who reaped great advantages from his liberal disposition. The opinion of his Sanctity taking by degrees deep root in the minds of the people; he was canonized by Pope Alexander III. Under the name of Edward the Confessor[30]

This prince was the first that touched for the king's evil if the opinion of his sanctity procured belief to this cure amongst the people: his successors regarded it as a part of their state and grandeur to uphold the same opinion. It has been continued down almost to our time and the practice was first dropped by the present royal family, who observed, that it could no longer give amazement even to the populace, and was attended with ridicule in the eyes of all men of understanding.

Edward was the last king of Egbert's race, though not the last, Saxon king, as his successor was of that nation. Before his reign, the West-Saxon, Mercian, and Danish laws were observed in England, namely, the first in Wessex, the second in Mercia, and the last in Northumberland; This prince reduced them all into one body; and from that time they became common to all England,

under the name of the laws of Edward, to distinguish them from those of the Normans, it introduced afterwards.

Notes to Edward III

1. A. D. 1041

2. He was crowned at Winchester, in 1042, on Easter-day.

3. The stories, however, of his accusing her of a participation in her son Alfred's murder, and of a criminal correspondence with the bishop of Winchester, and also of her justifying herself by treading barefoot, without receiving any hurt, over nine burning ploughshares, are to be regarded as monkish tales, propagated and believed by the silly wonder of posterity.

4. The abbess of Leon or Leominster in Herefordshire.

5. He was father to the famous Godfrey of Bologne, who won Jerusalem from the Saracens.

6. He was son to Goda sister of Edward, and the earl of Mantes. In 1052, Emma, king Edward's mother, died at Winchester, where she was buried.

7. Simeon of Durham says, being pricked in conscience for the murder of earl Beorn, he went from Flanders bare foot as far as Jerusalem, and in his return homeward died of a cold he got in Lycia.

8. Brompton says, he came in 1050, and St. Dunelm in 1051. They agree, that it was during Godwin's banishment, and not after his return.

9. Ingulph expressly says, that William had then no hopes of succeeding to the crown, neither was there the least mention made of it between them, at this time.

10. Duncan, king of Scotland, was a prince of a gentle disposition, but possessed not the genius requisite for governing a country so turbulent, and so much infested by the intrigues and animosities of the great, as Scotland was at that time. Macbeth, a powerful nobleman, and nearly allied to the crown, not content with curbing the king's authority, carried his ambition still further: he put his sovereign to death, chased Malcolm Kenmon, his son and heir, into England, and usurped the crown. Siward, whose daughter was married to Duncan, was a fit person to embrace the protection of this distressed family. In the action with Macbeth, he unfortunately lost his eldest son, Osborne. When the news was brought him, he was inconsolable, till he heard that the wound was in the breast, and that his son had behaved with the utmost gallantry.

11. A. D. 1055

12. They took and sacked Hereford, burning the church and monastery, with the relics of king Ethelbert treacherously slain by king Offa. Hereford, i. e. the ford of the army, was built as a frontier in the time of the Heptarchy. This was the only misfortune that ever happened to this city.

13. (i.e.) Truly noble, to denote his being of royal blood. His father, prince Edward, surnamed the Exile, was buried at St. Paul's, London.

14. He was buried in Coventry monastery, which he and Godiva built; and to which they gave so much gold, silver, and precious stones, that it was reckoned the richest in England.

15. Whether this be so or no, there is a procession or cavalcade still made there every year, in memory of Godiva, with a figure representing a naked woman riding through the city. The pictures of Leofric and Godiva were also set up in the windows of Trinity church, with this inscription:

**I Luric, for the rove of thee,
Do set Coventry toll free.**

This city had its name either from the Convent new built and richly endowed by Leofric, or as some will have it from a rivulet running through, now called Sherburn, but in an old charter of the priory, Cuentford. This city was famous for its walls, which were demolished in Charles the IInd's time, and the gates only left standing. In one of which, named Gofford, is to be seen the vast shield bone of a boar, which they tell you was slain by Guy earl of Warwick, after he had with his snout turned up the pool or pond now called Swaneswellpool, but in ancient charters, Swineswell. Here is also a fine cross built (33 Hen. VIII.) by Sir William Hollies, Lord mayor of London,

16. He died in 1059, and was buried at Coventry, by his father Ingulph p. 66.

17. Harold's going to Normandy is variously related as to the time, manner, and occasion of it. With our author agree Simeon of Durham, Brompton, and Eadmar, only with this addition, that king Edward foretold him what would happen to him. Malmsbury says Harold being at his house at Bosenham in Sussex, had a mind to go out in a fishing boat for his diversion, but sailing further than he was aware, a tempest arose and drove him as is here related by Rapin. Matthew Paris believes also, he was driven by a tempest to Normandy, where to gain his liberty he was forced to do as is here related. Rapin's account seems to be the most natural and likely; and it is corroborated, almost beyond a doubt, by the famous Bayeux tapestry, preserved in the Ducal palace at Rouen, and supposed to have been wrought by order of Matilda, wife to the emperor. Harold is there represented as taking his departure from king Edward, in execution of some commission, and mounting his vessel with a numerous retinue.

18. Simeon of Durham says, the duke told Harold that Edward, whilst at his court, promised to settle the crown of England on him.

19. The duke, we are told, secretly conveyed under the altar, on which Harold agreed to swear, the relics of some of the most revered martyrs; and when Harold had taken the oath, he shewed him the relics, and admonished him to observe religiously an engagement which had been ratified by so tremendous a sanction. Harold was astonished; but, dissembling his concern, he renewed his professions.

20. The duke made Harold swear to deliver up Dover as soon as king Edward was dead. Then loaded him with presents, dismissed him with his nephew Hacune, promising to bring over Ulnoth his brother when he himself should come into England.

21. There was one diversion, says William of Malmsbury, in which Edward took the greatest possible delight, viz. to follow a pack of swift hounds in pursuit of their game, and to cheer them with his voice, or to attend the flights of hawks taught to pursue and catch their kindred birds. Every day, after divine service, he took the field, and spent his time in these beloved sports.

22. He was beheaded Aug. 7. 1064. This was the end of Griffyth ap Llewelyn, to whom the Welsh chronicles give the character of a valiant and generous prince, and for the most part victorious, till now he perished by the treachery of his own people. Harold sent the head with the gilded stern of Griffin's ship, which the Welsh had brought with the head, to the king at Gloucester. Florence of Worcester adds, that the brothers of Griffin swore fealty to Harold as well as to the king.

23. Whom they themselves earnestly desired to have. The occasion of their insurrection was this: one Gospatric, a great officer in Northumberland, having been murdered at court by queen Editha's order, (though this seems contrary to her meek and pious temper) on account of a quarrel between him and her brother Toston, and he likewise killing in his own lodgings two of Gospatric's friends; and besides having laid intolerable impositions, or tribute, on all Northumberland, the people incensed at it, and at his other grievances abovementioned, rose to a man, and were not appeased till. he was banished the land.

24. He even married his daughter; an act by which be broke all measures with the duke of Normandy, one of whose daughters he had undertaken to espouse. William clearly perceived, that he could no farther rely on the oaths and promises of Harold.

25. It was dedicated to St. Peter. This fabric of Edward's was demolished by Henry III. about one hundred and sixty years after, who erected a new one, which was fifty years in building. The abbots very much enlarged it on the west-side, and Henry VII. added to the east a chapel, which Leland calls the miracle of the world. The re-edification, as it may be termed, of the exterior of this truly admirable and beautiful structure, reflects great credit on the taste and liberality of the nineteenth century.—The day after his death, Edward was buried in his newly dedicated church.

26. The dedication was performed December 28.

27. The great men also signed the charter of the privileges and immunities granted to the church, to which was annexed, as is said, the first Great-Seal used in England. Though Tyrrel thinks other kings might have seals to their charters, though they are now defaced.

28. On January 5, 1066.

29. Now Islip. In the chapel here, called the King's Chapel, not many years since stood a font, the same as tradition constantly delivered it down, wherein Edward the Confessor was baptized.

30. About two hundred years after his death. There was likewise a Bull of Pope Innocent IV. to fix the Anniversary, and order the solemnity of the festival.

31. It will not be amiss to relate the first instance of this hereditary miracle, as Mr. Collier calls it. A young married woman having the misfortune to be barren, and troubled at the same time with the distemper since called the king's evil, was, after all human means had been tried in vain, admonished in a vision to go to the king, by whose merits she should be cured upon his washing, touching, and signing with the cross, the parts affected. The woman ran to court next morning overjoyed, and told the king the whole matter; who thereupon disdained not to wash, touch, and cross her putrefied sores, which immediately breaking, and corruption and worms bursting out, the parts were in a few days healed without the least scar remaining and moreover her barrenness was removed, and she soon became the joyful mother of children. The kings of France claimed the same privilege, from the time of Clovis, the first Christian king of that country.





HAROLD II

A. D. 1066



HAROLD had so well laid his measures, that he was unanimously elected, by the assembly general, without any regard to the right of the lawful heir. The duke of Normandy's pretensions grounded on the late king's promise, do not seem to have been considered at all; and it is certain that this prince had never publicly declared his design of aspiring to the crown of England.

On the very day after Edward's death, and perhaps at the very time that his interment was taking place at Westminster, Harold was crowned king of England, in St. Paul's by Aldred, archbishop of York; and, from that time, there was not a person in the kingdom but what owned him for sovereign, and paid him obedience. But though he found no opposition at home, it was otherwise abroad. Not to mention the duke of Normandy, who, before he discovered it, put himself in a condition to execute his designs, earl Toston was preparing to disturb the king his brother in the possession of his new dignity.

He could not forgive him his impartial proceedings, when in favour of the Northumbrians, he dispossessed him of his government. As he was not ignorant of the duke of Normandy's intentions, with whom he had contracted a strict friendship, on account of their marrying two sisters, daughters of the earl of Flanders, he went to him to concert measures with him against the king his brother. Obtaining some ships either from William, or from the earl of Flanders, he landed some troops at Sandwich. But being informed the king was marching towards him, he set sail for the north and entering the Humber with his little fleet, made a descent on Yorkshire, and committed ravages as if he had been in an enemy's country.

Harold, not thinking it advisable to leave the southern parts, commissioned earl Morcar to go against his brother. The king remained at London, that he might have an eye to Edgar's party, and prevent them from exciting any troubles upon that young prince's account. To prevent discontent from breaking out into action; he also caressed, the prince. as well as those of his party. He even insinuated from time to time, that he had accepted the crown merely on account of Edgar's youth, willing they should understand, he meant to restore it to the prince when he was of age to govern. With this view, he created him earl of Oxford, and seemed to take particular care of his education, as it were to qualify him for the government of the kingdom.

Meanwhile, Morcar, accompanied. with his brother Edwin, earl of Chester, marched with all expedition against Toston, who was now on the south side of the Humber. He came upon him unawares in Lincolnshire, and his little army to flight, compelling him to betake himself to his ships. Toston finding he could do nothing considerable with so small a number of forces, steered towards Scotland, in expectation of assistance from thence. But perceiving the king of Scotland was not disposed to support him, he put to sea again, with design to make another descent on England: Prevented by contrary winds, he was driven on the coast of Norway, where he accidentally stumbled upon what he had been seeking so industriously.

Harold Harfager, king of Norway, had lately taken some of the Orcades[1], which belonged to Scotland, and was fitting out a more numerous fleet in order to carry on his conquests.

Toston being informed of this prince's designs, went directly to him, pretending that a favourable opportunity offered to conquer England, if he would but turn his arms that way. He told him, there were in the kingdom two powerful factions, both enemies to the king, the one for prince Edgar, the other for the duke of Normandy, and, therefore, the English being thus divided, it would not be difficult to subdue them. Adding, that he himself had a strong party in Northumberland, which would very much promote the execution of this design. Harfager, prepossessed by Toston of the practicableness of the thing, resolved to employ all his forces in Making so glorious a conquest.

Whilst the king of Norway was making his preparations, the duke of Normandy was no less seriously thinking of means to wrest from Harold a crown, he had so long been in expectation of. To proceed regularly, he sent ambassadors to Harold, to require him to deliver him up the crown, and in case of refusal, to charge him with the breach of his oath, and declare war against him. Harold told the ambassadors, " their master had no manner of right to the crown of England: that supposing the late king had disposed of it in his favour, a thing the English knew nothing of, it was contrary to the laws of the land, which allow not the king to give away the crown according to his fancy, much less to a foreigner.

As for his part, he had been elected by those, who had the power of placing the kings on the throne, and, therefore, could not resign it, without the breach of that trust reposed in him by the English. As for the oath, the violation whereof he was charged with, it having been extorted from him at a time when he had not the power to help himself, it was null and void, by the laws of all the nations in the world. In fine, he added, that he knew how to defend his right against any person that durst dispute it with him." This quarrel being of too great consequence to be decided without blows, each party took such measures as he judged most likely to prove successful.

Harold made every effort to increase his popularity. He lessened the taxes, and caused justice to be duly and impartially administered. His labour was not in vain. The English, charmed with his proceedings, resolved to sacrifice their lives and fortunes to support him on the throne to which they had raised him. Duke William, not ignorant of the resolution of the English, perceived he had no other way to attain his ends, but by setting on foot forces proportionable to those of the enemies he resolved to attack.

The main difficulty was, to raise a sum of money sufficient for the charge of so great an undertaking. Disappointed in an attempt to obtain it from an assembly of the states of Normandy, he bethought himself of an expedient, which succeeded to his wish. This was to borrow money of private persons; and, gaining some of the chief men, the rest were inspired with an emulation who should be most zealous in assisting their prince. William Fitz-osbern undertook to fit out forty ships at his own expense.

The most wealthy, every one according to his ability, subscribed very large sums: so that the duke by this method raised more money than he could have done by a public tax. But as this was not sufficient, he engaged several of the neighbouring[2] princes to furnish him with troops and transport, on condition of their having lands assigned them in England after the conquest. He even demanded the assistance of France; but it was not the interest of that crown that the duke of Normandy should become more powerful. Fortunately, however, king Philip, who was then a minor under the care of the earl of Flanders, obstructed not his proceedings[3].

Meantime William procured the pope's approbation of his undertaking, to whom it is said, he made a promise of holding the kingdom of England of the apostolic see. However this be, the pope very heartily espoused his cause, and sent him a consecrated banner[4], as a mark of his approbation. Moreover, willing that all Christians should know that religion was concerned in

this affair, he solemnly excommunicated all that should dare oppose the duke in the execution of this project. This approbation was of great service to the duke, as it furnished him with means to justify his intended expedition, and at the same time removed the scruples of such, as he was endeavouring to engage in his quarrel. But it had not the same effect in England. Whether the English knew nothing of the pope's excommunication, or saw it in its proper light, it prevented not Harold from equipping a large fleet, and raising a numerous army, with which he resolutely expected his enemy.

The charge of keeping so considerable an armament, could not but be very burthensome to the people, a thing the king would have been glad to avoid. After he had in vain expected some months the arrival of William, finding he did not appear, and the autumnal equinox approached, he imagined, pursuant to some false information he had received, that the duke had deferred his expedition till the spring. Accordingly, he thought he might safely lay up his ships for the winter, and disband his troops.

But as he was returning to London out of Kent, where he had given his last orders for disbanding the army, news was brought him that the king of Norway, accompanied with earl Toston, had entered the Tyne, with a fleet of five hundred sail. Surprised at this unexpected invasion, he hastily drew his army together again; but before they were ready to march, the Norwegians had made a great progress. Having sacked the counties on both sides the Tyne, they put to sea, and entering the Humber, landed their forces on the north side, and ravaged the country with inexpressible cruelties.

Morcar and Edwin, who were upon the spot, endeavoured to stop their career, with some troops levied in haste; but were so beaten that their whole army was destroyed. Flushed with this success, the Norwegians advanced towards York, and laid siege to the city, which they quickly became masters of the inhabitants, who were unprovided with all things necessary for their defence, choosing rather to surrender upon terms, than expose themselves to certain ruin. Meanwhile, Harold having drawn his army together, advanced with all expedition, to give the Norwegians battle, who having left their fleet in the Humber, were marching towards the north, to complete the reduction. of Northumberland, before they proceeded to other conquests. As they marched but slowly, and as Harold made all possible haste, he came up with them at Stamford bridge, on the river Dement, a little below York[5].

The Norwegians, upon his approach, entrenched themselves in so advantageous a post, that it seemed impossible to force them. They were posted on the other side of the river, where there was no attacking them but by the bridge, of which they were masters. Notwithstanding this, Harold, who was very sensible how much it behoved him to come to an engagement, ordered the bridge to be attacked without delay. The Norwegians stoutly defended it, but could not withstand the efforts of the English, though animated by the astonishing valour of one of their own men, who defended the bridge alone against the English army for a considerable time. At length, the brave Norwegian being slain[6].

Harold became master of the bridge, and passed his army over; then furiously falling upon the enemy, after an obstinate fight, entirely routed them. There had never been seen in England an engagement between two such numerous armies, each having no less than 60,000. men. The battle, which was very bloody, lasted from seven in the morning till three in the afternoon. Harfager. and Toston were both slain, and Harold obtained a complete victory.

Of the whole army that came from Norway in five hundred ships, the remains were carried off by Olaus son of Harfager, in twenty vessels, with the conqueror's leave. The booty which was taken upon this occasion was very great, since there was found in the camp all that the Norwegians had brought from home, and all they had plundered in the kingdom[7]. But Harold having been so impolitic as to retain the spoil to himself, raised such discontents in his army, as proved of very ill consequence to him afterwards[8].

This prince, who was naturally generous, should have secured the hearts of his soldiers by a liberality which would have cost him nothing, especially at a time when he stood in so great need of their service. But he considered, the expending this booty in the war against the duke of Normandy, would very much ease the people, whose affection he was desirous to preserve at any rate.

Whilst Harold was busied in the north, in rectifying the disorders occasioned by the Norwegian invasion, the duke of Normandy, who had long waited for a wind at St. Valori, set sail about the end of September, and had a speedy passage to Pevensey[9] in Sussex. it is affirmed, that in leaping ashore, he fell on his face; at which one of the soldiers said merrily, see, our duke is taking possession of England; which the duke took as a good omen[10].

Nobody appearing to oppose his landing, his first care was to run up a fort near the place where he disembarked, to favour his retreat in case of necessity. Some, however, will have it, that he sent his ships back to Normandy, to let his army see they had nothing to trust to but their valour[11].

After some days stay at Pevensey, he marched along the shore as far as Hastings, where he built a stronger fort than the former, resolving there to expect his enemy, of whom he had no intelligence. It was here he published a manifesto, shewing the reasons of his coming into England; namely, first, to revenge the death of prince Alfred, brother of king Edward; to restore Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury to his see and, thirdly, and principally, to offer the English his assistance to punish Harold for presuming to seize the crown, without any right, and directly contrary to his oath. Meanwhile, not to terrify the English, he charged his army to injure none, but such as were actually in arms against him. But neither this precaution, nor his manifesto gained him any friends.

The news of the descent of the Normans was quickly brought to Harold, who was still in the north, little expecting this invasion till the spring. By hasty marches, he came to London, where, upon a review, he found his army very much diminished, not only by the battle of Stamford, but by unusual desertions, occasioned by the discontent of his troops. However, all the nobility of the kingdom repaired to him, and offered their assistance on an occasion where it was no less their interest than his to repel the foreigners. Whilst he expected at London some of his troops that were behind, William sent ambassadors to require him to resign the crown, and to charge him with breach of oath.

He was so moved at the haughtiness wherewith the ambassadors addressed him, that he could hardly refrain from using them ill. However, he governed his passion; but sent him a menacing and insulting message. The duke patiently heard what Harold Ordered to be said to him, and dismissed the ambassadors without any answer.

Mean time, Harold having drawn all his forces together, encamped about nine miles from the Norman army, with a resolution to give them battle. Whilst the two armies lay thus near each other, spies were continually sent out on both sides: But the English spies so magnified the numbers and discipline of the Normans, that the principal officers began to doubt of the success of the war[12].

Gurth, brother of Harold, took occasion from these reports, to persuade the king to defer the battle. He represented to him, that by prolonging the time, he would find his army increase continually, whereas the enemy's forces would daily be diminished. That nothing could annoy the Normans more than wintering in an enemy's country, where they had not yet so much as one fortified town, and whence, in all probability, the want of necessaries would compel them to retire. That, as he was accused of breach of oath, he had reason to fear, in case he was guilty of the charge, heaven would not prosper his arms: nevertheless, if he was absolutely bent to come to an engagement without any farther delay, it would be most prudent for him, not to be present

himself in the battle, that he might discourage the enemies with the dread of having a fresh army to deal with, though they were so fortunate as to obtain the victory. In a word, if he would trust him with the command of his forces, he would promise him, not indeed, the victory, which was in the hand of God alone, but to die in the defence of his country." The king was deaf to all his brother's reasons, replying, "That by his former actions he had gained the esteem of the English, and, therefore, could not think of losing it again by an inglorious flight. That he had rather run the hazard of a battle, the success whereof was yet uncertain, than forfeit his reputation, as he should most assuredly do, if after so near an approach to the enemy, he should be known to withdraw. That after all, the Normans were not more formidable than the Norwegians; and if he was to fight; he could not do it at a better time, than whilst his army was flushed with their late success. In short, that he was resolved to let his subjects see he was not unworthy of the crown he wore."

William perceiving by all Harold's movements, that he was determined to give him battle, advanced a little, to seize an advantageous post, where he could conveniently draw up his army. Whilst they were preparing for a battle, which was to decide the fate of both princes, William sent the king by the hands of a certain monk these four proposals for him to take his choice. The first was, to resign the crown, as he was bound by oath. By the second, he offered to return into Normandy, provided Harold would do him homage for the kingdom of England. By the third, he was ready to refer their differences to the judgment of the apostolic see. Lastly, he proposed the deciding of their quarrel by single combat.

It is no wonder that Harold rejected these four proposals, as they were all so advantageous to the duke. As for the two, first, it is visible, how detrimental they were to Harold. The third seemed at first sight something fairer; but the Pope having already declared in favour of the duke, what justice could Harold expect from him? As for the fourth, the advantage plainly lay on the duke's side, since in a single combat, he hazarded only his person, whereas Harold ventured his crown with his life. The victory would have procured the duke of Normandy a noble kingdom, whereas it would have only acquired the king the bare glory of conquering. Besides, Harold was of opinion, the decision of an affair, where the whole nation was concerned, ought not to depend on the strength and skill of a single arm. His answer, therefore, was, God should determine on the morrow the justice of their rights[13].

The English spent the whole night in carousing and singing, as though they were sure of the victory. The Normans, on the contrary, were employed in preparing for the battle, and offering up prayers to God for success. At length, on the 14th of October, Harold's birthday, the two armies engaged.

In the front of the English stood the Kentish men, a privilege they had enjoyed ever since the time of the Heptarchy. Harold placed himself in the centre, and would fight on foot, that his men might be the more encouraged by seeing their king exposed to equal danger with the meanest soldier. The Normans were drawn up in three bodies. Montgomery and Fitz-osborn conducted the first, Geoffrey Martel commanded the second, and the duke himself headed the body of reserve, to succour those who should most want it[14].

The Normans began the fight with a volley of arrows, which being shot upward were like a thick cloud over the heads of the foremost body of the English. As their ranks were very close, the arrows did great execution. The English not being used to this way of fighting, were at first put into some little disorder. The Normans willing to take advantage of it, vigorously attacked them. But the English immediately falling into good order again, gave them so warm a reception, that they were obliged to draw back and take breath.

Quickly after, they renewed the attack, but met with as brave a resistance as before, neither was it in their power to break their enemy's ranks. The English chusing rather to die than give way, and the Normans ashamed to retreat, both sides fought stoutly for a considerable time, without

either gaining ground. The presence of their leaders animating the soldiers, they every where fought with equal bravery, without the least signs of advantage on either side.

The fight had lasted all day, and the success was yet very uncertain; when William bethought himself of a stratagem, which made victory incline to his side. Perceiving there was no breaking the ranks of the English, he ordered his troops to retreat as they fought, as though they were discouraged, but withal, to be very careful to keep their rank. This order being executed, the English regarded the enemy's retreat as the commencement of victory.

Possessed with this belief they encouraged each other by reiterated shouts, to press the retiring enemies. Their eagerness made them break their ranks, that they might push them with the greater impetuosity, imagining they were upon the point of taking to flight. Then it was, that the Normans, finding their stratagem had taken effect; stood their ground, and by a discipline, which they had long been used to, closed their ranks, and falling on the disordered English, made a terrible slaughter.

Harold, enraged to see the victory; which a moment before he thought himself sure of, snatched out of his hands, used his utmost endeavours to rally his troops, that were in extreme disorder. His labour was not altogether in vain, for at last he drew up, on a rising ground at a little distance from the field of battle, a good body of foot, which became at length very considerable, by being continually joined by the flying troops.

The duke of Normandy's victory being yet far from complete, whilst so strong a body of the English kept together, he ordered them to be attacked with great fury, But the English received them with that bravery, and the Normans lost such numbers of their men, that the fortune of the day seemed still very doubtful. The approach of the night, and the resolution of the English, making the duke despair of penetrating their ranks, he began to think himself conquered as he was not entirely victorious. Probably, the English army might have retreated in good order, by favour of the night, if Harold could have resolved to leave his enemy in possession of the field of battle, at a time when the loss on both sides was pretty equal. But apprehending his retreat might be prejudicial to his affairs, and derogatory to his reputation, he would maintain his post, and not give the enemy that advantage. Besides, he was in hopes of rallying his whole army during the night, and renewing the fight the next morning.

Meantime, the duke perceiving the night was likely to rob him of the glory of a complete victory, made one effort more to drive the English from their post. In this last onset, Harold was slain by an arrow which penetrated his brain. His troops, disheartened at this fatal accident, began to give way, and betake themselves to flight. Thus Harold's death was the second thing that procured the Normans the victory, and put the English entirely to rout.

In the pursuit which ensued, a terrible slaughter was made of the fugitives, the conquerors killing without mercy all they could overtake, to save the trouble of guarding the prisoners. The darkness of the night, however, saved a good part of the English army, who retreated under the conduct of Morcar and Edwin. These two lords, who had firmly adhered to Harold, seeing he was slain, as well as Garth and Lewin his brothers, at length submitted to providence, having given, the whole day, visible marks of their valour. This long and bloody battle cost the duke of Normandy near fifteen thousand men[15] but the English lost a much greater number[16].

William, at the height of his wishes, gave orders for the whole army to fall on their knees, and return God thanks for so signal a victory. After discharging so just a duty, he caused his tent to be pitched in the field of battle, and spent the residue of the night-among the slain. On the morrow, he ordered his own dead to be buried, and gave the English peasants leave to do the same office for the others. The bodies of the king and his brothers being found, he sent them to Gith their mother, who gave them as honourable a burial as the circumstance of the time would permit, in Waltham abbey, founded by the king her son[17].

Thus fell Harold, with his sword in his hand, in defence not only of his own, but of his country's cause, against the ambition of the duke of Normandy. The historians, who wrote in the reigns of the conqueror and his sons, have endeavoured to blacken the memory of Harold, thereby to justify, in some measure, the ambition of the duke. But all they have said against this last Saxon king, tends only to the imputation of breach of oath, on which we have seen what he alleged in his own vindication. He might have been much more justly blamed for his secret practices, in procuring prince Edgar to be excluded from the throne, who alone had a right to aspire to it.

Harold may be said to have been more worthy of the crown, had he been less forward to obtain it. He gained the love and esteem of the English whilst he was but a private man, and did nothing during his short reign[18], which tended to lessen their affection. He was honest, obliging, affable, exceedingly generous; in a word, he was endowed with all the virtues which form a great prince.

Harold was twice married. By his first wife, whose name is unknown, he had three sons, Edmund, Godwin, and Magnus, who retired into Ireland after the death of their father. By his second wife, Alghitha, sister of Morcar and Edwin, he had a son called Wolf, who was but a child at the time of the battle of Hastings, and was afterwards knighted by William Rufus. By this second marriage, he had also two daughters; of whom Gunilda, the eldest, falling blind, passed her days in a nunnery. The youngest was married to Waldemar king of Russia, by whom she had a daughter, who was wife to Waldemar king of Denmark.

Thus ended in England the empire of the Anglo-Saxons, which began above six hundred years before in the person of Hengist the first king of Kent.

Notes to Harold II

1. They are now called the Isles of Orkney. These isles were first inhabited by the Picts, who kept possession of them till destroyed in 839, by Kenneth II of Scotland, from which time they were subject to the Scots, till delivered up by Donald Bane the usurper in 1099, to Magnus king of Norway; but in 1263, they were surrendered to Alexander III; king of Scotland, by treaty with St. Magnus king of Norway, who is said to have built the stately cathedral at Kirkwal. They have since remained annexed to the crown of Scotland. In Hoy, one of these isles, lies a stone called the Dwarfie stone, thirty six feet long; eighteen broad, and nine thick, followed by art with a square hole of two foot high for the entry. Within, at one end, is a bed big enough for two men, excellently hewn out of the stone, with a pillow; at the other end is a couch, and in the middle a hearth for a fire, with a hole over it for the chimney.

2. The earls of Anjou, Poictou, Boulogne, and Alan earl of Bretagne. J. Conan, earl of Bretagne, Alan's father, demanded, and threatened to invade Normandy, in order to divert William from his attempt on England; but Conan died suddenly, and his successor, instead of opposing the designs of William, gave him all the assistance in his power.

3. William, and the emperor Henry, entered into a league, by which Henry bound himself to march with all the German forces, against any one that should attack Normandy, during William's expedition into England.

4. With a golden Agnus Dei, and one of St. Peter's hairs.

5. Which Camden says, is also called Battle bridge, from this engagement between Harold and the Norwegians,

6. He is said to have killed forty men with his own hand.

7. Adam Bremensis says, that he took so much gold among the spoil, that twelve young men could hardly bear it on their shoulders. This battle was fought nine days before William the Conqueror landed.

8. It was the custom in those days for all the spoils to be fairly divided among the officers and soldiers.

9. There had been, however, several vessels lost in the passage to St. Valori; and as the wind again proved contrary, the army began to imagine, that notwithstanding the Pope's benediction, they were destined to certain destruction. These bold warriors, who despised real danger, were very subject to dread imaginary ones; and many of them began to mutiny, some of them even to desert their colours; when the duke, in order to support their drooping hopes, ordered a procession to be made with the relics of St. Valori, and prayers to be said for more favourable weather. The wind instantly changed; and as this incident happened on the eve of the feast of St. Michael, the titular saint of Normandy, the soldiers, fancying they saw the hand of heaven in all these concurring circumstances, set out with the greatest alacrity, and arrived in safety.

10. It is also said that a soldier, running to a neighbouring cottage, plucked some thatch, which, as if giving him seized of the kingdom, he presented to the duke.

11. Camden says, he ordered his ships to be burnt.

12. Some of the spies took the Normans to be an army of priests, because they were shaven, it being the custom then among the English to wear long beards.

13. Harold is said to have previously made him an offer of a sum of money, if he would depart the kingdom without effusion of blood.

14. The chief of William's generals were, Eustace earl of Boulogne, William Fitz Richard earl of Evreux, Geoffrey son of Rotrou earl of Montaigne, Robert son of Roger earl of Beaumont; Aimeri de Touars, Hugh earl of Etaples, Walter Gifford, Hugh de Grentemesnil, and William de Warren.

15. He had three horses killed that day under him without losing one drop of blood.

16. This battle was fought near Heathfield in Sussex, in the place where the Town of Battle now stands, so called from this day's action, wherein our modern historians say were slain above threescore thousand Englishmen.

17. An ancient manuscript in the Cottonian library relates, that the king's body was hard to be known by reason of its being covered with wounds, but was at last discovered by one who had been his mistress, by certain marks known only to herself. The duke sent the body to his mother without any ransom, though she is said to have offered him its weight in gold. But though all others agree that Harold fell in this battle, yet Knighton from Giraldus Cambrensis asserts he was not slain, but escaping retired to a cell near St. John's church in Chester, and died there an anchorite, as was owned by himself in his last confession when he lay dying. In memory whereof they showed his tomb when Knighton wrote. This story seems undeserving of credit.

18. Of nine months and nine days.





STATE OF THE CHURCH, FROM THE REIGN OF ETHELRED II. TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST; THAT IS, FROM AD 979. TO AD 1066



DURING the greater part of this period, the English were, engaged in so many wars with the Danes, and involved in so many calamities, that they had little leisure to attend to ecclesiastical affairs; which renders the church history in the tenth, and at the beginning of the eleventh century, as barren as that of the state is melancholy.—One thing, however, is evident, from Elfric's celebrated sermon for Easter Sunday, on the Sacrament of the Lord's supper, that the church of England, at this time, had not embraced the doctrine of transubstantiation. On the other hand, there is evidence equally clear, that the worship of the Virgin Mary, and of the saints, was very general in the country.

From the beginning of the reign of Ethelred II, to the Norman conquest, we find in the ecclesiastical history of England but two councils. In all appearance, the wars with the Danes prevented the bishops from assembling more frequently, or rather were the reason that the acts of these conventions are lost. Both these councils, one at Engsham, and the other at Habham, were held, whilst Elphegus was archbishop. The most remarkable canons are as follows. In the council of Engsham,

The IInd canon enjoins celibacy of the clergy.

The IXth forbids all persons to do any wrong to the church, or eject a clergyman out of his benefice without the consent of the bishop.

By the XVIIth every Friday was to be a fast, unless it fell upon a holiday.

The XIXth enjoins widows to stay a twelve month after the death of their husbands, before they marry again.

The XXth enjoins frequent confessions, and the people are ordered to receive the sacrament three times at least, in a year.

The council of Habham has but one canon worth notice. By the second, every Christian was obliged to fast three days with bread and water, before the feast of St. Michael, and to distribute among the poor what he should have eaten in these three days.

To supply the want of councils, we have the ecclesiastical laws of Canute the Great, and Edward the Confessor, some of which we shall insert, to show the great regard these two princes had for the clergy. The following are Canute's.

The IVth enjoins all Christians to pay great respect to the clergy, because their sacerdotal functions are extremely beneficial to the people.

By the Vth, if a priest was accused of any crime, he had the liberty of purging himself by saying mass, and receiving the eucharist.

The XIIth recommends celibacy to the clergy, and ranks them among the Thanes of the second class, that is, among the gentry[1].

The XXth ordains, that at funerals the dues shall be paid upon the breaking up of the ground; and that the dues shall be paid to the parish the deceased belonged to, though he was buried elsewhere.

The XXIIInd enjoins the observance of Sunday from Saturday three o'clock in the afternoon, till Monday break of day.

The XXIIIrd determines the times of fasting, and places the vigils of the festivals of the Blessed Virgin and of the apostles among the fasts.

These likewise decreed by these laws, that every Christian should learn the Lord's prayer, and the apostles creed, otherwise, they were allowed neither to stand godfather, nor receive the communion, nor have Christian burial.

The ecclesiastical laws of Edward the Confessor run chiefly upon the protection of the church and clergy.

The Ist forbids the molesting a clergyman, contrary to the tenor of the privileges of the church.

The IInd appoints certain days, whereon all proceedings in the courts of justice were to cease.

By the IIIrd the church causes are to be tried first.

The IVth firmly establishes the immunities of those who in any wise depend on the church, and ordains that they shall not be obliged to answer any plea, &c. except in the ecclesiastical court.

The Vth confirms the privilege of sanctuary to churches, and extends it even to priest's houses.

By the VIth, if any person broke in upon the privileges of the church, he had no way to get off, but by submitting to the sentence of the bishop.

The VIIth orders the punctual payment of tithes, and sets forth what is to be paid.

The IXth determines the circumstances relating to the ordeal trial.

The XIIth settles the fine of Manbote, or the sum to be paid to the lord for killing any of his vassals or slaves: the king's and the archbishop's Manbote is fixed at the same sum.

By the XIIIth all found treasure belongs to the king, unless it is found in a church or churchyard; then the gold is the king's, and the silver the church's.

Notwithstanding the great condescension of the Saxon kings for the clergy, they could not retain the privilege of chusing their bishops and abbots. Whilst the prelates confined themselves within the bounds of their pastoral functions, and meddled not with civil matters, the power of electing was freely left to the chapters. But when the bishops were become rich and popular, and began to interpose in state affairs, by reason of the fiefs they were possessed of, it was of great consequence to the kings, to have such bishops and abbots as were in their interest, or at least, were obliged to them for their preferments. Accordingly, the kings began to interpose in elections, by way of canvassing, or recommendation, and very often by refusing to put in possession of

the fiefs belonging to the church or abbey, such prelates and abbots as they did not like. In fine, the authority of the court by degrees prevailed so, that in the time of Ethelred II, the monks had entirely lost the privilege of chusing their abbots.

There were but two removals of bishops' sees within the period we are going over. The see of Kirton in Wessex was removed to Exeter, and the see of Lindisfarn in Northumberland to Durham. Aldhun, bishop of Lindisfarn, being disturbed in that little island by the incursions of the Danes, resided at Durham, carrying with him the relics of St. Cuthbert. He built a cathedral, and fixed his see there, where it has remained to this day.

Canterbury to its former lustre, being supported by Canute the Great, with whom he was much in favour. He was succeeded by Edsius, who had been king Harold's chaplain[2]. He governed the church till the year 1050, either by himself, whilst his health permitted, or by a chorepiscopus, when disabled by sickness. Robert, a Norman monk, made bishop of London by Edward the Confessor, was by the same prince, promoted to the see of Canterbury after Edsius.

He was driven from thence, and banished the kingdom by an assembly general, and Stigand bishop of Winchester placed in his room. Robert appealed to the Pope against these proceedings; but Stigand, notwithstanding the appeal, and without staying for the Pope's determination, who for that reason suspended him, got himself consecrated. But, notwithstanding his suspension, and though he had never applied to Rome for the pall, he exercised all the metropolitical functions, till he was deposed in William the Conqueror's time.

The succession of the archbishops of York was as follows. After the death of Oswald, Adulph succeeded him in 993, and governed this church till 1002, when by his death he made room for Wulstan II, who, after twenty one years, was succeeded by Elfric Putta, surnamed the Grammarian, thought by some to be the author of the translation of the Saxon homilies. To him succeeded Kinsius, in 1050, after whom came Aldred, who was alive at the Conquest.

Among the bishops of note in those days, Wulfstan bishop of Worcester was a person of an extraordinary character in some men's opinion, though Lanfranc thought him unqualified for the office of a bishop, for his stupidity and want of learning[3].

Edmund bishop of Durham was remarkable for the manner of his election. The chapter of Durham being met to elect a bishop, and not being able to agree upon their man, Edmund, a priest of that church, said jestingly, that since they were at a loss who to choose, they might as well take him and make him bishop. As miracles were then much in vogue, the chapter looked upon this motion as a divine impulse, and so unanimously agreed to elect him. Edmund became famous for his courage and boldness in reprimanding vice, even in persons of the highest birth and stations.

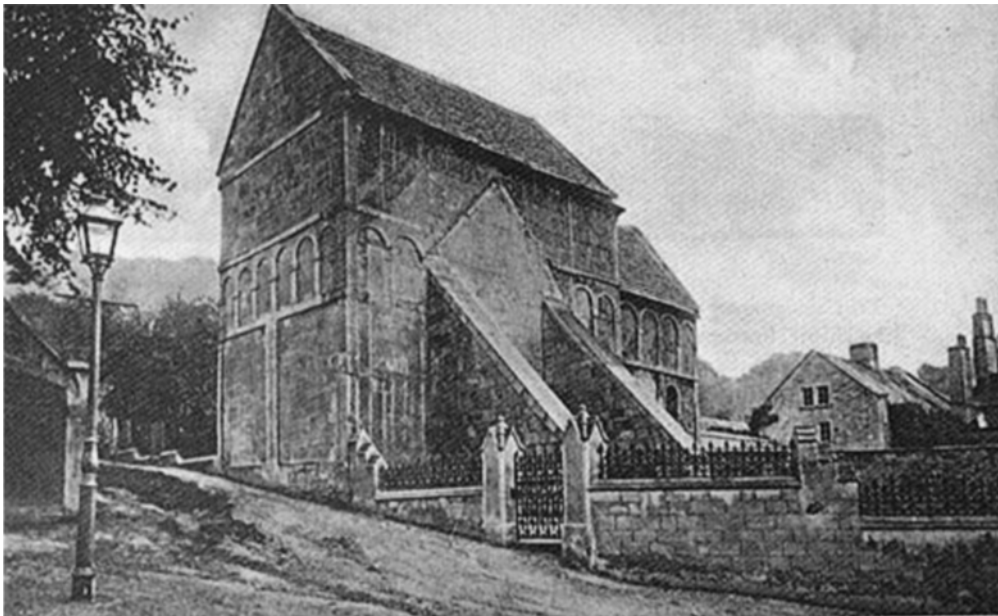
We must also reckon in the number of illustrious persons of that age, certain English ecclesiastics, who flourished in Sweden and Norway. Olaus Scot-Kunung, king of Sweden, designing to turn Christian, desired Ethelred to send him some missionaries to instruct him in the Gospel. Sigefrid, archdeacon of York, (and not archbishop, as a Swedish writer will have it,) Eskil, Gunichild, Rudolf, and Bernard, or David, undertook this mission. Sigefrid was made bishop of, Wexia, a city in the province of Smaland in Sweden, and baptized Olaus. Some say, however, he received baptism at the hands of Bernard; but this is not very material. The greatest part of these missionaries were martyred by the Pagans, to whom they preached.

Notes on The State of The Church

1. The law says, if a priest abstains from a woman, may God have mercy upon him, and let him have the worldly honour of a thane.

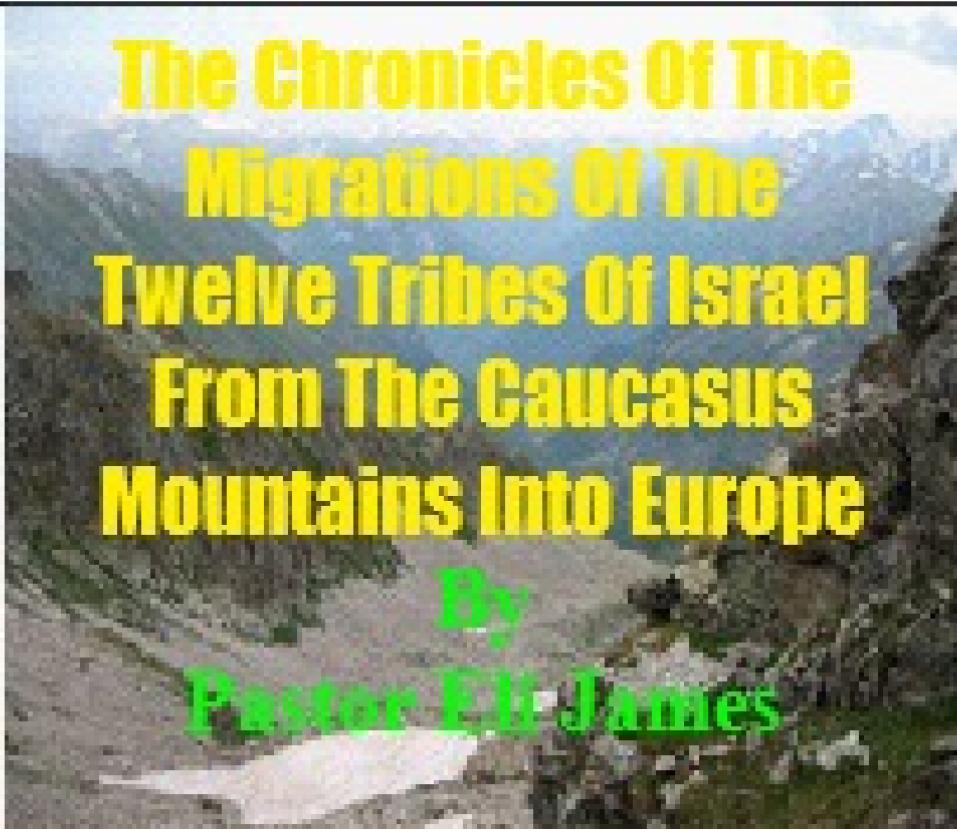
2. Edsius crowned or anointed king Edward the Confessor, on Easter-day, and then preached upon the occasion. This is the first Coronation sermon we meet with.

3. Bishop Wulfstan is thus celebrated by his biographer, in the *Anglia Sacra*, for the modesty and humility of his dress: "he avoid all appearance of pride and ostentation: for though he was very rich, he never made use of any finer furs than those of lambs' skins in lining his garments. For this he was blamed one day in conversation by one of his brethren, Jeffrey bishop of Constans; who asked him, why he used only the furs of lambs in his garments, when he might and ought to use those of sables, beavers, and foxes. To which he returned this facetious answer "It is very proper for you and other politicians, who are skilled in all the tricks and artifices of the world, to wear the spoils of those cunning animals; but as I am a plain artless man, I am very well contented with the skins of lambs." The other still insisting, that if he would not use those finer furs, he might at least use the furs of cats. "Believe me," replied Wulfstan, "my dear brother, the lamb of God is much oftener sung in the church than the cat of God." This witty answer threw the whole company into a violent fit of laughter, and put bishop Jeffery to silence.



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