I have inserted in my narrative portions of this epistle, to give sufficient knowledge of these circumstances, partly in the words of the author and partly in my own, shortening the sentences as seemed proper, for which I shall easily be excused, because there was need of brevity for the sake of those who were eager to resume the thread of the history. Moreover, Boniface transmitted an epistle of like import to archbishop Cuthbert, adding that he should remonstrate with the clergy and nuns on the fineness and vanity of their dress. Besides, that he might not wonder at his interfering in that in which he had no apparent concern, that is to say, how or with what manners the nation of the Angles conducted itself, he gave him to understand, that he had bound himself by oath to pope Gregory the Third, not to conceal the conduct of the nations near him from the knowledge of the apostolical see; wherefore, if mild measures failed of success, he should take care to act in such manner, that vices of this kind should not be kept secret from the pope. Indeed, on account of the fine texture of the clerical vestments, Alcuin obliquely glances at Athelard the archbishop, Cuthbert's successor, reminding him that, when he should come to Rome to visit the emperor Charles the Great, the grandson of Charles of whom Boniface was speaking above, he should not bring the clergy or monks dressed in party-coloured or gaudy garments, for the clergy amongst the Franks dressed only in ecclesiastical habits.

Nor could the letters of so great a man, which he was accustomed to send from watchful regard to his legation and pure love of his country, be without effect. For both Cuthbert, the archbishop, and king Ethelbald summoned a council for the purpose of retrenching the superfluities which he had stigmatised. The acts of this synod, veiled in a multiplicity of words, I shall forbear to add, as I think they will better accord with another part of my work, when I come to the succession of the bishops: but as I am now on the subject of kingly affairs, I shall subjoin a charter of Ethelbald's, as a proof of his devotion, because it took place in the same council.

"It often happens, through the uncertain change of times, that those things which have been confirmed by the testimony and advice of many faithful persons, have been made
of none effect by the contumacy of very many, or by the
artifices of deceit, without any regard to justice, unless they
have been committed to eternal memory by the authority of
writing and the testimony of charters. Wherefore I Ethel-
bald, king of the Mercians, out of love to heaven and regard
for my own soul, have felt the necessity of considering how
I may, by good works, set it free from every tie of sin. For
since the Omnipotent God, through the greatness of his
clemency, without any previous merit on my part, hath be-
stowed on me the sceptre of government, therefore I willingly
repay him out of that which he hath given. On this account
I grant, so long as I live, that all monasteries and churches
of my kingdom shall be exempted from public taxes, works,
and impositions, except the building of forts and bridges,
from which none can be released. And moreover the ser-
vants of God shall have perfect liberty in the produce of
their woods and lands, and the right of fishing, nor shall they
bring presents either to king or princes except voluntarily,
but they shall serve God without molestation."

Lullus* succeeded Boniface, an Englishman by birth also;
of whose sanctity mention is made in the life of St. Goar,
and these verses, which I remember to have heard from my
earliest childhood, bear witness:

"Lullus, than whom no holier prelate lives,
By God's assistance healing medicine gives,
Cures each disorder by his powerful hand,
And with his glory overspreads the land."

However, to return to my history, Offa, descended from
Penda in the fifth degree, succeeded Ethelbald. He was a
man of great mind, and one who endeavoured to bring to
effect whatever he had preconceived; he reigned thirty-nine
years. When I consider the deeds of this person, I am
doubtful whether I should commend or censure. At one
time, in the same character, vices were so palliated by virtues,
and at another virtues came in such quick succession upon
vices that it is difficult to determine how to characterize the
changing Proteus. My narrative shall give examples of
each. Engaging in a set battle with Cynewulf, king of the

* Lullus was appointed his successor by Boniface, on setting out for
Friesland, in 755; he died A.D. 785.
West Saxons, he easily gained the victory, though the other was a celebrated warrior. When he thought artifice would better suit his purpose, this same man beheaded king Ethelbert, who had come to him through the allurement of great promises, and was at that very time within the walls of his palace, soothed into security by his perfidious attentions, and then unjustly seized upon the kingdom of the East Angles which Ethelbert had held.

The relics of St. Alban, at that time obscurely buried, he ordered to be reverently taken up and placed in a shrine, decorated to the fullest extent of royal munificence, with gold and jewels; a church of most beautiful workmanship was there erected, and a society of monks assembled. Yet rebellious against God, he endeavoured to remove the archepiscopal see formerly settled at Canterbury, to Lichfield, envying, forsooth, the men of Kent the dignity of the archbishopric: on which account he at last deprived Lambert, the archbishop, worn out with continual exertion, and who produced many edicts of the apostolical see, both ancient and modern, of all possessions within his territories, as well as of the jurisdiction over the bishoprics. From pope Adrian, therefore, whom he had wearied with plausible assertions for a long time, as many things not to be granted may be gradually drawn and artfully wrested from minds intent on other occupations, he obtained that there should be an archbishopric of the Mercians at Lichfield, and that all the prelates of the Mercians should be subject to that province. Their names were as follow: Denebert, bishop of Worcester, Werenbert, of Leicester, Edulph, of Sidnacester, Wulpheard, of Hereford; and the bishops of the East Angles, Alpheard, of Elmham, Tidfrid, of Dunwich; the bishop of Lichfield was named Aldulph. Four bishops however remained suffragan to Lambert, archbishop of Canterbury, London, Winchester, Rochester, and Selsey. Some of these bishoprics are now in being, some are removed to other places, others consolidated by venal interest, for Leicester, Sidnacester, and Dunwich, from some unknown cause, are no longer in existence. Nor did Offa's rapacity stop here, for he showed himself a downright public pilferer, by converting to his own use the lands of many churches, of which Malmesbury was one. But this iniquity did not long deform canonical institutions, for soon
after Kenulf, Offa’s successor, inferior to no preceding king in power or in faith, transmitted a letter to Leo, the successor of Adrian, and restored Athelard who had succeeded Lambert, to his former dignity. Hence Alcuin, in an epistle to the same Athelard, says “Having heard of the success of your journey, and your return to your country, and how you were received by the pope, I give thanks with every sentiment of my heart to the Lord our God, who, by the precious gift of his mercy, directed your way with a prosperous progress, gave you favour in the sight of the pope, granted you to return home with the perfect accomplishment of your wishes, and hath condescended, through you, to restore the holiest seat of our first teacher to its pristine dignity.” I think it proper to subjoin part of the king’s epistle and also of the pope’s, though I may seem by so doing to anticipate the regular order of time; but I shall do it on this account, that it is a task of greater difficulty to blend together disjointed facts than to despatch those I had begun.

“To the most holy and truly loving lord Leo, pontiff of the sacred and apostolical see, Kenulf, by the grace of God king of the Mercians, with the bishops, princes, and every degree of dignity under our authority, sendeth the salutation of the purest love in Christ.

“We give thanks ever to God Almighty, who is wont, by the means of new guides, the former being taken to the life eternal, to guide the church, purchased by his precious blood, amid the diverse storms of this world, to the haven of salvation, and to shed fresh light upon it, in order that it be led into no error of darkness, but may pursue the path of truth without stumbling; wherefore the universal church justly rejoices, that when the true rewarder of all good men took the most glorious pastor of his flock, Adrian, to be eternally rewarded in heaven, still his kind providence gave a shepherd to his flock, not less skilled, to conduct the sheep of God into the fold of life. We also, who live on the farthest confines of the world, justly boast, beyond all other things, that the church’s exaltation is our safety, its prosperity our constant ground of joy; since your apostolical dignity and our true faith originate from the same source. Whencefore I deem it fitting to incline the ear of our obedience, with all due humility, to your holy commands, and
to fulfil, with every possible endeavour, what shall seem just to your piety for us to accomplish: but to avoid, and utterly reject, all that shall be found inconsistent with right. But now, I, Kenulf, by the grace of God king, humbly entreat your excellence that I may address you as I wish, without offence, on the subject of our progress, that you may receive me with peaceful tranquillity into the bosom of your piety, and that the liberal bounty of your benediction may qualify me, gifted with no stock of merit, to rule my people; in order that God may deign, through your intercession, to defend the nation, which, together with me, your apostolical authority has instructed in the rudiments of the faith, against all attacks of adversaries, and to extend that kingdom which he hath given. This benediction all the Mercian kings before me were, by your predecessors, deemed worthy to obtain. This, I humbly beg, and this, O most holy man, I desire to receive, that you would more especially accept me as a son by adoption, as I love you as my father, and always honour you with all possible obedience. For among such great personages faith ever should be kept inviolate, as well as perfect love, because paternal love is to be looked upon as filial happiness in God, according to the saying of Hezekiah, 'A father will make known thy truth to his sons, O Lord.' In which words I implore you, O loved father, not to deny to your unworthy son the knowledge of the Lord in your holy words, in order that, by your sound instruction, I may deserve, by the assistance of God, to come to a better course of life. And moreover, O most affectionate father, we beg, with all our bishops, and every person of rank among us, that, concerning the many inquiries on which we have thought it right to consult your wisdom, you would courteously reply, lest the traditions of the holy fathers and their instructions should, through ignorance, be misunderstood by us; but let your reply reach us in charity and meekness, that, through the mercy of God, it may bring forth fruit in us. The first thing our bishops and learned men allege is, that, contrary to the canons and papal constitutions enacted for our use by the direction of the most holy father Gregory, as you know, the jurisdiction of the metropolitan of Canterbury is divided into two provinces, to whose power, by the same father's command, twelve bishops ought to be subject,
as is read throughout our churches, in the letter which he directed to his brother and fellow bishop, Augustine, concerning the two metropolitans of London and York, which letter doubtlesly you also possess. But that pontifical dignity, which was at that time destined to London, with the honour and distinction of the pall, was, for his sake, removed and granted to Canterbury. For since Augustine, of blessed memory, who, at the command of St. Gregory, preached the word of God to the nation of the Angles, and so gloriously presided over the church of the Saxons, died in that city, and his body was buried in the church of St. Peter, the chief of apostles, which his successor St. Laurentius consecrated, it seemed proper to the sages of our nation, that the metropolitan dignity should reside in that city where rests the body of the man who planted the true faith in these parts. The honour of this pre-eminence, as you know, king Offa first attempted to take away and to divide it into two provinces, through enmity against the venerable Lambert and the Kentish people; and your pious brother and predecessor, Adrian, at the request of the aforesaid king, first did what no one had before presumed, and honoured the prelate of the Mercians with the pall. But yet we blame neither of these persons, whom, as we believe, Christ crowns with eternal glory. Nevertheless we humbly entreat your excellence, on whom God hath deservedly conferred the key of wisdom, that you would consult with your counsellors on this subject, and condescend to transmit to us what may be necessary for us to observe hereafter, and what may tend to the unity of real peace, as we wish, through your sound doctrine, lest the coat of Christ, woven throughout without seam, should suffer any rent among us. We have written this to you, most holy father, with equal humility and regard, earnestly entreating your clemency, that you would kindly and justly reply to those things which have been of necessity submitted to you. Moreover we wish that you would examine, with pious love, that epistle which, in the presence of all our bishops, Athelward the archbishop wrote to you more fully on the subject of his own affairs and necessities, as well as on those of all Britain; that whatever the rule of faith requires in those matters which are contained therein, you would condescend truly to explain. Wherefore last year I sent my own em-
bassy, and that of the bishops by Wada the abbat, which he received, but idly and foolishly executed. I now send you a small present as a token of regard, respected father, by Birine the priest, and Fildas and Ceolbert, my servants, that is to say, one hundred and twenty mancuses, together with letters, begging that you would condescend to receive them kindly, and give us your blessing. May God Almighty long preserve you safe to the glory of his holy church."

"To the most excellent prince, my son Kenulf, king of the Mercians, of the province of the Saxons, pope Leo sendeth greeting. Our most holy and reverend brother Athelard, archbishop of Canterbury, arriving at the holy churches of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, as well for the faithful performance of his vow of prayer as to acquaint us with the cause of his ecclesiastical mission to the apostolical see, hath brought to us the enclosures of your royal excellence, where finding, in two epistles filled with true faith, your great humility, we return thanks to Almighty God, who hath taught and inclined your most prudent excellence to have due regard with us in all things towards St. Peter, the chief of apostles, and to submit with meekness to all apostolical constitutions. Moreover, in one of these epistles we find that, were it requisite, you would even lay down your life for us, for the sake of our apostolical office. And again, you confess that you rejoice much in the Lord at our prosperity, and that when these our letters of kindest admonition reach the ears of your cordiality, you will receive them with all humility and spiritual joy of heart, as sons do the gift of a father. It is added too that you had ordered a small present out of your abundance to be offered to us, an hundred and twenty mancuses, which, with ardent desire for the salvation of your soul, we have accepted. The aforesaid archbishop, with his attendants, has been honourably and kindly received by us, and has been rendered every necessary assistance. In the meantime, trusting to your most prudent excellence when you observe, even in your own royal letters, that no Christian can presume to run counter to our aposto-

* The value of the mancus is doubtful; sometimes it appears to mean the same with the mark, at others it is supposed equal to thirty pence of the money of that time. The gold manca is supposed to be eight to the pound, which was probably the coin sent to the pope.
litical decisions, we therefore endeavour, with all possible diligence, to transmit and ordain what shall be of service to your kingdom, that as a canonical censure enjoins your royal excellence, and all the princes of your nation, and the whole people of God, to observe all things which the aforesaid archbishop Athelward our brother, or the whole body of the evangelical and apostolical doctrine and that of the holy fathers and of our predecessors the holy pontiffs ordain, you ought by no means to resist their orthodox doctrine in any thing, as our Lord and Saviour says in the Gospel, "He who receiveth you receiveth me," and "he who receives a prophet, in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward." And how much more do we praise the Almighty for this same lord archbishop, whom you have so highly commended to us as being, what he really is, honourable, and skilful, and prudent, of good morals, worthy before God and men. O loving son and excellent king, we praise God, that hath pointed out to you a prelate who, like a true shepherd, is able to prescribe due penance, according to the doctrine of the holy Scriptures, and to rescue the souls of those who are under his sacerdotal authority from the nethermost hell, snatching them from inextinguishable fire, bringing them into the haven of salvation, and offering for them to God Almighty a sacrifice, fit and pure in the sight of the Divine Majesty. And since the aforesaid archbishop hath pleased us extremely in every respect, in all holiness and conversation of life, confiding much to him, we give him such prelatical power by the authority of St. Peter, the chief of the apostles, whose office, though unworthily, we fill, that if any in his province, as well kings and princes as people, shall transgress the commandments of the Lord, he shall excommunicate him until he repent; and if he remain impenitent, let him be to you as an heathen and a publican. But with respect to the aforesaid Athelward, archbishop of Canterbury, since your excellent prelates have demanded from us that we do him justice concerning the jurisdiction which he lately held, as well of bishops as monasteries, and of which he has been unjustly deprived, as you know, and which have been taken from his venerable see: we, making most diligent search, have found in our sacred depository, that St. Gregory, our predecessor, delivered that diocese to his reputed arch-
bishop St. Augustine, with the right of consecrating bishops, to the full number of twelve. Hence we also, having ascertained the truth, have, by our apostolical authority, placed all ordinations or confirmations on their ancient footing, and do restore them to him entire, and we deliver to him the grant of our confirmation, to be duly observed by his church, according to the sacred canons."

In the meantime Offa, that the outrages against his countrymen might not secretly tend to his disadvantage, in order to conciliate the favour of neighbouring kings, gave his daughter Eadburgh in marriage to Bertric, king of the West Saxons; and obtained the amity of Charles the Great, king of the Franks, by repeated embassies, though he could find little in the disposition of Charles to second his views. They had disagreed before, insomuch that violent feuds having arisen on both sides, even the intercourse of traders was prohibited. There is an epistle of Alcuin to this effect, part of which I shall subjoin, as it affords a strong proof of the magnanimity and valour of Charles, who spent all his time in war against the Pagans, rebels to God. He says,* "The ancient Saxons and all the Friesland nations were converted to the faith of Christ through the exertions of king Charles, urging some with threats, and others with rewards. At the end of the year the king made an attack upon the Scalvoniens and subjugated them to his power. The Avaris, whom we call Huns, made a furious attempt upon Italy, but were conquered by the generals of the aforesaid most Christian king, and returned home with disgrace. In like manner they rushed against Bavaria, and were again overcome and dispersed by the Christian army. Moreover the princes and commanders of the same most Christian king took great part of Spain from the Saracens, to the extent of three hundred miles along the sea coast; but, O shame! these accursed Saracens, who are the Hagarens, have dominion over the whole of Africa, and the larger part of Asia Major. I know not what will be our destination, for some ground of difference, fomented by the devil, has arisen between king Charles and king Offa, so that, on both sides,

* See this entire, Usurii Veterum Epistolarum Hibernicarum Syllog., epist. 18. p. 36; and Alcuini Opera, tom. i. p. 6, epist. 3.
all navigation is prohibited the merchants. Some say that we are to be sent into those parts to treat of peace.”

In these words, in addition to what I have remarked above, any curious person may determine how many years have elapsed since the Saracens invaded Africa and Asia Major. And indeed, had not the mercy of God animated the native spirit of the emperors of the Franks, the pagans had long since subjugated Europe also. For, holding the Constantinopolitan emperors in contempt, they possessed themselves of Sicily and Sardinia, the Balearic isles, and almost all the countries surrounded by the sea, with the exception of Crete, Rhodes, and Cyprus. In our time however they have been compelled to relinquish Sicily by the Normans, Corsica and Sardinia by the Pisans, and great part of Asia and Jerusalem itself by the Franks and other nations of Europe. But, as I shall have a fitter place to treat largely of these matters hereafter, I shall now subjoin, from the words of Charles himself, the treaty which was ratified between him and Offa king of the Mercians.

“Charles, by the grace of God king of the Franks and Lombards, and patrician of the Romans, to his esteemed and dearest brother Offa king of the Mercians, sendeth health:—

First, we give thanks to God Almighty for the purity of the Catholic faith, which we find laudably expressed in your letters. Concerning pilgrims, who for the love of God or the salvation of their souls, wish to visit the residence of the holy apostles, let them go peaceably without any molestation; but if persons, not seeking the cause of religion, but that of gain, be found amongst them, let them pay the customary tolls in proper places. We will, too, that traders have due protection within our kingdom, according to our mandate, and if in any place they suffer wrongful oppression, let them appeal to us or to our judges, and we will see full justice done. Let your kindness also be apprized that we have sent some token of our regard, out of our dalmatics* and palls, to each episcopal see of your kingdom or of Ethelred’s, as an

* The dalmatic was a garment worn by the clergy, and sometimes by princes. Its name is said to have been derived from its invention in Dalmatia. The pall here apparently signifies an upper vesture also, in form resembling a cloak without sleeves; but it has a variety of meanings. See Du Cange, and note at p. 44, of Bede’s Eccles. History.
almsgiving, on account of our apostolical lord Adrian, earnestly begging that you would order him to be prayed for, not as doubting that his blessed soul is at rest, but to show our esteem and regard to our dearest friend. Moreover we have sent somewhat out of the treasure of those earthly riches, which the Lord Jesus hath granted to us of his unmerited bounty, for the metropolitan cities, and for yourself a belt, an Hungarian sword, and two silk cloaks."

I have inserted these brief extracts from the epistle that posterity may be clearly acquainted with the friendship of Offa and Charles; confiding in which friendly intercourse, although assailed by the hatred of numbers, he passed the rest of his life in uninterrupted quiet, and saw Egfrert his son anointed to succeed him. This Egfrert studiously avoided the cruel path trod by his father, and devoutly restored the privileges of all the churches which Offa had in his time abridged. The possessions also which his father had taken from Malmesbury he restored into the hands of Cuthbert, then abbat of that place, at the admonition of the aforesaid Athelard archbishop of Canterbury, a man of energy and a worthy servant of God, and who is uniformly asserted to have been its abbat before Cuthbert, from the circumstance of his choosing there to be buried. But while the hopes of Egfrert's noble qualities were ripening, in the first moments of his reign, untimely death cropped the flower of his youthful prime; on which account Alcuin writing to the patrician Osbert, says, "I do not think that the most noble youth Egfrert died for his own sins, but because his father, in the establishment of his kingdom, shed a deluge of blood." Dying after a reign of four months, he appointed Kenulf, nephew of Penda in the fifth degree by his brother Kenwalk, to succeed him.

Kenulf was a truly great man, and surpassed his fame by his virtues, doing nothing that malice could justly find fault with. Religious at home, victorious abroad, his praises will be deservedly extolled so long as an impartial judge can be found in England. Equally to be admired for the extent of his power and for the lowliness of his mind; of which he gave an eminent proof in restoring, as we have related, its faltering dignity to Canterbury, he little regarded earthly grandeur in his own kingdom at the expense of deviating from
anciently-enjoined canons. Taking up Offa's hatred against
the Kentish people, he sorely afflicted that province, and led
away captive their king Eadbert, surnamed Pren; but not
long after, moved with sentiments of pity, he released him.
For at Winchelcombe, where he had built a church to God,
which yet remains, on the day of its dedication he freed the
captive king at the altar, and consoled him with liberty;
thereby giving a memorable instance of his clemency.
Cuthred,* whom he had made king over the Kentish people,
was present to applaud this act of royal munificence. The
church resounded with acclamations, the street shook with
crowds of people, for in an assembly of thirteen bishops and
ten dukes, no one was refused a largess, all departed with
full purses. Moreover, in addition to those presents of in-
estimable price and number in utensils, clothes, and select
horses, which the chief nobility received, he gave to all who
did not possess landed property† a pound of silver, to each
presbyter a marca of gold, to every monk a shilling, and
lastly he made many presents to the people at large. After
he had endowed the monastery with such ample revenues as
would seem incredible in the present time, he honoured it by
his septime, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign. His
son Kenelm, of tender age, and undeservedly murdered by
his sister Quendorida, gained the title and distinction of mar-
tydom, and rests in the same place.

After him the kingdom of the Mercians sank from its
prosperity, and becoming nearly lifeless, produced nothing
worthy to be mentioned in history. However, that no one
may accuse me of leaving the history imperfect, I shall glance
over the names of the kings in succession. Ceolwulf, the
brother of Kenulf, reigning one year was expelled in the
second by Bernulf; who in the third year of his reign being
overcome and put to flight by Egbert, king of the West
Saxons, was afterwards slain by the East Angles, because
he had attempted to seize on East Anglia, as a kingdom sub-
ject to the Mercians from the time of Offa. Ludecan, after

* Kenulf made Cuthred king of Kent, A.D. 798. Eadbert had been
dreadfully mutilated by having his eyes put out and his hands cut off.
See chap. i.
† "Qui agras non habebant." These words refer to an inferior class of
gentry, as he mentions the people at large, "populus," afterwards.
a reign of two years, was despatched by these Angles, as he was preparing to avenge his predecessor: Withlaf, subjugated in the commencement of his reign by the before-mentioned Egbert, governed thirteen years, paying tribute to him and to his son, both for his person and his property: Berthwulf reigning thirteen years on the same conditions, was at last driven by the Danish pirates beyond the sea: Burhred marrying Ethelswith, the daughter of king Ethelwulf, the son of Egbert, exonerated himself, by this affinity, from the payment of tribute and the depredations of the enemy, but after twenty-two years, driven by them from his country, he fled to Rome, and was there buried at the school of the Angles, in the church of St. Mary; his wife, at that time continuing in this country, but afterwards following her husband, died at Pavia. The kingdom was next given by the Danes to one Celwulf, an attendant of Burhred's, who bound himself by oath that he would retain it only at their pleasure: after a few years it fell under the dominion of Alfred, the grandson of Egbert. Thus the sovereignty of the Mercians, which prematurely bloomed by the overweening ambition of an heathen, altogether withered away through the inactivity of a driveller king, in the year of our Lord's incarnation eight hundred and seventy-five.

CHAP. V.

Of the kings of the East Angles. [A.D. 520—905.]

As my narrative has hitherto treated of the history of the four more powerful kingdoms in as copious a manner, I trust, as the perusal of ancient writers has enabled me, I shall now, as last in point of order, run through the governments of the East Angles and East Saxons, as suggested in my preface. The kingdom of the East Angles arose anterior to the West Saxons, though posterior to the kingdom of Kent. The first* and also the greatest king of the East Angles was Redwald, tenth in descent from Woden as they affirm; for all the southern provinces of the Angles and Saxons on this side of

* Redwald was not the first king of East Anglia, but the first who became distinguished. In the year 571, Uffa assumed the title of king: he was succeeded by his son, Titil, in 578 who was followed by Redwald, his son. See Bede, b. ii. c. 15.
the river Humber, with their kings, were subject to his authority. This is the person whom I have formerly mentioned as having, out of regard for Edwin, killed Ethelfrid, king of the Northumbrians. Through the persuasion of Edwin too he was baptized; and after, at the instigation of his wife, abjured the faith. His son, Eorpwald, embraced pure Christianity, and poured out his immaculate spirit to God, being barbarously murdered by the heathen Richbert. To him succeeded Sigebert, his brother by the mother’s side, a worthy servant of the Lord, polished from all barbarism by his education among the Franks. For, being driven into banishment by Redwald, and for a long time associating with them, he had received the rites of Christianity, which, on his coming into power he graciously communicated to the whole of his kingdom, and also instituted schools of learning in different places. This ought highly to be extolled: as men heretofore uncivilized and irreligious, were enabled, by his means, to taste the sweets of literature. The promoter of his studies and the stimulator of his religion was Felix the bishop, a Burgundian by birth, who now lies buried at Ramsey. Sigebert moreover renouncing the world and taking the monastic vow, left the throne to his relation, Ecgric, with whom, being attacked in intestine war by Penda, king of the Mercians, he met his death, at the moment when, superior to his misfortunes, and mindful of his religious profession, he held only a wand in his hand. The successor of Ecgric was Anna, the son of Eni, the brother of Redwald, involved in similar destruction by the same furious Penda; he was blessed with a numerous and noble offspring, as the second book will declare in its proper place. To Anna succeeded his brother Ethelhere, who was justly slain by Oswy king of the Northumbrians, together with Penda, because he was an auxiliary to him, and was actually supporting the very army which had destroyed his brother and his kinsman. His brother Ethelwald, in due succession, left the kingdom to Adulf and Elwald, the sons of Ethelhere. Next came Bernred. After him Ethelred. His son was St. Ethelbert, whom Offa king of the Mercians killed through treachery, as has already been said, and will be repeated hereafter. After him, through the violence of the Mercians, few kings reigned in Eastern Anglia till the time of St. Edmund, and he was
despatched in the sixteenth year of his reign, by Hingwar, a heathen; from which time the Angles ceased to command in their own country for fifty years. For the province was nine years without a king, owing to the continued devastations of the pagans; afterwards both in it and in East Saxony, Gothrun, a Danish king, reigned for twelve years, in the time of king Alfred. Gothrun had for successor a Dane also, by name Eohric, who, after he had reigned fourteen years, was taken off by the Angles, because he conducted himself with cruelty towards them. Still, however, liberty beamed not on this people, for the Danish earls continued to oppress them, or else to excite them against the kings of the West Saxons, till Edward, the son of Alfred, added both provinces to his own West Saxon empire, expelling the Danes and freeing the Angles. This event took place in the fiftieth year after the murder of St. Edmund, king and martyr, and in the fifteenth* of his own reign.

CHAP. VI.

Of the kings of the East Saxons. [A.D. 520—823.

Nearly co-eval with the kingdom of the East Angles, was that of the East Saxons; which had many kings in succession, though subject to others, and principally to those of the Mercians. First, then, Sleda,† the tenth from Woden, reigned over them; whose son, Sabert, nephew of St. Ethelbert, king of Kent, by his sister Ricula, embraced the faith of Christ at the preaching of St. Mellitus, first bishop of London; for that city belongs to the East Saxons. On the death of Sabert, his sons, Sexeird and Seward, drove Mellitus into banishment, and soon after, being killed by the West Saxons, they paid the penalty of their persecution against Christ. Sigbert, surnamed the Small, the son of Seward, succeeding, left the kingdom to Sigebert, the son of Sige bald,

* According to the Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 921, that is, the 21st of Edward the Elder, and the fiftieth from the murder of king Edmund. Now following this statement, as Edward succeeded his father, Alfred A.D. 801, the expulsion of the Danes would be the twentieth of his reign. In Florence of Worcester the union of the kingdoms under Edward the Elder is assigned to the year 918.—Hardy.

† Sleda was not the first, but their times are uncertain. See Florence of Worcester, who calls him the son of Escwine, whom Henry of Huntingdon considers to have been the first king of Essex.
who was the brother of Sabert. This Sigebert, at the exhortation of king Oswy, was baptized in Northumbria by bishop Finan, and brought back to his nation, by the ministry of bishop Cedd,* the faith which they had expelled together with Mellitus. After gloriously governing the kingdom, he left it in a manner still more glorious; for he was murdered by his near relations, merely because, in conformity to the gospel-precept, he used kindly to spare his enemies, nor regard with harsh and angry countenance, if they were penitent, those who had offended him. His brother Suidelm, baptized by the same Cedd in East Anglia, succeeded. On his death, Sighere, the son of Sigbert the Small, and Sebbi, the son of Seward, held the sovereignty. Sebbi's associate dying, he himself voluntarily retired from the kingdom in his thirtieth year, becoming a monk, as Bede relates. His sons Sighard and Sceafred reigned after him. On their decease Offa, the son Sighere, governed the kingdom for a short time; a youth of engaging countenance and disposition, in the flower of his age, and highly beloved by his subjects. He, through the persuasion of Kyneswith, daughter of king Penda, whom he had anxiously sought in marriage, being taught to aspire after heavenly affections, went to Rome with Kenred king of the Mercians, and St. Edwin bishop of Worcester; and there taking the vow, in due time entered the heavenly mansions. To him succeeded Selred, son of Sigebert the Good, during thirty-eight years; who being slain, Swithed assumed the sovereignty of the East Saxons;† but in the same year that Egbert king of the West Saxons subdued Kent, being expelled by him, he vacated the kingdom; though London, with the adjacent country, continued subject to the kings of the Mercians as long as they held their sovereignty.

The kings of Kent, it is observed, had dominion peculiarly in Kent, in which are two sees; the archbishopric of Canterbury, and the bishopric of Rochester.

* Brother to St. Chad, bishop of Lichfield. See Bede, b. iii. c. 22.
† Here seems an oversight which may be supplied from Florence of Worcester. "Swithed succeeded Selred, and held the sovereignty some years; after whom few native kings ruled in Essex, for in the same year that Egbert conquered Kent, they surrendered to his power." Selred died 746; their submission took place 823. It would appear, however, from the authorities adduced by Mr. Turner, Hist. of Anglo-Saxons, vol. i. p. 318, that Selred was in fact king of East Anglia.
The kings of the West Saxons ruled in Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Dorsetshire; in which there is one bishop, whose see is now at Sarum or Salisbury; formerly it was at Ramsbury, or at Sherborne: in Sussex, which for some little time possessed a king of its own;* the episcopal see of this county was anciently in the island of Selsey, as Bede relates, where St. Wilfrid built a monastery; the bishop now dwells at Chichester: in the counties of Southampton and Surrey; which have a bishop, whose see is at Winchester: in the county of Somerset, which formerly had a bishop at Wells, but now at Bath: and in Domnonia, now called Devonshire, and Cornubia, now Cornwall; at that time there were two bishoprics, one at Crediton, the other at St. German's; now there is but one, and the see is at Exeter.

The kings of the Mercians governed the counties of Gloucester, Worcester, and Warwick; in these is one bishop whose residence is at Worcester: in Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Staffordshire; these have one bishop, who has part of Warwickshire and Shropshire; his residence is at the city of Legions, that is Chester or Coventry; formerly it was at Lichfield: in Herefordshire; and there is a bishop having half Shropshire and part of Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire; whose residence is at Hereford: in Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, half of Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire; which counties are under the jurisdiction of a bishop now resident at Lincoln, but formerly at Dorchester in the county of Oxford: in Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, which belong to the diocese of York; formerly they had their own bishop, whose seat was at Leicester.

The kings of the East Angles had dominion over the county of Cambridge; there is a bishop, whose seat is at Ely: and in Norfolk and Suffolk: whose see is at Norwich; formerly at Elmham or Thetford.

The kings of the East Saxons ruled in Essex, in Middle-

* The kingdom of Sussex was founded by Ælla, who arrived in Britain with three vessels, and accompanied by his three sons, A.D. 477. He seems to have attained a very high degree of power, and was succeeded by his son Cissa.—The affairs of this kingdom are extremely obscure; it appears to have been sometimes dependent on Kent and sometimes on Wessex until finally united to the latter by Egbert, A.D. 828.
sex, and half of Hertfordshire; where there anciently was, and still remains, the bishop of London.

The kings of the Northumbrians governed all the country which is beyond the river Humber, even into Scotland; and there were the archbishop of York, the bishops of Hexham, of Ripon, of Lindisfarne, and of Candida Casa [Whitherne]; Hexham and Ripon are no more; Lindisfarne is translated to Durham.

Such were the divisions of the kingdom of England, although the kings, according to the vicissitude of the times, now one, and then the other, would exceed their boundaries through their courage, or lose them by their indolence; but all these several kingdoms Egbert subdued by his abilities, and consolidated into one empire, reserving to each their own laws. Wherefore, since I have passed beyond his times, fulfilling my promise in a review of the different periods, I will here fix the limits of my first volume, that the various tracks of the different kingdoms may unite in the general path of the West Saxon Empire.

BOOK II.

PROLOGUE.

A long period has elapsed since, as well through the care of my parents as my own industry, I became familiar with books. This pleasure possessed me from my childhood: this source of delight has grown with my years. Indeed I was so instructed by my father, that, had I turned aside to other pursuits, I should have considered it as jeopardy to my soul and discredit to my character. Wherefore mindful of the adage "covet what is necessary," I constrained my early age to desire eagerly that which it was disgraceful not to possess. I gave, indeed, my attention to various branches of literature, but in different degrees. Logic, for instance, which gives arms to eloquence, I contented myself with barely hearing. Medicine, which ministers to the health of the body, I studied with somewhat more attention. But now, having scrupulously examined the several branches of
Ethics, I bow down to its majesty, because it spontaneously unveils itself to those who study it, and directs their minds to moral practice; History more especially; which, by an agreeable recapitulation of past events, excites its readers, by example, to frame their lives to the pursuit of good, or to aversion from evil. When, therefore, at my own expense, I had procured some historians of foreign nations, I proceeded, during my domestic leisure, to inquire if any thing concerning our own country could be found worthy of handing down to posterity. Hence it arose, that, not content with the writings of ancient times, I began, myself, to compose; not indeed to display my learning, which is comparatively nothing, but to bring to light events lying concealed in the confused mass of antiquity. In consequence rejecting vague opinions, I have studiously sought for chronicles far and near, though I confess I have scarcely profited any thing by this industry. For perusing them all, I still remained poor in information; though I ceased not my researches as long as I could find any thing to read. However, what I have clearly ascertained concerning the four kingdoms, I have inserted in my first book, in which I hope truth will find no cause to blush, though perhaps a degree of doubt may sometimes arise. I shall now trace the monarchy of the West Saxon kingdom, through the line of successive princes, down to the coming of the Normans: which if any person will condescend to regard with complacency, let him in brotherly love observe the following rule: "If before, he knew only these things, let him not be disgusted because I have inserted them; if he shall know more, let him not be angry that I have not spoken of them;" but rather let him communicate his knowledge to me, while I yet live, that at least, those events may appear in the margin of my history, which do not occur in the text.

CHAP. I.

The history of king Egbert. [A.D. 800—839.]

My former volume terminated where the four kingdoms of Britain were consolidated into one. Egbert, the founder of this sovereignty, grand-nephew of king Ina, by his brother Ingild, of high rank in his own nation, and liberally
educated, had been conspicuous among the West Saxons from his childhood. His uninterrupted course of valour begat envy, and as it is almost naturally ordained that kings should regard with suspicion whomsoever they see growing up in expectation of the kingdom, Bertric, as before related, jealous of his rising character, was meditating how to destroy him. Egbert, apprised of this, escaped to Offa, king of the Mercians. While Offa concealed him with anxious care, the messengers of Bertric arrived, demanding the fugitive for punishment, and offering money for his surrender. In addition to this they solicited his daughter in marriage for their king, in order that the nuptial tie might bind them in perpetual amity. In consequence Offa, who would not give way to hostile threats, yielded to flattering allurements, and Egbert, passing the sea, went into France; a circumstance which I attribute to the counsels of God, that a man destined to rule so great a kingdom might learn the art of government from the Franks; for this people has no competitor among all the Western nations in military skill or polished manners. This ill-treatment Egbert used as an incentive to "rub off the rust of indolence," to quicken the energy of his mind, and to adopt foreign customs, far differing from his native barbarism. On the death, therefore, of Bertric, being invited into Britain by frequent messages from his friends, he ascended the throne, and realized the fondest expectations of his country. He was crowned in the year of our Lord's incarnation 800, and in the thirty-fourth year of the reign of Charles the Great, of France, who survived this event twelve years. In the meantime Egbert, when he had acquired the regard of his subjects by his affability and kindness, first manifested his power against those Britons who inhabit that part of the island which is called Cornwall, and having subjugated them, he proceeded to make the Northern Britons,* who are separated from the others by an arm of the sea, tributary to him. While the fame of these victories struck terror into the rest, Bernulf king of the Mercians, aiming at something great, and supposing it would redound to his glory if he could remove the terror of others by his own audacity, proclaimed war

* The early adventures of Egbert are found only in Malmesbury. He does not observe the order in which these events happened.
against Egbert. Deeming it disgraceful to retreat, Egbert met him with much spirit, and on then coming into action, Bernulf was defeated and fled. This battle took place at Hellendun, A.D. 824.* Elated with this success, the West Saxon king, extending his views, in the heat of victory, sent his son Ethelwulf, with Alstan, bishop of Sherborne, and a chosen band, into Kent, for the purpose of adding to the West Saxon dominions that province, which had either grown indolent through long repose, or was terrified by the fame of his valour. These commanders observed their instructions effectually, for they passed through every part of the country, and driving Baldred its king, with little difficulty, beyond the river Thames, they subjugated to his dominion, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, Kent, Surrey, the South Saxons, and the East Saxons, who had formerly been under the jurisdiction of his predecessors. Not long after the East Angles, animated by the support of Egbert, killed by successive stratagems, Bernulf and Ludecan, kings of the Mercians. The cause of their destruction was, their perpetual incursions, with their usual insolence, on the territories of others. Withlaf their successor, first driven from his kingdom by Egbert, and afterwards admitted as a tributary prince, augmented the West Saxon sovereignty. In the same year the Northumbrians perceiving that themselves only remained and were a conspicuous object, and fearing lest he should pour out his long-cherished anger on them, at last, though late, gave hostages, and yielded to his power. When he was thus possessed of all Britain, the rest of his life, a space of nine years, passed quietly on, except that, nearly in his latter days, a piratical band of Danes made a descent, and disturbed the peace of the kingdom. So changeable is the lot of human affairs, that he, who first singly governed all the Angles, could derive but little satisfaction from the obedience of his countrymen, for a foreign enemy was perpetually harassing

* The printed text of the former editions places the battle of Hellendun, A.D. 806. Several MSS. have 826, one 825, and two only appear to adopt the correct year 824, as inserted above. These are—The Arundel MS. No. 35, Brit. Mus. and the MS. in Trinity Coll. Cam. R. 14. The place is variously conjectured: Wilton in Wiltshire; Hillingdon in Middlesex; and near Highworth in Wilts.
him and his descendants. Against these invaders the forces of the Angles made a stand, but fortune no longer flattered
the king with her customary favours, but deserted him in the
contest: for, when, during the greater part of the day, he
had almost secured the victory, he lost the battle as the sun
decayed; however, by the favour of darkness, he escaped
the disgrace of being conquered. In the next action, with a
small force, he totally routed an immense multitude. At
length, after a reign of thirty-seven years and seven months,
he departed this life, and was buried at Winchester; leaving
an ample field of glory for his son, and declaring, that he
must be happy, if he was careful not to destroy, by the
indolence natural to his race, a kingdom that himself had
consolidated with such consummate industry.

CHAP. II.

Of king Ethelwulf. [A.D. 839—858.]

In the year of our Lord’s incarnation 837,* Ethelwulf, whom
some call Athulf, the son of Egbert, came to the throne, and
reigned twenty years and five months. Mild by nature he
infinitely preferred a life of tranquillity to dominion over
many provinces; and, finally, content with his paternal
kingdom, he bestowed all the rest, which his father had sub-
jugated, on his son Ethelstan; of whom it is not known
when, or in what manner, he died. He assisted Burhred,
king of the Mercians, with an army against the Britons, and
highly exalted him by giving him his daughter in marriage.
He frequently overcame the piratical Danes, who were tra-
versing the whole island and infesting the coast with sudden
descents, both personally and by his generals; although,
according to the chance of war, he himself experienced
great and repeated calamities; London and almost the whole
of Kent being laid waste. Yet these disasters were ever
checked by the alacrity of the king’s advisers, who suffered
not the enemy to trespass with impunity, but fully avenged
themselves on them by the effect of their united counsels.
For he possessed at that time, two most excellent prelates,

* Malmesbury, in following the Saxon Chronicle, is two years earlier
than the Northern Chronicles.
St. Swithun of Winchester, and Ealstan of Sherborne, who perceiving the king to be of heavy and sluggish disposition, perpetually stimulated him, by their admonitions, to the knowledge of governing. Swithun, disgusted with earthly, trained his master to heavenly pursuits; Ealstan, knowing that the business of the kingdom ought not to be neglected, continually inspírited him against the Danes: himself furnishing the exchequer with money, as well as regulating the army. Any peruser of the Annals* will find many affairs of this kind, both entered on with courage, and terminated with success through his means. He held his bishopric fifty years; happy in living for so long a space in the practice of good works. I should readily commend him, had he not been swayed by worldly avarice, and usurped what belonged to others, when by his intrigues he seized the monastery of Malmesbury for his own use. We feel the mischief of this shameful conduct even to the present day, although the monastery has baffled all similar violence from the time of his death till now, when it has fallen again into like difficulty.† Thus the accursed passion of avarice corrupts the human soul, and forces men, though great and illustrious in other respects, into hell.

Ethelwulf, confiding in these two supporters, provided effectually for external emergencies, and did not neglect the interior concerns of his kingdom. For after the subjugation of his enemies, turning to the establishment of God's worship, he granted every tenth hide of land within his kingdom to the servants of Christ, free from all tribute, exempt from all services. But how small a portion is this of his glory? Having settled his kingdom, he went to Rome, and there offered to St. Peter that tribute which England pays to this day,‡ before pope Leo the fourth, who had also, formerly,

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* See Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 823—825.
† Roger, bishop of Salisbury, seized it in like manner to his own use, A.D. 1118, and held it till his death, 1159.
‡ Alluding to the Rome-scot, or Peter's-pence, a penny from each house, paid on the festival of St. Peter. Its origin and application seem obscure: Higden interpolates Malmesbury, as assigning its first grant to Ina: Henry of Huntingdon says, Offa. This grant is supposed by Spelman to have been made in a General Council of the nation. A similar payment appears to have been made by other nations. It is to be observed that Asser mentions only Ethelwulf's donation of three hundred mancuses.
honourably received, and anointed as king, Alfred,* his son, whom Ethelwulf had sent to him. Continuing there a whole year, he nobly repaired the School of the Angles, which, according to report, was first founded by Offa, king of the Mercians, and had been burned down the preceding year.† Returning home through France, he married Judith, daughter of Charles, king of the Franks.

OF THE SUCCESSORS OF CHARLEMAGNE.

For Louis the Pious, son of Charles the Great, had four sons; Lothaire, Pepin, Louis, and Charles, surnamed the Bald; of these Lothaire, even in his father's life-time, usurping the title of emperor, reigned fifteen years in that part of Germany situated near the Alps which is now called Lorraine, that is, the kingdom of Lothaire, and in all Italy together with Rome. In his latter days, afflicted with sickness, he renounced the world. He was a man by far more inhuman than all who preceded him; so much so, as even frequently to load his own father with chains in a dungeon. Louis indeed was of mild and simple manners, but he was unmercifully persecuted by Lothaire, because Ermengarda, by whom he had his first family, being dead, he was doatingly fond of Charles, his son by his second wife Judith.

* Asser relates that pope Leo stood sponsor for, and confirmed Alfred, who had been sent to Rome by his father the preceding year.
† The conflagration here named seems that mentioned by Anastasius, who tells us, that, shortly after the accession of Pope Leo the fourth, a fire broke out in the Saxon street, but the pope, making the sign of the cross with his fingers, put a stop to it. (Anastas. Biblioth. p. 319.) From this author's account it appears to have been a street or quarter of considerable extent, and near to St. Peter's. There were schools of this kind belonging to various nations at Rome. Matt. Westminster says it was founded by Ina, with the consent and approbation of Pope Gregory, that priests, nobles, prelates, or kings, of the English nation, might be entertained there during their stay for the purpose of being thoroughly instructed in the Catholic faith; for that, from the time of Augustine, the doctrine and schools of the English had been interdicted by the popes on account of the various heresies which had sprung up among them; that, moreover, Ina bestowed a penny from each house, or Rome-scot, for the support of these persons. (Matt. West. A.D. 727.) It was destroyed by fire in the year 816, and partially again A.D. 854. Our text, therefore, is at variance with the account given by Anastasius, and the latter is probably incorrect.
Pepin, another son of Louis, had dominion in Aquitaine* and Gascony. Louis, the third son of Louis, in addition to Norica, which he had already, possessed the kingdoms which his father had given him, that is to say, Alemannia, Thuringia, Austrasia, Saxony, and the kingdom of the Avars, that is, the Huns. Charles obtained the half of France on the west, and all Neustria, Brittany, and the greatest part of Burgundy, Gothia, Gascony, and Aquitaine, Pepin the son of Pepin being ejected thence and compelled to become a monk in the monastery of St. Methard; who afterwards escaping by flight, and returning into Aquitaine, remained there in concealment a long time; but being again treacherously deceived by Ranulph the governor, he was seized, brought to Charles at Senlis, and doomed to perpetual exile. Moreover, after the death of the most pious emperor, Louis, Lothaire, who had been anointed emperor eighteen years before his father's decease, being joined by Pepin with the people of Aquitaine, led an army against his brothers, that is, Louis, the most pious king of the Bavarians, and Charles, into the county of Auxerre to a place called Fontenai:† where, when the Franks with all their subject nations had been overwhelmed by mutual slaughter, Louis and Charles ultimately triumphed; Lothaire being put to flight. After this most sanguinary conflict, however, peace was made between them, and they divided the sovereignty of the Franks, as has been mentioned above. Lothaire had three sons by Ermengarda the daughter of Hugo: first, Louis, to whom he committed the government of the Romans and of Italy; next, Lothaire, to whom he left the imperial crown; lastly, Charles, to whom he gave Provence. Lothaire died in the year of our Lord's incarnation 855, of his reign the

* The divisions of France were liable to considerable variation: but it may be sufficient to observe, that Aquitaine lay between the Garonne and Loire; Vasconia, from the Garonne to the Pyrenees; Gothia, from the Pyrenees along the coast to the eastward; Austrasia or East France, besides various tracts beyond the Rhine, lay between that river and the Meuse; Neustria or West France, from the Channel to the Loire with the exception of Brittany.

† The battle of Fontenai is considered as the most calamitous in the French annals; more than one hundred thousand men having, it is said, perished in it. It was fought on the 25th of June, A.D. 841, a memorable month in the annals of France.
thirty-third. Charles his son, who governed Provence, survived him eight years, and then Louis, emperor of the Romans, and Lothaire his brother, shared his kingdom of Provence. But Louis king of the Norici, that is, of the Bavarians, the son of Louis the emperor, in the year of our Lord's incarnation 865, after the feast of Easter, divided his kingdom between his sons. To Caroloman he gave Norica, that is, Bavaria, and the marches bordering on the Scandians and the Lombards; to Louis, Thuringia, the Eastern Franks, and Saxony; to Charles he left Alemannia, and Cornwall, that is, the county of Cornwall.* Louis himself reigned happily over his sons, in full power for ten years, and then died in the year of our Lord's incarnation 876, when he had reigned fifty-four years. Charles king of the West Franks, in the thirty-sixth year of his reign, entering Italy, came to offer up his prayers in the church of the apostles, and was there elected emperor by all the Roman people, and consecrated by pope John on the 25th of December, in the year of our Lord's incarnation 875. Thence he had a prosperous return into Gaul. But in the thirty-eighth year of his reign, and the beginning of the third of his imperial dignity, he went into Italy again, and held a conference with pope John; and returning into Gaul, he died, after passing Mount Cenis, on the 13th of October, in the tenth of the Indiction, in the year of our Lord 877, and was succeeded by his son Louis. Before the second year of his reign was completed this Louis died in the palace at Compeigne, on the sixth before the Ides of April, in the year of our Lord 879, the twelfth of the Indiction. After him his sons, Louis and Caroloman, divided his kingdom. Of these, Louis gained a victory over the Normans in the district of Vimeu, and died soon after on the 12th of August, in the year of our Lord 881, the fifteenth of the Indiction, having reigned two years, three months, and twenty-four days. He was succeeded in his government by his brother Caroloman, who, after reigning three years and six days, was wounded by a wild boar† in the forest of Iveline, in Mount Ericus.

* Cornu-guallia, i.e. the Horn of Gaul from the projection of Brittany.

† Some pretend that he was accidentally wounded by Bertholde, one of his attendants; and that the story of the boar was invented in order to
He departed this life in the year of our Lord 884, the second of the Indiction, the 24th of December. Next Charles king of the Suavi, the son of Louis king of the Norici, assumed the joint empire of the Franks and Romans, in the year of the Incarnate Word 885, the third of the Indiction; whose vision, as I think it worth preserving, I here subjoin:

"In the name of God most high, the King of kings. As I, Charles by the free gift of God, emperor, king of the Germans, patrician of the Romans, and emperor of the Franks, on the sacred night of the Lord's day, after duly performing the holy service of the evening, went to the bed of rest and sought the sleep of quietude, there came a tremendous voice to me, saying, 'Charles, thy spirit shall shortly depart from thee for a considerable time:' immediately I was rapt in the spirit, and he who carried me away in the spirit was most glorious to behold. In his hand he held a clue of thread emitting a beam of purest light, such as comets shed when they appear. This he began to unwind, and said to me, 'Take the thread of this brilliant clue and bind and tie it firmly on the thumb of thy right hand, for thou shalt be led by it through the inextricable punishments of the infernal regions.' Saying this, he went before me, quickly unrolling the thread of the brilliant clue, and led me into very deep and fiery valleys which were full of pits boiling with pitch, and brimstone, and lead, and wax, and grease. There I found the bishops of my father and of my uncles: and when in terror I asked them why they were suffering such dreadful torments? they replied, 'We were the bishops of your father and of your uncles, and instead of preaching, and admonishing them and their people to peace and concord, as was our duty, we were the sowers of discord and the fomenters of evil. On this account we are now burning in these infernal torments, together with other lovers of slaughter and of rapine; and hither also will your bishops and ministers come, who now delight to act as we did.' While I was fearfully listening to this, behold the blackest demons came flying about me, with fiery claws endeavouring to snatch away the thread of life which I held in my hand, and to draw it to them; but repelled by the rays of the clue, they were unable screen him from punishment. Malmesbury, however, follows Asser, the Saxon Chron., &c.
to touch it. Next running behind me, they tried to grip me in their claws and cast me headlong into those sulphurous pits: but my conductor, who carried the clue, threw a thread of light over my shoulders, and doubling it, drew me strongly after him, and in this manner we ascended lofty fiery mountains, from which arose lakes, and burning rivers, and all kinds of burning metals, wherein I found immersed innumerable souls of the vassals and princes of my father and brothers, some up to the hair, others to the chin, and others to the middle, who mournfully cried out to me, 'While we were living, we were, together with you, and your father, and brothers, and uncles, fond of battle, and slaughter, and plunder, through lust of earthly things: wherefore we now undergo punishment in these boiling rivers, and in various kinds of liquid metal.' While I was, with the greatest alarm, attending to these, I heard some souls behind me crying out, 'The great will undergo still greater torment.' I looked back and beheld on the banks of the boiling river, furnaces of pitch and brimstone, filled with great dragons, and scorpions, and different kinds of serpents, where I also saw some of my father's nobles, some of my own, and of those of my brothers and of my uncles, who said, 'Alas, Charles, you see what dreadful torments we undergo on account of our malice, and pride, and the evil counsel which we gave to our kings and to you, for lust's sake.' When I could not help groaning mournfully at this, the dragons ran at me with open jaws filled with fire, and brimstone, and pitch, and tried to swallow me up. My conductor then tripled the thread of the clue around me, which by the splendour of its rays overcame their fiery throats: he then pulled me with greater violence, and we descended into a valley, which was in one part dark and burning like a fiery furnace, but in another so extremely enchanting and glorious, that I cannot describe it. I turned myself to the dark part which emitted flames, and there I saw some kings of my race in extreme torture; at which, affrighted beyond measure and reduced to great distress, I expected that I should be immeasurably thrown into these torments by some very black giants, who made the valley blaze with every kind of flame. I trembled very much, and, the thread of the clue of light assisting my eyes, I saw, on the side of the valley, the light somewhat
brightening, and two fountains flowing out thence: one was extremely hot; the other clear and luke-warm; two large casks were there besides. When, guided by the thread of light, I proceeded thither, I looked into the vessel containing boiling water, and saw my father Louis, standing therein up to his thighs. He was dreadfully oppressed with pain and agony, and said to me, 'Fear not, my lord Charles; I know that your spirit will again return into your body, and that God hath permitted you to come hither, that you might see for what crimes myself and all whom you have beheld, undergo these torments. One day I am bathed in the boiling cask; next I pass into that other delightful water; which is effected by the prayers of St. Peter and St. Remigius, under whose patronage our royal race has hitherto reigned. But if you, and my faithful bishops and abbots, and the whole ecclesiastical order will quickly assist me with masses, prayers and psalms, and alma, and vigils, I shall shortly be released from the punishment of the boiling water. For my brother Lothaire and his son Louis have had these punishments remitted by the prayers of St. Peter and St. Remigius, and have now entered into the joy of God's paradise.' He then said to me, 'Look on your left hand;' and when I had done so, I saw two very deep casks boiling furiously. 'These,' said he, 'are prepared for you, if you do not amend and repent of your atrocious crimes.' I then began to be dreadfully afraid, and when my conductor saw my spirit thus terrified, he said to me, 'Follow me to the right of that most resplendent valley of paradise.' As we proceeded, I beheld my uncle Lothaire sitting in excessive brightness, in company with glorious kings, on a topaz-stone of uncommon size, crowned with a precious diadem: and near him, his son Louis crowned in like manner. Seeing me near at hand he called me to him in a kind voice, saying, 'Come to me, Charles, now my third successor in the empire of the Romans; I know that you have passed through the place of punishment where your father, my brother, is placed in the baths appointed for him; but, by the mercy of God, he will be shortly liberated from those punishments as we have been, by the merits of St. Peter and the prayers of St. Remigius, to whom God hath given a special charge over the kings and people of the Franks, and unless he shall continue to favour and assist the
dregs of our family, our race must shortly cease both from the kingdom and the empire. Know, moreover, that the rule of the empire will be shortly taken out of your hand, nor will you long survive. Then Louis turning to me, said, 'The empire which you have hitherto held by hereditary right, Louis the son of my daughter is to assume.' So saying, there seemed immediately to appear before me a little child, and Lothaire his grandfather looking upon him, said to me, 'This infant seems to be such an one as that which the Lord set in the midst of the disciples, and said, "Of such is the kingdom of God, I say unto you, that their angels do always behold the face of my father who is in heaven." But do you bestow on him the empire by that thread of the clue which you hold in your hand.' I then untied the thread from the thumb of my right hand, and gave him the whole monarchy of the empire by that thread, and immediately the entire clue, like a brilliant sun-beam, became rolled up in his hand. Thus, after this wonderful transaction, my spirit, extremely wearied and affrighted, returned into my body. Therefore, let all persons know willingly or unwillingly, forasmuch as, according to the will of God, the whole empire of the Romans will revert into his hands, and that I cannot prevail against him, compelled by the conditions of this my calling, that God, who is the ruler of the living and the dead, will both complete and establish this; whose eternal kingdom remains for ever and ever, amen."

The vision itself, and the partition of the kingdoms, I have inserted in the very words I found them in.* This Charles, then, had scarcely discharged the united duties of the empire and kingdom for two years, when Charles, the son of Louis who died at Compeigne, succeeded him: this is the Charles who married the daughter of Edward, king of England, and gave Normandy to Rollo with his daughter Gisela, who was the surety of peace and pledge of the treaty. To this Charles, in the empire, succeeded Arnulph; a king of the imperial line, tutor of that young Louis of whom the vision above recited speaks. Arnulph dying after fifteen years, this Louis succeeded him, at whose death, one Conrad, king of the

* This vision is copied from Hariulf's Chronicle, lib. iii. cap. 21. The Annals ascribed to Asser also recite the vision, sub anno 886.—See Mr. Hardy's Note, vol. i. p. 160.
Teutonians, obtained the sovereignty. His son Henry, who succeeded him, sent to Athelstan king of the Angles, for his two sisters, Aldgitha and Edgitha, the latter of whom he married to his son Otho, the former to a certain duke near the Alps. Thus the empire of the Romans and the kingdom of the Franks being severed from their ancient union, the one is governed by emperors and the other by kings. But as I have wandered wide from my purpose, whilst indulging in tracing the descent of the illustrious kings of the Franks, I will now return to the course I had begun, and to Ethelwulf.

On his return after his year’s peregrination and marriage with the daughter of Charles the Bald, as I have said, he found the dispositions of some persons contrary to his expectations. For Ethelbald his son, and Ealstan bishop of Sherborne, and Enulph earl of Somerset conspiring against him, endeavoured to eject him from the sovereignty; but through the intervention of maturer counsel, the kingdom was divided between the father and his son. This partition was extremely unequal; for malignity was so far successful that the western portion, which was the better, was allotted to the son, the eastern, which was the worse, fell to the father. He, however, with incredible forbearance, dreading "a worse than civil war," calmly gave way to his son, restraining, by a conciliatory harangue, the people who had assembled for the purpose of asserting his dignity. And though all this quarrel arose on account of his foreign wife, yet he held her in the highest estimation, and used to place her on the throne near himself, contrary to the West Saxon custom. For that people never suffered the king’s consort either to be seated by the king or to be honoured with the appellation of queen, on account of the depravity of Edburga, daughter of Offa, king of the Mercians; who, as we have before mentioned, being married to Bertric, king of the West Saxons, used to persuade him, a tender-hearted man, as they report, to the destruction of the innocent, and would herself take off by poison those against whom her accusations failed. This was exemplified in the case of a youth much beloved by the king, whom she made away with in this manner: and immediately afterwards Bertric fell sick, wasted away and died, from having previously drunk of the
same potion, unknown to the queen. The rumour of this getting abroad, drove the poisoner from the kingdom. Proceeding to Charles the Great, she happened to find him standing with one of his sons, and after offering him presents, the emperor, in a playful, jocose manner, commanded her to choose which she liked best, himself, or his son. Eadburga choosing the young man for his blooming beauty, Charles replied with some emotion, "Had you chosen me, you should have had my son, but since you have chosen him, you shall have neither." He then placed her in a monastery where she might pass her life in splendour; but, soon after, finding her guilty of incontinence he expelled her.* Struck with this instance of depravity, the Saxons framed the regulation I have alluded to, though Ethelwulf invalidated it by his affectionate kindness. He made his will a few months before he died, in which, after the division of the kingdom between his sons Ethelbald and Ethelbert, he set out the dowry of his daughter, and ordered, that, till the end of time, one poor person should be clothed and fed from every tenth hide of his inheritance, and that every year, three hundred mancas of gold† should be sent to Rome, of which one-third should be given to St. Peter, another to St. Paul for lamps, and the other to the pope for distribution. He died two years after he came from Rome, and was buried at Winchester in the cathedral. But that I may return from my digression to my proposed series, I shall here subjoin the charter of ecclesiastical immunities which he granted to all England.

"Our Lord Jesus Christ reigning for evermore. Since we perceive that perilous times are pressing on us, that there are in our days hostile burnings, and plunderings of our wealth, and most cruel depredations by devastating enemies, and many tribulations of barbarous and pagan nations, threatening even our destruction: therefore I Ethelwulf king of the West Saxons, with the advice of my bishops and nobility, have established a wholesome counsel

* Asser had conversed with many persons who afterwards saw her begging for a subsistence in Pavia, where she died.
† One hundred were for the pope, and the other two hundred to be divided between the churches of St. Peter and St. Paul, to provide lights on Easter-eve.
and general remedy. I have decided that there shall be
given to the servants of God, whether male or female or lay-
men,* a certain hereditary portion of the lands possessed by
persons of every degree, that is to say, the tenth manse,†
but where it is less than this, then the tenth part; that it
may be exonerated from all secular services, all royal tri-
butes great and small, or those taxes which we call Witere-
den. And let it be free from all things, for the release of
our souls, that it may be applied to God’s service alone,
exempt from expeditions, the building of bridges, or of forts;
in order that they may more diligently pour forth their
prayers to God for us without ceasing, inasmuch as we have
in some measure alleviated their service. Moreover it hath
pleased Ealstan bishop of Sherborne, and Swithun bishop
of Winchester, with their abbats and the servants of God,
to appoint that all our brethren and sisters at each church,
every week on the day of Mercury, that is to say, Wednes-
day, should sing fifty psalms, and every priest two masses,
one for king Æthelwulf, and another for his nobility, con-
senting to this gift, for the pardon and alleviation of their
sins; for the king while living, they shall say, ‘Let us
pray: O God, who justifiest.’ For the nobility while living,
‘Stretch forth, O Lord.’ After they are dead; for the de-
parted king, singly: for the departed nobility, in common:
and let this be firmly appointed for all the times of Chris-
tianity, in like manner as that immunity is appointed, so
long as faith shall increase in the nation of the Angles.
This charter of donation was written in the year of our
Lord’s incarnation 844,‡ the fourth of the indictment, and on
the nones, i.e. the fifth day of November, in the city of
Winchester, in the church of St. Peter, before the high
altar, and they have done this for the honour of St. Michael

* Ingulf, who likewise gives this charter, reads, “laicos miseris,” the
poor laity.
† Manse implies generally a dwelling and a certain quantity of land an-
nexed: sometimes it is synonymous with a hide, or plough-land.
‡ Ingulf has A.D. 855: 3 indict. which agrees with Asser, who assigns
that year for the grant. It appears to be the charter which Mal\nmesbury before referred to on the king’s going to Rome, and has given rise to much
troversy; some holding that it conveyed the tithes of the land only,
while others maintain that it was an actual transfer of the tenth part of all
lands in the kingdom. See Carte, vol. i. 293. Both opinions are attended
the archangel, and of St. Mary the glorious queen, the
mother of God, and also for the honour of St. Peter the
chief of the apostles, and of our most holy father pope
Gregory, and all saints. And then, for greater security,
king Ethelwulf placed the charter on the altar of St. Peter,
and the bishops received it in behalf of God’s holy faith,
and afterwards transmitted it to all churches in their dio-
ceses according to the above-cited form."

From this king the English chronicles trace the line of the
generation of their kings upwards; even to Adam, as we
know Luke the evangelist has done with respect to our Lord
Jesus; and which, perhaps, it will not be superfluous for me
to do, though it is to be apprehended, that the utterance of
barbarous names may shock the ears of persons unused to
them. Ethelwulf was the son of Egbert, Egbert of Elmund,
Elmund of Eafa, Eafa of Eoppa, Eoppa was the son of Ingild,
the brother of king Ina, who were both sons of Kenred;
Kenred of Ceolwald, Ceolwald of Cutha, Cutha of Cuthwin,
Cuthwin of Cewlin, Cewlin of Cynric, Cynric of Creoding,
Creoding of Cerdic, who was the first king of the West
Saxons; Cerdic of Elesa, Elesa of Esla, Esla of Gewis,
Gewis of Wig, Wig of Frewin, Frewin of Frithogar,
Frithogar of Brond, Brond of Beldeg, Beldeg of Woden;
and from him, as we have often remarked, proceeded the
kings of many nations. Woden was the son of Frithowald,
Frithowald of Frealaf, Frealaf of Finn, Finn of Godwulf,
Godwulf of Geat, Geat of Tætwa, Tætwa of Beaw, Beaw of
Sceldi, Sceldi of Sceaf; who, as some affirm, was driven on
a certain island in Germany, called Scamphta, (of which
Jornandes,* the historian of the Goths, speaks,) a little boy
in a skiff, without any attendant, asleep, with a handful of
corn at his head, whence he was called Sceaf; and, on
account of his singular appearance, being well received by

with considerable difficulties. Mr. Carte very inadvertently imagines this
charter and the copy in Ingulf to be distinct grants: the latter being, he
says, a confirmation and extension of the former, after Ethelwulf’s return
from Rome: but the false date in Malmesbury is of no importance, some
MSS. having even 814, and 855 was the year of his departure, not of his
return.

* Jordanes, or Jornandes, was secretary to the kings of the Goths in
Italy. He was afterwards bishop of Ravenna, and wrote, De Rebus
Gothicis; and also, De Regnorum et Temporum Successione.—Hardy.
the men of that country, and carefully educated, in his riper age he reigned in a town which was called Slawvic, but at present Haithby; which country, called old Anglia, whence the Angles came into Britain, is situated between the Saxons and the Giotths. Sceaf was the son of Heremod, Heremod of Eitermon, Eitermon of Hathra, Hathra of Guala, Guala of Bedwig, Bedwig of Streaf, and he, as they say, was the son of Noah, born in the Ark. *

CHAPTER III.

Of Ethelbald, Ethelbert, and Ethelred, sons of Ethelwulf.

[A.D. 858—872.]

In the year of our Lord 857, † the two sons of Ethelwulf divided their paternal kingdom; Ethelbald reigned in West Saxony, and Ethelbert in Kent. Ethelbald, base and peridious, defiled the bed of his father by marrying, after his decease, Judith his step-mother. Dying, however, at the end of five years, and being interred at Sherborne, the whole government devolved upon his brother. In his time a band of pirates landing at Southampton, proceeded to plunder the populous city of Winchester, but soon after being spiritedly repulsed by the king’s generals, and suffering considerable loss, they put to sea, and coasting round, chose the Isle of Thanet, in Kent, for their winter quarters. The people of Kent, giving hostages, and promising a sum of money, would have remained quiet, had not these pirates, breaking the treaty, laid waste the whole district by nightly predatory excursions, but roused by this conduct they mustered a force and drove out the truce-breakers. Moreover Ethelbert, having ruled the kingdom with vigour and with mildness,

* A similar list of the genealogy of the West Saxon kings, will be found in the Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 855.

† Malmesbury’s Chronology to the accession of Edward the Elder, is a year later than the Saxon Chronicle, Asser, and Florence of Worcester. His computation rests on fixing the death of Ethelwulf in 857, who went to Rome in 855, stayed there a year, and died in the second year after his return. Allowing ten years for Ethelbald and Ethelbert, it brings the accession of Ethelred to 867, and five years added to this give 872 for Alfred’s accession. After the death of Ethelbald Judith returned to France. She left no children; but marrying afterwards Baldwin, count of Flanders, she bore him Matilda, wife of William the Conqueror.
paid the debt of nature after five years, and was buried at Sherborne.

In the year of our Lord 867, Ethelred, the son of Ethelwulf, obtained his paternal kingdom, and ruled it for the same number of years as his brothers. Surely it would be a pitiable and grievous destiny, that all of them should perish by an early death, unless it is, that in such a tempest of evils, these royal youths should prefer an honourable end to a painful government. Indeed, so bravely and so vigorously did they contend for their country, that it was not to be imputed to them that their valour did not succeed in its design. Finally, it is related, that this king was personally engaged in hostile conflict against the enemy nine times in one year, with various success indeed, but for the most part victor, besides sudden attacks, in which, from his skill in warfare, he frequently worsted those straggling depredators. In these several actions the Danes lost nine earls and one king, besides common people innumerable.

One battle memorable beyond all the rest was that which took place at Eschendun.* The Danes, having collected an army at this place, divided it into two bodies; their two kings commanded the one, all their earls the other. Ethelred drew near with his brother Alfred. It fell to the lot of Ethelred to oppose the kings, while Alfred was to attack the earls. Both armies eagerly prepared for battle, but night approaching deferred the conflict till the ensuing day. Scarcely had the morning dawned ere Alfred was ready at his post, but his brother, intent on his devotions, had remained in his tent; and when urged on by a message, that the pagans were rushing forward with unbounded fury, he declared that he should not move a step till his religious services were ended. This piety of the king was of infinite advantage to his brother, who was too impetuous from the thoughtlessness of youth, and had already far advanced. The battalions of the Angles were now giving way, and even bordering on flight, in consequence of their adversaries pressing upon them from the higher ground, for the Christians were fighting in an unfavourable situation, when the

* Supposed Aston, near Wallingford, Berks. Others think Ashendon in Bucks. The Latin and Saxon names, Mons Frasini, and Eschen-dun, seem to favour the latter.
king himself, signed with the cross of God, unexpectedly hastened forward, dispersing the enemy, and rallying his subjects. The Danes, terrified equally by his courage and the divine manifestation, consulted their safety by flight. Here fell Oseg their king, five earls, and an innumerable multitude of common people.

The reader will be careful to observe that during this time, the kings of the Mercians and of the Northumbrians, eagerly seizing the opportunity of the arrival of the Danes, with whom Ethelred was fully occupied in fighting, and somewhat relieved from their bondage to the West Saxons, had nearly regained their original power. All the provinces, therefore, were laid waste by cruel depredations, because each king chose rather to resist the enemy within his own territories, than to assist his neighbours in their difficulties; and thus preferring to avenge injury rather than to prevent it, they ruined their country by their senseless conduct. The Danes acquired strength without impediment, whilst the apprehensions of the inhabitants increased, and each successive victory, from the addition of captives, became the means of obtaining another. The country of the East Angles, together with their cities and villages, was possessed by these plunderers; its king, St. Edmund, slain by them in the year of our Lord's incarnation 870, on the tenth of November, purchased an eternal kingdom by putting off this mortal life. The Mercians, often harassed, alleviated their afflictions by giving hostages. The Northumbrians, long embroiled in civil dissensions, made up their differences on the approach of the enemy. Replacing Osbert their king, whom they had expelled, upon the throne, and collecting a powerful force, they went out to meet the foe; but being easily repelled, they shut themselves up in the city of York, which was presently set on fire by the victors; and when the flames were raging to the utmost and consuming the very walls, they perished for their country in the conflagration. In this manner Northumbria, the prize of war, for a considerable time after, felt the more bitterly, through a sense of former liberty, the galling yoke of the barbarians. And now Ethelred, worn down with numberless labours, died and was buried at Wimborne.
CHAP. IV.

Of king Alfred. [A.D. 872—901.]

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 872, Alfred, the youngest son of Ethelwulf, who had, as has been related before, received the royal unction and crown from pope Leo the fourth at Rome, acceded to the sovereignty and retained it with the greatest difficulty, but with equal valour, twenty-eight years and a half. To trace in detail the mazy labyrinth of his labours was never my design; because a recapitulation of his exploits in their exact order of time would occasion some confusion to the reader. For, to relate how a hostile army, driven by himself or his generals, from one part of a district, retreated to another; and, dislodged thence, sought a fresh scene of operation and filled every place with rapine and slaughter; and, if I may use the expression, "to go round the whole island with him," might to some seem the height of folly: consequently I shall touch on all points summarily. For nine successive years battling with his enemies, sometimes deceived by false treaties, and sometimes wreaking his vengeance on the deceivers, he was at last reduced to such extreme distress, that scarcely three counties, that is to say, Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Somersetshire, stood fast by their allegiance, as he was compelled to retreat to a certain island called Athelney, which from its marshy situation was hardly accessible. He was accustomed afterwards, when in happier circumstances, to relate to his companions, in a lively and agreeable manner, his perils there, and how he escaped them by the merits of St. Cuthbert; * for it frequently happens that men are pleased with the recollection of those circumstances, which formerly they dreaded to encounter. During his retreat in this island, as he was one day in the house alone, his companions being dispersed on the river side for the purpose of fishing, he endeavoured to refresh his weary frame with sleep: and behold! Cuthbert, formerly bishop of Lindisfarne, addressed

* This legend will be found in the curious "account of the translation of the body of St. Cuthbert from Lindisfarne to Durham," which we shall give in "Anglo-Saxon Letters, Biographies," &c. It is taken from the Acta Sanctorum, iii. March, p. 127.
him, while sleeping, in the following manner:—"I am Cuthbert, if ever you heard of me; God hath sent me to announce good fortune to you; and since England has already largely paid the penalty of her crimes, God now, through the merits of her native saints, looks upon her with an eye of mercy. You too, so pitiably banished from your kingdom, shall shortly be again seated with honour on your throne; of which I give you this extraordinary token: your fishers shall this day bring home a great quantity of large fish in baskets; which will be so much the more extraordinary because the river, at this time hard-bound with ice, could warrant no such expectation; especially as the air now dripping with cold rain mocks the art of the fisher. But, when your fortune shall succeed to your wishes, you will act as becomes a king, if you conciliate God your helper, and me his messenger, with suitable devotion." Saying thus, the saint divested the sleeping king of his anxiety; and comforted his mother also, who was lying near him, and endeavouring to invite some gentle slumbers to her hard couch to relieve her cares, with the same joyful intelligence. When they awoke, they repeatedly declared that each had had the self-same dream, when the fishermen entering, displayed such a multitude of fishes as would have been sufficient to satisfy the appetite of a numerous army.

Not long after, venturing from his concealment, he hazarded an experiment of consummate art. Accompanied only by one of his most faithful adherents, he entered the tent of the Danish king under the disguise of a minstrel; and being admitted, as a professor of the mimic art, to the banqueting room, there was no object of secrecy that he did not minutely attend to both with eyes and ears. Remaining there several days, till he had satisfied his mind on every matter which he wished to know, he returned to Athelney: and assembling his companions, pointed out the indolence of the enemy and the easiness of their defeat. All were eager for the enterprise, and himself collecting forces from every side, and learning exactly the situation of the barbarians from scouts he had sent out for that purpose, he suddenly attacked and routed them with incredible slaughter. The

* This story rests upon the authority of Ingulf and William of Malmesbury. Asser does not notice it.
remainder, with their king, gave hostages that they would embrace Christianity and depart from the country; which they performed. For their king, Gothrun, whom our people call Gurmund, with thirty nobles and almost all the commonalty, was baptized, Alfred standing for him; and the provinces of the East Angles, and Northumbrians* were given up to him, in order that he might, under fealty to the king, protect with hereditary right, what before he had overrun with predatory incursion. However, as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, he domineered over these tributary provinces with the haughtiness of a tyrant for eleven years, and died in the twelfth, transmitting to his posterity the inheritance of his disloyalty, until subdued by Athelstan, the grandson of Alfred, they were, though reluctantly, compelled to admit one common king of England, as we see at the present day. Such of the Danes as had refused to become Christians, together with Hastings, went over sea, where the inhabitants are best able to tell what cruelties they perpetrated. For overrunning the whole maritime coasts to the Tuscan sea, they unpeopled Paris and Tours, as well as many other cities seated on the Seine and Loire, those noted rivers of France. At that time the bodies of many saints being taken up from the spot of their original interment and conveyed to safer places, have ennobled foreign churches with their relics even to this day. Then also the body of St. Martin, venerated, as Sidonius says, over the whole earth, in which virtue resides though life be at an end, was taken to Auxerre, by the clergy of his church, and placed in that of St. German, where it astonished the people of that district by unheard-of miracles. And when they who came thither, out of gratitude for cures performed, contributed many things to requite the labours of those who had borne him to this church, as is commonly the case, a dispute arose about the division of the money; the Turonians claiming the whole, because their patron had called the contributors together by his miracles: the natives, on the other hand, alleging that St. German was not unequal in merit, and was of equal

* This seems a mistake as far relates to Northumbria. The Saxon Chronicle has "Northern," and Florence of Worcester "Rex Northmanius," which at a first glance might easily be converted into Northumbria.
kindness; that both indeed had the same power, but that
the prerogative of their church preponderated. To solve
this knotty doubt, a leprous person was sought, and placed,
nearly at the last gasp, wasted to a skeleton, and already
dead, as it were, in a living carcass, between the bodies of
the two saints. All human watch was prohibited for the
whole night: the glory of Martin alone was vigilant; for
the next day, the skin of the man on his side appeared
clear, while on that of German, it was discoloured with its
customary deformity. And, that they might not attribute
this miracle to chance, they turned the yet diseased side to
Martin. As soon as the morning began to dawn, the man
was found by the hastening attendants with his skin smooth,
perfectly cured, declaring the kind condescension of the
resident patron, who yielded to the honour of such a wel-
come stranger. Thus the Turonians, both at that time and
afterwards, safely filled their common purse by the assistance
of their patron, till a more favourable gale of peace restored
them to their former residence. For these marauders infest-
ing France for thirteen years, and being at last overcome by
the emperor Erualph and the people of Brittany in many
encounters, retreated into England as a convenient receptacle
for their tyranny. During this space of time Alfred had re-
duced the whole island to his power, with the exception of
what the Danes possessed. The Angles had willingly sur-
rrendered to his dominion, rejoicing that they had produced a
man capable of leading them to liberty. He granted Lon-
don, the chief city of the Mercian kingdom, to a nobleman
named Ethered, to hold in fealty, and gave him his daughter
Ethelfled in marriage. Ethered conducted himself with
equal valour and fidelity; defended his trust with activity,
and kept the East Angles and Northumbrians, who were
fomenting rebellion against the king, within due bounds,
compelling them to give hostages. Of what infinite service
this was, the following emergency proved. After England
had rejoiced for thirteen years in the tranquillity of peace
and in the fertility of her soil, the northern pest of barba-
rians again returned. With them returned war and slaugh-
ter; again arose conspiracies of the Northumbrians and East
Angles: but neither strangers nor natives experienced the
same fortune as in former years; the one party, diminished
by foreign contests, were less alert in their invasions; while the other, now experienced in war and animated by the exhortations of the king, were not only more ready to resist, but also to attack. The king himself was, with his usual activity, present in every action, ever daunting the invaders, and at the same time inspiriting his subjects, with the signal display of his courage. He would oppose himself singly to the enemy; and by his own personal exertions rally his declining forces. The very places are yet pointed out by the inhabitants where he felt the vicissitudes of good and evil fortune. It was necessary to contend with Alfred even after he was overcome, after he was prostrate; insomuch that when he might be supposed altogether vanquished, he would escape like a slippery serpent, from the hand which held him, glide from his lurking-place, and, with undiminished courage, spring on his insulting enemies: he was insupportable after flight, and became more circumspect from the recollection of defeat, more bold from the thirst of vengeance. His children by Elswitha, the daughter of earl Athelred, were Ethelswitha, Edward who reigned after him; Ethelfled who was married to Ethered earl of the Mercians; Ethelwerd, whom they celebrate as being extremely learned; Elfred and Ethelgiva, virgins. His health was so bad that he was constantly disquieted either by the piles or some disorder of the intestines. It is said, however, that he entreated this from God, in his supplications, in order that, by the admonition of pain, he might be less anxious after earthly delights.

Yet amid these circumstances the private life of the king is to be admired and celebrated with the highest praise. For although, as some one has said, "Laws must give way amid the strife of arms," yet he, amid the sound of trumpets and the din of war, enacted statutes by which his people might equally familiarise themselves to religious worship and to military discipline. And since, from the example of the barbarians, the natives themselves began to lust after rapine, insomuch that there was no safe intercourse without a military guard, he appointed centuries, which they call "hundreds," and decennaries, that is to say, "tythings," so that every Englishman, living according to law, must be a member of both. If any one was accused of a crime, he
was obliged immediately to produce persons from the hundred and tything to become his surety; and whosoever was unable to find such surety, must dread the severity of the laws. If any who was impleaded made his escape either before or after he had found surety, all persons of the hundred and tything paid a fine to the king. By this regulation he diffused such peace throughout the country, that he ordered golden bracelets, which might mock the eager desires of the passengers while no one durst take them away, to be hung up on the public causeways, where the roads crossed each other. Ever intent on almsgiving, he confirmed the privileges of the churches, as appointed by his father, and sent many presents over sea to Rome and to St. Thomas in India. Sighelm, bishop of Sherborne, sent ambassador for this purpose, penetrated successfully into India, a matter of astonishment even in the present time. Returning thence, he brought back many brilliant exotic gems and aromatic juices in which that country abounds, and a present more precious than the finest gold, part of our Saviour's cross, sent by pope Marinus to the king. He erected monasteries wherever he deemed it fitting; one in Athelney, where he lay concealed, as has been above related, and there he made John abbat, a native of Old Saxony; another at Winchester, which is called the New-minster, where he appointed Grimbald abbat, who, at his invitation, had been sent into England by Fulco archbishop of Rheims, known to him, as they say, by having kindly entertained him when a child on his way to Rome. The cause of his being sent for was that by his activity he might awaken the study of literature in England, which was now slumbering and almost expiring. The monastery of Shaftesbury also he filled with nuns, where he made his daughter Ethelgiva abbess: From St. David's he procured a person named Asser,* a man of skill in literature, whom he made bishop of Sherborne. This man explained the meaning of the works of Boethius, on the Consolation of Philosophy, in clearer terms, and the king himself translated them into the English language. And since there was no good scholar in his own kingdom, he sent for Werefrith

* Asser, the faithful friend and biographer of this great king. His Life of Alfred, alike honourable to his master and himself, is free from flattery. It is given in one of the volumes of our Series.
bishop of Worcester out of Mercia, who by command of the
ing rendered into the English tongue the books of Greg-
gory's Dialogues. At this time Johannes Scotus is supposed
to have lived; a man of clear understanding and amazing
cloquence. He had long since, from the continued tumult
of war around him, retired into France to Charles the Bald,
at whose request he had translated the Hierarchia of Diony-
sius the Areopagite, word for word, out of the Greek into
Latin. He composed a book also, which he entitled περ
φύσεως μερισμοῦ, or Of the Division of Nature,* extremely
useful in solving the perplexity of certain indispensable in-
quiries, if he be pardoned for some things in which he de-
viated from the opinions of the Latins, through too close
attention to the Greeks. In after time, allured by the mun
ficence of Alfred, he came into England, and at our monas-
tery, as report says, was pierced with the iron styles of the
boys whom he was instructing, and was even looked upon as
a martyr; which phrase I have not made use of to the dis-
paragement of his holy spirit, as though it were matter of
doubt, especially as his tomb on the left side of the altar,
and the verses of his epitaph, record his fame.† These,
though rugged and deficient in the polish of our days, are
not so uncouth for ancient times:

"Here lies a saint, the sophist John, whose days
On earth were grace'd with deepest learning's praise:
Deem'd meet at last by martyrdom to gain
Christ's kingdom, where the saints for ever reign."

Confiding in these auxiliaries, the king gave his whole
soul to the cultivation of the liberal arts, insomuch that no
Englishman was quicker in comprehending, or more elegant
in translating. This was the more remarkable, because until
twelve years of age he absolutely knew nothing of literature.‡

* It has been printed by Gale, Oxon, 1681.
† John the Scot is generally supposed to have died in France before
A.D. 877, as the letter of Anastasius (Usher's Syllage, Ep. 24,) addressed
to Charles the Bald, who died in that year, seems strongly to imply that he
was not then living. There is, however, no positive notice of the time of
his death. The story indeed has so much the air of one told in Asser of
John abbot of Athelney, that one would almost suspect it was formed from
it: especially as Malmesbury seems to speak in a very hesitating manner
on the subject. V. Asser, à Wise, p. 62.
‡ Asser says he first began his literary education, Nov. 11, 887.
At that time, lured by a kind mother, who under the mask of amusement promised that he should have a little book which she held in her hand for a present if he would learn it quickly, he entered upon learning in sport indeed at first, but afterwards drank of the stream with unquenchable avidity. He translated into English the greater part of the Roman authors, bringing off the noblest spoil of foreign intercourse for the use of his subjects; of which the chief books were Orosius, Gregory’s Pastoral, Bede’s History of the Angles, Boethius Of the Consolation of Philosophy, his own book, which he called in his vernacular tongue “Handboc,” that is, a manual.* Moreover he infused a great regard for literature into his countrymen, stimulating them both with rewards and punishments, allowing no ignorant person to aspire to any dignity in the court. He died just as he had begun a translation of the Psalms. In the prologue to “The Pastoral” he observes, “that he was incited to translate these books into English because the churches which had formerly contained numerous libraries had, together with their books, been burnt by the Danes.” And again, “that the pursuit of literature had gone to decay almost over the whole island, because each person was more occupied in the preservation of his life than in the perusal of books; wherefore he so far consulted the good of his countrymen, that they might now hastily view what hereafter, if peace should ever return, they might thoroughly comprehend in the Latin language.” Again, “That he designed to transmit this book, transcribed by his order, to every see, with a golden style in which was a mancus of gold; that there was nothing of his own opinions inserted in this or his other translations, but that everything was derived from those celebrated men Plegmund,† archbishop of Canterbury, Asser the bishop, Grimibald and John the priests.” But, in short, I may thus briefly elucidate his

* Alfred’s Manual, from the description which Asser gives of it, appears to have contained psalms, prayers, texts of Scripture, etc.: Malmesbury, however, in his Lives of the Bishops, quotes anecdotes of Aldhelm from it also.

† Plegmund is said to have written part of the Saxon Chronicle; Asser was archbishop of St. David’s, and biographer of Alfred; Grimibald, abbot of St. Omer; and John of Corvey, a German Saxon, whom Alfred invited into England.
whole life; he so divided the twenty-four hours of the day and night as to employ eight of them in writing, in reading, and in prayer, eight in the refreshment of his body, and eight in dispatching the business of the realm. There was in his chapel a candle consisting of twenty-four divisions, and an attendant, whose peculiar province it was to admonish the king of his several duties by its consumption. One half of all revenues, provided they were justly acquired, he gave to his* monasteries, all his other income he divided into two equal parts, the first was again subdivided into three, of which the first was given to the servants of his court, the second to artificers whom he constantly employed in the erection of new edifices, in a manner surprising and hitherto unknown to the English, the third he gave to strangers. The second part of the revenue was divided in such a mode that the first portion should be given to the poor of his kingdom, the second to the monasteries, the third to scholars,† the fourth to foreign churches. He was a strict inquirer into the sentences passed by his magistrates, and a severe corrector of such as were unjust. He had one unusual and unheard of custom, which was, that he always carried in his bosom a book in which the daily order of the Psalms was contained, for the purpose of carefully perusing it, if at any time he had leisure. In this way he passed his life, much respected by neighbouring princes, and gave his daughter Ethelswitha in marriage to Baldwin earl of Flanders, by whom he had Aethelred and Ethelwulf; the former received from his father the county of Boulogne, from the other at this day are descended the earls of Flanders.‡

Alfred, paying the debt of nature, was buried at Winchester, in the monastery which he had founded; to build the offices of which Edward, his son, purchased a sufficient space of ground from the bishop and canons, giving, for every foot, a mancus of gold of the statute weight. The endurance of

* Asser says he devoted one half of his income "to God," which part was afterwards subdivided for the poor, for the two monasteries he had founded, for the school he had established, for other monasteries and churches, domestic and foreign.

† This proportion was for both teachers and pupils in the school he founded for the young nobility.—Lappenberg, vol. i. p. 340.

‡ Matilda, queen of William the First, was daughter of Baldwin earl of Flanders, the fifth in descent from Ethelswitha. See note, p. 110.
the king was astonishing, in suffering such a sum to be extorted from him; but he did not choose to offer a sacrifice to God from the robbery of the poor. These two churches were so contiguous, that, when singing, they heard each others’ voices; on this and other accounts an unhappy jealousy was daily stirring up causes of dissension, which produced frequent injuries on either side. For this reason that monastery was lately removed out of the city, and became a more healthy, as well as a more conspicuous, residence. They report that Alfred was first buried in the cathedral, because his monastery was unfinished, but that afterwards, on account of the folly of the canons, who asserted that the royal spirit, resuming its carcass, wandered nightly through the buildings, Edward, his son and successor, removed the remains of his father, and gave them a quiet resting-place in the new minster.† These and similar superstitions, such as that the dead body of a wicked man runs about, after death, by the agency of the devil, the English hold with almost inbred credulity,† borrowing them from the heathens, according to the expression of Virgil,

"Forms such as fit, they say, when life is gone."‡

CHAP. V.

Of Edward the son of Alfred. [A.D. 901—924.]

In the year of our Lord’s incarnation, 901, Edward, the son of Alfred, succeeded to the government, and held it twenty three years: he was much inferior to his father in literature, but greatly excelled in extent of power. For Alfred, indeed, united the two kingdoms of the Mercian and West Saxons, holding that of the Mercians only nominally, as he had assigned it to prince Ethelred: but at his death Edward first brought the Mercians altogether under his power, next, the West§ and East Angles, and Northumbrians, who had

* On its removal called Hyde Abbey.
† The popular notion was, that the devil re-animated the corpse, and played a variety of pranks by its agency; and that the only remedy was to dig up and consume the body with fire. See Will. Neubrig v. 22.
‡ Virg. Aenid, x. 641.
§ By West Angles he probably intends the people of Essex or East Saxons. See Florence of Worcester.
become one nation with the Danes; the Scots, who inhabit the northern part of the island; and all the Britons, whom we call Welsh, after perpetual battles, in which he was always successful. He devised a mode of frustrating the incursions of the Danes; for he repaired many ancient cities, or built new ones, in places calculated for his purpose, and filled them with a military force, to protect the inhabitants and repel the enemy. Nor was his design unsuccessful; for the inhabitants became so extremely valorous in these contests, that if they heard of an enemy approaching, they rushed out to give them battle, even without consulting the king or his generals, and constantly surpassed them, both in number and in warlike skill. Thus the enemy became an object of contempt to the soldiery and of derision to the king. At last some fresh assailants, who had come over under the command of Ethelwald, the son of the king's uncle, were all, together with himself, cut off to a man; those before, settled in the country, being either destroyed or spared under the denomination of Angles. Ethelwald indeed had attempted many things in the earlier days of this king; and, disdaining subjection to him, declared himself his inferior neither in birth nor valour; but being driven into exile by the nobility, who had sworn allegiance to Edward, he brought over the pirates; with whom, meeting his death, as I have related, he gave proof of the folly of resisting those who are our superiors in power. Although Edward may be deservedly praised for these transactions, yet, in my opinion, the palm should be more especially given to his father, who certainly laid the foundation of this extent of dominion. And here indeed Etheldred, sister of the king and relict of Ethered, ought not to be forgotten, as she was a powerful accession to his party, the delight of his subjects, the dread of his enemies, a woman of an enlarged soul, who, from the difficulty experienced in her first labour, ever after refused the embraces of her husband; protesting that it was unbecoming the daughter of a king to give way to a delight which, after a time, produced such painful consequences. This spirited heroine assisted her brother greatly with her advice, was of equal service in building cities, nor could you easily discern, whether it was more owing to fortune or her own exertions, that a woman should be able to
protect men at home, and to intimidate them abroad. She
died five years before her brother, and was buried in the
monastery of St. Peter's, at Gloucester; which, in conjunc-
tion with her husband, Ethered, she had erected with great
solicitude. Thither too she had transferred the bones of St.
Oswald, the king, from Bardney; but this monastery being
destroyed in succeeding time by the Danes, Aldred, arch-
bishop of York, founded another, which is now the chief in
that city.

As the king had many daughters, he gave Edgiva to
Charles, king of France, the son of Lewis the Stammerer,
son of Charles the Bald, whose daughter, as I have repeat-
edly observed, Ethelwulf had married on his return from
Rome; and, as the opportunity has now presented itself, the
candid reader will not think it irrelevant, if I state the
names of his wives and children. By Egwina, an illustrious
lady, he had Athelstan, his first-born, and a daughter, whose
name I cannot particularise, but her brother gave her in
marriage to Sihriric, king of the Northumbrians. The second
son of Edward was Ethelward, by Elfleda, daughter of earl
Etheline; deeply versed in literature, much resembling his
grandfather Alfred in features and disposition, but who de-
parted, by an early death, soon after his father. By the
same wife he had Edwin, of whose fate what the received
opinion is I shall hereafter describe, not with confidence, but
doubtlessly. By her too he had six daughters; Elfleda,
Edgiva, Ethelhilda, Ethilda, Edgitha, Elgifa: the first and
third vowing celibacy to God, renounced the pleasure of
earthly nuptials; Elfleda in a religious, and Ethelhilda in a
lay habit: they both lie buried near their mother, at Win-
chester. Her father gave Edgiva, as I have mentioned, to
king Charles, and her brother, Athelstan, gave Elfleda to
Hugh: this same brother also sent Edgitha and Elgifa to
Henry, emperor of Germany, the second of whom he gave
to his son Ótho, the other to a certain duke, near the Alps.

* Charles the Simple had one son by her, Louis II., surnamed
D'Outremer.

† Surnamed the Great: father of Hugh Capet: she had no issue by him.

‡ Henry, surnamed the Fowler, father of Ótho the Great. She had a
son and daughter by him. One of Edward's daughters, called Adela, is
said to have been married to Ebles, earl of Pictiers, by whom she had two
sons. See L'Art de Vérifier les Dates, ii. 312.
Again; by his third wife, named Edgiva, he had two sons, Edmund and Edred, each of whom reigned after Athelstan: two daughters, Eadburga, and Edgiva; Eadburga, a virgin, dedicated to Christ, lies buried at Winchester; Edgiva, a lady of incomparable beauty, was united, by her brother Athelstan, to Lewis, prince of Aquitaine.* Edward had brought up his daughters in such wise, that in childhood they gave their whole attention to literature, and afterwards employed themselves in the labours of the distaff and the needle, that thus they might chastely pass their virgin age. His sons were so educated, as, first, to have the completest benefit of learning, that afterwards they might succeed to govern the state, not like rustics, but philosophers.

Charles, the son-in-law of Edward, constrained thereto by Rollo, through a succession of calamities, conceded to him that part of Gaul which at present is called Normandy. It would be tedious to relate for how many years, and with what audacity, the Normans disquieted every place from the British ocean, as I have said, to the Tuscan sea. First Hasten, and then Rollo; who, born of noble lineage among the Norwegians, though obsolete from its extreme antiquity, was banished, by the king's command, from his own country, and brought over with him multitudes, who were in danger, either from debt or consciousness of guilt, and whom he had allured by great expectations of advantage. Betaking himself therefore to piracy, after his cruelty had raged on every side at pleasure, he experienced a check at Chartres. For the townspeople, relying neither on arms nor fortifications, piously implored the assistance of the blessed Virgin Mary. The shift too of the virgin, which Charles the Bald had brought with other relics from Constantinople, they displayed to the winds on the ramparts, thronged by the garrison, after the fashion of a banner. The enemy on seeing it began to laugh, and to direct their arrows at it. This, however, was not done with impunity; for presently their eyes became dim, and they could neither retreat nor advance. The townsmen, with joy perceiving this, indulged

* This seems to have been Lewis the Blind, king of Arles: and if so, she must have been one of the elder daughters, as he appears not to have survived A.D. 930. She had, at least, one son by him, Charles Constantine, earl of Vienne. See L'Art de Vérifer les Dates, ii. 429.
themselves in a plentiful slaughter of them, as far as fortune permitted. Rollo, however, whom God reserved for the true faith, escaped, and soon after gained Rouen and the neighbouring cities by force of arms, in the year of our Lord 876, and one year before the death of Charles the Bald, whose grandson Lewis, as is before mentioned, vanquished the Normans, but did not expel them: but Charles, the brother of that Lewis, grandson of Charles the Bald, by his son Lewis, as I have said above, repeatedly experiencing, from unsuccessful conflicts, that fortune gave him nothing which she took from others, resolved, after consulting his nobility, that it was advisable to make a show of royal munificence, when he was unable to repel injury; and, in a friendly manner, sent for Rollo. He was at this time far advanced in years; and, consequently, easily inclined to pacific measures. It was therefore determined by treaty, that he should be baptized, and hold that country of the king as his lord. The inbred and untameable ferocity of the man may well be imagined, for, on receiving this gift, as the by standers suggested to him, that he ought to kiss the foot of his benefactor, disdainful to kneel down, he seized the king's foot and dragged it to his mouth as he stood erect. The king falling on his back, the Normans began to laugh, and the Franks to be indignant; but Rollo apologized for his shameful conduct, by saying that it was the custom of his country. Thus the affair being settled, Rollo returned to Rouen, and there died.

The son of this Charles was Lewis: he being challenged by one Isembard, that had turned pagan, and renounced his faith, called upon his nobility for their assistance: they not even deigned an answer; when one Hugh, son of Robert, earl of Mont Didier, a youth of no great celebrity at the time, voluntarily entered the lists for his lord and killed the challenger. Lewis, with his whole army pursuing to Pontchen, gained there a glorious triumph; either destroying or putting to flight all the barbarians whom Isembard had brought with him. But not long after, weakened by extreme sickness, the consequence of this laborious expedition, he appointed this Hugh, a young man of noted faith and courage, heir to the kingdom. Thus the lineage of Charles the Great ceased with him, because either his wife was bar-
ren, or else did not live long enough to have issue. Hugh
married one of the daughters of Edward,* and begot Robert;
Robert begot Henry; Henry, Philip; and Philip, Lewis,
who now reigns in France. But to return to our Edward:
I think it will be pleasing to relate what in his time pope
Formosus commanded to be done with respect to filling up
the bishoprics, which I shall insert in the very words I found
it.†

"In the year of our Lord's nativity 904, pope Formosus
sent letters into England, by which he denounced excommu-
ication and maladministration to king Edward and all his subjects,
instead of the benediction which St. Gregory had given
to the English nation from the seat of St. Peter, because for
seven whole years the entire district of the Gewisseæ, that is,
of the West-Saxons, had been destitute of bishops. On hear-
ing this, king Edward assembled a council of the senators of
the English, over which presided Plegmund, archbishop of
Canterbury, interpreting carefully the words of the apostolic
legation. Then the king and the bishops chose for them-
selves and their followers a salutary council, and, according
to our Saviour's words, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but
the labourers are few;';† they elected and appointed one
bishop to every province of the Gewisseæ, and that district which
two formerly possessed they divided into five. The council

* This is a mistake; Hugh is confounded with his father, who married
Edward's daughter. There is no notice of this exploit of Hugh's in Bou-
quêt, though Isembard is mentioned as the nephew of Lewis, who, being
unjustly banished, returns accompanied by a large body of Danes and Nor-
mans, but is defeated. Bouquet, Recueil, &c. tom. ix. 58. Lewis, how-
ever, left issue, and it was on the death of his grandson Lewis, that Hugh
Capet became king of France.

† This story of pope Formosus and the seven bishops is to be found
verbatim in a MS. (Bodley, 579) which was given to the cathedral of Exe-
ter by bishop Leofric, who died A.D. 1073. Its difficulties therefore are
not to be imputed to our author. But though it may not be easy to assign
a rational motive for the invention of such an instrument, it is a decided
forgery; and all the ecclesiastical writers, from Baronius to Wilkins, [See
Concilia, i. p. 201.] have utterly failed in their conjectural attempts to up-
hold it: even the temperate, the acute, the learned Henry Wharton [An-
glia Sacra, i. 554, 5], who rejects decidedly the epistle, gives but an un-
satisfactory solution of the seven vacant sees. Its repugnancies will be
seen at a glance, when it is recollected, that Formosus died A.D. 896;
Edward did not reign till A.D. 901; and Frithstan did not become bishop
of Winchester before A.D. 910.

‡ Matt. ix. 37.
being dissolved, the archbishop went to Rome with splendid presents, appeased the pope with much humility, and related the king's ordinance, which gave the pontiff great satisfaction. Returning home, in one day he ordained in the city of Canterbury seven bishops to seven churches:—Frithstan to the church of Winchester; Athelstan to Cornwall; Werstan to Sherborne; Athelelm to Wells; Aidulf to Crediton in Devonshire: also to other provinces he appointed two bishops; to the South Saxons, Berneagus, a very proper person; and to the Mercians, Cenulph, whose see was at Dorchester, in Oxfordshire. All this the pope established, in such wise, that he who should invalidate this decree should be damned everlastingly.”

Edward, going the way of all flesh, rested in the same monastery with his father, which he had augmented, with considerable revenues, and in which he had buried his brother Ethelward four years before.

CHAP. VI.

Of Athelstan, the son of Edward. [A.D. 924—940.]

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 924, Athelstan, the son of Edward, began to reign, and held the sovereignty sixteen years. His brother, Ethelward, dying a few days after his father, had been buried with him at Winchester. At this place, therefore, Athelstan, being elected king by the unanimous consent of the nobility, he was crowned at a royal town, which is called Kingston; though one Elfred, whose death we shall hereafter relate in the words of the king, with his factious party, as sedition never wants adherents, attempted to prevent it. The ground of his opposition, as they affirm, was, that Athelstan was born of a concubine. But having nothing ignoble in him, except this stain, if after all it be true, he cast all his predecessors into the shade by his piety, as well as the glory of all their triumphs, by the splendour of his own. So much more excellent is it to have that for which we are renowned inherent, than derived from our ancestors; because the former is exclusively our own, the latter is imputable to others. I forbear relating how many new and magnificent monasteries he founded; but I will not conceal that there was scarcely an old one in Eng-
land which he did not embellish, either with buildings, or ornaments, or books, or possessions. Thus he enabled the new ones expressly, but the old, as though they were only casual objects of his kindness. With Sithric, king of the Northumbrians, who married, as I have before said, one of his sisters, he made a lasting covenant; he dying after a year, Athelstan took that province under his own government, expelling one Aldulphe, who resisted him. And as a noble mind, when once roused, aspires to greater things, he compelled Guthwel, king of all the Welsh, and Constantine, king of the Scots, to quit their kingdoms; but not long after, moved with commiseration, he restored them to their original state, that they might reign under him, saying, "it was more glorious to make than to be a king." His last contest was with Anlaf, the son of Sithric, who, with the before-named Constantine, again in a state of rebellion, had entered his territories under the hope of gaining the kingdom. Athelstan purposely retreating, that he might derive greater honour from vanquishing his furious assailants, this bold youth, meditating unlawful conquests, had now proceeded far into England, when he was opposed at Bruneford* by the most experienced generals, and most valiant forces. Perceiving, at length, what danger hung over him, he assumed the character of a spy. Laying aside his royal ensigns, and taking a harp in his hand, he proceeded to our king's tent: singing before the entrance, and at times touching the trembling strings in harmonious cadence, he was readily admitted, professing himself a minstrel, who procured his daily sustenance by such employment. Here he entertained the king and his companions for some time with his musical performance, carefully examining everything while occupied in singing. When satiety of eating had put an end to their sensual enjoyments, and the business of war was resumed among the nobles, he was ordered to depart, and received the recompence of his song; but disdaining to take it away, he hid it beneath him in the earth. This circumstance was remarked by a person, who had formerly served under him, and immediately related it to Athelstan. The king, blaming him

* In the Saxon Chronicle it is called Brumby. [See Chronicles of the Anglo-Saxons, in Bahn's Antiquarian Library, pp. 376, 377.] Its site is not exactly known, but it was probably not far from the Humber.
extremely for not having detected his enemy as he stood before them, received this answer: "The same oath, which I have lately sworn to you, O king, I formerly made to Anlaf; and had you seen me violate it towards him, you might have expected similar perfidy towards yourself; but condescend to listen to the advice of your servant, which is, that you should remove your tent hence, and remaining in another place till the residue of the army come up, you will destroy your ferocious enemy by a moderate delay." Approving this admonition, he removed to another place. Anlaf advancing, well prepared, at night, put to death, together with the whole of his followers, a certain bishop,* who had joined the army only the evening before, and, ignorant of what had passed, had pitched his tent there on account of the level turf. Proceeding farther, he found the king himself equally unprepared; who, little expecting his enemy capable of such an attack, had indulged in profound repose. But, when roused from his sleep by the excessive tumult, and urging his people, as much as the darkness of the night would permit, to the conflict, his sword fell by chance from the sheath; upon which, while all things were filled with dread and blind confusion, he invoked the protection of God and of St. Aldhelm, who was distantly related to him; and replacing his hand upon the scabbard, he there found a sword, which is kept to this day, on account of the miracle, in the treasury of the kings. Moreover, it is, as they say, chased in one part, but can never be inlaid either with gold or silver. Confiding in this divine present, and at the same time, as it began to dawn, attacking the Norwegian, he continued the battle unwearied through the day, and put him to flight with his whole army. There fell Constantine, king of the Scots, a man of treacherous energy and vigorous old age; five other kings, twelve earls, and almost the whole assemblage of barbarians. The few who escaped were preserved to embrace the faith of Christ.

Concerning this king a strong persuasion is prevalent among the English, that one more just or learned never governed the kingdom. That he was versed in literature, I

* Said to be Wistan, bishop of Sherborne. See Malmesbury's Gesta Pontificum; or, Lives of the Bishops, to be hereafter translated and published in this series.
discovered a few days since, in a certain old volume, wherein
the writer struggles with the difficulty of the task, unable to
express his meaning as he wished. Indeed I would subjoin
his words for brevity's sake, were they not extravagant be-
yond belief in the praises of the king, and just in that style
of writing which Cicero, the prince of Roman eloquence,
in his book on Rhetoric, denominates "bombast." The cus-

tom of that time excuses the diction, and the affection for
Athelstan, who was yet living, gave countenance to the ex-
cess of praise. I shall subjoin, therefore, in familiar lan-
guage, some few circumstances which may tend to augment
his reputation.

King Edward, after many noble exploits, both in war and
peace, a few days before his death subdued the contumacy of
the city of Chester, which was rebelling in confederacy with
the Britons; and placing a garrison there, he fell sick and
died at Faringdon, and was buried, as I before related, at
Winchester. Athelstan, as his father had commanded in his
will, was then hailed king, recommended by his years,—for
he was now thirty,—and the maturity of his wisdom. For
even his grandfather Alfred, seeing and embracing him affec-
tionately when he was a boy of astonishing beauty and
graceful manners, had most devoutly prayed that his govern-
ment might be prosperous: indeed, he had made him a
Knight* unusually early, giving him a scarlet cloak, a belt
studded with diamonds, and a Saxon sword with a golden
scabbard. Next he had provided that he should be educated
in the court of Ethelfled his daughter, and of his son-in-
law Ethered; so that, having been brought up in expecta-
tion of succeeding to the kingdom, by the tender care of his
aunt and of this celebrated prince, he repressed and destroyed
all envy by the lustre of his good qualities; and, after the
death of his father, and decease of his brother, he was
crowned at Kingston. Hence, to celebrate such splendid
events, and the joy of that illustrious day, the poet justly
exclaims:

* This passage is thought to prove the existence of knights as a distinct
order among the Saxons; and, coupled with the case of Hereward, it has
very much that air. See Mr. Turner's Anglo-Saxons, 4, 171, et inf. But
perhaps in the present instance, it may amount to nothing more than
bestowing his first arms on him. Lewis the Debonnaire received his armes,
"case succinctus est," at thirteen years old.—Duchesne, i. ii. 289.
Of royal race a noble stem
Hath chased our darkness like a gem.
Great Athelstan, his country's pride,
Whose virtue never turns aside;
Sent by his father to the schools,
Patient, he bore their rigid rules,
And drinking deep of science mild,
Passed his first years unlike a child.
Next clothed in youth's bewitching charms,
Studied the harsher lore of arms,
Which soon confessed his knowledge keen,
As after in the sovereign seen.
Soon as his father, good and great,
Yielded, though ever famed, to fate,
The youth was called the realm to guide,
And, like his parent, well preside.
The nobles meet, the crown present,
On rebels, prelates curses vent;
The people light the festive fires,
And show by turns their kind desires.
Their deeds their loyalty declare,
Though hopes and fears their bosoms share.
With festive treat the court abounds;
Foams the brisk wine, the hall resounds:
The pages run, the servants haste,
And food and verse regale the taste.
The minstrels sing, the guests commend,
Whilst all in praise to Christ contend.
The king with pleasure all things sees,
And all his kind attentions please.

The solemnity of the consecration being finished, Athelstan, that he might not deceive the expectation of his subjects, and fall below their opinion, subdued the whole of England, except Northumbria, by the single terror of his name. One Sihtric, a relation of that Guthrun who is mentioned in the history of Alfred, presided over this people, a barbarian both by race and disposition, who, though he ridiculed the power of preceding kings, humbly solicited affinity with Athelstan, sending messengers expressly for the purpose; and himself shortly following confirmed the proposals of the ambassadors. In consequence, honoured by a union with his sister, and by various presents, he laid the basis of a perpetual treaty. But, as I have before observed, dying at the end of a year, he afforded Athelstan an opportunity for uniting Northumbria, which belonged to him both by ancient right and recent affinity, to his sovereignty. Anlaf, the son of Sihtric, then
flid into Ireland, and his brother Guthferth into Scotland. Messengers from the king immediately followed to Constantine, king of the Scots, and Eugenius, king of the Cumbrians, claiming the fugitive under a threat of war. The barbarians had no idea of resistance, but without delay coming to a place called Dacor, they surrendered themselves and their kingdoms to the sovereign of England. Out of regard to this treaty, the king himself stood for the son of Constantine, who was ordered to be baptized, at the sacred font. Guthferth, however, amid the preparations for the journey, escaped by flight with one Turfrid, a leader of the opposite party; and afterwards laying siege to York, where he could succeed in bringing the townsfolk to surrender neither by entreaties nor by threats, he departed. Not long after, being both shut up in a castle, they eluded the vigilance of the guards, and escaped. Turfrid, losing his life quickly after by shipwreck, became a prey to fishes. Guthferth, suffering extremely both by sea and land, at last came a suppliant to court. Being amicably received by the king, and sumptuously entertained for four days, he resought his ships; an incorrigible pirate, and accustomed to live in the water like a fish. In the meantime Athelstan levelled with the ground the castle which the Danes had formerly fortified in York, that there might be no place for disloyalty to shelter in; and the booty which had been found there, which was very considerable, he generously divided, man by man, to the whole army. For he had prescribed himself this rule of conduct, never to hoard up riches; but liberally to expend all his acquisition either on monasteries or on his faithful followers. On these, during the whole of his life, he expended his paternal treasures, as well as the produce of his victories. To the clergy he was humble and affable; to the laity mild and pleasant; to the nobility rather reserved, from respect to his dignity; to the lower classes, laying aside the stateliness of power, he was kind and condescending. He was, as we have heard, of becoming stature, thin in person, his hair flaxen, as I have seen by his remains, and beautifully wreathed with golden threads. Extremely beloved by his subjects from admiration of his fortitude and humility, he was terrible to those who rebelled against him, through his invincible courage. He compelled the rulers of the northern
Welsh, that is, of the North Britons, to meet him at the city of Hereford, and after some opposition to surrender to his power. So that he actually brought to pass what no king before him had even presumed to think of: which was, that they should pay annually by way of tribute, twenty pounds of gold, three hundred of silver, twenty-five thousand oxen, besides as many dogs as he might choose, which from their sagacious scent could discover the retreats and hiding places of wild beasts; and birds, trained to make prey of others in the air. Departing thence, he turned towards the Western Britons, who are called the Cornwallish, because, situated in the west of Britain, they are opposite to the extremity of Gaul.* Fiercely attacking, he obliged them to retreat from Exeter, which, till that time, they had inhabited with equal privileges with the Angles, fixing the boundary of their province on the other side of the river Tamar, as he had appointed the river Wye to the North Britons. This city then, which he had cleansed by purging it of its contaminated race, he fortified with towers and surrounded with a wall of squared stone. And, though the barren and unfruitful soil can scarcely produce indifferent oats, and frequently only the empty husk without the grain, yet, owing to the magnificence of the city, the opulence of its inhabitants, and the constant resort of strangers, every kind of merchandise is there so abundant that nothing is wanting which can conduce to human comfort. Many noble traces of him are to be seen in that city, as well as in the neighbouring district, which will be better described by the conversation of the natives, than by my narrative.

On this account all Europe resounded with his praises, and extolled his valour to the skies: foreign princes with justice esteemed themselves happy if they could purchase his friendship either by affinity or by presents. Harold king of Norway sent him a ship with golden beak and a purple sail, furnished within with a compacted fence of gilded shields. The names of the persons sent with it, were Helgrim and Offrid: who, being received with princely magnificence in the city of York, were amply compensated, by rich presents, for the labour of their journey. Henry the First, for there were many of the name, the son of Conrad, king of the

* Cornu Gallia, a fanciful etymology.
Teutonians and emperor of the Romans, demanded his sister, as I have before related, for his son Otho; passing over so many neighbouring kings, but contemplating from a distance Athelstan's noble descent, and greatness of mind. So completely indeed had these two qualities taken up their abode with him, that none could be more noble or illustrious in descent; none more bold or prompt in disposition. Maturity considering that he had four sisters, who were all equally beautiful, except only as their ages made a difference, he sent two to the emperor at his request; and how he disposed of them in marriage has already been related: Lewis prince of Aquitania, a descendant of Charles the Great, obtained the third in wedlock: the fourth, in whom the whole essence of beauty had centred, which the others only possessed in part, was demanded from her brother by Hugh king of the Franks.* The chief of this embassy was Adolph, son of Baldwin earl of Flanders by Ethelswitha daughter of king Edward.† When he had declared the request of the suitor in an assembly of the nobility at Abingdon, he produced such liberal presents as might gratify the most boundless avarice: perfumes such as never had been seen in England before: jewels, but more especially emeralds, the greenness of which, reflected by the sun, illumined the countenances of the bystanders with agreeable light: many fleet horses with their trappings, and, as Virgil says, "Champing their golden bits:" an alabaster vase so exquisitely chased, that, the cornfields really seemed to wave, the vines to bud, the figures of men actually to move, and so clear and polished, that it reflected the features like a mirror; the sword of Constantine the Great, on which the name of its original possessor was read in golden letters; on the pomell, upon thick plates of gold, might be seen fixed an iron spike, one of the four which the Jewish faction prepared for the crucifixion of our Lord: the spear of Charles the Great, which whenever that invincible emperor hurled in his expeditions against the Saracens, he always came off conqueror; it was reported to be the same, which, driven into the side of our Saviour by

* Improperly called king; it was Hugh the Great, father of Hugh Capet. Malmesbury was probably deceived by a blunder of Ingulfus.
† This is a mistake, she was daughter of Alfred. See chap. iv. p. 117.
the hand of the centurion, opened, by that precious wound, the joys of paradise to wretched mortals: the banner of the most blessed martyr Maurice, chief of the Theban legion; with which the same king, in the Spanish war, used to break through the battalions of the enemy however fierce and wedged together, and put them to flight: a diadem, precious from its quantity of gold, but more so for its jewels, the splendour of which threw the sparks of light so strongly on the beholders, that the more stedfastly any person endeavoured to gaze, so much the more he was dazzled, and compelled to avert his eyes; part of the holy and adorable cross enclosed in crystal; where the eye, piercing through the substance of the stone, might discern the colour and size of the wood; a small portion of the crown of thorns, enclosed in a similar manner, which, in derision of his government, the madness of the soldiers placed on Christ's sacred head. The king, delighted with such great and exquisite presents, made an equal return of good offices; and gratified the soul of the longing suitor by a union with his sister. With some of these presents he enriched succeeding kings; but to Malmesbury he gave part of the cross and crown; by the support of which, I believe, that place even now flourishes, though it has suffered so many shipwrecks of its liberty, so many attacks of its enemies.†

In this place he ordered Elwin and Ethelwin, the sons of his uncle Ethelward, whom he had lost in the battle against Anlaf; to be honourably buried, expressing his design of resting here himself; of which battle it is now proper time to give the account of that poet, from whom I have taken all these transactions.

His subjects governing with justest sway,
Tyrants ever w'd, twelve years had pass'd away,

* The legend of St. Longinus makes the centurion mentioned in the Gospel, the person who pierced the side of our Lord; with many other fabulous additions. See Juc. a Vuragine, Legenda Sanctorum.
† The Theban legion refusing, in the Diocletian persecution, to bring the Christians to execution, were ordered to be decimated; and on their persisting in the same resolution at the instigation of Maurice, the commander of the legion, they were, together with him, put to cruel death. V. Acta Sanctor. 23 Sept.
‡ His fate, apparently, the oppressions of bishop Roger constantly before him.
When Europe's noxious pestilence stalk'd forth,
And poured the barbarous legions from the north.
The pirate Anlaf now the briny surge
Forsoaks, while deeds of desperation urge.
Her king consenting, Scotia's land receives
The frantic madman, and his host of thieves:
Now flush'd with insolence they shout and boast,
And drive the harmless natives from the coast.
Thus, while the king, secure in youthful pride,
Bade the soft hours in gentle pleasures glide,
Though erst he stemmed the battle's furious tide,
With ceaseless plunder sped the daring hordes,
And wasted districts with their fire and sword.
The verdant crops lay withering on the fields
The glebe no promise to the rustic yields.
Immense the numbers of barbarian force,
Countless the squadrons both of foot and horse.
At length fame's rueful moan alarmed the king,
And bade him shun this ignominious sting,
That arms like his to ruffian bands should bend:
'Tis done: delays and hesitations end.
High in the air the threatening banners fly,
And call his eager troops to victory,
His hardy force, a hundred thousand strong
Whom standards hasten to the fight along.
The martial clamour scares the plundering band,
And drives them bootless towards their native land.
The vulgar mass a dreadful carnage share,
And shed contagion on the ambient air,
While Anlaf, only, out of all the crew
Escapes the need of death, so justly due,
Reserved by fortune's favor, once again
When Athelstan was dead, to claim our strain.

This place seems to require that I should relate the death of Elfred in the words of the king, for which I before pledged the faith of my narrative. For as he had commanded the bodies of his relations to be conveyed to Malmesbury, and interred at the head of the sepulchre of St. Aldhelm; he honoured the place afterwards to such a degree, that he esteemed none more desirable or more holy. Bestowing many large estates upon it, he confirmed them by charters, in one of which, after the donation, he adds: "Be it known to the sages of our kingdom, that I have not unjustly seized the lands aforesaid, or dedicated plunder to God; but that I have received them, as the English nobility, and even John, the pope of the church of Rome himself, have judged
fitting on the death of Elfred. He was the jealous rival both of my happiness and life, and consented to the wickedness of my enemies, who, on my father's decease, had not God in his mercy delivered me, wished to put out my eyes in the city of Winchester: wherefore, on the discovery of their infernal contrivances, he was sent to the church of Rome to defend himself by oath before pope John. This he did at the altar of St. Peter; but at the very instant he had sworn, he fell down before it, and was carried by his servants to the English School, where he died the third night after. The pope immediately sent to consult with us, whether his body should be placed among other Christians. On receiving this account the nobility of our kingdom, with the whole body of his relations, humbly entreated that we would grant our permission for his remains to be buried with other Christians. Consenting, therefore, to their urgent request, we sent back our compliance to Rome, and with the pope's permission he was buried, though unworthy, with other Christians. In consequence all his property of every description was adjudged to be mine. Moreover, we have noted this in writing, that, so long as Christianity reigns, it may never be abrogated, whence the aforesaid land, which I have given to God and St. Peter, was granted me; nor do I know any thing more just, than that I should bestow this gift on God and St. Peter, who caused my rival to fall in the sight of all persons, and conferred on me a prosperous reign."

In these words of the king, we may equally venerate his wisdom, and his piety in sacred matters: his wisdom, that so young a man should perceive that a sacrifice obtained by rapine could not be acceptable to God: his piety in so gratefully making a return to God, out of a benefit conferred on him by divine vengeance. Moreover, it may be necessary to observe, that at that time the church of St. Peter was the chief of the monastery, which now is deemed second only: the church of St. Mary, which the monks at present frequent, was built afterwards in the time of king Edgar, under abbot Elfric. Thus far relating to the king I have written from authentic testimony: that which follows I have learned more from old ballads, popular through succeeding times, than from books written expressly for the information of
posterity. I have subjoined them, not to defend their veracity, but to put my reader in possession of all I know. First, then, to the relation of his birth.

There was in a certain village, a shepherd's daughter, a girl of exquisite beauty, who gained through the elegance of her person what her birth could never have bestowed. In a vision she beheld a prodigy: the moon shone from her womb, and all England was illuminated by the light. When she sportively related this to her companions in the morning, it was not so lightly received, but immediately reached the ears of the woman who had nursed the sons of the king. Deliberating on this matter, she took her home and adopted her as a daughter, bringing up this young maiden with costlier attire, more delicate food, and more elegant demeanour. Soon after, Edward, the son of king Alfred, travelling through the village, stopped at the house which had been the scene of his infantine education. Indeed, he thought it would be a blemish on his reputation to omit paying his salutations to his nurse. He became deeply enamoured of the young woman from the first moment he saw her, and passed the night with her. In consequence of this single intercourse, she brought forth her son Athelstan, and so realized her dream. For at the expiration of his childish years, as he approached manhood, he gave proof by many actions what just expectations of noble qualities might be entertained of him. King Edward, therefore, died, and was shortly followed by his legitimate son Ethelward. All hopes now centred in Athelstan: Elfred alone, a man of uncommon insolence, disdaining to be governed by a sovereign whom he had not voluntarily chosen, secretly opposed with his party to the very utmost. But he being detected and punished, as the king has before related, there were some who even accused Edwin, the king's brother, of treachery. Base and dreadful crime was it thus to embroil fraternal affection by sinister constructions. Edwin, though imploring, both personally and by messengers, the confidence of his brother, and though invalidating the accusation by an oath, was nevertheless driven into exile. So far, indeed, did the dark suggestions of some persons prevail on a mind distracted with various cares, that, forgetful of a brother's love, he expelled the youth, an object of pity even to strangers. The
mode adopted too was cruel in the extreme: he was compelled to go on board a vessel, with a single attendant, without a rower, without even an oar, and the bark crazy with age. Fortune laboured for a long time to restore the innocent youth to land, but when at length he was far out at sea, and sails could not endure the violence of the wind, the young man, delicate, and weary of life under such circumstances, put an end to his existence by a voluntary plunge into the waters. The attendant wisely determining to prolong his life, sometimes by shunning the hostile waves, and sometimes by urging the boat forward with his feet, brought his master's body to land, in the narrow sea which flows between Wissant and Dover. Athelstan, when his anger cooled, and his mind became calm, shuddered at the deed, and submitting to a seven years' penance, inflicted severe vengeance on the accuser of his brother: he was the king's cup-bearer, and on this account had opportunity of enforcing his insinuations. It so happened on a festive day, as he was serving wine, that slipping with one foot in the midst of the chamber, he recovered himself with the other. On this occasion, he made use of an expression which proved his destruction: "Thus brother," said he, "assists brother." The king on hearing this, ordered the faithless wretch to be put to death, loudly reproaching him with the loss of that assistance he might have had from his brother, were he alive, and bewailing his death.

The circumstances of Edwin's death, though extremely probable, I the less venture to affirm for truth, on account of the extraordinary affection he manifested towards the rest of his brothers; for, as his father had left them very young, he cherished them whilst children with much kindness, and, when grown up, made them partakers of his kingdom; it is before related to what dignity he exalted such of his sisters as his father had left unmarried and unprovided for. Completing his earthly course, and that a short one, Athelstan died at Gloucester. His noble remains were conveyed to Malmesbury and buried under the altar. Many gifts, both in gold and silver, as well as relics of saints purchased abroad in Brittany, were carried before the body: for, in such things, admonished, as they say, in a dream, he expanded the treasures which his father had long since
amassed, and had left untouched. His years, though few, were full of glory.

CHAP. VII.

Of kings Edmund, Edred, and Eadwy. [A.D. 940—955.]

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 940, Edmund the brother of Athelstan, a youth of about eighteen, received and held the government for six years and a half. In his time the Northumbrians, meditating a renewal of hostilities, violated the treaty which they had made with Athelstan, and created Anlaf, whom they had recalled from Ireland, their king. Edmund, who thought it disgraceful not to complete his brother's victorious course, led his troops against the delinquents; who presently retreating, he subjugated all the cities on this side the river Humber. Anlaf, with a certain prince, Reginald, the son of that Gurmund of whom we have spoken in the history of Alfred, sounding the disposition of the king, offered to surrender himself, proffering his conversion to Christianity as a pledge of his fidelity, and receiving baptism. His savage nature, however, did not let him remain long in this resolution, for he violated his oath, and irritated his lord. In consequence of which, the following year he suffered for his crimes, being doomed to perpetual exile. The province which is called Cumberland Edmund assigned to Malcolm, king of the Scots, under fealty of an oath.

Among the many donations which the king conferred on different churches, he exalted that of Glastonbury, through his singular affection towards it, with great estates and honours; and granted it a charter in these words:

"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I Edmund, king of the Angles, and governor and ruler of the other surrounding nations, with the advice and consent of my nobility, for the hope of eternal retribution, and remission of my transgressions, do grant to the church of the holy mother of God, Mary of Glastonbury, and the venerable Dunstan, whom I have there constituted abbat, the franchise and jurisdiction,

* Reginald was not the son of Gurmund, but of Guthfryth, who was driven out of Northumberland by Athelstan. See Saxon Chronicles, A.D. 927—944.
rights, customs, and all the forfeitures of all their possess-
sions; that is to say,* burhgeritha, and hundred-setena.
athas and ordelas, and infangenetheofas, hamsone, and fri-
debrice, and forestel and toll, and team, throughout my king-
dom, and their lands shall be free to them, and released from
all exactions, as my own are. But more especially shall the
town of Glastonbury, in which is situated that most ancient
church of the holy mother of God, together with its bounds,
be more free than other places. The abbat of this place,
alone, shall have power, as well in causes known as unknown;
in small and in great; and even in those which are above,
and under the earth; on dry land, and in the water; in
woods and in plains; and he shall have the same authority
of punishing or remitting the crimes of delinquents perpetra-
ted within it, as my court has; in the same manner as my
predecessors have granted and confirmed by charter; to wit,
Edward my father, and Elfred his father, and Kentwin, Ina,
and Cuthred, and many others, who more peculiarly honoured
and esteemed that noble place. And that any one, either
bishop, or duke,† or prince, or any of their servants, should
dare to enter it for the purpose of holding courts, or distrain-
ing, or doing any thing contrary to the will of the ser-
vants of God there, I inhibit under God's curse. Whosoever
therefore shall benevolently augment my donation, may his
life be prosperous in this present world; long may he enjoy
his happiness: but whosoever shall presume to invade it
through his own rashness, let him know for certain that he
shall be compelled with fear and trembling to give account
before the tribunal of a rigorous judge, unless he shall first
alone for his offence by proper satisfaction."

The aforesaid donation was granted in the year of our

* The exact meaning of some of these terms is not easily attainable, but
they are generally understood to imply—jurisdiction over the burgh, or
town—hundred court—oaths and ordelas—thieves taken within the jurisdic-
tion—housebreakers—breach of peace—offences committed on the high-
ways, or forestalling—tolls—warranty, or a right of reclaiming villains who
had absconded. The charter therefore conveys a right to hold various
courts, and consequently to try, and receive all multia arising from the
several offences enumerated, which being generally redeemable by fine,
produced considerable sums; besides, what was perhaps of more import-
ance, exemption from the vexations of the king's officers.
† Duke is often used in charters, &c. as synonymous with earl.
Lord Jesus Christ's incarnation 944, in the first of the indiction, and was written in letters of gold in the book of the Gospels, which he presented to the same church elegantly adorned. Such great and prosperous successes, however, were obscured by a melancholy death. A certain robber named Leota, whom he had banished for his crimes, returning after six years' absence totally unexpected, was sitting, on the feast of St. Augustine, the apostle of the English, and first archbishop of Canterbury, among the royal guests at Puckle-church,* for on this day the English were wont to regale in commemoration of their first preacher; by chance too, he was placed near a nobleman whom the king had condescended to make his guest. This, while the others were eagerly carousing, was perceived by the king alone; when, hurried with indignation and impelled by fate, he leaped from the table, caught the robber by the hair, and dragged him to the floor; but he secretly drawing a dagger from its sheath plunged it with all his force into the breast of the king as he lay upon him. Dying of the wound, he gave rise over the whole kingdom to many fictions concerning his decease. The robber was shortly torn limb from limb by the attendants who rushed in, though he wounded some of them ere they could accomplish their purpose. St. Dunstan, at that time abbat of Glastonbury, had foreseen his ignoble end, being fully persuaded of it from the gesticulations and insolent mockery of a devil dancing before him. Wherefore, hastening to court at full speed, he received intelligence of the transaction on the road. By common consent then it was determined, that his body should be brought to Glastonbury and there magnificently buried in the northern part of the tower. That such had been his intention, through his singular regard for the abbat, was evident from particular circumstances. The village also where he was murdered was made an offering for the dead, that the spot which had witnessed his fall might ever after minister aid to his soul.

In his fourth year, that is, in the year of our Lord 944, William, the son of Rollo, duke of Normandy, was treacherously killed in France, which old writers relate as having been done with some degree of justice. Rinulph, one of the Norman nobility, owing William a grudge from some un-
known cause, harassed him with perpetual aggressions. His son, Anschetil, who served under the earl, to gratify his lord durst offer violence to nature for taking his father in battle: he delivered him into the power of the earl, relying on the most solemn oath, that he should suffer nothing beyond imprisonment. As wickedness, however, constantly discovers pretences for crime, the earl, shortly after feigning an excuse, sends Anschetil to Pavia bearing a letter to the duke of Italy, the purport of which was his own destruction. Completing his journey, he was received, on his entrance into the city, in the most respectful manner; and delivering the letter, the duke, astonished at the treachery, shuddered, that a warrior of such singular address should be ordered to be despatched. But as he would not oppose the request of so renowned a nobleman, he laid an ambush of a thousand horsemen, as it is said, for Anschetil when he left the city. For a long time, with his companions whom he had selected out of all Normandy, he resisted their attack; but at last he fell nobly, compensating his own death by slaying many of the enemy. The only survivor on either side was Balso, a Norman, a man of small size, but of incredible courage; although some say that he was ironically called short. This man, I say, alone hovered round the city, and by his single sword terrified the townspeople as long as he thought proper. No person will deem this incredible, who considers what efforts the desperation of a courageous man will produce, and how little military valour the people of that region possess. Returning thence to his own country, he laid his complaint of the perfidy of his lord before the King of France. Fame reported too, that Rinulph, in addition to his chains, had had his eyes put out. In consequence the earl being cited to his trial at Paris was met, under the pretence of a conference, as they assert, and killed by Balso; thus making atonement for his own perfidy, and satisfying the rage of his antagonist in the midst of the river Seine. His death was the source of long discord between the French and Normans, till by the exertions of Richard his son it had a termination worthy such a personage. A truer history indeed relates, that being at enmity with Ernulph, earl of Flanders, he had possessed himself of one of his castles, and that being invited

* See Will. Gematiosus, lib. III. c. 11.
out by him to a conference, on a pretended design of making a truce, he was killed by Balso, as they were conversing in a ship: that a key was found at his girdle, which being applied to the lock of his private cabinet, discovered certain monastic habiliments: * for he ever designed, even amid his warlike pursuits, one day to become a monk at Jumièges; which place, deserted from the time of Hasting, he cleared of the overspreading thorns, and with princely magnificence exalted to its present state.

In the year of our Lord 946, Edred, Edward's third son, assuming the government, reigned nine years and a half. He gave proof that he had not degenerated in greatness of soul from his father and his brothers; for he nearly exterminated the Northumbrians and the Scots, laying waste the whole province with sword and famine, because, having with little difficulty compelled them to swear fidelity to him, they broke their oath, and made Iricius their king. He for a long time kept Wulstan, archbishop of York, who, it was said, connived at the revolt of his countrymen, in chains, but afterwards, out of respect to his ecclesiastical dignity, released and pardoned him. In the meantime, the king himself, prostrate at the feet of the saints, devoted his life to God and to Dunstan, by whose admonition he endured with patience his frequent bodily pains, † prolonged his prayers, and made his palace altogether the school of virtue. He died accompanied with the utmost grief of men, but joy of angels; for Dunstan, learning by a messenger that he was sick, while urging his horse in order to see him, heard a voice thundering over his head, "Now king Edred sleeps in the Lord." He lies buried in the cathedral at Winchester.

In the year of our Lord 955, Edwy, son of Edmund, the brother of Athelstan the former king, taking possession of the kingdom, retained it four years: a wanton youth, who abused the beauty of his person in illicit intercourse. Finally, taking a woman nearly related to him as his wife, he doated on her beauty, and despised the advice of his coun-

* These were a woollen shirt and cowl. Will. Gemet. lib. iii. c. 12.
† Edred is described by Bridgforth as being constantly oppressed with sickness; and of so weak a digestion, as to be unable to swallow more than the juices of the food he had masticated, to the great annoyance of his guests. Vita Dunstani, Act. Sanct. 19 Maii.
sellors. On the very day he had been consecrated king, in full assembly of the nobility, when deliberating on affairs of importance and essential to the state, he burst suddenly from amongst them, darted wantonly into his chamber, and rioted in the embraces of the harlot. All were indignant of the shameless deed, and murmured among themselves. Dunstan alone, with that firmness which his name implies, regardless of the royal indignation, violently dragged the lascivious boy from the chamber, and on the archbishop's compelling him to repudiate the strumpet,† made him his enemy for ever. Soon after, upheld by most contemptible supporters, he afflicted with undeserved calamities all the members of the monastic order throughout England,—who were first despoiled of their property, and then driven into exile. He drove Dunstan himself, the chief of monks, into Flanders. At that time the face of monachism was sad and pitiable. Even the monastery of Malmesbury, which had been inhabited by monks for more than two hundred and seventy years, he made a sty for secular canons. But thou, O Lord Jesus, our creator and redeemer, gracious disposer, art abundantly able to remedy our defects by means of those irregular and vagabond men. Thou didst bring to light thy treasure, hidden for so many years—I mean the body of St. Aldhelm, which they took up and placed in a shrine. The royal generosity increased the fame of the canons; for the king bestowed on the saint an estate, very convenient both from its size and vicinity. But my recollection shudders even at this time, to think how cruel he was to other monasteries, equally on account of the giddiness of youth, and the pernicious counsel of his concubine, who was perpetually poisoning his uninformed mind. But let his soul, long since placed in rest by the interposition of Dunstan,‡

* A quibble on his name, as compounded of “hill” and “stone.”
† Much variation prevails among the earliest writers concerning Elfgiva. Bridestref (Act. Sanct. 19 Mai) says, there were two women, mother and daughter, familiar with Edwy. A contemporary of Bridestref (MS. Cott. N.e. 1.) asserts, that he was married, but fell in love with, and carried off, another woman. A MS. Saxon Chron. (Cott. Tib. b. iv.) says, they were separated, as being of kin. Osberne, Edmer, and Malmesbury, in his Life of Dunstan (MS.), all repeat the story of the two women.
‡ Dunstan, learning that he was dead, and that the devil were about to carry off his soul in triumph by his prayers obtained his release. A curious
pardon my grief: grief, I say, compels me to condemn him, "because private advantage is not to be preferred to public loss, but rather public loss should outweigh private advantage." He paid the penalty of his rash attempt even in this life, being despoiled of the greatest part of his kingdom;* shocked with which calamity, he died, and was buried in the new minster at Winchester.

CHAP. VIII.

Of king Edgar, son of king Edmund. [A.D. 959—975.]

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 959, Edgar, the honour and delight of the English, the son of Edmund, the brother of Edwy, a youth of sixteen years old, assuming the government, held it for about a similar period. The transactions of his reign are celebrated with peculiar splendour even in our times. The Divine love, which he sedulously procured by his devotion and energy of counsel, shone propitious on his years. It is commonly reported, that at his birth Dunstan heard an angelic voice, saying, "Peace to England so long as this child shall reign, and our Dunstan survives." The succession of events was in unison with the heavenly oracle; so much while he lived did ecclesiastical glory flourish, and martial clamour decay. Scarcely does a year elapse in the chronicles, in which he did not perform something great and advantageous to his country; in which he did not build some new monastery. He experienced no internal treachery, no foreign attack. Kind, king of the Scots, Malcolm, of the Cambrians, that prince of pirates, Maccus, all the Welsh kings, whose names were Dufnal, Giferth, Huval, Jacob, Judethil, being summoned to his court, were bound to him by one, and that a lasting oath; so that meeting him at Chester, he exhibited them on the river Dee in triumphal ceremony. For putting them all on board the same vessels he compelled them to row him as he sat at the prow: thus displaying his regal magnificence, who held so many kings in subjection. Indeed, he is reported to have said, that henceforward his successors might truly boast of being kings.

Colloquy between the abbot and the devil on the subject, may be found in Osbernæ's Life of Dunstan, Anglia Sacra, ii. 108.

* The Mercians had revolted, and chosen Edgar king.
of England, since they would enjoy so singular an honour. Hence his fame being noised abroad, foreigners, Saxons, Flemings, and even Danes, frequently sailed hither, and were on terms of intimacy with Edgar, though their arrival was highly prejudicial to the natives: for from the Saxons they learned an untameable ferocity of mind; from the Flemings an unmanly delicacy of body; and from the Danes drunkenness; though they were before free from such propensities, and disposed to observe their own customs with native simplicity rather than admire those of others. For this history justly and deservedly blames him; for the other imputations which I shall mention hereafter have rather been cast on him by ballads.

At this time the light of holy men was so resplendent in England, that you would believe the very stars from heaven smiled upon it. Among these was Dunstan, whom I have mentioned so frequently, first, abbot of Glastonbury; next, bishop of Worcester; and lastly, archbishop of Canterbury: of great power in earthly matters, in high favour with God; in the one representing Martha, in the other Mary. Next to king Alfred, he was the most extraordinary patron of the liberal arts throughout the whole island; the munificent restorer of monasteries; terrible were his denunciations against transgressing kings and princes; kind was his support of the middling and poorer classes. Indeed, so extremely anxious was he to preserve peace ever in trivial matters, that, as his countrymen used to assemble in taverns, and when a little elevated quarrel as to the proportions of their liquor, he ordered gold or silver pegs to be fastened in the pots, that whilst every man knew his just measure, shame should compel each neither to take more himself, nor oblige others to drink beyond their proportional share. Osberne,1 precentor of Canterbury, second to none of these times in composition, and indisputably the best skilled of all in music, who wrote his life with Roman elegance, forbids me to relate farther praiseworthy anecdotes of him. Besides, in addition to this, if the divine grace shall accompany my design, I intend after the succession of the kings at least to particularize the names of all the bishops of each province in England, and to offer them to the knowledge of my countrymen, if I shall be able

1 Osberne’s Life of St. Dunstan is published in the Anglia Sacra, vol. ii.
to coin anything worth notice out of the mintage of antiquity. How powerful indeed the sanctity and virtue of Dunstan's disciples were, is sufficiently evidenced by Ethelwold, made abbat of Abingdon from a monk of Glastonbury, and afterwards bishop of Winchester, who built so many and such great monasteries, as to make it appear hardly credible how the bishop of one see should be able to effect what the king of England himself could scarcely undertake. I am deceived, and err through hasty opinion, if what I assert be not evident. How great are the monasteries of Ely, Peterborough, and Thorney, which he raised from the foundations, and completed by his industry; which though repeatedly reduced by the wickedness of plunderers, are yet sufficient for their inhabitants. His life was composed in a decent style by Wulstan,* precentor of Winchester, who had been his attendant and pupil: he wrote also another very useful work, "On the Harmony of Sounds," a proof that he was a learned Englishman, a man of pious life and correct eloquence. At that time too Oswald, nephew of Odo, who had been archbishop before Dunstan, from a monk of Flory becoming bishop of Worcester and archbishop of York, claimed equal honours with the others. Treading the same paths, he extended the monastic profession by his authority, and built a monastery at Ramsey in a marshy situation. He filled the cathedral of Worcester with monks, the canons not being driven out by force, but circumvented by pious fraud.† Bishop Ethelwold, by the royal command, had before expelled the canons from Winchester, who, upon the king's giving them an option either to live according to rule, or depart the place, gave the preference to an easy life, and were at that time without fixed habitations wandering over the whole island. In this manner these three persons, illuminating England, as it were, with a triple light, chased away the thick darkness of error. In consequence, Edgar advanced the monastery of Glastonbury, which he ever loved beyond all others, with great possessions, and was anxiously vigilant.

* Wulstan's Life of Ethelwold is printed by Mabillon, and in the Acta Sanctorum, Antwerp. Aug. tom. i.
† He erected another church at Worcester, in which he placed monks. The canons finding the people desert them in order to obtain the favour of the new comers, by degrees took the monastic habit. See Malmesbury de Gest. Pontif. lib. iii.
in all things pertaining either to the beauty or convenience of the church, whether internally or externally. It may be proper here to subjoin to our narrative the charter he granted to the said church, as I have read it in their ancient chartulary.*

* Some MSS. omit from “Edgar of glorious memory, &c.” to “spoken of another. The monastic order,” &c. in page 155, and insert the charter at length, together with what follows it, thus:

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: although the decrees of pontiffs and the decisions of priests are fixed by irrevocable bonds, like the foundations of the mountains, yet, nevertheless, through the storms and tempests of secular matters, and the corruptions of reprobate men, the institutions of the holy church of God are often convulsed and broken. Wherefore I perceive that it will be advantageous to posterity that I should confirm by writing what has been determined by wholesome counsel and common consent. In consequence, it seems proper that the church of the most blessed mother of God, the eternal virgin Mary, of Glastonbury, inasmuch as it has always possessed the chief dignity in my kingdom, should be honoured by us with some especial and unusual privilege. Dunstan, therefore, and Oswald, archbishops of Canterbury and York, exhorting thereto, and Brithelm, bishop of Wells, and other bishops, abbots, and chiefs assenting and approving, I, Edgar, by the grace of God, king of the English, and ruler and governor of the adjacent nations, in the name of the blessed Trinity, for the soul of my father who reposes there, and of my predecessors, do by this present privilege decree, appoint, and establish, that the aforesaid monastery and all its possessions shall remain free and exonerated from all payments to the Exchequer now and for ever: they shall have soc and sac, on stronde and on wude, on felde, on grithbrice, on burgbrice, hundredsetes, and mortheres, athas, and ordelas, ealle hordas bufan corthan, and beneothan: infangenetheof, utfangenetheof, fimenefertha, hamscene, friderbrice, forestal, toll and team, just as free and peaceably as I have in my kingdom: let the same liberty and power also as I have in my own court, as well in forgiving as in punishing, and in every other matter, be possessed by the abbat and monks of the aforesaid monastery within their court. And should the abbat, or any monk of that place, upon his journey, meet a thief going to the gallows, or to any other punishment of death, they shall have power of rescuing him from the impending danger throughout my kingdom. Moreover, I confirm and establish what has hitherto been scrupulously observed by all my predecessors, that the bishop of Wells and his ministers shall have no power whatever over this monastery, or its parish-churches; that is to say, Street, Mirieling [Merlinge], Budecal, Shapwick, Sowy, or their chapels, or even over those contained in the islands, that is to say, Bookery, otherwise called Little Ireland, Godney, Martensia, Pathebeerga, Ardsecia, and Ferramere, except only when summoned by the abbat for dedications or ordinations, nor shall they cite their priests to their synods or chapters, or to, any of their courts, nor shall they suspend them from their holy office, or presume to exercise any right over them whatever. The abbat shall cause any bishop of the same province he pleases to ordain his monks, and the clerks of the aforesaid
"Edgar of glorious memory, king of the Angles, son of king Edmund, whose inclinations were ever vigilantly bent on divine matters, often coming to the monastery of the churches, according to the ancient custom of the church of Glastonbury, and the apostolical authority of archbishop Dunstan, and of all the bishops of my kingdom; but the dedications of the churches we consign to the bishop of Wells, if he be required by the abbat. At Easter let him receive the chasms of sanctification, and the oil from the bishop of Wells, according to custom, and distribute them to his before mentioned churches. This too I command above all other things: on the curse of God, and by my authority, saving the right of the holy Roman church, and that of Canterbury, I inhibit all persons, of whatever dignity, be they king, or bishop, or earl, or prince, or any of my dependants, from daring to enter the bounds of Glastonbury, or of the above named parishes, for the purpose of searching, seizing, holding courts, or doing any thing to the prejudice of the servants of God there residing. The abbat and convent shall alone have power in causes known and unknown, in small and in great, and in every thing as we have before related. And whosoever, upon any occasion, whatever be his dignity, whatever his order, whatever his profession, shall attempt to pervert or nullify the pre-eminency of this my privilege by sacrilegious boldness, let him be aware that he must without a doubt give account thereof, with fear and trembling, before a severe Judge, unless he first endeavour to make reparation by proper satisfaction." The charter of this privilege the aforesaid king Edgar confirmed by his own signature at London, in the twelfth year of his reign, with the common consent of his nobles; and in the same year, which was the 96th of our Lord's incarnation, and the 14th of the indiction, pope John, in a general assembly, authorized it at Rome, and made all the men of chief dignity who presided at that council confirm it; and also, from motives of paternal regard, sent a letter to the following effect to earl Alfric, who was then grievously persecuting the aforesaid church:—

"Bishop John, servant of the servants of God, to Alfric the distinguished earl, and our dearly beloved son in the Spirit, perpetual health and apostolical benediction. We have learned, from the report of certain faithful people, that you commit many enormities against the church of the holy mother of God, called Mary of Glastonbury, which is acknowledged to belong solely to, and to be under the protection of, the Roman Pontiff, from the earliest times; and that you have seized with boundless rapacity upon its estates and possessions, and even the churches of Brent and Pilton, which, by the gift of king Ina, it legally possesses, together with other churches, that is to say, Sowy, Martine, Budecal, Shapwick, and that on account of your near residence you are a continual enemy to its interests. It would, however, have been becoming, from your living so near, that by your assistance the holy church of God might have been much benefited and enriched; but, horrible to say! it is impoverished by your hostility, and injured by your deeds of oppression; and since we doubt not that we, though unworthy, have received from St. Peter the apostle the care of all the churches, and solicitude for all things; we therefore admonish your affection, to abstain from plundering it, for the love of the apostles Peter
holy mother of God, at Glastonbury, and studying to honour this place with dignity superior to others, hath by the common consent of the bishops, abbots, and nobility, conferred on it many and very splendid privileges; the first of which is, that no person, unless a monk of that place, shall there be abbot, either in name or in office, nor any other, except such as the common consent of the meeting shall have chosen according to the tenor of the rule. But should necessity so ordain, that an abbot or monk of another monastery be made president of this place, then he deems it proper that none shall be appointed, but such as the congregation of the monastery may elect, to preside over them in the fear of the Lord; nor shall this be done, if any, even the lowest of the congregation, can be there found fit for the office. He hath appointed too, that the election of their abbot shall rest forever in the monks, reserving only to himself and his heirs the power of giving the pastoral staff to the elected brother. He hath ordained also, that so often as the abbot or the monks of this place shall appoint any of their society to be dignified with holy orders, they shall cause any bishop canonically ordained, either in his own cathedral, or in the monastery of St. Mary at Glastonbury, to ordain such monks and clerks as they deem fit to the church of St. Mary. He hath granted moreover, that as he himself decides in his own dominions, so the abbot or the convent shall decide the causes of their entire island, in all matters ecclesiastical or secular, without the contradiction of any one. Nor shall it be lawful for any person to enter that island which bore witness to his birth, whether he be bishop, duke, or prince, or person of whatever order, for the purpose of there doing anything prejudicial to the servants of God: this he forbids altogether, in the same manner as his predecessors have sanctioned and confirmed by their privileges; that is to say, Kentwin, Ina, Ethelard, Cuthred, Alfred, Edward, Athelstan, and Edmund. When, therefore, by the common consent and Paul, and respect to us, invading none of its possessions, churches, chapels, places, and estates; but if you persist, remember, that by the authority of the chief of the apostles, committed unto us, you shall be excommunicated and banished from the company of the faithful, subjected to a perpetual curse, and doomed to eternal fire with the traitor Judas.”

* Glastonbury is situated on land which was once an island formed by a stagnation of inland waters, in a low situation.
sent, as has been said, of his prelates, abbats, and nobility, he determined to grant these privileges to the place aforesaid, he laid his own horn, beautifully formed of ivory and adorned with gold, upon the altar of the holy mother of God, and by that donation confirmed them to the same holy mother of God, and her monks, to be possessed for ever. Soon after he caused this horn to be cut in two in his presence, that no future abbat might give or sell it to any one, commanding part of it to be kept upon the spot for a testimony of the aforesaid donation. Recollecting, however, how great is the temerity of human inconstancy, and on whom it is likely to creep, and fearing lest any one hereafter should attempt to take away these privileges from this place, or eject the monks, he sent this charter of royal liberality to the renowned lord, pope John, who had succeeded Octavian in the honour of the pontificate, begging him to corroborate these grants by an apostical bull. Kindly receiving the legation, the pope, with the assenting voice of the Roman council, confirmed what had been already ordained, by writing an apostical injunction, terribly hurling on the violators of them, should any be so daring, the vengeance of a perpetual curse. This confirmation therefore of the aforesaid pope, directed to the same place, king Edgar, of worthy memory, laid upon the altar of the holy mother of God for a perpetual remembrance, commanding it to be carefully kept in future for the information of posterity. We have judged it proper to insert both these instruments, lest we should be supposed to invent such things against those persons who seek to enter into the fold of St. Mary, not like shepherds, by the door, but like thieves and robbers, some other way. "Be it known to all the faithful, that I, John the twelfth, through the mercy of God unworthy pope of the holy Roman See, am intreated by the humble request of the noble Edgar, king of the Angles, and of Dunstan, archbishop of the holy church of Canterbury, for the monastery of St. Mary, Glastonbury; which, induced by the love of the heavenly King, they have endowed with many great possessions, increasing in it the monastic order, and having confirmed it by royal grant, they pray me also so to do. Wherefore assenting to their affectionate request, I take that place into the bosom of the Roman church, and the protection of the holy apostles, and support
and confirm its immunities as long as it shall remain in the same conventual order in which it now flourishes. The monks shall have power to elect their own superior; ordination, as well of monks as of clerks, shall be at the will of the abbat and convent. We ordain, moreover, that no person shall have liberty to enter this island, either to hold courts, to make inquiry, or to correct; and should any one attempt to oppose this, or to take away, retain, diminish, or harass with vexatious boldness, the possessions of the same church, he shall become liable to a perpetual curse, by the authority of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the holy mother of God, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all saints, unless he recant. But the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all who maintain the rights of the place aforesaid. Amen. And let this our deed remain unshaken. Done in the time of Edward, abbat of the said monastery." The aforesaid king Edgar confirmed these things at London, by his solemn charter, in the twelfth year of his reign; and in the same year, that is, of our Lord 965, the pope aforesaid allowed them in a general synod at Rome, and commanded all members of superior, dignity who were present at the said general council, to confirm them likewise. Let the despisers then of so terrible a curse consider well what an extensive sentence of excommunication hangs over their heads: and indeed to St. Peter the apostle, the chief of apostles, Christ gave the office either of binding or loosing, as well as the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But to all the faithful it must be plain and evident, that the head of the Roman church must be the vicar of this apostle, and the immediate inheritor of his power. Over this church then John of holy memory laudably presided in his lifetime, as he lives to this day in glorious recollection, promoted thereto by the choice of God and of all the people. If then the ordinance of St. Peter the apostle be binding, consequently that of John the pope must be so likewise; but not even a madman would deny the ordinance of Peter the apostle to be binding, consequently no one in his sober senses can say that the ordinance of John the pope is invalid. Either, therefore, acknowledging the power conferred by Christ on St. Peter and his successors, they will abstain from transgressing against the authority of so dread-

* The twelfth of Edgar was 971.
ful an interdict, or else contemning it, they will, with the devil and his angels, bring upon themselves the eternal duration of the curse aforewritten. In consequence, it is manifest that no stranger ever seized this monastery for himself, who did not, as shall appear, disgracefully lose it again; and that this occurred, not by any concerted plan of the monks, but by the judgment of God, for the avenging his holy authority. Wherefore let no man reading this despise it, nor make himself conspicuous by being angry at it; for should he, perhaps he will confess that to be said of himself which was designed to be spoken of another. The monastic order, for a long time depressed, now joyfully reared its head, and hence it came to pass that our monastery also resumed its ancient liberties: but this I think will be more suitably related in the words of the king himself:

"I, Edgar, king of all Albion, and exalted, by the subjection of the surrounding kings maritime or insular, by the bountiful grace of God, to a degree never enjoyed by any of my progenitors, have often, mindful of so high an honour, diligently considered what offering I should more especially make from my earthly kingdom, to the King of kings. In aid of my pious devotion, heavenly love suddenly insinuated to my watchful solicitude, that I should rebuild all the holy monasteries throughout my kingdom, which, as they were outwardly ruinous, with mouldering shingles and worm-eaten boards, even to the rafters, so, what was still worse, they had become internally neglected, and almost destitute of the service of God; wherefore, ejecting those illiterate clerks, subject to the discipline of no regular order, in many places I have appointed pastors of an holier race, that is, of the monastic order, supplying them with ample means out of my royal revenues to repair their churches wherever ruined. One of these pastors, by name Elfriæ, in all things a true priest, I have appointed guardian of that most celebrated monastery which the Angles call by a twofold name Mald-elmess-burgh. To which, for the benefit of my soul, and in honour of our Saviour, and the holy mother of God the virgin Mary, and the apostles Peter and Paul, and the amiable prelate Aldhelm, I have restored, with munificent liberality, a portion of land: and more especially a piece of ground."

* Here is an omission, apparently, which may be supplied from the Ang.
with meadows and woods. This, leased out by the aforesaid priest, was unjustly held by the contentious Edelnot; but his vain and subtle disputation being heard by my counsellors, and his false defence being, in my presence, nullified, by them, I have restored it to the use of the monastery in the year of our Lord 974, in the fourteenth of my reign, and the first of my royal consecration."

And here I deem it not irrelevant to commit to writing what was supernaturally shown to the king. He had entered a wood abundant in game, and, as usually happens, while his associates were dispersed in the thicket for the purpose of hunting, he was left alone. Pursuing his course, he came to the outlet of the wood, and stopping there waited for his companions. Shortly after, seized with an irresistible desire to sleep, he alighted from his horse, that the enjoyment of a short repose might assuage the fatigue of the past day. He lay down, therefore, under a wild apple-tree, where the clustering branches had formed a shady canopy all around. A river, flowing softly beside him, adding to his drowsiness, by its gentle murmur soothed him to sleep; when a bitch, of the hunting breed, pregnant, and lying down at his feet, terrified him in his slumbers. Though the mother was silent, yet the whelps within her womb barked in various sonorous tones, incited, as it were, by a singular delight in the place of their confinement. Astonished at this prodigy, as he lifted up his eyes towards the summit of the tree, he saw, first one apple, and then another, fall into the river, by the collision of which, the watery bubbles being put in commotion, a voice articulately sounded, "Well is thee." Soon after, driven by the rippling wave, a little pitcher appeared upon the stream, and after that a larger vessel, overflowing with water, for the former was empty: and although by the violence of the stream the greater vessel pressed upon the lesser that it might discharge its waters into it; yet it ever happened that the pitcher escaped, still empty, and again, as in a haughty and insulting manner, attacked the larger. Returning home, as the Psalmist says, "He thought upon what had been done, and sought out his spirit." His mother addressed him, however, that she might cheer both his counte-

Sac. ii. p. 33. "A piece of ground, to wit, of ten farms (or manors), called Estotum," &c. G. Malm. de Vita Adhelmi.
nance and his heart; saying, it should be her care to entreat God, who knew how to explain mysteries by the light of his inspiration. With this admonition he dispelled his grief and dismissed his anxiety, conscious of his mother's sanctity, to whom God had vouchsafed many revelations. Her name was Elfgiva, a woman intent on good works, and gifted with such affection and kindness, that she would even secretly discharge the penalties of those culprits whom the sad sentence of the judges had publicly condemned. That costly clothing, which, to many women, is the pander of vice, was to her the means of liberality; as she would give a garment of the most beautiful workmanship to the first poor person she saw. Even malice itself, as there was nothing to carp at, might praise the beauty of her person and the work of her hands. Thoroughly comprehending the presage, she said to her son next morning, "The barking of the whelps while the mother was sleeping, implies, that after your death, those persons who are now living and in power, dying also, miscreants yet unborn will bark against the church of God. And whereas one apple followed the other, so that the voice, 'Well is thee,' seemed to proceed from the dashing of the second against the first, this implies that from you, who are now a tree shading all England, two sons will proceed; the favourers of the second will destroy the first, when the chiefs of the different parties will say to each of the boys, 'Well is thee,' because the dead will reign in heaven, the living on earth. Forasmuch as the greater pitcher could not fill the smaller, this signifies, that the Northern nations, which are more numerous than the English, shall attack England after your death; and, although they may recruit their deficiencies by perpetual supplies of their countrymen, yet they shall never be able to fill this Angle of the world, but instead of that, our Angles, when they seem to be completely subjugated, shall drive them out, and it shall remain under its own and God's governance, even unto the time before appointed by Christ. Amen."

Farther perusal will justify the truth of the presage. The manifest sanctity both of parent and child ought here to be considered; that the one should see a mystery when broad awake without impediment, and that the other should be able to solve the problem by the far-discerning eye of prophecy.
The rigour of Edgar's justice was equal to the sanctity of his manners, so that he permitted no person, be his dignity what it might, to elude the laws with impunity. In his time there was no private thief, no public freebooter, unless such as chose to risk the loss of life for their attacks upon the property of others. How, indeed, can it be supposed that he would pass over the crimes of men when he designed to exterminate every beast of prey from his kingdom; and commanded Judwall, king of the Welsh, to pay him yearly a tribute of three hundred wolves? This he performed for three years, but omitted in the fourth, declaring that he could find no more.

Although it is reported that he was extremely small both in stature and in bulk, yet nature had condescended to enclose such strength in that diminutive body, that he would voluntarily challenge any person, whom he knew to be bold and valiant, to engage with him, and his greatest apprehension was, lest they should stand in awe of him in these encounters. Moreover, at a certain banquet, where the prating of coxcombs generally shows itself very freely, it is reported that Kinad, king of the Scots, said in a sportive manner, that it seemed extraordinary to him how so many provinces should be subject to such a sorry little fellow. This was caught up with malignant ear by a certain minstrel, and afterwards cast in Edgar's teeth, with the customary raillery of such people. But he, concealing the circumstance from his friends, sent for Kinad, as if to consult him on some secret matter of importance, and leading him aside far into the recesses of a wood, he gave him one of two swords, which he had brought with him. "Now," said he, "as we are alone, I shall have an opportunity of proving your strength; I will now make it appear which ought deservedly to command the other; nor shall you stir a foot till you try the matter with me, for it is disgraceful in a king to prate at a banquet, and not to be prompt in action." Confused, and not daring to utter a word, he fell at the feet of his sovereign

* Edgar's laws for the punishment of offenders were horribly severe. The eyes were put out, nostrils slit, ears torn off, hands and feet cut off, and, finally, after the scalp had been torn off, the miserable wretches were left exposed to birds or beasts of prey. V. Acta Sanctor. Jul. 2, in Vita Swythuni.
lord, and asked pardon for what was merely a joke; which he immediately obtained. But what of this? Every summer, as soon as the festival of Easter was passed, he ordered his ships to be collected on each coast; cruising to the western part of the island with the eastern fleet; and, dismissing that, with the western to the north; and then again with the northern squadron towards the east, carefully vigilant lest pirates should disturb the country. During the winter and spring, travelling through the provinces, he made inquiry into the decisions of men in power, severely avenging violated laws, by the one mode advancing justice, by the other military strength; and in both consulting public utility. There are some persons, indeed, who endeavour to dim his exceeding glory by saying, that in his earlier years he was cruel to his subjects, and libidinous in respect of virgins. Their first accusation they exemplify thus. There was, in his time, one Athelwold, a nobleman of celebrity and one of his confidants. The king had commissioned him to visit Elfthrida, daughter of Ordgar, duke of Devonshire, (whose charms had so fascinated the eyes of some persons that they commended her to the king), and to offer her marriage, if her beauty were really equal to report. Hastening on his embassy, and finding everything consonant to general estimation, he concealed his mission from her parents and procured the damsel for himself. Returning to the king, he told a tale which made for his own purpose; that she was a girl nothing out of the common track of beauty, and by no means worthy such transcendent dignity. When Edgar’s heart was disengaged from this affair, and employed on other amours, some tattlers acquainted him, how completely Athelwold had duped him by his artifices. Paying him in his own coin, that is, returning him deceit for deceit, he showed the earl a fair countenance, and, as in a sportive manner, appointed a day when he would visit his far-famed lady. Terrified, almost to death, with this dreadful pleasantry, he hastened before to his wife, entreat ing that she would administer to his safety by attiring herself as unbecomingly as possible: then first disclosing the intention of such a proceeding. But what did not this woman dare? She was hardy enough to deceive the confidence of her first lover, her first husband; to call up every charm by art, and to omit nothing which
could stimulate the desire of a young and powerful man. Nor did events happen contrary to her design. For he fell so desperately in love with her the moment he saw her, that, dissembling his indignation, he sent for the earl into a wood at Warewelle,* called Harewood, under pretence of hunting, and ran him through with a javelin: and when the illegitimate son of the murdered nobleman approached with his accustomed familiarity, and was asked by the king how he liked that kind of sport, he is reported to have said, "Well, my sovereign liege, I ought not to be displeased with that which gives you pleasure." This answer so assuaged the mind of the raging monarch, that, for the remainder of his life, he held no one in greater estimation than this young man; mitigating the offence of his tyrannical deed against the father, by royal solicitude for the son. In expiation of this crime, a monastery which was built on the spot by Elfrhida is inhabited by a large congregation of nuns.

To this instance of cruelty, they add a second of lust. Hearing of the beauty of a certain virgin, who was dedicated to God, he carried her off from a monastery by force, ravished her, and repeatedly made her the partner of his bed. When this circumstance reached the ears of St. Dunstan, he was vehemently reproved by him, and underwent a seven years' penance; though a king, submitting to fast and to forego the wearing of his crown for that period.† They add a third, in which both vices may be discovered. King Edgar coming to Andover, a town not far from Winchester, ordered the daughter of a certain nobleman, the fame of whose beauty had been loudly extolled, to be brought to him. The mother of the young lady, shocked at the proposed concubinage of her daughter, assisted by the darkness of night placed an attendant in his bed; a maiden indeed neither deficient in elegance nor in understanding. The night having passed, when aurora was hastening into day, the woman attempted to rise; and being asked, "why in such haste?" she replied, "to perform the daily labour of her mistress." Retained though with difficulty, on her knees she bewailed her wretched situation to the king, and entreated her freedom as

* Whorwell, Hants.
† This seems to have been founded on the singular circumstance of his not having been crowned till within two years of his death.
the recompence of her connexion with him; saying, "that it became his greatness, not to suffer one who had ministered to his royal pleasure, any longer to groan under the commands of cruel masters." His indignation being excited, and sternly smiling, while his mind was wavering between pity to the girl, and displeasure to her mistress, he, at last, as if treating the whole as a joke, released her from servitude, and dismissed his anger. Soon after, he exalted her with great honour, to be mistress of her former tyrants, little consulting how they liked it, loved her entirely, nor left her bed till he took Elfrhida, the daughter of Ordgar, to be his legitimate wife. Elfrhida bore him Edmund, who dying five years before his father, lies buried at Romsey, and Etheldred, who reigned after him. Besides, of Ecgeldeda, surnamed the fair, the daughter of the most powerful duke, Ordmer, he begot Edward; and St. Editha of Wulfrihta, who it is certain was not a nun at that time, but being a lay virgin had assumed the veil through fear of the king, though she was immediately afterwards forced to the royal bed; on which, St. Dunstan, offended that he should desire lustfully a person who had been even the semblance of a nun, exerted the pontifical power against him. But however these things may be, this is certain, that from the sixteenth year of his age, when he was appointed king, till the thirtieth, he reigned without the insignia of royalty; for at that time, the princes and men of every order assembling generally, he was crowned with great pomp at Bath, survived only three years, and was buried at Glastonbury. Nor is it to be forgotten, that when abbat Ailward opened his tomb in the year of our Lord 1052, he found the body unconscious of corruption; which instead of inclining him to reverence, served only to increase his audacity. For when the receptacle which he had prepared, seemed too small to admit the body, he profaned the royal corpse by cutting it. "Whence the blood immediately gushing out in torrents, shook the hearts of the bystanders with horror. In consequence his royal remains were placed upon the altar in a shrine, which he had himself given to this church, with the head of St. Apollinarius, and the relics of Vincent the martyr; which purchased, at a great price, he had added to the beauty of the house of God. The violator of the sacred body presently became dis-
tracted, and not long after, going out of the church, met his death by a broken neck. Nor did the display of royal sanctity stop thus; it proceeded still further, a man, lunatic and blind, being there cured. Deservedly then does the report prevail among the English, that no king, either of his own or former times in England, could be justly and fairly compared to Edgar: for nothing could be more holy than his life, nothing more praiseworthy than his justice; those vices excepted which he afterwards obliterated by abundant virtues: a man who rendered his country illustrious through his distinguished courage, and the brilliancy of his actions, as well as by the increase of the servants of God. After his departure, the state and the hopes of the English met with a melancholy reverse.*

CHAP. IX.

Of St. Edward king and martyr the son of Edgar. [A.D. 975—978.]

In the year of our Lord 975, Edward the son of Edgar began to reign, and enjoyed the sovereignty for three years and a half. Dunstan, in common consent with the other bishops, elevated him to the royal dignity, in opposition, as it is said, to the will of some of the nobility, and of his stepmother; who was anxious to advance her sonEthelred, a child scarcely seven years of age, in order that herself might govern under colour of his name. Then, from the increasing malice of men, the happiness of the kingdom was impaired; then too, comets were seen, which were asserted certainly to portend either pestilence to the inhabitants, or a change in the government. Nor was it long ere there followed a scarcity of corn; famine among men; murrain among cattle; and an extraordinary accident at a royal town called Caine. For as soon as Edgar was dead, the secular canons who had been for some time expelled their monasteries, rekindled the former feuds, alleging, that it was a great and serious disgrace for new comers to drive the ancient inmates from their dwellings; that it could not be esteemed grateful to God, who had granted them their ancient habitations: neither could it be so to any considerate man, who might dread that

* Virg. Æn. ii. 169.
injustice as likely to befall himself, which he had seen over-take others. Hence they proceeded to clamour and rage, and hastened to Dunstan; the principal people, as is the custom of the laity, exclaiming more especially, that the injury which the canons had wrongfully suffered, ought to be redressed by gentler measures. Moreover, one of them, Elfricus, with more than common audacity, had even overturned almost all the monasteries which that highly revered monk Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester, had built throughout Mercia. On this account a full synod being convened, they first assembled at Winchester. What was the issue of the contest of that place, other writings declare;* relating, that the image of our Saviour, speaking decidedly, confounded the canons and their party. But men's minds being not yet at rest on the subject, a council was called at Calne; where, when all the senators of England, the king being absent on account of his youth, had assembled in an upper chamber; and the business was agitated with much animosity and debate; while the weapons of harsh reproach were directed against that firmest bulwark of the church, I mean Dunstan, but could not shake it; and men of every rank were earnestly defending their several sides of the question; the floor with its beams and supporters gave way suddenly and fell to the ground. All fell with it except Dunstan, who alone escaped unhurt by standing on a single rafter which retained its position; the rest were either killed, or subjected to lasting infirmity. This miracle procured the archbishop peace on the score of the canons; all the English, both at that time and afterwards, yielding to his sentiments.

Meanwhile king Edward conducted himself with becoming affection to his infant brother and his step-mother; he retained only the name of king, and gave them the power; following the footsteps of his father's piety, and giving both his attention and his heart to good council. The woman, however, with that hatred which a step-mother only can entertain, began to meditate a subtle stratagem, in order that not even the title of king might be wanting to her child, and to lay a treacher-

* When the question was agitated, whether the monks should be supported or the canons restored, the crucifix is said to have exclaimed. "Far be it from you: you have done well; to change again would be wrong." See Edmer, and Osberne, Angl. Sacra, ii. 219, 112
ous snare for her son-in-law, which she accomplished in the following manner. He was returning home, tired with the chase and gasping with thirst from the exercise, while his companions were following the dogs in different directions as it happened, when hearing that they dwelt in a neighbouring mansion, the youth proceeded thither at full speed, unattended and unsuspecting, as he judged of others by his own feelings. On his arrival, alluring him to her with female blandishment, she made him lean forward, and after saluting him while he was eagerly drinking from the cup which had been presented, the dagger of an attendant pierced him through. Dreadfully wounded, with all his remaining strength he clapped spurs to his horse in order to join his companions; when one foot slipping, he was dragged by the other through the trackless paths and recesses of the wood, while the streaming blood gave evidence of his death to his followers. Moreover, they then commanded him to be ingloriously interred at Wareham; envying him even holy ground when dead, as they had envied him his royal dignity while living. They now publicly manifested their extreme joy as if they had buried his memory with his body; but God’s all-seeing eye was there, who ennobled the innocent victim by the glory of miracles. So much is human outweighed by heavenly judgment. For there lights were shown from above; there the lame walked; there the dumb resumed his faculty of speech; there every malady gave way to health. The fame of this pervading all England, proclaimed the merits of the martyr. The murderess excited by it, attempted a progress thither; and was already urging forward the horse she had mounted, when she perceived the manifest anger of God; for the same creature which she had heretofore constantly ridden, and which was used to outstrip the very wind in speed, now by command of God, stood motionless. The attendants, both with whips and clamours, urged him forward that he might carry his noble mistress with his usual readiness; but their labour was in vain. They changed the horse; and the same circumstance recurred. Her obdurate heart, though late, perceived the meaning of the miracle; wherefore, what she was not herself permitted to do, she suffered to be performed by another: for that Elserius, whom I before blamed for destroying the monasteries, repen-
ing of his rashness, and being deeply distressed in mind, took up the sacred corpse from its unworthy burial-place, and paid it just and distinguished honours at Shaftesbury. He did not escape unpunished, however, for, within a year afterwards, he was eaten of the vermin which we call lice. Moreover, since a mind unregulated is a torment to itself, and a restless spirit endures its own peculiar punishment in this life, Elfthrida declining from her regal pride, became extremely penitent; so that at Werewell, for many years, she clothed her pampered body in hair-cloth, slept at night upon the ground without a pillow; and mortified her flesh with every kind of penance. She was a beautiful woman; singularly faithful to her husband; but deserving punishment from the commission of so great a crime. It is believed and commonly reported, that from her violence to Edward, the country for a long time after groaned under the yoke of barbarian servitude.

At Shaftesbury, truly shines a splendid proof of royal sanctity; for to his merit must it be attributed, that there a numerous choir of women dedicated to God, not only enlighten those parts with the blaze of their religion, but even reach the very heavens. There reside sacred virgins wholly unconscious of contamination, there, continent widows, ignorant of a second flame after the extinction of the first; in all whose manner, graceful modesty is so blended with chastened elegance, that nothing can exceed it. Indeed it is matter of doubt which to applaud most, their assiduity in the service of God or their affability in their converse with men: hence assent is justly given to those persons who say that, the world, which has long tottered with the weight of its sins, is entirely supported by their prayers.

CHAP. X.

Of king Ethelred and king Edmund. [A.D. 979—1017.]

In the year of our Lord's incarnation 979, Ethelred, son of Edgar and Elfthrida, obtaining the kingdom, occupied, rather than governed it for thirty-seven years. The career of his life is said to have been cruel in the beginning, wretched in the middle, and disgraceful in the end. Thus, in the murder to which he gave his concurrence, he was cruel; base in his
flight, and effeminacy; miserable in his death. Dunstan, indeed, had foretold his worthlessness, having discovered it by a very filthy token: for when quite an infant, the bishops standing round, as he was immersed in the baptismal font, he defiled the sacrament by a natural evacuation: at which Dunstan, being extremely angered, exclaimed, "By God, and his mother, this will be a sorry fellow." I have read, that when he was ten years of age, hearing it noise abroad that his brother was killed, he so irritated his furious mother by his weeping, that not having a whip at hand, she beat the little innocent with some candles she had snatched up: nor did she desist, till herself bedewed him, nearly lifeless, with her tears. On this account he dreaded candles during the rest of his life, to such a degree that he would never suffer the light of them to be brought into his presence. The nobility being assembled by the contrivance of his mother, and the day appointed for Dunstan, in right of his see, to crown him, he, though he might be ill-affected to them, forbore to resist, being a prelate of mature age, and long versed in secular matters. But, when placing the crown on his head he could not refrain from giving vent with a loud voice, to that prophetic spirit which he had so deeply imbibed. "Sime," said he, "thou hast aspired to the kingdom by the death of thy brother, hear the word of God; thus saith the Lord God: the sin of thy abandoned mother, and of the accomplices of her base design, shall not be washed out but by much blood of the wretched inhabitants; and such evils shall come upon the English nation as they have never suffered from the time they came to England until then." Nor was it long after, that is, in his third year, that seven piratical vessels came to Southampton, a port near Winchester, and having ravaged the coast fled back to the sea: this I think right to mention because many reports are circulated among the English, concerning these vessels.

A quarrel between the king and the bishop of Rochester had arisen from some unknown cause; in consequence of which he led an army against that city. It was signified to him by the archbishop, that he should desist from his fury, and not irritate St. Andrew, under whose guardianship that bishopric was; for as he was ever ready to pardon, so was he equally formidable to avenge. This simple mes-
DUNSTAN'S PROPHECY.

Sage being held in contempt, he graced the intimation with money, and sent him a hundred pounds, as a bribe, that he should raise the siege and retire. He therefore took the money, retreated, and dismissed his army. Dunstan, astonished at his avarice, sent messengers to him with the following words, "Since you have preferred silver to God, money to the apostle, and covetousness to me; the evils, which God has pronounced will shortly come upon you; but they will not come while I live, for this also hath God spoken." Soon after the death of this holy man, which was in the tenth year of his reign, the predictions speedily began to be fulfilled, and the prophecies to have their consummation. For the Danes infested every port, and made descents on all sides with great activity, so that it was not known where they could be opposed. But Siric, the second archbishop after Dunstan, advised that money should repel those whom the sword could not: thus a payment of ten thousand pounds satisfied the avarice of the Danes. This was an infamous precedent, and totally unworthy the character of men, to redeem liberty, which no violence can ever extirpate from a noble mind, by money. They now indeed abstained a short time from their incursions; but as soon as their strength was recruited by rest, they returned to their old practices. Such extreme fear had seized the English, that there was no thought of resistance: if any indeed, mindful of their ancient glory, made an attempt to oppose, or engage them, they were unsuccessful, from the multitude of their enemies, and the desertion of their allies. The leader of revolt was one Elfric, whom the king had appointed to command the fleet: he, instead of trying his fortune, as he ought, in a naval conflict, went over, on the night preceding the battle, a base deserter to the enemy, whom he had apprised, by messengers, what preparations to make; and though the king, for this perfidious crime, ordered his son's eyes to be put out, yet he returned again, and again deserted. All Northumbria being laid waste, the enemy was met in battle and worsted. London was besieged, but honourably: defended by its citizens. In consequence, the besiegers, after suffering severely and despairing of taking the city, retired; and devastating the whole province to the eastward, compelled the king to pay a sum of money,
amounting to sixteen thousand pounds. Moreover, hostages being given, he caused their king Anlaf to come to him, stood for him at the font, and soothing him with royal munificence, bound him by an oath that he should never return into England again. The evil however was not thus put to rest. For they could never provide against their enemies from Denmark, springing up afresh, like the heads of the hydra. The province in the west of England, called Devonshire, was laid waste; the monasteries destroyed; and the city of Exeter set on fire: Kent was given up to plunder; the metropolitan city and seat of the patriarchs, burnt; the holy patriarch himself, the most reverend Elphege, carried away and bound in chains: and at last, when required to plunder his tenants in order to ransom himself, and refusing to do so, he was stoned, struck with a hatchet, and glorified heaven with his soul. After he was murdered, God exalted him; insomuch, that when the Danes, who had been instrumental to his death, saw that dead wood besmeared with his blood miraculously grew green again in one night, they ran eagerly to kiss his remains, and to bear them on their shoulders. Thus they abated their usual pride, and suffered his sacred corpse to be carried to London. There it was honorably buried; and when taken up, ten years afterwards, free from every taint of corruption, it conferred honour on his cathedral at Canterbury.* To the present moment both its blood remains fresh, and its soundness unimpaired, and it is considered a miracle, that a carcass should be divested of life, and yet not decay. That I may not be tedious in mentioning severally all the provinces which the Danes laid waste, let it be briefly understood, that out of thirty-two counties, which are reckoned in England, they had already overrun sixteen; the names of which I forbear to enumerate on account of the harshness of the language. In the meantime, the king, admirably calculated for sleeping, did nothing but postpone and hesitate, and if ever he recovered his senses enough to raise himself upon his elbow, he quickly relapsed into his original wretchedness, either from the oppression of indolence, or the adverseness of fortune. His brother's ghost also, demanding dire expiation, tormented him. Who can tell how often he collected his

* The life of Elphege, by Osberne, is in the Anglia Sacra, ii. 122.
army? how often he ordered ships to be built? how frequently he called out commanders from all quarters? and yet nothing was ever effected. For the army, destitute of a leader and ignorant of military discipline, either retreated before it came into action, or else was easily overcome. The presence of the leader is of much avail in battle; courage manifested by him avails also; experience, and more especially, discipline avail much; and as I have said, the want of these, in an army, must be an irreparable injury to its countrymen, as well as a pitiable object of contempt to an enemy. For soldiers are a kind of men, who, if not restrained before the battle, are eager to plunder; and if not animated during it, are prone to flight. When the ships, built for the defence of the sea-coast, were lying at anchor, a tempest suddenly arising dashed them together, and rendered them useless by the destruction of their tackle: a few, fitted from the wrecks of the others, were, by the attack of one Wulnod, whom the king had banished, either sunk, or burnt, and consequently disappointed the expectations of all England. The commanders, if ever they met to confer, immediately chose different sides, and rarely or never united in one good plan; for they gave more attention to private quarrels, than to public exigences: and, if in the midst of pressing danger, they had resolved on any eligible secret design, it was immediately communicated to the Danes by traitors. For besides Elfric, the successor of Elfere who had murdered the late king, there was one Edric, a man infamously skilled in such transactions, whom the king had made governor of the Mercians. This fellow was the refuse of mankind, the reproach of the English; an abandoned glutton, a cunning miscreant; who had become opulent, not by nobility, but by specious language and impudence. This artful dissembler, capable of feigning anything, was accustomed, by pretended fidelity, to scent out the king's designs, that he might treacherously divulge them. Often, when despatched to the enemy as the mediator of peace, he inflamed them to battle. His perfidy was sufficiently conspicuous in this king's reign, but much more so in the next; of which I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. Ulfkytel, earl of the East Angles, was the only person who, at that time, resisted the invaders with any degree of spirit; inso-
much that although the enemy had nominally the victory, yet the conquerors suffered much more than the conquered;* nor were the barbarians ashamed to confess this truth, while they so frequently bewailed that victory. The valour of the earl was more conspicuously eminent, after the death of Ethelred, in that battle which mowed down the whole flower of the province; where, when he was surrounded from the rear, deeming it disgraceful to fly, he gave fresh confidence to the king by his blood; but this happened some time after.† At this juncture, that the measure of king Ethelred's misery might be full, a famine ravaged all England, and those whom war had spared perished from want. The enemy overran the country with such freedom, that they would carry off their booty to their ships through a space of fifty miles, without fearing any resistance from the inhabitants. In the midst of these pressing evils, the expedient of buying off hostilities by money was again debated and adopted; for first twenty-four, and soon after, thirty thousand pounds were given to the Danes: with what advantage, succeeding times will show. To me, indeed, deeply reflecting upon the subject, it seems wonderful, how a man, as we have been taught to suppose, neither very foolish, nor excessively heartless, should pass his life in the wretched endurance of so many calamities. Should any one ask me the reason of this, I could not easily answer, except by saying, that the revolt of the generals proceeded from the haughtiness of the king. Their perfidy has been spoken of before: I now hasten to instances of his violence, which was so intolerable, that he spared not even his own relations. For, besides the English, whom he despoiled of their hereditary

* Ulfyngel attacked the Danes near Thetford, A.D. 1004, and though compelled to retreat, yet occasioned so severe a loss to the enemy, that they are said to have acknowledged that they had never endured a more powerful attack. See Flor. Wigorn., and the Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 1004.

† At Amisngton in Essex, A.D. 1016.
affinity, and to cut short their embraces with the sword: yet besides all this, I say, he was so inconstant towards his wife, that he scarcely deigned her his bed, and degraded the royal dignity by his intercourse with harlots. She too, a woman, conscious of her high descent, became indignant at her husband, as she found herself endeared to him neither by her blameless modesty nor her fruitfulness; for she had borne him two children, Ethelred and Edward. She was the daughter of Richard, earl of Normandy, the son of William, who, after his father, presided over that earldom for fifty-two years, and died in the twenty-eighth year of this king. He lies at the monastery of Fecamp, which he augmented with certain revenues, and which he adorned with a monastic order, by means of William, formerly abbot of Dijon. Richard was a distinguished character, and had also often harassed Ethelred: which, when it became known at Rome, the holy see, not enduring that two Christians should be at enmity, sent Leo, bishop of Treves, into England, to restore peace: the epistle describing this legation was as follows:—

"John the fifteenth, pope of the holy Roman church, to all faithful people, health. Be it known to all the faithful of the holy mother church, and our children spiritual and secular, dispersed through the several climates of the world, that inasmuch as we had been informed by many of the enmity between Ethelred, king of the West-Saxons, and Richard the marquis, and were grieved sorely at this, on account of our spiritual children; taking, therefore, wholesome counsel, we summoned one of our legates, Leo, bishop of the holy church of Treves, and sent him with our letters, admonishing them, that they should return from their ungodliness. He, passing vast spaces, at length crossed the sea, and, on the day of the Lord's nativity, came into the presence of the said king; whom, having saluted on our part, he delivered to him the letters we had sent. And all the faithful people of his kingdom, and senators of either order, being summoned, he granted, for love and fear of God Almighty, and of St. Peter, the chief of the apostles, and on account of our paternal admonition, the firmest peace for all his sons and daughters, present and future, and all his faithful people, without deceit. On which account he sent Edelsin, prelate of the holy church of Sherborne, and Leofstan, son of Alf-
wold, and Edelnoth, son of Wulstan, who passed the maritime boundaries, and came to Richard, the said marquis. He, peaceably receiving our admonitions, and hearing the determination of the said king, readily confirmed the peace for his sons and daughters, present and future, and for all his faithful people, with this reasonable condition, that if any of their subjects, or they themselves, should commit any injustice against each other, it should be duly redressed; and that peace should remain for ever unshaken and confirmed by the oath of both parties: on the part of king Ethelred, to wit, Edelsin, prelate of the holy church of Sherborne; Leofstan, the son of Alfwold; Edelnoth, the son of Wulstan. On the part of Richard, Roger, the bishop; Rodolph, son of Hugh; Truteno, the son of Thurgis.

"Done at Rouen, on the kalends of March, in the year of our Lord 991, the fourth of the indiction. Moreover, of the king's subjects, or of his enemies, let Richard receive none, nor the king of his, without their respective seals."

After the death of this John, Gregory succeeded; after whom came John XVI.; then Silvester, also called Gerbert, about whom it will not be absurd, in my opinion, if I commit to writing those facts which are generally related about him.* Born in Gaul, from a lad he grew up a monk at Flory; afterwards, when he arrived at the double path of Pythagoras,† either disgusted at a monastic life or seized by lust of glory, he fled by night into Spain, chiefly designing to learn astrology and other sciences of that description from the Saracens. Spain, formerly for many years possessed by the Romans, in the time of the emperor Honorius, fell under the power of the Goths. The Goths were Arians down to the days of St. Gregory, when that people were united to the Catholic church by Leander bishop of Seville, and by king Becared, brother of Hermengildus,‡ whom his father

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* In several of the manuscripts there is an omission of several words which has made nonsense of the whole paragraph. Its restoration is due to Mr. Hardy, in whose edition of William of Malmesbury it is given correctly from M.S. authority.

† That is, when he had attained that age when a man settles, or chooses his future line of conduct; or, to years of discretion. This Pythagoras represented by the form of the letter Y, or the Greek gamma.

‡ Hermengildus the eldest son of Leovigild. He was invested by his
slew on Easter night for professing the true faith. To Leander succeeded Isidore,* celebrated for learning and sanctity, whose body purchased, for its weight in gold, Aldefonseus king of Gallicia in our times conveyed to Toledo. The Saracens, who had subjugated the Goths, being conquered in their turn by Charles the Great, lost Gallicia and Lusitania, the largest provinces of Spain; but to this day they possess the southern parts. As the Christians esteem Toledo, so do they hold Hispalis, which in common they call Seville, to be the capital of the kingdom; there practising divinations and incantations, after the usual mode of that nation. Gerbert then, as I have related, coming among these people, satisfied his desires. There he surpassed Ptolemy with the astrolabe,† and Alcandæus in astronomy, and Julius Firmicus in judicial astrology; there he learned what the singing and the flight of birds portended; there he acquired the art of calling up spirits from hell: in short, whatever, hurtful or salutary, human curiosity has discovered. There is no necessity to speak of his progress in the lawful sciences of arithmetic and astronomy, music and geometry, which he imbibed so thoroughly as to show they were beneath his talents, and which, with great perseverance, he revived in Gaul, where they had for a long time been wholly obsolete. Being certainly the first who seized on the abacus‡ from the Saracens,

father with the royal diadem and the principality of Bética, and contracted an alliance with Ingundis, daughter of Sigebert, king of Austrasia. Ingundis was persecuted, and at length killed by her husband’s mother, on account of her Catholic faith. Leander, archbishop of Seville, easily persuaded Hermonegild to resent the treatment of his bride, and assisted him in an attempt to dethrone his father. Hermonegild was taken and sentenced to death for his rebellion. The inflexible constancy, with which he refused to accept the Arian communion, from which he had been converted by Leander, as the price of his safety, procured for him the honour of being enrolled among the saints of the Roman church.—HARDY.

* Isidore was bishop of Seville in the sixth century.

† An instrument for making celestial observations. The reader who is conversant with the Arabian Nights’ Entertainments will remember its being frequently mentioned in that amusing book.

‡ The abacus was a counting table: here it seems used metaphorically for arithmetic, Gerbert having written a treatise on arithmetic with that title. The authors of the Hist. Litt. de la France, t. vi. understand him literally, as stealing a book containing the principles of the science, and then confounding this supposed book with the conjuring treatise mentioned below. They also seem very much displeased with Malmesbury for relating these
he gave rules which are scarcely understood even by laborious computers. He resided with a certain philosopher of that sect, whose good will he had obtained, first by great liberality, and then by promises. The Saracen had no objection to sell his knowledge; he frequently associated with him; would talk with him of matters at times serious, at others trivial, and lend him books to transcribe. There was however one volume, containing the knowledge of his whole art, which he could never by any means entice him to lend. In consequence Gerbert was inflamed with anxious desire to obtain this book at any rate, "for we ever press more eagerly towards what is forbidden, and that which is denied is always esteemed most valuable."* Trying, therefore, the effect of entreaty, he besought him for the love of God, and by his friendship; offered him many things, and promised him more. When this failed he tried a nocturnal stratagem. He plied him with wine, and, with the help of his daughter, who connived at the attempt through the intimacy which Gerbert's attentions had procured, stole the book from under his pillow and fled. Waking suddenly, the Saracen pursued the fugitive by the direction of the stars, in which art he was well versed. The fugitive too, looking back, and discovering his danger by means of the same art, hid himself under a wooden bridge which was near at hand; clinging to it, and hanging in such a manner as neither to touch earth nor water.† In this manner the eagerness of the pursuer being eluded, he returned home. Gerbert, then quickening his pace, arrived at the sea-coast. Here, by his incantations, he called up the devil, and made an agreement with him to be under his dominion for ever, if he would defend him from the Saracen, who was again pursuing, and transport him to the opposite coast: this was accordingly done.

Probably some may regard all this as a fiction, because the vulgar are used to undermine the fame of scholars, saying that the man who excels in any admirable science, holds converse with the devil. Of this, Boethius, in his book, On tales of their countryman, and attribute them to cardinal Bessarion; but there is nothing of this kind in his work published by Gellius, and in Brown's Fasciculus, t. i.

* Ovid. Amor. iii. iv. 17.
† This was perhaps a necessary precaution, according to the rules of the necromantic art.
the Consolation of Philosophy, complains; and affirms, that he had the discredit of such practices on account of his ardent love of literature, as if he had polluted his knowledge by detestable arts for the sake of ambition. "It was hardly likely," says he, "that I, whom you dress up with such excellence as almost to make me like God, should catch at the protection of the vilest spirits; but it is in this point that we approach nearest to a connection with them, in that we are instructed in your learning, and educated in your customs." So far Boethius. The singular choice of his death confirms me in the belief of his league with the devil; else, when dying, as we shall relate hereafter, why should he, gladiator-like, maim his own person, unless conscious of some unusual crime? Accordingly, in an old volume, which accidentally fell into my hands, wherein the names and years of all the popes are entered, I found written to the following purport, "Silvester, who was also called Gerbert, ten months; this man made a shameful end."

Gerbert, returning into Gaul, became a public professor in the schools, and had as brother philosophers and companions of his studies, Constantine, abbot of the monastery of St. Maximin, near Orleans, to whom he addressed the Rules of the Abacus;* and Ethelbald bishop, as they say, of Wintenburg, who himself gave proof of ability, in a letter which he wrote to Gerbert, on a question concerning the diameter in Macrobius,† and in some other points. He had as pupils, of exquisite talents and noble origin, Robert, son of Hugh surnamed Capet; and Otho, son of the emperor Otho. Robert, afterwards king of France, made a suitable return to his master, and appointed him archbishop of Rheims. In that church are still extant, as proofs of his science, a clock constructed on mechanical principles: and an hydraulic organ, in which the air escaping in a surprising manner, by the force of heated water, fills the cavity of the instrument, and the brazen pipes emit modulated tones through the multifarious apertures. The king himself, too, was well skilled in sacred music, and in this and many other respects, a liberal benefactor to the church: moreover, he composed that beautiful sequence, "The grace of the Holy Spirit be with

* His treatise so called.  † Macrobi. in Somn. Scip. i. 20.
us;” and the response, “He hath joined together Judah and Jerusalem;” together with more, which I should have pleasure in relating, were it not irksome to others to hear. Otho, emperor of Italy after his father, made Gerbert archbishop of Ravenna, and finally Roman pontiff. He followed up his fortune so successfully by the assistance of the devil, that he left nothing unexecuted which he had once conceived. The treasures formerly buried by the inhabitants, he discovered by the art of necromancy, and removing the rubbish, applied to his own lusts. Thus viciously disposed are the wicked towards God, and thus they abuse his patience, though he had rather that they repent than perish. At last, he found where his master would stop, and as the proverb says, “in the same manner as one crow picks out another crow’s eyes,” while endeavouring to oppose his attempts with art like his own.

There was a statue in the Campus Martius near Rome, I know not whether of brass or iron, having the forefinger of the right hand extended, and on the head was written, “Strike here.” The men of former times supposing this should be understood as if they might find a treasure there, had battered the harmless statute by repeated strokes of a hatchet. But Gerbert convicted them of error by solving the problem in a very different manner. Marking where the shadow of the finger fell at noon-day, when the sun was on the meridian, he there placed a post; and at night proceeded thither, attended only by a servant carrying a lanthorn. The earth opening by means of his accustomed arts, displayed to them a spacious entrance. They see before them a vast palace with golden walls, golden roofs, every thing of gold; golden soldiers amusing themselves, as it were, with golden dice; a king of the same metal, at table with his queen; delicacies set before them, and servants waiting; vessels of great weight and value, where the sculpture surpassed nature herself. In the inmost part of the mansion, a carbuncle of the first quality, though small in appearance, dispelled the darkness of night. In the opposite corner stood a boy, holding a bow bent, and the arrow drawn to the head. While the exquisite art of every thing ravished the eyes of the spectators, there was nothing which might be handled though it might be seen: for immediately, if any one stretched forth his hand