

# The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

## Part 3: A.D. 920 - 1014

### Online Medieval and Classical Library Release #17



A.D. 920. This year, before midsummer, went King Edward to Maldon; and repaired and fortified the town, ere he departed thence. And the same year went Earl Thurkytel over sea to Frankland with the men who would adhere to him, under the protection and assistance of King Edward. This year Ethelfleda got into her power, with God's assistance, in the early part of the year, without loss, the town of Leicester; and the greater part of the army that belonged thereto submitted to her. And the Yorkists had also promised and confirmed, some by agreement and some with oaths, that they would be in her interest. But very soon after they had done this, she departed, twelve nights before midsummer, at Tamworth, the eighth year that she was holding the government of the Mercians with right dominion; and her body lieth at Glocester, in the east porch of St. Peter's church. This year also was the daughter of Ethered, lord of the Mercians, deprived of all authority over the Mercians, and led into Wessex, three weeks before midwinter. Her name was Healfwina.

A.D. 921. This year, before Easter, King Edward ordered his men to go to the town of Towcester, and to rebuild it. Then again, after that, in the same year, during the gang-days, he ordered the town of Wigmore to be repaired. The same summer, betwixt Lammas and midsummer, the army broke their parole from Northampton and from Leicester; and went thence northward to Towcester, and fought against the town all day, and thought that they should break into it; but the people that were therein defended it, till more aid came to them; and the enemy then abandoned the town, and went away. Then again, very soon after this, they went out at night for plunder, and came upon men unaware, and seized not a little, both in men and cattle, betwixt Burnham-wood and Aylesbury. At the same time went the army from Huntington and East-Anglia, and constructed that work at Ternsford; which they inhabited and fortified; and abandoned the other at Huntingdon; and thought that they should thence oft with war and contention recover a good deal of this land. Thence they advanced till they came to Bedford; where the men who were within came out against them, and fought with them, and put them to flight, and slew a good number of them. Then again, after this, a great army yet collected itself from East-Anglia and from Mercia, and went to the town of Wigmore; which they besieged without, and fought against long in the day; and took the cattle about it; but the men defended the town, who were within; and the enemy left the town, and went away. After this, the same summer, a large force collected itself in King Edward's dominions, from the nighest towns that could go thither, and went to Temsford; and they beset the town, and fought thereon; until they broke into it, and slew the king, and Earl Toglos, and Earl Mann his son, and his brother, and all them that were therein, and who were resolved to defend it; and they took the others, and all that was therein. After this, a great force collected soon in harvest, from Kent, from Surrey, from Essex, and everywhere from the nighest towns; and went to Colchester, and beset the town, and fought thereon till they took it, and slew all the people, and seized all that was therein; except those men who escaped therefrom over the wall. After this again, this same harvest, a great army collected itself from East-Anglia, both of the land- forces and of the pirates, which they had enticed to their assistance, and thought that they should wreak their vengeance. They went to Maldon, and beset the town, and fought thereon, until more aid came to the townsmen from without to help. The enemy then abandoned the town, and went from it. And the men went after, out of the town, and also those that came from without to their aid; and put the army to flight, and slew many hundreds of them, both of the pirates and of the others. Soon after this, the same harvest, went King Edward with the West-Saxon army to Passham; and sat there the while that men fortified the town of Towcester with a stone wall. And there returned to him Earl Thurferth, and the captains, and all the army that belonged to Northampton northward to the Welland, and sought him for their lord and protector. When this division of the army went home, then went another out, and marched to the town of Huntingdon; and repaired and renewed it, where it was broken down before, by command of King Edward. And all the people of the country that were left submitted to King Edward, and sought his peace and protection. After this, the same year, before Martinmas, went King Edward with the West-Saxon army to Colchester; and repaired and renewed the town, where it was broken down before. And much people turned to him. both in East- Anglia and in Essex, that were before under the power of the Danes. And all the army in East-Anglia swore union with him; that they would all that he would, and would protect all that he protected, either by sea or land. And the army that belonged to Cambridge chose him separately for their lord and protector, and confirmed the same with oaths, as he had advised. This year King Edward repaired the town of Gladmouth; and the same year King Sihtric slew Neil his brother.

A.D. 922. This year, betwixt gang-days and midsummer, went King Edward with his army to Stamford, and ordered the town to be fortified on the south side of the river. And all the people that belonged to the northern town submitted to him, and sought him for their lord. It was whilst he was tarrying there, that Ethelfleda his sister died at Tamworth, twelve nights before midsummer. Then rode he to the borough of Tamworth; and all the population in Mercia turned to him, who before were subject to Ethelfleda. And the kings in North-Wales, Howel, and Cledauc, and Jothwel, and all the people of North-Wales, sought him for their lord. Then went he thence to Nottingham, and secured that borough, and ordered it to be repaired, and manned both with English and with Danes. And all the population turned to him, that was settled in Mercia, both Danish and English.

A.D. 923. This year went King Edward with an army, late in ther harvest, to Thelwall; and ordered the borough to be repaired, and inhabited, and manned. And he ordered another army also from the population of Mercia, the while he sat there to go to Manchester in Northumbria, to repair and to man it. This year died Archbishop Plegmund; and King Reynold won York.

A.D. 924. This year, before midsummer, went King Edward with an army to Nottingham; and ordered the town to be repaired on the south side of the river, opposite the other, and the bridge over the Trent betwixt the two towns. Thence he went to Bakewell in Peakland; and ordered a fort to be built as near as possible to it, and manned. And the King of Scotland, with all his people, chose him as father and lord; as did Reynold, and the son of Eadulf, and all that dwell in Northumbria, both English and Danish, both Northmen and others; also the king of the Strathclydwallians, and all his people.

((A.D. 924. This year Edward was chosen for father and for lord by the king of the Scots, and by the Scots, and King Reginald, and by all the North-humbrians, and also the king of the Strath-clyde Britons, and by all the Strath-clyde Britons.))

((A.D. 924. This year King Edward died among the Mercians at Farndon; and very shortly, about sixteen days after this, Elward his son died at Oxford; and their bodies lie at Winchester. And Athelstan was chosen king by the Mercians, and consecrated at Kingston. And he gave his sister to Ofsae (Otho), son of the king of the Old-Saxons.))

A.D. 925. This year died King Edward at Farndon in Mercia; and Elward his son died very soon after this, in Oxford. Their bodies lie at Winchester. And Athelstan was chosen king in Mercia, and consecrated at Kingston. He gave his sister to Otho, son of the king of the Old-Saxons. St. Dunstan was now born; and Wulfhelm took to the archbishopric in Canterbury. This year King Athelstan and Sihtric king of the Northumbrians came together at Tamworth, the sixth day before the calends of February, and Athelstan gave away his sister to him.

((A.D. 925. This year Bishop Wulfhelm was consecrated. And that same year King Edward died.))

A.D. 926. This year appeared fiery lights in the northern part of the firmament; and Sihtric departed; and King Athelstan took to the kingdom of Northumbria, and governed all the kings that were in this island: -- First, Howel, King of West-Wales; and Constantine, King of the Scots; and Owen, King of Monmouth; and Aldred, the son of Eadulf, of Bamburgh. And with covenants and oaths they ratified their agreement in the place called Emmet, on the fourth day before the ides of July; and renounced all idolatry, and afterwards returned in peace.

A.D. 927. This year King Athelstan expelled King Guthfrith; and Archbishop Wulfhelm went to Rome.

A.D. 928. William took to Normandy, and held it fifteen years.

((A.D. 931. This year died Frithstan, Bishop of Winchester, and Brinstan was blessed in his place.))

A.D. 932. This year Burnstan was invested Bishop of Winchester on the fourth day before the calends of June; and he held the bishopric two years and a half.

A.D. 933. This year died Bishop Frithestan; and Edwin the atheling was drowned in the sea.

A.D. 934. This year went King Athelstan into Scotland, both with a land-force and a naval armament, and laid waste a great part of it; and Bishop Burnstan died at Winchester at the feast of All Saints.

A.D. 935. This year Bishop Elfheah took to the bishopric of Winchester.

((A.D. 937. This year King Athelstan and Edmund his brother led a force to Brumby, and there fought against Anlaf; and, Christ helping, had the victory: and they there slew five kings and seven earls.))

A.D. 938. Here

 Athelstan king,

 of earls the lord,

 rewarder of heroes,

 and his brother eke,

 Edmund atheling,

 elder of ancient race,

 slew in the fight,

 with the edge of their swords,

 the foe at Brumby!

 The sons of Edward

 their board-walls clove,

 and hewed their banners,

 with the wrecks of their hammers.

 So were they taught

 by kindred zeal,

 that they at camp oft

 'gainst any robber

 their land should defend,

 their hoards and homes.

 Pursuing fell

 the Scottish clans;

 the men of the fleet

 in numbers fell;

 'midst the din of the field

 the warrior swate.

 Since the sun was up

 in morning-tide,

 gigantic light!

 glad over grounds,

 God's candle bright,

 eternal Lord! --

 'till the noble creature

 sat in the western main:

 there lay many

 of the Northern heroes

 under a shower of arrows,

 shot over shields;

 and Scotland's boast,

 a Scythian race,

 the mighty seed of Mars!

 With chosen troops,

 throughout the day,

 the West-Saxons fierce

 press'd on the loathed bands;

 hew'd down the fugitives,

 and scatter'd the rear,

 with strong mill-sharpen'd blades,

 The Mercians too

 the hard hand-play

 spared not to any

 of those that with Anlaf

 over the briny deep

 in the ship's bosom

 sought this land

 for the hardy fight.

 Five kings lay

 on the field of battle,

 in bloom of youth,

 pierced with swords.

 So seven eke

 of the earls of Anlaf;

 and of the ship's-crew

 unnumber'd crowds.

 There was dispersed

 the little band

 of hardy Scots,

 the dread of northern hordes;

 urged to the noisy deep

 by unrelenting fate!

 The king of the fleet

 with his slender craft

 escaped with his life

 on the felon flood; --

 and so too Constantine,

 the valiant chief,

 returned to the north

 in hasty flight.

 The hoary Hildrinc

 cared not to boast

 among his kindred.

 Here was his remnant

 of relations and friends

 slain with the sword

 in the crowded fight.

 His son too he left

 on the field of battle,

 mangled with wounds,

 young at the fight.

 The fair-hair'd youth

 had no reason to boast

 of the slaughtering strife.

 Nor old Inwood

 and Anlaf the more

 with the wrecks of their army

 could laugh and say,

 that they on the field

 of stern command

 better workmen were,

 in the conflict of banners,

 the clash of spears,

 the meeting of heroes,

 and the rustling of weapons,

 which they on the field

 of slaughter played

 with the sons of Edward.

 The northmen sail'd

 in their nailed ships,

 a dreary remnant,

 on the roaring sea;

 over deep water

 Dublin they sought,

 and Ireland's shores,

 in great disgrace.

 Such then the brothers

 both together

 king and atheling,

 sought their country,

 West-Saxon land,

 in right triumphant.

 They left behind them

 raw to devour,

 the sallow kite,

 the swarthy raven

 with horny nib,

 and the hoarse vultur,

 with the eagle swift

 to consume his prey;

 the greedy gos-hawk,

 and that grey beast

 the wolf of the weald.

 No slaughter yet

 was greater made

 e'er in this island,

 of people slain,

 before this same,

 with the edge of the sword;

 as the books inform us

 of the old historians;

 since hither came

 from the eastern shores

 the Angles and Saxons,

 over the broad sea,

 and Britain sought, --

 fierce battle-smiths,

 o'ercame the Welsh,

 most valiant earls,

 and gained the land.

A.D. 941. This year King Athelstan died in Glocester, on the

sixth day before the calends of November, about forty-one

winters, bating one night, from the time when King Alfred died.

And Edmund Atheling took to the kingdom. He was then eighteen

years old. King Athelstan reigned fourteen years and ten weeks.

This year the Northumbrians abandoned their allegiance, and chose

Anlaf of Ireland for their king.

((A.D. 941. This year King Edmund received King Anlaf at

baptism; and that same year, a good long space after, he received

King Reginald at the bishop's hands.))

A.D. 942. Here

 Edmund king,

 of Angles lord,

 protector of friends,

 author and framer

 of direful deeds.

 o'erran with speed

 the Mercian land.

 whete'er the course

 of Whitwell-spring,

 or Humber deep,

 The broad brim-stream,

 divides five towns.

 Leicester and Lincoln.

 Nottingham and Stamford,

 and Derby eke.

 In thraldom long

 to Norman Danes

 they bowed through need,

 and dragged the chains

 of heathen men;

 till, to his glory,

 great Edward's heir,

 Edmund the king,

 refuge of warriors,

 their fetters broke.

A.D. 943. This year Anlaf stormed Tamworth; and much slaughter

was made on either hand; but the Danes had the victory, and led

away with them much plunder. There was Wulfrun taken, in the

spoiling of the town. This year King Edmund beset King Anlaf and

Archbishop Wulfstan in Leicester; and he might have conquered

them, were it not that they burst out of the town in the night.

After this Anlaf obtained the friendship of King Edmund, and King

Edmund then received King Anlaf in baptism; and he made him royal

presents. And the same year, after some interval, he received

King Reynold at episcopal hands. This year also died King Anlaf.

A.D. 944. This year King Edmund reduced all the land of the

Northumbrians to his dominion, and expelled two kings, Anlaf the

son of Sihtric, and Reynold the son of Guthferth.

A.D. 945. This year King Edmund overran all Cumberland; and let

it all to Malcolm king of the Scots, on the condition that he

became his ally, both by sea and land.

A.D. 946. This year King Edmund died, on St. Augustine's mass

day. That was widely known, how he ended his days: -- that Leof

stabbed him at Pucklechurch. And Ethelfleda of Damerham,

daughter of Alderman Elgar, was then his queen. And he reigned

six years and a half: and then succeeded to the kingdom Edred

Atheling his brother, who soon after reduced all the land of the

Northumbrians to his dominion; and the Scots gave him oaths, that

they would do all that he desired.

A.D. 947. This year came King Edred to Tadden's-cliff; and there

Archbishop Wulfstan and all the council of the Northumbrians

bound themselves to an allegiance with the king. And within a

little space they abandoned all, both allegiance and oaths.

A.D. 948. This year King Edred overran all Northumberland;

because they had taken Eric for their king; and in the pursuit of

plunder was that large minster at Rippon set on fire, which St.

Wilferth built. As the king returned homeward, he overtook the

enemy at York; but his main army was behind at Chesterford.

There was great slaughter made; and the king was so wroth, that

he would fain return with his force, and lay waste the land

withal; but when the council of the Northumbrians understood

that, they then abandoned Eric, and compromised the deed with

King Edred.

A.D. 949. This year came Anlaf Curran to the land of the

Northumbrians.

A.D. 951. This year died Elfeah, Bishop of Winchester, on St.

Gregory's mass day.

A.D. 952. This year the Northumbrians expelled King Anlaf, and

received Eric the son of Harold. This year also King Edred

ordered Archbishop Wulfstan to be brought into prison at

Jedburgh; because he was oft bewrayed before the king: and the

same year the king ordered a great slaughter to be made in the

town of Thetford, in revenge of the abbot, whom they had formerly

slain.

A.D. 954. This year the Northumbrians expelled Eric; and King

Edred took to the government of the Northumbrians. This year

also Archbishop Wulfstan received a bishopric again at

Dorchester.

A.D. 955. This year died King Edred, on St. Clement's mass day,

at Frome.(41) He reigned nine years and a half; and he rests in

the old minster. Then succeeded Edwy, the son of King Edmund, to

the government of the West-Saxons; and Edgar Atheling, his

brother, succeeded to the government of the Mercians. They were

the sons of King Edmund and of St. Elfgiva.

((A.D. 955. And Edwy succeeded to the kingdom of the West-

Saxons, and Edgar his brother succeeded to the kingdom of the

Mercians: and they were the sons of King Edmund and of S.

Elfgiva.))

A.D. 956. This year died Wulfstan, Archbishop of York, on the

seventeenth day before the calends of January; and he was buried

at Oundle; and in the same year was Abbot Dunstan driven out of

this land over sea.

A.D. 958. This year Archbishop Oda separated King Edwy and

Elfgiva; because they were too nearly related.

A.D. 959. This year died King Edwy, on the calends of October;

and Edgar his brother took to the government of the West-Saxons,

Mercians, and Northumbrians. He was then sixteen years old. It

was in this year he sent after St. Dunstan, and gave him the

bishopric of Worcester; and afterwards the bishopric of London.

 In his days

 it prosper'd well;

 and God him gave,

 that he dwelt in peace

 the while that he lived.

 Whate'er he did,

 whate'er he plan'd,

 he earn'd his thrift.

 He also rear'd

 God's glory wide,

 and God's law lov'd,

 with peace to man,

 above the kings

 that went before

 in man's remembrance.

 God so him sped,

 that kings and earls

 to all his claims

 submissive bow'd;

 and to his will

 without a blow

 he wielded all

 as pleased himself.

 Esteem'd he was

 both far and wide

 in distant lands;

 because he prized

 the name of God,

 and God's law traced,

 God's glory rear'd,

 both far and wide,

 on every side.

 Wisely he sought

 in council oft

 his people's good,

 before his God,

 before the world.

 One misdeed he did,

 too much however,

 that foreign tastes

 he loved too much;

 and heathen modes

 into this land

 he brought too fast;

 outlandish men

 hither enticed;

 and to this earth

 attracted crowds

 of vicious men.

 But God him grant,

 that his good deeds

 be weightier far

 than his misdeeds,

 to his soul's redemption

 on the judgment-day.

A.D. 961. This year departed Odo, the good archbishop, and St.

Dunstan took to the archbishopric. This year also died Elfgar, a

relative of the king, in Devonshire; and his body lies at Wilton:

and King Sifferth killed himself; and his body lies at Wimborn.

This year there was a very great pestilence; when the great fever

was in London; and St. Paul's minster was consumed with fire, and

in the same year was afterwards restored. In this year Athelmod.

the masspriest, went to Rome, and there died on the eighteenth

before the calends of September.

A.D. 963. This year died Wulfstan, the deacon, on Childermass-

day; (42) and afterwards died Gyric, the mass-priest. In the

same year took Abbot Athelwold to the bishopric of Winchester;

and he was consecrated on the vigil of St. Andrew, which happened

on a Sunday. On the second year after he was consecrated, he

made many minsters; and drove out the clerks (43) from the

bishopric, because they would hold no rule, and set monks

therein. He made there two abbacies; one of monks, another of

nuns. That was all within Winchester. Then came he afterwards

to King Edgar, and requested that he would give him all the

minsters that heathen men had before destroyed; for that he would

renew them. This the king cheerfully granted; and the bishop

came then first to Ely, where St. Etheldritha lies, and ordered

the minster to be repaired; which he gave to a monk of his, whose

name was Britnoth, whom he consecrated abbot: and there he set

monks to serve God, where formerly were nuns. He then bought

many villages of the king, and made it very rich. Afterwards

came Bishop Athelwold to the minster called Medhamsted, which was

formerly ruined by heathen folk; but he found there nothing but

old walls, and wild woods. In the old walls at length he found

hid writings which Abbot Hedda had formerly written; -- how King

Wulfhere and Ethelred his brother had wrought it, and how they

freed it against king and against bishop, and against all worldly

service; and how Pope Agatho confirmed it with his writ, as also

Archbishop Deusdedit. He then ordered the minster to be rebuilt;

and set there an abbot, who was called Aldulf; and made monks,

where before was nothing. He then came to the king, and let him

look at the writings which before were found; and the king then

answered and said: "I Edgar grant and give to-day, before God and

before Archbishop Dunstan, freedom to St. Peter's minster at

Medhamsted, from king and from bishop; and all the thorps that

thereto lie; that is, Eastfield, and Dodthorp, and Eye, and

Paston. And so I free it, that no bishop have any jurisdiction

there, but the abbot of the minster alone. And I give the town

called Oundle, with all that thereto lieth, called Eyot-hundred,

with market and toll; so freely, that neither king, nor bishop,

nor earl, nor sheriff, have there any jurisdiction; nor any man

but the abbot alone, and whom he may set thereto. And I give to

Christ and St. Peter, and that too with the advice of Bishop

Athelwold, these lands; -- that is, Barrow, Warmington, Ashton,

Kettering, Castor, Eylesworth, Walton, Witherington, Eye, Thorp,

and a minster at Stamford. These lands and al the others that

belong to the minster I bequeath clear; that is, with sack and

sock, toll and team, and infangthief; these privileges and all

others bequeath I clear to Christ and St. Peter. And I give the

two parts of Whittlesey-mere, with waters and with wears and

fens; and so through Meerlade along to the water that is called

Nen; and so eastward to Kingsdelf. And I will that there be a

market in the town itself, and that no other be betwixt Stamford

and Huntingdon. And I will that thus be given the toll; --

first, from Whittlesey-mere to the king's toll of Norman-cross

hundred; then backward again from Whittlesey-mere through

Meerlade along to the Nen, and as that river runs to Crowland;

and from Crowland to Must, and from Must to Kingsdelf and to

Whittlesey-mere. And I will that all the freedom, and all the

privileges, that my predecessors gave, should remain; and I write

and confirm this with the rood-token of Christ." (+) -- Then

answered Dunstan, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and said: "I

grant, that all the things that here are given and spoken, and

all the things that thy predecessors and mine have given, shall

remain firm; and whosoever breaketh it, then give I him God's

curse, and that of all saints, and of all hooded heads, and mine,

unless he come to repentance. And I give expressly to St. Peter

my mass-hackle, and my stole, and my reef, to serve Christ." "I

Oswald, Archbishop of York, confirm all these words through the

holy rood on which Christ was crucified." (+) "I Bishop

Athelwold bless all that maintain this, and I excommunicate all

that break it, unless they come to repentance." -- Here was

Bishop Ellstan, Bishop Athulf, and Abbot Eskwy, and Abbot Osgar,

and Abbot Ethelgar, and Alderman Elfere; .Alderman Ethelwin,

Britnoth and Oslac aldermen, and many other rich men; and all

confirmed it and subscribed it with the cross of Christ. (+)

This was done in the year after our Lord's Nativity 972, the

sixteenth year of this king. Then bought the Abbot Aldulf lands

rich and many, and much endowed the minster withal; and was there

until Oswald, Archbishop of York, was dead; and then he was

chosen to be archbishop. Soon after another abbot was chosen of

the same monastery, whose name was Kenulf, who was afterwards

Bishop of Winchester. He first made the wall about the minster,

and gave it then the name of Peterborough, which before was

Medhamsted. He was there till he was appointed Bishop of

Winchester, when another abbot was chosen of the same monastery,

whose name was Elfsy, who continued abbot fifty winters

afterwards. It was he who took up St. Kyneburga and St.

Kyneswitha, that lay at Castor, and St. Tibba, that lay at

Ryhall; and brought them to Peterborough, and offered them all to

St. Peter in one day, and preserved them all the while he was

there.

((A.D. 963. This year, by King Edgar, St. Ethelwold was chosen

to the bishoprick at Winchester. And the Archbishop of

Canterbury, St. Dunstan, consecrated him bishop on the first

Sunday of Advent; that was on the third before the kalends of

December.))

A.D. 964. This year drove King Edgar the priests of Winchester

out of the old minster, and also out of the new minster; and from

Chertsey; and from Milton; and replaced them with monks. And he

appointed Ethelgar abbot to the new minster, and Ordbert to

Chertsey, and Cyneward to Milton.

((A.D. 964. This year were the canons driven out of the Old-

minster by King Edgar, and also from the New-minster, and from

Chertsey and from Milton; and he appointed thereto monks and

abbots: to the New-minster Ethelgar, to Chertsey Ordbert, to

Milton Cyneward.))

A.D. 965. This year King Edgar took Elfrida for his queen, who

was daughter of Alderman Ordgar.

A.D. 966. This year Thored, the son of Gunner, plundered

Westmorland; and the same year Oslac took to the aldermanship.

A.D. 969. This year King Edgar ordered all Thanet-land to be

plundered.

A.D. 970. This year died Archbishop Oskytel; who was first

consecrated diocesan bishop at Dorchester, and afterwards it was

by the consent of King Edred and all his council that he was

consecrated Archbishop of York. He was bishop two and twenty

winters; and he died on Alhallow-mas night, ten nights before

Martinmas, at Thame. Abbot Thurkytel, his relative, carried the

bishop's body to Bedford, because he was the abbot there at that

time.

A.D. 971. This year died Edmund Atheling, and his body lies at

Rumsey.

((A.D. 972. This year Edgar the etheling was consecrated king at

Bath, on Pentecost's mass-day, on the fifth before the ides of

May, the thirteenth year since he had obtained the kingdom; and

he was then one less than thirty years of age. And soon after

that, the king led all his ship-forces to Chester; and there came

to meet him six kings, and they all plighted their troth to him,

that they would be his fellow-workers by sea and by land.))

A.D. 973. Here was Edgar,

 of Angles lord,

 with courtly pomp

 hallow'd to king

 at Akemancester,

 the ancient city;

 whose modern sons,

 dwelling therein,

 have named her BATH.

 Much bliss was there

 by all enjoyed

 on that happy day,

 named Pentecost

 by men below.

 A crowd of priests,

 a throng of monks,

 I understand,

 in counsel sage,

 were gather'd there.

 Then were agone

 ten hundred winters

 of number'd years

 from the birth of Christ,

 the lofty king,

 guardian of light,

 save that thereto

 there yet was left

 of winter-tale,

 as writings say,

 seven and twenty.

 So near had run

 of the lord of triumphs

 a thousand years,

 when this was done.

 Nine and twenty

 hard winters there

 of irksome deeds

 had Edmund's son

 seen in the world,

 when this took place,

 and on the thirtieth

 was hallow'd king. (43)

Soon after this the king led all his marine force to Chester; and

there came to meet him six kings; and they all covenanted with

him, that they would be his allies by sea and by land.

A.D. 975. Here ended

 his earthly dreams

 Edgar, of Angles king;

 chose him other light,

 serene and lovely,

 spurning this frail abode,

 a life that mortals

 here call lean

 he quitted with disdain.

 July the month,

 by all agreed

 in this our land,

 whoever were

 in chronic lore

 correctly taught;

 the day the eighth,

 when Edgar young,

 rewarder of heroes,

 his life -- his throne -- resigned.

 Edward his son,

 unwaxen child,

 of earls the prince,

 succeeded then

 to England's throne.

 Of royal race

 ten nights before

 departed hence

 Cyneward the good --

 prelate of manners mild.

 Well known to me

 in Mercia then,

 how low on earth

 God's glory fell

 on every side:

 chaced from the land,

 his servants fled, --

 their wisdom scorned;

 much grief to him

 whose bosom glow'd

 with fervent love

 of great Creation's Lord!

 Neglected then

 the God of wonders,

 victor of victors,

 monarch of heaven, --

 his laws by man transgressed!

 Then too was driv'n

 Oslac beloved

 an exile far

 from his native land

 over the rolling waves, --

 over the ganet-bath,

 over the water-throng,

 the abode of the whale, --

 fair-hair'd hero,

 wise and eloquent,

 of home bereft!

 Then too was seen,

 high in the heavens,

 the star on his station,

 that far and wide

 wise men call --

 lovers of truth

 and heav'nly lore --

 "cometa" by name.

 Widely was spread

 God's vengeance then

 throughout the land,

 and famine scour'd the hills.

 May heaven's guardian,

 the glory of angels,

 avert these ills,

 and give us bliss again;

 that bliss to all

 abundance yields

 from earth's choice fruits,

 throughout this happy isle. (45)

((A.D. 975. The eighth before the ides of July.

 Here Edgar died,

 ruler of Angles,

 West-Saxons' joy,

 and Mercians' protector.

 Known was it widely

 throughout many nations.

 "Thaet" offspring of Edmund,

 o'er the ganet's-bath,

 honoured far,

 Kings him widely

 bowed to the king,

 as was his due by kind.

 No fleet was so daring,

 nor army so strong,

 that 'mid the English nation

 took from him aught,

 the while that the noble king

 ruled on his throne.

And this year Edward, Edgar's son, succeeded to the kingdom; and

then soon, in the same year, during harvest, appeared "cometa"

the star; and then came in the following year a very great

famine, and very manifold commotions among the English people.

 In his days,

 for his youth,

 God's gainsayers

 God's law broke;

 Eldfere, ealdorman,

 and others many;

 and rule monastic quashed,

 and minsters dissolved,

 and monks drove out,

 and God's servants put down,

 whom Edgar, king, ordered erewhile

 the holy bishop

 Ethelwold to stablish;

 and widows they plundered,

 many times and oft:

 and many unrighteousnesses,

 and evil unjust-deeds

 arose up afterwards:

 and ever after that

 it greatly grew in evil.

And at that rime, also, was Oslac the great earl banished from

England.))

A.D. 976. This year was the great famine in England.

A.D. 977. This year was that great council at Kirtlington, (46)

after Easter; and there died Bishop Sideman a sudden death, on

the eleventh day before the calends of May. He was Bishop of

Devonshire; and he wished that his resting-place should be at

Crediton, his episcopal residence; but King Edward and Archbishop

Dunstan ordered men to carry him to St. Mary's minster that is at

Abingdon. And they did so; and he is moreover honourably buried

on the north side in St. Paul's porch.

A.D. 978. This year all the oldest counsellors of England fell at

Calne from an upper floor; but the holy Archbishop Dunstan stood

alone upon a beam. Some were dreadfully bruised: and some did

not escape with life. This year was King Edward slain, at

eventide, at Corfe-gate, on the fifteenth day before the calends

of April. And he was buried at Wareham without any royal honour.

No worse deed than this was ever done by the English nation since

they first sought the land of Britain. Men murdered him but God

has magnified him. He was in life an earthly king -- he is now

after death a heavenly saint. Him would not his earthly

relatives avenge -- but his heavenly father has avenged him

amply. The earthly homicides would wipe out his memory from the

earth -- but the avenger above has spread his memory abroad in

heaven and in earth. Those, Who would not before bow to his

living body, now bow on their knees to His dead bones. Now we

may conclude, that the wisdom of men, and their meditations, and

their counsels, are as nought against the appointment of God. In

this same year succeeded Ethelred Etheling, his brother, to the

government; and he was afterwards very readily, and with great

joy to the counsellors of England, consecrated king at Kingston.

In the same year also died Alfwold, who was Bishop of

Dorsetshire, and whose body lieth in the minster at Sherborn.

A.D. 979. In this year was Ethelred consecrated king, on the

Sunday fortnight after Easter, at Kingston. And there were at

his consecration two archbishops, and ten diocesan bishops. This

same year was seen a bloody welkin oft-times in the likeness of

fire; and that was most apparent at midnight, and so in misty

beams was shown; but when it began to dawn, then it glided away.

((A.D. 979. This year was King Edward slain at even-tide, at

Corfe-gate, on the fifteenth before the kalends of April, and

then was he buried at Wareham, without any kind of kingly

honours.

 There has not been 'mid Angles

 a worse deed done

 than this was,

 since they first

 Britain-land sought.

 Men him murdered,

 but God him glorified.

 He was in life

 an earthly king;

 he is now after death

 a heavenly saint.

 Him would not his earthly

 kinsmen avenge,

 but him hath his heavenly Father

 greatly avenged.

 The earthly murderers

 would his memory

 on earth blot out,

 but the lofty Avenger

 hath his memory

 in the heavens

 and on earth wide-spread.

 They who would not erewhile

 to his living

 body bow down,

 they now humbly

 on knees bend

 to his dead bones.

 Now we may understand

 that men's wisdom

 and their devices,

 and their councils,

 are like nought

 'gainst God's resolves.

This year Ethelred succeeded to the kingdom; and he was very

quickly after that, with much joy of the English witan,

consecrated king at Kingston.))

A.D. 980. In this year was Ethelgar consecrated bishop, on the

sixth day before the nones of May, to the bishopric of Selsey;

and in the same year was Southampton plundered by a pirate-army,

and most of the population slain or imprisoned. And the same

year was the Isle of Thanet overrun, and the county of Chester

was plundered by the pirate-army of the North. In this year

Alderman Alfere fetched the body of the holy King Edward at

Wareham, and carried him with great solemnity to Shaftsbury.

A.D. 981. In this year was St. Petroc's-stow plundered; and in

the same year was much harm done everywhere by the sea-coast,

both upon Devonshire and Wales. And in the same year died

Elfstan, Bishop of Wiltshire; and his body lieth in the minster

at Abingdon; and Wulfgar then succeeded to the bishopric. The

same year died Womare, Abbot of Ghent.

((A.D. 981. This year came first the seven ships, and ravaged

Southampton.))

A.D. 982. In this year came up in Dorsetshire three ships of the

pirates, and plundered in Portland. The same year London was

burned. In the same year also died two aldermen, Ethelmer in

Hampshire, and Edwin in Sussex. Ethelmer's body lieth in

Winchester, at New-minster, and Edwin's in the minster at

Abingdon. The same year died two abbesses in Dorsetshire;

Herelufa at Shaftsbury, and Wulfwina at Wareham. The same year

went Otho, emperor of the Romans, into Greece; and there met he a

great army of the Saracens, who came up from the sea, and would

have proceeded forthwith to plunder the Christian folk; but the

emperor fought with them. And there was much slaughter made on

either side, but the emperor gained the field of battle. He was

there, however, much harassed, ere he returned thence; and as he

went homeward, his brother's son died, who was also called Otho;

and he was the son of Leodulf Atheling. This Leodulf was the son

of Otho the Elder and of the daughter of King Edward.

A.D. 983. This year died Alderman Alfere, and Alfric succeeded

to the same eldership; and Pope Benedict also died.

A.D. 984. This year died the benevolent Bishop of Winchester,

Athelwold, father of monks; and the consecration of the following

bishop, Elfheah, who by another name was called Godwin, was on

the fourteenth day before the calends of November; and he took

his seat on the episcopal bench on the mass-day of the two

apostles Simon and Jude, at Winchester.

A.D. 985. This year was Alderman Alfric driven out of the land;

and in the same year was Edwin consecrated abbot of the minster

at Abingdon.

A.D. 986. This year the king invaded the bishopric of Rochester;

and this year came first the great murrain of cattle in England.

A.D. 987. This year was the port of Watchet plundered.

A.D. 988. This year was Goda, the thane of Devonshire, slain;

and a great number with him: and Dunstan, the holy archbishop,

departed this life, and sought a heavenly one. Bishop Ethelgar

succeeded him in the archbishopric; but he lived only a little

while after, namely, one year and three months.

A.D. 989. This year died Abbot Edwin, and Abbot Wulfgar

succeeded to the abbacy. Siric was this year invested

archbishop, and went afterwards to Rome after his pall.

A.D. 991. This year was Ipswich plundered; and very soon

afterwards was Alderman Britnoth (47) slain at Maldon. In this

same year it was resolved that tribute should be given, for the

first time, to the Danes, for the great terror they occasioned by

the sea-coast. That was first 10,000 pounds. The first who

advised this measure was Archbishop Siric.

A.D. 992. This year the blessed Archbishop Oswald departed this

life, and sought a heavenly one; and in the same year died

Alderman Ethelwin. Then the king and all his council resolved,

that all the ships that were of any account should be gathered

together at London; and the king committed the lead of the land-

force to Alderman Elfric, and Earl Thorod, and Bishop Elfstan,

and Bishop Escwy; that they should try if they could anywhere

without entrap the enemy. Then sent Alderman Elfric, and gave

warning to the enemy; and on the night preceding the day of

battle he sculked away from the army, to his great disgrace. The

enemy then escaped; except the crew of one ship, who were slain

on the spot. Then met the enemy the ships from East-Anglia, and

from London; and there a great slaughter was made, and they took

the ship in which was the alderman, all armed and rigged. Then,

after the death of Archbishop Oswald, succeeded Aldulf, Abbot of

Peterborough, to the sees of York and of Worcester; and Kenulf to

the abbacy of Peterborough.

((A.D. 992. This year Oswald the blessed archbishop died, and

Abbot Eadulf succeeded to York and to Worcester. And this year

the king and all his witan decreed that all the ships which were

worth anything should be gathered together at London, in order

that they might try if they could anywhere betrap the army from

without. But Aelfric the ealdorman, one of those in whom the

king had most confidence, directed the army to be warned; and in

the night, as they should on the morrow have joined battle, the

selfsame Aelfric fled from the forces; and then the army

escaped.))

A.D. 993. This year came Anlaf with three and ninety ships to

Staines, which he plundered without, and went thence to Sandwich.

Thence to Ipswich, which he laid waste; and so to Maidon, where

Alderman Britnoth came against him with his force, and fought

with him; and there they slew the alderman, and gained the field

of battle; whereupon peace was made with him, and the king

received him afterwards at episcopal hands by the advice of

Siric, Bishop of Canterbury, and Elfeah of Winchester. This year

was Bamborough destroyed, and much spoil was there taken.

Afterwards came the army to the mouth of the Humber; and there

did much evil both in Lindsey and in Northumbria. Then was

collected a great force; but when the armies were to engage, then

the generals first commenced a flight; namely, Frene and Godwin

and Frithgist. In this same year the king ordered Elfgar, son of

Alderman Elfric, to be punished with blindness.

((A.D. 993. In this year came Olave with ninety-three ships to

Staines, and ravaged there about, and then went thence to

Sandwich, and so thence to Ipswich, and that all overran; and so

to Maldon. And there Britnoth the ealdorman came against them

with his forces, and fought against them: and they there slew the

ealdorman, and had possession of the place of carnage. And after

that peace was made with them; and him (Anlaf) the king

afterwards received at the bishop's hands, through the

instruction of Siric, bishop of the Kentish-men, and of Aelphege

of Winchester.))

A.D. 994. This year died Archbishop Siric: and Elfric, Bishop of

Wiltshire, was chosen on Easter-day, at Amesbury, by King

Ethelred and all his council. This year came Anlaf and Sweyne to

London, on the Nativity of St. Mary, with four and ninety-ships.

And they closely besieged the city, and would fain have set it on

fire; but they sustained more harm and evil than they ever

supposed that any citizens could inflict on them. The holy

mother of God on that day in her mercy considered the citizens,

and ridded them of their enemies. Thence they advanced, and

wrought the greatest evil that ever any army could do, in burning

and plundering and manslaughter, not only on the sea-coast in

Essex, but in Kent and in Sussex and in Hampshire. Next they

took horse, and rode as wide as they would, and committed

unspeakable evil. Then resolved the king and his council to send

to them, and offer them tribute and provision, on condition that

they desisted from plunder. The terms they accepted; and the

whole army came to Southampton, and there fixed their winter-

quarters; where they were fed by all the subjects of the West-

Saxon kingdom. And they gave them 16,000 pounds in money. Then

sent the king; after King Anlaf Bishop Elfeah and Alderman

Ethelwerd; (48) and, hostages being left with the ships, they led

Anlaf with great pomp to the king at Andover. And King Ethelred

received him at episcopal hands, and honoured him with royal

presents. In return Anlaf promised, as he also performed, that

he never again would come in a hostile manner to England.

A.D. 995. This year appeared the comet-star.

A.D. 996. This year was Elfric consecrated archbishop at Christ

church. (49)

A.D. 997. This year went the army about Devonshire into Severn-

mouth, and equally plundered the people of Cornwall, North-Wales,

(50) and Devon. Then went they up at Watchet, and there much

evil wrought in burning and manslaughter. Afterwards they

coasted back about Penwithstert on the south side, and, turning

into the mouth of the Tamer, went up till they came to Liddyford,

burning and slaying everything that they met. Moreover, Ordulf's

minster at Tavistock they burned to the ground, and brought to

their ships incalculable plunder. This year Archbishop Elfric

went to Rome after his staff.

A.D. 998. This year coasted the army back eastward into the

mouth of the Frome, and went up everywhere, as widely as they

would, into Dorsetshire. Often was an army collected against

them; but, as soon as they were about to come together, then were

they ever through something or other put to flight, and their

enemies always in the end had the victory. Another time they lay

in the Isle of Wight, and fed themselves meanwhile from Hampshire

and Sussex.

A.D. 999. This year came the army about again into the Thames,

and went up thence along the Medway to Rochester; where the

Kentish army came against them, and encountered them in a close

engagement; but, alas! they too soon yielded and fled; because

they had not the aid that they should have had. The Danes

therefore occupied the field of battle, and, taking horse, they

rode as wide as they would, spoiling and overrunning nearly all

West-Kent. Then the king with his council determined to proceed

against them with sea and land forces; but as soon as the ships

were ready, then arose delay from day to day, which harassed the

miserable crew that lay on board; so that, always, the forwarder

it should have been, the later it was, from one time to another;

-- they still suffered the army of their enemies to increase; --

the Danes continually retreated from the sea-coast;-- and they

continually pursued them in vain. Thus in the end these

expeditions both by sea and land served no other purpose but to

vex the people, to waste their treasure, and to strengthen their

enemies. "

A.D. 1000. This year the king went into Cumberland, and nearly

laid waste the whole of it with his army, whilst his navy sailed

about Chester with the design of co-operating with his land-

forces; but, finding it impracticable, they ravaged Anglesey.

The hostile fleet was this summer turned towards the kingdom of

Richard.

A.D. 1001. This year there was great commotion in England in

consequence of an invasion by the Danes, who spread terror and

devastation wheresoever they went, plundering and burning and

desolating the country with such rapidity, that they advanced in

one march as far as the town of Alton; where the people of

Hampshire came against them, and fought with them. There was

slain Ethelwerd, high-steward of the king, and Leofric of

Whitchurch, and Leofwin, high-steward of the king, and Wulfhere,

a bishop's thane, and Godwin of Worthy, son of Bishop Elfsy; and

of all the men who were engaged with them eighty-one. Of the

Danes there was slain a much greater number, though they remained

in possession of the field of battle. Thence they proceeded

westward, until they came into Devonshire; where Paley came to

meet them with the ships which he was able to collect; for he had

shaken off his allegiance to King Ethelred, against all the vows

of truth and fidelity which he had given him, as well as the

presents which the king had bestowed on him in houses and gold

and silver. And they burned Teignton, and also many other goodly

towns that we cannot name; and then peace was there concluded

with them. And they proceeded thence towards Exmouth, so that

they marched at once till they came to Pin-hoo; where Cole, high-

steward of the king, and Edsy, reve of the king, came against

them with the army that they could collect. But they were there

put to flight, and there were many slain, and the Danes had

possession of the field of battle. And the next morning they

burned the village of Pin-hoo, and of Clist, and also many goodly

towns that we cannot name. Then they returned eastward again,

till they came to the Isle of Wight. The next morning they

burned the town of Waltham, and many other small towns; soon

after which the people treated with them, and they made peace.

((A.D. 1001. This year the army came to Exmouth, and then went

up to the town, and there continued fighting stoutly; but they

were very strenuously resisted. Then went they through the land,

and did all as was their wont; destroyed and burnt. Then was

collected a vast force of the people of Devon and of the people

of Somerset, and they then came together at Pen. And so soon as

they joined battle, then the people gave way: and there they made

great slaughter, and then they rode over the land, and their last

incursion was ever worse than the one before: and then they

brought much booty with them to their ships. And thence they

went into the Isle of Wight, and there they roved about, even as

they themselves would, and nothing withstood them: nor any fleet

by sea durst meet them; nor land force either, went they ever so

far up. Then was it in every wise a heavy time, because they

never ceased from their evil doings.))

A.D. 1002. This year the king and his council agreed that

tribute should be given to the fleet, and peace made with them,

with the provision that they should desist from their mischief.

Then sent the king to the fleet Alderman Leofsy, who at the

king's word and his council made peace with them, on condition

that they received food and tribute; which they accepted, and a

tribute was paid of 24,000 pounds. In the meantime Alderman

Leofsy slew Eafy, high-steward of the king; and the king banished

him from the land. Then, in the same Lent, came the Lady Elfgive

Emma, Richard's daughter, to this land. And in the same summer

died Archbishop Eadulf; and also, in the same year the king gave

an order to slay all the Danes that were in England. This was

accordingly done on the mass-day of St. Brice; because it was

told the king, that they would beshrew him of his life, and

afterwards all his council, and then have his kingdom without any

resistance.

A.D. 1003. This year was Exeter demolished, through the French

churl Hugh, whom the lady had appointed her steward there. And

the army destroyed the town withal, and took there much spoil.

In the same year came the army up into Wiltshire. Then was

collected a very great force, from Wiltshire and from Hampshire;

which was soon ready on their march against the enemy: and

Alderman Elfric should have led them on; but he brought forth his

old tricks, and as soon as they were so near, that either army

looked on the other, then he pretended sickness, and began to

retch, saying he was sick; and so betrayed the people that he

should have led: as it is said, "When the leader is sick the

whole army is hindered." When Sweyne saw that they were not

ready, and that they all retreated, then led he his army into

Wilton; and they plundered and burned the town. Then went he to

Sarum; and thence back to the sea, where he knew his ships were.

A.D. 1004. This year came Sweyne with his fleet to Norwich,

plundering and burning the whole town. Then Ulfkytel agreed with

the council in East-Anglia, that it were better to purchase peace

with the enemy, ere they did too much harm on the land; for that

they had come unawares, and he had not had time to gather his

force. Then, under the truce that should have been between them,

stole the army up from their ships, and bent their course to

Thetford. When Ulfkytel understood that, then sent he an order

to hew the ships in pieces; but they frustrated his design. Then

he gathered his forces, as secretly as he could. The enemy came

to Thetford within three weeks after they had plundered Norwich;

and, remaining there one night, they spoiled and burned the town;

but, in the morning, as they were proceeding to their ships, came

Ulfkytel with his army, and said that they must there come to

close quarters. And, accordingly, the two armies met together;

and much slaughter was made on both sides. There were many of

the veterans of the East-Angles slain; but, if the main army had

been there, the enemy had never returned to their ships. As they

said themselves, that they never met with worse hand-play in

England than Ulfkytel brought them.

A.D. 1005. This year died Archbishop Elfric; and Bishop Elfeah

succeeded him in the archbishopric. This year was the great

famine in England so severe that no man ere remembered such. The

fleet this year went from this land to Denmark, and took but a

short respite, before they came again.

A.D. 1006. This year Elfeah was consecrated Archbishop; Bishop

Britwald succeeded to the see of Wiltshire; Wulfgeat was deprived

of all his property; (51) Wulfeah and Ufgeat were deprived of

sight; Alderman Elfelm was slain; and Bishop Kenulf (52) departed

this life. Then, over midsummer, came the Danish fleet to

Sandwich, and did as they were wont; they barrowed and burned and

slew as they went. Then the king ordered out all the population

from Wessex and from Mercia; and they lay out all the harvest

under arms against the enemy; but it availed nothing more than it

had often done before. For all this the enemy went wheresoever

they would; and the expedition did the people more harm than

either any internal or external force could do. When winter

approached, then went the army home; and the enemy retired after

Martinmas to their quarters in the Isle of Wight, and provided

themselves everywhere there with what they wanted. Then, about

midwinter, they went to their ready farm, throughout Hampshire

into Berkshire, to Reading. And they did according to their

custom, -- they lighted their camp-beacons as they advanced.

Thence they marched to Wallingford, which they entirely

destroyed, and passed one night at Cholsey. They then turned

along Ashdown to Cuckamsley-hill, and there awaited better cheer;

for it was often said, that if they sought Cuckamsley, they would

never get to the sea. But they went another way homeward. Then

was their army collected at Kennet; and they came to battle

there, and soon put the English force to flight; and afterwards

carried their spoil to the sea. There might the people of

Winchester see the rank and iniquitous foe, as they passed by

their gates to the sea, fetching their meat and plunder over an

extent of fifty miles from sea. Then was the king gone over the

Thames into Shropshire; and there he fixed his abode during

midwinter. Meanwhile, so great was the fear of the enemy, that

no man could think or devise how to drive them from the land, or

hold this territory against them; for they had terribly marked

each shire in Wessex with fire and devastation. Then the king

began to consult seriously with his council, what they all

thought most advisable for defending this land, ere it was

utterly undone. Then advised the king and his council for the

advantage of all the nation, though they were all loth to do it,

that they needs must bribe the enemy with a tribute. The king

then sent to the army, and ordered it to be made known to them,

that his desire was, that there should be peace between them, and

that tribute and provision should be given them. And they

accepted the terms; and they were provisioned throughout England.

((A.D. 1006. This year Elphege was consecrated archbishop [of

Canterbury].))

A.D. 1007. In this year was the tribute paid to the hostile

army; that was, 30,000 pounds. In this year also was Edric

appointed alderman over all the kingdom of the Mercians. This

year went Bishop Elfeah to Rome after his pall.

A.D. 1008. This year bade the king that men should speedily

build ships over all England; that is, a man possessed of three

hundred and ten hides to provide on galley or skiff; and a man

possessed of eight hides only, to find a helmet and breastplate

(53).

A.D. 1009. This year were the ships ready, that we before spoke

about; and there were so many of them as never were in England

before, in any king's days, as books tell us. And they were all

transported together to Sandwich; that they should lie there, and

defend this land against any out-force. But we have not yet had

the prosperity and the honour, that the naval armament should be

useful to this land, any more than it often before was. It was

at this same time, or a little earlier, that Brihtric, brother of

Alderman Edric, bewrayed Wulnoth, the South-Saxon knight, father

of Earl Godwin, to the king; and he went into exile, and enticed

the navy, till he had with him twenty ships; with which he

plundered everywhere by the south coast, and wrought every kind

of mischief. When it was told the navy that they might easily

seize him, if they would look about them, then took Brihtric with

him eighty ships; and thought that he should acquire for himself

much reputation, by getting Wulnoth into his hands alive or dead.

But, whilst they were proceeding thitherward, there came such a

wind against them, as no man remembered before; which beat and

tossed the ships, and drove them aground; whereupon Wulnoth soon

came, and burned them. When this was known to the remaining

ships, where the king was, how the others fared, it was then as

if all were lost. The king went home, with the aldermen and the

nobility; and thus lightly did they forsake the ships; whilst the

men that were in them rowed them back to London. Thus lightly

did they suffer the labour of all the people to be in vain; nor

was the terror lessened, as all England hoped. When this naval

expedition was thus ended, then came, soon after Lammas, the

formidable army of the enemy, called Thurkill's army, to

Sandwich; and soon they bent their march to Canterbury; which

city they would quickly have stormed, had they not rather desired

peace; and all the men of East-Kent made peace with the army, and

gave them 3,000 pounds for security. The army soon after that

went about till they came to the Isle of Wight; and everywhere in

Sussex, and in Hampshire, and also in Berkshire, they plundered

and burned, as THEIR CUSTOM IS. (54) Then ordered the king to

summon out all the population, that men might hold firm against

them on every side; but nevertheless they marched as they

pleased. On one occasion the king had begun his march before

them, as they proceeded to their ships, and all the people were

ready to fall upon them; but the plan was then frustrated through

Alderman Edric, AS IT EVER IS STILL. Then after Martinmas they

went back again to Kent, and chose their winter-quarters on the

Thames; obtaining their provisions from Essex, and from the

shires that were next, on both sides of the Thames. And oft they

fought against the city of London; but glory be to God, that it

yet standeth firm: and they ever there met with ill fare. Then

after midwinter took they an excursion up through Chiltern, (55)

and so to Oxford; which city they burned, and plundered on both

sides of the Thames to their ships. Being fore-warned that there

was an army gathered against them at London, they went over at

Staines; and thus were they in motion all the winter, and in

spring, appeared again in Kent, and repaired their ships.

A.D. 1010. This year came the aforesaid army, after Easter, into

East Anglia; and went up at Ipswich, marching continually till

they came where they understood Ulfcytel was with his army. This

was on the day called the first of the Ascension of our Lord.

The East-Angles soon fled. Cambridgeshire stood firm against

them. There was slain Athelstan, the king's relative, and Oswy,

and his son, and Wulfric, son of Leofwin, and Edwy, brother of

Efy, and many other good thanes, and a multitude of the people.

Thurkytel Myrehead first began the flight; and the Danes remained

masters of the field of slaughter. There were they horsed; and

afterwards took possession of East-Anglia, where they plundered

and burned three months; and then proceeded further into the wild

fens, slaying both men and cattle, and burning throughout the

fens. Thetford also they burned, and Cambridge; and afterwards

went back southward into the Thames; and the horsemen rode

towards the ships. Then went they west-ward into Oxfordshire,

and thence to Buckinghamshire, and so along the Ouse till they

came to Bedford, and so forth to Temsford, always burning as they

went. Then returned they to their ships with their spoil, which

they apportioned to the ships. When the king's army should have

gone out to meet them as they went up, then went they home; and

when they were in the east, then was the army detained in the

west; and when they were in the south, then was the army in the

north. Then all the privy council were summoned before the king,

to consult how they might defend this country. But, whatever was

advised, it stood not a month; and at length there was not a

chief that would collect an army, but each fled as he could: no

shire, moreover, would stand by another. Before the feast-day of

St. Andrew came the enemy to Northampton, and soon burned the

town, and took as much spoil thereabout as they would; and then

returned over the Thames into Wessex, and so by Cannings-marsh,

burning all the way. When they had gone as far as they would,

then came they by midwinter to their ships.

A.D. 1011. This year sent the king and his council to the army,

and desired peace; promising them both tribute and provisions, on

condition that they ceased from plunder. They had now overrun

East-Anglia [1], and Essex [2], and Middlesex [3], and

Oxfordshire [4], and Cambridgeshire [5], and Hertfordshire [6],

and Buckinghamshire [7], and Bedfordshire [8], and half of

Huntingdonshire [9], and much of Northamptonshire [10]; and, to

the south of the Thames, all Kent, and Sussex, and Hastings, and

Surrey, and Berkshire, and Hampshire, and much of Wiltshire. All

these disasters befel us through bad counsels; that they would

not offer tribute in time, or fight with them; but, when they had

done most mischief, then entered they into peace and amity with

them. And not the less for all this peace, and amity, and

tribute, they went everywhere in troops; plundering, and

spoiling, and slaying our miserable people. In this year,

between the Nativity of St. Mary and Michaelmas, they beset

Canterbury, and entered therein through treachery; for Elfmar

delivered the city to them, whose life Archbishop Elfeah formerly

saved. And there they seized Archbishop Elfeah, and Elfward the

king's steward, and Abbess Leofruna, (56) and Bishop Godwin; and

Abbot Elfmar they suffered to go away. And they took therein all

the men, and husbands, and wives; and it was impossible for any

man to say how many they were; and in the city they continued

afterwards as long as they would. And, when they had surveyed

all the city, they then returned to their ships, and led the

archbishop with them.

 Then was a captive

 he who before was

 of England head

 and Christendom; --

 there might be seen

 great wretchedness,

 where oft before

 great bliss was seen,

 in the fated city,

 whence first to us

 came Christendom,

 and bliss 'fore God

 and 'fore the world.

And the archbishop they kept with them until the time when they

martyred him.

A.D. 1012. This year came Alderman Edric, and all the oldest

counsellors of England, clerk and laity, to London before Easter,

which was then on the ides of April; and there they abode, over

Easter, until all the tribute was paid, which was 48,000 pounds.

Then on the Saturday was the army much stirred against the

bishop; because he would not promise them any fee, and forbade

that any man should give anything for him. They were also much

drunken; for there was wine brought them from the south. Then

took they the bishop, and led him to their hustings, on the eve

of the Sunday after Easter, which was the thirteenth before the

calends of May; and there they then shamefully killed him. They

overwhelmed him with bones and horns of oxen; and one of them

smote him with an axe-iron on the head; so that he sunk downwards

with the blow; and his holy blood fell on the earth, whilst his

sacred soul was sent to the realm of God. The corpse in the

morning was carried to London; and the bishops, Ednoth and

Elfhun, and the citizens, received him with all honour, and

buried him in St. Paul's minster; where God now showeth this holy

martyr's miracles. When the tribute was paid, and the peace-

oaths were sworn, then dispersed the army as widely as it was

before collected. Then submitted to the king five and forty of

the ships of the enemy; and promised him, that they would defend

this land, and he should feed and clothe them.

A.D. 1013. The year after that Archbishop Elfeah was martyred,

the king appointed Lifing to the archiepiscopal see of

Canterbury. And in the same year, before the month August, came

King Sweyne with his fleet to Sandwich; and very soon went about

East-Anglia into the Humber-mouth, and so upward along the Trent,

until he came to Gainsborough. Then soon submitted to him Earl

Utred, and all the Northumbrians, and all the people of Lindsey,

and afterwards the people of the Five Boroughs, and soon after

all the army to the north of Watling-street; and hostages were

given him from each shire. When he understood that all the

people were subject to him, then ordered he that his army should

have provision and horses; and he then went southward with his

main army, committing his ships and the hostages to his son

Knute. And after he came over Watling-street, they wrought the

greatest mischief that any army could do. Then he went to

Oxford; and the population soon submitted, and gave hostages;

thence to Winchester, where they did the same. Thence went they

eastward to London; and many of the party sunk in the Thames,

because they kept not to any bridge. When he came to the city,

the population would not submit; but held their ground in full

fight against him, because therein was King Ethelred, and

Thurkill with him. Then went King Sweyne thence to Wallingford;

and so over Thames westward to Bath, where he abode with his

army. Thither came Alderman Ethelmar, and all the western thanes

with him, and all submitted to Sweyne, and gave hostages. When

he had thus settled all, then went he northward to his ships; and

all the population fully received him, and considered him full

king. The population of London also after this submitted to him,

and gave hostages; because they dreaded that he would undo them.

Then bade Sweyne full tribute and forage for his army during the

winter; and Thurkill bade the same for the army that lay at

Greenwich: besides this, they plundered as oft as they would.

And when this nation could neither resist in the south nor in the

north, King Ethelred abode some while with the fleet that lay in

the Thames; and the lady (57) went afterwards over sea to her

brother Richard, accompanied by Elfsy, Abbot of Peterborough.

The king sent Bishop Elfun with the ethelings, Edward and Alfred,

over sea; that he might instruct them. Then went the king from

the fleet, about midwinter, to the Isle of Wight; and there abode

for the season; after which he went over sea to Richard, with

whom he abode till the time when Sweyne died. Whilst the lady

was with her brother beyond sea, Elfsy, Abbot of Peterborough,

who was there with her, went to the abbey called Boneval, where

St. Florentine's body lay; and there found a miserable place, a

miserable abbot, and miserable monks: because they had been

plundered. There he bought of the abbot, and of the monks, the

body of St. Florentine, all but the head, for 500 pounds; which,

on his return home, he offered to Christ and St. Peter.

A.D. 1014. This year King Sweyne ended his days at Candlemas,

the third day before the nones of February; and the same year

Elfwy, Bishop of York, was consecrated in London, on the festival

of St. Juliana. The fleet all chose Knute for king; whereupon

advised all the counsellors of England, clergy and laity, that

they should send after King Ethelred; saying, that no sovereign

was dearer to them than their natural lord, if he would govern

them better than he did before. Then sent the king hither his

son Edward, with his messengers; who had orders to greet all his

people, saying that he would be their faithful lord -- would

better each of those things that they disliked -- and that each

of the things should be forgiven which had been either done or

said against him; provided they all unanimously, without

treachery, turned to him. Then was full friendship established,

in word and in deed and in compact, on either side. And every

Danish king they proclaimed an outlaw for ever from England.

Then came King Ethelred home, in Lent, to his own people; and he

was gladly received by them all. Meanwhile, after the death of

Sweyne, sat Knute with his army in Gainsborough until Easter; and

it was agreed between him and the people of Lindsey, that they

should supply him with horses, and afterwards go out all together

and plunder. But King Ethelred with his full force came to

Lindsey before they were ready; and they plundered and burned,

and slew all the men that they could reach. Knute, the son of

Sweyne, went out with his fleet (so were the wretched people

deluded by him), and proceeded southward until he came to

Sandwich. There he landed the hostages that were given to his

father, and cut off their hands and ears and their noses.

Besides all these evils, the king ordered a tribute to the army

that lay at Greenwich, of 21,000 pounds. This year, on the eve

of St. Michael's day, came the great sea-flood, which spread wide

over this land, and ran so far up as it never did before,

overwhelming many towns, and an innumerable multitude of people.

**ENDNOTES:**

(41) So I understand the word. Gibson, from Wheloc, says -- "in

 aetatis vigore;" a fact contradicted by the statement of

 almost every historian. Names of places seldom occur in old

 MSS. with capital initials.

(42) i.e. the feast of the Holy Innocents; a festival of great

 antiquity.

(43) i.e. the secular clergy, who observed no rule; opposed to

 the regulars, or monks.

(44) This poetical effusion on the coronation, or rather

 consecration, of King Edgar, as well as the following on his

 death, appears to be imitated in Latin verse by Ethelwerd at

 the end of his curious chronicle. This seems at least to

 prove that they were both written very near the time, as

 also the eulogy on his reign, inserted 959.

(45) The following passage from Cotton Tiberius B iv., relating

 to the accession of Edward the Martyr, should be added here

 -- In his days,

 On account of his youth,

 The opponents of God

 Broke through God's laws;

 Alfhere alderman,

 And others many;

 And marr'd monastic rules;

 Minsters they razed,

 And monks drove away,

 And put God's laws to flight --

 Laws that King Edgar

 Commanded the holy

 Saint Ethelwold bishop

 Firmly to settle --

 Widows they stript

 Oft and at random.

 Many breaches of right

 And many bad laws

 Have arisen since;

 And after-times

 Prove only worse.

 Then too was Oslac

 The mighty earl

 Hunted from England's shores.

(46) Florence of Worcester mentions three synods this year;

 Kyrtlinege, Calne, and Ambresbyrig.

(47) Vid. "Hist. Eliens." ii. 6. He was a great benefactor to

 the church of Ely.

(48) This was probably the veteran historian of that name, who

 was killed in the severe encounter with the Danes at Alton

 (Aethelingadene) in the year 1001.

(49) i.e. at Canterbury. He was chosen or nominated before, by

 King Ethelred and his council, at Amesbury: vid. an. 994.

 This notice of his consecration, which is confirmed by

 Florence of Worcester, is now first admitted into the text

 on the authority of three MSS.

(50) Not the present district so-called, but all that north of

 the Sea of Severn, as opposed to West-Wales, another name

 for Cornwall.

(51) See a more full and circumstantial account of these events,

 with some variation of names, in Florence of Worcester.

(52) The successor of Elfeah, or Alphege, in the see of

 Winchester, on the translation of the latter to the

 archiepiscopal see of Canterbury.

(53) This passage, though very important, is rather confused,

 from the Variations in the MSS.; so that it is difficult to

 ascertain the exact proportion of ships and armour which

 each person was to furnish. "Vid. Flor." an. 1008.

(54) These expressions in the present tense afford a strong proof

 that the original records of these transactions are nearly

 coeval with the transactions themselves. Later MSS. use the

 past tense.

(55) i.e. the Chiltern Hills; from which the south-eastern part

 of Oxfordshire is called the Chiltern district.

(56) "Leofruna abbatissa". -- Flor. The insertion of this

 quotation from Florence of Worcester is important, as it

 confirms the reading adopted in the text. The abbreviation

 "abbt", instead of "abb", seems to mark the abbess. She was

 the last abbess of St. Mildred's in the Isle of Thanet; not

 Canterbury, as Harpsfield and Lambard say.

(57) This was a title bestowed on the queen.

(58) The "seven" towns mentioned above are reduced here to

 "five"; probably because two had already submitted to the

 king on the death of the two thanes, Sigferth and Morcar.

 These five were, as originally, Leicester, Lincoln,

 Stamford, Nottingham, and Derby. Vid. an. 942, 1013.



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