

THE PROLOGUE OF BOOK THE THIRD BEGINS.

After what has been written in the foregoing pages, it remains that we declare the contents of our third book. We exhort you, therefore, most beloved object of my desire, that the present work may not be thought tedious by you for its length of reading, since to thee especially I dedicate this. Wherefore, the farther my mind digresses, the more does my affectionate love generate and expand itself.

HERE ENDS THE PROLOGUE

AND

THE BOOK BEGINS

Whilst the pious king Bertric was reigning over the western parts of the English, and the innocent people spread through their plains were enjoying themselves in tranquillity and yoking their oxen to the plough, suddenly there arrived on the coast a fleet of Danes, not large, but of three ships only: this was their first arrival. When this became known, the king's officer, who was already stopping in the town of Dorchester, leapt on his horse and galloped forwards with a few men to the port, thinking that they were merchants rather than enemies, and, commanding them in an authoritative tone, ordered them to be made to go to the royal city; but he was slain on the spot by them, and all who were with him. The name of the officer was Beaduhard.

A. 787. And the number of years that was fulfilled was above three hundred and thirty-four, from the time that Hengist and Horsa arrived in Britain, in which also Bertric married the daughter of king Offa.

A. 792. Moreover, it was after five years that Offa king of the Mercians commanded the head of king Ethelbert to be struck off.

A. 794. After two years Offa also died, and Ecgrith his son succeeded to the kingdom, and died in the same year. Pope Adrian also departed this life. Aethelred, king of the Northumbrians, was slain by his own people.

Chap. I — Of Coenwulf, king of the Mercians, and of his wars.

A. 796. After two years, Coenwulf, king of the Mercians, ravaged Kent and the province which is called Merswarum [Romney Marsh], and their king Praen was taken, whom they loaded with chains, and led as far as Mercia.

A. 797. Then after a year, the enraged populace of Rome cut out the tongue of the blessed pope Leo, and tore out his eyes, and drove him from his apostolical seat. But suddenly, by the aid of Christ, who is always wonderful in his works, his sight was restored, and his tongue regifted with speech, and he resumed his seat of apostleship as before.

A. 800. After three years, king Bertric died.

Chap. II — Of the reign of Ecgberht, and his deeds.

Therefore Egbert is raised to the kingdom of the West Saxons. On the very same day, as king Aethelmund was passing through a farm, Wiccum, intending to go to a ford called Cynemaeresford [Kempsford], duke Woxstan met him there with the centuries of the inhabitants of the province of Wilsaetum [Wiltshire]. Both of them fell in the battle, but the Wilsaetae remained the victors.

Also, down to the time that Ecgberht received the kingdom, there were completed from the beginning of the world 5995 years, from the incarnation of our Lord 800 years, from the coming of Hengist and Horsa into Britain 350 years, from the reign of Cerdic, the tenth ancestor of king Ecgberht, when he subdued the western part of Britain, 300 years, and from the coming of Augustine, who was sent by the blessed pope Gregory to baptise the English nation, 204 years: and in the tenth year afterwards the holy father Gregory died.

A. 805. After king Ecgberht had reigned five years, was the death of Cuthred king of Kent.

A. 812. In the seventh year Charles, king of the Franks, departed this life.

A. 814. After two years, the blessed pope Leo passed from one virtue to another.

A. 819. After five years, Coenwulf king of the Mercians died.

A. 821. His successor was Ceolwulf, who was deprived of the kingdom two years afterwards.

A. 822. A year afterwards a great synod was held at a place called Clovesho, and two dukes were there slain Burhelm and Mucca.

A. 823. After one year a battle was fought against the Britons in the province of Defna [Devonshire], at a place called Camelford. In the same year king

Ecgberht fought a battle against Bernulf king of the Mercians at Ellendune [Wilton], and Ecgberht gained the victory: but there was a great loss on both sides; and Hun duke of the province of Somerset was there slain: he lies buried in the city of Winchester. Lastly, king Ecgberht sent his son Aethelwulf with an army into Kent, and with him bishop Ealstan and duke Wulfherd. They defeated the Kentish army, and pursued their king Baldred into the northern parts beyond the Thames. To whom the men of Kent are afterwards subjected, and also the provinces of Surrey and Sussex, that is, the midland and southern Angles.

A. 824. For in the course of the same year the king of the East Angles with the wise men of his realm, visits king Ecgberht, for the sake of peace and protection, on account of his fear of the Mercians.

A. 825. In the course of that year the aforesaid East Angles made war against Beornwulf king of the Mercians, and having defeated his army they slew him and five dukes with him. His successor was Witglaf.

A. 827. Two years afterwards, the moon was eclipsed on the very night of Christ's nativity. And in the same year king Ecgberht reduced under his power all that part of the kingdom which lies to the south of the river Humber: he was the eighth king in Britain who was famous for his great power. For the first was Aelle king of the South Angles, who possessed the same dominions as Ecgberht; the second was Ceawlin king of the West Angles; the third Aethelberht king of Kent; the fourth Raedwald king of the East Angles; the fifth Edwin king of Northumbria; the sixth Oswald; the seventh Oswy brother of Oswald; after whom the eighth Egbert, of whom we have made mention above. He led his army against the Northumbrians, who also bent their necks and submitted to him.

A. 828. At the end of a year therefore, Witglaf again received the kingdom. At that time also, king Echgbert led his army against the northern Britons, and when he had subdued all of them, he returned in peace.

A. 832. After four years therefore the pagans devastated the territories of a place called Sceapige [Sheppey].

A. 833. After one year Egbert fought against the pagan fleet, in number thirty-five vessels, at a place called Carrum [Charmouth]: and the Danes obtained the victory.

A. 836. Lastly after three years, a large army of Britons approached the frontiers of the West-Saxons: without delay they form themselves into a compact body, and carry their arms against Egbert king of the Angles. Egbert therefore having ascertained the state of things beforehand, assembled his army and twice imbued their weapons in the blood of the Britons at Hingston Down, and put them to flight.

A. 837. At the end of a year the powerful king Echgbert died.

Chap. III — Of the reign of Aethelwulf and of his deeds.

After his death, Aethelwulf succeeded to the throne of his father Egbert, and he delivered up the kingdom of Kent to his son Aethelstan, together with East Saxony, South Saxony, and Surrey, *i.e.* the eastern, southern and midland parts.

A. 838. After one year, duke Wulfherd fought with the pagan fleet near the town of Hamptun [Southampton], and having slain many of them gained the victory: the number of ships in the fleet was thirty-three. After this exploit the duke himself died in peace. The same year duke Aethelhelm, with the people of the province of Dorset, fought another battle against the pagan army at Port, and pursued them some distance: but afterwards the Danes were victorious, and slew the duke and his companions with him.

A. 839. After one year duke Herebert was slain by the Danes at Merswarum [Romney Marsh]; and the same year a great slaughter was made by that army in the city of Lindsey, and in the province of Kent, and in East Anglia.

A. 840. Also after one year, the same thing took place in the city of London, in Quintanwic [Canterbury], and in the town of Rochester.

A. 841. Meanwhile, after one year king Aethelwulf fought against the Danes at a place called Charmouth, by whom also he was vanquished, and the victors kept possession of the ground.

A. 844. Three years afterwards duke Eanwulf, who governed the province of Somerset, and bishop Ealstan also, and Osric duke of Dorset, fought a battle against the pagans at the mouth of the Parret before-mentioned; where they gained the victory, having defeated the Danish army. Also in the same year king Aethelstan and duke Elchere fought against the army of the above-mentioned nation in the province of Kent, near the town of Sandwich, where they slew many of them, put their troops to flight, and took nine ships.

A. 851. After seven years Ceorl duke of Devon fought a battle against the pagans at Wembury*, where they slew many of the Danes and gained the victory. In the course of the same year, the barbarians wintered first in the Isle of Thanet, which lies not far from Britain, and has fruitful but not large corn fields. That year was not yet finished, when a large fleet of pagans arrived, 350 ships, at the mouth of the river Thames, commonly called Thamesmouth, and destroyed the city of Canterbury and the city of London, and put to flight Berthwulf king of Mercia, having defeated his army. After the battle they returned beyond the river Thames towards the south through the province of Surrey, and there king Aethelwulf with the Western Angles met them: an

* Near Plymouth.

immense number was slain on both sides, nor have we ever heard of a more severe battle before that day: these things happened near Ockley Wood.

A. 854. After three years king Burhred asked assistance from king Ethelwulf to subdue the Northern Britons: he granted it, and having collected his army, passed through the Mercian kingdom to go against the Britons: whom he subdued and made tributary. In the same year king Aethelwulf sent his son Alfred to Rome, in the days of our lord pope Leo*, who consecrated him king and named him his son in baptism, when we are accustomed to name little children, when we receive them from the bishop's hand. In the same year where fought battles in the isle of Thanet against the pagans; and there was a great slaughter made on both sides, and many were drowned in the sea. The same year also after Easter king Aethelwulf gave his daughter in marriage to king Burhred.

A. 855. After a year the pagans wintered in Sheppey. In the same year king Ethelwulf gave the tenth of all his possessions to be the Lord's portion, and so appointed it to be in all the government of his kingdom. In the same year he set out to Rome with great dignity, and stayed there twelve months. As he returned home, therefore, to his country, Charles, king of the Franks, gave him his daughter in marriage, and he took her home with him to his own country.

A. 857. Lastly, after a year king Aethelwulf died, and his body reposes in the city of Winchester. Now the aforesaid king was son of king Ecgberth, and his grandfather was Ealhmund, his great-grandfather Eafa, his great-grandfather's father was Eoppa, and his great-grandfather's grandfather was Ingild, brother of Ine, king of the Western Angles, who ended his life at Rome; and the above-named kings derived their origin from king Cenred. Cenred was the son of Ceolwald, son of Cuthwin, son of Ceawlin, son of Cynric, son of Cerdic, who also was the first possessor of the western parts of Britain, after he had defeated the armies of the Britons : his father was Elesa, son of Esla, son of Gewis, son of Wig, son of Freawin, son of Frithogar, son of Brond, son of Beldeg, son of Woden, son of Frithowald, son of Frealaf, son of Frithuwulf, son of Finn, son of Godwulf, son of Geat, son of Taetwa, son of Beaw, son of Sceldi, son of Sceaef. This Sceaef came with one ship to an island of the ocean named Scani, sheathed in arms, and he was a young boy, and unknown to the people of that land; but he was received by them, and they guarded him as their own with much care, and afterwards chose him for their king. It is from him that king Aethelwulf derives his descent. And then was completed "the fiftieth year from the beginning of king Ecgberth's reign.

HERE ENDS THE THIRD BOOK

* Leo the Fourth.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE FOURTH BOOK HERE BEGINS

Three books are now finished, and it remains to guide my pen to the fourth, in which also will be found greater gain, and the origin of our race is more clearly intimated. And, although I may seem to send you a load of reading, dearest sister of my desire, do not judge me harshly, but as my writings were in love to you, so may you read them. And may God Almighty, who is praised both in Trinity and in Unipotence ever preserve you under the shadow of his wings, and your companions with you. Amen!

HERE ENDS THE PROLOGUE

Chap. I — Of the reign of the sons of king Aethelwulf, namely Aethelbald and Aethelberht.

Meanwhile, after the death of king Aethelwulf, his sons were raised to the kingdom, namely Aethelbald over the Western Angles, and Aethelberht over the men of Kent, and the Eastern, Southern, and Midland Angles.

A. 861. When five years were completed, king Aethelbald died, and his brother Aethelberht succeeded to the possessions of both. In those days a large fleet of pagans came to land, and destroyed the royal city which is called Winton. They were encountered by Osric duke of Hampshire, and Aethelwulf duke of Berkshire: a battle ensued; the pagans were routed, and the English gained the victory.

A. 865. After four years, from the death of king Aethelbald, the pagans strengthened their position in the isle of Thanet, and promise to be at peace with the men of Kent, who on their part prepare money, ignorant of the future. But the Danes break their compact, and sallying out privately by night, lay waste all the eastern coast of Kent.

A. 866. After one year king Aethelbert died, and his body rests peaceably in the monastery named Sherborne

Chap. II — Of the reign of king Aethelred.

Aethelred succeeded to the throne after the death of his brother Aethelberht. In the same year the fleets of the tyrant Ivar arrived in England from the north, and wintered among the East Angles, and having established their arms there, they get on their horses, and make peace with all the inhabitants in their own neighbourhood.

A. 867. After one year that army, leaving the eastern parts, crossed the river Humber into Northumberland to the city of Evoric, which is now commonly called the city of Eoferwic [York]. For there was then a great civil dissension between the inhabitants of that land, and they were so enraged that they also expelled their king Osberht from his seat; and having confirmed their resolves, they chose an obscure person for their king; and after some delay they turned their thoughts to raise an army and repulse those who were advancing. They collected together no small bodies of troops, and reconnoitred the enemy: their rage was excited: they joined battle, a miserable slaughter took place on both sides, and the kings were slain. Those of them who were left made peace with the hostile army.

In the same year died Eanwulf, duke of Somerset; also bishop Ealstan, fifty years after his succession to the bishopric, in the diocese called Sherborne. There also his body now reposes; and that of the above-named duke in the monastery called Glastonbury.

A. 868. After one year therefore, the army of the pagans, of whose arrival we have spoken above, measured out their camp in a place called Snotingham [Nottingham], and there they passed the winter, and Burgred king of the Mercians, with his nobles, consented to their remaining there without reproach.

A. 869. At the end of a year therefore, the army was transported to York, and there also they measured out their camp in the winter season.

A. 870. Again after a year they departed, and passed through Mercia into East Anglia, and there measured out their camp for the winter at Thetford. King Edmund carried on war against them for a short time, but he was slain there by them, and his body lies entombed at a place called Beodoricsworth [Bury St. Edmunds], and the barbarians obtained the victory, but with the loss of their king soon afterwards: for king Ivar died the same year; archbishop Ceolnoth also died that same year, and is buried in the city of Canterbury.

A. 871. After one year therefore the army of the barbarians above-mentioned set out for Reading, and the principal object of the impious crew was to attack the West Saxons; and three days after they came, their two consuls, forgetting that they were not on board their fleet, rode proudly through fields and meadows on horseback, which nature had denied to them.

But duke Aethelwulf met them, and though his troops were few, their hearts resided in brave dwellings: they point their darts, they rout the enemy, and triumph in abundant spoils. At length four days after their meeting, Aethelred arrives with his army; an indescribable battle is fought, now these, now those urge on the fight with spears immovable; duke Aethelwulf falls, who a short time before had obtained the victory: the barbarians at last triumph. The body of the above-named duke is privately withdrawn, and carried into the province of the Mercians, to a place called Northworthig, but Derby in the language of the Danes. Four days after king Aethelred with his brother Alfred fought again with all the army of the Danes at Aescisdune; and there was great slaughter on

both sides: but at last king Aethelred obtained the victory. But it is proper that I should declare the names of those chiefs who fell there: Bagsac king, the veteran Sidrac their consul, the younger Sidrac also, the consul Osbern, the consul Frene, the consul Harold; and, so to speak, all the flower of the barbarian youth was there slain, so that neither before nor since was ever such destruction known since the Saxons first gained Britain by their arms.

Fourteen days after, they again took courage and a second battle was fought at a place called Basing: the barbarians came and took part over against them; the fight began, and hope passed from the one side to the other; the royal army was deceived, the enemy had the victory, but gained no spoils.

Furthermore, after two months the aforesaid king Aethelred renewed the battle, and with him was his brother Alfred, at Merton, against all the army of the barbarians, and a large number was slain on both sides. The barbarians obtained the victory; bishop Heahmund there fell by the sword, and his body lies buried at Cegineshamme [Keynsham]. Many others also fell or fled in that battle, concerning whom it seems to be a loss of time to speak more minutely at present. Lastly, after the above-mentioned battle, and after the Easter of the same year, died king Aethelred, from whose family I derive my origin.

And now I have followed up my plan, dear cousin Matilda, and will begin to consolidate my subject; and like a ship which, having sailed a long way over the waves, already occupies the port, to which in her patient voyage she had been tending: so we, like sailors, are already entering, and as I briefly intimated to you in my former epistle, so also in the prefaces to this present book, and without any impropriety I again remind you, and though I cut short the course of that which is visionary, not impelled by necessity, but through love of your affection, I now send it you again more fully to be meditated upon concerning the origin of our family, and sufficiently embrace the study of your sincerity.

Thus far then: I will now leave obscurity and begin to speak concerning the sons of Aethelwulf. They were five in number: the first was Aethelstan, who also shared the kingdom with his father: the second was Aethelbald, who also was king of the Western English: the third was Aethelbert, king of Kent: the fourth was Aethelred, who after the death of Aethelberht succeeded to the kingdom, and was also my grandfather's grandfather: the fifth was Alfred, who succeeded after all the others to the whole sovereignty, and was your grandfather's grandfather. Wherefore I make known to you, my beloved cousin Matilda, that I receive these things from ancient tradition, and have taken care in most brief style to write the history of our race down to these two kings, from whom we have taken our origin. To you therefore, most beloved, I devote this work, compelled by the love of our relationship: if others receive them with haughtiness, they will be judged unworthy of the feast; if otherwise, we advise all in charity to gather what is set before them. Let us return then to the story that we broke off, and to the death of the above-named Aethelred. His reign lasted five years, and he is buried in the monastery which goes by the name of Wimborne.

Chap. III — Of the reign of king Alfred.

A. 871. After these things, Alfred obtained the kingdom when his brothers were dead — he also was the youngest son of king Aethelwulf — over all the provinces of Britain.

There came a summer-army innumerable to Reading, and were eager to fight against the army of the West Angles: to their aid also came those who had already long time been ravaging. But the army of the Angles at that time was small on account of the king's absence, who at the same time had performed his brother's obsequies, and although their ranks were not full, yet their hearts were firm in their breasts, they rejoice in the fight, and repel the enemy: but at length oppressed with fatigue, they cease from the fight. The barbarians hold possession of a sterile field of battle: afterwards also they spread themselves and ravage the country. During their foul domination, there were three battles fought by the Angles, besides the battles before-mentioned, and eleven of their consuls, whom they call "earls," were slain, and one of their kings. Lastly, in the same year the Eastern Angles made peace with them. And the number of years to the encamping of the barbarian army in Reading and to the death of king Aethelred and the succession of his brother Alfred was the seventy-first from the time that Ecgberht had first consolidated the kingdom, and forty-seven from the time that the Mercians and Western Angles carried on civil wars at the place called Ellandune*, and king Ecgberht received the name of victor twenty-six years from the time that the battle was fought in Pedredan [Petherton]; and twenty years after the contest which was waged near the wood called Ockley, and lastly five years from the arrival of the pagans in the country of the East Angles: and without long delay, they then went to Reading.

A. 872. After a year had elapsed from the time of their coming to Reading, they measured out their camp in the neighbourhood of the city of London. But the Mercians atify a treaty with them, and pay a stipend.

A. 873. After one year the barbarians change their position to the neighbourhood of the city of Lindsey in a place called Torksey. The Mercian people renew their treaty with them.

A. 874. After the lapse of a year, the barbarians at length remove to a place called Repton, and drive king Burgred from the kingdom beyond the sea. Twenty-two years are enumerated from the time that he first occupied his father's kingdom. They now break the peace, and devastate the lands of the Mercians. The above-named king did not abandon his hope in Christ, but made a journey to Rome and died there, and his body, laid in a worthy mausoleum, reposes in the temple of Christ's blessed mother, which is now called the school of the English. At the same time Ceolwulf possessed the kingdom of the Mercians.

A. 875. Lastly after a year, the barbarians divide the kingdom into two parts: and Halfdan the leader of the barbarians took one part, namely the kingdom of

* Allington, Wiltshire.

the Northumbrians, and there he chose his winter quarters near the river called the Tyne, and they ravaged the country there on every side. But they also made frequent wars on the Picts and the men of Cumberland. Oskytel also, and Gothrun, and Anwind, their three kings, with an immense army, came from Repton to a place called Grantabridge [Cambridge], and there remained twelve months. Furthermore, in the summer of the same year, king Alfred came out with his army on board a fleet by sea, and the barbarians met them with seven tall vessels. A battle ensues, and the Danes are routed: the king takes one of their ships.

A. 876. After one year, the tyrant Halfdan obtained the kingdom of the Northumbrians, all of whom he reduced to subjection. And in the course of the same year, the army which had been at Cambridge made a junction with the western army, a thing which they had not done before, near the town which is called Wareham, and ravaged the greater part of that province. Also, the king ratified a treaty of peace with them and gave them money. But they gave him hostages chosen out of their army, and made oath to him on their sacred bracelet which they had never done to the kings of the other districts, that they would quickly leave their territories.

A. 877. But they broke the peace and contravened their engagements, and the following year extended their troops into the province of Devon, where they passed the winter at Exeter. Lastly their fleets put to sea and spread their sails to the wind: but a lamentable storm came on, and the greatest part of them, namely a hundred of their chief ships, were sunk near the rock which is called Swanwich. The barbarians renew their fraud and offer peace: hostages were given, more than were demanded, to the effect that they would withdraw out of the territories of king Alfred; and they did so. They devastate the kingdom of the Mercians and drive out all the freemen. They erect their huts in the town of Gloucester.

A. 878. At the end of that year therefore this foul mob broke the compact which they had before solemnly made with the Western Angles, and they take up their winter quarters at Chippenham. The people were everywhere unable to resist: some of them were driven by the impious wretches over the sea into Gaul. King Alfred was at this time straitened more than was becoming. Aethelnoth also duke of Somerset lived with a narrow retinue in a certain wood, and they built a strong-hold in the island of Athelingay*, which seems to have been situated in a marsh. But the aforesaid king fought daily battles against the barbarians, having with him the province of Somerset only; no others assisted him, except the servants who made use of the king's pastures. In the same year arrived Halfdan brother of the tyrant Ivar with thirty galleys, in the western parts of the Angles, and besieged Odda duke of Devon in a certain castle, and war was stirred up on all sides. The king of the barbarians fell, and eighty decads with him. At last, the Danes obtain the victory. Meanwhile, after the Easter of that year, king Alfred fought against the army that was in Chippenham, at a place called Ethandune [Edington], and they obtain the

* Athelney, no longer an island is situated near Boroughbridge in Somersetshire.

victory. But after the decision of the battle, the barbarians promise peace, ask a truce, give hostages, and bind themselves by oath: their king submits to be baptizsd, and Alfred the king receives him from the laver in the marshy isle of Alney. Duke Ethelnoth also purified the same at a place called Wedmore, and king Alfred there bestowed upon him magnificent honours.

A. 879. After a year from the time of the pagan army leaving Gloucester, they marched to Cirencester, and there wintered. In the course of the same year the sun was eclipsed.

A. 880. A year after the eclipse, the aforesaid army struck their tents, and leaving Cirencester went into the country of the East Angles, and pitching their camp, reduced all the inhabitants of those parts to subjection. And it was now fourteen years since the barbarians first wintered in the country aforesaid, and ravaged it. In the same year, when they had reduced the district aforesaid, they went in a vessel to Gaul and took up a position at a place called Ghent: the same men who had formerly measured out their camp at a place called Fulham.

A. 881. After a year, they attempt to proceed further; but the armies of the Franks assail them and gain the victory; the barbarians were put to flight.

A. 882. After a year the aforesaid army passed ito the upper districts of the Meuse and measured out their camp at a place called Escelum [Asselt]. In the same year king Alfred put to sea and fell in with four ships; which he defeated, and destroyed two, the others surrendered.

A. 883. The next year the aforesaid army entered the parishes of the Scald [Scheldt], to a place called Cundath [Condé-sur-l'Escaut]; and there measured out their camp for the winter.

A. 884. After one year had expired, that pestilential army aforesaid removed to the higher districts of the Somme, to a place called Embenum [Amiens], and there wintered.

A. 885. After a year they divide themselves into two parts: one to Sofenum [Leuven], the other to Rochester; and they laid siege to those towns. They also construct other smaller camps. Defeat prevails among the inhabitants until the arrival of king Alfred with an army. The foul plague was vanquished, and sought reinforcement ...* Some of them made for the sea coasts. The same year they renewed their league, and gave hostages to the English, and twice in the year they counted the spoil which they had obtained by fraud, in the land which borders on the southern bank of the Thames. The filthy crew which was then in possession of the East Angles, suddenly removed to a place called Bamfleet; and there the allied band divided; some of them remained, and some of them went beyond the sea. In the same year, therefore, the aforesaid king Alfred sent his fleet into the country of the East Angles, and immediately on their arrival,

* I acknowledge my inability to translate this and many other passages of this obscure author. The events which here follow for the next half page are referred by the Saxon Chronicle to the year 894.

there met them at a place called Stourmouth sixteen ships, which they forthwith ravaged, and slew the captains with the sword. The rest of the pirate crew met them; they ply their oars, their armour shines over the constrained waters, the barbarians obtain the victory. In the same year died Charles the Magnificent king of the Franks, cut off by death before the revolution of one year; after him came his uterine brother who ruled over the western coasts of Gaul. Both were sons of Louis, who had formerly possessed the sole sovereignty: his life had reached its termination during the eclipse of the sun aforesaid. He was son of the great king Charles, whose daughter Aethelwulf king of the English had taken to wife. In the course of that year, a great number of barbarians landed and filled the coasts of the Old Saxons; two battles were fought soon after: the Saxons were the victors, and the Frisians also were present in the contest. In the same year, Charles the Younger succeeded to the sovereignty of all the western parts of Gaul as far as the Tyrrhenian Sea, and, if I may so speak, of the dominions of his grandfather, except the province, of the Lidwiccas [Brittany]. His father was Lodwicus [Louis], brother of the middle Charles whose daughter was married to Aethelwulf king of the English. And both of these were sons of Lodwicus, namely, Lodwicus was son of Charlemagne who was the son of Pepin.

In the same year died the blessed pope Marinus, who also gave freedom to the school of the English, by the appointment of king Alfred, and sent as a present part of the thrice blessed cross of Christ, who is the salvation of the world. In the course of that year, the above-named pestilential crew broke their engagements, and marched in arms against king Alfred. Lastly, after a year, they went to the lower parts of Gaul, and fixed on a place to winter near the river Seine. Meanwhile, the city of London was fortified by king Alfred, whom no civil discord could subdue, either by cunning or by force: all men received him as a saviour, and particularly the Saxons — except the barbarians — and those who were then held prisoners in their hands. Also, after his army was strengthened, Aethelred was appointed leader there by the aforesaid king, to guard the citadel.

A. 887. Now the army which were at that time ravaging the country of Gaul cut their way through the bridge of the citadel of Paris, and devastated the whole country along the Seine, as far as the Marne, and above its vertex, as far as Catsig [Chézy], where they thrice fixed their winter quarters. In the same year also died Charles, king of the Franks, and his cousin Arnulf succeeded to the kingdom, seven years before his uncle's death. The kingdom was then divided into five, and so many kings in the same: but all things are done by the permission of king Arnulf, and they promised to be all under his subjection, because they were not like him, descended from the paternal stock; and he lived after this on the eastern side of the river Rhine. But Rudolph occupied the middle parts of the kingdom, Odo the western parts, and Berengar with Wido held the kingdom of the Lombards from the division of the Jovian mountain*. There they began a civil war; people assailed people; the lands of both were continually disturbed, nor was there any hope of quiet.

* Great St. Bernard's Pass

The same year, in which the barbarians had settled on the bridge of Paris, duke Aethelhelm received no small part of the money paid from the diocese of the English by the king for the people, and went to Rome. In the same year died queen Aethelswith.

A. 888. In the lapse of the same year also, archbishop Aethelred deceased, and Aethelwald, commander in Kent.

A. 889. After one year, abbot Bernhelm carried to Rome the alms for the people, and principally those of the western English and of king Alfred. Then also Guthrum, king of the northern English, yielded his breath to Orcus; he had taken the name of Aethelstan, as he came out of the baptismal laver, from his godfather, king Alfred, and had his seat among the East Angles, since he there also had held the first station.

In the same year, the aforesaid army of barbarians removed from the river Seine to a place called Santlaudah [Saint-Lô], situated between the Bretons and the Franks; but the Bretons met them in arms, and obtained the victory, and followed them to the windings of a certain river, and there not a few of them were drowned in the waters.

A. 891. One year afterwards, the bands of the aforesaid army visited the eastern parts of France; king Arnulf met them; a fight of cavalry took place before the fleets arrived. An army of eastern Franks came up, Saxons and Bavarians; the pagans spread their sails to flee. In the same year, three chosen men of Hibernian race, burning with piety, leave their country: they privately form a boat by sewing ox hides; they put into it provisions for a week; they sail seven days and seven nights, and arrive on the shores of Cornwall: here they left their fleet, which had been guided, not by the strength of their arms, but by the power of Him who rules all things, and set out for the court of king Alfred, who with his senate rejoice in their coming. From thence they proceed to Rome, and, as is customary with teachers of Christ, they essay to go thence to Jerusalem* Their names were, Dubslane, the first; Macbeth, the second; Maelinmun, the third, flourishing in the arts, skilled in letters, and a distinguished master of the Scots. Also in the same year, after Easter a comet appeared, which some think to be an omen of foul times, which have already passed; but it is the most approved theory of philosophers, that they foretell future things, as has been tried in many ways.

A. 893. One year after the barbarians fought against king Arnulf, they go to Boulogne, and there build a fleet, and pass over into England. There they station their fleet in the Limnean port, at a place called Apoldre [Appledore, in the eastern part of Kent], and destroy an ancient castle, because there was but a small band of rustics within, and there they make their winter camp. In the course of this year, a large fleet belonging to Hasten arrives on the banks of the

* I omit this obscure passage rather than run the risk of misleading the reader by an inaccurate translation of it.

river Thames, and found a citadel on the coasts of Kent, at a place called Middleton [Milton]: they encamp there the whole winter; and the number of years that had elapsed from the glorious nativity of our Saviour was nine hundred, all but seven.

After the Easter of that year, the army which had come from Gaul leave their camp, and trace the intricacies of a certain immense wood, which is called Andred, and they extend as far as the Western Angles. Slowly as they go, they ravage the adjoining provinces, Hampshire and Berkshire: these things were told to the heir of Edward, son of king Alfred, who had been exercising himself in the southern parts of England. After this they reach the Western Angles, who meet then with threatening arms and dense array at Farnham: they exult, freed by the arrival of the prince, like sheep under the protection of the shepherd; the tyrant is wounded, and his troops are driven across the river Thames into the northern countries.

Meanwhile, the Danes are held besieged in Thorney Isle. Earl Aethelred, setting out from the city of London, lent his aid to the prince. The barbarians asked peace and a treaty: hostages are given, they promise by oath to leave the kingdom of the aforesaid king; their words and deeds agree together without delay. Lastly, they set out for the country of the East-Angles, formerly governed by the king Saint Edmund, and their ships fly round to them from the Limnean port to Meresige [Mersey], a place in Kent.

In the course of the same year, Hasten breaks away with his band from Bamfleet, and devastates all Mercia, until they arrive at the end of Britain. The army, which was then in the eastern part of the country, supplied them with reinforcements, and the Northumbrian, in the same way. The illustrious duke Aethelhelm, with a squadron of cavalry, and duke Ethelnoth, with an army of Western-Angles, followed behind them, and Athelred, earl of the Mercians, pressed after them with great impetuosity. The youth of both people join battle, and the Angles obtain the victory. These things are said by ancient writers to have been done at Buttington, and the exertions of the Danes appeared futile; they again ratify peace, give hostages, and promise to leave that part of the country. In the same year Danaasuda*, in Bamfleet, was destroyed by the people, and they divide the treasure among them.

After this, Sigferth, the pirate, lands from his fleet in Northumbria, and twice devastates the coast, after which he returns home.

A. 895. When two years were completed, from the time that an immense fleet came from Boulogne to Limnae, a town of the Angles, duke Aethelnoth set out from the western parts of the Angles, and goes from the city of York against the enemy, who devastate no small tracts of land in the kingdom of the Mercians, on the west of Stanford; *i.e.* between the courses of the river Welland and a thick wood, called Kesteven.

* This must be the fortress which Hasten's men built in Bamfleet.

A. 896. In the course of one year also, died Guthred, king of the Northumbrians, on the birthday of Christ's apostle, St. Bartholomew, whose body is buried at York, in the high church.

A. 900. Meanwhile, after four years, from the time that the above-named king died, there was a great discord among the English, because the foul bands of the Danes still remained throughout Northumberland. Lastly, in the same year, king Alfred departed out of this world, that immoveable pillar of the Western Saxons, that man full of justice, bold in arms, learned in speech, and, above all other things, imbued with the divine instructions. For he had translated into his own language, out of Latin, unnumbered volumes, of so varied a nature, and so excellently, that the sorrowful book of Boethius seemed, not only to the learned, but even to those who heard it read, as it were, brought to life again. The monarch died on the seventh day before the solemnity of All Saints, and his body rests in peace in the city of Winton. Pray, O reader, to Christ our Redeemer, that he will save his soul!

Chap. IV — Of the reign of king Edward, and of his wars.

A. 901. The successor to the throne was Edward, son of the above-named king. He was elected by the nobles, and crowned with the royal crown on Whitsunday, one hundred years having elapsed since his great grandfather, Egbert.

A. 902. After two years was the battle of Holme*. Five days after the festival of the blessed mother, they lock together their shields, brandish their swords, and vibrate their lances in both hands. There fell duke Siwulf and Sigehelm, and almost all the Kentish nobility: and Eohric, king of the barbarians, there descended to Orcus: two princes of the English, in the flower of their youth, there yield up the breath of life, and explore the foreign regions, under the waves of Acheron, and numbers of full-grown men fall on both sides. The barbarians remain victors, and triumph on the field of battle.

A. 905. At length, after three years, the number of years completed since the beginning of the world, was six thousand and one hundred.

A. 908. After three years archbishop Plegmund inaugurated, in the city of Winchester, a lofty tower, which had been recently founded in honour of Mary, the mother of God. The pontiff aforesaid, in the course of the same year, carried to Rome the alms for the people, and for king Edward.

A. 909, After one year the barbarians break their compact with king Edward, and with earl Aethelred, who then ruled the provinces of Northumberland and Mercia. The lands of the Mercians are laid waste on all sides by the hosts aforesaid, as far as the streams of the Avon, where begins the frontier of the West Saxons and the Mercians. Thence they pass over the River Severn into the

* The particulars recorded in this passage, concerning the battle of Holme, are ascribed, by Florence of Worcester and the Saxon Chronicle, to another battle, fought three years later. This caused Petrie to Suppose, that the paragraph in question had slipped out of its real place.

western regions, and gained by their devastations no little booty. But when they had withdrawn homewards, rejoicing in their rich spoils, they passed over a bridge on the eastern side of the River Severn, at a place commonly called Cantabridge [Cambridge, Gloucestershire], the troops of the Mercians and West Saxons met them: a battle ensued, and in the plain of Wodnesfield the English obtained the victory: the Danish army fled, overwhelmed by the darts of their enemies: these things are said to have been done on the fifth day of August; and their three kings fell there in that turmoil or battle, namely, Halfdan, Eowils, and Ingwaer: they lost their sovereignty, and descended to the court of the infernal king, and their elders and nobles with them.

A. 910. After one year, Aelthered, who survived of the Mercians, departed this life, and was buried peacefully in the city of Gloucester.

A. 912. After two years, died Athulf in Northumbria; he was at that time commander of the town called Bebbanburgh [Bamburgh].

A. 913. After a year, a fleet entered the mouth of the River Severn, but no severe battle was fought there that year. Lastly, the greater part of that army go to Ireland, formerly called Bretannis by the great Julius Cesar.

A. 914. After one year, the day of Christ's nativity fell on a Sunday; and so great was the tranquillity of that winter, that no one can remember anything like it either before or since.

A. 917. After three years, Aethelflaed the king's sister departed this life, and her body lies buried at Gloucester.

A. 926. Also, in the ninth year died Edward, king of the English. This was the end; his name and his pertinacity here ceased.

Chap. V — Of the reign of king Aethelstan, his wars and deeds.

A. 926. The year in which the stout king Athelstan gained the crown of the kingdom, was the nine hundred and twenty-sixth from the glorious incarnation of our Saviour.

A. 939. Therefore, after thirteen years, a fierce battle was fought against the barbarians at Brunandune [Brumby], wherefore that fight is called great even to the present day: then the barbarian tribes are defeated and domineer no longer; they are driven beyond the ocean: the Scots and Picts also bow the neck; the lands of Britain are consolidated together, on all sides is peace, and plenty of all things, nor ever did a fleet again come to land except in friendship with the English.

A. 941. Two years afterwards the venerated king Aethelstan died.

Chap. VI — Of the reign of king Edmund.

After him Edmund succeeded to the neglected kingdom.

A. 948. After seven years, therefore, bishop Wulfstan and the duke of the Mercians expelled certain deserters, namely, Ragnald and Olaf from the city of York, and gave them into the king's hand. In the same year died also queen Aelfgifu, wife of king Edmund, and afterwards was canonised. In her tomb, with God's assistance, even to the present day, miracles are performed in the monastery called Shaftesbury. In the same period also died king Edmund on the solemnity of Augustine the Less, who also was the apostle of the English: and he held the kingdom six years and a half.

Chap. VII — Of the reign of king Eadred.

Edmund's successor was Eadred his brother, to whom all the Northumbrians became subject; and the Scots also give oaths of allegiance and immutable fidelity. Not long after these things he also departed in peace, on the birthday of the blessed pope and martyr Clement. He had held the kingdom nine years and half.

Chap. VIII — Of king Eadwig.

His successor to the throne was Eadwig, who, on account of his great personal beauty, was called Pankalus by the people. He held the sovereignty four years, and was much beloved.

Chap. IX — Of the reign of king Edgar.

A. 959. After this, Edgar was crowned, and he was an admirable king*

Moreover, from the nativity of our Lord and Saviour was then completed the number of 973 years*

HERE HAPPILY ENDS THE FOURTH BOOK OF

FABIUS ETHELWERD,

QUESTOR AND PATRICIAN.

* Here follow two sets of Latin verses, of a most obscure and ungrammatical character, and altogether untranslatable.