

THE CHRONICLE
OF
FABIUS ETHELWERD

FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD TO
THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 975

IN FOUR BOOKS

To Matilda, the most eloquent and true handmaid of Christ, Ethelwerd the patrician, health in the Lord! I have received, dearest sister, your letter which I longed for, and I not only read it with kisses, but laid it up in the treasury of my heart. Often and often do I pray the grace of the Most High, to preserve you in safety during this life present, and after death to lead you to his everlasting mansions. But as I once before briefly hinted to you by letter, I now, with God's help, intend to begin in the way of annals from the beginning of the world, and explain to you more fully about our common lineage and descent, to the end that the reader's task may be lightened, and the pleasure of the hearer may be augmented, whilst he listens to it. Concerning the coming of our first parents out of Germany into Britain, their numberless wars and slaughters, and the dangers which they encountered on shipboard among the waves of the ocean, in the following pages you will find a full description. In the present letter therefore I have written, without perplexity of style, of our modern lineage and relationship, who were our relations, and how, and where they came from; as far as our memory can go, and according as our parents taught us. For instance, king Alfred was son of king Aethelwulf, from whom we derive our origin, and who had five sons, one of whom was king Aethelred* my ancestor, and another king Alfred who was yours. This king Alfred sent his daughter

* Aethelred died and Alfred succeeded him A. D. 871.

Ethelswitha into Germany to be the wife of Baldwin, who had by her two sons Ethelwulf and Arnulf, also two daughters Elswid and Armentruth. Now from Ethelswitha is descended count Arnulf, your neighbour. The daughter of king Edward son of the above-named king Alfred was named Edgiva, and was sent by your aunt into Gaul to marry Charles the Simple. Ethilda also was sent to be the wife of Hugh, son of Robert: and two others were sent by king Aethelstan to Otto that he might choose which of them he liked best to be his wife. He chose Edgitha, from whom you derive your lineage; and united the other in marriage to a certain king* near the Jupiterean Mountains, of whose family no memorial has reached us, partly from the distance and partly from the confusion of the times. It is your province to inform us of these particulars, not only from your relationship, but also because no lack of ability or interval of space prevents you.

HERE ENDS THE PROLOGUE

BOOK THE FIRST BEGINS

The beginning of the world comes first. For on the first day God, in the apparition of the light, created the angels; on the second day, under the name of the firmament he created the heavens; *etc. etc.*[†]

Rome was destroyed by the Goths in the eleven hundred and forty-sixth year after it was built. From that time the Roman authority ceased in the island of Britain, and in many other countries which they had held under the yoke of slavery. For it was now four hundred and eighty-five years, beginning with Caius Julius Cesar, that they had held the island above mentioned, wherein they had built cities and castles, bridges and streets of admirable construction, which are seen among us even to the present day. But whilst the people of Britain were living carelessly within the wall, which had been built by Severus to protect them, there arose two nations, the Picts in the north and the Scots in the west, and leading an army against them, devastated their country, and inflicted many sufferings upon them for many years. The Britons being unable to bear their misery, by a wise device send to Rome a mournful letter[‡] the army returned victorious to Rome. But the Scots and Picts, hearing that the hostile army was gone, rejoiced with no little joy. Again, they take up arms, and

* Louis the blind.

[†] Here follow several pages, in which the writer, like other annalists, deduces his history from the creation. It is now universally the custom with modern writers and translators to omit such preliminary matter,

[‡] There is evidently a hiatus in this passage.

like wolves attack the sheepfold which is left without a protector: they devastate the northern districts as far as the ditch of Severus: the Britons man the wall and fortify it with their arms; but fortune denied them success in the war. The cunning Scots, knowing what to do against the high wall and the deep trench, contrive iron goads with mechanical art, and dragging down those who were standing on the wall, slay them without mercy: they remain victors both within and without; they at once plunder and take possession; and a slaughter is made worse than all that had been before. Thus ended the four hundred and forty-fourth year since the incarnation of our Lord.

The Britons, seeing themselves on every side vanquished, and that they could have no more hopes from Rome, devise, in their agony and lamentations, a plan to adopt. For in those days they heard, that the race of the Saxons was active, in piratical enterprises, throughout the whole coast, from the river Rhine to the Danish city, which is now commonly called Denmark, and strong in all matters connected with war. They therefore send to them messengers, bearing gifts, and ask assistance, promising them their alliance when they should be at peace. But the mind of that degraded race was debased by ignorance, and they saw not that they were preparing for themselves perpetual slavery, which is the stepmother of all misfortune.

The person who especially gave this counsel was Vortigern, who at that time was king over all, and to him all the nobility assented. They preferred to procure assistance: to them from Germany. Already two young men, Hengist and Horsa, were pre-eminent. They were the grandsons of Woden, king of the barbarians, whom the pagans have since raised to an abominable dignity, and honouring him as a god, offer sacrifice to him for the sake of victory or valour, and the people, deceived, believe what they see, as is their wont. The aforesaid youths therefore arrive, according to the petition of the king and his senate, with three vessels, loaded with arms, and prepared with every kind of warlike stores: the anchor is cast into the sea, and the ships come to land. Not long afterwards they are sent against the Scots to try their mettle, and without delay they sheathe their breasts in arms, and engage in a novel mode of battle. Man clashes with man, now falls a German and now a Scot: on both sides is a most wretched scene of slaughter: at length the Saxons remain masters of the field. For this the king aforesaid honours them with a triumph; and they privately send home messengers, to tell their countrymen of the fertility of the country and the indolence of its cowardly people. Their countrymen, without delay, listen to their representations, and send to them a large fleet and army. Forthwith they were magnificently received by the king of the Britons, and contracted a league of hospitality with the natives. The Britons promise peace, worthy gifts of alliance and honours, provided that they might remain in ease under their protection from the attacks of their enemies, and pay them immense stipends.

Thus, much of the alliance and promises of the Britons: now let us speak of their discord and ill fortune. For seeing the cunningness of the new people, they partly feared and partly despised them. They break their compact, and no longer render them the honours of alliance, but instead thereof, they try to drive them

from their shores. These being their designs, the thing is made public, the treaty is openly set aside, all parties fly to arms: the Britons give way, and the Saxons keep possession of the country. Again they send to Germany, not secretly as before, but by a public embassy, as victors are wont to do, and demand reinforcements. A large multitude joined them from every province of Germany; and they carried on war against the Britons, driving them from their territories with great slaughter, and ever remaining masters of the field. At last the Britons bend their necks to the yoke, and pay tribute. This migration is said to have been made from the three provinces of Germany, which are said to have been the most distinguished, namely, from Saxony, Anglia, and Giota. The Cantuarians derived their origin from the Giote [Jutes], and also the Uuhtii, who took their name from the island Wihta [Isle of Wight], which lies on the coast of Britain.

For out of Saxony, which is now called Ald-Sexe, or Old Saxony, came the tribes which are still called so among the English, the East Saxons, South Saxons, and West Saxons; that is, those who are called in Latin, the Oriental, Austral, and Occidental Saxons.

Out of the province of Anglia came the East Anglians, Middle Anglians, Mercians, and all the race of the Norhumbrians. Moreover, Old Anglia is situated between the Saxons and Jutes, having a capital town, which in Saxon is called Sleswig, but in Danish Haithaby. Britain, therefore, is now called Anglia [England], because it took the name of its conquerors: for their leaders aforesaid were the first who came thence to Britain; namely, Hengist and Horsa, sons of Wihtgils: their grandfather was Wecta, and their great-grandfather Withar, whose father was Woden, who also was king of a multitude of barbarians. For the unbelievers of the North are oppressed by such delusion that they worship him as a god even to this day, namely the Danes, the Northmen, and the Suevi; of whom Lucan says,

“Pours forth the yellow Suevi from the North.”

So greatly did the invasion of those nations spread and necrease, that they by degrees obliterated all memory of the inhabitants who had formerly invited them with gifts. They lemand their stipends: the Britons refuse: they take up arms, discord arises, and as we have before said, they drive the Britons into certain narrow isthmuses of the island, and themselves hold possession of the island from sea to sea even unto the present time.

A. 418. In the ninth year also after the sacking of Rome by the Goths, those of Roman race who were left in Britain, not bearing the manifold insults of the people, bury their treasures in pits thinking that hereafter they might have better fortune, which never was the case; and taking a portion, assemble on the coast, spread their canvas to the winds, and seek an exile on the shores of Gaul.

A. 430. Twelve years after, bishop Palladius is sent by the holy pope Celestinus to preach the gospel of Christ to the Scots.

CHAPTER

A. 449. When, therefore, nineteen years had elapsed, Marcian and Valentine became emperors of Rome; in whose reign Hengist and Horsa at the invitation of Vortigern king of the Britons arrive at the place called Wippid's Fleet, at first on the plea of assisting the Britons: but afterwards they rebelled and became their enemies, as we have already said. Now the number of years, completed since the marvellous incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, was four hundred and forty-nine.

A. 455. In the sixth year after, Hengist and Horsa fought a battle against Vortigern in the plain of Aegelsthrep. There Horsa was killed, and Hengist obtained the kingdom.

A. 457. But after two years, Hengist and Aesc his son renewed the war against the Britons; and there fell in that day on the side of the Britons four thousand men. Then the Britons, leaving Cantia, which is commonly called Kent, fled to the city of London.

A. 465. About eight years after, the same men took up arms against the Britons, and there was a great slaughter made on that day: twelve chiefs of the Britons fell near a place called Wipped's Fleet; there fell a soldier of the Saxons. called Wipped, from which circumstance that place took its — name; in the same way as the Thesean sea was so called from Theseus, and the Aegaeon sea from Aegeus who was drowned in it.

A. 473. After eight years were completed, Hengist with his son Aesc, a second time make war against the Britons, and having slaughtered their army, remain victors on the field of battle, and carry off immense spoils.

A. 477. In the fourth year Alla landed in Britain from Germany with his three sons, at a place called Cymenes Ora, and defeated the Britons at Andredes Leage.

A. 485. After eight years, the same people fight against the Britons, near a place called Mearcraedsburn.

A. 488. After this, at an interval of three years, Aesc, son of Hengist, began to reign in Kent.

A. 492. After three years, Aella and Assa besieged a town called Andredscester, and slew all its inhabitants, both small and great, leaving not a single soul alive.

A. 495. After the lapse of three more years, Cerdic and his son Cynric sailed to Britain with five ships, to a port called Cerdic's Ore, and on the same day fought a battle against the Britons, in which they were finally victorious.

A. 500. Six years after their arrival, they sailed round the western part of Britain, which is now called Wessex.

A. 501. Also, after a year Port landed in Britain with his son Bieda.

A. 508. Seven years after his arrival, Cerdic with his son Cynric slay Natan-Leod, king of the Britons, and five thousand men with him.

A. 514. Six years after, Stuf and Whitgar landed in Britain at Cerdic's Ore, and suddenly make war on the Britons, whom they put to flight, and themselves remain masters of the field. Thus was completed the sixty-sixth year since Hengist and Horsa first landed in Britain.

A. 519. Five years after, Cerdic and Cynric fought a battle against the Britons at Cerdic's Ford*, on the river Avene, and that same year nominally began to reign.

A. 527. Eight years after, they renew the war against the Britons.

A. 580. After three years, they took the Isle of Wight, the situation of which we have mentioned above: but they did not kill many of the Britons.

A. 534. Four years after, Cerdic with his son Cenric gives up the Isle of Wight into the hands of their two cousins Stuf and Wihtgar. In the course of the same year Cerdic died, and Cenric his son began to reign after him, and he reigned twenty-seven years.

A. 538. When he had reigned four years, the sun was eclipsed from the first hour of the day to the third.

A. 540. Again, two years after, the sun was eclipsed for half an hour after the third hour, so that the stars were everywhere visible in the sky.

A. 547. In the seventh year after this, Ida began to reign over the province of Northumberland, whose family derive their kingly title and nobility from Woden.

A. 552. Five years after, Cenric fought against the Britons near the town of Scarburh [Old Sarum], and, having routed them, slew a large number.

A. 556. The same, four years afterwards, fought with Ceawlin against the Britons, near a place called Berinbyrig [Banbury?]

A. 560. At the end of about four years, Ceawlin began to reign over the western part of Britain, which is now commonly called Wessex. Moreover, Ella the Iffing is sent to the race of Northumbria, whose ancestry extends up to the highest, namely to Woden.

* Charford, near Fordingbridge, Hants.

A. 565. Five years afterwards, Christ's servant Columba came from Scotia [Ireland] to Britain, to preach the word of God to the Picts.

A. 568. Three years after his coming, Ceawlin and Cutha stirred up a civil war against Ethelbert, and having defeated him, pursued him into Kent, and slew his two chiefs, Oslaf and Cnebba, in Wubbandune*.

A. 571. After three years, Cuthulf fought against the Britons at Bedanford [Bedford], and took four royal cities, namely Liganburh [Lenbury], Eglesburh [Aylesbury], Bensington [Benson], and Ignesham [Eynsham].

A. 577. After the lapse of six years, Cuthwin and Ceawlin fight against the Britons, and slay three of their kings, Comail, Condidan, and Farinmeail, at a place called Deorhamme [Derham?]; and they took three of their most distinguished cities, Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath.

A. 584. After seven years, Ceawlin and Cutha fought against the Britons, at a place called Fethanleage [Frethern?]: there Cutha fell; but Ceawlin reduced a multitude of cities, and took immense spoils.

A. 592. In the eighth year there was a great slaughter on both sides, at a place called Wodnesbyrg [Wemborow?], so that Ceawlin was put to flight, and died at the end of one more year.

A. 593. After him, Cwichelm, Crida, and Ethelfrid, succeeded to the kingdom.

HERE ENDS BOOK THE FIRST

* Wimbledon, or Worplesdon, Surrey,

HERE BEGINS THE PROLOGUE TO BOOK THE SECOND

In the beginning of this book, it will not be necessary to make a long preface, my dearest sister; for I have guided my pen down through many perplexed subjects from the highest point, and, omitting those things extracted from sacred and profane history, on which most persons have fixed their attention, have left higher matters to the skilful reader. And now I must turn my pen to the description of those things which properly concern our ancestors; and though a pupil is not properly called a member, yet it yields no little service to the other members. We therefore entreat in God's name that our words may not be despised by the malevolent, but rather that they may give abundant thanks to the King of heaven, if they seem to speak things of high import.

HERE ENDS THE PROLOGUE;

AND

THE SECOND BOOK BEGINS

Chap. I — *Of the coming of Augustine, who was sent by the blessed Pope Gregory.* [A.D. 596]

As Divine Providence, mercifully looking down upon all things from all eternity, is accustomed to rule them, not by necessity, but by its powerful superintendence, and remaining always immoveable in itself, and disposing the different elements by its word, and the human race to come to the knowledge of the truth by the death of his only begotten Son, by whose blood the four quarters of the world are redeemed, so now by his servant doth it dispel the darkness in the regions of the west.

Whilst therefore the blessed pope Gregory sat on the episcopal seat, and sowed the seeds of the gospel of Christ, there stood by him some men of unknown tongue and very comely to look on. The holy man admiring the beauty of their countenances, asked of them with earnestness from what country they came. The young men with downcast looks replied, that they were Angles. "Are you Christians," said the holy man, "or heathens?"

"Certainly not Christians," said they, "for no one has yet opened our ears."

Then the holy man, lifting up his eyes, replied, "What man, when there are stones at hand, lays a foundation with reeds?"

They answer, "No man of prudence."

“You have well said,” answered he; and he straightaway took them into a room, where he instructed them in the divine oracles, and afterwards washed them with the baptism of Christ: and further he arranged with them, that he would go with them into their country. When the Romans heard of this, they opposed his words, and were unwilling to allow their pastor to go so far from home. The blessed pope Gregory, therefore, seeing that the people were opposed to him, sent with the men aforesaid one of his disciples, who was well instructed in the divine oracles, by name Augustine, and with him a multitude of brethren. When these men arrived, the English received the faith and erected temples, and our Saviour Jesus Christ exhibited innumerable miracles to his faithful followers through the prayers of the bishop, St. Augustine; at whose tomb, even to the present day, no small number of miracles are wrought, with the assistance of our Lord.

Chap. III — *Of king Ethelbert, and of his baptism.* [A.D. 597]

When the man aforesaid arrived, Ethelbert bore rule over Kent, and receiving the faith, submitted to be baptised with all his house. He was the first king among the English who received the word of Christ. Lastly Ethelbert was the son of Ermenric, whose grandfather was Ohta, who bore the prenomen of Eisc, from which the kings of Kent were afterwards named Esings, as the Romans from Romulus, the Cecropide from Cecrops, and the Tuscans from Tuscus. For Kise was the father of Hengist, who was the first consul and leader of the Angles out of Germany; whose father was Wihtgils, his grandfather Witta, his great-grandfather Wecta, his great-grandfather's father Woden, who also was king of many nations, whom some of the pagans now still worship as a god. And the number of years that was completed from the incarnation of our Lord was four years less, than six hundred.

Chap. III — Of Ceolwulf, king of the West Saxons, and of his continued wars.

A. 597. At the end of one year, Ceolwulf began to reign over the Western English. His family was derived from Woden; and so great was his ferocity that he is said to have been always at war, either with his own nation or with the Britons, or the Picts or Scots.

Chap. IV — Concerning Augustine's pall of apostleship sent him by pope Gregory.

A. 601. When he had reigned four years, pope Gregory sent to Augustine the pall of apostleship.

Chap. V — Of the faith of the East Saxons, and of the decease of the blessed pope Gregory.

A. 604. After three years, the eastern English also received baptism in the reign of Sigeberht their king.

A. 606. Two years afterwards, the blessed pope Gregory departed this world, in the eleventh year after he had bestowed baptism on the English by sending among them Christ's servant Augustine. And the number of years that was completed from the beginning of the world was more than five thousand and eight hundred.

Chap. VI — Of the reign of king Cynegils, his wars; and of the coming of bishop Birinus, of the baptism of the king, and the faith of the West Saxons, and of the baptism of Cuthrid. [A.D. 615 — 639]

Afterwards Cynegils received the kingdom of the West Angles, and, in conjunction with Cuichelm, he fought against the Britons at a place called Beandune*, and having defeated their army, slew more than two thousand and forty of them.

A. 629. Fourteen years after, Cynegils and Cuichelm fought against Penda at Cirencester.

A. 635. After six years bishop Birinus came among the Western Angles, preaching to them the gospel of Christ. And the number of years that elapsed since their arrival in Britain out of Germany, was about one hundred and twenty. At that time Cynegils received baptism from the holy bishop Birinus, in a town called Dorchester.

A. 639. He baptized Cuthred also four years after in the same city, and adopted him as his son in baptism.

Chap. VII — Of the reign of Kenwalk, and of his actions.

A. 648. When nine years were fulfilled, Kenwalk gave to his relation, Cuthred, out of his farms, three thousand measures, adjacent to a hill named Esc's Dune [Aston?].

A. 652. Four years after, he fought a battle against his own people, at a place called Bradford, on the river Avon.

A. 655. Three years afterwards king Penda died, and the Mercians were baptized.

* Most probably Bampton in Oxfordshire. This battle took place in 614. See the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for that year.

A. 658. After three years more, the kings Cenwalh and Penda renewed the war against the Britons, and pursued them to a place called Pederydan*.

A. 661. After three years, Cenwalh again fought a battle near the town of Pontesbury, and took prisoner Wulfhere, son of Penda, at Ese's Dune [Ashdown], when he had defeated his army.

A. 664. Three years afterwards there was an eclipse of the sun.

A. 670. When six years were fulfilled, Oswy, king of Northumberland, died, and Egfrid succeeded him.

A. 671. After one year more, there was a great pestilence among the birds, so that there was an intolerable stench by sea and land, arising from the carcasses of birds, both small and great.

A. 672. Twelve months after Kenwalk, king of the West Angles, died; and his wife, Sexburga, succeeded him in the kingdom, and reigned twelve months.

A. 673. After her Escwin succeeded to the throne, and two years were fulfilled. His family traces to Cerdic.

Chap. VIII — Of Wulfhere and Aescwin, and of the council held by the holy father Theodore.

A. 674. After one year, Wulfhere son of Penda, and Aescwin fought a battle among themselves in a place called Beadanhead [Bedwin].

A. 677. After three years a comet was seen.

A. 680. At the end of two years a council was held at Hethleget[†], by the holy archbishop Theodore, to instruct the people in the true faith. In the course of the same year died Christ's servant, Hilda, abbess of the monastery called Streaneshalch [Whitby].

Chap. IX — Of king Kentwin and his wars

A. 682. After two years king Kentwin drove the Britons out of their country to the sea.

A. 684. After he had reigned two years Ina became king of the Western English. A hundred and eighty-eight years were then fulfilled from the time that Cerdic, his sixth ancestor, received the western part of the island from the Britons.

* Petherton.

[†] Heathfield or Hatfield.

Chap. X — Of Caedwalla's conversion to the faith of Christ.

A. 684. In the course of the same year Caedwalla went to Rome, and received baptism and the faith of Christ; after his baptism the pope of that year gave him the surname of Peter.

A. 694. About six years afterwards, the Kentish men remembered the cause which they had against king Ina when they burnt his relation* with fire; and they gave him thirty thousand shillings at a fixed rate of sixteen pence each.

Chap. XI — Of the acts of Ethelred king of the Mercians.

A. 704. After ten years, Ethelred son of Penda and king of the Mercians assumed the monastic habit, when he had completed twenty-nine years of his reign.

A. 705. After twelve months died Alfrid king of Northumberland. And the number of years that was then fulfilled from the beginning of the world was five thousand nine hundred.

A. 709. Four years afterwards died the holy bishop Aldhelm, by whose wonderful art were composed the words which are now read, and his bishopric was the province which is now called Selwoodshire [Sherborne].

Chap. XII — Of the reign of Ine, and of his acts.

A. 710. After a year, the kings and Ine made war against king Geraint; also duke Bertfrid against the Picts.

A. 714. After four years died Christ's servant Guthlac.

A. 715. After a year Ine and Ceolred fought against those who opposed them in arms at Wothnesbeorghge [Wanborough].

A. 721. After seven years Ine slew Cynewulf, and after six months made war against the Southern English.

* His name was Mul: the passage is obscure. See the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,

Chap. XIII — Of king Aetheleard.

A. 728. When six years were fulfilled he went to Rome, and Aetheleard received the kingdom of the West Saxons. In the first year of his reign he made war against Osric.

A. 729. At the end of one year a comet appeared, and the holy bishop Egbert died.

A. 731. After two years, Osric king of Northumberland died and Ceolwulf succeeded to the kingdom.

Chap. XIV — Of the acts of king Aethelbald.

A. 733. Two years after these things, king Aethelbald received under his dominion the royal vill which is called Somerton. The same year the sun was eclipsed.

A. 734. After the lapse of one year, the moon appeared as if stained with spots of blood, and by the same omen Tatwine and Bede departed this life.

Chap. XV — Of the reign of Eadberht and of his deeds.

A. 788. After four years, Eadberht succeeded to the kingdom of the Northumbrians, and his brother Ecgbert discharged the archiepiscopal office; and now they both lie buried in the city of York, under the shade of the same porch.

Chap. XVI — Of the rule of king Cuthred.

A. 750. After twelve years king Cuthred began to make war against duke Aethelhun, for some state jealousy.

A. 752. Again after two years he drew his sword against king Aethelbald at a place called Beorgforda*.

A. 758. After another year he gratified the fierce propensities of his nature by making war against the Britons: and after another year he died, A.D. 754.

Chap. XVII — Of the acts of king Sigiberht and of his reign.

Furthermore Sigiberht received the kingdom of the western English.

* Without doubt this is Burford in Oxfordshire.

A. 756. At the end of one year after Sigebert began to reign, Cynewulf, invading his kingdom, took it from him, and drew away all the wise men of the west country, in consequence of the perverse deeds of the aforesaid king; nor was any part of his kingdom left to him except one province only, named Hamptonshire [Hampshire]. And he remained there no long time; for, instigated by an old affront, he slew a certain duke, and Cynewulf drove him into the wilds of Andred: and so he fled from thicket to thicket, until he was at last slain by a herdsman at a place named Pryffetesflodan*, and so the blood of duke Cumbra was avenged.

Chap. XVIII — Of the reign of Cynewulf, his war and deeds.

A. 755. These things having been premised, Cynewulf frequently fought no slight battles against the Britons. For when thirty-one years had passed, he tried to expel from his territories a certain chief named Cyneard, brother to Sigebert, whose deeds have been related above. He was afterwards besieged by this prince, for it was told him that he was in company of a certain courtesan at a place called Meranton [Merton], and though he had with him only a few men, who knew nothing of the matter, he surrounded the house with arms. The king, seeing how he was situated, leaped to the door, and bravely repelled their weapons; but making up his mind he rushed upon the prince, and inflicted no slight wounds upon him; his companions, not forgetting his threats, raised their weapons and slew the king. The report being spread, the king's soldiers, who had been in his company, each for himself, as was their custom, made an attack, uttering shouts. But the prince, soothing them, promised them gifts and ample honours. They desire death, now that their lord is dead; nor do they attend to his promises, but rush with one accord upon death. None of them escaped with life except one British hostage, and he had received severe wounds. When, therefore, the day dawned, it became known to the soldiers, who had remained behind the king's back, they assembled together and set forth, and with them Osric the duke and Wigferth the knight. They found the prince in the house, where their master was lying dead. The doors are beleaguered on both sides. Within are the one party, and the other party are without. The prince asks a truce, and makes ample promises; his object is future sovereignty. The king's friends spurn these offers, and rather seek to separate from the prince their relations who were in his company. These reject their proposals; on the contrary they answer their friends thus: "No tie is so powerful as that which binds us to our lord; and whereas you ask us to depart, we tell you that we made the same proposal to those who were slain with your king, and they would not accede to it."

To this the other party rejoined, "But you will remain unhurt, if you only depart, nor share in the vengeance which we shall inflict for those who were slain with the king."

* Privett, Hampshire,

They returned no answer to this, but silently begin the battle; shield punishes shield, and arms are laced in bucklers, relation falls by his kinsman; they smash the doors, one pursues after another, and a lamentable fight ensues. Alas! they slay the prince; all his companions are laid low before his face, except one, and he was the baptismal son of duke Osric, but half alive, and covered with wounds.

Now Cynewulf reigned thirty-one years, and his body lies entombed in the city of Winchester. The above-named prince also reposes in the church commonly called Axanminster [Axminster]. Both their families trace to Cerdic.

A. 755. In the same year Ethelbald, king of Mercia, was slain at a place called Seccandune [Seckington], and his body rests in a monastery called Reopandune [Repton]. Bernred succeeded to the kingdom, and not long after he also died.

Chap. XIX — Of the reign of king Offa and of his deeds.

A. 756. In the revolution of the same year, Offa succeeded to the kingdom, a remarkable man, son of Thingferth; his grandfather was Enwulf, his great-grandfather Osmod, his great-grandfather's father Pybba, his great-grandfather's grandfather was Icel, his sixth ancestor Eomaer, the seventh Angeltheow, the eighth Offa, the ninth Wermund, the tenth Wihtlwg, the eleventh Woden.

A. 773. Also after seventeen years, from the time that Cynewulf took the kingdom from Sigebert, the sign of our Lord's cross appeared in the heavens after sun-set, and in the same year a civil war took place between the people of Kent and Mercia, at a place called Ottanford [Otford]: and in those days some monstrous serpents were seen in the country of the Southern Angles, which is called Sussex.

A. 777. About four years after, Cynewulf and Offa fought a battle near the town of Bensington, which was gained by Offa.

A. 779. Two years afterwards, the Gauls and Saxons stirred up no slight contests with one another.

A. 783. In short, after four years, Cyneard slays king Cynewulf, and is himself also slain there.

Chap. XX — Of the acts of Bertric, king of the West Saxons.

A. 783. In the same year Bertric received the kingdom of the West Angles, whose lineage traces up to Cerdic.

A. 786. After three years, he took in marriage Offa's daughter Eadburga.

HERE ENDS BOOK THE SECOND