ON THE LIFE AND DEATH OF EARL GODWINE.

GODWINE, the great Earl of the West-Saxons, himself the deliverer and virtual ruler of England at one of the most momentous periods of her earlier history, and yet more famous as the father of her last truly native and elective sovereign, bears nevertheless a character which has been by many of our historians, both of early and of recent date, handed down to us in the blackest colours. Even those who are merciful to the supposed perjury and usurpation of the son, generally fall without any compunction upon the father; some, indeed, scarcely mention him without the addition of "traitor," almost as a portion of his style and title. But on looking more narrowly into the annals nearest to his own time, we find that his crimes become less distinctly visible, while his great and good qualities begin to stand out in more conspicuous colours. It was the manifest policy both of Norman and of ecclesiastical writers to cast every possible obloquy upon a family which formed the great obstacle to the establishment of Norman influence, and which was always more or less in disfavour with the Church. Both Godwine and Harold may be fairly classed among the assertors of the ecclesiastical independence of England; but such a title was still less likely than their defence of its political liberty, to win them favour from writers in the interest of the papal see. The accusations against them are in many cases belied by facts, in others they are grossly absurd and trifling; but it is a very curious study to mark how they originated, and how they are copied from one writer by another, usually attaching to themselves some further mythical features by the way. I have therefore thought it advisable to pay more attention than they in themselves deserved to the narratives of very late and inferior writers. For what is true in every case applies most especially to this, that it is the part of a good historian not only to know what really did happen at a remote period, but also what intervening ages have conceived to have happened.

The real authorities in this matter lie within a small compass. The Saxon Chronicle and Florence of Worcester are the records to which we must look for our essential facts; the Norman writers give us their version of them, and the Norman Survey helps us to many personal particulars. William of Malmesbury, though certainly to be set on the Norman side, comes somewhere between the two classes, and often fairly sets before us both sides of the story. The Scandinavian writers are for the most part only valuable as showing how wonderfully little they knew of the affairs of a kindred kingdom. The later English writers, down to the chroniclers of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, however valuable for times nearer their own, are, with one or two exceptions, only useful to our present purpose, as showing how utterly the narrative was misconceived, and how carelessly, often dishonestly, one copied from another. Yet, for the reasons above stated, I have thought it desirable to make frequent references to them, though I must confess that my patience failed me more than once during the process.

§ 1. OF THE PARENTAGE OF GODWINE, AND HIS SERVICES UNDER CNUT.

The first question to be discussed is no other than that of the parentage of Godwine himself. During the reigns of the sons of Cnut and that of Eadward the Confessor, Godwine appears as the most prominent and powerful man in England; he appears also as the champion of the national party, the leader of the English movement, first against Danish, then against Norman domination, and yet at the same time as owing his honours to the favour of the Danish kings, and to his connection by marriage with their house. It may also be remarked, that in most of our records he comes on the stage in a rather singular manner, his position and power being rather assumed than directly stated, and no reference being generally made to his kindred or descent. What then was his lineage and ancestry? Two widely different stories present themselves for our acceptance.

By far the more attractive of the two is the romantic tale which, on the authority of certain northern Sagas, confirmed by a single MS. chronicle, has gained acceptance with two of the most distinguished

Godwine, a herdsman's son, according to Turner and Thierry.

writers on this period, with a countryman of our own, who may fairly claim our respect as the pioneer of all more recent inquiries into early English history, and with a writer of another land, who has proved himself, though far from the most accurate in detail, yet undoubtedly the most eloquent and picturesque of its narrators. Sharon Turner and Thierry quote the MS. Chronicle of Radulphus Niger, as well as the Knytlinga Saga, both of which authorities I am obliged to take at second-hand, in support of the story that Godwine was a peasant's son in the west of England, who won the favour of the Danish chieftain Ulf by hospitality and guidance when he had lost his way after one of the battles between Cnut and Eadmund. Ulf, pleased with the appearance and address of the young Englishman, takes him to the court of Cnut, procures him promotion at the hands of the King, and gives him his own sister Gytha in marriage. By most later writers this story is passed by in silence. M. de Bonnechose, however, stops to argue against it, as also does Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, the notes to whose splendid romance of "Harold" show what laurels he might have won in the graver field of history itself, had not his genius been diverted into another and more popular channel. Sir Edward only alludes to the story in order to dismiss it with the utmost contempt, as directly contrary to the authority of the Saxon Chronicle and of Florence of Worcester. Now I must confess that I have a lingering attachment to Thierry's story, partly from early associations, partly from the natural wish to recognise in a great man the architect of his own fortune, and to find that the last prince who was raised to the throne by the free choice of the English people did, in the fullest sense, derive his origin from their own ranks. I would not, indeed, be understood as fully committing myself to the legend, which is certainly surrounded by difficulties, but it certainly does not strike me as the gross absurdity which most modern writers seem to consider it.

That in a period of extreme confusion and national disorganisation, a youth of lowly birth, but of commanding abilities, might, if a lucky accident once put him upon the track of fortune, make his way to the highest dignities of the state, is in itself neither incredible nor improbable. A few years before, Eadric Streone, whom all describe as a person of low birth, had risen to be the first man in the kingdom;

and had espoused the daughter of King Æthelred. If Æthelred could thus promote an utterly unworthy favourite, what should hinder the discerning Danish conqueror from doing the like by one in whom he perceived powers well calculated to prove the best support of an insecure dynasty? Nothing could be more likely to reconcile the mass of the English people to the Danish sovereignty than the sight of one of themselves, an Englishman risen from the ranks, promoted to be the counsellor of the foreign monarch, and connected by marriage with the royal house? And, as I have before remarked, the prominent position of Godwine at the death of Cnut is rather assumed than stated in most of our old chronicles. He appears as the leader of the English party, and the chief support of the deceased monarch's widow, but as to his parentage, and as to the means by which he obtained so high a position, nearly all our historians are silent. Thus far we might be inclined to accept the Scandinavian legend, as filling up a singular gap in our own annals.

Supposed contrary testimony of the Saxon Chronicle and Florence.

But it may be answered that this general silence of our old records is broken by two, and those the most trustworthy of their number. One of the most conspicuous events in the troubled reign of Æthelred is the assemblage and dispersion of the great English fleet in the year 1009. With vast labour and expense a navy had been gathered together which was to brave the power of the Northmen upon their own element, and to guard England from all further fear of subjugation at the hands of her inveterate invaders. At the very moment of its assemblage Brihtric, the brother of the Ealdorman Eadric, accuses to the King "Child Wulfnoth, the South-Saxon;" Wulfnoth flies with twenty ships and takes to piracy; Brihtric, at the royal order, pursues him with eighty ships, but the fleet of Brihtric is scattered by a tempest, and the remnant attacked and burnt by Wulfnoth. Now, who was this "Child Wulfnoth the South Saxon?" Some copies of the Saxon Chronicle, followed by the printed editions, add to this description the words "father of Earl Godwine." But in other copies the words are wanting, nor do they occur either in Florence of Worcester, who evidently copies the Chronicle, or in Roger Wendover, or Roger de Hoveden who evidently copies Florence; nor yet in the slightly

different version given by Henry of Huntingdon and his copyist Bromton. Florence, however, had just before given a genealogy, in which he enumerates the brothers of Ealdorman Eadric; "cujus fratres exstiterunt Brithricus, Ælfricus, Goda, Ægelwinus, Ægelwardus, Ægelmærus, pater Wlnothi, patris West-Saxonum Ducis Godwini."[1]

Thierry, by omitting all mention of this last story, certainly makes his course tolerably easy, but Mr. Turner seems to accept the pedigree just given without hesitation, and apparently without considering it contradictory to the tale which he follows of Godwine's humble origin. Indeed he represents Wulfnoth in his lowly estate, as "perhaps remembering the high fortunes of his uncle Eadric,"[2] "and hoping a similar good success for his own child." Before this,[3] in recording the story of Brihtric and Wulfnoth, he calls the latter "the father of the Earl Godwine," and though he remarks in a note that the words are absent from some MSS. of the Saxon Chronicle, he does not appear to doubt Wulfnoth's parentage. It would be sufficiently remarkable if the nephew of the powerful Eadric remained in the condition of a herdsman, while that chief had raised himself to such greatness, and had exalted at least one of his brothers with him; yet this is at least possible. But possibility can hardly be stretched so far as to identify Wulfnoth, the naval commander of Sussex in 1009, with Wulfnoth, the western peasant in 1016. Unquestionably, princes and lords, under the frown of fortune, have before now lurked in such disguises, but one who, outlaw as he was, still remained at the head of twenty ships, would be more likely[4] to take service under King Svend, or to continue his proceedings as Viking on his

[1] Dr. Lappenberg (ii. 170) speaking of Eadric, says, that he "stands at the head of all the laity in a charter of 1012, where also appear the names of most of his brothers and 'Godwine Miles.'" One of that year in Kemble (vi. 164) is signed among others by "Eadricus Dux" "Ælfricus Dux," "Æthelmarus minister," "Æthelwardus minister," "Goda minister," "Godwinus minister." Another of the same year (iii. 357) includes the signatures of "Eadric dux," "Æthelmær Miles," "Godwine Miles," "Æthelwine Miles." But is not this far more likely to be Godwine, Ealdorman of Lindesey, mentioned in the Chronicle as dying in the battle of Assandon in 1016?

[2] ii. 494.

[3] ii 478.

[4] M. de Bonnechose, arguing in favour of Godwine's being the son of Child Wulfnoth, says, "Le service que ce Wulfnoth rendit au roi Sweyn en lui livrant une partie de la flotte qu'il commandait, et en brulant la reste, explique suffisament la faveur dont jouit son fils auprès de Canut, successeur de Sweyn" Wulfnoth very probably joined Svend, but there is no proof that he did, so that it is not fair to use it as an argument. Also Eadric himself is a proof that Cnut did not always favour traitors when he had profited by them.

own account, than to betake himself to honest labour in a midland county. I think we may safely assert that if Godwine was the son of a western herdsman, he was certainly not the son of the South-Saxon naval captain, and not likely to be the grand nephew of Ealdorman Eadric.

But, on the other hand, I cannot help thinking that historians have been somewhat hasty both in assuming the South-Saxon "Child" to have been Godwine's father, and in identifying him with the nephew of Eadric. As I observed, the description of Wulfnoth as Godwine's father, is wanting both in several MSS. of the "Chronicle" (as indeed the title of "Child" is in one), and in the later writers who have drawn their materials from that source. Again, it is a description which could only have been inserted afterwards, when Godwine had risen to eminence, and when the Danish title "Earl" had supplanted the English "Ealdorman." I therefore cannot help suspecting that it is a later gloss, inserted by some one who had heard that Godwine's father was named Wulfnoth, and leaped too hastily to the conclusion that he and Child Wulfnoth, the South-Saxon, were identical.

Doubts as to the reading.

Again, as Florence does not call Child Wulfnoth Godwine's father, neither does he at all clearly identify Child Wulfnoth with Wulfnoth the son of Ægelmær. He had just enumerated the brothers of Eadric, including Brihtric and Ægelmær, and had mentioned Wulfnoth and Godwine as the son and grandson of the latter. Immediately after, he tells us how King Æthelred gathered together at Sandwich the great fleet of what he is pleased to call triremes. He then adds; "Eo tempore, vel paullo ante, frater perfidi Ducis Eadrici Streonæ, Brihtric, homo lubricus, ambitiosus, et superbus, apud Regem[5] injuste accusavit Suth-Saxonicum ministrum Wlnothum, qui, ne caperetur, fugam iniit." Now, if Florence was so particular to identify this Brihtric with the Brihtric he had mentioned a few lines above, is there not rather a presumption that the Wulfnoth whom he does not similarly identify, but introduces under quite another style, is not the Wulfnoth whom he had just mentioned as the father of Godwine, but some quite distinct person? Had they been

[5] The Chronicle pronounces no opinion on the "injustice" of the accusation. On the other hand, M. de Bonnechose (ii. 17) makes Wulfnoth fly without any accusation at all.

the same, would he not, while describing Brihtric as the brother of Eadric, have also described Wulfnoth as the nephew both of Brihtric and Eadric? I think any one would argue in this way, if the doubtful passage of the Chronicle had not been held to foreclose the question.

To me it seems clear that we have no sufficient ground for identifying Child Wulfnoth, the South-Saxon, with the father of Godwine. Putting then this identity aside, we have two statements, that of Florence, who makes Wulfnoth the father of Godwine to be the nephew of Eadric, and that of the authorities followed by Turner and Thierry, who make him to be a herdsman in Gloucestershire or Wilts. Mr. Turner, we have seen, does not look upon the two statements as irreconcilable. Formally indeed they certainly are not, as Wulfnoth *may* have remained in obscurity, while other members of his family rose to greatness. But if this be thought too improbable, we have two contradictory statements, each of which has something to be said in its behalf.

Statement of the evidence.

For the one we have the high authority of a direct statement from one of our best early historians, a statement perfectly clear and intelligible, and affected, I believe, by no doubt as to the text.

For the other, we have the fact that Florence stands alone in his statement in a rather remarkable manner; we have the direct testimony of some inferior authorities; we have also, as appears to me, on the whole, the probability of the case.

First of all, what is always of no small consequence in these questions, if we grant the truth of the Saga story, there is no difficulty in understanding how the contrary version arose, while the reverse process is by no means so easy. For if the tale of Godwine's peasant origin be a fiction, it must be a pure invention without motive. One does not see how any confusion or misconception can have led to it; and as the tale of his lowly birth does not seem at all introduced with any notion of depreciating Godwine, there appears no reason for any one to go out of the way to invent it. But if, as is probable enough, there were several contemporary Wulfnoths, especially if the one really in question were an obscure person, mere misconception might lead Florence or his informants to fasten the paternity upon the wrong Wulfnoth. Again, various motives might easily lead to a falsification. To connect Godwine with Eadric would suit

his foes, who might wish to brand one whom they called traitor with relationship to an earlier traitor; it would suit Danish friends to represent him as connected with one who was so conspicuous in setting up the Danish throne in England; it would even suit those among his English friends who, with a weakness common in all ages, might regard a connection with Eadric as deriving more of honour from the splendour of his rank than of disgrace from the infamy of his crimes.

On the other hand, it is certainly strange at first sight, that if Godwine's lowly origin were a historical fact, it should never have been brought up against him by any of his adversaries. This argument is pressed with some force by M. Emile de Bonnechose, but it is easy to answer that the difficulty exists, though in a milder form, in any case; for, as Eadric is always called a man of low birth, it does but put the herdman ancestor a generation or two further back.[6]

Again, if we accept the Norse legend, we understand the rather mysterious way in which Godwine himself comes on the stage under the patronage of Cnut and Ulf, better than if we suppose him to have been a member of a powerful English family. If he had been so, he would surely have been introduced as such; whereas those who connect him with the house of Eadric do it backwards; they describe Wulfnoth as the father of Godwine, not Godwine as the son of Wulfnoth. Even those who speak of his nobility never introduce him in that manner.

Against all this, there still lies the direct testimony of Florence, certainly weighty, and perhaps conclusive. Nevertheless I cannot help thinking that enough may be said on the other side to entitle the more romantic view, supported as it is by two such names as Turner and Thierry, at least to a respectful consideration.

It follows at once from this version, if we accept it, that we must sever Godwine from all natal connection with

[6] M. de Bonnechose quotes William of Jumieges as a testimony to the "Parentum Nobilitas" of Godwine; which proves too much, as that writer says "magnam regni Anglorum partem * * * ex parentum nobilitate seu vi vel fraudulentiâ vendicaverat." For anyhow, if Godwine were never so noble, it was not to his nobility that he owed his position. M. de Bonnechose goes on to quote William of Malmesbury as mentioning the "virtutes majorum" of Godwine; but this is a misquotation, as Malmesbury is speaking, not of Godwine, but of his son Swegen. The "majores" must be taken loosely for Godwine himself, especially considering the context, "Swanus multotiens a patre et fratre Haroldo descivit, et, pirata factus, prædis marinis virtutes majorum polluit."

Sussex. A writer in the "Penny Cyclopædia"[7] attempts to reconcile all the statements by taking the word "Cild" or "Child," applied to Wulfnoth, to mean "peasant."[8] I can find no such meaning for the word, nor apparently could Florence or Huntingdon, who translate it respectively by "minister" [thegn] and "puer nobilis." Moreover, Wulfnoth was then in command of a considerable division of the navy. The writer also forgets the geography of the case. "Child Wulfnoth" was a South-Saxon, but Wulfnoth the peasant must have been an inhabitant of Wiltshire or the south of Gloucestershire. Thierry, indeed, says that the interview between Ulf and Godwine took place "after a battle fought in the south part of the province of Warwick, and lost by the Danes." Mr. Turner's authorities place it after the battle of Sceorstan or Skorstein, in 1016, which was a drawn battle, though the Danes claimed the victory. I can see no reason for doubting this Sceorstan to be Sherston in Wiltshire. Mr. Thorpe[9] objects that this place does not answer Florence's description "in Hwiccia." But Sherston is so near to the Hwiccian or Gloucestershire border, that in a great battle taking its name therefrom, military operations might well extend into "Hwiccia." If Thierry has any authority for making Ulf ask the distance to the ships in the Severn, the question would be much more to the purpose near Sherston, than, as Mr. Thorpe supposes, at Chimney, near Bampton, in Oxfordshire (also out of Hwiccia), or, as others hold, at a boundary stone dividing the counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Worcester, and Warwick.[1]

Godwine's services under Cnut.

But whatever part of England may claim the honour of Godwine's birth, and by whatever means he may have gained his elevation, thus much is certain, that he had become a person of great importance at a very early stage of the reign of Cnut. This first recorded martial exploit has the northern dominions of his sovereign for its scene. In 1017, Cnut first became king over all England; two years after, according to the Saxon Chronicle, "he went with forty ships into Denmark, and

[7] Art. Harold.

[8] Still more strangely says M. de Bonnechose (ii. 54), "Il etait fils de Wulfnoth, *churl* ou *chef* des Saxons du sud." Sir F. Palgrave on the other hand makes Cild equivalent to Ætheling. English Commonwealth, i. 596.

[9] Lappenberg, ii. 189; and again in his note on Florence.

[1] Mr. Thorpe distinctly rejects this latter view, but M. de Bonnechose (ii. 30) quotes him as supporting it.

there abode all the winter." To this Henry of Huntingdon, and his copyists, add a romantic tale, which, nevertheless, seems to be accepted by Dr. Lappenberg, of a stratagem of Godwine's in a war against the Wends, which procured great favour for his English subjects at the hands of Cnut.[2] Wendover, who is followed by Dr. Lingard, give another version of the tale, in which the event is placed in the year 1024 or 1025, and the enemies of Cnut are spoken of as Swedes instead of Wends. This latter version certainly seems to contradict the statement of the Chronicle, which distinctly represents Cnut's combined host of Danes and English as being on that occasion defeated by the Swedes, Ulf and Eglaf. So that, if the tale be authentic at all, it is more probable in the form adopted by Dr. Lappenberg. But the inferences which he makes from it can hardly be sustained. He says, that after the victory Godwine was "raised by Cnut to the rank of earl;" adding, in a note, apparently as an argument against Wendover's account, that "Godwine appears as 'Dux' in a charter of 1021-3." He thence infers, most indisputably, that he could not have been first raised to that rank in 1024 or 1025. But none of the writers whom he quotes state that Godwine was "raised to the rank of earl" after the campaign in question, whether of 1019 or 1025. They all represent him as already commanding the English forces with that dignity; Wendover introduces him as "Comes," while Huntingdon and Bromton give him the title of "Consul," which, in their affected phraseology is identical.[3] And it is not only in charters of 1021 and onwards, that Godwine appears as "Dux;" he attests in that character a charter of Cnut in 1018,[4] the second year of that prince's reign in Wessex, and the year preceding the expedition to Denmark. He signs last of the persons holding that rank, the others being Thurcil, Yrric, Ranig, and Æthelweard. It is clear that the promotion of Godwine must have been one of the first acts of the reign of Cnut.[5]

Godwine raised to the Earldom.

[2] The story is very pleasantly and quaintly told by Holinshed, p. 180.

[3] So also Malmesbury introduces Godwine with the title of "Comes," as figuring in the Swedish expedition of 1025, but does not mention the particular stratagem related by Wendover.

[4] Cod. Dipl. iv. 3.

[5] Thierry can have no possible ground for saying that "after a great victory gained over the *Norwegians*, he obtained the dignity of Earl, or civil governor of the ancient kingdom of Wessex now reduced into the form of a province." Now Cnut, when he divided England into four parts, kept Wessex under his own government, and Godwine might, like others, hold the title of Earl with a much

§ 2. MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN OF GODWINE.

We now come to one of the most perplexing parts of our subject, the family relations of Godwine. We find him, at an early period of the Danish sway in England, among the chief men of the realm, and all accounts agree in representing him as forming some matrimonial connexion or other with the Danish royal family. We find him also in the reign of Eadward the father of a numerous offspring, among whom his sons Harold, Swegen, Tostig, Gyrth, and Leofwine, and his daughter Eadgyth, occupy a prominent place in the history of the period. But as to the order of their birth, and the name and parentage of their mother or mothers, we find the most contradictory statements even among early writers. And those who give the most definite accounts are perhaps not among the most trustworthy, namely William of Malmesbury and Ordericus Vitalis.

Malmesbury tells us that Godwine married twice; that his first wife was the sister of Cnut; that she gained great wealth by selling English slaves, especially beautiful girls, into Denmark; that she bore one son, who was drowned in the Thames while yet a boy, being carried into the stream by a horse given him by his "grandfather;" finally, that she herself received the punishment of her misdeeds by being struck by lightning. After her death, he married another, whose descent, and apparently whose name, also, the historian could not ascertain, but who was the mother of Harold, Swegen, Tostig, Wulfnoth, Gyrth, and Leofwine.

Ordericus Vitalis, after describing the death of Harold, calls his mother Gytha, and says she bore Godwine seven sons, Swegen, Tostig, Harold, Gyrth, Ælfgar, Leofwine, Wulfnoth.

To turn to the Scandinavian writers, the Saga[6] of Harold Hardrada contains a list of Godwine's children, without the name of their mother: "King Edward's Queen was Gyda, a daughter of Earl Godwin, the son of Ulfnad. Gyda's brothers were Earl Toste the eldest, Earl Maurokari the next; Earl Walter the next; Earl Swend the fourth; and the fifth was Harold, who was the youngest."

Saxo Grammaticus tells us that Cnut, in pursuance of his

less extensive jurisdiction, possibly over Kent only. At least the later writers often call him Earl of Kent.

[6] Laing's Heimskringla, iii. 75.

plan of conciliation between the Danes and the English, bestowed the sister of Ulf (the husband of his own sister Estrith) on "the satrap of the English, Godwine," to whom she bore Harold, Biorn, and Tostig.[7]

The earlier English authorities give more fragmentary information.

The Chronicle gives no formal list, but mentions of Godwine's children, Harold, Swegen, Tostig, Gyrth, Leofwine, and Eadgyth.

Florence to this adds (A. 1051), that Swegen was the eldest, and seems to imply that Harold was the second son. He also (A. 1067) calls the mother of Harold Gytha, sister of Svend, King of the Danes. So, also, Simeon of Durham. But Florence previously (A. 1049) calls Ulf, the father of Svend, the "avunculus" of the sons of Godwine, which would make their mother the sister of Ulf, not of his son.

In Domesday Book we find "Gytha mater Heraldi," "Gytha Comitissa," and the like, in various forms and spellings. The historical sons of Godwine all also occur in that record. It may, also, perhaps, help us to two daughters of Godwine, besides Queen Eadgyth. There is an entry of "Ælveva soror Heraldi,"[8] which must be taken in connection with the fact recorded by some writers, that William of Normandy, among the obligations which he laid upon Harold, required his sister to be given to one of the Norman nobles.[9] According to Sir Henry Ellis,[1] Godwine had a third daughter, Gunhild, who is entered in Domesday among the Godwine family, and in the Exeter Domesday appears distinctly as "Gunnila filia Comitis Godwini."

The Knytlinga Saga, quoted by Turner, states, as we have seen, that Godwine's early patron Ulf bestowed on him the hand of his sister Gyda.

The romantic legend called "Vita Haroldi," tells a strange tale of a stratagem by which Godwine obtained in marriage the sister of Cnut.[2]

[7] Benevolentiam enim quam Canutus perfidis Ulvonis meritis denegavit, consanguineæ sibi prolis respectui tribuendam putavit. Quinetiam sororem Anglorum satrapæ Godwino nuptiis junxit, gentem genti animis atque affinitate conserere cupiens. Ex qua Haraldum, Biornonem, Tostonemque ortos memoria proditum habemus, 196. Saxo's Latin is none of the clearest, but I suppose he means that Godwine married Ulf's sister, and not Cnut's.

[8] Ellis' Introd., i. 309.

[9] Sim. Dun. a. 1066.

[1] Introd. ii. 136.

[2] Chroniques Anglo-Normandes, ii. 157. Cnut, jealous of Godwine's abilities, sends him into Denmark with letters, ordering the Danes, or some of them, to cut off his head. Godwine, like the slave

The later English chroniclers supply some very curious versions, chiefly grounded upon that of Malmesbury.

Bromton first talks of Godwine as marrying the *daughter* of Cnut "by his first wife or mistress,"[3] by whom he was the father of Harold; but afterwards he says, that "by his Danish wife Gytha, the sister of Svend, he had six sons, Swegen, Wulfnoth, Leofwine, Harold, Tostig, and *Griffin*." This last must be a confusion between Gyrth and Gruffydd of Wales. In like manner Hemingburgh gives Godwine a son "Griffus,"[4] by which he seems to mean Gyrth.

Knighton marries Godwine first to Cnut's sister, whom he accuses of gaining wealth by exposing young women to prostitution, apparently without selling them into Denmark, then to another wife, by whom he had six sons, Swegen, Harold, Tostig, Wulfnoth, Gyrth, and *Leofric*.

Those who may care to trace the progress of confusion among later writers, I should recommend to refer to Fabyan, 223; Holinshed, 186, 191; Polydore Vergil, 156, (and especially the English translation published by the Camden Society, 289, 356;) Duchesne, Histoire d'Angleterre, 405—19; Rapin, 423; Speed, 413; Brady, i. 131; Hayward, Norman Kings, 48, who represents Harold's claim to the throne as being that he was "borne of the daughter of Hardicanutus the Dane." These passages are worthy of some attention as specimens of the way in which the history of this period has been written. It is really instructive to observe the manner in which, when two different stories are current in the early chronicles, the later copyists will combine both, apparently careless of the contradiction, or else jumble the two into something entirely different from either.

Statement of the evidence.

Let us now see what real facts we can gather out of all this. The best authorities, Florence and Domesday Book, together with Ordericus Vitalis, call the mother of Harold Gytha. Ordericus adds, that the other celebrated sons of Godwine were

of Pausanias, reads the letters by the way; "expalluit novus Urias," the legend adds, but, recovering himself, he substitutes others, directing the Danes to receive him as Regent, and to give him the king's sister in marriage. All this being done, Cnut puts the best face upon the matter, receives Godwine as a brother, and raises him to the rank of "Consul."

Some such story as this must also be referred to in the Chronicle of Radulphus Niger, quoted by Turner (ii. 493). "In Daciam cum breve Regis transmissus callide duxit sororem Cnutonis."

[3] De primâ uxore sive amasiâ suâ. That is, I suppose, by Ælfwyn, the reputed mother of Harold I., not by Queen Emma.

[4] Cum uxore et duobus filiis Sweyno et Griffo fugit ad comitem Flandrensem, i. 4.

also her offspring. All who mention her parentage represent her as being of Danish origin; only Florence and Simeon in one place call her the sister[5] of Svend Estrithson; Saxo and the Knytlinga Saga, and Florence himself in another place, call her the sister of Svend's father Ulf. None of these writers had any occasion to allude to any earlier wife of Godwine. Malmesbury alone, while attributing Godwine's historical children to a second nameless mother, marries him first of all to a sister of Cnut.[6] In the later writers we find this sister (or daughter) of Cnut called Thyra, and some of the children attributed to her. *Their* confusions and contradictions I need not stay to examine further than to point out one monstrous absurdity. Some of those who marry Godwine to Cnut's daughter, make her the child of Ælfwyn or Ælfgyfu, the mother of Harold the First; but Polydore Vergil and Holinshed distinctly say that Godwine's daughter Eadgyth was the child of a "sister of Harthacnut." Now to speak pointedly of a "sister of Harthacnut," rather than of a "daughter of Cnut the Great," can only mean that the person in question was a daughter of Cnut and Emma. Such an one would, like the Empress Gunhild, have been half-sister to Eadward, and consequently her daughter would have been Eadward's niece.

We may, I think, unhesitatingly assert that all Godwine's historical children were born of a Danish wife, Gytha, daughter of Thorgils Sprakalegg, sister of Ulf, the husband of Cnut's sister Estrith, and aunt of King Svend Estrithson. The only question is, whether we are, on the authority of Malmesbury, to suppose that Gytha was his second wife, having for her predecessor a sister of King Cnut himself. I must confess that I doubt it. Malmesbury's story has a mythical air about it, and the accusations against Godwine's wife are just of a piece with the ordinary Norman fables about himself and his

Godwine married but once, to Gytha.

[5] M. de Bonnechose (ii. 84) repeats this error, as Sir Henry Ellis had done before him (Introd. to Domesday Book, ii. 117), where he quotes an account of the gifts of Gytha to the church of Winchester for the benefit of her husband's soul.

[6] Even Dr. Lappenberg seems to have got out of his depth among all these fables and contradictions. He says, "the slanderous gossip of the Normans exhibits itself most glaringly in representing Harold and his brothers, not as the sons of Gytha (whom they erroneously represent to have been the sister of Cnut), but of a second unknown wife of Godwine. So Malmesbury, ii. 13." But Malmesbury does not call the supposed sister of Cnut, Gytha; he gives her no name at all, while the later writers call her Thyra.

sons. And really to suppose an union between Godwine and the king's own sister, at the very beginning of his reign, for so it must surely have been, is only adding an additional marvel to his otherwise sufficiently marvellous rise. The sister of the great Jarl Ulf, connected as he was with the throne, was herself no small alliance for Godwine, without his raising his thoughts to a sister of the king himself—a marriageable daughter, whom some of the later writers introduced, he could hardly have had so early. The English writers, who were evidently not very well versed in Scandinavian pedigrees, might by a slight confusion, have mistaken Gytha for Cnut's own sister. I cannot help thinking that the author of the "Vita Haroldi" means no other than Gytha, when he unites Godwine to a sister of Cnut living in Denmark. If both this and the more correct statement were afloat, they might easily have been mistaken for two separate wives. We may also remark, that in Malmesbury's tale, it is not easy to see who is the "grandfather" alluded to, from whom the boy received the horse which caused his death. Wulfnoth, whether "child" or herdsman, he has not mentioned, and Cnut's father, Svend, was dead.

Of the children of Godwine and Gytha, Harold, Swegen, Tostig, Gyrth, Leofwine, and Eadgyth, all play important parts in the history. Wulfnoth we shall also find mentioned, but Ælfgar rests on the authority of Ordericus alone, and is absent from Malmesbury's list. According to the Norman writer, both these two became monks, Ælfgar at Rheims, Wulfnoth at Salisbury.[7] Saxo, as we have seen, and after him Polydore Vergil, assign to Godwine a son named Biorn, who is unknown to any of the early English writers. Duchesne identified this Biorn with Wulfnoth,[8] I know not on what grounds, except that there is something of the savage beast in the composition of both names; it strikes me rather that Gytha has here attributed to her as her son a Biorn, who was really her nephew, namely, the son of Ulf, and brother of King Svend Estrithson, afterwards murdered by his cousin Swegen. Of Godwine's three daughters, Queen Eadgyth is of course recognised everywhere, though

[7] Elfgarus et Vulnodus Deum diligentes pie legitimeque vixerunt, et in verâ confessione prior Remis peregrinus et monachus, alter Salisberiæ, venerabiliter obierunt.

[8] Wlnod, que d'autres semblent nommer Biorno, 410.

in Snorre she appears as Gyda; the other two, Ælfgyfu and Gunhild, rest, as we have seen, on very satisfactory testimony.

Order of the brothers.

Of the order of birth of the brothers we have very contradictory statements, but we can see our way tolerably well as far as regards the three principal ones, whom modern writers generally and probably arrange thus, Swegen, Harold, Tostig. This is the order in which they begin to appear in the history; Swegen also is distinctly called the eldest by Florence,[9] and as he adds immediately "alterque filius Haroldus," we may infer that he considered him as the next. But Malmesbury enumerates them in the order, Harold, Swegen, Tostig, as if Harold had been the eldest brother, but he says nothing distinctly, except that Gyrth and Leofwine were younger than Harold. Ordericus makes Harold junior to Tostig, but that is in order to represent him as unjustly depriving Tostig of the West-Saxon earldom. On the contrary, another enemy, Saxo,[1] talks of "minores Godovini filii, majorem [Haraldum, sc.] perosi," in a way which must refer to Tostig, though he is not mentioned by name. Snorre, as we have seen, makes Harold the youngest of the family, but we can trust but little to one who reckons among Godwine's children the members of the rival houses, Morkere, the son of Ælfgar, and "Earl Walter," by whom I suppose he means the great Waltheof, son of Siward.

Turning to another source of information, the signatures to the Charters, Swegen and Harold both appear among the great earls at the commencement of the reign of Eadward, and Harold at least possessed the rank of earl, though probably with a less extended jurisdiction, before the death of Harthacnut.[2] On Swegen's disgrace in 1046, none of the other brothers are promoted, but his earldom is divided between Harold and their cousin Biorn; Tostig does not appear as one of the great earls till the death of Leofric in 1055. In attesting the charters, we find the brothers

[9] A. 1051, in describing the movement under Godwine against the Normans. Thierry, in describing the same event, when he ought to have had Florence before him, calls Harold the eldest and Swegen the second.

[1] 107.

[2] Dr. Lappenberg says that Harold witnesses a charter of Harthacnut as Dux. I cannot find such an one of Harthacnut himself in the Codex Diplomaticus, but there is one of Bishop Lyfing during his reign (vi. 69) signed by "Godwine Dux," and "Harald Dux."

signing with no very certain order, and no very certain titles,[3] but so far as we can infer anything, the order seems to be Swegen, Harold, Tostig, Gyrth, Leofwine. This is Malmesbury's order, corrected by the statement of Florence that Swegen was the eldest, and Malmesbury may have put Harold first as the future king. Wulfnoth, who perhaps never signs, is placed by Malmesbury between Tostig and Gyrth, but I conceive him to have been the youngest of all, on the strength of a passage of Florence to be hereafter examined.

EDWARD A. FREEMAN.

[3] In a charter of 1044 all five brothers sign as "Dux," but generally that title is confined to Swegen and Harold during the early part of Eadward's reign. Swegen so long as he signs at all, is always "Dux." Harold is generally "Dux," in two of 1045 "minister," in two later ones "Comes." Tostig signs as "Dux" in one other charter of 1041-7, otherwise he does not usually assume that title till his promotion in 1055. Before that he is "minister" or "nobilis;" several times we have pointedly "Harold Dux, Tostig Minister." From 1055 onwards he is generally "Dux," twice "Comes." After the charter of 1044, Leofwine does not sign till 1049-50, when he appears as "minister" or "nobilis;" from 1061 he is "Dux" or "Comes." After 1044 Gyrth does not sign till 1055, when he appears as "Comes," and in 1061 as "Dux." In the charter of 1044 (iv. 80) the order is Harold, Leofwine, Swegen, Tostig, Gyrth; Swegen signs two others with Harold, and before him; in several others he signs alone. *Harold always signs before Tostig*, Tostig always (with the one exception) before Gyrth and Leofwine; Gyrth generally before Leofwine. In one bearing date December 28, 1065, the order is Leofwine, Gyrth, Harold; in ten days the latter's title of "Dux" was to be exchanged for a higher one.

If we could get rid of the single charter of 1044, the order of their appearance and their precedence in signing would be tolerably clear. It is worth notice that, with that exception, Swegen always signs before Harold, Harold before Tostig, and Tostig before Gyrth and Leofwine, while Harold, Gyrth and Leofwine do not observe so strict an order. Now Swegen had a quarrel with Harold, while Harold, Gyrth, and Leofwine lived and died firm friends. Did not jealousy in the one case lead to a strict observance of ceremony, confidence, in the other, lead to its being dispensed with?

Wulfnoth I imagine never signs. If he were either, according to one statement, a hostage in Normandy from his father's return till Harold's death, or a prisoner of William's from his childhood, as Florence tells us, there were good reasons why he should not. Probably he was not born in 1044, when all the other brothers sign close together. A Wulfnoth does sign several charters about that time, but he was probably a different person from the son of Godwine.

(*To be continued.*)

ON THE LIFE AND DEATH OF EARL GODWINE*

§ 3. GODWINE DURING THE REIGN OF HAROLD THE FIRST AND HARTHACNUT.

At the death of Cnut, Godwine appears as the chief man of English blood in the realm, and as taking a prominent part in the dissessions as to the succession between Harold and Harthacnut. This brings us almost immediately to the great question of Godwine's life and character, the accusation which, with many writers, has branded his name with indelible infamy. Had he, or had he not, any share in betraying the Ætheling Ælfred to Harold I., or in the loathsome torments which that barbarian inflicted upon his rival and his adherents? To examine into this question, we must look at the state of affairs immediately following the death of Cnut, when the crowns which had been heaped upon the head of that illustrious monarch were divided among a host of unworthy successors. That of England was disputed between his natural son Harold, and Harthacnut, his son by Emma, who was consequently half-brother to the English Æthelings. According to Malmesbury and Wendover, the Danes in England were in favour of Harold, the English divided between Harthacnut and the sons of Æthelred; Godwine, whom the former calls "maximus justitiæ propugnator," appears as the champion of Emma and Harthacnut. Florence says nothing of this, nor does one version of the Saxon Chronicle, while the other makes Godwine, at the head of the West-Saxons, act at first as the chief supporter of Harthacnut's claim to the entire kingdom, and, after the division was agreed upon, as the minister of that prince and his mother in Wessex. Now, it is worth notice that this last version of the Chronicle, which differs very much in its dates from the other, makes no mention of Godwine's supposed treachery to the Ætheling Ælfred, nor, indeed, records

* Continued from p. 252, *ante*.

his coming into England at all. I cannot help thinking that we here have two distinct versions of the story, which have been confused. As the tale is generally told, we hear that the kingdom was divided between Harold and Harthacnut, the latter taking all south of the Thames, but as the new King of the West-Saxons still remained in Denmark, Emma and Godwine governed in his name at Winchester. Ælfred comes over, lands at Sandwich, is seized by Godwine at Guildford, carried before Harold, and blinded or murdered; Emma is then driven into exile, Harthacnut forgotten, and Harold elected king over all England. Of this story half comes from one version of the Chronicle, half from the other; each of the two is tolerably consistent with itself, but the whole which they produce cannot lay claim to that merit. Godwine, so lately the chief support of Harthacnut, is[1] silently transformed into the minister of his rival Harold; the tale also is always told as if the aggression had been made upon the kingdom of Harold, whereas Sandwich and Guildford both lie within the territory assigned to Harthacnut. It is always Harold and his party, not the agents of Harthacnut, who are represented as opposing his entry; Godwine, as minister of Harold, seises him within the region which he is just before described as governing in the name of Harthacnut. In fact it may be doubted whether those who told the tale of Ælfred's landing and being betrayed by Godwine, knew anything of the division of the kingdom, still less of Godwine's position as the minister of Harthacnut. This is the situation of the writer of one version of the Chronicle; he seems to have regarded Harold as succeeding to the whole kingdom on the death of Cnut, Harthacnut being rather mentioned as a mere unsuccessful rival than as one who shared the kingdom by a formal division. Florence avoids that part of the difficulty which is concerned with Godwine's personal share in these transactions, by recording the dissensions on the death of Cnut without any mention of his name; but still he leaves the other untouched, namely, how it happened that an incursion into the dominions of Harthacnut was avenged, not by the ministers of that prince,

Two versions confused.

[1] Hume indeed tells us that Harold had gained over Godwine by a promise to marry his daughter, but I can find nothing of this in any trustworthy writer. Rapin more prudently says that he won him over "par des voyes que l'histoire n'a pas développées, mais qui ne sont pas malaisées a diviner."

but by those of his rival Harold. In continuation, Florence tells us how on the final accession of Harthacnut, Ælfric, Archbishop of York, accused Godwine and Bishop Lyfing to that king as parties to the murder of Ælfred, and how Godwine cleared himself by his own oath and that of the other great men of the realm, asserting that the blinding of Ælfred was not done by his will or counsel, and that what he had done was all by the command of his lord King Harold.[2] He also describes the magnificent ship which Godwine gave Harthacnut as the price of his friendship—a gift which does not throw more doubt upon the purity of Godwine's acquittal than the fact that Ælfric got Lyfing's bishopric in plurality for his pains, does upon the testimony of the Most Reverend informer.

Let us try what amount of truth we can get out of these discrepancies between our best authorities, taking in what amount of collateral evidence we can find elsewhere. The details of the two stories in the Chronicle cannot be reconciled, and Florence is actually self-contradictory; yet it seems impossible to doubt the historical character of the two main events, the division of the kingdom between Harold and Harthacnut, and the subsequent landing of Ælfred, with his blinding or death. The variations, however, in the narration of the latter event are so numerous as to destroy all confidence in the details, yet we may observe that all introduce Godwine in some shape or other.

First of all, I think we may fairly accept the statement that, on the death of Cnut, Godwine, with the West-Saxons, asserted the claims of Harthacnut, that the kingdom was divided between him and Harold, and that the government of Wessex was carried on in Harthacnut's name by Emma and Godwine. The version of the Chronicle which states this was written during Eadward's reign, and apparently early in it, as, on recording his election, it adds a wish for his long life. The narration is remarkably clear and straightforward, while there is something very confused in the way in which the story is told in the other. Such a division of the kingdom is also the sort of event which could not well have been invented, while, as the arrangement proved only

[2] "Insuper etiam non sui consilii nec suæ voluntatis fuisse quod frater ejus cæcatus fuisset, sed dominum suum Regem Haroldum illum facere quod fecit jussisse, cum totius fere Angliæ principibus et ministris dignioribus Regi juravit." Fl. Wig. a. 1040.

temporary, it might easily have been passed by in other accounts. Now this must be reconciled with the other fact that Ælfred came into England, and was blinded or murdered. I will not enter into the controverted details, whether Ælfred came alone or accompanied by Eadward, or whether the latter preceded him; whether he was induced to come by a genuine letter from his mother, or by a forgery of Harold's; or, finally, how long he survived his blinding. The great difficulty, as I said before, is the fact that this event is placed before the election of Harold as king over all England; if it happened afterwards, all would be plain, and it is probably on this account, that some of the later writers, as we shall soon see, do actually place it at a later period. But the Chronicle and Florence are distinct; Ælfred is blinded before the expulsion of Emma and the election of Harold over Wessex. Now we must take in two considerations; first that a popular rumour, if nothing better, accused Emma herself,[3] either alone or in conjunction with her son Harthacnut, of complicity in the deed; secondly, that Eadward, in a charter, attributes the death of Ælfred to Harold and Harthacnut together.[4] Now, as Dr. Lingard truly says, the accusation must allude not to Harthacnut personally, but rather to some of those who governed in his name during his absence, that is either Emma or Godwine; but as Harold the son of Godwine signed the charter, and would not be likely to subscribe his father's disgrace, it must be taken of Emma only. Now Emma was always said to have had little regard to her sons by Æthelred, having transferred all her affection to her second husband and children. We know also how severely Emma was treated on that ground by her son Eadward. Again, the panegyrist of Emma does not accuse Godwine, but represents him as receiving Ælfred with all friendliness, and Harold's satellites as seizing him in Godwine's absence, and without his knowledge. Our facts then seem to be that Ælfred was received by Godwine—this much is allowed, whether treacherously or not is the question—that his murder was the work of Harold,

[3] Bromton. "Quidam tamen dicunt ipsam in necem filii sui Alfredo consensisse et venenum Edwardo procurasse . . . unde dicunt quod propter necem Alfredi contra Regem Hardeknoutum, cujus conniventiâ hoc processisse dicebatur, et contra dictum Godwinum magna ira orta est."

[4] Cod. Dipl., iv. 171, 181. In one he accuses the Danes in general, in another Harold and Harthacnut by name.

whether with or without Godwine's consent; finally, that suspicion reached both Emma and Harthacnut. I have argued all along that as the aggression was made on the dominions of Harthacnut, we should have expected that his partisans would have been the persons to resist him, whereas we hear nothing of them, but only of the agents of Harold. But though the attempt was immediately directed against Harthacnut's possession of the crown, it would probably have ultimately attacked Harold's share also. Consequently the partisans of both might well be on the alert. Godwine might well meet Ælfred, either on his own account or on Emma's, and yet Harold's emissaries seize him in a frontier town without Godwine's intervention. This seems to have been the notion of the contemporary author of the Encomium Emmæ. And, on this view, we can easily understand how suspicion of treachery may have attached to Godwine at the time, and how later writers, forgetting that he was the minister of Harthacnut, may have represented him as acting on the part of Harold. If so, with what aim did Godwine meet Ælfred? He may have gone with a commission, friendly or unfriendly, from Emma; or why may we not believe that Godwine really intended to assert the rights of the Ætheling? Godwine, as we have seen, opposed the Danish party after the death of Cnut, and obtained for Harthacnut a portion of the kingdom; after the death of Harthacnut, he opposed them again and placed Eadward on the throne. Why attribute to him a single act opposed to both his earlier and his later policy? He had opposed Harold and supported Harthacnut; Harthacnut was still absent and his cause was failing; Ælfred, the English Ætheling, was actually landed; nothing was more natural than that Godwine should transfer his allegiance to him from the dilatory Harthacnut; nothing less in character than that the leader of the English party should conspire with the Danish King[5] against the English Ætheling. I really think this is more probable than the version devised by Thierry, that Godwine went to see what

Share of Godwine in Ælfred's fate.

[5] Harold was certainly of English blood on the mother's side, if the son of Cnut and Ælfwyn; if he was not really Cnut's son at all, he may well have been English on both sides. Yet he figures as the chosen king of the Danish party, while the English prefer Harthacnut, though, as the son of a Danish father and a Norman mother, he was a complete stranger. Was illegitimacy a greater obstacle in English than in Danish eyes?

Ælfred was like, and finding that he had too many Normans with him, abandoned or betrayed him to Harold. Nor has that writer any business, in thus narrating the story, to put into Godwine's mouth a speech out of Henry of Huntingdon, who tells the whole tale in a completely different manner (making Ælfred not come till after the death of Harthacnut); still less, two or three pages after, to make the whole share of Godwine in the business fabulous. If Godwine, as I imagine, came to Ælfred really intending to support him, and if, during Godwine's temporary absence, Harold's emissaries carried him off, one can quite understand that the cautious Earl might think it useless to venture any further in his behalf, and might thus easily undergo the suspicion of treachery. And when suspicion had thus touched him, his accusation and acquittal before Harthacnut become, in themselves, perfectly intelligible; the only difficulty is presented by the particular form of words put into Godwine's mouth by Florence. Taken alone, one would infer from them that Godwine arrested Ælfred at Harold's command, but that all the special barbarities were entirely the king's own act. Yet, as we have seen, it is impossible to conceive that Godwine was then in Harold's service. If he were, surely the royal command would be ample justification for merely seizing the persons of Ælfred and his followers, as disturbers of the peace of the realm,[6] provided he was guiltless of treachery in the manner of accomplishing it, and of complicity in the fiendish atrocities which followed their arrest.

On the whole, the matter must remain now, as it did then, involved in obscurity and suspicion. I do not pretend to make out a demonstrative case in favour of Godwine, but still less can such an one be made out against him. I certainly think that, amid such a mass of difficulties and conflicting statements, the great earl, every other action of whose life is that of an English patriot, is at least entitled to a verdict of Not Proven, if not of Not Guilty.[1]

Conclusion. The case doubtful.

[6] Would any officer, military or civil, in the service of George I. or II. have been blameworthy for apprehending the elder or the younger Pretender? If such an event had taken place, and the king, of his own act, had caused the full penalties of the law of treason to be inflicted, the case would have been just analogous to this view of Godwine and Harold.

[1] So M. la Butte (Ducs de Normandie i. 281) "Cette opinion [that against Godwine] est fort contestable, et dans tous les cas, elle est fort contestée.

It may perhaps be worth while, as before, to look a little at the way in which the story has been corrupted by more recent writers.

Malmesbury's statement.

The way in which it is treated by Malmesbury is very remarkable. He casts doubt upon the whole story, but describes those who related it (the "rumigeruli," as he somewhat contemptuously calls them) as placing it between the death of Harold and the arrival of Harthacnut. Mr. Hardy, in the Historical Society's edition, observing the difference between this and the ordinary statement, proposes to read "Cnutonis" instead of "Haroldi." This is rather destroying than explaining conflicting evidence. To me it seems plain that Malmesbury or his informants saw the difficulties which I have above mentioned as attending the version which represents Godwine as acting on behalf of Harold, and put the story later in order to avoid them. As Harthacnut is represented as highly displeased with the proceeding, they must have conceived Godwine, Bishop Lyfing, and the "compatriotæ," who are said to have aided them, as acting on their own account.

Bromton's version.

Now stories are apt to improve in the telling, and a little dexterous treatment will easily transform this version into the tale which is given at such length in Bromton. That romance-loving Abbot quotes, indeed, the common version, and also, as we have seen, that which implicated Emma herself; but his own form of the story is widely different. The last form, as we have seen, delivered us from one great crux, our present narrator sends all the others after it. The deed is done after the death neither of Cnut nor of Harold, but of Harthacnut; the motive is Godwine's own ambition; the sovereign offended is of course no longer Harthacnut, but Eadward. This has the merit of getting rid of all puzzling questions as to Godwine's position during the divided kingdom, or as to the parental and fraternal merits of Emma and Harthacnut. On the death of the latter prince the English expel the Danes, and send for the two Æthelings, sons of Æthelred; Godwine determines in his own mind that the future King shall reign under his management, and marry his daughter; he perceives that the high spirit of Ælfred will never submit to this arrangement, but that the

milder and weaker Eadward may perhaps be brought under the yoke; he therefore determines to destroy Ælfred and promote Eadward.[2] Now when the messengers reach Normandy in search of the Æthelings, they find Eadward gone into Hungary, to visit his nephew Eadward, the son of Eadmund Ironside; but Ælfred comes over, and is betrayed and blinded by Godwine, according to the common story. The English chiefs, enraged, swear that Godwine shall die a worse death than ever did Eadric,[3] the betrayer of his lord King Eadmund; Godwine, however, escapes into Denmark, but his goods are confiscated. Meanwhile Eadward comes over, is crowned, and reigns justly and mercifully. Godwine, hearing of his justice and mercy, ventures to hope that the latter princely virtue may be extended to himself; he supplicates that he may be allowed to come over and plead his cause. This he does in a "Parliament," where the "Counts and Barons" talk a considerable quantity of Norman law. Earl Leofric at last cuts the knot; "It is clear that Godwine is guilty, but then he is the best-born man in the land after the king himself, [therefore, we may suppose, neither the son of Wulfnoth the herdsman, nor yet kinsman of the upstart Ealdorman Eadric], so he and his sons, and I, and eleven other nobles, his kinsmen, will each bring the king as much gold and silver as he can carry, and the king shall forgive Earl Godwine, and give him his lands back again." To this singular way of observing his coronation oath to do justice, the saintly monarch makes no objection; Earl Godwine takes his lands, and King Eadward takes the broad pieces; perhaps they were the identical ones over which he afterwards saw the devil dancing.

During the reign of Harthacnut, we read of Godwine, besides his trial and acquittal, being sent with Archbishop Ælfric and others to disinter the body of the late King Harold, a precedent followed in more polished times with that of Oliver Cromwell. Dr. Lingard represents these illustrious body-snatchers as quarrelling over their agreeable task, which led to Ælfric's accusation against

[2] Thus far Bromton copies Henry of Huntingdon, for the rest the good Abbot seems to draw on his own resources. Robert of Gloucester, Polydore Vergil, and Fabyan follow nearly the same version; Peter Langtoft and Hardyng adhere to the common story.

[3] It is singular that Bromton, in introducing this comparison, makes no allusion to any relationship between Godwine and Eadric.

Godwine. He had also a share in the capture of Worcester, along with Siward, Leofric, and the other great earls, including Ælfric again. This prelate is said to have instigated the king to burn the city, because the people thereof preferred a separate bishop of their own, to one who divided his ministrations between them and an archiepiscopal see.

§ 4. GODWINE AND HIS CHILDREN IN THE EARLY PART OF THE REIGN OF EADWARD.

On the death of Harthacnut, in 1042, Godwine begins to appear in a more important and a more distinctly honourable character. There cannot be the least doubt that Eadward was peaceably elected king on the death of his half-brother. This appears from both versions of the Chronicle, and from Florence, the latter of which authorities adds, that his election was chiefly brought about through the influence of Godwine and of Lyfing, Bishop of Worcester, the prelate who had shared with him the imputation of Ælfred's murder. I only mention this, because Thierry, on insufficient authority, has given us a picture of Godwine and his sons acting as the leaders of a patriot army, and expelling the Danes by main force. This he rests upon certain confused and unintelligible statements of Bromton and Knighton, which it is exceedingly difficult to reconcile even with the latter writer's own subsequent statements, much less with the history as transmitted by earlier and better authors. Bromton connects this expulsion of the Danes with the coming over of Ælfred, which, as we have seen, he places after the death of Harthacnut. Knighton, first of all,[4] relates the death of Harthacnut 'in unâ bovariâ," and his burial at *Westminster*. He then says that under him the oppression of the Danes was so great that the English rose under a certain Howne, and expelled them. He then relates the murder of Ælfred as happening under Harthacnut, goes off to certain tales of emperors and popes, and finally returns to England to kill Harthacnut again in the ordinary way at the marriage-feast, and to bury him at *Winchester;* adding, that the English immediately sent into Normandy for Eadward, who was certainly in England at the time. Instead of

[4] X. Scriptt. 2326.

building up a story on the absurd contradictions of so late and inaccurate a writer, Thierry would have done better to have adopted in full, instead of merely honouring with a brief allusion, the legend of Saxo Grammaticus, which is at least consistent with itself, and which is worth relating, as a specimen of the way in which the history even of neighbouring countries may be entirely misconceived. Saxo makes Harold, the son of Cnut, die before his father, and consequently never reign in England; Cnut himself dies at Rouen, in a war with Richard of Normandy; Svend Estrithson acts as his lieutenant in England, and secures the crown for Harthacnut. This prince sends for his half-brother Eadward, whom he associates with himself in the kingdom. Of the royal saint Saxo Grammaticus does not speak highly; he ventures to talk boldly of Eadward's "stoliditas" and "desidia." On the death of Harthacnut, Svend hopes to succeed both in Denmark and England. Finding his hopes frustrated in the former quarter, he returns to England only to find that Harold, the son of Godwine—Godwine himself is not mentioned—had roused the English against the Danish rule, massacred the Danes at a banquet, and given a nominal royalty to the weak Eadward, reserving the real administration in his own hands. This beautiful story seems to meet with no credence from any writer, except, perhaps, Polydore Vergil and Duchesne. Earlier writers had probably never read the Danish historian; later and more critical ones have generally passed by the story with the contempt it merits. Of both these fictions one need only say, that they must be confused repetitions of the massacre of St. Brice in the time of Æthelred. Knighton's "Howne," indeed, can be no other than the "Huna quidam, Regis Ethelredi militiæ princeps, vir strenuus et bellicosus," who, according to Wendover,[5] instigated Æthelred to that crime.

Election of Eadward.

Both Eadward and his mother were now in England, under the protection of Harthacnut, who, according to a probable though ill-authenticated statement, had named Eadward as his successor. This is clear from Florence, Malmesbury, and William of Jumièges; the notion that Eadward was in Normandy, adopted by Thierry, comes from that version of the story of Ælfred, which represented the Æthelings as coming over

[5] i. 444.

after the death of Harthacnut. Or rather, as Dr. Lingard truly says, in the form which it assumes in William of Poitou, it is an interested Norman fiction. That writer would have us believe that Eadward was elected under a letter missive from William the Bastard, with threats of a Norman invasion as his writ of præmunire. Very different is the authentic narrative, whether in the unadorned simplicity of Florence, or in the more elaborate periods of Malmesbury. This last writer gives us a long story of the way in which Godwine persuaded the unwilling Eadward to accept the crown, of which Florence and the Chronicle say nothing. It is chiefly valuable for the character which it gives of Godwine as an eloquent speaker, skilled in the art of guiding popular assemblies,[6] on which the novelist well remarks, that "when the chronicler praises the gift of speech, he unconsciously proves the existence of constitutional freedom."[7] If Malmesbury be correct in his statement (not found in all his MSS.), that a few persons opposed the election of Eadward, and were banished from the kingdom, one can only imagine them to have been a small Danish party, who supported the pretensions of Svend. That prince certainly claimed the crown, and is said to have professed that Eadward named him as his successor.[8] If so, we may here have some slender additional groundwork for the war or the massacre dreamed of by Saxo and Thierry.

Eloquence of Godwine.

It is however certain that Svend was treated, if not as a friend, at least as one whom it was wished to provoke as little as possible. This may have been owing to his connexion with Godwine as the nephew of Gytha, as well as to his own position as the nephew of the great Cnut. Certainly he was dealt with in a very different way from his Norwegian rival Magnus, who also claimed the throne by virtue of an alleged convention between him and Harthacnut, and to whom Eadward was made to return an answer of magnanimous defiance.[9] Godwine even went so far as to counsel vigorous aid to Svend in his war with Magnus, which the Witan refused on the motion of Leofric. The result was that, after the defeat

[6] "Homo affectati leporis, et ingenue gentilitiâ linguâ eloquens, mirus dicere, mirus populo persuadere quæ placerent."

[7] Harold, i. 165.

[8] Lappenberg, ii, 236.

[9] *Ibid.* Saga of Magnus, ap. Laing, ii. 398. Eadward somewhat strangely says "After him [Cnut] *my brother Harald* was king as long as he lived, and after him my brother Hardicanute took the kingdoms both of Denmark and England."

of Svend, Kent and Essex were ravaged by a Norwegian fleet, and probably the sudden death of Magnus alone prevented a more formidable invasion. Thierry, therefore, is hardly justified in saying that "none of the kings of the north ventured to claim with arms in their hands the inheritance of the sons of Cnut."

From this moment up to the fight of Hastings, the history of England is, in fact, the history of Godwine and his children. Godwine the Earl, Harold the Earl, Harold the King, ruled England during a period which all allow to have been among the most prosperous in our early history, a season of repose between Danish and Norman invasions. For a moment the intrigues of the stranger banished the stout English chieftains, but only to return to greater power among the united acclamations of their countrymen. The formal position successively occupied by Godwine and Harold was that of Earl of the West-Saxons, carrying with it the chief jurisdiction over the old kingdom of Wessex, with its appendages of Kent and Sussex. This was the portion of the kingdom which had usually remained under the immediate sway of the monarch, ever since the King of the West-Saxons had expanded into the full proportions of "totius Britanniæ Basileus." Cnut had retained this territory in his own hands, while dividing the rest of England into Earldoms, so that Godwine probably first obtained this extensive jurisdiction, while acting as the lieutenant of the absent Harthacnut, and retained it during the subsequent reigns. It is perhaps the most striking mark of his greatness, that this peculiar possession of the sovereign should now for the first time be placed under the government of a subject. Harold obtained the Earldom of the East-Angles, including, also, Essex, Cambridge, and Huntingdon; Swegen was invested with the rule of an anomalous province, partly Mercian, partly West-Saxon; to wit, the shires of Somerset, Gloucester, Hereford, Oxford, and Berks.

Godwine Earl of the West-Saxons.

Of the administration of Godwine and his sons in these high places, we find, of course, exactly contrary statements in the English and the Norman writers, which are mutually compared with tolerable fairness by Malmesbury. Sir F. Palgrave [1] adopts without hesitation the Norman version,

[1] Anglo-Saxons, 334.

and represents them as behaving with great insolence to the king personally. Yet this is just what, according to the account of Malmesbury, the English writers expressly denied, and is hardly consistent with the phrase of the Chronicle, that they were "the King's darlings." As regards the more important question, how they governed their Earldoms, their popularity, wherever they come, except in Somersetshire, seems sufficient proof of the good government of Godwine and Harold, while it affords some presumption against that of Swegen. Nothing is to my mind clearer than that they were the essentially English party, the impersonation of the West-Saxon feeling, hated by the French intruders, and looked on with more or less of envy and suspicion by the Northern Earls and their half Danish followers. Whether Godwine had or had not any share in the miserable fate of Ælfred, no stain can be found attaching to the subsequent administration either of himself or his son. The Norman writers, who rake up every fable against them, only, after all, bring vague accusations without proof, or else paltry legends, which carry their own confutation with them. When we have continually repeated nothing but the same charge of "treason" against Godwine, of "perjury" against Harold, we may at once perceive that the doubtful crime of the father against the English Ætheling, and the crime, if crime it was, of the son against the Norman Duke, were the greatest of which they could accuse them. In fact, their hatred is the very noblest tribute that could be paid to rulers whose great object was the support of the national cause, and the exclusion of all foreign influence. Judging Godwine and his son by their certain recorded actions, and not by the vague declamations of enemies, they are entitled to the praise of having raised and maintained themselves in greatness by a thoroughly patriotic policy, and without any distinctly proved crime.

Queen Eadgyth.

Along with the advancement of Godwine and his sons, King Eadward, not long after his election, married, in pursuance of his engagement to the earl, his eldest daughter Eadgyth, or, in modern orthography, Edith.[2] Godwine probably

[2] The French writers seem sorely puzzled with this name. Thierry informs us that it is "diminutif familier pour Edswithe ou Ethelswithe." M. la Butte in his new History of the Dukes of Normandy (ii. 285) gives rather a Mycenæan turn to the name; the "charmante et douce créature," as the Queen appears in the former page, becomes more definitely "la belle Egisthe."

expected, that by this means, the crown of England would in due time descend to a grandson of his own, who would have his uncles for his natural guardians and ministers. This hope was frustrated by the absurd and unnatural terms on which the royal pair lived together, on which I shall leave Eadward's monastic biographers to enlarge; suffice it to record the motive which some of them assign, that he was unwilling to become the father of children who would be the grandchildren of the traitor Godwine. This Queen's character puts us in some perplexity; it appears from Malmesbury that her private life did not pass altogether without scandal, but that her dying assertion of her innocence was accepted by all men as sufficiently clearing her reputation. We, however, are rather concerned with her in the character of Godwine's daughter and Harold's sister. She was indeed disgraced and restored with her father and brothers, but she has also won the dubious honour of Norman approbation. William of Poitou [3] represents her not only as an enemy to Harold, but as actually a favourer of William; taking the opportunity for a good deal of round abuse of the one, and of eulogy on the other. And we find also a fact recorded on better authority, which must for ever stamp her name with infamy. Florence, in recounting the wrongs of the Northumbrians, which led to the expulsion of Tostig, enumerates "the execrable murder of the noble Northumbrian Thegn Gospatric, whom Queen Eadgyth, for the sake of her brother Tostig, caused to be treacherously slain in the King's court, the fourth night after our Lord's nativity." [4] This recorded crime may sufficiently balance the interested praises of Ingulf, and the saying about "the rose and the thorn." [5] Indeed, whatever we say to the phrase of the Abbot of Croyland, "in nullo patris aut fratrum barbariem sapiens," we may at least accept, in a different sense from that intended, the description of her given by the Norman chaplain, that she was "Heraldo moribus absimillima." [6]

The first of Godwine's sons who appears prominently is the eldest, Swegen. We have seen, Malmesbury's description "multotiens a patre et fratre Haroldo descivit, et,

[3] 199.

[4] A. 1065.

[5] "Sicut spina rosam genuit Godwinus Egitham."

[6] Malmesbury's general description of Eadgyth is, "fœminam in cujus pectore omnium liberalium artium esset gymnasium, sed parvum in rebus mundanis ingenium; quam cum videres, si literas stuperes, modestiam certe animi et speciem corporis desiderares."

pirata factus prædis marinis virtutes majorum polluit." The cause of his taking to this Viking life we find elsewhere. The Chronicle tells us that in 1046, after an expedition into Wales, "then commanded he to be brought unto him the Abbess of Leominster,[7] and had her while that he listed, and after that let her go home." The other version tells us somewhat later that "Swegen the Earl went out to Baldwine's land to Brycge;" *i.e.* Bruges. Florence, who is copied by Hoveden, apparently connects the two events, and supplies the name of the Abbess, telling us that "because he could not have in marriage Eadgyfu, Abbess of Leominster, whom he had corrupted, he had left England and gone into Denmark." I infer from this that Eadgyfu was a consenting party, and that Swegen forsook his earldom and his country in a fit of pique. At all events, there is a little colouring about Dr. Lingard's version, that "he had violated the person of Edgive, the Abbess of Leominster, and the indignant piety of Edward drove him into banishment." It does not appear that he was formally banished, and his treatment as an outlaw might well follow on his taking the part of Count Baldwine of Flanders[8] against the Emperor Henry, while the King was at war with the former on behalf of the latter.[9] His Earldom was divided between his brother Harold and his cousin Biorn,[1] both of whom opposed its restitution, when, tired of his warfare in Denmark and Flanders, he came to ask for restoration. On this he treacherously murdered Biorn, as is related in the Chronicle at length. He was afterwards restored, at the intercession, according to Florence, of Ealdred, Bishop of Worcester, and afterwards Archbishop of York, whom Stubbs[2] describes as being of that authority with King Eadward that he could reconcile to him his bitterest enemies, instancing Swegen himself and the Welsh King Gruffydd.

(*To be continued.*)

[7] Most surely the Leominster in question is the well-known Leominster in Herefordshire, in Swegen's own Earldom, and not Leominster in Sussex, as Mr. Hussey (Churches of Kent, &c, p. 249) takes for granted, inferring from the statement about Swegen that "a small nunnery existed here in Saxon times."

[8] Flanders seems the favourite resort of the Godwine family, and Baldwine their fast friend till just before William's invasion. Tostig married his daughter Judith, sister of Mathilda, Queen to the Conqueror.

[9] Lappenberg, ii. 241.

[1] Malmesbury calls him Bruno; Wendover makes him the King's cousin instead of Swegen's.

[2] Act. Pont. Ebor. x. Scriptt. 1700.