# The conquests of Ceawlin, the second Bretwalda

# THE CONQUESTS OF CEAWLIN

*By the Same Author*

THE STORMING OF LONDON AND THE THAMES VALLEY CAMPAIGN

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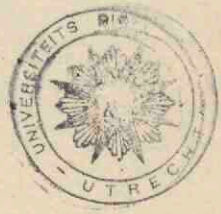
# THE CONQUESTS OF CEAWLIN

## THE SECOND BRETWALDA

By Major P. T. GODSAL

WITH PLANS

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1924




PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES.

# PREFACE

THE Conquest of Britain by the English will never be explained unless it is treated as a whole, and an explanation is offered which is coherent and adequate.

It is claimed for the version of the second stage of the conquest here put forward that whatever faults it may have it is at least coherent and adequate.

The only way to tackle a subject of this kind is to begin by asking ourselves what are the chief difficulties that have to be faced, and at least a tentative explanation of them offered? The minor difficulties are legion, but the two chief ones seem to be, firstly, marine transport, and how that was continuously provided as it was wanted during a period of about 150 years; and secondly, the relations of the southern invasion by the Saxons, led by Angle Kings, to the northern invasion by the Angles.

These crucial questions have not been shirked in this work. No version can possibly be adequate that offers no answer to them. Then it would be impossible to give an adequate explanation of the

second stage of the conquest without offering a coherent explanation of the battle of Mons Badonicus.

It is assumed, and for reasons that seem to the writer conclusive, that this battle took place at Bath.

The way in which it came about that an English force got itself into such a false position as to have been besieged on a mountain at Bath is suggested, but has of course to be conjectural. The way in which that force got away after sustaining heavy losses, is explained by means of evidence which does not appear to have been recognized hitherto as such, since it is derived from a tainted source, namely, the so-called history of Geoffrey of Monmouth.

No apology is offered that a certain amount of conjecture has to be indulged in with a view to enabling the reader to realize what sort of disaster to the English the battle of Mons Badonicus must have been, since without thus visualizing the battle, we cannot form an estimate as to its consequences to the invasion as a whole, and the lasting effects it had upon the course which the conquest eventually followed. One of these consequences was the making of the Wansdyke by Ceawlin, and the reasons for which he made it, and the way he used it, are fully explained.

The Wodnesbeorg of the Chronicle under the year 591 is identified as Wednesbury near Wolverhampton, and reasons for this identification are given.

The reasons for this identification seem to be conclusive, and they are confirmed by the fact

that it enables a consistent and coherent explanation of Ceawlin's career of conquest after Deorham to be given, and more especially to explain his tragic end.

A point in this book which will probably excite the objurgation of critics is the fact that the battle of Fethanleah, mentioned in the Chronicle under the year 484, is once more identified as Faddiley in Cheshire, in spite of the adverse verdict of philologists. It is shown that that verdict is based on very uncertain premises, and that at most it only amounts to a verdict of "not proven."

The general resemblance of the names is sufficient to make it reasonable to submit the question to the judication of Military science, and whether we approach Faddiley from the standpoint of the invaders or of the defenders of Cheshire (to use the modern name), the verdict in favour of the identification of Fethanleah with Faddiley is conclusive. Very strong reasons are given for supposing that Ceawlin, in league with the Angles, did attack Cheshire at this time, and if those prove acceptable, then it follows that the most likely spot for a great battle to have taken place was unquestionably Faddiley.

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# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

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# THE CONQUESTS OF CEAWLIN

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

THE conquests of Ceawlin the second Bretwalda have become easier to explain, since it has become recognized that the invading English did advance up the Thames Valley. That such a crucial question should have ceased to be a matter of controversy, constitutes an immense advance in our knowledge of the history of our land and people.

The publication of the book, "The Storming of London and the Thames Valley Campaign. A Military Study of the Conquest of Britain by the Angles," in the year 1908, first proved that the invading English certainly made an advance up the Thames Valley, after taking London, the leading feature of the first stage of their conquest. These conclusions were arrived at by means of inductions from the literary evidence, and from that of the countless traces of the conquest that remain, and these inductions were co-ordinated

and welded into a coherent story by deductions from the principles of Military Science.

Five years later the fact of the advance of the invaders up the Valley of the Thames was confirmed by archæology, namely, by the publication of the book, "The Archæology of the Anglo-Saxon Settlements," by E. Thurlow Leeds, F.S.A., the Curator of the Ashmolean Museum. It, therefore, does not seem likely that this, the fundamental feature of the English conquest of Britain, can ever again be called in question; and so it may be accepted as a firm foundation upon which the further advances of the invaders may be built. Or to change to a better metaphor, the advance of the invaders up the Thames Valley provides a true source from whence the flow of the further streams of conquest may be followed.

It must be borne in mind that invaders, who declined to live in walled towns, but destroyed them all, and settled in open villages and farms, must have made arrangements for constantly guarding these open settlements, and no fresh ones could ever have been made without careful provision for their protection.

It is important to keep the fact that conquest was accompanied by colonization constantly before us, and that the sort of conquest we are dealing with, is that permanent conquest that was made with a view to occupying each district as it was won, and then guarding it; until, in the process of time, with the coming of fresh immigrants, collected, for the most part, from Saxon clans on the Continent, a fresh permanent advance became possible. This permanent conquest, which origin-

ally began with the landing of Hengist and Horsa at Thanet, differed altogether from the previous incursions, by means of which the power of the Britons was reduced and the country explored, and wealth collected.

This limitation of our inquiry is of the utmost importance, and also is of the greatest assistance, since it imposes on our investigations the same limitations as must have constrained invaders, who had given so many hostages to fortune in the shape of open settlements.

We have seen how, during the first stage of the conquest, the settlements of the invaders were constantly guarded by the strategical genius of Aella, who used the river Thames to protect his right flank, at the same time that he used it as a means of advance, until, between the army under King Aesc at Englefield, near Reading, and the army under Cerdic advancing from the south Calleva Atrebatum was reduced, and became known henceforth by the English name "Silchester." It is hardly too much to say that the first stage of the conquest of Britain by the English, could never have been understood but for the evidence of Bede that Aella King of the South Saxons had sole command of all the invaders south of the Humber. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us much, and gives us the most important facts; but it would have indeed been difficult to co-ordinate them, and weld them into a whole, and give a coherent explanation of this stage of the conquest, but for the evidence of Bede. The evidence also of the Chronicle that Aella was given the mysterious title of

"Bretwalda" is of almost equal importance, and as Ceawlin became the second Bretwalda, that title must be explained.

The fact that Bede's evidence is of late date, namely, some two centuries after the time of Aella, hardly affects its value at all, if we consider the manner in which it came about that Bede felt himself compelled to give the important statement about Aella that we find in his Ecclesiastical History.

The reason why this evidence of Bede is given rather fully here will appear later. For the present all the reader is asked to do is to consider its unsophisticated character, and how impossible it would have been for a Northumbrian ecclesiastic like Bede, who never left his native kingdom, to have made such a statement, unless, not only it was true, but would be recognized as true by all his readers.

It was, indeed, a fact known to all the men of Bede's time which could not be omitted without, in their estimation, detracting from the value of his history. Although Bede was writing only an ecclesiastical history, yet he felt it incumbent on him, when telling us about Ethelbert, the first Christian King to have sole rule in this country, to show that he knew that two great heathen kings, Aella and Ceawlin, held the same rule before him.

Bede's evidence is as follows. Speaking of Ethelbert he says, "tertius quidem in regibus gentis Anglorum, cunctis australibus eorum provinciis quæ Humbræ fluvio et contiguis ei terminis sequestrantur a borealibus imperavit; sed primus

omnium cælestia regna conscendit. Nam primus imperium hujusmodi Ælli' rex Australium Saxonum; secundus Cælin rex Occidentalium Saxonum, qui linguâ eorum Ceaulin vocabatur; tertius, ut dixi, Ædilberct rex Cantuariorum; quartus Reduald rex Orientalium Anglorum, qui etiam vivente Ædilbercto eidem suæ genti ducatum præbebat, obtinuit." Then follow, fifth Edwine, sixth Oswald, and seventh Oswy, with remarks on the extent of the conquests made by each. Then in the Chronicle under the year 827 we find it stated that Egbert was the eighth king who was Bretwalda, in succession to the above list of kings.

It is plain to every one that we here have before us two great facts. Firstly, the sole "imperium" or "ducatus" clearly borne witness to by Bede; and secondly the title of Bretwalda that was borne by those kings who succeeded, or claimed to have succeeded, in exercising a similar rule or authority to that borne witness to by Bede.

Of these two facts the fundamental one was evidently the supreme military command, or an authority, won for themselves by each of these kings; and though this rule or authority may have varied according to the character of the king and the times he lived in, yet in all cases it was recognized that there was sufficient similarity, to that won for himself by Aella King of the South Saxons, to warrant the successful Monarch in claiming the glorious title of honour that was first granted to Aella.

It is evident that the Bretwaldaship was not the name of an office with definite rights and

duties, but merely a title of honour that was claimed by certain kings after they, in emulation of the deeds of the first king who was granted that title, had done enough, at least in their own estimation, and that of their followers, to justify them in adopting the title. Although the rule established in all cases was primary, and the title of Bretwalda secondary, it will be best to consider the Bretwaldaship first.

To do this it will of course be necessary to consider how it was that the title of Bretwalda came to be given to Aella King of the South Saxons, and by whom it was so given, that it was thought ever afterwards to be the highest honour a successful monarch could win.

It is manifest that the title of Bretwalda could only have been devised and given by the leading king of the English race, and under circumstances of peculiar honour, at some important juncture.

Under no other circumstances is it conceivable that the Bretwaldaship would have remained for centuries such a glorious tradition.

Such a tradition could never have resulted merely from the personal swagger of a Saxon Chieftain who claimed the kingship of the South Saxons, the smallest party of invaders who gave their name to a district. It is this paltry kingship of the South Saxons that must be explained, before we can understand the commanding position of Aella, their nominal king, when he was made Bretwalda.

We want to understand how a man who had sole command of all the invaders south of the Humber, could have been king of a horde of

immigrant Saxons, collected from their numerous clans on the Continent, and there is only one explanation possible.

Aella was the only king who was not of the royal race of Woden, and he probably was sprung from one of the Jutish or Saxon branches of the English race. Nothing but superlative ability could have won for him the position he undoubtedly held, since it is vouched for by Bede.

Then the time came that it was essential that Saxon immigrants should be brought to settle on the lands won. How could they be induced to leave their homes? They knew that the first thing they would do would be to quarrel amongst themselves, unless they were certain of finding some settled form of government on their arrival, which they could respect. Aella quickly solved the difficulty by saying, "I will be your king."

For quite a long time Aella could be constantly in Sussex, and could attend to the partitioning of the land; but later he must have ruled entirely by deputies, chieftains appointed by himself, if he was to give his whole attention to the invasion and conquest, and by the time he was made Bretwalda, which could only have been upon his retirement from active campaigning, his connection with Sussex had probably ceased altogether. Thus we need not allow his temporary kingship of the South Saxons to distract our attention from Aella's far greater services to the cause of the invaders. It is evident that the kingship of the South Saxons was a relatively unimportant incident in Aella's career; important at the time, since it

settled a difficulty, and secured the willing co-operation of the Saxons; but it was a difficulty that gradually disappeared. Moreover, it is evidently characteristic of Aella, since it gives us an insight into the confidence he had inspired, not only in the leaders of his race, but also it shows that his fame had spread to the Continent; and the assurance that Aella would be their king, drew Saxon immigrants in thousands from their scattered clans on the Continent.

It is now time to come to some conclusion as to the origin and meaning of the mysterious title of Bretwalda, and in order to enable us to do so, we must try and form some idea as to the position of the invaders in the Thames Valley when Aella had consummated the work of his life by the taking of Calleva Atrebatum, or Silchester, which probably had to surrender to the combined armies of Cerdic and Aesc about the year 510.

We shall thus be able to form a reasonable conception how it was that the unique title of honour "Bretwalda" came to be given. That it was only a title of honour, giving the royal recognition and confirmation of a primacy of command long exercised, we may feel confident from the analogy of the later claimants of the title, as well as from the probabilities of the case.

During Aella's long period of active command, we have no reason to suppose that he was anything more than Chief Heretoga, or, in modern language Commander-in-Chief of all the invaders.

Possibly his Kingship of the South Saxons served incidentally an object of considerable importance, amongst invaders who paid great respect

to rank, since it raised Aella to a rank equal to that of Hengist, and later of his son Aesc.

However that may have been, there can be no doubt at all that King Aesc and Cerdic, as well as all of lesser rank and authority, obeyed Aella as long as he was in active command, if there is any truth in the remarkable evidence of Bede.

Then came Aella's retirement from active command which can hardly have taken place before the capture of Calleva.

The retirement of a man who had had sole rule, the sole "imperium" or "ducatus," of all the invaders for many years, must have been a very important event. Every one, from the leading king of the race, downwards through all ranks, must have desired that such a beloved and ever victorious leader should continue to exercise some influence, as long as he retained his faculties; and at any rate all would wish that such a leader should hold a position and rank second to none in the lands he had won. A title was wanted that, whilst it expressed the rule that Aella had exercised for so many years, over every one with whom he had to deal, whether friends or enemies, at the same time carried no definite duties or authority with it. The only authority the old man could exercise was that of his personal influence. That, supported by the approval of his sovereign, could not pass away until his death.

The title of king with its many arduous duties and the necessity it involved of keeping some sort of state, was impossible. But a title for which there were precedents was not far to seek. The

title "Walda" or Wielder had been used before. We read of a Folcwalda in Beowulf, and Tacitus mentions a Catualda, personal names, it must be admitted, but they show that there was nothing novel in the term "Wielder." A man could hardly be called a Wielder who had not already wielded a nation or people, unless indeed the term formed part of his personal name given at birth. It is impossible to conceive a title more suited to a man who for many years had so exercised supreme authority amongst the invaders of Britain, as everywhere to settle his friends in security, and defeat their enemies, than "Bretwalda" or "Wielder of Britain." Even if Bretwalda only meant Broad or Wide Wielder, as has been suggested by some, the argument would scarcely be weakened.

It is important to realize that such a title as Bretwalda could only have been given to a man who had already done his work, it could only have been the royal and national recognition of an accomplished fact. It would have been absurd to bestow such a title upon a leader at the beginning of his career, or even before he had established his people in a definite position of security, with wide districts at their command, and fresh settlers pouring in, as ships became available for their transport. Aella must have proved himself to be the "de facto" wielder of Britain, before such a title as Bretwalda could have been bestowed upon him. What more perfect title of honour than that of Bretwalda can be conceived for bestowal on the aged leader Aella upon his retirement? Whilst it carried with it no definite responsibilities or

anxieties, it put the stamp of royal recognition and approval upon the gold of a life spent in the service of the English race.

And yet there is one more deduction to be made from the evidence of Bede, and of the Chronicle, and it is one that we may make with a confidence and certainty that almost amount to demonstration. If the Bretwaldaship was indeed such a glorious tradition, that it was sought by at least seven of the greatest kings of the English, after they and their followers thought that they had done enough to deserve it, then it follows, that the first bestowal of that title can have been no hole and corner affair, but it points clearly to some great assembly of the invaders at which Aella was invested with the title, and probably rewarded with other gifts, with the acclamation of the assembled warriors, and the chief leaders of the invasion.

The retirement of a leader who had had sole command for so many years, would make it absolutely necessary that some sort of assembly should be convened to arrange for the future, and distribute rewards for the past. The most central and convenient spot for such a meeting at that time was unquestionably the meadow which, at the time of Magna Charta, bore the name of Runnymede or the Meadow of Council. That name can only be accounted for by the fact that some great council, or possibly councils, had been held there in former times.

It is suggested that the great council which first gave its name to this spot, which has since been almost made sacred by the sealing or signing

there of Magna Charta, was the Council-Meeting at which Aella was invested with the title of Bretwalda.

However, no one is compelled to believe that the first council that gave its name to Runnymede was that held on Aella's retirement, and those who pride themselves in doubting everything not proved by literary evidence, will probably continue to indulge their propensity to doubt. The point is that unless Aella was made Bretwalda at some great meeting of the invaders somewhere, the Bretwaldaship could not possibly have remained a glorious tradition for at least three centuries.

The only place that might possibly vie with Runnymede for that honour is Kingston, but it is a detail that cannot matter. Thus, from a study of the circumstances that led to its initiation, we have been able to form a fairly clear conception what the title of Bretwalda meant. It was a title of honour given with honour. It was a title that had to be won, it could not be granted except at its initiation. It was the recognition of deeds accomplished for the wielding of Britain, by the leading King of the English race, but even that royal recognition would have been soon forgotten, if it had not been received with acclamation by the assembled leaders and warriors of the nation.

Enough has been said to explain what the Bretwaldaship was; it is now time to consider how the later winners of the title qualified themselves for it, and why it took the course it did, finally becoming extinguished in Northumbria, until eventually it was renewed by Egbert.

As regards Ceawlin the second Bretwalda, little

need be said here, since his life-history fills the bulk of this book, and no one who knows how he settled up the west, and later on conquered, and largely settled up, the West Midlands, can question Ceawlin's right to the title of Bretwalda.

It is different with Ethelbert; it is hardly possible to understand how he could have done much in the way of the conquest of fresh districts, and although his rule, after the death of Ceawlin, may have extended very far, it is difficult to believe that Bede was not mistaken in claiming for Ethelbert anything approaching sole command of all the invaders. It is quite likely that for some time there was a sort of primacy claimed by the Kentish kings, and, whilst Ceawlin was away in the Midlands, the kingdom of Kent was quietly accumulating wealth and acquiring a more extended influence.

Whatever may have been the character and extent of the "imperium" claimed for Ethelbert by Bede, it is evident that there was a large party who would not admit it, although they may have submitted to it for a time, and until they could find a claimant worthy of it, and capable of asserting his claim. Perhaps it was the fact that Ethelbert had ceased to worship Woden, that aroused a large party of heathen dissentients to his rule.

Their opportunity came with the accession of Redwald to the kingdom of East Anglia in the year 593, and to secure the support of this heathen faction Redwald gave up Christianity which Ethelbert had persuaded him to adopt. It seems certain that a warrior like Redwald

would take advantage of the weakness of the Welsh, caused by the victorious advance of Ceawlin in the west, to conquer large parts of the east Midlands; and having done this, he would later on be proclaimed Bretwalda, with the acclamation of his heathen followers; not only because he had earned that title, but also because the Christian King Ethelbert would thus be ousted from a command and a title he had done little or nothing to deserve.

We do not hear of Redwald asserting his authority over Ethelbert in any way, and therefore we may conclude that it was the title of Bretwalda, assumed by Ethelbert, that had aroused the jealousy of the East Anglian heathens, and Ethelbert appears to have thought it better to resign it, lest he should have to fight such a redoubted warrior as Redwald, and risk losing all.

We now come to a great crisis in the history of the Bretwaldaship, and learn by what means it came about that it was transferred to Northumbria.

The youthful Edwine began life as a fugitive from King Ethelfrith, and, after having been pursued by the emissaries of the latter, eventually took refuge with King Redwald in East Anglia—who refused to give him up; and eventually took his part, and raised an army, and defeated and slew Ethelfrith on the banks of the river Idle.

It must have been during Edwine's long residence at Redwald's court that he learnt all about the Bretwaldaship and its glorious traditions, and must often have heard Redwald saluted as Bretwalda. Redwald died soon after he had

defeated Ethelfrith, and it evidently became the ambition of Edwine to win the title of Bretwalda, which he soon afterwards did, by the conquest of Anglesey and the Isle of Man, as well as parts of the district which is now Lancashire.

By this means Edwine became so powerful that he was able, according to Bede, to extend his dominion over all parts of Britain except Kent. Edwine was succeeded by Oswald, whose dominion was of the same extent, What his qualifications were for the title of Bretwalda we do not know, but there must have been several Welsh districts still left for him to conquer and rule.

The seventh Bretwalda was Oswy the brother of Oswald. He appears to have qualified himself for the title by conquering and rendering tributary some districts of the Picts and Scots.

After the death of Oswy the Bretwaldaship seems to have lain dormant, until it was revived about one hundred and fifty years later by the great King Egbert, about whose sole rule there can be no question.

It is easy to see how the Bretwaldaship thus remained in abeyance so long. Northumbria, in which the Bretwaldaship survived so long, was constantly at war with Mercia; and so Mercia was not likely to carry on a title that had become merely a Northumbrian tradition. The Bretwalda tradition seems to have died out in Mercia, or even if it still lingered, there appears to have been no king, except perhaps Offa, who could have made a legitimate claim to the title. It is quite possible that Offa did claim and acquire the title, but that the fact has not been recorded, or

that he would have claimed it, if he had not died so soon after his last great victory over the Welsh in the marshes of Rhuddlan. That the Mercian kings did claim a very extended supremacy must be admitted, but never the Bretwaldaship.

These surmises are merely intended to show how easy it is to explain the lapse of the Bretwaldaship for so many years.

It is also quite easy to explain its revival by Egbert. In Kent and Wessex, the tradition of the Bretwalda must have been carefully preserved; although since Ceawlin and Ethelbert, no king had risen in those districts who was capable of qualifying for the title by conquest and universal rule, until the rise of Egbert, who was not only a West Saxon King, but also connected with Kent, and Egbert established a rule with a universality that had never been approached by any of his predecessors.

Is there anything surprising in the fact that Egbert, who was descended from Ceawlin the second Bretwalda, claimed that glorious title directly he had qualified himself for it by establishing universal dominion throughout England?

By considering the circumstances under which the title of Bretwalda was first given, we have realized that it was a title of honour and of nothing but honour, it gave no extra power to the holder, it was only the recognition of the past services of a great leader by his sovereign, approved by the acclamation of all whom he had so constantly led to victory.

The story of the Bretwaldaship is a golden thread that laces together the greater events of

the progress of the Conquest of Britain by the English, at the same time that it gives us an insight into their chief aspiration, which was, that some great king might in the course of time arise, who would again weld together the scattered branches of the race into unity.

When Egbert had once done this with some degree of permanency, and a permanency that would probably have been complete but for the later incursions of the Danes, the title of Bretwalda could no longer be won, it lapsed from its own success.

The above story of the Bretwaldas lies largely beyond the scope of this book, and yet it is no digression, since it helps us to enter into the spirit that was all the time actuating the invaders, though it was a spirit that blew where it listed; and many, if not indeed most, of them may have been unaware of its presence, until it was aroused by opportunity; and then the king in whom for the time their hopes became centred owing to his wide success, was hailed as another Bretwalda.

Many attempts have been made to explain the conquest of Britain by the English, but none of them can be pronounced successful, although we must all be grateful to their authors for having dragged into the light every piece of literary evidence that can be made to bear upon the subject. What strikes us most about each and all of these attempts is their inadequacy.

Many able investigators, by means of masterly induction from the evidence, have thrown light on this or that phase of the conquest, and we feel, as we read them, that we are learning something;

and then the conclusion is forced upon us that the theory put forward is inadequate, and something greater is wanted. The fact is their induction from evidence is perfect as far as it goes, but they dread deduction from principles, although deduction is but the strategy, as induction is the tactics of investigation, or, to change the metaphor, investigators are like sailors who dread to go out of sight of land, and fear to trust themselves to the guidance of the sun and stars. Fortunately for us our course is made more clear by the very difficulties of the task the invaders had set themselves, namely, that of conquering by armies, and holding by means of colonization. This limited their powers of striking at a distance, and enables us to comprehend the strategic factors of each step of the advance. Invaders who constantly gave numberless hostages to fortune in the shape of open settlements, dare not go far from the broad base they had to protect.

This statement does not of course imply that they could not send out marauding or reconnoitring expeditions to very great distances, but even such expeditions would have to be conducted with great caution and skill if they were not to entail disaster, not only to the force concerned, but also to many homesteads that would for a time be unprotected. The difference between conquest accompanied, step by step, by colonization, and ordinary warfare, must be grasped, if we are to understand the conquest of Britain by the English, which differs altogether from the conquest of England by the Danes. Although some have professed to detect a resemblance between them, it extended no farther than the facts that, for all we know to the contrary,

the warriors and vessels employed in the earlier invasion, probably resembled those of the later, and they came from much the same countries, and landed at the same ports. They were in fact the same race, but here the resemblance ceases. We are considering only the final invasion for the purposes of permanent conquest and occupation, and it is quite possible that the earlier expeditions of the English, for the purpose chiefly of plunder, against Roman Britain, may have resembled those of the Danes, though even then the resistance that had to be encountered was of a wholly different character to that met with by the Danes.

The Danes when they first landed in England came as gangs of warriors for the purpose of plunder, and without a thought for the morrow. They found not a single walled fortress in the whole country, and all there was to resist them in each district that they swooped down upon was the Fyrd, a sort of local militia, raised from the open farmsteads scattered over the country; unless indeed they happened to find the king ready to receive them with his Gesiths and house-carls, but these were not numerous enough to form more than a rallying-point for the Fyrd.

But there was a greater difference still between the invasion of the Gallo-Roman Britain by the English, and of England by the Danes. The Danes, in spite of all their ferocity and cruelty, and the hatred they aroused, where their chronic incursions prevailed, came to a people whose language they could understand, and with whom they showed themselves in numberless instances quite ready to amalgamate and to settle down together

in amity. Moreover, the Danes showed themselves quite ready to adopt the system of local government and administration that they found in the English districts they occupied, with very slight modifications. Whereas the English changed everything, the Danes practically changed nothing, beside adding a few laws, and a few fresh place-names; and they set the example, to be followed of necessity by Alfred and his daughter Ethelfleda the Lady of the Mercians, of creating fortified centres. Considering that they began in the same countries, crossed the same sea, and ended in the same districts, we can hardly find two invasions, followed by conquest and settlement, more contrasted than those of Britain by the English, and of England by the Danes. Superficially, it may be admitted that there was a sort of resemblance, but intrinsically there was no resemblance at all. It has been necessary to say this much about the Danes, because so many investigators have been led astray by having moulded their ideas of the conquest by the English, on their knowledge of the later conquests by the Danes.

The first stage of the conquest of Britain ended with the death of Aella the first Bretwalda. It is therefore incumbent upon us to form some idea of the position of affairs at that epoch, in order that we may be able to trace the strategic factors that influenced the invaders, and led later to the conquests of Cerdic and Cynric, and to the conquest of the West Midlands by Ceawlin.

It seems necessary first to make a few preliminary remarks upon strategy, since that term is often used very vaguely. Strategic influences vary

very much in intensity, sometimes they are evident to all ranks in an army, sometimes it takes a great mind to grasp them. For instance, after the battle of Crayford, when Hengist's army slew four thousand Welsh-men, and they fled with great fear to Londonborough, we can well understand that Hengist's followers, whether warriors or seamen, would have mutinied if he had not at once gone on to take London, the chief strategic and commercial centre, and chief seaport of the country. All knew that, if London was once taken, the whole of Kent would be theirs without a blow.

After London was taken the problem became more complex, and yet since we hear of no failures, and as far as the lines of the invasion can be traced, the invaders appear to have been directed and restrained (a more difficult business) in a masterly manner, we can only suppose that Aella was a consummate strategist. However, even if Aella's strategy was not so faultless and far-seeing as the writer supposes, it comes to the same thing in the end; since the mistakes would not have been recorded, but only the far-flung war-strokes by sea and land, by which all districts south of the Thames were conquered and colonized in safety, have been recorded in the Chronicle; and even some of these are evidently missing, and have to be supplied by the reasonable conjecture that what was so well begun was equally well ended.

With the death of Aella the restraining influence was gone, and we shall soon see how the invaders had to learn in the school of hard experience, that the dictates of sound strategy cannot be neglected without disaster.

Of course we do not learn of this disaster from the Chronicle, it is not mentioned, and it is only from Welsh sources that we know about the battle of Mons Badonicus.

Yet even this disaster seems to have been a blessing in disguise, since it restored that restraining influence which had vanished with the death of Aella; and the invaders were sobered down, and directed to a wiser course, and induced to restrict each advance that they made to a limited conquest well within their powers, not only of taking but also of keeping. That is the point we must grasp if we are to understand the conquest and colonization of Britain by the English, namely, that it was always a useless squandering of the limited forces at the command of the invaders, unless each victory was followed by the permanent and secure acquisition of fresh territory.

A school of sound strategy had probably sprung up under Aella the first Bretwalda, but upon his death a fresh generation of ambitious warriors appears to have broken away from its traditions, and were only brought to heel by the disastrous campaign of Mons Badonicus. It is an instructive fact that we only learn of this serious check to the invading English from Welsh sources.

The inference from this is, that there may possibly have been other minor disasters, or there may have been successful minor campaigns that led to no permanent advantage, but if there were any such, they were even less likely to have been recorded than the disaster of Mons Badonicus.

It seems more probable, however, that, after that lesson, the strategic principles inculcated by

the first Bretwalda prevailed; and that the invaders never afterwards committed their forces to a task that was not well within their powers of achievement. Then, with the rise of Ceawlin the second Bretwalda, we find ourselves studying the acts of a leader, who, whatever his faults may have been, had as wide and far-seeing strategic vision, even as that of Aella himself. It has been necessary to make these few remarks on strategy because, whoever ventures to assume that when nations are at war, military science can never be in abeyance, but must remain the chief science by means of which the facts of that warfare may be co-ordinated, is apt to be met by a school of criticism that loves to veil its ignorance by quoting Milton's "Battles of Kites and Crows," or with Green, show its scorn for anything military by talking of a "Drum and Trumpet History." Such critics are apt to meet the use of the term "strategy" in connection with the warfare of "so-called" barbarians, with a supercilious smile; and assume that plain deductions from military science are guess-work, and inapplicable to illiterate barbarians. They seem to fail to realize that a patchwork of inductions from very meagre literary evidence, remains mere guess-work, unless they can be co-ordinated by some scheme that is adequate, and will stand the severest criticism at all the numberless points that call for explanation in a great invasion across the sea, and leading to colonization.

Inductions from numerous facts relating to a great subject, great not only from its importance, but also from its extent as measured in space and

in time, can only be co-ordinated, and brought into due relation to one another, by means of reasonable deductions from the principles of some science.

In the case of a transmarine invasion, followed by permanent conquests and settlement, upon what principles can we base our deductions with any hope of sure guidance but those of military science? Not forgetting, of course, the demands of the ancillary science of Navigation, and the difficulties involved in Marine transportation? The use of the term "strategy" in connection with the conquests of Britain by the English, seems to arouse the scorn of some, especially of those literary critics who had to use Green's "Making of England" as a text-book in their university days. It should be remembered that after all "Strategy" is only a convenient term for common sense applied to warfare, so the question merely resolves itself into one of whether the invaders acted as reasonable men or as blundering fools. In either case they must have been up against strategic factors, working weal or woe, in precise accordance with the way they were recognized or disregarded.

It may be admitted that in a great invasion there were strategic problems that demanded something beyond what we understand by common sense, in fact, there were questions to be settled as a basis of action, that were only comprehensible by the superlative ability of a great leader. The conduct and the result of the first stage of the conquest proved that there was such a leader, and Bede tells us that he was Aella

King of the South Saxons, and known later as the first Bretwalda.

It may be fairly urged that Military Science, or Strategy, is not merely common sense, but systematized common sense applied to warfare, and that when the invaders first landed, it is impossible for us to credit them with clearly defined system of strategy for not only defeating their enemies, but also for making their friends secure in their open settlements. Probably this was the case.

The campaign along the north coast of Kent could have raised no very puzzling strategical questions; every man serving there, on land and sea, must have known what was wanted, namely, the capture of London and its port. Any false moves made after that event might have involved the invaders in hosts of difficulties, and have squandered their forces in useless victories, if not indeed in disasters.

It must have been about this time that the ability of Aella was recognized and he was given sole command.

Thus it came about that, by the time Aella retired, the methods of conquest and settlement had been reduced to a fixed system. In fact, in modern language it had become scientific, it had been systematized in accordance with the dictates of the soundest strategy by a leader of consummate ability.

This book then is written to show that upon the death of Aella the natural thing happened.

Warriors who had been constantly victorious had learned to despise the Welsh, and so, freed

from the restraining influence of their great leader, they started on a wild campaign that was contrary to the dictates of prudence and common sense, in more modern parlance, it was contrary to the principles of sound strategy; and so they met with a disaster that was only partially retrieved by brilliant tactics, as we shall see later.

Thenceforward, the invaders having learned in the hard school of experience, never forgot their lesson. but reverted to that systematized scheme of invasion, followed promptly by fresh settlements, that had been devised and perfected by the superlative genius of Aella the first Bretwalda.

It is hoped that these few remarks on Strategy will reconcile critics to the adoption of its principles as a guide in our investigations, and that it will be admitted that deductions from sound principles are reasonable conjectures that do not deserve to be ranked as guess-work, but rather that it is mere guess-work to assume that the invaders were nowhere actuated by a fixed policy, and that the movements of their fleets and armies and parties of settlers, were directed by the casual decisions of jealous leaders, with no fixed principles or recognized system to guide them.

It is a reasonable conjecture that one man could not have had sole command of all the invaders south of the Humber for a period of probably half a century, but at any rate for a very long time, without having established some sort of scheme of invasion, by means of which fresh districts were conquered, and the open settlements

established upon them protected. In other words, that he taught his followers sound strategy.

If, however, it is admitted that the invaders did bring with them, or perhaps only evolved, a set scheme of conquest and colonization, it may well be asked, "Did it leave definite traces by which it may be recognized?" The answer is in the affirmative.

The traces of the conquest are too numerous to be specified here; some will be dealt with as they are met.

On the whole the distribution of place-names is the most significant, and more especially around London. However, this is too large a subject to be dealt with here, and we only select one set of place-names, namely, the Stokes, for special notice; since the Stokes help us to trace the course of the conquest with greater certainty and precision than any other form of place-names.

It stands to reason that whenever invaders distributed in open settlements over the country, and with no fortified centres at which they could assemble, and from whence they could advance, and to which if necessary they could retire, wished to undertake a further permanent conquest of a definite coveted district, it would be necessary for them to fix upon a base of operations for the above purposes at which stores and munitions of war could be collected, and at which they could eventually assemble.

We find this requirement of warfare, under the conditions that prevailed during the invasion, perfectly fulfilled by the Stokes; and so we may conclude that the Stokes were in each and every

case where we find them, first made for the above purpose.

It does not follow that every single permanent advance of necessity premises the construction of a Stoke. In some instances the invaders may have been so overwhelmingly strong that a base of operations was unnecessary, in others perhaps a strong tun served the purpose, in fact we often find Stoketuns or Stocktons. However that may be, wherever we do find a Stoke, we seldom, if ever, have any difficulty in discovering its objective, in other words, we can always understand the purpose for which it was originally made.

Amongst the place-names of England the Stokes hold a unique position, they differ from all others in one remarkable respect, although etymologists tell us that there is nothing in the word "stoke" to indicate anything more than "a place," and that we are not even entitled to assume, as we should be inclined to do, that a Stoke meant a place surrounded by a stockade.

It is evident, therefore, that with the Stokes, as indeed with certain other forms of place-names, the powers of etymology to explain what they meant to those who first gave them, are limited, and we must visit the Stokes themselves, and study their relation to other place-names, and to their surroundings, if we are ever to hope to learn more.

In dealing with such a far-flung place-name as Stoke, the difficulty is to arouse a spirit of inquiry that is of equally wide extent. The following suggestion may be of some assistance.

Supposing we took the map of, say, the south of England, and scratched out every Stoke, and wrote instead the word "Place." Our interest would be at once aroused, and we should naturally ask, Why did the invaders select one spot in each district and call it the Place?

And then our attention is drawn to another supreme fact, and that is that we only find one Stoke in each district, and we never find two Stokes together, in fact, seldom within ten miles of one another. This statement is not traversed by the fact that we find a North and a South Stoke together in the Thames Valley, and again near Arundel. One of these Stokes has been the original, and another village that has risen near it has assumed the same name. In fact, in the Thames Valley there appears to have been a third stoke intervening, from which the others derived their names.

Apart from these very explainable exceptions, the Stokes stand in a solitary grandeur that is unique amongst the various classes of place-names. It may be said that the singular thing about the Stokes is their singularity.

We find an apparent weakening of this characteristic in the west, in that part of Britain that was occupied by the Saetas or Settlers.

Saetas merely means "dwellers," but the way this term was used evidently implies that the Saetas had taken no part in the conquest, but had been brought in as settlers with their families to fill up districts which had been won by the armies.

We find the Dorsetas, Wiltsetas, and Somer-

setas, and the use they made of Stokes is easily explained. In this region we often find a stoke in one valley near to a stoke in the next valley.

This change in the character of the stokes will be more fully accounted for when we follow the strategy of Ceawlin later on. For the present it is sufficient to state that, when Ceawlin had completed the first stage of his advance westwards, and before his advance northwards from Deorham, he professed to be satisfied with what he had won, and established the Wansdyke as his frontier line, and kept a strong force in constant readiness to guard it. Behind this strategic frontier line, which the Welsh were taught to respect, although for miles it was only marked by a Roman road, Ceawlin settled up the country by bringing in Saxon clans, not as armies, but as settlers with their families, and perhaps even cattle; in fact, they were correctly termed "Saetas" or Settlers.

The distribution of these saetas seems to have been carefully thought out and provided for, since the results leave evidenee of the same system of settlement having prevailed everywhere throughout Dorset, Wilts, and Somerset.

Each party of saetas seems to have been apportioned a valley to conquer and to keep, on condition that they drove out all the Welsh from their district. This they could easily do, although in many cases they found the Welsh withdrawn into the fancied security of vast hill-fortresses; and the wretched Welsh soon learned that a fort, however strong, that cannot be relieved, must sooner or later be surrendered to invaders who had come to stay, and who knew that a great

leader was watching to prevent the approach of any relieving force too great for them to deal with.

And now we can see how it came about that we find a Stoke, and only one, in almost all the larger valleys of the west.

It was essential even for settlers, since they had to be prepared for much local warfare, to have a base of operations. For a few seasons, at any rate, they must have required a secure centre at which stores could be collected, and from whence they could be issued; at least until the new system of valley cultivation, which the Saxons introduced, had been established, and their fields and their herds had become productive.

At first each stoke was evidently just the Stoke of its district, though many of the smaller stokes were soon distinguished by being called after the stream on which they were situated, such as Alverstoke, Plimstock, Tavistock, etc.

The greater stokes seem to have remained for a long time without any distinctive addition to their names, even until the time of the Normans, whose propensity for travelling from one castle to another made it essential that the stokes should be distinguishable, and so we find such names as Stoke D'Abernon, Bishops' Stoke, etc., although many stokes have remained simply "Stoke" until this day.

Etymology is an accurate science, and must be absolutely respected so far as it leads us, but it is evident from the stokes that it has its limits, and where we find plain facts to help us to extend our knowledge of the actual meaning that the

invaders of Britain attached to certain words, we should be foolish not to study them.

We get an interesting illustration of the limits of etymology in the place-name suffix "Stead."

Etymology can only tell us that it is the same as the German "Stadt," and it appears to have much the same meaning as the word "Station," a place or spot where people resided for a time or permanently. The science of language gets us no further than this, and so it is necessary for those who care for facts, and wish to know what meaning our invading forefathers attached to the word "Stead," to visit all the steads they can, and see for themselves, when a very striking peculiarity makes itself apparent.

The steads, almost without exception, are on relatively high ground, and generally on the highest ground in their neighbourhood. It looks apparently as if steads were look-out stations, but we are now only concerned with facts and not with deductions that may be made from them.

Then, again, etymologists tell us that the word "Tun" simply meant an enclosure, and they quote the Anglo-Saxon scriptures and the charters to prove it. Some tuns may have been such, but we are concerned with tuns formed some two centuries before the scriptures were translated, or the charters were drafted, and during a time of strenuous warfare.

We naturally suppose that tuns which gave us permanent place-names, under such arduous circumstances, were more likely to have been enclosures for keeping out armed men than for keeping in cattle and swine; and we are supported

in our surmise by the fact that the tun of those days was an organized community with a tungerefa and a tunscipe. Cattle and pigs can hardly have required the services of a sheriff and a garrison.

In the tuns with their tungerefas and tunscipes it appears that we may recognize typical instances of the system of land settlement that the invaders came to establish in Britain; and though it developed out of all recognition the permanence of that system has proved to be most remarkable.

In the south the tuns have for the most part been made, or combined, into ecclesiastical parishes, but in the north the old townships still remain as civil parishes, forming parts, or possibly the whole, of the ecclesiastical parishes in which they are situated.

We should make a great mistake, however, if we expected perfection in a system of settlement so widely extended. The invading English were far too practical to insist on the logical perfection of their scheme of land settlement, and so soon as a district became safe it appears that mixed gangs of immigrants were brought in and settled chiefly in hams or homes, and in places that adopted names that had no reference to any form of local government.

And yet if we may judge from the north, where the ancient townships are still living units of local government, the principle of land-settlement first established by the tuns, prevailed in the end, and threw a net-work of townships over the whole country. Although most of these have names ending in "ton," indicating a pristine

township, many have other forms of place-names. In the combination Stockton and Hampton, we find tuns used as stokes and as hams.

The first Hampton appears to have been the one that gave its name to Hampshire, and which, later on, when the Northampton was founded, had to be called Southampton to distinguish it.

In conclusion, let it be clearly understood that this book is not written to show that the English, or Anglo-Saxon, invaders of Britain were perfect strategists. Very much the contrary. We happen to know, from Welsh sources, of one stupid blunder in the disastrous campaign of Mons Badonicus; and there may have been numerous lesser ones which in a similar manner would not be recorded. In fact, it is possible that the invaders may have been driven to adopt the wise course by which they eventually succeeded, by a process of trial and failure.

It is more probable, however, that this was not the case, and the lesson of Mons Badonicus, confirming as it did the principles of warfare and of guarded settlements, once for all laid down by the first Bretwalda, was sufficient.

However that may have been, all we want is a coherent explanation of the successful moves that were recorded, and by means of which the conquest was extended to the West Midlands by Ceawlin, and even to the taking of Chester by Ethelfrith.

One word more. It does not follow that because we find that, in the process of permanent conquest, a severe restraint appears to have been exercised, and that no permanent advance was

made without due consideration and preparation, therefore the invaders were always thus confined; but their ascendancy was evidently such that they could at any time they chose send out strong reconnoitring and marauding expeditions, and scour the country as they did of old, as long as they took proper precautions against being cut off by a superior force.

Unless we grasp this difference between permanent conquest and expeditions for temporary purposes, we cannot understand how the invaders were able to learn all about the country beyond their borders, and how they were able to hold the Welsh near their borders in subjection.

With regard to the names of the invaders and defenders of Britain. The invaders were, broadly speaking, all English, although some branches of that race had, owing to long separation, adopted distinctive names, of which the Seaxes and Jutes are the chief ones. The Jutes seem to have quickly dropped their name, but the Seaxes were brought over in such large numbers that they gave their name to the various districts where they settled, and became known as the East, Middle, South, and West Seaxes; yet even they soon called themselves English, largely perhaps because their kings and many of their leaders were Engles, and all were desirous of becoming united under the ancient name of their race. The northern invaders were all Engles, or English, led by the same dynasty that provided kings for the rest. It is convenient, however, and in accordance with convention, to use the Latinized name "Saxons" when speaking of the southern invasion, and the Latinized name

"Angles" for the northern invaders, and this practice is followed. With regard to the defenders of Britain, the tribes of Britons, mixed with the descendants of people brought in by the Romans, might be called Britons, but now Englishmen are often called by that name. The name "Welsh," though it is of English origin, is more distinctive, and Englishmen have learned to honour it for the brave defence the Welsh made against overwhelming odds, and for the part they have since played in the combined nation and empire. The Chronicle often speaks of the Wealas, or Welsh, and so that name is generally the one used throughout this book.

## CHAPTER II

### CERDIC, THE JUTES, AND THE WEST SAXONS

In order to explain the conquests of Ceawlin, it is first of all necessary to explain the events that led up to them, and thus to connect them up with the previous conquests of Aella the first Bretwalda, and so through those of Cerdic, and of Cynric, to the time when Ceawlin became king.

Our story begins with the year 514, since that is the year Aella is said to have died; and moreover it is the year the West Saxons first came, as we know from a definite entry in the Chronicle. It is a statement that could hardly have been made unless it was true. It should be noted that Cerdic, with his victorious army, had already been in the country nineteen years, this fact helps to explain a great difficulty. We know from Bede that the Saxons lived in separate Clans or Tribes on the Continent, under Chieftains whom Bede calls "Satraps." It is impossible to conceive how jealous clansmen, living for the most part in the interior of the Continent and away from the sea, could have organized a large naval expedition to an enemy's country, or what they could have done with their families whilst the country was being cleared of the enemy. These difficulties disappear directly we realize that Cerdic, for nineteen years,

had been preparing large districts north of the Solent for the reception of fresh settlers; and that it was Cerdic's emissaries who had collected families of Saxons near convenient ports on the Continent, and provided transports for bringing them across the sea.

Even so, the difficulties that have to be explained are puzzling enough, but they must be fearlessly tackled; always bearing in mind that explanations that are inadequate, although they may serve their purpose for a time, are certain sooner or later to lead to confusion, and then we have all our work to do over again.

It is the custom of historians of this period to sigh over the lack of evidence, because forsooth the literary evidence is very meagre and disjointed. Yet it may be fairly said that no conquest has left more, if so much, evidence of its tracks, in countless place-names, in dykes and earthworks, and in boundaries of Counties, Hundreds, and Townships, etc. The plain difficulties that the invaders had to face and overcome are helps to investigators who have the courage to face such facts, and consider how such difficulties could have been overcome. Let us by all means collect all the facts we can, but let us at the same time remember that mere inductions from facts, however numerous, can never explain a conquest that extended its operations over such vast tracts of land and sea, during a period of about one hundred and fifty years.

To enable us to co-ordinate facts so widely spread both in space and time, and to harmonize them with the literary evidence, we must appeal

to deductions from principles; and these, in the first place, must be the principles of Navigation and of Military Science.

No questions have been more persistently slurred over by historians, in connection with the history of Britain, than those concerning navigation. They constantly ignore the fact that no ship could leave a continental port for Britain, unless she had a crew of expert seamen; and yet we are not justified in assuming that more than ten per cent. of the invaders came under that category. As for the Saxon branch of the English Race, it is doubtful if more than one per cent. could have been seamen or had ever seen the sea.

This statement is not traversed by the fact that the Romans, and the Welsh, taught by them, called all the invaders Saxons. This arose, with hardly any doubt, from the fact that the first Englishmen, with whom the Romans came in contact, belonged to a tribe of Saxons, perhaps the Chauci, and as Englishmen were then, at least, as distinct from other races as they are to-day, and whether Angles or Jutes, had the same general appearance, the Romans continued to call them Saxons. It is important to realize this fact, and to understand that the Saxons, with the exception of a few living near the mouths of the Ems and the Weser, must all have been landsmen and quite unable to organize naval expeditions without the assistance of the Angles and Jutes. Then there is another error that must be corrected before we proceed further. It is commonly assumed that Cerdic was a Saxon, but this guess, derived apparently from the fact that,

later on, he assumed the Kingship of the West Saxons, is evidently a wrong one. Cerdic like Hengist was a descendant of Woden, the Royal ancestor of all the kings of the Angles, and therefore he must have been an Angle. The Angles were the King-governed branch of the race, to which the others looked for guidance. They were the only branch that could organize and conduct a transmarine conquest; and although the other branches, the Saxons and Jutes, had long been separated from the Angles, yet they were only too glad to return to their allegiance to Angle kings, with the prospect of winning an Island home. As for the army that Cerdic commanded when he first came to the Solent, nineteen years before the coming of the West Saxons, it was probably raised from all branches of the English race, the bulk of it probably being Angles. Some of these warriors may have elected to settle in Wessex, others may have returned to the Continent, and have gone later on with their fellows to the North of Britain.

Of what elements the original army of Cerdic was composed, and what became of the warriors in the ranks, are details which, after all, do not affect the main issue, which was that the first state of the invasion of Britain for the purposes of permanent conquest and colonization, beginning with the landing of Hengist and Horsa at Thanet, and ending at the death of Aella, had been unquestionably conducted by the Angles; and had been supported throughout by their national organization under kings, and by all their powers as reckoned chiefly in men and ships. The col-

lection of the West Saxons on the Continent and their transportation to Britain, was probably the last operation in the South that the northern Angles assisted; and after the Saxons had been landed on the shores of the Solent, the ships of the Angles probably took away such Angle warriors as wished to return to their homes. The service of these seasoned and experienced fighting men, who not only knew all the arts of campaigning, but also the well-tried principles of establishing and protecting open settlements, were now wanted for the pure Angle invasion of the North of Britain, which must have begun at least as early as this.

We find Ida beginning to reign in Northumbria in the year 547. Ida could hardly have been said to have begun to reign, before a kingdom had been established in Britain for him to reign over, and this must have taken at least thirty years to effect. After the year 514 we must therefore expect to find Cerdic left to his own resources. Although much of his army had probably been taken, these would have been more than replaced in numbers, although as yet lacking in experience, by the West Saxon warriors, and doubtless contingents from Kent, Sussex, and Surrey would remain with him, at least until all had been made secure. For shipping, however, Cerdic must have been entirely dependent on the Jutes, and it is interesting to see the measures that he took to maintain his command over them.

Although we are not told when the Jutes took the Isle of Wight, it is evident that they had been there a long time; and it is probable that they

came there about the time that Aella first landed near Regnum (Chichester) and took it, namely, the year 477.

We should here remind ourselves that the great battle near Kingston, when the Welsh fled from the Angles as from fire, and the Angles took spoils innumerable, took place in the year 473.

It is likely that the invaders would follow up this crushing victory by some forward move, before the Welsh could recover themselves, and yet as long as the Welsh held the south coast there was no inland district safe to settle in. The Jutes had long been divided, by half of them having come to Kent and the remainder wished to follow. Here was an island covering the chief ports remaining to the Britons, and covering the point too where Aella was so soon to begin his attack on the south coast.

We may search the whole period and we cannot find a more likely time for the conquest and occupation of the Isle of Wight by the Jutes than the years 474 to 476.

We are not told when the Jutes came to the Isle of Wight, but we may be quite certain that it was some time before Cerdic came to the Solent, as he would never have landed near Southampton before the Isle of Wight had been occupied.*

* It is a point worthy of consideration whether the Jutes may not have had a trading station at Cowes even in the time of the Romans.

The Romans were largely dependent upon the hardy mariners of the North Sea for ships to cross the Channel, and so it may well have been worth their while to allow the Jutes to occupy, not only the port of Cowes, but perhaps even the whole of the Isle of Wight, so as to retain their services, and have a valuable pledge for their loyalty.

It may seem extraordinary that such an important event was not recorded in the Chronicle, but it is probable that the Chronicle was based upon annals recorded on wood in runic writing, and stored in such places as Kingston, or the royal palace at Old Windsor, and some of these staves may have rotted and become indecipherable.

Although there can be no doubt that the Jutes must have occupied the Isle of Wight before Cerdic landed in Wessex, yet one naturally scans the evidence very closely to see if we can discover any corroboration of this deduction, and we are not disappointed.

The Chronicle under the year 514 tells us that, "This year the West Saxons came to Britain with three ships, at the place which is called Cerdic's Ore, and Stuf and Wihtgar fought against the Britons and put them to flight." Now Wihtgar could hardly have been given the name he bore unless he had been born in the Isle of Wight, so he must have been a Jute.* We can hardly suppose that Wihtgar could have been less than twenty-five to thirty years of age in 514. From this we should gather that the Jutes had captured and occupied the Isle of Wight by the year 490 at the latest, and this is certainly in accordance with the probabilities of the invasion of the south coast.

If, as thus appears from the Chronicle, the Jutes protected the landing of the Saxons, and

* It must be admitted that authorities differ as to the significance of the name Wihtgar. The view of Sir C. Oman is adopted here. See "England before the Norman Conquest," p. 224 and note. But apart from the apparent significance of Wihtgar's name, there is plenty of evidence to show that he must have been a Jute, although he was a kinsman of Cerdic.

did the fighting for them, it explains the question that has always puzzled historians, namely, how it came about that the Jutes had a settlement in Wessex. We may be sure that they did not get such a valuable grant of land for settlements, as well as a good harbour for their ships, without having done something to earn them; and it was very desirable that they should help the West Saxons to establish their settlements, if they were to hope to live at peace with such jealous neighbours.

To understand the position when the West Saxons came, we must turn back to the landing of Cerdic in the year 495 and follow the ensuing course of events. Cerdic evidently established his head-quarters at what is now Southampton, with a view to following the usual course adopted by the invaders, namely, ascending a river as far as it was navigable; and the River Itchen was then navigable as far as Winchester. But a great deal had to be done before the ascent of the Itchen was possible. Cerdic appears to have landed in Stokes Bay and made a stoke on the little River Alver. From this he probably drove out the Welsh as far as Bishopstoke. But the peninsula on which Portsmouth stands, and the Roman fortress of Porchester, were still in the hands of the Welsh. Here was a chance for the Jutes; they had long coveted the harbour of Portsmouth for their ships, and more land for settlers than could be found in the Isle of Wight. But if such land was to be obtained it must be earned by conquest, the only title to it that was recognizable at this early stage of the conquest.

We therefore, under the year 501, find the following entry in the Chronicle:—

"This year Port, and his two sons Bieda and Maegla, came to Britain at a place which is called Portsmouth, and they soon effected a landing, and they there slew a young British man of high nobility."

We may perhaps dismiss the eponymous chieftain Port with a smile, but Bieda and Maegla were undoubtedly two Jutish chieftains, since we know that the Jutes held Portsmouth and its hinterland, the valley of the River Meon. Later on we see the Jutes from Meon Stoke assisting in the taking of Winchester. The Jutes seem to have acquired all the country between the River Meon and Sussex, thus leaving the valley of the Itchen open to the advance of the West Saxons. Thus no confusion was permitted, but each district in turn was fully occupied, and not left as a wilderness in rear where Welsh refugees could assemble.

It should be noted that it was in Cerdic's interest that the Jutes should have a large settlement on the main land, since he knew that when the time came for the Angles under his command to leave for the North, he would become dependent on the ships of the Jutes for transport; and thus by their settlements in Hampshire, the Jutes gave hostages for their loyalty.

Then in 514 we see the Jutes, not only helping with their ships to bring large numbers of Saxons with their families to Cerdic's Ore, but also supplying a force under Stuf and Wihtgar to guard their landing. This landing of Bieda and Maegla at

Portsmouth corroborates evidence of Bede that the Jutes held Portsmouth and the country north of it; but only on the understanding that Bieda and Maegla were Jutes. That they were Jutes there can be no doubt at all, the evidence of Bede is conclusive. This is not arguing in a circle, as there is no room for any other tribe to intervene.

But the recognition of Bieda and Maegla and their followers as Jutes, carries with it much larger deductions. To begin with, it again proves, if indeed further proof is necessary, that the Jutes had held the Isle of Wight for many years before the year 501; since the Jutes would never have consented to invade the main land, before they had had long possession of the Isle of Wight. There seems no doubt that, wherever the various constituents of the expedition, in men and ships, were originally collected, their final port of departure for Portsmouth was Cowes.

We must not forget that in the year 501, the invaders were still directed by Aella the first Bretwalda, since he had sole command of all the invaders south of the Humber, according to Bede.

Although we can have no reason for doubting the sterling evidence of Bede, it will be well to use this landing of the Jutes to test it. Was this incident the casual landing of an independent war-band? or, on the other hand, was it dictated by the highest strategy?

If it can be shown, as it certainly can, that the landing of Bieda and Maegla at Portsmouth was an important military operation filling a definite place in a great scheme of conquest, then, and

not otherwise, we have a strong corroboration of the truth of Bede's statement. We must recall to our minds the fact that Aella and Cissa only took Anderida (Pevensey) in 491, and it would take some years for Aella to clear out the Andredswald, and then to bring in the South Saxons who had accepted Aella as their king.

It is easy to see why Aella was appointed king. The Saxons were drawn from scattered clans on the Continent, and jealous as these clans must have been of one another, they would know that they would be quite unable to settle in peace, unless they were under the rule of a king who had proved his capacity. The Saxons may indeed have demanded that some guarantee should be given them that the land would be fairly apportioned among them, but that if Aella himself would consent to be their king, that would be sufficient.

Although Aella probably ended his days as Bretwalda in the Thames Valley, yet we may be sure that he did not leave Sussex before his subjects had settled down in peace under a ruler appointed by him, and these matters would take some years to carry out, and whilst thus engaged, Aella probably made Chichester his head-quarters, and from there he would easily visit the Solent and the Isle of Wight and Southampton. On such reasonable deductions is based the conclusion that the advance of Cerdic towards Winchester, and the simultaneous advance of the Jutes upon Portsmouth and Porchester, were directed by the strategy of Aella.

Let us see if it is worthy of his fame. Aella

himself was getting old, and probably took little or no part in the operations; at a given date Cerdic probably advanced to Botley, or to some chosen position covering the Roman road from Winchester, to prevent any succour coming from thence.

At the same time the Jutes landed at what is now Portsmouth, and that peninsula they probably cleared without any difficulty, if indeed it was defended at all by the Welsh. The chief objective of Bieda and Maegla's force must undoubtedly have been the Roman fortress of Porchester. This seems to have been held by an important British prince, probably a son of Ambrosius Aurelianus.

If he expected help from his father at Winchester, he was doomed to disappointment, and Porchester seems to have been taken at once, probably by storming. Scaling-ladders could easily be brought there by ships. Invaders had thus two lines of advance and of supply, and Cerdic appears to have advanced with the main army to Bishopstoke supplied by boats on the Itchen. And the Jutes under Bieda and Maegla to Meonstoke, and soon after Winchester must have fallen. Surely the meagre entries in the Chronicle are capable of a reasonable explanation that corroborates the evidence of Bede, and confirms the greatness attributed to Aella by the Anglo-Saxons.

Some comment seems necessary on the absurd number of ships mentioned in the Chronicle entries of the various landings, varying from two to five. Of course no serious invasion could have been effected even with five ships, and although we may safely dismiss this item in the entries as due to

scribal errors, it may be well to suggest how such errors could have arisen.

It is suggested that the main entries of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle were gathered from squared wooden staves, covered with runic writing, recording the main facts for each year, one stave or boc used for a year. When the annal thus recorded on wood referred to a landing, it is suggested that the sign or symbol of a ship was burned or carved on the wood, in more numbers than one, in accordance with the supposed greatness of the event. Then in transcribing these annals for the purpose of the Chronicle the scribes added the number of ship symbols to the entry.

This may be legitimately characterized as a mere guess, but when we are confronted with a manifest absurdity in a deeply serious work like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, any suggestion that offers a reasonable explanation of it can hardly be unworthy of consideration.

But to return to the landing of the West Saxons, directly we drop the preconceived theory that has hitherto clogged the steps of historians, namely, the theory that the invaders came in separate gangs, it is extraordinary how easy it becomes to explain things.

The landing of the West Saxons, and the settlement of a portion of the Jutes in Hampshire, have been supposed to be so mutually destructive, that the truth of both statements has been called in question. When, however, we start our investigations without any theory, unless indeed it is a theory to suppose that a great leader like Cerdic did lead, and that he did make the best use of his

limited resources, we find that entries in the Chronicle, and in Bede, that have been supposed to be mutually destructive, become mutually explanatory.

As the Saxons had come from scattered clans in the interior of the Continent, and had been collected at some seaport, probably Calais, it is clear that they could not leave their families behind, but must have brought them with them, in probably the largest fleet of transports that had yet been collected.

In this case, however, no difficulty arises. The Welsh had been crushed by the loss of Silchester, and communications with the Thames Valley had long been opened, and no more opposition to the landing of unorganized hordes of colonists could be expected than could be dealt with by local forces. Then the invaders had had ample time to collect supplies, sufficient to maintain even this large number of immigrants, until they were in a position to maintain themselves, and the inland waters of the Solent provided ample anchorages and landing-places.

The thirty-seven Hundreds into which Hampshire was divided are worthy of study. They bear a strong contrast to those of other shires, and appear to be the result of parcelling out the land amongst gangs of settlers in a haphazard manner. Some are in two parts—notably Fawley, the largest except the New Forest, has its name-giving place near Calshot Castle, between the Beaulieu River and Southampton Water; whereas the main portion lies along the east bank of the Itchen, and up to, and beyond, Winchester. This seems to

have been the first district colonized by the West Saxons.

This first arrival of the West Saxons was an important event, and it heralded the second stage of the conquest, as the death of Aella the first Bretwalda marked the end of the first. Much depended on this first introduction of colonists on a large scale with their families. A very different affair to the landings of armed warriors; as failure, or even an undue amount of hardship and suffering on the part of the new-comers, would have checked immigration for many years; and we have every reason to believe that it went on unceasingly as fresh districts became safe, and as shipping became available.

The next entry in the Chronicle is under the year 519. We read that this year Cerdic and Cynric obtained the kingdom of the West Saxons; and the same year they fought against the Britons where it is now named Cerdicesford. And from that time forth the royal offspring of the West Saxons reigned.

There is nothing puzzling in the fact that Cerdic allowed five years to elapse before he assumed the kingship of Wessex, since he could hardly do so before he had established a kingdom to reign over, and it may well have taken five years, and fresh introductions of Saxon clans, before that was accomplished.

There was, however, a more serious reason for delay, though we only learn about it from Welsh sources. An army of the invaders was driven from the field with great loss, at the siege of Mons Badonicus about this time. A great deal

will have to be said about this, and it is reserved for another chapter.

This chapter must be concluded with some remarks about Cerdic himself, since his very existence has been questioned by historians, on no other grounds apparently than that he had a Welsh-sounding name. The first mention of Cerdic and Cynric his son in the Chronicle, under the year 495, raises a difficulty, but one which can easily be accounted for. It is stated that "This year two Ealdormen came to Britain Cerdic and Cynric his son." If Cynric was an Ealdorman he cannot have been less than twenty years old, and would more probably have been over thirty. Even if Cynric was but twenty years old in 495, he must have been eighty-five when he died, and over eighty when he fought at Beranburgh; and as for Cerdic, he must have been about ninety when he died, if he had a son over twenty years of age in 495. That there is some mistake in this entry seems evident, but it is easy to suggest an explanation. Cerdic had a very able son named Cynric, whom he associated with himself in the government when he became King of the West Saxons in 519. Henceforward the names Cerdic and Cynric were always mentioned together, and associated in men's memories, and so when the Chronicle was first committed to writing, the scribe put them together. Perhaps Cynric did land in Britain with his father, as a lad of about five years old; and so the only mistake was calling him an ealdorman.

Since so much has been made of the fact that Cerdic had a Welsh-sounding name, even to the

extent of casting doubt upon Cerdic's very existence as an English king, it may be well to consider whether it may not have been possible for him to have been called after the Ceredig Gwledig of Welsh history.

There is no reason to doubt that before the famous landing in Thanet in the year 449, for the purposes of permanent conquest and colonization, the assistance of the Saxons, as they were called, was sought by the Welsh against the inroads of the Picts and Scots; and the Saxons, or Angles, as they really were, would have been only too glad to seize such an opportunity for surveying the country they were so soon going to attack. This being the case, then Elesa, Cerdic's father, may well have taken a leading part in these military operations in alliance with the Welsh. If so, then it is extremely likely that he would have met their great leader Ceredig Gwledig, and he may even have married a daughter of that renowned conqueror. At any rate he may have been so impressed with this great ruler of Britain, that he called his son, born about 450, after him. It may be said that this is all conjecture, but if it is, every step of it is more probable than the absurd conjecture, that Cerdic could not have existed as an English king, because he had a Welsh-sounding name.

The possible intimate association of Cerdic with Ceredig Gwledig is, to say the least of it, an interesting suggestion, and, at any rate, it is not so wildly improbable as the idea that Cerdic himself was a myth.

## CHAPTER III

### THE BATTLE OF MONS BADONICUS

It is now possible to form a general idea of the position held by the invaders in the south of Britain at the end of the year 514, after the arrival of the West Saxons, and after the death of Aella. The fact that it is now definitely taught as history that the invaders fought up the Thames Valley, and that, by this time, they must have reached at least as far as Abingdon, saves us a vast amount of trouble, and we may assume, without fear of serious contradiction, that they had planted their settlements as far as Abingdon, on the south bank of the Thames. With the north bank we are not at present concerned, and we need not trouble to consider whether an English settlement had yet been formed beyond the ford at Oxford.

On the south bank, however, there can be little doubt that all the land surrounded by the sharp bend of the Thames beyond Oxford, would be held by the invaders as far as Faringdon. There is a King's tun in it (Kingston Bagpuize), and south of Faringdon, about eight miles, we find Ashbury, and further south Ashdown, and there are strong reasons for believing that the Aesc, who gave his name to these, was none other than King

Aesc the son of Hengist, after whom the kings of Kent called themselves Aescings.

This seems rather an advanced position for King Aesc to have held before the fall of Silchester, but it was protected by the Thames and the slope of the land favoured it.

It was probably at this time that the white horse was cut on a high hillside facing northwards, as a standard from which there would be no retirement. This was a standard that was extremely likely to have been raised by King Aesc the great son of Hengist.

We see him here, with his main army at Englefield, at the extreme outpost, watching the Roman road, and ensuring the encirclement of Silchester, until Cerdic had advanced from the south and demanded its surrender.

But we are dealing with a time four years after the taking of Silchester, and Aesc must have returned to his kingdom of Kent, and died there in 512. This territory must have been comparatively safe now that Silchester had fallen, but as yet it could have been but sparsely settled, although the invaders may by this time have become more venturesome.

The rest of the boundary of the lands occupied by the invaders may be roughly demarcated by a line running due north and south from Newbury to Southampton. The front of the invaders may, therefore, be described as a straight line running due north from Southampton to Abingdon, except that the right was thrown forward to Ashbury under the protection of the River Thames.

The main line of Welsh resistance opposite the

right flank of the invaders must have extended from Bath by Chippenham and Malmesbury to Cirencester, and they still held an advanced post at Cunetio, now Marlborough.

We cannot suppose that the invaders remained supinely within the bounds of their settlements, but they are certain to have ravaged the lands beyond their front for many miles, thus not only gaining information and loot, but overawing the Welsh, and maintaining their own ascendancy. But beyond these, they were cultivating a rash spirit, that was bound sooner or later to lead to a disaster.

We must now turn our attention to the southern border of the Welsh front. This ran from Amesbury and followed the River Avon to the sea. The settlements of the Welsh may have extended east of this line, but this must have been the line they hoped to defend permanently.

Besides Amesbury, this line was defended by fortresses with vast earthworks, of which the chief were Old Sarum, and Badbury Rings near Wimborne. Besides these the Welsh made a dyke known as Bokerley Dyke from Cranborne Chase to the Avon Valley. This seems to have been the only dyke of any size that was made by the Welsh in their own interests; and it differs in character from all the other dykes.

More will have to be said about dykes when we come to see the Wans Dyke, for the present only two remarks need be made about Bokerley Dyke. One is that it was evidently made to oppose an enemy expected from the north-east. The

other is that, when Bokerley Dyke was made, the invaders could hardly have landed at the ports of Poole, Wareham, and Weymouth, since, foolish as the construction of this dyke was in any case, we can hardly suppose that the constructors would have gone on with their work after the invaders had landed in their rear.

One of the most remarkable facts of the invasion and conquest of Britain is, that the invaders appear to have left the Welsh in what is now Dorsetshire undisturbed for so long, and they seem to have ignored it for a time during their advance towards Bath.

This must be explained. Certainly if the invaders had come in separate and independent gangs, without a central authority to direct them, we should have supposed that they would have landed at Poole and Wareham and Weymouth as soon as the lands near Southampton were settled up. But we find nothing of the sort, except that in the year 519 we find Cerdic giving the Welsh, rendered too confident by their victory at Mons Badonicus, a lesson at Chardford on the Avon, and we feel inclined to ask why that victory was not followed up. The reasons for this will appear as we proceed. For the present only a general statement can be offered.

Although Dorsetshire could have been easily won after Chardford, there can be no doubt that it would have been a strategical error thus to extend the scattered fronts of the invaders, and the correct course was to obstruct all roads from Bath and Bristol first, when the Welsh of the west would be cut off from the main body of that

nation, and their lands could be acquired with scarcely a struggle.

This was the course eventually followed. And yet we need not credit Cerdic with the foresight and strategical ability that undoubtedly characterized his grandson Ceawlin. Cerdic took the right course because he was too weak in men and ships to take any other. We see here merely the effect of the constant action of strategic factors moulding the actions of nations at war. All that Cerdic appears to have known was that his northern frontier was constantly threatened by large and well-led and well-organized forces of Welshmen from the direction of Bath and Cirencester, etc., and he could not leave it unguarded for a day, whereas on his western frontier all was quiet, and few Welshmen dared cross the Avon after the battle of Chardford. Above all, the disaster at Mons Badonicus had opened his eyes, for that had occurred three years before.

The year 516 is here accepted as the date of the Battle of Mons Badonicus. The question is to be found examined and explained on pp. 200 and 201 of Oman's "England before the Norman Conquest," and the suggestion made by Mr. E. B. Nicholson, and given in the footnote on p. 201, seems to be conclusive. Over and above the careful calculations and convincing arguments there given, lies the great fact, that no other date could conceivably fit in so well with all we know of the state of affairs on the frontier of the invaders, from the bend of the Thames round Abingdon to Southampton.

In 516 we find just that condition of affairs

that would be likely to lead to a rash enterprise. A great leader had recently died and a fresh generation of warriors had sprung up, to whom victory had always come easily, thanks to the wonderful strategy of Aella; and now that Aella's restraining influence was gone, they began to form visions of further conquests won with equal ease. The fall of Silchester had overwhelmed the Welsh, and had left the English settlements in the large districts that had had their centre of government and of trade at Calleva, in an apparent condition of peaceful security, none making them afraid.

Doubtless Calleva had surrendered on the sole condition that the lives of all who dwelt there should be spared. The stronger men had been promptly taken to make the great dyke that runs from Mongewell near Wallingford to Henley, and the rest had been allowed to depart to become a burden on their friends elsewhere.

A strong force was always kept in readiness as a frontier guard, and from this frequent expeditions were sent out for marauding and reconnoitring. These returned with spoils and with reports of the goodness of the land, and that no Welsh force had dared to resist them. Mounted parties had often ridden round Cunetio, and even up to the walls of Cirencester, and of Bath.

But it is one thing to reconnoitre and maraud, and quite another thing to invade for the purpose of conquest, and this difference, and the risks that are inevitably incurred by the invading armies, this rising generation had yet to learn; and so they were eventually taught by a lesson that they and their children could not forget.

One child at any rate imbibed the lesson of Mons Badonicus with his mother's milk; for about this time was born to Cynric the son of a Cerdic, a son named Ceawlin, who was to become the second Bretwalda, and the conqueror of Bath and the West Midlands. As a boy Ceawlin may have followed his grandfather to the field of battle, and as a young man he took part in the victories of his father Cynric.

No one can doubt the strategic ability of Ceawlin, but that blessed word "genius" is not sufficient to explain surpassing excellence in any walk of life, and no one now expects talents, however great, to approach perfection, without a school to develop them.

As we proceed, we shall see the school of warfare, accompanied by colonization, in which the youthful Ceawlin was trained.

We only learn that there was such a battle as that of Mons Badonicus from Welsh sources, and then only from vague allusions to it. The most important, that from Gildas, is so short that it had best be quoted, so far as the mention of the battle is concerned; it runs as follows: "Down to the year of the siege of Mount Badon, which is near the mouth of the Severn, the year of the last and not the least slaughter of these ruffians." It should be noted that the battle is called "obsessio Badonici Montis," and that this Mons Badonicus was near the mouth of the Severn.

We have fixed the date of the battle as the year 516 with tolerable certainty, it now remains to be seen whether we cannot fix the place with equal, or even greater, certainty.

That having been done, then the next thing is to suggest how an English army could have been driven to take up such a false position as to have been surrounded by Welshmen on the top of a mountain. Since there is no English evidence to help us all this must of course be surmise; guess-work, perhaps the strait-laced critic will exclaim. But when we are tied and bound by certain very peculiar conditions as regards the nature of the battle itself, and when we have to start an army from a certain frontier, vaguely defined perhaps, but with no uncertainty as to its general position, since we know the invaders were in the Thames Valley; as long as our suggestions are reasonable they do not deserve to be dubbed as mere guesses, but they are indeed wise conjectures, such as are conceded to all men of science when they are trying to co-ordinate certain known facts. The first point to be settled is the actual site of the battle of Mons Badonicus. We naturally suppose that it must be at or near the City of Bath, and the extraordinary thing is that any one should ever have doubted it.

We do not know for certain the Welsh name for the City of Bath, though we should naturally suppose that it was "Caer Baddon." We do, however, know that the Welsh for a bath is "baddon," pronounced "bathon"; and we do know that, at the foot of the hill where the City of Bath stands, there was the finest Bath in Britain, called by the Romans "Aquæ Sulis."

We therefore may conclude with absolute certainty that the mountain at whose base stood

this wonderful Bath, would be called by the Welsh the Bath Mountain, perhaps in Welsh "Mynydd yr Baddon," and in Latin "Mons Badonicus."

Geoffrey of Monmouth, with all his faults, may be quoted in this connection. He gives perfectly clear and unsophisticated evidence that in his time Bath was called by the Welsh "Badon."

And it must be remembered that Geoffrey was an educated man, who, whether he was himself a Welshman or not, knew the Welsh language, and wrote from the Welsh standpoint.

In Book II, Chapter iii, of his history, Geoffrey makes Merlin prophesy that "The baths of Badon shall grow cold, and their salubrious water engender death."

It should be noted that the absurdity of Merlin's prophecies does not affect the question. They were written by Geoffrey to be read and understood by the men of his time, and there can be no question at all what meaning Geoffrey intended them to attach to this statement—he can only have been alluding to the waters of Bath. In fact, when we go up Milsam Street in Bath, we are beginning the ascent of Mons Badonicus.*

* In the *English Historical Review*, XVII, p. 663, footnote 38, Mr. W. H. Stevenson tells us on the authority of Professor Rhys, that the alleged modern Welsh "baddon" is a loan word from the English "bath." Geoffrey of Monmouth demonstrates that the name "Badon" for Bath was so old in his time that the Welsh then took it for granted that it went back to the time of Merlin, and there appears to have been no question as to the position of Mons Badonicus then, since Geoffrey never mentions that name, although he describes the battle. The specific name "Badonicus" must have had a Welsh origin, since it is first mentioned by Gildas, and it must have been derived either from "baddon," or some word very like it. It is for Welsh scholars to say what that word meant if it did not mean "bath" or "baths."

There is much more evidence positively identifying Mons Badonicus with the mountain on which the City of Bath stands; this will be evolved in due course as the story of the campaign, and ensuing battle, and retreat, proceeds, but for the present it is contended that the above plain and simple evidence is sufficient.

And yet it would not be wise to ignore the fact that other sites have been suggested, but there is only one which has been put by competent historians in serious competition with the claims of Bath. This is a large circular treble earthwork called Badbury Rings near Wimborne in Dorsetshire.

It is difficult to treat the idea that, under the circumstances of the English invasion at the time, Badbury Rings could have been the scene of a successful siege by the Welsh, with the respect due to the great names that have supported it. It is a military fallacy to suppose that the invaders would have left their countless open settlements exposed to Welsh attack, in order to march a large army to their left flank, and across the Hampshire Avon, merely to shut themselves up in a circular earthwork on the downs, and of no strategical importance whatever. That they did risk a very important force in the campaign of Mons Badonicus goes without saying; but it was for a greater prize than Badbury Rings, and one of the greatest substantial as well as strategical value, namely, the town of Bath.

Why Badbury Rings should ever have been called Mons Badonicus, these guessers fail to explain. But if arguments derived from military

science do not appeal to literary men, let us take their own chief authority.

The ecclesiastic Gildas, who wrote in Brittany, tells us that Mons Badonicus was near the mouth of the Severn. This is a fair description of the mountain at Bath, but absolutely shuts out Badbury Rings as a possible site for the great Welsh victory of Mons Badonicus.

Since a great deal will have to be said about Bath, not only in this chapter, but also later on, it will be well to study the position of Bath, and consider why it was the key of the Welsh position, guarding the entrance to the Severn Valley.

It must be borne in mind that what is here said about Bath was not known to the invaders at the time of Mons Badonicus; but it is what that battle taught them, and taught them so thoroughly, that they did not venture to attack Bath again for about fifty years, when after long and careful preparations Bath was taken by Ceawlin.

No one would suppose that Bath could possibly have any military strength or strategic importance now-a-days, and it is probably for that reason that no one seems to have pointed out what an important part it must have played in the Welsh defence of the Severn Valley. Bath owed its position solely to its healing waters, and it was to protect that wonderful thermal spring, and because they found easily worked stone on the spot, that the Romans strongly fortified the small town that rose there. Though Bath does not seem to have been used as a military station by the Romans, yet it must have had some slight military value in

their eyes, since it commanded the gorge of the river Avon, upon which several Roman roads converged. The Fosse Way passed from Corinium (Cirencester) through Bath, on its course to Ilchester; and just north of Roman Bath, and in the middle of the modern city, it was joined by the Via Julia from Bristol. Then the Roman road from Spinae, near Newbury, joined the Fosse Way at Batheaston; and there is no doubt that another road led from Bath to Sorbiodunum (Old Sarum), though it is not easily traceable. Yet these roads, although they must have added to the importance of Bath in Roman times, added nothing to its strength; and by the period we are dealing with, they can have been of little use except to serve as tracks to guide travellers. Besides its high walls of squared stone, which would have made Bath a difficult problem in any position, its chief strength lay in the fact that it was situated in a deep loop of the river Avon, and from that loop the course of the river trended to the north-east for three miles, until it bends southward again beyond Batheaston and past Bathford, towards Claverton and Limpley Stoke, and so to Bradford-on-Avon.

The chief point to be realized is that all the country to the north of this great bend of the Avon is hilly and broken, and large forces might easily be concealed there, and so an invading force when once it was round the Batheaston bend was liable to have its retreat cut off.

But this is not all, for as an invading force approaches Bath the conditions get far worse, and for the last mile or more the ground rises from

about 80 feet to a height of 500 feet, at Beacon Hill, only a quarter of a mile from the road.

Furthermore, a force advancing beyond this danger-point towards Bath has to go round another bend of the river, with high ground on its right flank all the way, and by the time it reached the wall of Roman Bath, it would be facing almost south-east.

All these frightful risks must have been apparent to the invaders as they advanced, and we can only wonder at the madness that the intoxication of constant victory can produce in young and ignorant warriors, that they should have faced them in a vain attempt to take Bath by escalade.

We have alluded so far only to local risks, but there were worse ones beyond. Doubtless the invaders had taken Cunetio, and perhaps other fortresses, by a bold and sudden stroke, and they hoped to do the same with Bath. But they had not yet learned what was beyond those hills that rise above Bath to over 700 feet, neither could they have realized the importance that the Welsh attached to Bath.

The cities of Bristol and Gloucester (Glevum) and Cirencester and Malmesbury, and many others, could all send contingents to defend Bath with but very few weeks' notice; and across the the estuary of the Severn would come as many more to defend their famous and beloved city, and all these preparations could have been made behind those hills without the invaders having the slightest inkling of them.

Moreover, from the south large forces could be sent into Bath itself by the Fosse Way, with-

out invaders from the east knowing anything about it.

It is hoped that enough has been said to show what a strong position Bath held, and that it was the key to the Welsh main position, but the worst has not been said yet, having regard to the open settlements of the invaders.

The worst that could have happened would have been if the invading force had succeeded in taking Bath by storm at the first onset. Shut in in Bath by a vast Welsh army on the slopes above it, not a man could have escaped to tell the tale.

The question that naturally arises is, How could the invaders have been so mad as to attempt to take Bath by a *coup-de-main?* Well, the intoxication produced in ignorant warriors by constant victory is hard to gauge, and then we must constantly bear in mind the difference between reconnoitring expeditions boldly led, and the advance of an army for the purpose of storming a fortress.

There is no reason to doubt that a well-mounted party, or parties, had ridden right up to the walls of Bath, and had forded the Avon and looked right into Bath from Bathampton Down. These may have robbed rich villas, whose contents whetted their appetite for more of such spoils. All must have seemed so easy, if there did not happen to have been amongst these marauders a man with military foresight. Thus it is quite easy to understand how the battle of Mons Badonicus was brought about on the hill above Bath.

The frontier force of the invaders was composed of young warriors under a young leader, and the restraint exercised by the older and more prudent leaders was absent. Cerdic was getting old, and he with Cynric his son were fully occupied bringing in the West Saxons, and apportioning the land among their families and clans.

The actual circumstances that led up to a march to Bath, and the course that the battle there took, in its earlier stages, must, of course, be pure conjecture, and yet it would be pusillanimous not to indulge in it, when we have to account for the undoubted fact that such a march did take place.

Fortunately we have evidence of the later stages of the battle, though as it is from a tainted source, namely, Geoffrey of Monmouth, it is left out of the account for the present, the evidence of Gildas is sufficient.

The account following will be given for the sake of brevity, as a positive statement, since it is tedious to be constantly explaining that it is only conjecture. It of course challenges criticism, but it is to be hoped that critics who do not agree will offer a better explanation.

In the year 514, the frontier force had its headquarters at Newbury, with a detachment at Abingdon, and a small outpost at Ashbury; and the front was guarded by constant mounted patrols, and occasionally by larger reconnoitring parties that penetrated farther into the country still held by the Welsh.

The commander of this frontier force had made it his constant practice to visit Aella in the

Thames Valley near Hurley, and seek his advice. Advice which was of course loyally followed.

With the death of Aella a changed spirit came over the whole frontier force from the commander downwards. Much was expected from the able and dashing young commander, who had already proved his ability and courage on the field of battle, as he was indeed to prove it once again, by his tactics, and by his death.

That far-seeing military vision that makes a strategist was, however, beyond his powers, and he lacked the experience that might have given it. He trusted in fact to his own tactical ability, and to the staunchness and discipline of his followers, to get his army out of any difficulty that a despised enemy could get them into.

It had long been the desire of all in the frontier force to take Cunetio, but hitherto Aella had forbidden it. The old man had pointed out that it was against his principles to take a district that they could not occupy and cultivate. It was far better to leave it in the hands of the Welsh, who would to some extent keep it cultivated. The acquisition of Cunetio would merely add to the difficulties of guarding the frontier, without any corresponding gain.

However, to put it shortly, in the spring of 515 Cunetio was easily taken by surprise, and so well had the expedition been planned, that large spoils, in the shape of corn and cattle and horses, fell into the hands of the victors.

Highly elated with their easily won victory, the frontier force spent the summer in sending out mounted reconnoitring expeditions in all

directions, but the chief of these was one which followed the Roman road to Bath, and rode up to its gates, and looked into it from the hill across the river.

The expedition returned with valuable spoils and with more cattle and horses, and some carts. Altogether the frontier force found itself in possession of sufficient provisions and transport to enable them to arrange to send a force of between four and five thousand men to Bath in the following spring. The height of the walls of Bath had been estimated, and so scaling-ladders formed part of the outfit of the expedition.

Thus it come about that, as soon as the days were long enough, namely, in May 516, the English started on their mad march to Bath. They had only some thirty miles to go. Everything went well, in fact only too well and too easily, if they had only known it. The reason they met with no opposition was that the Welsh had gained full knowledge of their intentions, and had decided to entrap them under the walls of Bath.

On reaching the bend of the Avon, the English leader left a third of his army, perhaps as many as 2000 men, to make a temporary camp watching the Fosse Way, and to secure the retreat of the main body round this fatal bend of the Avon from being attacked by a force from Cirencester.

Then, fondly thinking that they were going to surprise Bath, the English pressed forward round the bend of the Avon, and on towards the city.

Scouts had been thrown out upon the right flank, but they had not been given time to scour the country and report. The English leader was

far too good a tactician to neglect the ordinary precautions, but he allowed himself to be hurried by his eager followers.

He sent a strong outpost to hold Beacon Hill, and to patrol the hill beyond. The modern name is given to help the reader, but this was nothing less than Mons Badonicus. That post was only occupied by a small Welsh detachment that rushed down to Bath. Everything was cleverly arranged by the astute leader of the Welsh to distract attention from the large forces that were lying hidden beyond the hills around, and with supreme confidence the English force advanced to the walls of Bath, little dreaming what was in store for them. It was about 8 o'clock in the morning.

All this time keen Welsh eyes had been watching the advance of the invaders from the mountain on the other side of the river, now known as Bathampton Down, and as the English reached the walls of Bath, far back on Bathampton Down and out of sight of the main body of the English, a beacon fire was lit.

Upon this preconcerted signal large armies of Welshmen rose from their various hiding-places, and began their march, each to its appointed post. At last they had got the hated Saxon in their grasp.

The English scouts came running in to report to their chief, who, with the main body at Bath, was preparing to set up his scaling-ladders. Then, and not until then, their incredible folly was revealed to the English.

There was but one defensible position that the

English could take up before the Welsh were upon them, and that was on Beacon Hill. From its top the ground towards the north and west sloped favourably for the defenders, and to the east, which became the rear of the position, was a sheer precipice.

The ground was strewn with boulders, and with these the English hastily constructed the best defences they could, in the short time at their disposal, before the Welsh were upon them.

Thus began the "Obsessio Montis Badonici," and it lasted the live-long day.

The question is, how did this stage of the battle end?

Then we should like to know whether any of the English succeeded in getting away, and if so, what proportion of them? We should also like to know the names of the commanders on either side.

So far the battle that has been described and the position taken up has been deduced solely from the evidence of Gildas.

If Gildas was right in speaking of this Welsh victory as "the siege of Bath mountain," then it follows that he referred to Beacon Hill. To no other spot can an English force be brought by a continuous course of reasonable conjectures, with no weak link, so that it should be besieged on a mountain. No other spot can possibly be held to dispute the claim of Beacon Hill to be indeed the Mons Badonicus of Gildas.

The writer had got thus far in his conclusions regarding the battle of Mons Badonicus, and was trying to puzzle out how such a battle probably ended. That some of the English must have got

away seemed evident, as otherwise the Welsh would have swept down on the open settlements of the invaders and destroyed them all; and yet we hear of nothing of the kind. At the best any suggestions the writer might have made must have been pure guess-work, and certainly he would not have had sufficient military intuition, and tactical skill, to have been able to suggest the wise and bold course that was adopted by the English, unless by mere chance he had come across certain statements made by Geoffrey of Monmouth. Since it must be admitted that Geoffrey of Monmouth is a very weak authority indeed, a few words about him seem necessary, in order to show why certain statements of his about a battle at Bath, which will be quoted later, may be relied on.

No man has done so much to poison the wells of history as Geoffrey of Monmouth. The Normans in the early part of the twelfth century wanted a history of the country they had conquered, and had already begun to make their home; but as true history would have been bound to reveal the great deeds of the vanquished English, and to have told the story of a far greater conquest than their own fortunate incursion, when the English were ill prepared, it was essential that if a history was to be acceptable to the Normans it must be a false one. This false history Geoffrey of Monmouth supplied. It met with immediate and lasting success, and it is hardly too much to say that we have not yet thrown off the incubus of falsehood with which he overlaid the history of our land.

Geoffrey of Monmouth was an extraordinary person. Gauged by worldly success, and by the influence of his writings upon his contemporaries and upon succeeding generations, he was a great man. Judged by any higher standard, it would be unpleasant to give full expression to the feelings of disgust which Geoffrey of Monmouth's so-called history arouses.

In reading it, it is painfully evident that we have before us the work of a deceiver who was truckling to the dominant class, namely, the Norman nobles, who by means of their castles and armour and armed retainers, were with difficulty holding in subjection a stubborn people with a far finer history than their own. If Geoffrey of Monmouth's book was to be acceptable to the vainglorious public for which he catered, it was evident that the true history of the English must be concealed. Then, as long as the book was plentifully spiced with vituperation of the English, or Saxons as he calls them, it did not much matter with what stuff he filled its pages.

Judged from the standpoint of sterling worth, Geoffrey of Monmouth was a stupid man, because he says such stupid things. He had, however, great fluency and command of florid expressions, and he must besides have had considerable knowledge of true history. Having decided, however, to give false history, his fluency, coupled with absolute recklessness, produced a sort of brilliance, which dances like an *ignis fatuus* over the morass of falsehood in which for centuries English history was smothered.

Yet as any one wades through this so-called history he must become aware that there are some facts blended with the farrago of absurdities which make up the book. Even these facts are as a rule distorted, and no connected history can be deduced from them. Some such sterling facts we may recognize in Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of a battle at Bath. Here as we wade through the slime, our feet seem to stand on firm ground.

Although these facts have to be picked out from a mass of bombastic fustian, like jewels from a dust-bin, it is not difficult to do so, since they explain and make clear, instead of confusing; in fact, they enable us to solve a difficult problem.

The glints of truth with which they sparkle enable us to distinguish them from the rubbish with which they are mingled. Geoffrey of Monmouth claims to have possessed a very ancient book in the Welsh language, and it seems more than probable that this statement was true. If so, then it may be possible that some lingering spark of respect for the story of a great Welsh victory, as recounted by an old Welsh writer, may have induced Geoffrey of Monmouth to embody that story in his book with a minimum of falsification.

Was it stupidity which prevented Geoffrey realizing that, in describing a Welsh success, in the process of which a numerically superior Welsh army surrounded an English one on the top of a hill, he was revealing a fine feat of arms on the part of the English, in extricating themselves from such a position by means of brilliant tactics, and with the heroic sacrifice of some of their numbers? It could not have been generosity that led Geoffrey

to make this unwilling revelation, for he never spares vituperation of the Saxons as he calls them.

These considerations point to the fact that it is quite possible, and reasonably probable, that Geoffrey of Monmouth, in the middle of an absurd and grandiloquent account of a battle at Bath, did insert some sentences taken from an old Welsh book that he possessed. If these sentences are true, and they certainly bear the impress of truth, they can only refer to the battle of Mons Badonicus. Of that there can be no doubt at all. At no other time before Ceawlin's campaign of Deorham, in the year 577, is it conceivable that the English could have besieged Bath.

Of course Geoffrey makes Arthur the commander of the Welsh, and the hero of the battle of Mons Badonicus. There seems no doubt that there was a Welsh, or perhaps Roman leader named Arthur, or Artorius, who flourished about this time, and did command the Welsh forces at the battle of Mons Badonicus. On the other hand, Geoffrey tells us that a leader named Cheldric commanded the English, and although by bad strategy he got his army into a false position at Bath, he seems to have been a brave and capable leader in action, and one who under trying circumstances could calmly bide his time until the auspicious moment for action had arrived. Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of a battle at Bath is to be found in Book IV, Chapters v and vi, of his history.

We need not waste time over the rigmarole of absurd statements by means of which Geoffrey gets the Saxons and the Welsh to Bath. The

Saxons are said to have landed at Totnes, and to have been pursued eventually to Thanet. Statements equally ridiculous. However, they serve Geoffrey's purpose, which was to concoct a story of some kind, which should enable him to utilize an account of a battle at Bath which he possessed.

Fortunately Geoffrey does give enough of the true story to give a certain amount of consistency to his ranting nonsense, and the remarkable fact remains, and cannot be gainsaid, that Geoffrey does describe just such a battle as would have taken place, if the Welsh, by clever combinations, had caught the English in the act of besieging Bath.

Throughout his book Geoffrey shows an utter incapacity for understanding warfare, and nowhere more so than at Bath.

There is something ingenuous and unsophisticated about his stupidity. If, on the one hand, we lose the fine account he might have truly given of the rallying of the Welsh tribes to Arthur's standard, and the able dispositions he made of his untrained forces; on the other, we gain the witness that the true account bears to the noble stand made by the English all day, on the top of a hill, and drawn up in the form of a wedge, until towards sunset they suddenly evacuated it, and retired to another hill with a camp on it.

The extracts from Geoffrey's verbose account of the battle near Bath that seem to have been taken from another work are as follows:—

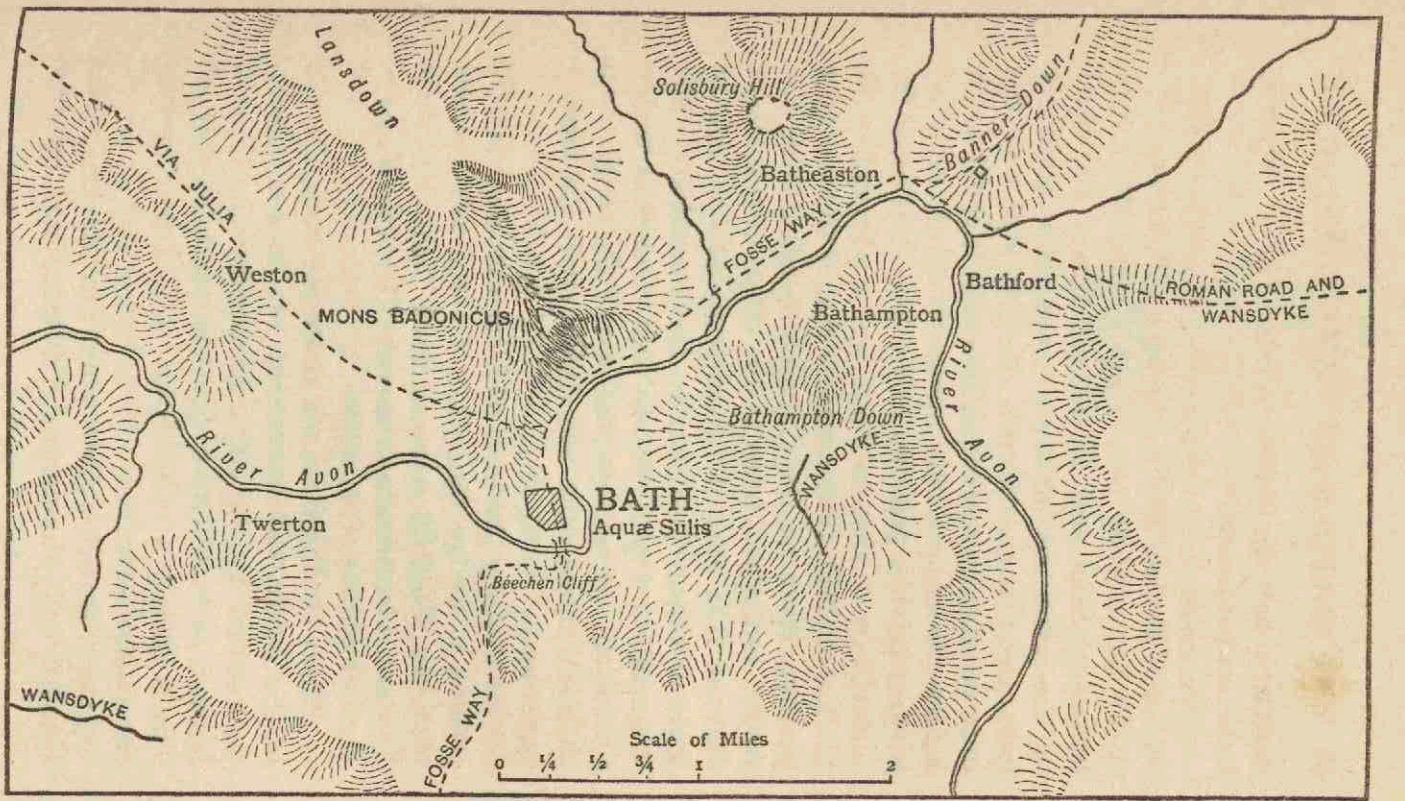
"From thence the Saxons pursued their furious march to the town of Bath, and laid siege to it. . . ."

Then follows a statement that involves the fact that Arthur, who was in the north, could not have reached Bath until many weeks after the Saxons had begun to besiege it. This is of course absurd, and may be dismissed with the speeches which follow.

Then, Arthur having armed himself, we get to business, and it is stated that Arthur "boldly attacked the Saxons, who were drawn out in the shape of a wedge, as their manner was. And they, notwithstanding that the Britons fought with great eagerness, made a noble defence all that day; but at length towards the sunsetting, climbed up the next mountain which served them for a camp."

These two sentences, short as they are, do help us to give some sort of shape to the battle near Bath, and the tactics employed; and they certainly seem to have been written by some one who had complete knowledge of all that happened.

That the Saxons "pursued their furious march to Bath" is a truthful touch, and shows how their mad march impressed their enemies. Then when Arthur attacks them he finds them "drawn out in the shape of a wedge, as their manner was." Now, every soldier must know that there is no virtue in the wedge formation when on the defensive against superior numbers, unless it happens that the shape of the position chosen for defence favours a wedge formation, and, above all, that it provides a secure defence for the rear of the wedge. We are left in no doubt at all as to the fact that the Saxons were on the defensive, since the following words plainly tell us that "they made a noble defence all that day." For the whole of a long

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summer's day the Saxons underwent a siege, in Latin an "obsessio."

We now come to the most remarkable identification of Beacon Hill as the Mons Badonicus.

It has already been shown that, if a force besieging Bath had its retreat round the bend of the Avon cut off by a large army suddenly debouching from the hills, Beacon Hill was the only possible defensive position that it could reach before the enemy was upon it. Now, it is an unquestionable fact, that any one can test for himself, by a visit to Bath, and a pleasant walk to Beacon Hill, that an army forced to take up a position there on the defensive must assume the wedge formation, because the shape of the top of Beacon Hill suits the wedge formation, and in fact no other formation is there possible. The shape of the top of Beacon Hill compels a wedge formation, and protects the rear of the wedge by a sheer precipice, as it was then, now it has zig-zag paths up it.

At this day the lines of houses on Beacon Hill assume a wedge formation, for the same reason that the English assumed that formation there fourteen centuries ago, namely, that the shape of the hill admits of no other.

Even on the one-inch ordnance map, the site of the battle, still uncovered, can be seen clearly demarcated by the angle formed by the lines of houses, and subtended by the precipice. If all this is merely a coincidence, it is indeed a very remarkable one.

Does it not rather point to the fact that Geoffrey of Monmouth did take, not only his

general ideas of a battle at Bath, but even some of his plain statements, from a true account of that battle that he claimed to have in his possession?

But there is far more than this that fits in, in a remarkable manner, with what would have occurred, assuming that the English were commanded by a brave and capable leader, who did not lose his presence of mind, notwithstanding his strategical blunder, but calmly took the best measures for extricating his army, or at least a large part of it, from the false position into which he had got it.

A great deal could be said to show that the English held quite a strong position, and one that, by limiting or extending the wedge, could be exactly adapted to their numbers; whilst a strong reserve could be kept on the reverse slope facing the precipice, ready at any moment to deliver a counter-charge, should the enemy have the temerity to charge home at any point. The lack of water, however, made it imperative that they should quit their position that day. The question was, at what hour?

And now we come to a fact that, if it is merely one of the inventions poured out from the teeming brain of Geoffrey, is indeed a remarkable one. Geoffrey, who never even by accident makes a sensible remark on military matters, here names the very best hour for the retirement of the English from their false position, namely, at sunsetting.

Surely this egregious historian could only have taken this plain and sensible statement from a true account of the battle!

Cheldric knew well the character of the foes that were surrounding him. He knew that their numberless forces, which he could see everywhere from the commanding position he held, were composed of gangs of untrained and undisciplined and badly armed tribesmen, gathered from all parts. He knew that his trained warriors could walk through their ranks, and the thicker they were, the more easily would they be mown, as a great leader of his own race once said.

Then he knew that upon his sudden move the Welsh would become a helpless rabble tumbling over one another, some in their efforts to attack, others in their efforts to escape his well-timed charges.

Above all, he knew that when darkness fell the Welsh would be helpless, and incapable of restoring anything like order before daylight came again.

But it was essential that Cheldric should have enough daylight to ensure that all his men, wherever scattered in the battle, should be able to find their way to the bend of the river Avon. And so he chose sunset as the best hour for his sudden retirement.

Doubtless throughout that long day, not only every leader but every warrior of that beleaguered force, had been taken to the top of the precipice and pointed out the exact track he would have to follow. And now there is a particular feature of the Beacon Hill position, not hitherto alluded to, which helps to confirm the fact that this was the course followed. From the wedge-shaped summit the land falls, with an easy slope, right down to

the Fosse Way, and points straight in the direction of the bend of the Avon.

The retreating force were thus able to rise, as one man, at the appointed moment, fall into their appointed places, and march away with quite a broad front, and for more than half a mile they were charging down hill. Then, after a halt to quench their thirst at the brook at the bottom, and to effect a few defensive charges on the mob that hung around them, they retired to another position, and by that time darkness had fallen.

The next question to be settled is: What position did the English take up?

We must again refer to Geoffrey of Monmouth. He says "they climbed up the next mountain which served them for a camp. . . . The next morning Arthur, with his army, went up the mountain, but lost many of his men in the ascent, etc., etc. Notwithstanding, after a very hard struggle, the Britons gained the summit of the hill, and quickly came to a close engagement with the enemy, who again gave them a warm reception, and made a vigorous defence. In this manner a great part of that day also was spent." So far we seem to be reading a true account of the second stage of the battle, from the pen of a true Welshman, and not from that of the half-Norman Geoffrey. This unknown Welsh writer evidently realised that the true glory of this Welsh victory lay in the fact that untrained and ill-armed tribesmen had driven the seasoned warriors of the English from the field, and had faced and defeated the rear-guard that they had left in a strong position.

The rodomontade of the next sentence shows

the unmistakable style of Geoffrey, as he describes how Arthur drew his sword "Caliburn" and, rushing into the battle, slew 470 men with his own hand. If he killed the Saxons at the quick rate of one a minute, this would have taken Arthur more than seven hours. It is added that "the Britons," seeing this, followed their leader, in great multitudes, and made slaughter on all sides; so that Colgrin and Baldulph his brother, and many thousands more fell before them." From this heap of chaff we may perhaps pick out two grains of truth preserved from the original Welsh story. The number 470, slain by Arthur's own hand, according to Geoffrey, probably preserves for us the actual number of the slain in this particular position; and the names Colgrin and Baldulph may also be those of two renowned leaders of the Saxons, proudly recorded by an ancient Welsh writer. If 470 was indeed the number of Saxons who sacrificed their lives in one rear-guard position in order to secure the retirement of the remainder of their army, it does enable us to form at least a vague estimate as to their total number, and we cannot put it at less than 5000 men and possibly it may have been 6000.

And now there is added one more important statement that bears the impress of truth. It is said that "Cheldric in this imminent danger of his men, betook himself to flight." This seems quite likely.

It must be borne in mind that on the previous nightfall, Cheldric, as soon as he had reached his chosen position at the bend of the Avon, is sure to have sent off the main body of his army on a

night-march to Cunetio, there to get food and rest, guarded by the strong detachment left there. They could not lose their way, since they had but to follow the track of the Roman road, and since they are sure to have chosen a time when there was a full moon, this would be easy. It is even possible that the main body may have thus escaped without the knowledge of the Welsh. Even the wounded may have been carried away.

To cover the retreat of the main body Cheldric would be sure to leave a strong force, probably at least one thousand men.

These, as we learn from Geoffrey, made a fine resistance for the greater part of the day, and then seeing that all was up, Cheldric, having beaten off a severe attack, made a swift retirement with all his unwounded men, except that some unwounded may have decided to remain and sell their lives dearly. At any rate Cheldric got away, though with but a very small start of the enemy. Thus appears to have ended the second stage of the great Welsh victory of Mons Badonicus.

We must now turn back to consider where the position was that Cheldric retired to from Beacon Hill.

There is a hill, now called Solisbury Hill, half a mile north-west of Batheaston; it has a broad flat top surrounded by a low embankment. This hill takes the eye and appeals to the fancy of those ignorant of military requirements; but it only has to be considered a moment to be dismissed as an impossible position.

It has no water. It can be easily surrounded, and it is too large to be easily defended by a small

force, and, worst of all, it does not secure retreat round the bend of the Avon.

There are two other possible positions.

One is where the lower slopes of Banner Down run down to the Fosse Way and to the river; the other where the Roman road to Cunetio ascends the hill near Bathford.

Only by visiting the neighbourhood can it be decided which is the more probable of these positions to have been chosen by Cheldric. On the whole the Banner Down position seems to be the most likely one at which Cheldric would have left a strong rear-guard to secure his retreat round the bend of the river, with orders to prepare the position for defence; and it has the immense advantages of an unlimited supply of water, and that the river protects its left flank.

So far it must be admitted that Geoffrey of Monmouth has given us a very reasonable and probable account of the first two stages of the battle of Mons Badonicus, in spite of the Arthurian fustian with which he has embellished it.

With regard to the third stage, namely, the flight of Cheldric and the forlorn remnant of his brave rear-guard from the Avon Valley, Geoffrey is less instructive, and yet we may gather some reasonable deductions from his vague statements.

Geoffrey tells us that "the victory being thus gained, the King commanded Cador, Duke of Cornwall, to pursue them, while he himself should hasten his march into Albania (Scotland), etc., etc. . . . In the mean time the Duke of Cornwall, who had command of ten thousand men, would not as yet pursue the Saxons in their flight, but speedily

made himself master of their ships. . . . After this he hastily pursued the enemy . . . and allowed no quarter to those he could overtake.

"At last the Saxons entered the Isle of Thanet . . . but Cador gave them no respite till he had killed Cheldric, and taken hostages for the surrender of the rest."

Let us first notice that Geoffrey here makes Arthur desert his army, at a moment when his guidance was most wanted, and go off to Scotland. If Arthur was the absolute king, with commanding authority, that Geoffrey makes him, this desertion of his brave men was certainly discreditable.

But if we take Arthur off the pedestal on which Geoffrey places him, and restore him to the position he undoubtedly held, if indeed he existed at all, namely, that of a tribal leader, with influence over all owing to his recognized ability, but with authority only over his own men, we shall find far better reasons for Arthur not pursuing the Saxons himself, and reasons entirely creditable to him.

After the second day's battle had been won, we may safely picture to ourselves the position crowded with swarms of half-starved Welshmen quarrelling over the meagre spoils that they found there. It must have taken some time to reduce this mob to something like order, and get each troop sorted out, and assembled under its chief.

Then we must remember that Arthur's army had lain out, at least two nights, and probably more, and had had no more food than they could carry in their wallets; and they were quite unfit

to undertake a long march into a country where they could hardly expect to find food, and certainly not enough for their needs.

To induce these men to return peacefully to their homes must have been a task that taxed all Arthur's abilities for the next few days. So far we have only considered the condition of Arthur's own army, namely, those who had rallied to his standard from the north, and from South Wales.

We must not forget, however, that there was another contingent that came into action on that fateful morning, when the Saxons retreated from the walls of Bath to Mons Badonicus. Then Bath opened its gates, and from them issued the men from Cornwall and Devon (as they are now called), and we learn that their leader's name was Cador.

These men had had plenty of food and a good night's rest, and after the first day's battle they could return to Bath for more food and rest. These men, with their well-filled wallets, were the only troops fit to pursue a beaten enemy in a war-stricken country. Are we to assume that the fact that Cador and his men are named as the pursuers of the Saxons is due to a fortunate guess on the part of Geoffrey? Or, on the other hand, may we not, must we not, attribute it to an honest old Welsh chronicler, whose true story Geoffrey uses, to give consistence to his own garbled account?

The detail about the ships of the Saxons is either one of Geoffrey's embellishment, or it may embalm the fact that the Saxons did bring a few

flat-bottomed boats to enable them to throw a force across the river to reconnoitre or maraud.

All these considerations justify us in assuming that Cheldric and his men may well have got from one to two hours' start before Cador could take up their pursuit.

We can hardly suppose that they had had much if any food, and, at any rate, they had to start on a twenty-five miles' march to Cunetio after a hard morning's fighting, and a night with little rest. Considering their losses in battle we can hardly suppose that it was a band of more than two or three hundred men that left that stricken field and climbed the hill out of the Avon Valley. If they could but reach Cunetio they would be safe, since the main body would have been rested, and prepared to meet any force that the Welsh could send so far against them.

There is one more statement of Geoffrey's which is worth considering. In spite of its manifest absurdity, as regards place, it does preserve the fact that Cheldric took refuge somewhere, and that he was there killed. Geoffrey tells us that "at last . . . they entered the Isle of Thanet with their broken forces . . . but Cador gave them no respite till he had killed Cheldric, and taken hostages for the surrender of the rest."

Thanet is, of course, too ridiculous to waste time over, and all we have to do is to try and discover some place between Bath and Cunetio where Cheldric may have made his last stand. It seems impossible to fix on any spot that deserves consideration, and so the question must be left in abeyance.

It is, of course, possible that Cheldric may have got to Cunetio itself, and that the main body of his army had left it, and so that it was there that he was slain,

It is a balance of probabilities whether, having regard to the danger to the open settlements, and possibly also a shortage of food, the main body retired; or whether they remained, showing a bold front and waiting for the possible escape of some at least of their gallant rear-guard, before they returned to Newbury.

There is one suggestion which, although it is admittedly a guess, yet may be worthy of consideration, if, indeed, a guess that provides food for thought is better than pusillanimous silence.

This guess is worth considering because, should it turn out to be true, it would not only explain the end of the final stage of the battle of Mons Badonicus, but it would also solve one of the greatest archæological problems in England.

About twenty miles from the River Avon, and about five from Cunetio, the Roman road from Bath comes to the greatest artificial mound in Europe, namely, Silbury Hill.

We know for certain that at least the lower part of Silbury Hill was there when the Romans made their road, because that road, which points straight to it, is there diverted in order to avoid it, and it passes south of Silbury on its course to Cunetio.

Another proof of the great age, of at least the base of Silbury Hill, lies in the fact that flint arrow-beds and Bronze Age relics have been found at its base.

We know that some early race, or races, in Britain were great earth-movers. Witness Avebury itself, less than a mile north of Silbury Hill, also the wonderful earthwork camps near Salisbury, and in Dorsetshire.

It is suggested that such an earthwork camp stood here when the Romans came, it may well have been 60 or 70 feet high, or even more. The bench-marks on the 6-inch map show that the plain from which Silbury Hill rises averages about 495 feet above sea-level. The ground south of Silbury Hill, however, rises so quickly that the 600-feet contour is only 400 yards away.

It is suggested that, originally, this rising ground continued northwards where Silbury Hill now stands, and formed a round hill rising some 40 or 50 feet above the plain. This hill the camp-makers scarped, using the soil to build up their camp, and taking more from the high ground to the south.

Thus Silbury Camp arose completely detached from the higher ground, and must have been an outstanding feature of the landscape. Since Silbury Hill covers about five acres, a camp about 60 feet up may well have enclosed from three to four acres.

It is a curious fact that both the Romans and Saxons do give some slight corroborative evidence that it was such a camp that they found at Silbury.

We know how accurate the Romans were in the alignment of their roads where no obstacles interfered. For more than two miles the Roman road runs in a dead straight line to the west of

Silbury. Now if, in the time of the Romans, Silbury Hill had risen to a peak as it does to-day, it is inconceivable that the Roman engineers would not have planted their alignment staff on the top of that peak. That they did not do this is plainly evident, since the alignment of their road has been made on a point about 160 feet south of the present peak of Silbury Hill. On the assumption, however, that there was a camp and not a peak at Silbury in the time of the Romans, the point selected by them to align their road upon would certainly have been the highest, since it was on that part of the parapet of the camp that faced the high ground.

Although this evidence may seem to be minute, yet it is clear and positive, and it is incumbent on those who question it, to find some other reason for the Romans having not aligned their road on the peak of Silbury Hill.

The evidence of the Saxons is not quite so clear and positive, since, instead of depending upon the accurate science of engineering, it depends upon the science of language. Since the writer is no etymologist, he cautiously prefers to put it in the form of a question.

Would the Saxons have given Silbury the name it bears if they had not found a camp there?

According to the ordnance survey, the top of Silbury Hill is 616 feet above sea-level, and therefore about 120 feet above the surrounding plain. If there was a camp here when the Saxons came, the question arises, who filled it up with soil, so that it rises to a peak some 50 or 60 feet above the level of the camp?

This will be answered as we conclude the third and final stage of the battle of Mons Badonicus.

We here return to the flight of Cheldric from the Avon Valley. We see him and his weary men approaching Silbury. Cador and his victorious Welshmen had caught him up long before, and had killed many stragglers.

The moon was going down, and the way beyond Silbury more difficult. Here was a camp, where at any rate he could make a stand, with a hope that relief might come from Cunetio next day, and so they entered it. Silbury was but an ancient deserted earthwork with no gates, but it was a last resource, and the weary men could go no further.

During the remainder of the night Cador and his men surrounded Silbury, and at daylight stormed it, and had no difficulty in overcoming and slaying all they found there, and after stripping the dead promptly took their departure. And, probably, with no time to spare before a relieving force of the English from Cunetio appeared.

It must be borne in mind that Cheldric would have been sure to send forward messengers announcing his retreat; moreover, he may have been able to retain a few horses to mount them on.

However that may have been, the force at Cunetio would have been sure to send forward a strong party, as soon as the men were rested, in hopes of being able to rescue their commander and his men. These would arrive soon after dawn

near Silbury, but only in time to see the Welsh retiring towards Bath.

Then they would enter the ancient fortress, and find there the bodies of their slaughtered comrades.

After burying these where they found them, the English must have retired to Cunetio, and later to Newbury, vowing vengeance on the Welsh. It is suggested that the stern Woden-worshipper, Ceawlin, was brought up from childhood with these cries of vengeance ringing in his ears, and made it the task of his life to execute that vengeance.

It will be shown later that there can be as little question of Ceawlin's ruthless brutality as there can be of his ability as a leader.

It will be shown also that Ceawlin made the Wansdyke, and it goes without saying that he did this with the forced labour of his enemies; he had nothing to teach them in earth-moving, besides setting them to work according to his wishes.

It is suggested that when Ceawlin had thus completed that great part of the Wansdyke north of Devizes, he made his wretched slaves fill up Silbury Camp as high as the soil could be made to stand, as a monument of his immortal revenge.

If this story of the battle of Mons Badonicus has thus been ended with a mere guess, it cannot be denied that the rest of it is derived from reasonable conjectures, which, in a very remarkable manner, do co-ordinate a large number of scraps of evidence, and produce a coherent and reasonable account of that great Welsh victory.

For a wonder they show that Geoffrey of Monmouth for once spoke the truth, when he said that he possessed an ancient Welsh manuscript. And, above all, they bear witness to the honesty of that old Welsh chronicler.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE REIGNS OF CERDIC AND CYNRIC

We are now in a position to take stock of the affairs of the invaders, and of their hopes and anxieties, as they were affected by the great disaster of Mons Badonicus.

If any readers decline to accept the version of that battle given in these pages, they are reminded that the position of affairs is not thereby affected, since there can be no doubt at all that some such disaster should occur at this time, if there is any truth at all in Welsh evidence. Surely a tentative explanation of the battle of Mons Badonicus based on numerous scraps of Welsh evidence is better than nothing. It at least helps us to realize the sobering effect that such a disaster must have had on the invaders for many years after, and to some extent it enables us to make a rough estimate of the extent of their losses. Several of their most experienced leaders and about one thousand, or perhaps even as many as two thousand, of their best warriors were slain, at a time when their services were much wanted, and their weapons were lost to an enemy who much wanted them.

At the same time this presentation, this visualization, of a disaster at Bath, enables us to understand how it was that, whilst the actual settlements

of the invaders were unaffected, and we do not hear of a single village being lost, yet all attempts at further conquest ceased for more than a generation.

It is held that this statement is not traversed by the fact that Cerdic and Cynric fought the Welsh at Cerdicsford (Chardford on the Avon) in 519, and at Cerdic's-lea in 527, since it seems evident that these battles were only of an offensive-defensive character; and intended to administer lessons to the Welsh, who were becoming too presumptuous after their great victory.

If we are ever to hope to explain the Conquest of Britain by the English, it can only be by some one offering a definite explanation which is adequate and coherent, and then some one else, either improving this by sound criticism, or offering a better.

In spite of all the faults of Green's "Making of England" it was used as a text-book at the Universities for a quarter of a century, and has done much to encourage and help investigation. Where would the question stand now, but for this gallant attempt of a great historian to make a synthesis of the Conquest of Britain by the English? If we are compelled to criticize some of Green's conclusions, to the point even of styling them ridiculous, let us not fail to emulate his spirit.

Green's great weakness lay in his ignorance of military matters, and indeed in his contempt for what he called a "drum and trumpet history." He does not even appear to have understood that, without due consideration being given to strategical

factors, it is impossible to write the history of a conquest.

This is where the disaster of Mons Badonicus comes in to help us, for a failure is often far more instructive than a success. This statement was as true for our forefathers as it is for us to-day. It taught our forefathers, who had given so many hostages to fortune in the shape of open settlements, where their danger lay; and it taught them the difficulties, or, in military parlance, the strategic factors, they would have to overcome, and this is the same lesson that we may learn from it.

The disaster of Mons Badonicus is a remarkable instance of a blessing in disguise. Without the lesson thus taught at the supreme moment that it was wanted, we can hardly conceive that it would have been possible for gangs of jealous invaders, coming together from different parts of the continent, to have held together, and submitted to the necessary restraint, and to have yielded loyal obedience to one supreme leader, whom they were soon to make their king.

The laws of sound strategy had been broken once, and, as far as we can discover, they were never broken again, the penalty for their infraction had been exacted, and the advance of the invaders had been checked for many years.

There may, of course, have been other mistakes made, to which some countenance is given, by the claims of the Welsh to other victories of less importance. If so, we may be sure that they would not have been recorded by the English, and we may also be sure that they would confirm the lesson of Mons Badonicus.

We can thus understand how it came about that even the most lawless and adventurous among the invaders were held in leash; and that the systematized strategy of the first Bretwalda, constantly confirming conquest by colonization, was never afterwards relinquished.

There seems to be a tendency amongst literary men to despise the invaders of Britain, and, like one of the greatest of them, to describe their battles as those of kites and crows.

The mere mention of the word "strategy" seems to arouse the rancour of some of them, and lead them to quizz it, by such terms as "Warfare of to-day." They seem to think that there can be no such thing as strategy without a Staff College to teach it. They seem to forget that one of the best books on strategy was written by a Chinese, long before the period we are dealing with; and that the principles of strategy do not alter, as those of tactics do with every change of armament.

They forget the constant influence of strategic factors on those engaged in warfare, ever penalizing those who ignore them.

In the first stage of the conquest there is some excuse for this ignorance, since the consummate genius of the first Bretwalda allowed no failures to display to us the difficulties and dangers the invaders faced and overcame.

As much may be said of Ceawlin the second Bretwalda, of whose victorious career an explanation will be offered later.

Between these two great strategists comes the disaster of Mons Badonicus, and as by a flash of

lightning on a stormy night, the road we have to follow stands revealed.

There is no mystery about strategy, it is merely common sense applied to warfare. The leader of innate ability may possibly acquire a knowledge of strategy by simply applying his wits to any given campaign. The ordinary man must learn it from his more experienced elders, or, as now-a-days, from a Staff College. Otherwise he can only be taught it by disaster. After all, fear is the great instructress of the ordinary man, and this it is that leads him in times of great stress and anxiety to repose his trust in leaders of known courage, ability and prudence, and to yield them willing obedience. After two generations of constant success, the invaders wanted something to frighten them, and they got it at Mons Badonicus. Henceforward there was to be no lack of cohesion amongst the various bands, coming at different times, and often from very different places, that composed their armies, and every one must have recognized the necessity for discipline.

Thus the immediate effect of the great disaster must have been a tightening up of that discipline to which the invaders had to submit, if only for the purposes of immigration; but which was tending to become relaxed, as broad lands were offered them for settlement, with no apparent danger, even in the offing.

This tendency to disintegration, which is the inherent weakness of broadcast rural settlement, was at once checked by the bracing effect of the cold douche of threatening danger. Thus, whether we call it discipline, or mere loyalty, that cohesion

was preserved amongst the scattered invaders, which alone could make future conquests possible. Then fortunately there could have been no tendency to division of command, since Cerdic and his son Cynric had not been implicated in the great disaster, and so confidence in them had not been shaken.

Cerdic had held chief command of the army of the west for many years, as King Aesc had held command in the Thames Valley; and everywhere success had crowned his leadership in battle; and besides, he had shown his capacity in organizing marine transport, and for all the countless difficulties that had to be foreseen and prepared for, in landings on a hostile shore.

Moreover, Cerdic's son Cynric, from early boyhood, had been following in his father's footsteps, and was beginning to show an equal, if not indeed a greater capacity. Cynric's name could hardly have been so constantly mentioned together with that of his father, unless it had been universally recognized that he was a real help to him.

We thus see how the disaster of Mons Badonicus was indeed a blessing in disguise, since it served to weld together the scattered invaders under one experienced and capable leader, with a son ready to take his place, and, as we shall see later, with a grandson of even greater capacity, the renowned Ceawlin, the second Bretwalda and conqueror of the West Midlands.

But Mons Badonicus did a great deal more than this. Although it was indeed a disaster, yet unwittingly it fulfilled the conditions of an operation of war that was much needed.

Far better than if it had been designed for it, the campaign to the walls of Bath acted as a reconnaissance in force, and not only revealed the strategical difficulties which had to be overcome, but also it compelled the Welsh to display their forces. Thus it showed the invaders, not only that the Welsh could assemble quickly in vast numbers near Bath without their knowing it, but also that they certainly would thus assemble for the defence of their beloved city if they got the slightest warning that it was going to be attacked. Knowledge is power, and we are met with the paradox that disaster gave power to the English, since it gave them knowledge. This does not mean, however, that it gave them added power, but it does mean that it prevented them squandering the excess of power that they possessed over the enemy, in the pursuit of at least risky, if not indeed unattainable objects.

The great result of this dire lesson will be shown as the story proceeds, but it may be broadly stated here.

Led by Cerdic, the great pupil and understudy of Aella the first Bretwalda, the invaders decided to revert to the strategical policy of that great leader, namely, limited conquests confirmed by colonization. That only could win them pure homes untainted by foreign domination or intrusions of any kind, where they could live under their own laws and customs and their own religion, that of Woden. "Strategical policy" may seem to be a contradiction in terms, but it is not so, since in this case military and civil elements were combined for their mutual support. It was only

by colonizing in safety that they could continue to conquer. Although the effect of the disaster of Mons Badonicus must have been instantaneous, in the manner that has so far been described, we should make a mistake if we supposed that all its lessons were as quickly understood; it was not necessary that they should be, until the time came that this or that lesson came in useful to explain how the next difficulty should be overcome.

It is easy now for any tyro to open his maps and follow the course of that ill-omened campaign. It was far different then, and even the ablest leaders could only have been able to form a vague and confused conception of what had occurred.

And yet as years went on it must have often been a topic very seriously discussed at conferences of leading men, and so its lessons would be gradually absorbed, although not until the invaders approached Bath would all of them be revealed. The gradual advance of the invaders, culminating in the battle of Deorham in the year 577, can only be understood if we realize all the time, the moderating and controlling effect of the great lesson taught at Mons Badonicus.

We now return to Cerdic. There is nothing to show that Cerdic was a man of more than ordinary capacity, who had had the advantage of a sound training, because for the first fifteen years of his career as an invader, he had acted under the command of Aella, and the best that can be said of him is, that Aella must have had the greatest confidence in him. Then for the next four years, after Aella had retired, with the honorary rank of

Bretwalda, Cerdic must have been able to profit by the advice of his beloved leader.

The bringing over of large numbers of Saxons, which began at this time, so many in fact that they eventually gave their name to Cerdic's kingdom, may have been due to Aella's advice, but at any rate it was a continuation of his policy. It must have been whilst Cerdic was attending to the distribution of those new-comers, that he heard of the disaster to his frontier force.

The first report must have created great alarm, as first news of a disaster always does. Moreover, as this was the first set-back the invaders had received, since they landed for the purposes of permanent conquest sixty-seven years before, it must have created something like consternation. And then, as it was realized that the main body of the frontier force had escaped, and after rallying at their temporary base at Cunetio, had checked the pursuit of the Welsh, the alarm would subside. The immediate effect of this state of alarm must have been to establish Cerdic's authority so that it was never afterwards questioned.

With his knowledge and experience he would be able to take all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of the settlers near the frontier, and so confidence would be quickly restored. Cerdic, like every one else, must have been filled with disappointment; doubtless he had looked forward to doing great things, and now, for many years, for the rest of his life as it turned out, he was compelled to act on the defensive, and to devote himself to guarding what he had gained.

Still that was no mean task, and if Cerdic

could only have known it, few things, if any, could have done so much to establish his dynasty as the disaster of Mons Badonicus, since it forced all the invaders to look to him for guidance and protection, and, as we know, he proved worthy of the confidence placed in him, with the result that the King of England is still proud to trace his descent to Cerdic. Too much can hardly be made of the far-reaching and long-lasting effects of the disaster of Mons Badonicus, at any rate the writer will not be deterred, by the risk of being tedious, from dilating upon them. As so often happens, difficulties faced turn into explanations. *Solvuntur ambulando.*

The united character of the first stage of the invasion manifested itself as soon as due regard was accorded to the difficulties of warfare accompanied by colonization, and especially to those of marine transport; and it was confirmed by the evidence of Bede, that Aella King of the South Saxons had sole command of all the invaders.

That one man of consummate ability should thus be able to establish his absolute authority was easy to understand, more especially as the course the invasion took did display the guidance of a master mind; but it was long foreseen that a difficult problem would arise, when it became necessary to explain how such absolute authority could have been handed on, amongst invaders of different branches of the race, and of different clans, widely scattered in rural settlements.

Then it became necessary to explain a mysterious Welsh victory, about which, all that was known with certainty was the place, and with

reasonable certainty the date. When this had been done, lo and behold! we find explained the overmastering incentives to cohesion, which must have impelled the scattered colonists to render willing obedience to one capable and experienced leader. One difficulty explained has helped to explain another, thus adding to the probability that both explanations are sound.

There is nothing to show whether Cerdic was a good strategist or not, but he must have been a good administrator and disciplinarian; and fully qualified by long experience to distribute his frontier guards advantageously, and ensure that they did their duty.

That Cerdic soon earned the confidence of all is shown by the fact that, in the year 519, he was able to get himself acclaimed as King. That the three intervening years had been arduous ones, entailing constant vigilance, is shown by the fact that, in the year 519, Cerdic had to give the Welsh a severe lesson at Chardford on the Avon, as has already been stated. We must not infer from this that English settlements had been pushed thus far as yet, since it must have been essential that the English should show that they could strike far beyond their own borders; and the Downton that we find holding a commanding position overlooking the Avon, may have been established later. It is necessary to say this, as some people are apt to assume that a victory at a given spot implies settlement up to that spot, whereas it proves nothing of the kind.

The probable lines that settlements were pushed to at the various stages of the conquest,

must be left for local antiquaries to puzzle out, very few suggestions of that kind can be offered here.

There is a long straight dyke running north and south, just east of Andover, with the ditch to the west. This may possibly mark one stage of the gradual and cautious advance of the settlements; but the pros and cons are too complex to be dealt with here, and this is only put forward as a suggestion likely to be fruitful.

The western boundary of Hampshire seems to mark the limit of safe settlements in the lifetime of Cerdic.

Chardford was probably a severe lesson to the Welsh. Elated by their victory three years before, they ventured to meet the better trained, and better armed, and more powerful warriors of the English in a pitched battle. With strong earthworks in their rear, to which they could retire if defeated, they appear to have tried to prevent the crossing of the river Avon by the English, and to have failed, doubtless with considerable loss, and the moral effect of their defeat must have been great and lasting.

This is indicated by the fact that we hear of no more battles until the year 527, when the Chronicle tells us that Cerdic and Cynric fought against the Britons at the place which is called Cerdices-lea.

That it was a victory we may confidently assume or it would not have been recorded, but apparently it did not lead to any great accession of territory; it must, in fact, have been of a defensive character, and intended only to administer a sharp

lesson to the Welsh, who were again becoming too presumptuous.

It probably took place on some exposed part of Cerdic's extended frontier, and, as generally supposed, it may have been near the river Avon. The exact site of the battle of Cerdices-lea is not of great importance.

Guest, that brilliant but rather wild, though very suggestive writer, and his followers have supported the idea that Cerdices-lea may have been at Chearsley between Oxford and Aylesbury and a few miles north of Thame; but philologists will have none of this, since they point out that the "ic" of Cerdic is wanting in the earliest form of the name "Chearsley," which assume the form of Cerdes-lai and point to an earlier Ceardes-leah. With all due respect to philologists, etymology is a good servant but a bad master, and having regard to the known tendency of local rustics to abbreviate names, it seems necessary, since there is such a close resemblance between Cerdices-lea and Cerdes-lai, to consider whether Chearsley may not, after all, prove to be the site of the battle at Cerdices-lea.

The chief point against Chearsley is the entry in the Chronicle under the year 571, when Cuthwulf fought against the Britons at Bedford and took four towns, Lenbury, Aylesbury, Bensington, and Eynsham.

This will be dealt with later, and it does not altogether preclude the identification of Chearsley with Cerdices-lea.

It would be quite sufficient to account for a battle at Chearsley, if we supposed that the Welsh

had been too intrusive in the Thames Valley, and that this action was only intended to correct that.

The fact, however, that it is accorded a place in the Chronicle seems to imply that the battle at Cerdices-lea was of some importance, and was more than a mere punitive expedition, and in studying this conquest, the larger view seldom fails to yield a larger explanation. Assuming it to have been at Chearsley it will be well to consider what events might have brought it about.

The successful immigration of Saxons on a large scale in 514 is certain to have led many others to follow their example, as reports reached their friends on the continent of the goodness of the land, and, above all, that they had found themselves under the strong and wise and just rule of Cerdic.

Individual Englishmen in those days may have been as ready then as always to try their luck in a new country; but families, and even whole clans of Saxons, would hardly have been induced to emigrate without considerable assurances as to their security. Such assurances were now ample, and so we may assume that now a constant immigration of Saxons had been going on for many years. Most of these would probably take ship to London, and many would settle near it, and become known later as the Middle Saxons. Many would doubtless push up the Thames, even perhaps as far as Oxford; and many more would push up the rivers Crouch and Blackwater, and begin the colonization of Essex, which must have been far advanced by this time.

Since we know that the first stage of the

conquest had been devoted to establishing the invaders south of the Thames, with of course certain minor exceptions, it is probable that the Welsh, in what are now Essex, Hertfordshire, and Buckinghamshire, had been left in peace as long as they remained quiet.

To leave them thus, to keep their lands cultivated until they were wanted, was evidently one of the principles of the invasion laid down by Aella.

Now, however, these Welsh were being driven back gradually, and becoming concentrated in Bucks ; and were calling in the help of the Welsh of the north and west, who had not yet forgotten their one great victory, when by united action they had succeeded in driving an English army from the field.

It was evidently some such state of affairs that demanded decisive action on the part of Cerdic. He had made his frontier safe, and could afford to leave many of his own West Saxons guarding it, since he could doubtless reckon on a strong contingent from Kent, and all the warriors in the Thames Valley would be certain to join him.

A short campaign with the prospect of rich spoils must have been a great attraction ; and the rich vale of Aylesbury, which the Welsh were sure to try to defend, offered such prospects.

Cerdic probably assembled his forces near Wallingford ; and thence marched on Aylesbury, and met the brave but unfortunate Welsh at Chearsley, with the result recorded in the Chronicle.

We are thus enabled to realize how Cerdic was

occupied during the first seven years of his reign in establishing the security of his self-chosen frontiers, and after the victory at Cerdices-lea, which may have been Chearsley, that security could never again be threatened as long as he left the Welsh alone.

Thus Cerdic was able to turn his attention to other matters, and a very serious challenge to his authority by a section of an important branch of his followers, namely, the Jutes, had arisen, which threatened the conduct of the invasion in future, unless it was promptly and drastically dealt with.

As has been pointed out before, Cerdic had now become entirely dependent upon the Jutes for shipping. It was always important for Cerdic to have ships at his command, but much more so now. Cerdic and his chieftains had now had fourteen years to discuss the disaster of Mons Badonicus, and to weigh and value the lessons it taught. They now knew for certain where the chief centre of Welsh resistance lay. Everywhere they could if they chose drive back the Welsh in the open country, but that only led to an ever-widening frontier to be protected; and such extended settlements were liable to be swept away by Welsh armies suddenly debouching from the Cotswolds and from the hills above Bath. Under such conditions, and with long inland journeys to face, colonization could not be expected to proceed unchecked.

It was different in the west, where there were many good sea-ports at which armies and settlers could be landed within easy reach of their destina-

tions. In fact, the English possessed in sea-power one immense advantage over the Welsh; and Cerdic, as an apt pupil of the first Bretwalda, intended to use it to the full.

There can be little doubt that Cerdic had already sent fleets round Land's End, and had surveyed the estuary of the Severn, and had beaten up the unprepared Welsh in their quarters, and had possibly reconnoitred as far as Bath itself. A bold reconnoitring expedition amongst the settlements of an enemy that had no warning of its approach was a perfectly feasible proposition, entailing a minimum of risk, and gathering a maximum of information. However this may have been, there is no reason at all to doubt that English ships could sail those seas, as well and as confidently as those of the Welsh and Irish had done for centuries, and that they neglected to do so, no one can believe for a moment. The rewards of raiding expeditions, like the later practices of the Danes, would be a sufficient incentive, apart from the information gained, and so much needed by Cerdic.

However this may have been, there can be no doubt that by this time Cerdic and his chieftains had realized that the future trend of the invasion must be westwards, and that their objective, if a modern expression may be allowed without arousing the quizzing of critics, must be the hills that guard the mouth of the Severn from an enemy approaching them from the east. We are thus able to see the constant influence of strategic factors moulding the actions of nations at war; and whether we call the result that of strategy, or

merely that of the application of common sense to difficult problems, little matters.

But to return to the Jutes. All that has been said implies that it was essential that Cerdic should not only have plenty of ships, but also absolute control over their crews.

Now we read in the Chronicle, under the year 530, that Cerdic and Cynric conquered the island of Wight and slew many men at Wiht-gara's byrg.

It has already been shown that the Jutes occupied the Isle of Wight, and had probably done so even before the first arrival of Cerdic. To suppose that the Welsh had been holding the Isle of Wight all this time would be making too great demands upon our credulity, although Asser, a Welsh ecclesiastic, writing three centuries later, seems to have thought so.

The fact, therefore, that Cerdic is said to have conquered the Isle of Wight does show what an independent position the Jutes must have held there all this time; and so we are now able to grasp the far-sighted wisdom of Cerdic in bringing another large section of the tribe of the Jutes to Portsmouth, and giving them a large district to settle in north of Portsmouth. To have such a good harbour for their ships on the mainland must have been a great attraction to these traders; whilst their settlements in the Meon Valley did not in the least interfere with the influx of the Saxons by the Itchen Valley.

All this must have given great satisfaction at the time, but Cerdic, perhaps advised by Aella, evidently had ulterior motives of great importance,

when he induced so many more Jutes thus to come westwards, instead of going to Kent or to London. He wanted some Jutes on the mainland, in order that by means of them and their ships he might, if necessary, be able at any time to establish his authority over the Jutes in the Isle of Wight.

That time had now come.

We need not suppose that there was anything like a rebellion by the Jutes of the Isle of Wight, but merely that they were beginning to display a spirit of haughty independence. They were quite ready to render to Cerdic the services of some of their ships, but only on their own terms, and at times that suited them. Besides this they are sure to have had many shipbuilders at Cowes, and so they could, to a great extent, control the output of ships. The Wihtgaras, as they seem to have called themselves, not a Welsh name, probably sailed away every spring with such goods as they could collect for barter in Kent or on the continent; and then spent a great part of the summer in ferrying over families of Saxons to London, or to the ports of Essex. Then they would return in the autumn with such goods from the continent as were wanted in Wessex. In this sort of way they may have been doing a roaring trade. Moreover, they could, up to a certain point, reasonably urge that they were acting in the best interests of all the invaders.

So, indeed, they had been, up to a certain point, but it was not within the competence of mere traders to realize that that point had now been passed; and unless the absolute control of

marine transport was in the hands of the leader of the conquest, in this case the king, it must either fail altogether, or at least be liable to be seriously hampered at all times by the selfish interests of one independent section of the invaders.

It was to put a stop once and for all to this chronic clashing of military and trading interests, and to establish his own absolute authority, that Cerdic took drastic measures in the year 530. It was none too soon, as Cerdic died in 534, and it was desirable that the stern disciplinarian who had conducted the invasion from its commencement in these parts, and had won the confidence of all, should be the first to put down what amounted to a mutiny by the force of arms.

We learn from the entry in the Chronicle under the year 534 that Stuff and Wihtgar were Cerdic's nephews. It seems probable that a Jutish chief, living in the Isle of Wight, had in days gone by visited Cerdic on the continent to arrange to bring him and his army to the Solent; and then he had there married a sister of Cerdic's, and taken her back with him to the Isle of Wight before the birth of Wihtgar, since he would hardly have been given that name unless he had been born in the Isle of Wight.

As we should have expected, these chieftains appear to have been always loyal to their royal uncle, and they probably succeeded Bieda and Maegla as chiefs of the Jutes at Portsmouth; and then when Cerdic with their assistance had settled matters in the Isle of Wight, he, according to the Chronicle, with the concurrence of his son Cynric, gave the rule of that island to Stuff and Wihtgar.

The fact that the Chronicle, which tells us so little, does tell us that in the year 544 Wihtgar died, and that he was buried at Wihtgarabyrg, is fair proof that Wihtgar was considered by his contemporaries to have been a chieftain of great importance, and one that had taken a leading part in establishing the English in Britain. We may conclude that, for the last ten years of his life, Wihtgar gave loyal allegiance to Cynric, and that he introduced amongst the crews of his ships in the Solent, a discipline that was a prototype of that of later times.

Not often, if ever, are we told in the Chronicle of the death and the place of burial of a leader not of royal rank. This, indeed, appears to have been a case of a man whom kings delighted to honour, and as we read the entry we almost seem to be listening to a dirge on the death of a great sailor, though it must be admitted that the greatness of Wihtgar is only indicated by the sense of loss which this simple record of his death and burial reveals.

Enough has been said to show that Cerdic was certainly not a myth, but a very capable leader and a strong king. On the whole the chroniclers seem to have touched in the most important and decisive events in Cerdic's life with a certain hand.

They write as men who could have told us more if they had not been sternly limited by the terms of the national Chronicle for which they selected the leading events to be recorded, and they left those to be clothed with a history that they thought would never be forgotten. When

these meagre records are accepted without cavil, in the spirit in which they seem to have been written, and reasonable suggestions are added as to how each event recorded came about, we see that a consistent and coherent history of the period is produced. If in this process a certain amount of conjecture is absolutely necessary to fill in the vacant spaces, surely it is better to use boldly such conjectures, provided they are reasonable, than to commit ourselves to the wild and improbable guess that the chroniclers did not know what they were writing about. At any rate, we are not entitled to adopt one entry because it happens to fit some preconceived theory, and reject another because it happens to traverse it.

We are bound in the first instance to assume that the chroniclers, and those whose actions they recorded, were honest and capable men, unless indeed, in any particular case, strong and clear reasons to the contrary can be adduced.

In the bald entries of the Chronicle it is not often that we can detect a human touch. One such seems to appear under the year 519. After telling us that Cerdic and Cynric obtained the kingdom, it adds, "and from that time forth the royal offspring of the West Saxons reigned."

Surely it was with a feeling of pride that this claim to continuous royal descent from Cerdic, was made for King Alfred by a chronicler appointed by him. King Alfred could at any rate have had no shade of doubt about Cerdic, and his leadership and reign.

Cynric began to reign in the year 534, and we are at once struck by the remarkable fact that no

battle is recorded—in fact, no event of importance—except the death of Wihtgar, until the year 552, when Cynric made his great advance to Searobyrig (Sorbiodunum or Old Sarum) and won a battle there. And yet of course it is impossible to believe that there was not a great deal going on, and of considerable importance too, during these eighteen years.

It seems evident that if there were any actions taken during this long period, leading to small acquisitions of territory by the invaders, that they were not accorded any notice in the Chronicle, because they did not come under the immediate personal direction of the King.

If there were any such small accretions of territory during this period, we are entitled to suspect that they were won by Wihtgar with the aid of his ships, his death would hardly have merited notice unless he had some such achievements to his credit. As to these suggestions will be made; for the present let us return to Cynric.

Cynric's first business must have been to continue the policy of his father, and bring in more Saxon clans every summer, and for this and other purposes he had in view, he would be sure to give the greatest encouragement to shipbuilding. Then as shipping increased he would be able, with the assistance and advice of his cousin Wihtgar, to arrange for a regular fleet of transports to ply to the continent for the purposes of trade and migration, whilst another fleet would be retained under Wihtgar's command for the purposes of further invasions, and for further explorations and raids.

Then for years Cynric must have been fully occupied with the internal affairs of his kingdom, and more especially with distributing fresh families of immigrants as they arrived, and seeing that they were fed until they could provide for themselves. Besides these duties, the frontier guards had to be attended to, and constant vigilance maintained. It would be tedious to suggest all the multifarious duties which must have fully occupied Cynric's time for many years. We can now only note that there were two things that held this varied horde of colonists in loyal allegiance to Cynric—they latterly must have become crowded on the land; one was that their safety depended on it, the other their confidence that when the time came that they were fully prepared and strong enough, Cynric would strike again and win fresh lands for them to settle on.

And now we have to face a difficult problem with little or no evidence to guide us. It is, how and when was the district now called Dorsetshire conquered? The writer can but do his best to explain how this was effected, and leave it to others to offer better suggestions if they can.

We are able to judge that this conquest had two phases, since from the name "Dorsaetas," we may conclude that the greater part of that district was peopled with mere settlers; that is to say, with families of Saxons who had had little or nothing to do with the main conquest; although they may have had to drive out such local Welsh families as still lingered on the lands they had come to occupy, yet their primary duties were to settle and cultivate the land.

It was different with the ports of Dorsetshire, Poole, Wareham, and Weymouth. These had to be taken from the sea, with probably a land force co-operating. Then when Cynric had taken Sorbiodunum, and had occupied the valleys of the Avon, and Wiley, and Nadder, which converge at Wilton, the eastern end of Dorsetshire as far as Blandford, and Shaftesbury, would become safe for settlement, and so the saetas would be brought in.

It is suggested that it was probably at the beginning of Cynric's reign that he deputed his cousin Wihtgar to take Poole, Wareham, and Weymouth, and the Roman fortress of Dorchester, without at any time going inland further than any easy march from one of these ports. The moral effects of such a minor conquest would, for the time being, be greater than the material gains, although those would not be inconsiderable since the loss of these ports would diminish the possible chances the Welsh may have stil possessed of receiving succour from the continent. It seems extremely probable that a leader who knew that he was going to attack Sorbiodunum, and the upper valley of the Avon, in a few years' time, would decide to secure these ports first. We are able to see very clearly the line of action that was taken in approaching and attacking Dorchester. It is manifest that to land at Weymouth alone, and advance from thence, would be a costly operation, since the enemy could meet the advancing force on a narrow front that could not possibly be turned.

A Stoke five miles west of Wareham, and

within easy march of Dorchester, shows us how they got over this difficulty. They appear to have landed a force at Wareham, probably the main body, and then to have assembled at this Stoke. Then the two forces from Wareham and Weymouth could advance simultaneously, and act in unison, as circumstances might dictate. Since they had such short distances to traverse, many scaling-ladders could be transported, and Dorchester was probably stormed before the Welsh could come to its relief.

Although we may be certain that no settlers would be allowed to reside within the walls of Dorchester, according to the invariable practice of the invaders, yet it seems likely that they may have used Dorchester as a stronghold for a time, protecting their left flank, since it would be so easy to relieve it, if it was besieged.

These operations could have taken, at most, but two or three years. As for the rest of the long wait before the great advance to Sorbiodunum, the bringing in and distributing swarms of settlers in the conquered territories, is quite sufficient to account for it, but we should make a great mistake if we did not look farther away. We are not entitled to assume that these southern invaders took no interest in the proceedings of the Angles who were the leading branch of their race.

Since all the invaders were English, it is best to use the Latinized form of the name when we wish to specify the leading, king-governed branch of the English race, who landed in East Anglia, and on the north-east coast.

It is a fact worthy of notice that the chroniclers,

who, most of them, if not all, lived in the south, begin to evince an interest in the doings of the Angles at this time; and the first notice of Northumbria in the Chronicle is under the year 547, when we are told that Ida began to reign there. The notice is a long one, ending by tracing Ida's descent from Woden, but we are not concerned at present with the doings of the Angles.

It is, however, necessary to consider whether it could have been possible for the invaders of the south to have been quite uninterested in the progress and success of their brothers in the north.

The reader's answer to this question will depend largely on whether he is still obsessed with the preconceived idea that the invaders were merely independent gangs of marauders; or, on the other hand, whether his mind is open to the idea, supported by the evidence of Tacitus, and of the Chronicle and of the legends, that the invaders came to re-establish in an island home their old institutions, including especially that of their ancient monarchy.

This question cannot be discussed here. But the idea here supported is that the Angles had always been under kings, and that they were a united nation, and the monarchy was essential to their laws and customs, and to crown a social system which recognized nobility by birth.

If this was the case, and the evidence in its favour is overwhelming, then the crowning of Ida as King of the Angles in Northumbria was a national event which had a deep interest for all the invaders, since it meant the transference of their ancient monarchy from the Baltic littoral, or

from the Elbe, to an island which they were now beginning to call England.

So essential was monarchy to English institutions that local kings had already been established by acclamation in Kent and Wessex.

That Ida's father and grandfather, Eoppa and Esa, had fought in Northumbria is quite likely, but they evidently had not then transferred their home and court and kingdom to Britain.

We are not forced to believe anything so wildly improbable, as that these kingdoms resulted from a new idea imposing itself on the invaders: far otherwise. It was their national instinct, cultivated by centuries of happy experience, to seek a monarch to rule over them, chosen from the great family of Woden, the statesman and king, and the founder of their religion.

The transference of this ancient monarchy from the continent to Britain was an event of the deepest interest to all Englishmen, whether Angles, Jutes, or Saxons; therefore we are not surprised to find it recorded in the Chronicle as the first event alluded to in connection with the Angles.

Of course the Angles must have begun establishing themselves in Northumbria and East Anglia long before this, but the Chronicle which was written and kept in the South of England and in the Midlands, says nothing about any landing previous to the year 547, when Ida became king, although there must have been many, as well as many hard-fought battles.

There must, of course, have been a great difference between the invasion of the east coast by the Angle nation, and that which began at Thanet

some sixty years before, and ended at Deorham. When the Angles came the resistance of the Welsh as a united nation under a capable leader was no longer possible, although they probably made some splendid rallies. Even from the Welsh records we learn of no victory claimed by them that could be compared to that of Mons Badonicus. Thus the Angles could, and evidently did, advance much more recklessly without suffering any severe disaster.

Henry of Huntingdon, from whatever source he gained his knowledge, appears to give a true account of the advance of the Angles. He says in Book II of his history—

"At that time (A.D. 527) large bodies of men came successively from Germany, and took possession of East Anglia and Mercia; they were not as yet reduced under the government of one king; various chiefs contended for the occupation of different districts, waging continual wars with each other; but they were too numerous to have their names preserved."

This account could never have been written of the southern invasion under Kings Hengist, Aesc, and Cerdic, and directed by Aella. That was quite a different affair, and with two minor exceptions, namely, the correction of the Jutes in the Isle of Wight by Cerdic, and the correction of the youthful Ethelbert by Ceawlin, remained a united invasion until the death of Ceawlin.

It was because the Welsh were constantly menaced by this united southern invasion that they were unable to concentrate in order to resist the greater but more scattered invasion by the

Angles in the north. Thus the Angles, meeting with but a weak and disjointed resistance, were probably justified in advancing more recklessly than did their fellow-invaders in the south.

At any rate, although there must have been many fights, we hear of no pitched battles and epoch-marking victories with the Angles, such as would certainly have reached the ears of the chroniclers, and have been recorded by them. It was the steady and cautious and ably-directed advance of Wessex, ending with the victory of Deorham, that finally crushed the Welsh.

There was, however, one great event in the north that the chroniclers could not, and did not, fail to record, and it was the transference of the kingdom of the Angles to Britain.

The final break-up of an ancient kingdom, and the relinquishment of beloved homes and ancient centres of government on the continent, must have made extraordinary demands on the will-power and the energies of those who had to carry this unique ethnical migration to a successful conclusion.

It could hardly have been carried out without serious risk from interference by jealous neighbours, but without going into particulars, it is evident that an extra large number of ships would be necessary, and these a king of the dynasty of Woden, like Cynric, would have been certain to offer. This consideration helps us to understand the long delay in the early part of Cynric's reign before he began to extend his dominion by a fresh conquest, and why he began to do this so soon after the Angle monarchy had been established.

We are not justified, on any terms, in assuming that the invaders of the south took no interest in the doings of the invaders of the north, and vice versa, since the success of the one invasion was certain to help the other, But there was far more than this to arouse the sympathies of each, and to ensure co-operation when need called for it.

It all may be summed up in the fact that they were all the same people, with the same language, laws, customs and religion, and, above all, with the same dynasty ruling and directing them. The Angle King Cynric is sure to have helped the leading branch of his race to carry out the final leaving of their continental home; and although he probabiy was unable to leave his kingdom himself, it is extremely likely that he sent his young son Ceawlin to represent him. Thus it was probably that that great warrior learned all about the Angles and their difficulties, and their certain prospects of success, now that they had again become united under a king; and he probably then made up his mind that the conquest of the West Midlands should be his. Although, without his complete knowledge of the power of the Angles in the north, he would hardly have dared to have taken the bold course in the Midlands that he eventually adopted.

It will be seen later that, in order to account for Ceawlin's bold strategy, we have to assume that he had a very complete knowledge of the power of the Angles, who, though they were probably only advancing westwards, for the sake of their own selfish interests, were practically co-operating with Ceawlin, as he was with them.

However, this is a question for a later chapter; at present we are only concerned to explain the long delay after the beginning of Cynric's reign before he began a fresh invasion.

The larger view of the conquest as usual comes to our help. Under the year 552 we read in the Chronicle that Cynric advanced to Searobyrig (Sorbiodunum or Sarum) and won a victory there. By this time Wessex must have been crowded with fresh immigrants, and these could now be distributed in the Avon Valley and in East Dorsetshire. The great earthwork fortresses of the Britons they would soon find useless against a foe who had come to settle; since Cynric took great care that no relieving force should come to their succour. Also Bockerley Dyke, which the Welsh must have made about this time, was useless against invaders coming from the coast.

Thus numerous saetas would find safe settlements in East Dorsetshire, and even the Wilton saetas may have begun to occupy the valley of the Wyley about this time, eventually giving their name to Wiltshire. We cannot help noticing that Ceawlin's name is not mentioned with that of his father as having taken part in the battle near Sorbiodunum, although four years later father and son take part together in a battle at Beran-Byrig.

We cannot but suppose that there was some definite reason for Ceawlin's absence, and a reason entirely creditable to him. It so happens that this curious absence of Ceawlin from a great battle beside his old father, the place of all others where he would have desired to be, suggests the solution of a very difficult problem. Although the difficulty

only arises a quarter of a century later the explanation may be offered here, since it serves to explain the gradual growth of the power of the West Saxons.

Every difficulty cannot be dealt with in this sketch of the conquest, but one at least shall not be shirked. A version of the conquest which fails to explain how naval transport could have been provided at all times must be a rotten one, and explanations must always be either adequate or futile.

We shall realize as we proceed, and more especially after the victory of Deorham, what a large number of ships the West Saxons must have had constantly at their command, more a great deal than the harbours of Portsmouth and Cowes could have supplied. How often one difficulty cancels out another when both are boldly faced!

The question naturally arises as to what became of the large number of vessels the Angles must have possessed, and employed to ferry them across the North Sea; there must have been very many more than could find profitable employment afterwards in coastal trade. And yet trained seamen and traders do not readily give up their profession, but are given to seeking employment elsewhere. This the West Saxons could offer them with the certainty of finding good harbours and trading stations, and full employment for many years to come.

Portsmouth and Cowes were already occupied by the Jutes, but it is suggested that the young Ceawlin was sent to Bamborough, with full powers to offer the Angle sea-captains and their crews,

the harbours of Southampton, Poole, Wareham, and Weymouth, with lands near them, and to promise constant employment for many years.

If this was the case we can easily understand how Ceawlin came to be absent from the battle near Sorbiodunum in the year 552.

Several trips to the Elbe may have been necessary to bring away the families of the Angle seamen, and also, we may be sure, the materials for shipbuilding that had been collected there.

We can now proceed with the story without any misgivings as to the lack of naval transport. A reasonable conjecture has demonstrated that we need not suppose that there was ever any shortage of ships, and ships too that would have been under the immediate control of the West Saxons.

The Chronicle tells us that in the year 556 Cynric and Ceawlin fought against the Welsh at Beran-Byrig. That this battle resulted in the complete defeat of the Welsh there can be no question, although the chroniclers do not take the trouble to tell us so, but they would not have recorded it if it had not been a victory.

Four years later, namely, in 560, we are told that Ceawlin succeeded to the kingdom. Now the Beran-Byrig of the Chronicle has been identified with Barbury Castle, an earthwork about five miles north of Marlborough, and as many south of Swindon. The probabilities of the case are entirely in favour of this identification. We see the army of the invaders marching, either westwards from Newbury, or northwards from Sorbiodunum, and retaking Cunetio, and founding Marlborough.

Then the Welsh we see advancing from Cirencester and taking up a position on the high ground of Hackpen Hill, about six miles from Cunetio, perhaps in Barbury Castle itself.

Cynric and Ceawlin would welcome this challenge to a pitched battle, and the result can hardly be doubtful.

Perhaps the reason that this battle is not recorded as a victory is that Cynric and Ceawlin decided to retire from that exposed position, and ultimately adopted a frontier line some seven miles south of Barbury, and marked it by the Wansdyke. This will be explained later.

As Cynric was getting old he probably retired to his home-centre of government, wherever that may have been, after the battle of Barbury; and handed over the command of all the forces of the invaders to his son, whose great ability and energy must by this time have been recognized by all.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ORIGIN OF THE WANSDYKE

CEAWLIN was the greatest of the conquerors of Britain as regards extent of territory, since it was due to his masterly strategy that the English were established in Dorset, Somerset, and Wilts, and in the West Midlands, as far north as the south of Cheshire.

It does not follow that all these districts were completely settled up in Ceawlin's time, and there is no doubt that the Angles from the east poured in, as very welcome intruders, amongst the sparsely settled Saxons from the south, since there was land enough for all. But the Angles found the resistance of the Welsh completely shattered, and the primary conquest of the West Midlands was undoubtedly due to Ceawlin. In fact, a large part of the Angle conquests were effected under Ceawlin's leadership, as will be seen later.

That Ceawlin was a man of consummate ability, specially fitted for the great task of his life, there can be no question; but there is nothing to show that he was an original genius worthy to be compared with Aella the first Bretwalda, by whose example and system, of conquest confirmed by colonization, Ceawlin profited so much. Ceawlin must have

learned all about Aella from his father and grandfather, and probably required no urging from them to decide, from his earliest youth, to try to emulate the deeds of Aella.

Then from the same source Ceawlin must have learned all about the disaster of Mons Badonicus, and the lessons to be deduced therefrom, of which the chief one was, that the strategical policy of Aella must not be departed from, at least before he had taken the Cotswolds. Ceawlin must have had instilled into him that most difficult of all lessons for a young warrior in his prime to accept, namely, the supreme necessity for caution, patience, and restraint, when advancing, for the purposes of permanent conquest, from the broad frontier he would have to leave behind him. He would early realize the importance of selecting not only the right place but also the right time to strike.

Ceawlin must have early foreseen that vast numbers of preliminary operations, each perhaps small in its way, must be undertaken and carried through, before he could be in a position to strike at the Severn Valley, and ensure the conquest of the West Midlands.

As regards the actual kingdom of his father and grandfather, Ceawlin's knowledge must of course have been complete. He must often have witnessed settlers pouring in, and have studied the arrangements made for their reception, until places could be found where they could settle in security, and without quarrelling with their neighbours. Also we may be sure that he would often have ridden with expeditions beyond the frontier, for the purposes of marauding, and at the same time learning

all about the country he intended some day to occupy.

It would be tedious to suggest the many other lessons that must have come under Ceawlin's observation, and served to complete his training for his great task; but there is one that must not be neglected.

A leader of the invasion of an island would be unfitted for his task unless he knew all about naval transport. Moreover, the lessons to be learned by marauding and reconnoitring expeditions by sea were even greater than of those on land.

It is quite inconceivable that when Ceawlin's old cousin Wihtgar, the Jutish chieftain, sailed either eastwards to fetch immigrants, or westwards for discovery and marauding, that the youthful Ceawlin never went with him. It would, in fact, be a silly guess to suppose that with such opportunities offered him, Ceawlin stayed at home.

It is not merely a possibility, it is indeed a very strong and reasonable probability, that Ceawlin as a young man had visited the continental ports used by Saxon and Angle emigrants, and also the estuary of the Severn. In fact, it is quite likely that Ceawlin with a Jutish fleet may have sailed round Anglesey and looked in at the port of Chester. By some such means he must have learned the size and configuration of the land he was invading.

Besides all these means of gaining knowledge and experience that were open to the young Ceawlin, as has already been pointed out, we are not entitled to assume that the leaders of the

southern invaders, commonly called the Saxons, took no interest in the northern invasion by the Angles, since the success of each was bound up with the success of the other; and so the young Ceawlin, of all others, is sure to have been chosen as one of those sent to gain a knowledge of the position of affairs in the north. Moreover, when the Angles, with their monarchy, finally left the continent, the Saxons, then in a peaceful and safe condition, are sure to have lent assistance, more especially as it was in their own interest to do so.

If this was the case, and it is a perfectly rational conjecture to suppose that it was so, then Ceawlin must have met Ida, and many others of his own great family, descendants of Woden, in Northumbria. There Ceawlin would learn what the Angles had already done, and what they next proposed to do; and doubtless it would be arranged that there should be a continuous mutual exchange of information in future, so that as the two invasions approached one another, they should be able, to some extent, to act in unison.

We shall see later that we can only account for the extreme boldness, amounting apparently to rashness, with which Ceawlin advanced after Deorham, by assuming that he had fairly complete knowledge of the advance of the Angles on his right front. He seems to have been confident that his right flank was always safe. Possibly a spirit of emulation, and a determination to forestall the Angles, may to some extent have influenced this jealous conqueror. But the point is, that it would be unreasonable to suppose that the two

invasions were conducted with, if not indeed complete ignorance, at any rate with complete indifference, as to the movements of the other.

The larger view of the conquest here, as always, gives the larger and better explanation, and we are not compelled to limit our inquiries merely because, in the past, it has been fashionable to suppose that the invaders were all of them ignorant and stupid. An invasion that was constantly limited by the demands of marine transport, demanded at all times a very high order of intelligence, if sufficient supplies were always to be forthcoming, whether for armies or immigrants. Unless it can be suggested how Ceawlin could have gained a full and accurate knowledge of sea-power and marine transport, it would be hopeless to try and explain how he could have conquered, and largely colonized, not only the western districts of Wessex itself, but also the West Midlands, which later on became Mercia.

Having thus ascertained what may have been possible as regards the powers possessed by the invaders, and having shown that it is reasonably probable that they, as men of common sense, used those powers to the utmost; having also pictured to ourselves the environment of the young Ceawlin, and the school in which he must have been trained; we can with confidence begin an investigation of his career as a conqueror, since we have at hand explanations which are reasonable and adequate.

As regards the actual character of Ceawlin, we can but gather what it must have been from his actions. It is here taken for granted that he was

as stark and stern and as ruthlessly brutal as William the Conqueror was later on to the English. Like William, Ceawlin was probably too great a man to have indulged in cruelty for mere cruelty's sake; he had no time for such pettiness, his thoughts were set on higher things; but there can be no question that Ceawlin gave no consideration to the sufferings of the Welsh, and that his conduct towards them was brutal in the last degree, but always with one object in view, Conquest.

As regards the character of Ceawlin, we do just get one human touch from the meagre annals of the Chronicle, when under the year 584 we are told that after his victory at Fethan Leag, where he lost his son Cutha, Ceawlin "wrathful returned to his own." A man with Ceawlin's force of character must have had a temper such as could drive home his behests with a force that was unchallengeable, and made even any slackness in obedience impossible. And yet Ceawlin could not have done all he did unless at first he had his temper fairly under control. Latterly it appears to have become ungovernable, and in fact seems to account for his undoing, and for his miserable end. On the whole Ceawlin stands before us with tolerable clarity, as a man peculiarly fitted both by his abilities and his training for the great task of his life.

In assessing the advantages possessed by the invaders of Britain which helped them to complete their conquest, one detail has not yet been alluded to, and though a small one, it is of some importance.

It is easy to see that the invading English may

have been constantly served by spies, whereas for the Welsh spies must have been quite unobtainable.

This implies nothing against the character of the Welsh, or in favour of the English; but from the nature of the conquest of a heterogeneous nation, composed not only of different tribes, but also of men of all nations, brought in by Rome, by a united nation all speaking one strange language and carefully guarding their settlements, spies must have been easily obtained from the defenders, and impossible to get from the invaders of Britain. The result of the possession of such an advantage by the invaders must have been, that whereas they could at any time make large preparations for a concentrated attack without the Welsh being aware of it, the Welsh could do nothing of the kind, except perhaps on the smallest scale, without information leaking through to the enemy. Whether Ceawlin used Welsh spies or not to gain information, we cannot of course tell; but that he used the power he possessed, and developed to a high degree, of concentrating his forces in absolute secrecy, in order that he might strike suddenly at the point he had chosen, will be shown in due course.

The chief thing that Ceawlin did with this end and object in view, was to cause the Wansdyke or "Woden's Dyke" to be made; for it will be proved to demonstration that Ceawlin was the author of the Wansdyke, or at least that no one else could have been.

It will be better first to make a few explanatory remarks on War-dykes in general, and on the

Wansdyke in particular, before proceeding with the story of Ceawlin's career of conquest. The only value that a long dyke can possess is as a delimitation of a frontier between two opposed nations. Such dykes were invariably made in the interest of the victorious nation, though possibly and probably by the labour of the weaker nation.

The rampart of such boundary dykes is as a rule on the side of the victorious nation, the ditch on the side of the weaker one.

Such long straight dykes have no military value, beyond the fact that they may make mere raids more difficult, if the bank is high and the ditch deep. To a certain extent also such dykes have a moral value, if the stronger nationality is always ready to take prompt action, and to administer due punishment if its territory is invaded. Thus those on the weaker side would always know that if they crossed such a clearly marked boundary they must expect punishment.

The existence of a long dyke, or the remains of one, entitles us to assume that those on the rampart side of it wished to settle down and enjoy the fruits of their conquest, without disturbance from their opponents. The existence of a dyke clearly implies that, when it was made, there were two distinct nationalities, one on each side of it, and that these nationalities had no desire to coalesce; and in fact that the victorious one, in whose interests the dyke was made, was quite determined to hold aloof from the other.

It is inconceivable that a dyke could ever have been made between two branches of the same race, speaking the same language and having the same

laws and customs. The natural tendency of people, especially the younger ones, to meet together for trade or social purposes, would quickly turn an intervening dyke into a solemn farce. A dyke betrays an overwhelming desire on the part of the conquering nation to live apart from the conquered.

We therefore see that it would be quite absurd to suppose that any long straight dyke was ever made by one British tribe to keep out another one, or for one kingdom or district of the English to keep out another, as, for instance, Wessex to keep out the Mercians.

A long incomplete dyke, with many miles of it only marked by a Roman road, would not stop traffic in cattle and goods between men of the same race, speaking the same language. It would be no obstacle to, say, a gay West Saxon wishing to visit a Mercian lady, or to their return together across it. Men of the same race would never go to the expense of making such a useless line of demarcation between two districts occupied by their own people.

We may therefore lay it down as an axiom that a long straight dyke is in itself a proof that at the time it was made there were different nationalities on each side of it. And furthermore, we may with much confidence assume that the victorious race was on the rampart side of the dyke, and the defeated race was on the ditch side of it. We may furthermore assume with equal confidence that the victorious race had decided to have no dealings with their opponents.

These deductions are fairly obvious, and they

are not shaken, by certain minor exceptions; as for instance in the Chiltern Hills, where we find dykes with very low profile, and with the ditch to the south; or the remarkable instance of Bokerley Dyke, near Cranborne in Dorsetshire. This dyke was apparently made by the Welsh in their own interests, and therefore has the rampart on their side. The chief evidence to be derived from Bokerley Dyke is that the Welsh had no leader with any military genius, or they would never have taken the trouble to make such a long and useless earthwork, at a spot that could be easily turned by invaders from the sea.

That the invading English did make, or have made for them by their defeated opponents, long straight dykes, and with a very sound and sensible object in view, there can be no question.

The dykes made by the English do in fact mark stages in their conquest. When the English had reached a certain point, where, for the time being, they wished to settle down in peace, in open farms and villages, their custom was to make a boundary line, marked by a dyke, which it was death to any Welshman to cross. Doubtless in each case the unfortunate Welsh were led to suppose that the dyke was intended to mark the limit of their losses, provided they did not attempt to cross it. If they did it was a case of war, and sharp retaliation quickly followed.

In the dykes we see one of the chief means used by the invading English to keep their homes free from what they considered the contamination of the Welsh, or Roman, social and legal systems, which they so much disliked, and to maintain their

own language and institutions in their ancient purity.

In order to pass in review some of the many dykes made during the English conquest, it is best to begin with Offa's Dyke, about the origin of which there can be no question.

Even the origin of Offa's Dyke has been questioned in the past; but the literary evidence in favour of Offa, together with the fact that this dyke has been found superimposed on Roman work, has long settled the question in favour of Offa.

Offa's Dyke begins on the bank of the Severn, then the frontier was marked by the course of the river Wye, until it turns into the mountains; and from thence Offa's Dyke is continued with very few gaps right up to Brymbo near Wrexham, where it is lost in the mountains. Offa's Dyke is called "Clawd Offa" by the Welsh.

Another dyke, called Wat's Dyke, begins on the estuary of the Dee near Basingwork, where, for some ten miles or more, it is still called "Clawd Offa" by the Welsh. Wat's Dyke then runs past Wrexham and Wynnstay (the old name of which was Wat'stay) and Oswestry, until it is lost in the marshes of Maesbury, near Melverley, on the Severn.

Wat's Dyke cannot be dealt with fully here, but is reserved for the period in which it was made.

However, this much may be said, that Wat's Dyke as a line of demarcation, and for protection from raids and cattle-lifting, is a masterpiece, and bears witness to the wisdom and skill of its

designer. In this it bears a strong contrast to Offa's Dyke which may well be called "Offa's Folley"; made as a rule far beyond the haunts of men, and quite unguardable, it seems to be a fitting monument of the vain-glorious Offa.

All these remarks are not digressive, but are intended to lead up to the crucial point in the argument, which is, that Offa's Dyke could not possibly have been a new idea with no precedents. Even if the Mercian King Offa was as powerful as he appears to have been pompous, his subjects would have thought him mad, if, without any successful precedents in his favour to point to, he had ordered a dyke to be made from the estuary of the Severn to that of the Dee, along all the foot-hills of Wales.

We may feel certain that under such conditions Offa's Dyke would never have been made, or if begun, would never have been carried so near to completion as it was. In fact, the very existence of Offa's Dyke points with no uncertain hand to previous long boundary dykes, by means of which the Welsh had been segregated from the invading English, and we have no difficulty in finding them. In the Thames Valley we find dykes, in Middlesex, and in the Chilterns, notably the one extending from Henley to Mongewell. In Sussex we find the War Dyke near Chichester. These all must have been made under the directions of Aella.

Then we find traces of dykes in Hampshire, presumably made by Cerdic. Then there are dykes demarcating East Anglia from the Fens. There are traces of long dykes in Oxfordshire and

elsewhere, whose origin must be left to local antiquaries to decide.

Above all, we have the Wansdyke, made by Ceawlin, as will be shown, with hardly any doubt, as the story proceeds. All these dykes demonstrate irrefutably the determination of the invading English to dwell apart from the Welsh, and they enable us to see the very means adopted to secure this segregation. To give a full description of the Wansdyke would take many pages, and only a short one can be given here.

Speaking roughly, the Wansdyke runs due east and west, from near Inkpen in Berkshire to Portbury near Bristol. The eastern end of it curves southwards a little from near Marlborough past Bedwyn to Inkpen, and then there is a remarkable loop running round on the heights south of Bath.

The only portion of the Wansdyke that has been completed in a continuous line is the part which lies north to north-east of Devizes. Here for some six or seven miles we find it in an almost perfect state.

Here, too, we find evidence as to how it was made, as in front of it, at intervals of about a mile, we find five square camps of low elevation, each about a quarter of a mile north of the dyke, and easily seen from it. It seems quite evident that these camps were the compounds in which the slaves who did the labour of making the great dyke were herded at night.

This suggestion fully accounts for these small camps; it remains to be seen if any one else can think of any other explanation of them. Then from the western end of this perfect part of the

Wansdyke, between Bishops' Cannings and Cherhill, the line of the Wansdyke is taken up by the Roman road to Bath, where signs of the Wansdyke begin again in the Avon Valley. Thus there is a gap in the Wansdyke of about fourteen miles, marked only by a Roman road. Then the Wansdyke is continued round the heights above Bath, and from thence in a fairly straight line to Portbury near Bristol. But there are many large gaps in this line, and it is evident that the Wansdyke was left in a very unfinished condition. The distance from Bristol to Inkpen is about fifty miles.

The first question that naturally arises is—Who first called this splendid patchwork of dykes and gaps Woden's Dyke?

Who first put together these patches as all parts of one great scheme under the name Woden's Dyke? Surely it would be rather a wild guess to suppose that it could have been any one else than its founder! Unless the name was thus given, it would be a wild guess indeed for us to suppose that the unfinished dyke round Bath and to Bristol had anything to do with another dyke fourteen miles away!

It is of course easy now-a-days for us with a map in front of us to notice that these two dykes are connected by a Roman road; but whence did the universal tradition arise that they were thus connected, and that they all marked one frontier line, and that the whole, Roman road and all, was called the Wansdyke?

It is fortunate for us that this tradition has survived, for otherwise he would have been a bold

antiquary who would have ventured to suggest that the Devizes and Bath dykes were parts of one and the same scheme, and connected by a road.

It is easy to imagine the jeers with which critics would have met such a wild guess as they dilated upon the absurdity of connecting two dykes by fourteen miles of an open road. Fortunately the tradition is too strong and too instructive to be upset.

That this tradition is an English one is absolutely certain. The English worshipped Woden, the Welsh did not, and there were none but English left to hand the tradition down.

It follows, therefore, that the founder of this fifty miles of frontier line, marked by dykes and by a road, must have been an Englishman. There is no escape from this conclusion, but let us not leave it at that, but as the argument and the story proceeds pile as many more proofs upon it as can be discovered.

The probable date of the construction of the Wansdyke is the first point to be considered, and since the views that it was made in Roman times, and even that it may have been made during the Roman military occupation of Britain, have both found supporters, it may be well to show first the absurdity of such ideas. That the British tribes could have made long dykes between their different territories is quite absurd. Mere tribes never make any system of defence but that of central earthworks. Their organization, or rather lack of it, precludes them from establishing and guarding a long frontier line, and there could

never have been that difference of social system, laws, language, and nationality between two tribes of early Britons, to make a long boundary dyke between them a desirable object, and certainly the Roman road did not exist in those times.

In Roman times a long dyke would have been quite out of harmony with the Roman system of holding Britain in subjection.

Certainly the Romans made the Walls of Hadrian and of Antoninus, but these walls were made for the purpose of stopping raids by barbarous races beyond territories held by Rome.

Like all long dykes they were made in the interests of a superior race, endeavouring completely to exclude inferior ones. Such a state of affairs never existed in southern Britain in Roman times. If any district required special treatment owing to its lawlessness, the Romans simply made a fort within its borders; and if it was of importance, ran a road to it. Even in the Welsh mountains this was the system adopted.

It is thus quite inconceivable that the Wansdyke, or any considerable part of it, could have been made before the Romans left.

These conclusions were corroborated by a few excavations conducted by General Pitt Rivers. So far as these went, they showed that, at the points excavated, the Wansdyke was post-Roman.

Surely the above considerations are sufficient to demonstrate that the Wansdyke was post-Roman!

The Wansdyke must have taken many years to bring it up even to the unfinished state in which we find it; but it is very easy to name the

exact year in which work upon it ceased, and ceased for ever, since it could never have been of any use between Englishmen.

This was the year 577, the year of Ceawlin's great victory over the Welsh at Deorham, followed by his capture of Bath, Cirencester, and Gloucester, and his advance into the Midlands. By that time the Wansdyke had fulfilled its object, as will be seen later. For a backward limit to the date of the beginning of the Wansdyke, we must look to the year 552, when Cynric defeated the Welsh at Old Sarum. It is quite evident that the Wansdyke could not have been begun before that.

The most probable date for the beginning of the Wansdyke is the year 556, when Cynric and Ceawlin fought the Welsh at Barbury. It is very likely that it was with prisoners taken in that battle that the Wansdyke was begun. At that time the management of the frontier was probably handed over to Ceawlin by his old father Cynric.

The above reasons seem to be sufficient to prove that the Wansdyke must have been made by Ceawlin. But over and above these, there is the fact that the wonderful career of Ceawlin can only be explained by the Wansdyke; as the Wansdyke can only be explained by the career of Ceawlin.

But this must be reserved for another chapter, when it will be found that the Wansdyke is the key that unlocks Ceawlin's strategy, and explains his long-prepared scheme of conquest.

In conclusion, a word seems necessary on the methods employed by Ceawlin in making the Wansdyke.

There can be no doubt that he did this by

means of the forced labour of Welshmen, taken either as prisoners in battle, or by means of raids for collecting labour. It is unnecessary to suggest what means were employed for digging such a vast ditch, and raising such a high rampart, since we know well that the Welsh were great earth-movers; their hill-fortresses in Dorsetshire and around Salisbury are enough to prove that.

Then there is the Bokerley Dyke near Downton connecting Cranborne Chase with the Valley of the Avon.

There can be little doubt that Bokerley Dyke was made by the Welsh in their own interests, as it entirely differs in character from the Wansdyke, and is made with bastions following the contours of the rising ground behind it. It looks as if the Welsh had realized that their vast earthwork forts were but death-traps before an enemy that had come to settle around them, and was powerful enough to prevent relief being sent to them.

This seems to be the reason that induced the Welsh to waste their labour over making such a useless line of defence at Bokerley Dyke. We know for certain, as the result of General Pitt Rivers' excavations, that Bokerley Dyke is post-Roman.

Ceawlin must have known all about the making of Bokerley Dyke, and have laughed at it, as he realized how the skill of the Welsh as earth-movers might in due time be used to further his own schemes.

# CHAPTER VI

## CEAWLIN MAKES THE WANSDYKE

ENOUGH has been said in the previous chapter to show that there is every reason to suppose that, when Ceawlin took over from his old father, the duty of guarding the now widely extended frontier of the invaders, he had a complete knowledge of the position of the affairs of the invaders, not only in Wessex, but also in Kent, in London and the Thames Valley, and in Northumbria, as well as in the continental ports used by the invaders.

It has long been fashionable to begin the study of the rise and spread of the conquest of the West Saxons, with the theory that Cerdic was a tribal chieftain, and the West Saxons merely his tribe in the main, though they may have been joined later by other tribes. This theory has, by reiteration, become so deeply planted in people's minds that it is difficult to eradicate it. Although directly it is called upon to account for the results, its utter inadequacy becomes apparent.

So far the efforts of historians seem to have been confined to vain endeavours to make this false preconceived theory fit the facts. It is far better to begin an investigation of a period of history with no theory at all, taking the evidence as we find it, and testing it by using it, and seeing

whether it helps to produce a coherent story that is reasonable and within the powers of mankind.

Of no institution of the invading English is there more complete evidence than there is about their monarchy.

As soon as they had brought over enough settlers into a district that was sufficiently self-contained, and detached from other districts to form a kingdom, they invariably appointed a king to rule over it. A king was evidently necessary to complete their social system.

And another great fact is that these kings were, at first at any rate, all chosen from one royal family. They were all descendants of Woden, with the sole exception of Aella King of the South Saxons, and Aella is shown to have been a man of such marked ability, and his services to the whole body of the invaders were so great, that there is no cause for surprise that he was given a small kingdom.

We need not for the present go further than Wessex.

We have seen the descendants of Aesc son of Hengist made kings in Kent, a decidedly important and self-contained district; and moreover one that would engross all the attention and energy of its king for the time being, so that he could not give any attention to the conquest as a whole, without neglecting local affairs in Kent, and in the estuary of the Thames, and the port of London. Moreover, the Kings of Kent seem to have had much to do with the establishment of Middlesex and Essex.

It is therefore not surprising, but in keeping

with a well-designed scheme of invasion, to find a scion of the royal dynasty of Woden sent to initiate and carry on an invasion beginning on the shores of the Solent.

But the task of Cerdic in the Solent was a very different one to that of Hengist in Kent, and whereas Hengist assumed the kingdom only six years after landing, Cerdic appears to have waited twenty-four years before he made himself king. Whether it was ambition, or the force of circumstances, that induced Cerdic to assume kingship, we do not know; but it seems more likely that it was the latter rather than the former. A man who had acted loyally under the supreme command of Aella for so many years, does not seem to have been one in whom ambition overruled the welfare of his people. Then when Aesc and Aella were dead, and the kingdom of Kent had fallen into weaker and less experienced hands, Cerdic, upon whom the brunt of the conquest had fallen, may well have found it necessary to make himself a king. Having done so it soon became evident to all that Cerdic and his son Cynric were the royal leaders in whom the hopes of all the southern invaders were centred. That some jealousy was aroused on the part of the king in Kent, we shall soon see, when we come to deal with the ill-advised action of the young King Ethelbert, who had to be sent back to his own proper business by Ceawlin.

These preliminary remarks about the adaptation of their monarchical institutions by the invaders to the practical demands of the conquest, have been partly rendered necessary, in order that we may be able to understand Ceawlin's treatment

of Ethelbert, when we come to it; but chiefly in order that we may be able to understand the united character of the conquest as a whole, and the commanding position held by the young Ceawlin when he began his career of conquest.

A scion of a leading branch of the royal family of Woden, the son and grandson of conquerors and kings, Ceawlin must, from the very first, have held a position that was second to none amongst the invaders; and since his abilities must by this time have been recognized in many quarters, some as far distant as Northumbria and the continent, high hopes of him are sure to have been held, and young warriors probably flocked to his standard from all parts.

Thus if we pay no heed to the idea that Ceawlin was merely a Saxon chieftain, whose grandfather had assumed the royal dignity, an idea evolved merely to bolster up the theory that the various invasions were separate and independent, and simply accept the plain statements of the Chronicle that Ceawlin was a true English king of the royal race of Woden, we at once surmount a host of difficulties, and find in Ceawlin a royal leader adequately equipped for the great tasks which we know that he accomplished.

We are not surprised to find that, later on, after he had shown himself to be a wielder of Britain, by taking large districts from the Welsh, and settling them with Saxon clans brought from the continent in his own fleet of transports; and when he had established his rule, so that his word was law throughout the south of Britain, including

Kent, that Ceawlin was acclaimed as the second Bretwalda.

We should not forget to note, by the way, how Ceawlin, the second Bretwalda, thus brings strong corroboration to the splendour of the achievements of the first holder of that mysterious title.

This last remark strikes the note which harmonizes the careers of these two great conquerors, and brings them into a true relation to one another; for Ceawlin had been brought up in that school of conquest, accompanied by colonization, established by Aella, and confirmed by disaster, when its teachings were neglected. Above all, Ceawlin, from the example of Aella, appears to have learned the necessity of keeping up good relations with the Saxons on the continent.

If we were not aware that Ceawlin must have been thus furnished with numerous excellent precedents for his guidance, and with a kingdom and a fleet and an army all in the best order, we could not account for all that he did without attributing to him an original genius, which we have no reason for supposing that he possessed. Ceawlin must have been able and clever, and with an irresistible will-power, but for the rest we may attribute his success chiefly to the excellent training which good fortune provided for him in his youth.

If we are right in assuming that Cynric retired from warfare on the frontier after the battle of Barbury in 556, and left Ceawlin in command, then we may detect the influence of Aella's teaching in the first step that Ceawlin appears to have taken, for at this date the Wansdyke must have been begun, and it is seven miles south of Bar-

bury. This seems to show a determination on Ceawlin's part not to bite off more than he could chew. It was enough for him to secure the rich vale of Pewsey.

But more than this, we have already shown how easy it was for Ceawlin at any time to have surveyed the country right up to Bath. This he is the more certain to have done, since Mons Badonicus and the line of retreat from it must have had a deep interest for him.

We may, therefore, fairly assume that the general line of the Wansdyke was already planned out by him, as the frontier line which he intended to adopt, and to conquer and occupy all the country south of it to the shore of the Severn Sea.

There is no wild guess in this suggestion as to the actual scheme of conquest devised by Ceawlin. We know for certain that this region was settled up by clans of Saxons before the battle of Deorham in 577—a vast scheme of conquest and colonization to have been accomplished in twenty-one years, more especially as we find this territory to have been protected by numerous fortresses, some of them of vast size and strength. There is no other period during which these settlers could have been brought in. Of course we all know that the ultimate fate of these fortresses depended entirely on whether they could be relieved before they were forced to capitulate from starvation; and we naturally wonder why we hear nothing of Welsh armies issuing from Bath, and from the Cotswolds to raise the siege of this or that fortress, and to recover the surrounding lands.

That there must have been chronic warfare of

a minor character going on during the greater part of this period seems certain, but there appear to have been no battles of sufficient importance to have been worthy of mention in the Chronicle.

The whole of Dorsetshire and the greater part of Wiltshire and of Somersetshire, colonized in twenty-one years, and apparently with no great battle worthy of being recorded! The difficulties of providing sufficient naval transport alone would have seemed insuperable, but for the suggestions made in a previous chapter. Then every port and river-mouth and landing-place must have been used; and it has been shown how a full knowledge of these had been acquired long before, perhaps in some instances by the young Ceawlin himself. Even so the trekkings up country to some distant valley must have been sufficiently arduous.

We are naturally led to ask such pertinent questions as—Who apportioned the land to the various gangs of settlers? Who provided guides to, in many instances, valleys far inland? Who saw to it that there was no quarrelling amongst these gangs of warriors brought from different Saxon clans on the continent, and dumped down in a strange country? Who saw to it that, in the long process of immigration, the settlers did not die of starvation, whatever other hardships they may have suffered?

Everything points to there having been a magnificent scheme of colonization, adequately protected from interference by the enemy. But, it may be asked, is there any positive evidence of there having been such a scheme? The answer is

in the affirmative, and although the evidence is not direct, but only by inference, it is worthy of respect and cannot be ignored. The region under consideration is the only part of Britain, with certain minor and sporadic exceptions, that was colonized by Saetas or Settlers—the Dorsaetas, the Wiltonsaetas, the Somersaetas.

This can only mean that these clans, or parts of clans, of Saxons, were brought from the continent with their families and goods, and presumably were not required to provide warriors for the host for many years. The whole of their attention and of their energies could be devoted to settling down, and cultivating the land.

We must of course suppose that in these districts, where the Welsh, trusting to the strength of their fortresses, still clung to the land, an adequate force of trained warriors would accompany the settlers, and remain with them until the fortresses had capitulated; the only condition being that the lives of all should be spared. Then the able-bodied men would be taken off to do their turn at making the Wansdyke, and the rest would be put across that sacred boundary line Ceawlin had dedicated to his god, to return across which meant death.

We thus see that, granted a certain relentless brutality, which we have no reason to suppose was lacking, the Wansdyke had, as a clearly marked boundary line, a real practical value, when once the Welsh had been taught to respect it. The ferocity of Ceawlin seems to have even excelled that of William the Conqueror, since it must have extended to all classes of his enemies, whereas

William could at times show a certain amount of geniality towards those of low degree. Any suggestion that Ceawlin may have pursued some less brutal course would be welcome to Englishmen, but nothing less brutal would be adequate. At any rate Ceawlin and his followers worshipped Woden, and may have been acting in consonance with the teaching of their religion; whereas William and his Normans professed to be Christians. Of the two conquerors Ceawlin appears to have been the less of a hypocrite.

For the rest, the contrast between these two successful conquerors could hardly have been greater. Whereas Ceawlin, by a piecemeal conquest, completely ousted another nation with its laws and customs and language, one district after another being cleared of the enemy, and settled with his friends, William the Conqueror gained his ends by winning one great battle, and then by seizing the reins of government, and holding down the vanquished, by building castles at all important centres, and above all he came, not to destroy, but to establish the realm with all its laws and customs, and even in the end its language.

In both cases the sufferings of the vanquished can hardly be imagined. And yet if we are ever to get to understand how one nation could so completely oust another as the English did the Welsh, we must not allow disgust to place any limits on our inquiries; and when we find a great composite boundary line like the Wansdyke, placed at the most crucial point of the second stage of the invasion, and certainly of the time of Ceawlin, we are compelled to inquire why

he made it? and how he made it? and how he used it?

To understand the reasons why Ceawlin made the Wansdyke, we must have in mind the training and manifold experiences of his youth, as explained in the previous chapter. Above all, we must remember that he knew all about the disaster of Mons Badonicus, and must have learned and taken to heart all the lessons that could be derived from it, by the time he assumed command of the frontier forces. He had probably decided in his own mind that he would some day take Bath, but in a very different way. But we may well suppose that Ceawlin was capable of keeping his own counsel, and never revealed his ultimate object in making the Wansdyke, until all his preparations had been completed, and the time to strike had come.

For the time being he could point to several successful precedents, and how the Welsh were excluded from the scattered settlements of the English, by means of boundary dykes made by the first Bretwalda, and he would announce that he was going to adopt the same principle. Then, after the battle of Barbury, he would begin the dyke on the hills north of Devizes.

Ceawlin must have known well that a dyke had no defensive value in itself, but that it would be respected only if prompt punishment was given to those who dared to cross it from the north.

The enormous size of the Wansdyke in this section is more probably accounted for by Ceawlin's desire to impress the Welsh, than for any use it could have been to the English, except as a

boundary line. Even the compounds in which the workers were herded are north of the dyke.

It seems as if during the actual construction of the dyke the Welsh were taught that it was death to cross a certain line marked on the ground; and the dyke itself when finished was dedicated to Woden, the god of the English, and it was therefore sacrilege in their eyes for any Welshman to cross it.

By the time the Roman road was reached the Welsh had been sufficiently impressed with Ceawlin's resolve, and his power to execute it; and so he said that the line of the road was a sufficient boundary for his purposes, but that if the Welsh failed to respect it, he would force them to bank it up like the rest of the dyke.

Then Ceawlin would be sure to make full use of his knowledge of the Angle invasion in the north. His policy would be to assert that this was no concern of his; but that the Welsh had much better attend to that, and not trouble about him, as long as he and they respected the boundary which he had established. For his part, he had a certain number of settlers coming from the continent, and he intended to find room for them, by taking all the land south of the Wansdyke, and of the river Avon, right up to the sea.

It is, of course, open to critics to prove that Ceawlin did not make the Wansdyke, and did not use it as a boundary. If, however, it is once admitted that the Wansdyke was made and used as a boundary by Ceawlin, then it follows that it could only have been made as an essential item in a bold and clearly defined scheme of con-

quest; and it will be difficult, if not indeed impossible, to suggest any other than that briefly outlined above.

Since there is no other period in which the Wansdyke could have been made, and given the name it bears, "Woden's Dyke," it is therefore taken for granted here, that Ceawlin did make the Wansdyke, and for the purposes specified above.

It would be beyond the scope of this work to try and trace out the probable lines by which colonists trekked from their various ports of landing, to the different districts or valleys to which they were allocated, and how this or that Welsh fortress was dealt with. This must be left to local antiquaries, and when they have realized the scheme under which this great system of settlement was conducted, it seems probable that with the aid of place-names, and especially the Stokes, as well as the evidence of other local vestiges of conquest, they may be able, in most districts, to explain in detail how each settlement of Saetas was established. Wilton seems to have been the first and chief centre for the reception of gangs of Saetas, and for sending each party on to the district to which it had been assigned. The dispersal of Saetas from Wilton would form a very interesting and instructive subject for study by local antiquaries.

All the difficulties presented by this vast scheme of colonization by settlers with their families, have been obviated by the suggestions in the previous chapter, and notably that chief difficulty of all—namely, how Saxon clans from the interior of the continent of Europe could

have been provided constantly with sufficient marine transport to enable them to fill up such large districts in twenty-one years.

Of no less importance is the suggestion contained in this chapter, as to how these separate gangs of settlers, quite incapable at first of acting together, could have been protected from molestation by the armies of the Welsh.

Since we know that this region was filled with settlers at this time, and that, immediately afterwards, Ceawlin had the control of sufficient shipping to bring a large and continuous supply of immigrants to colonize the West Midlands, probably through the ports of Bristol and Gloucester, it must be apparent to every inquirer, that there must have been, not only a very large scheme of colonization, directed by Ceawlin and his experienced followers, but also that he, by his skilful strategy, contrived to give these settlers adequate protection. Since conquest confirmed by colonization had been going on for more than a century, it would indeed be surprising if we did not find that the invaders had introduced some order and system into their methods of using their limited supply of shipping, and also into their methods of embarkation and debarkation of so many colonists, and of their distribution inland. Then when a leader of high training and capacity came to the throne, we should expect to find this system of marine transport and colonization developed to its highest capacity, and used to the best advantage.

At any rate the wonderful results have to be accounted for, and it does not seem that they have ever been fairly grappled with as yet. It is hoped

that this attempt to give a reasonable explanation of a very important phase of the conquest may at least be a help to other inquirers. At any rate, many questions have been raised which demand answers. Can they be answered on any other lines than those suggested?

To conclude this conquest of Western Wessex, we must return to Ceawlin.

Limpley Stoke near Claverton was evidently made when Ceawlin advanced from Bradford-on-Avon, to take the heights on the south of the Avon overlooking Bath. This he probably effected with ease, but the movement must have created some perturbation amongst the Welsh in Bath, until it was found that he showed no signs of attacking that city, and he probably found means for letting the Welsh know that he had no intention of doing so, but that he intended to adopt the Avon as his boundary, or rather a line south of it, to be marked by a dyke, with a no-man's land between. Above all, he insisted on complete separation between his people and the Welsh, as had been their custom with many previous dykes.

We now have to follow the line of the Wansdyke to the sea. In many long lengths it is well marked, in others it is only just traceable, and in the gaps it is fairly easy to see the line it would have followed if it had been completed. These details must be left to local antiquaries.

All we are concerned with is to discover the object Ceawlin had in view in carrying his dyke so far westward of Bath, and how the dyke fulfils that object.

The first idea that naturally strikes us is that

Ceawlin would have wished to secure a port or landing-place, by means of which he could bring in warriors, and settlers, and supplies to this, the furthest point of his widely extended frontier; and of course we should expect to find the dyke covering that landing-place, and the approaches to it.

At first our thoughts naturally turn to Bristol, until we find that the Wansdyke is traceable some miles farther west than that town. And then, if we have not done so before, we begin to realize that, at the time we are dealing with, it would have been impossible for the invaders to have used the port of Bristol. Without trained pilots, transports could not be expected to go to and return from Bristol, through some eight or nine miles of the tide-swept gorge of the Avon; and with one of its banks in the hands of the enemy.

It was evidently essential for Ceawlin to have a landing-place on the shore of the Severn, and we find it at Portishead. The name shows that there was a port there, at the time it was given. Covering this port, we find an ancient camp called Portbury, which gives its name to one of the hundreds of Somersetshire. The Wansdyke is said to be traceable near Portbury, but, however that may be, it certainly seems probable that, if ever the Wansdyke had been completed, it would have been continued to Portbury.

That the Wansdyke was intended merely to be a boundary line is shown by the fact that some fourteen miles of it consisted of a Roman road. That it was not completed is also evident, therefore something must have suddenly made it

unnecessary; what that was we shall see clearly when we come to the campaign of Deorham, and Ceawlin's advance into the Midlands; and not until we understand how that great campaign was begun, shall we fully realize what was Ceawlin's ultimate object in making the Wansdyke.

For the present it is sufficient for us to grasp the fact, that the primary object of the Wansdyke was to make it clear to the Welsh that Ceawlin had come to establish himself permanently in a strong position, guarded by the Avon, and overlooking Bath, and with a small sea-port on his left flank sufficient for his needs. Then by forcing the Welsh to make a large dyke for his boundary, Ceawlin demonstrated his ascendancy over them, and besides, we may be sure that, in every possible manner, he made a display of his constant determination to have his boundary respected.

The position held by Ceawlin thus countered the strong position held by the Welsh along the north bank of the Avon, with the fortress of Bath covering a bridge over the Avon; and they also had probably another bridge at what was later called Brig-stowe or Bristol. These could be watched with ease. As the English had command of the sea, Ceawlin's left flank was secure, and as for his right flank, Ceawlin knew that the Welsh would not dare to try to turn it by the open country beyond Bathford. If they had done so the advantages would have remained with Ceawlin, and a pitched battle in the open would have been entirely to his liking.

To sum up the main question. We find from numerous vestiges of it, that a boundary dyke was

traced from near Inkpen in Berkshire to Portbury near Portishead on the Severn.

We know from the relative positions of the vallum and the ditch, where completed, that this dyke had a victorious nationality on the south, and a defeated one on the north of it.

We know that this dyke could not have been begun before the battle of Searobury in 552, and that it could not have been continued after the battle of Deorham in 577.

It does not seem possible that these two limits (552 to 577) to the period during which the Wansdyke must have been made, can ever be controverted; more especially as it is the only period during which it is possible to find a victorious nationality on the south of the Wansdyke and a defeated nationality on the north of it; and it is the only period during which it could have been called after Woden, the god of the English invaders.

These considerations, standing alone, seem to leave no room for doubt as to the origin of the Wansdyke; but there are others of hardly less importance.

The Wansdyke, with all its gaps, and with its fourteen miles of Roman road, is a stern fact that cannot be ignored; any more than the English tradition can be ignored that, in spite of its unfinished state, it, at one time, constituted one long boundary line.

On facing these facts, the dyke, and the tradition about it, the question that naturally arises is, Does the Wansdyke help to explain history?

The answer is that, not only does the Wansdyke explain the designs of Ceawlin, and mark the climax of his career, but the history of this period cannot be understood without it.

That the Wansdyke has not been generally recognized as one of the essential factors of the conquest, is probably due to the fact that so many persons seem to have an ineradicable belief that a long straight dyke has some military value as a defence for the people on the rampart side of it. As long as some lingering trace of this false notion remains, it is difficult to inculcate true ideas into minds thus affected, it is difficult to bring them to facts.

Of course it is easy to prove logically that a long straight dyke might have a defensive value; and in fact, in that land of paradoxes, China, we have an instance in the Great Wall, whose massive and passive resistance to the inroads of Tartars, appears to have been successful for centuries.

The point is, however, that if we start on the assumption that Ceawlin had the Wansdyke made in order to give some direct increase of security to the settlements of his people, we switch ourselves into a false line of reasoning. That one of the final results of the Wansdyke may have been to increase the security of the settlers of the victors on the south side, may be admitted without question. It may even be admitted that the vast size of parts of the Wansdyke may have given some additional security to dwellers protected by those parts, at least it served to protect them to some extent from raids.

And yet, any small increment of local security

that the size of the Wansdyke may have given, would at once be converted into an element of danger, from the moment it was trusted in to the extent of neglecting the real and true system of frontier protection. That of course was to promptly retaliate and severely punish the slightest infraction of this artificially marked boundary. In fact, unless the immigrant settlers up to the Roman road were as safe as those north of Devizes, the Wansdyke was a failure, if not indeed a farce. The chief object in making the Wansdyke so large in places, could only have been to impress the vanquished with the power of their conquerors.

The dedication of the line of the Wansdyke, whether marked by a greater or smaller dyke, or by a road, or perhaps in places, and temporarily, by a mere furrow, to Woden the god of the English invaders, explains the spirit in which the Wansdyke was made, and maintained as long as it was a going concern, and a real boundary line. The Wansdyke was a sacred line, which it was sacrilege for any Welshman to cross.

It seems probable that some kind of slight and fragile fence followed the whole line of the Wansdyke; not intended as a serious obstacle, but merely to ensure that any one crossing it should leave a track. Then for weeks and perhaps months together, no Welshman would ever see anything but a daily boundary-rider or two; but from bitter experience they would know the force that those solitary riders represented, and so that boundary would be respected, By such reasonable surmises we are enabled to realize what a valuable

factor in the process of conquest the Wansdyke may have been made, under the guidance of such a ruthless and capable leader as Ceawlin. It has been pointed out that it is practically certain that the Welsh would not have been able to secure the services of traitors as spies from any of the ranks of the invaders; whereas, owing to the mixed character of the population of Britain, it is quite likely that Ceawlin could easily get information as to the movements of the Welsh. With regard to the latter we are not concerned—but the fact that Ceawlin possessed the fullest confidence that no traitors could be found amongst his followers, must have added enormously to the value of the Wansdyke; for it thus became an impenetrable screen, behind which he could dispose his forces, and distribute his settlers, without the Welsh having the slightest knowledge of what was going on. We shall see later how Ceawlin made use of this valuable power.

The topographical and archæological details of the Wansdyke, and the inductions to be derived from them, are less likely to appeal to historians than to archæologists, whose verdict they will await. It has been necessary, however, to make this rough sketch of them, to challenge criticism, and to arouse discussion at archæological meetings.

Historians will want a larger view, and to know what part the Wansdyke played in history, and whether history is helped, or confused, by the explanation of the Wansdyke here offered.

Well, at any rate the Wansdyke fills a very important gap in the dykes and boundary ditches of England.

It has been already shown how the bringing in of such vast numbers of settlers in twenty-one years, as those represented by the Dorsaetas, the Wilton Saetas, and the greater part of the Somersaetas, would have been impossible unless Ceawlin with his army had taken up the very position still marked by the Wansdyke.

Though the Somersaetas then probably extended only as far westwards as the Mendips, and as far as a line drawn from Wells to Bridport, yet the districts between this line and the Hampshire Avon, bounded on the north by the Wansdyke and on the south by the sea, constitute a large region to have been settled up in so short a time. That this region was settled up at this time, and at no other, is proved by two facts.

One, that since it was filled only with settlers, this is the only time during which we can explain how those settlers were protected from being swept away by Welsh armies.

The other, that this is the only time during which it is possible to account for the large amount of naval transport that must have been required to bring such hosts of settlers with their families.

Directly Ceawlin had begun his northward campaign with the victory of Deorham, ships that had hitherto been bringing settlers to Poole, and Weymouth, and Portishead, would all be wanted to land their charges at Bristol, and Gloucester, and on the banks of the Severn, to colonize the Severn Valley.

It is inconceivable that Ceawlin would have begun his great campaign of Deorham before he had so settled up the country in his rear that the

settlers would be strong enough to resist any attacks that the Welsh of Cornwall might make. Having taken Bath, Cirencester, and Gloucester, Ceawlin could himself protect the settlers in West Wessex from attacks coming from Wales.

Enough has been said to prove that Ceawlin made the Wansdyke, and gave it its name, and to explain why he made it, and how he used it.

So far only Ceawlin's primary object in making the Wansdyke has been explained. His ultimate object is reserved for the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CAMPAIGN OF DEORHAM

We find in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under the year 568 the following entry:

"Here Ceawlin and Cutha, Ceawlin's brother, fought against Ethelbert and drove him into Kent; and they killed two aldormen at Wibbandun, Oslaf and Cnebba."

We learn from previous entries that Ethelbert was born in 552 and succeeded to the Kingdom of Kent in 565, therefore he could only have been thirteen years old when he succeeded to the throne, and sixteen when he was defeated by Ceawlin and driven back to Kent. We can easily detect in this unwise action of this boy king the jealousy of the rising power of Wessex, that had long been smouldering in Kent. The blame must evidently be put on his two evil counsellors, Oslaf and Cnebba, who paid for this first disloyalty to the leader of the conquest with their lives.

The lesson seems to have lasted with Ethelbert throughout his long reign, for although he, later on, claimed the Bretwaldaship, he yielded it to Redwald of East Anglia, without submitting it to the test of battle. Perhaps Christianity had by that time taught Ethelbert to seek something higher than a worldly honour, that could only be retained at the cost of human lives.

With the stern Woden-worshipper Ceawlin the case was far different. He had been the leader of the conquest and the colonization of Britain for ten or twelve years, and he could not for a moment brook this challenge to his supreme authority.

The precedent of the primacy of Kent, dating back to the times of Hengist and Aesc, and even then, as regards the invasion, under the sole military command of Aella the first Bretwalda, could not be allowed to reassert itself, after having been fifty years in abeyance, or to call in question the claim of the actual leader of the invasion to the obedience of all.

This stern action on the part of Ceawlin was certainly justifiable, as in fact it was justified by its results, for without this reassertion of the unity of all the invaders in the south of Britain, Ceawlin could not possibly have carried out his great campaign in the West Midlands.

This correction by Ceawlin, of Ethelbert's ill-advised attempt to assert his independence, is very instructive, and worthy of further consideration, since it establishes the fact that the invaders of southern Britain were united, and looked upon unity of command as essential to their success, at least until the triumphal campaigns of Ceawlin in the West Midlands had put a different complexion on the question. The constant guarding of such a frontier as that then won by Ceawlin became impossible; and since he had so utterly crushed the Welsh, for the time being, became unnecessary. Thus it came about that the widely scattered settlers looked to the nearest king for protection, and what is known as the Heptarchy began.

It is clearly evident that a very different state of affairs to that of Heptarchy prevailed when Ceawlin marched from Wessex to Wimbledon. By that time Ceawlin must have established his frontier, and marked it with the Wansdyke, and behind it a constant influx of settlers was pouring in. If the invasion of Wessex had been separate from that of Kent and of the Thames Valley, and conducted by a separate gang of freebooters, why should the King of Wessex trouble himself about the doings of a youthful king in Kent?

It is evident that Ceawlin took a very different view of Ethelbert's actions, and was determined that the unity of the invaders, which had existed from the beginning, should not be broken up just as he was about to extend his conquests.

Then it is quite evident that Ceawlin had taken care to keep himself informed as to Ethelbert's doings, and was fully prepared to nip his insubordination in the bud, as he did at Wimbledon. Ceawlin was of the same royal family as Ethelbert, and his proved capacity as a leader and in the prime of life, constituted a claim to command which had always been recognized by his race. Then the unity of the invaders which was thus established by Ceawlin, was but a continuation of their pristine unity under Aella the first Bretwalda; although it seems to have been dormant during the reigns of Cerdic and Cynric, since there was no occasion then for any special calls upon Kent.

With the accession of Ceawlin a change came over the scene.

Notably every ship that could be diverted from

London and Kent was wanted in the Solent. Then every immigrant must be diverted from the ports of Essex to the ports of Wessex. The trade of London was suffering, the people of Kent were grumbling. Many persons beside Ethelbert had to be reminded of the lessons first taught by the first Bretwalda.

This brings us to the probable conclusion of this visit of Ceawlin to the Thames Valley. It seems certain that Ceawlin must have chosen this auspicious moment to proclaim himself, and have himself acclaimed, as the second Bretwalda. This he probably did either at Runnymede or at Kingston. Perhaps the latter is the more likely place, since it is so close to Wimbledon, and as it was so often the coronation place of the Anglo-Saxon Kings, it seems likely that Hengist and Aesc had been crowned there. At any rate it was a place of glorious associations. It was perhaps to prevent Ethelbert proceeding to Kingston, to be crowned there as King of all the English, that Ceawlin fought him at Wimbledon.

Although by his later career of conquest Ceawlin seems to have become so overbearing as to have been cast out by the Angles, as we shall see later, we can but recognize in his assumption of the Bretwaldaship an appeal to the higher aspirations of all the invaders, and to the glorious traditions of those living in the Thames Valley whom he had come to rule.

That a descendant of Woden should thus claim a title first won by a Saxon Heretoga, was an act of deference to the memory of Aella King of the South Saxons; and one eminently acceptable to

a people whose forefathers, owing to their unity under Aella's leadership, had won lands, on which they had been settled in peace for nearly a century.

It seems quite evident that the aspiration for unity of the English nation throughout Britain, was never far from the thoughts of the invaders; and any king who by his deeds had brought them nearer to its fulfilment, was certainly to arouse it, and to be hailed as a wielder of Britain. Due credit, however, should be given to Ceawlin for having been the first to make an appeal to this glorious tradition.

Ceawlin seems to have returned very soon to Wessex, and to have left affairs in the Thames Valley in charge of his brother Cuthwulf; because in the year 571, we learn from the Chronicle, that Cuthwulf fought against the Britons at Bedford, and took four towns, Lenbury, Aylesbury, Bensington, and Eynsham; and the same year Cuthwulf died. The old forms of the names of these towns are of course given in the Chronicle, but there can be no doubt that they have been correctly identified.

A word seems necessary on the name "Cuthwulf." It, and also the name "Cuthwine," seem to have been favourite names in Ceawlin's branch of the great family of Woden. Unfortunately they both appear to have had the same diminutive form "Cutha," which is liable to cause confusion. There seems no doubt, however, that Ceawlin had a brother named Cuthwulf, and a son named Cuthwine or Cuthwulf, and that at times they are both spoken of as Cutha.

The Chronicle entry for the year 571 presents a very difficult enigma. We should hardly have expected to find Britons living so near the Thames Valley, even as Aylesbury, and certainly not in towns with English names. The main fact that this Chronicle entry seems to bear witness to is, that in the Vale of Aylesbury the English and Welsh were on friendly terms, and were beginning to amalgamate, and that the four towns mentioned had been allowed to assume a Welsh character although they had English names.

If so, then Cuthwulf would be sure to find that information about Ceawlin's doings was beginning to leak through to the Welsh ; and possibly even that some minor disaster had been brought about through this leakage of information.

However this may have been, there can be no doubt that if Ceawlin made the Wansdyke for the purposes explained, he would be certain not to permit any less drastic treatment of the Welsh on any part of his widely extended frontier, and so doubtless this is why Cuthwulf appears to have driven the Welsh out of the Vale of Aylesbury, and put a stop to all dealings with them, and perhaps he sent many prisoners to make the Wansdyke. If this explanation is sound, it enables us to understand the importance that Ceawlin attached to his having sole command of all the invaders, before he began preparations for his great advance northwards.

The death of his trusted brother Cuthwulf must have been a great blow to Ceawlin, and it was perhaps partly due to his loss that we find

that six years elapsed before he was able to fight the great battle of Deorham.

And yet this long delay may be fully accounted for otherwise, if we consider the fact that Ceawlin had to bring in enough settlers, not only to hold and cultivate the lands south of the Wansdyke, but as many more as could be rushed in during the last year to hold the lands, and gather the harvest left by the Welsh on the Cotswolds, which he intended to take. Moreover, we shall see that during the year of Deorham the bulk of Ceawlin's fleet of transports would be required for the army he intended to bring to Bristol, and for its supply.

An explanation of the conquest of Britain by the English must be a worthless one, if it ignores the great question of marine transport, and if it fails at least to suggest the probable ports of embarkation and debarkation. It must be borne in mind that the Angles had left the Elbe many years before the time we are dealing with, and so since that river could no longer be safe for Angle shipping and shipbuilding, and since so many ships could not possibly find employment in coastal trade in the North of Britain, the Angles are certain to have transferred many of their ships to the southern ports of Britain. By such reasonable suggestions we are able to account for the large amount of shipping that Ceawlin had under his control. Then by this time a steady annual migration of limited numbers of Saxons, from the interior of the continent to the mouths of the Rhine, and to the ports of Gaul, must have been instituted. The Franks and other races would have been little likely to interfere with peaceable

emigrants, who only wanted to help to conquer an island which had once been a Roman province.

We know that Picardy is full of Saxon place-names, especially those ending in "ham" or "home," so this district must have been peopled with Saxons about this time, and as they left, fresh emigrants from Germany could migrate here. Then to ferry them across the Channel and to London, presents no great difficulties.

The colonization of Wessex and the West Midlands raises, however, further questions of great importance which must be faced if we are ever to make a serious attempt to explain the conquest of Britain by the English.

How were these emigrants from inland districts induced to sail down Channel to the Solent, and to the ports of Dorsetshire, and even round Land's End to the Severn? It would take too long to discuss this question in all its details, but no one can doubt that this was the line that emigration took, after the Thames Valley had been filled. It was the reasonable and sensible line, and it is for those who think that our forefathers were wanting in common sense to urge the contrary. The answer presents no difficulties to those who believe that the conquest of Southern Britain was united under English leadership. Can any other explanation be given? No version of the conquest can be worthy of respect that shirks the question of marine transport and how it was provided, controlled, and maintained.

Before we begin to deal with the campaign of Deorham, it would be well to take stock of the situation created by the strategical genius of Ceawlin.

The five years after the battle at Bedford in 571 were the lull before the storm, which broke in all its fury with the lightning flash of Deorham. Up to that moment warfare may be said to have been static in its character, henceforward Ceawlin, with deliberate and long-prepared intention, made it dynamic.

A system of piecemeal conquest, confirmed by carefully guarded settlements, had been instituted by Aella; and this, after one lapse, had been confirmed by Cerdic and Cynric, and then had been developed up to its highest capacity by Ceawlin.

Ceawlin had a strategic vision that ranks him with his great teacher Aella, and therefore with the greatest war-leaders known to history. Moreover, Ceawlin's capacity had been developed by the most perfect practical training, in all the branches of his profession as a commander for a transmarine invasion.

By many reconnaissances by land and sea (they may be called marauding expeditions if preferred, and if the word reconnaissance sounds too modern), Ceawlin had acquired a complete knowledge of the whole of Britain, generally speaking, and even up to the littoral invaded by the Angles; and a special knowledge of the region he was about to invade.

Above all, Ceawlin had kept himself informed as to the doings of the Angles, and he knew that their advance into the East Midlands would make it safe for him to do things in the West Midlands, which would have been impossible without his right flank having been thus protected.

Ceawlin knew that Aella's system of specially guarded settlements had had its day, and must cease; and had to be changed to open warfare of such a crushing character that henceforward settlements, if properly constituted and prepared for local resistance until an army could come to their support, would be able to defend themselves against the Welsh thus weakened. Ceawlin knew how much depended on the complete success and the absolutely crushing effect of his opening campaign. With that end in view he quietly completed all his preparations behind the Wansdyke before he struck.

Ceawlin's selection of the year 577 to begin his career of conquest may have been influenced by his knowledge that the Angles intended to make a great advance in the north, perhaps into Nottinghamshire, or even perhaps as far as Derbyshire, as this would be certain to draw away all the forces of the Welsh in North Wales and Shropshire. It is necessary to use modern names to make the position of the invaders clear.

The actual date on which he struck would be decided by local circumstances, but it would be certain to be as early in the campaign season as possible, but not before the days had begun to lengthen out. Probably May would be the month chosen.

Then the final fixture of the date would be left until it was decided by the arrival of a fleet filled with an army of chosen warriors at Portishead.

There is local evidence of the exact course adopted by Ceawlin in his march on Deorham, but before giving it it will be well to realize

exactly what Ceawlin's objective was, so far as his first campaigning season was concerned. It can be stated very briefly.

The entry in the Chronicle for the year 577 confirms what we should have expected. It states, "Here Cuthwin and Ceawlin fought against the Britons, and they slew three Kings, Coinmail, Condidan, and Jarinmail, at a place which is called Deorham, and took three cities from them, Gloucester and Cirencester and Bath."

These captured towns fairly define the position that Ceawlin intended to take up and colonize in the first campaigning season; but there is no doubt that he would push on further and take the whole of the Cotswolds, and as far as Stow-on-the-Wold, where he would be joined by a contingent from Oxford. Then the rest of the season would be occupied in driving out the Welsh south of a line, say, from Tewkesbury to Oxford, and bringing in the many settlers that were waiting for homes, some from Bristol and Bath, and more from the Thames Valley. Although Ceawlin had further schemes in his mind for future years, it must have been essential to get this valuable and easily guarded district, now that there were English ships in the Severn to protect it, completely settled up first.

Ceawlin's first object must have been to take the two bridges over the Avon at Bath and Bristol. Two place-names confirm this very reasonable conjecture. One is South Stoke near Bath, about which much will have to be said. The other is the old form of Bristol, namely, the "Brig Stowe" or "Bridge Place."

The bridge at Bath was more than two hundred

yards from the wall of the Roman city. It had probably not been destroyed, or only partially so, and could easily be repaired, knowing, as the invaders must have done, the exact length of beams required.

At Bristol there must have been the remains of a Roman bridge. But however that may have been, there can be no question that the invaders either made or repaired a bridge there, since the name Brig Stowe could only have been given at this time.

Since Ceawlin must have been compelled to time his opening attack on the Welsh by the arrival of his fleet at Bristol, it will be best to begin with that port.

The arrival of Ceawlin's fleet at Portishead need not have occasioned any alarm amongst the Welsh, since a fleet must have come there every summer, only on this occasion it probably arrived earlier than usual. Then the Welsh would hardly detect that it was filled with warriors and not immigrants. Some of these would be landed at Portishead, and ships thus released would be sent to patrol the Severn, and prevent the crossing of any Welsh forces from South Wales.

The rest of the fleet would proceed up the Avon with the next tide and would begin to land men and stores at the Stowe by the bridge. Suitable timber had been brought, and the bridge was either promptly repaired or constructed. Then a force, that had been waiting behind the Wansdyke, would join their friends. It is likely that Ceawlin himself attended these operations, and then rode off to South Stoke.

The Welsh must by this time have become thoroughly alarmed, and the lighting of beacon-fires to call their friends from across the Severn probably showed it.

But it was too late. Moreover, their attention was drawn to Bristol, and they probably little suspected the treacherous war-stroke that was being prepared for them at Bath.

It must have often puzzled soldiers who have studied the battle of Deorham, under the influence of the vague but hitherto orthodox version of the conquest, how Ceawlin would have ventured to fight a pitched battle at Deorham, with a fortress-town like Bath, covering a bridge over the Avon, in his rear.

Certainly the brief entry in the Chronicle implies that it was in consequence of the victory of Deorham that Bath fell. Perhaps the chronicler knew no better. But, even if he did, taking this brief annal as a whole, the statement does, in a general way, convey the truth, although Ceawlin certainly must have taken Bath a day or two before the battle. That Bath was taken during the Deorham campaign was all that concerned the chronicler.

South Stoke is the most remarkable stoke to be found in England, and differs in character from all the others. Instead of being placed on a main road, as, for instance, Radstock on the Fosse Way, or North Stoke on the Via Julia; or like the stokes of the Saetas, the central place in a valley—South Stoke is stuck into the upper end of a deep combe, and the ground towards Bath rises from it 140 feet in 300 yards. It is easy

enough to reach South Stoke from the south by deep winding valleys from Bradford-on-Avon, or Radstock, or Dunkerton; but northwards it is a steep climb to reach the high ground above the Avon valley with Bath beyond.

Along this high ground, and 700 yards from South Stoke, ran the Wansdyke. This has since been levelled, but traces show that it must have been high here.

Only one explanation of this remarkable Stoke seems possible, and it reveals the ultimate object for which Ceawlin made the Wansdyke—namely, to make concealed preparations, so as to be able to strike suddenly and powerfully at Bath. For some ten or fifteen years the Welsh had been lulled into a sense of peaceful security; they had been taught to dread the coming of the Angles, more than that of the Saxons, and that the Wansdyke was to be the permanent boundary of the latter. Then their attention was suddenly distracted by the landing of a force at Bristol. If such were their thoughts over-night, the morning revealed the designs of their treacherous foes in all their ferocity and cunning.

The remarkable position of South Stoke leads us to suppose that enough supplies had been collected there to keep two or three thousand men for a fortnight or so, whilst they were waiting the arrival of the fleet at Portishead. Perhaps there may have been more men, but at least that number would be required to take the bridge, and if possible to take Bath by surprise, if not by storm. The invaders must have known with fair accuracy the strength of the garrison

of Bath, and would regulate their numbers accordingly.

Ceawlin is certain to have retained the right to fish in the Avon, and so his men would have often netted salmon under the old Roman bridge, and so would know the exact dimensions of the timbers required if it had to be repaired. Moreover, these men would act as guides, and would have boats on the river. Besides this, the no-man's land between the Wansdyke and the Avon was doubtless often patrolled by Ceawlin's men. As these practices would have been going on regularly for many years they would raise no alarm, and Ceawlin had only to substitute the members of the patrol, by leaders of his army, to take them to Beechen Cliff looking right into Bath. Every care would be taken that nothing unusual should excite alarm amongst the garrison of Bath.

By such reasonable conjectures, and the sterling evidence of South Stoke, a stoke that could hardly have been made for any other purpose than that indicated, we are able to surmount the difficulty felt by all soldiers, as to how Ceawlin could have ventured to fight a pitched battle at Deorham with a fortress, covering a bridge, in his rear. He did nothing of the kind, but took Bath first.

For the rest, the line of action adopted is easily imagined. The force at South Stoke could have been assembled behind the Wansdyke by daylight. Then when darkness came they would be quietly marched, each gang of warriors led by a guide to its own post. A few light punts may have been carried down to assist in the crossing of the Avon, and besides, there were the boats of the Saxon

fishermen. The bridge would be easily secured and repaired, and before daylight the whole army would be against the walls of Bath. Scaling-ladders would be at once rushed up to the selected places, and the invaders would probably overwhelm the unprepared garrison with their first rush.

As soon as Bath had been taken, Lansdown Ridge would be occupied, and the main body of Ceawlin's right wing would begin its march to North Stoke, on the Via Julia, there to be joined by his left wing from Bristol.

The large army of trained warriors which Ceawlin had now assembled for the first time, had probably already been assigned their places in the line of battle; and yet we may well suppose that Ceawlin spent a few days at North Stoke, and simulated weakness, since the Welsh could not yet have learned his overpowering strength; and his object must have been to allow them to draw together for a pitched battle, so that he might deal them a crushing blow. If so, Ceawlin got what he wanted.

The Welsh doubtless kept a force in constant readiness on the Cotswolds, with centres at Gloucester (Glevum) and Cirencester (Corineum). Perhaps the fall of Bath was as yet unknown to them, and their wish would be to relieve it. At any rate, the Welsh would wish to strike at once, and before Ceawlin could obtain further reinforcements. However this may have been, we know that the Welsh did advance to within five miles of North Stoke, and took up a position at Deorham, now Dyrham Park, seven miles north of Bath. The result also we know.

The fact that Ceawlin was able to kill the three leaders of the Welsh seems to show that he was able to detach part of his highly trained and powerful army, and get in rear of the Welsh, and cut off their retreat. However this may have been, Ceawlin's victory was complete, and Gloucester and Cirencester quickly fell to his arms, and the Welsh in their farms and settlements to the south-east were cut off from Wales, and the advance of a further force from the neighbourhood of Oxford to Stow-on-the-Wold, probably had the effect of completely surrounding them. We can only surmise what happened to men of fighting age, but the rest were probably put across the Severn, to become a burden to their friends.

It seems probable that a certain number of men would be retained, to help to gather the harvest later on, and to distribute the large herds of cattle which must have been taken, amongst the settlers who came pouring in during the summer. Then, in the following year, Ceawlin required the forced labour of these capable earth-movers to make a fortress for him, as will be seen later on.

In dealing with the actions of a highly trained strategist like Ceawlin, we must always take the largest view, for it is only by thus entering into his mind that we can explain his actions.

The question of marine transport must never be neglected. The fleet at Bristol was probably detained for a few days, to revictual and to be rewarded with a share of the spoils, the very best advertisement of victory that they could take back

to continental ports. To these the fleet of transports doubtless proceeded at once, to bring another consignment of immigrants, to find homes ready for them before the winter set in.

In this way immigration probably went on merrily for the next three or four years, each vessel doing two voyages to the Severn, and perhaps a third to the Thames, before lying up for the winter. Then as years went on, and Ceawlin neglected Wessex, and devoted his whole attention to the Midlands, so soon to become known as Mercia, the transports, with slackening control, and lessening rewards, probably returned after a time to trading on their own account, and so until the time of Ethelfrith and Edwine, some thirty years later, we do not hear of the employment of ships for the purposes of conquest.

Ceawlin is certain to have taken advantage of the Welsh having been so completely crushed at Deorham, to reconnoitre northwards, with a view to a campaign in the ensuing year. The only way he could hold his large army together and maintain their discipline was by holding forth the prospects of future conquests.

With this object in view Ceawlin probably rode, with a mounted force of some two or three hundred men, up the Roman road, the Icknield Street, past Alcester, and at least as far as Wednesbury. Ceawlin would also be certain to send to tell the Angles of his victory, and to prepare them for his advance in the ensuing year.

As this work is an effort to explain the conquest of Britain by the English with due regard to the military factors which must have influenced

and moulded the course it took, it is beyond its scope to deal with the multitudinous bits of evidence which archæology provides, and is adding to as time goes on.

In the main archæology has so far endorsed the military verdict, especially as regards the course the invasion took up the Thames Valley.

Within its own domain the verdict of archæology must be accepted without question, where it speaks with confidence and certainty about any particular find or finds, although its discoveries, so far, only yield relative and not positive dates; and although, so far, it appears to be able only to offer vague suggestions as to the sources of supply of any particular object or set of objects. It seems evident that at the beginning of the invasion, and for long after, the chief sources of supply of jewelry, and also of weapons, must have been at the continental ports of embarkation; and that it could only have been after the country had become quite safe, and well settled up, that the jewellers and other artificers transferred themselves with their tools, and other requirements of their crafts, to Britain, and then probably only to Kent, or the Thames Valley.

At the ports of embarkation there must have been an annual influx of Saxon families, many of them wealthy; and these would have been glad to exchange their heavier goods, for the more portable objects of the jewellers' or armourers' arts, and the producers of such articles must have done a thriving trade, and have received much encouragement.

As regards the relative dates, we have to bear

in mind two factors, affecting the earlier and later dates respectively. Before a given style could have become common enough to suggest a relative date at all, it must have been in use for at least a generation, and have been worn by that generation before it could have been deposited in its graves. Thus any particular discovery of a marked style, if it happened to have been the first of its kind, presented to a great warrior who died a few years afterwards, might have been made quite two generations or more before that style became common. However, this consideration does not concern us now, except as a general plea for reservation of judgment in any particular case.

With regard to discoveries made in localities which we know were not brought under the power of the invaders until quite a late date, it is quite evident that we need not be surprised to find in such localities, articles, especially if they consist of jewelry, which are characteristic of a much earlier period, since they may have been treasured heirlooms for generations.

Only one such discovery can be dealt with here, but it is a remarkable and an important one, and fairly typical of the archæological difficulties which vanish directly we realize the united character of the invasion of Britain by the English, and that all three branches of the race, Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, played their parts in the conquest of Wessex—the Angles chiefly as leaders under Angle kings, the Saxons both as settlers and warriors, and the Jutes chiefly as seamen.

It is evident, therefore, that we need not be surprised if we find relics characteristic of each of

these three branches in the tracks of the invaders who came through Wessex.

The particular discovery alluded to is one made about 1847 at Fairford, which is only some eight or nine miles east of Cirencester; it is fully described in Professor Baldwin Brown's "The Arts in Early England."

It consisted of a cemetery with more than 140 graves, in which a very large number of articles were discovered. Some of these articles were of later date, but the point we have to consider is, that it is the verdict of competent archæologists that a large proportion of them are of patterns characteristic of a much earlier period than 577, the year in which Cirencester was taken by Ceawlin, and it is rightly argued that Saxon immigrants could not have settled within ten miles of Cirencester many years before Ceawlin took it. But why should they? The idea that archæology proves that certain families of invaders settled at Fairford before the year 577 is simply based upon the fallacious but fashionable theory, that the invaders came in independent family parties. These are supposed to have dated themselves by their purchases of jewelry and other articles, on their way to Britain, and then to have promptly dumped themselves into those districts where we find a certain style of ornament predominant. The military version of the conquest puts a very different complexion on this not unimportant question.

It explains why certain districts were occupied first, conclusions since confirmed by archæology.

But it does more than this. It shows that

until the time of Ceawlin, the invaders of southern Britain were united at all times under one leader, by whom they were directed to their settlements, and protected after they had settled.

It follows of course that, as far as possible, immigrants of one branch of the race would be kept together, and sent to the same districts. These settlers would have to pass through the same ports of embarkation, and so would be likely to fit themselves out with the same ornaments and other light goods. Thus it has come about that archæologists have been able to associate certain types of ornaments, etc., with the Jutes, or the Saxons, or the Angles, and to give, provisionally, certain relative dates to this or that type of ornament.

The military version of the conquest, however, leads us to suppose that this simple distribution of settlers would not work out to a simple sort of perfection. In practice things never do, and we can never attain to more than a general approximation. We begin to realize that large classes of the wealthier and more ambitious, and more adventurous, of the invaders, would attach themselves to the leading king of their race, and would not be content to settle down in agricultural communities in the south, as long as there were the rich Midlands waiting for conquest. Yet these classes would have come over with their fellows, and would presumably have dated themselves by buying on their way the same types of ornaments. Some of these would, of course, be deposited in southern graves as generations passed away; but the rest may have been carried at least

as far as such places as Fairford, and it will not be surprising if ornaments of these earlier types are discovered much further north.*

The point to be noted is, that invaders passing northwards through Wessex would have had few, if any, opportunities of replenishing their supplies of early-dated ornaments with those of later dates; and so their graves, when found, would be mistakenly given a much earlier relative date than was their due.

The Fairford find seems to corrobrate the idea that many of Ceawlin's veterans clung to their profession as warriors until, after they had tasted the "Certaminis gaudia" at Deorham, they settled down around Cirencester. If there is any truth in this view, the Fairford find with its early-dated ornaments is fully accounted for.

* This was written before the remarkable discovery made at Bidford was known to the writer.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WEDNESBURY

THE effects of Ceawlin's great victory at Deorham must have been felt far and wide throughout Britain.

The Angles probably realized them in the relaxation of Welsh resistance, as Welsh forces, drawn from Cheshire, and Shropshire, and North Wales, were recalled to defend their threatened homes.

The career of Ceawlin between Deorham 577, and his death in 593, presents a very difficult problem. If it is ever to be solved, as it probably will be some day, it can only be by the persistent work of investigators who have considerable knowledge of the region that was undoubtedly first overrun, if not indeed finally conquered, by Ceawlin. For the present all that can be offered are reasonable suggestions as to the general principles of Ceawlin's strategy, and as to the probable line that his conquests took. It will be found that there are many facts to guide us. These will, for the most part, be dealt with as their place in the story is reached; but there are certain general facts giving us the limitations of Ceawlin's works, both in time and space, which must be dealt with first, but before giving these it will be best to give the Annals from

the Chronicle, which give us almost all the literary evidence we possess about the later career of Ceawlin.

584. Here Ceawlin and Cutha fought against the Britons at the place which is called Fethanleag, and Cutha was slain; and Ceawlin took many villages and spoils innumerable and in wrath returned to his own.

592. Here was a great slaughter at Woddesbeorg (or Wodnesbeorg) and Ceawlin was expelled.

593. Here Ceawlin and Cwicklem and Crida perished; and Ethelfrith succeeded to the kingdom amongst the Northumbrians.

597. Here Ceolwulf began to reign amongst the West-Saxons; and he fought and won incessantly against either the race of the Angles, or the Welsh, or the Picts, or the Scots. He was the son of Cutha, the son of Cynric, etc.

Much use will be made of these entries later on; for the present the following preliminary remarks are best made here:

It has long been thought that Guest's suggestion, that Fethanleag may be identified with Faddiley in Cheshire, may be correct. Further evidence will be adduced in support of this view. The resemblance of these names is striking although etymology denies their identity.

The Woddesbeorg mentioned under 592, and called Wodnesbeorg in one copy of the Chronicle, has been thought by many antiquaries to be Wednesbury near Wolverhampton. Very strong, if not indeed conclusive, evidence will be adduced that this identification is correct. In fact, it will

be shown that Woden's Beorg played as important a part in the second stage of Ceawlin's conquests, as the Woden's Dyke did in the first.

Furthermore, the great slaughter which took place at Wednesbury will be shown, with a probability that almost amounts to certainty, to have been made by the Angles.

The entry about Ceolwulf, under the year 597, is given because it tells us that Ceolwulf fought incessantly against the Angles, and the Welsh, and the Picts, and the Scots.

The value of this entry consists in the fact that, at any rate, the chronicler knew that Ceolwulf fought far north of Wessex, and against the Angles and the Welsh.

The addition of Picts and Scots is probably due to the chronicler's ignorance of their country, although it is just possible that the Welsh may have brought the Picts and Scots by sea to help them.

The main point that the chronicler bears witness to in no uncertain terms is, that Ceolwulf fought in what seemed to him the far north, and not in Wessex. How this came about will be explained.

The region of Ceawlin's final conquests may be roughly defined as all Worcestershire and Warwickshire, and the greater part of Herefordshire and of Shropshire and of Staffordshire, to within the border of Cheshire. As regards the actual limits of these conquests in space and time. The limits of Ceawlin's conquests to the east cannot be clearly defined, because there is little doubt that the Angles came pouring in latterly,

and assisted him, by helping to colonize the country, and by contingents of warriors, until Ceawlin's rule became unbearable, and so they quarrelled with him, and eventually drove him out.

The limits of Ceawlin's conquests to the west are fairly defined by a line on the borders of Wales where Welsh place-names cease, and only English ones are found. This place-name line is seldom far from the modern boundary of Wales, though it never quite coincides with it, except on the eastern and northern boundary of the Hundred of Maelor, that remarkable bit of Flintshire which juts out some ten miles east of the River Dee; and it follows the line of the Dee as far as Farndon and Holt. It is evident that, as long as the invaders were heathens, and worshippers of Woden, they drove out the Welsh, and would have nothing to do with them or their place-names; whereas we know that after they had become Christians, they mingled readily with the Welsh, and used their place-names to a very great extent. For instance, the whole of Flintshire, and part of Denbighshire, up to Wat's Dyke, was conquered and occupied by the English, during, or shortly before, the time of Offa, and we find numbers of the old Welsh place-names remaining in these districts, though interspersed with English ones.

The most remarkable and sharply defined contrast is presented by the place-names inside Maelor, and those outside to the north and east. The farthest district of Wales to the east still retains its old Welsh place-name "Il y Coed," though now slightly Anglicized into "Iscoyd," and there are many other Welsh place-names in that parish.

Outside it, in Cheshire and Shropshire, there are none. The only possible explanation of this contrast is, that whereas Cheshire and Shropshire were conquered by heathens, Maelor was not conquered until the English had become Christians.

However, this question of the precise extent of the conquests by the heathen English cannot be gone into in detail here; and it is sufficient for our present purpose, if we recognize that the conquests by the English, as long as they were heathens, extended very nearly up to the modern boundary of Wales.

Now, we know from the Chronicle that the Mercians became Christians on the death of Penda, in the year 655. But the limit of time during which conquests of Welsh districts by heathens could have taken place, must be very much shortened from this date; because we find that Penda, throughout the whole of his reign, was in league with the Welsh against Northumbria, so we may be quite certain that Penda left the boundary of Wales as he found it, when he began his long reign in the year 626.

On the whole it seems certain that the bulk of the conquest up to the Welsh border, as far as the north of Shropshire, was due to Ceawlin; except that Ceolwulf, his nephew and successor, may have extended those conquests towards South and Mid Wales; and the Angles may have made further encroachments in the north. There can be no doubt that the greater part of the conquest of Cheshire was due to the Angles, and that it must have been carried as far as the Bickerton Hills, and Peckforton and Beeston, soon after

Ceawlin's great victory at Fethenleag (Faddiley) had broken the resistance of the Welsh. That the Angles could not have planted their settlements with safety beyond these hills is due to the fact that the Welsh still held the great fortress of Chester.

This was taken by Ethelfrith about the year 613; but that campaign from Northumbria, assisted by local forces, is beyond the scope of this work. We can only note here that there is clear evidence that the same methods were adopted, at this late date, to invest Chester, as those which led to the taking of Silchester, in the first stage of the invasion.

To return to Ceawlin. We find the greater part of our difficulties in explaining his campaigns in the West Midlands obviated, directly we realize that he must, throughout his career of conquest, have been acting in unison with the Angles coming from the east. To those critics who delight in dubbing every reasonable suggestion as guess-work, it may be pointed out that it would be a wild guess to assume that these two great branches of the English race, each ruled by kings of the same dynasty, remained all the time in a state of abysmal ignorance of each other's doings.

Surely it is more reasonable to suppose that there was a mutual exchange of information, and that every victory and every advance, as well as every approaching difficulty, was duly reported; and that one branch of the invaders timed its attacks, and selected its lines of advance, to suit the exigencies of the other.

A generation had passed since Ida had estab-

lished his kingdom in Northumbria, so we may well suppose that the Angles had pressed forwards at least as far as Derbyshire. Then Redwald in East Anglia must have been doing something to enable him later to claim the title of Bretwalda, then held by Ethelbert. And even Ethelbert, in the south, must have made some conquests to enable him to qualify for that glorious title. In fact, Deorham seems to have sounded the advance on all the different frontiers of the invaders. It was an epoch-marking victory, and at one blow changed the character of the invasion from piecemeal conquest to open warfare and strategic combinations.

Hitherto the actions of the Angles had been confined to costly frontal attacks on a widely extended frontier, from which they could not advance far without leaving their settlements unprotected. Ceawlin was to change all this, by getting in rear of the Welsh, and challenging them to battles in the open, a challenge they were compelled to accept, in the forlorn hope that they might be able to retain at least some portion of the lowlands and open country, and not be driven back into the mountains of Wales.

There are some, and they are many, who think that Ceawlin was little more than a tribal leader, who by his courage and ability had perhaps gained followers from other tribes and sections of the invaders, and that when he advanced to Deorham he was merely making an effort to extend his own conquests, an effort which only differed in degree from previous ones, inasmuch as it was larger, and in that it attacked the chief source of Welsh

resistance in the south, namely, the Cotswolds, guarded by the fortresses of Bath, Cirencester, and Gloucester.

The chief objection to this view is its utter inadequacy to explain, not only the conquest itself, but also how such numbers of invaders could have been transported from the continent and landed in the ports of Britain. The only consideration that supports such an inadequate version of the conquest is that it is fashionable, and it will gain for students who hold it full marks in examinations. And yet when we analyse this view of the conquest we must realize that there is no real evidence to support it, and that it is merely based on a preconceived theory.

It is in fact nothing but a guess to suppose that a leader, who must by this time have assumed the title and have been accepted with acclamation as the Bretwalda, or Wielder, of Britain did not have the power and unquestioned authority to demand allegiance, and control the actions, of at least all the invaders in southern Britain, and as for the rest, where are we to draw the line? Certainly it must be admitted that Ceawlin's authority and power to control the actions of the Angles in the east and in the north, cannot possibly be claimed, as it is over the southern invaders. And yet, unless we are to assume, as a guess, for it is nothing more, that the Angles and Saxons remained in a sort of stupid ignorance of each other's doings, the influence of a leader like Ceawlin must have served to control, or at least to inspire, the actions of the Angles, although it was not supported by any direct authority.

In this way it is no guess, but a very reasonable conjecture, that when Ceawlin advanced, the year after Deorham, on his career of conquest in the West Midlands, he could do so with supreme confidence that, in accordance with his wishes, certain actions, at certain times, in certain districts, would be taken by the Angles. Thus it becomes possible to explain how it was that Ceawlin was able to advance to Wednesbury in the heart of the enemy's country, with his left flank exposed to attacks from Wales; because he knew, not only that his right flank was protected, but that he was certain of support, sooner or later, from that direction.

In this way also it becomes possible to explain not only the vast extent of Ceawlin's conquests, but also the numberless districts that must have been colonized in his time. It is quite evident that large numbers of Angles must have settled under Ceawlin's rule in the east and north, and that it was only when that iron rule became insupportable that they rebelled against him.

Since the Monarchy of the Angles had been transferred to Northumbria for more than thirty years, we may expect to find that the Angles had made considerable advances by this time, and were probably holding the eastern parts of Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, and that the western boundaries of those shires roughly mark the push forward that they were able to make on hearing of the victory of Deorham.

Then Redwald of East Anglia probably took part in this great advance, thereby qualifying himself for the Bretwaldaship, which he took later on

from Ethelbert. Cambridgeshire and Huntingdon perhaps mark his conquests. Ethelbert may have helped to extend Essex northwards to its present boundary.

Then, on the eastern border of Wessex, it was probably at this time that the men of Oxford pushed northwards, and founded Banbury; and the northern boundary of Oxfordshire marks the settlements which they were then able to establish in security. The principle of never making settlements without a fair prospect of security still held good, but it does not follow that the men of Oxford were doing nothing all this time to advance the conquest, and that they confined their peregrinations to a walk up Headington Hill, or to the top of Shotover.

Far otherwise. It must have been easy and safe for chiefs at Oxford to ride, with an armed escort, to many of the districts occupied by the Angles; and thus Oxford was probably a centre of information about the doings of the English race in the north and in the south. We cannot bring ourselves to believe that, in those stirring times, the men of Oxford would be content to remain in ignorance of the world beyond their own favoured centre, and thus it may have come about that the rest of the English race looked to them for information. At Banbury, we see the Saxons checking the advance of the Angles in Northamptonshire, not in a hostile sense, but merely by previous occupation. In many such ways the shires seem to explain themselves as owing their pristine boundaries largely to the first invasions.

The limits of Berkshire, near Faringdon, must have been nearly reached before the battle of Deorham; and after that battle Wiltshire was able to come up alongside, and nearly to Cirencester.

Gloucestershire, containing as it does the Cotswold Hills, represents roughly the immediate results of Deorham, and this doubtless was filled up with the settlers that Ceawlin had in waiting behind the Wansdyke; and perhaps many a war-worn veteran, who had waited to take part in the great victory Ceawlin had promised them, here found a home.

We have now roughly defined the arena into which Ceawlin was about to step early in the campaigning season of the year 578. It was a region crowded with the retreating Welsh, but it was beleaguered by victorious foes. It was probably the wealthiest region yet unconquered, and had been filled with the cattle the Welsh drove before them. Thus Ceawlin would feel certain that for some time his army would be able to live on the country.

We know that the whole of this region had been conquered by the English, and the Welsh driven from it, by the year 626, and that in that year Penda succeeded to the kingdom, not of the West Saxons, but of the Mercians. Though the Chronicle only says that Penda succeeded to the kingdom, and does not mention Mercia, yet we know with absolute certainty that the kingdom which Penda succeeded to was Mercia.

Therefore we know that in the year 626 Mercia was already established as a kingdom, although we do not know the name of the previous king,

though it was probably Penda's father, Pybba. They were of the royal family of Woden, and, therefore, were Angles. Penda was already fifty years of age, and so must have been acting for his father for some time in all matters, such as warfare, demanding activity; and so we may be certain that the Mercians, under Penda's influence, had long been cultivating friendly relations with the Welsh.

The last serious conquest made by the Angles of Mercia was probably about the year 613, when, with the assistance of Ethelfrith of Northumbria, they were able to take and destroy Chester, and push their settlements right up to the Dee, and even beyond it at one point, and to take and occupy the peninsula of Wirral.

We know from the later events of his life, that Penda possessed a strategic vision equal to that of Ceawlin, a talent seldom lacking in princes of the family of Woden, worthy rulers of a great race. Penda would early realize that the kingdom established by his father stood in a perilous position between Wessex and Northumbria, each claiming the over-lordship, unless it was living in harmony with its Welsh neighbours.

It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that no fresh districts in the Midlands were taken from the Welsh after the year 613, and, therefore, that practically all the conquests made by the heathen English were made under the leadership of either Ceawlin or Ceolwulf.

What these conquests probably were we shall see later.

The above remarks are no digressions, since it

is necessary to form some conception by glancing forward to known events, not only of the events we are leading up to, but also the time limit of the period of the unknown conquests we are going to try and explain.

Since from the year 578, the earliest in which Ceawlin could have advanced from the Cotswolds, to 591, when he was expelled from Wednesbury, is only thirteen years, we realize at once that Ceawlin must have struck boldly as well as victoriously at first, so as to have been able to conquer and colonize such a large region in such a short time.

But there are other reasons for supposing that he took such a bold course as to advance at once to Wednesbury.

A spirit of emulation of the Angles would make Ceawlin wish to be first in the field along the whole Welsh frontier; and, besides, it had probably been arranged beforehand that what he conquered he should rule. His line of advance was protected by the Severn, and it would be some years before enough emigrants could be transported from the continent to colonize the lands beyond the Severn—in fact, these were probably filled in the time of Ceolwulf.

Ceawlin had nothing to detain him, but he had one of the strongest of reasons for going on, and one that would specially appeal to an experienced warrior like himself. His army was in the very highest state of training and discipline that was possible in those days—in fact, its moral was perfect; but Ceawlin knew how quickly deterioration sets in in these matters amongst men, especially ignorant men, who are kept waiting for long.

On such grounds it is held that, early in 578, Ceawlin marched straight to Wednesbury, the Wodnesbeorg of the Chronicle, which he had chosen as the central base of his future operations.

It was very certain that the South Welsh would not cross the Severn to attack him where he was, so he must go where circumstances were more favourable to the Welsh, and challenge them to battle, and the northern Welsh had not yet felt his sword.

Wednesbury holds a remarkable position and one particularly well suited for a base for Ceawlin's last campaigns. It stands high on the edge of a broad plateau, which it overlooks for miles, and yet it is not so high as to be inconvenient. The lines of circumvallation of a large camp are still fairly traceable there.

Wednesbury stands on the edge of the Black Country, as this mining district is called, and the surface is so defaced by coal-mines and their refuse heaps that it is difficult to imagine it in its pristine state. Then it was probably as open as it is now, since no large timber trees could have grown there, and this upland plateau, with the arms from it which extend eastwards into the lower and richer country, must have been covered with fern and broom and gorse and stunted trees where it was not cultivated.

Though not surrounded by rich lands, yet Wednesbury was admirably suited for an army that had come to live by plunder, and herds of cattle could have been kept in the plain below within view of the higher grounds. No large force could approach Wednesbury unobserved.

Towards the north-west the ground rises gradually to Wolverhampton, which is five miles away.

Beyond Wolverhampton is Tettenhall (ancient form, Teotanheale), or the "look-out place," from which an extensive view can be obtained. To the north-east of Wolverhampton is Wednesfield, about which more will have to be said. It unquestionably means "Woden's Field." Wednesbury well deserves a visit by antiquaries.

Only two remarkable coincidences to be found in the neighbourhood can be mentioned here.

One of the hundreds of Staffordshire, namely, the one just north of Wednesbury, that has the town of Penkridge at its centre, is called Cuttlestone. And the bridge at Penkridge is called Cuttlestone Bridge.

In the thirteenth century this was called "Cuthulfestan," and there can be no doubt that it means "Cuthwulf's Stone."

Then about seven miles north-east of Wednesbury we find Catshill. Duignan, in his "Staffordshire Place-Names," tells us that, in the thirteenth century, this was called "Cutteslowe," and that there is a tumulus there, and the mound marks the boundary of three manors. It certainly looks as if the earliest form of this name, "Cutteslowe," has been derived from "Cutha's lowe." If so, then it is a very remarkable coincidence, that in the neighbourhood of Wednesbury we should find two important place-names derived from favourite names in "Ceawlin's" family, and both names having every probability in favour of their antiquity, and of their dating back to heathen times. The Hundreds must have had their origin in the first

conquest, however much they may have been modified later, and a tumulus must certainly date back to these times. And yet it must be admitted that it may be merely a coincidence that we find the names "Cuthwulf" and "Cutha" established as parts of place-names near Wednesbury. The names were not uncommon, and we know from the Chronicle that they were used in Northumbria. It would be a mistake to lay too much stress on the fact of their existence near Wednesbury, though it is a striking coincidence.

The chief fact that cannot be gainsaid is that the name Wednesbury is the exact modern equivalent of the Woddesbeorg or Wodnesbeorg of the Chronicle; and when we examine the place, we find that it entirely fulfils the requirements for a central base for the conquest of the West Midlands. There is nothing to be urged against it. It is far otherwise with other localities that have been suggested. The only one worth considering, since it has been supported, if not indeed accepted, by some authorities, is Wanborough, an earthwork near Swindon. The absurdity of the idea, that a great conqueror like Ceawlin could have wasted his time round Wanborough, should alone have been sufficient to condemn its claims to have been the Woden's beorg of the Chronicle. Fortunately, however, it has been discovered that the early form of the name precludes the derivation of it from Woden.

A word seems necessary about a central base from which campaigns might be conducted.

It must be borne in mind that Ceawlin had established a complete ascendancy over the Welsh;

morever, he knew their ways and their methods of fighting. He knew exactly what powers they still possessed, and that they could still put a powerful army in the field for short campaigns in the north; but he also knew their intrinsic weakness and utter inability to organize and combine, or maintain any fixed policy for long. He knew that he must expect one bold bid for victory, and that attempt having failed, that he could do pretty well what he liked with them.

Of course Ceawlin's wish must have been that the Welsh would come to him, and save him the trouble of seeking them out far from his base; and in this he seems to have been satisfied if there is any significance in the name "Woden's Field."

It is evident that the central base which Ceawlin established at Wednesbury was not intended to contain his army. When his men went into winter quarters they merely settled in booths near Wednesbury to await the next campaigning season.

The central base at Wednesbury was merely intended to contain Ceawlin's own personal followers during the winter season, and chiefly as a centre for the collection of spoils and stores, and a place where these could be left in safety under the charge of a strong garrison whilst he was away campaigning.

Then every spring a proportion of the spoils would be sent under convoy to Winchester, or to Gloucester and Bristol, to reward the mariners and help them to revictual their ships. At first campaigning would easily be made to pay its way. Latterly times seem to have got harder, and the

large quotas demanded of settlers to maintain the army and the sailors was probably one of the chief causes that led eventually to the great slaughter at Wednesbury.

On arriving at Wednesbury, Ceawlin would be sure to fortify it. Perhaps there was already a Welsh village there surrounded by an earthen rampart; if so, Ceawlin's work would have been all the easier. Welsh prisoners taken at Deorham would be employed in making the earthworks, whilst part of the army marauded the country, and the rest began making shelters for the winter with materials brought in from Welsh settlements and farms.

Of course a constant look-out would be kept at Tettenhall, thus giving it the name it already bore in 909 when, according to the Chronicle, the West Saxons and Mercians defeated the Danes there.

And now we have to account for the name Wednesfield, four miles north-west of Wednesbury. A good deal of confused thought has been bestowed upon this remarkable name, because it has been assumed that it marks the site of the Mercian victory over the Danes in 909. Of course this is absurd. Firstly, because Tettenhall is four miles away; and secondly, because the Christian English would never have named the site of their victory after the heathen god Woden, and the heathen Danes could not have given the name, since they were routed and driven from the site of the battle.

The name Woden's Field can only have been given by the English whilst they still worshipped

Woden; and, moreover, the name indicates that it was given in celebration of a victory over a foreign foe, as it could never have been given to celebrate the victory of one branch of Woden-worshippers over another. In fact, we may gather, with hardly any doubt at all, that the name Wednesfield bears witness to the fact that here the heathen English gained a great victory over the Welsh.

It may be fairly urged that a great victory by Ceawlin would have been certain to have been recorded by the Chronicle, as Fethanleag was about five or six years later.

This is easily accounted for. Ceawlin must have won several victories, and doubtless, after the custom of his family, had taken care to have them recorded; but his annalist probably lost his life in the slaughter at Wednesbury in 592, and his records were used as firewood by the Angles. Fethanleag was probably recorded because perhaps Ceolwulf took part in that hard-won victory, which was the turning-point in Ceawlin's career; at any rate, some one who had witnessed Ceawlin's wrathful return to his own, must have given the information to the chronicler.

It is easy to surmise how a battle with the Welsh may have been brought about by Ceawlin, at a spot so convenient for his purposes as Wednesfield. We have to account for that remarkable place-name, and so it is necessary to make reasonable suggestions as to how it could have been acquired.

To begin with, we have to realize what must have been the dominating idea in Ceawlin's mind, and that can only have been a wish to induce

the Welsh to charge home in open battle. That done, the result could not be doubtful.

With this object in view we can only suppose that Ceawlin kept a large proportion of his forces behind the eastern slopes of the Wednesbury plateau, where they need not have remained idle; there was plenty for them to do in preparation for the winter. Then with the most active part of his army he would scour the country northwards, doing everything he could to aggravate the Welsh; and then when they made any display of force, to make timorous retirements towards a position near Wednesfield.

Perhaps even the ground there favoured the Welsh. What did that matter so long as Ceawlin attained the desired result, a pitched battle? With a strong reserve at hand, the result could not be doubtful.

In some such manner, it must have come about that this spot was named, like Ceawlin's great dyke, and his great camp, after his god, Woden. Thus, and at this time only, can we account for the name Wednesfield. If a battle took place at Wednesfield, as has been suggested, in order to explain this remarkable place-name, there can be no doubt that a strong contingent of Angles took part in it, and thus acquired confidence in the leadership of Ceawlin.

It is remarkable how the survival of the name Wednesfield enables us to fill in a very important gap in our knowledge of the victorious career of Ceawlin, with a reasonable suggestion which explains both.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE LAST CAMPAIGNS OF CEAWLIN

WITH regard to the last campaigns of Ceawlin, it may be fairly asked, what positive evidence is there that Ceawlin conquered any districts beyond the immediate neighbourhood of Wednesbury?

The answer is that the whole of Staffordshire, and nearly all of Shropshire, and the greater part of Cheshire, were undoubtedly conquered and occupied by the English, before Ethelfrith of Northumbria took and destroyed Chester about the year 613; and unless the conquest and colonization of such a large region were carried out by such a great and experienced leader as Ceawlin, with the assistance of his Angle allies, and very promptly too, we are at a loss to explain how such great conquests could have been effected, and the various districts settled up in so short a time.

There is not much local evidence, except that which is to be derived from the position of the Stokes, but such as there is, all harmonizes perfectly with a view that these wide districts were invaded and conquered from Wednesbury.

It almost goes without saying that if this was so, Ceawlin must have been acting throughout with the full support of the Angles, loyal and

willingly rendered support at first, though not so in the bitter end.

That the support of the Angles must have been not only willing but even enthusiastic is evident, when we consider the fact that Ceawlin must all the time have been winning this northern end of his conquests for the Angles. It would have been impossible for him to settle up all these districts with any one but Angles, and he had more than enough country for the Hwiccas, and later the Magesaetas, which were probably established by Ceolwulf, Ceawlin's nephew and successor.

The Angles would readily give loyal allegiance to a descendant of Woden who had proved his capacity to lead. There must have been numerous Angles with Ceawlin before he left Wessex. His gesiths and house-carls were probably all Angles, as well as many of his chieftains. At any rate, the Angles and Saxons were all of the same race; they were all English. They all spoke the same language, although since the Angles and Saxons had lived apart for so long, in some instances for centuries, they probably spoke very different dialects, as different as the Lowland Scottish dialect from that of Dorsetshire. Nevertheless, there is no reason for supposing that, when the two different branches of these jealous invaders first met near Wednesbury, that it was otherwise than a perfectly harmonious meeting—in fact, there is every reason to suppose that it was joyful and enthusiastic.

The renown which Ceawlin had already won as a great and constantly successful conqueror,

and one who had not only overcome his enemies, but had also established vast numbers of immigrants on lands in Britain, was sufficient to ensure that there could have been no question as to leadership, and the independent chieftains of the Angles would have been, one and all, ready to serve under Ceawlin. Moreover, the Angle leaders who composed Ceawlin's staff (if such a modern expression may be permitted) were able to speak on terms of perfect familiarity with the Angles of the north and east, and their rank and precedence as gesiths of a great king of the Angle royal family of Woden, would be accepted without demur; though doubtless many Angle chieftains from the east would be welcomed to places of equal authority in Ceawlin's retinue.

Then we must not omit to notice that Ceawlin had a son named Cuthwine, or Cutha, who since, when he was killed in 584, had already had at least one son, may be presumed to have been about thirty years of age, and therefore that Ceawlin's age must have been at least sixty. We know how Ceawlin valued the help that his son gave him, by the manner in which he felt his loss.

A man could not have done all that Ceawlin did without developing a certain harshness of character by the time he was approaching sixty years of age, and this harshness may often have been tempered to the Angles by means of the help and advice of Cuthwine; and so his loss may have made all the difference to Ceawlin's rule with reference to the Angles.

The point that it is desired to make clear is, that although the massacre which took place at

Wednesbury in the year 592, can, with hardly any doubt at all, be attributed to the Angles, it does not follow that their relations with the Saxons may not have been perfectly harmonious for many years.

One thing is quite certain, namely, that Ceawlin in the course of his later conquests must often have come in contact with the Angles. The question is, therefore, did these two branches of the English race remain neutral spectators of each other's doings? or did they coalesce?

The first idea is absurd, whereas the idea that they coalesced is reasonable, and explains everything; and in spite of the fact that the coalition ended in massacre, there need be no reason to doubt that great conquests were effected by it, before the inevitable rupture came.

Of course it would have been an understanding, though possibly only a tacit one, that whatever districts Ceawlin conquered he should rule. It is easy for us now to realize that, in the state the invaders were then in, and for more than two centuries later, it was impossible for one king to reign over both Wessex and the Midlands, and that they were bound to split asunder sooner or later. But in the days of Ceawlin the invaders had yet to learn this, and none suspected that the lesson was to come in his lifetime, as the natural result that followed from his having made such distant conquests.

In fact, the great slaughter at Wednesbury may have been said to have been the act which constituted the founding of Mercia, and the completion of the Heptarchy.

Since the campaign which ended with the battle of Fethanleag occurred in 584, we have five campaigning seasons to account for, if the battle at Wednesfield took place in 578.

Since presumably the Welsh had been crushed, Ceawlin must have been able to advance in a very different fashion, and with considerably less caution, in fact, his operations would have consisted in driving out the Welsh, and bringing in the Angles to take their places and harvest their crops.

It should be noted that no other settlers than Angles could have been available so far north at this time. It is, therefore, no mere surmise, it is indeed a certainty, that the Angles must have colonized all Staffordshire, and all Shropshire east of the Severn, and all Cheshire east of the Bickerton Hills, in Ceawlin's time, or so soon afterwards as to have been directly due to his conquests.

Good reasons have been given for believing that the relations between the Angles and Ceawlin, and his son Cuthwine, were perfectly cordial, at least up to the time of the battle of Fethanleag. Ceawlin with his experienced staff, long accustomed to placing settlers on freshly won territories, would have been of great assistance in teaching the Angles how to occupy any given district, and apportion the lands, and appoint a post at which to rally for its defence, a post that in many instances would be likely to become its centre of administration.

The chieftains of the Angles would quickly realize the value to them of an over-lord, who not only knew his business, but was unbiased so far as they only were concerned, to compose their mutual jealousies. Doubtless Ceawlin may have

favoured a few of his chief followers in particular instances, but there was more than enough land for all, and so such favouritism, if there was any, would be accepted as only natural and reasonable.

With regard to the Welsh, the whole tenor of Ceawlin's life impresses on us the conviction that he was excessively brutal towards them, and in fact would not allow their presence, even as thralls, amongst any of the communities he established. We must bear in mind that previous to Deorham the total exclusion of the Welsh was a matter of military importance, to prevent information of the preparations of the invaders reaching Wales.

Now, owing to the changed character of the invasion, from strictly defined and carefully guarded settlements, to warfare in the open, such careful exclusion of the Welsh from English communities was no longer essential, and was indeed scarcely possible, except perhaps in the immediate neighbourhood of Wednesbury.

Then the value of willing Welsh labour must have been increasing every year, as the conquest extended, and the overworked colonists were less and less able to get any assistance in tilling their lands and tending their cattle. We cannot doubt that as the conquest extended towards Wales, more and more Welshmen were employed by the Angles.

The Welsh are good servants and almost always loyal to good masters, and, owing to their numerous tribal divisions, had learned quickly to transfer their allegiance to the strongest side. Welsh nationalism has almost always been an artificial production. The chief division in the Welsh

border has always been, the Men of the Hills *versus* the Men of the Plains.

Thus a Welshman who had settled down peaceably in the service of an Angle settler, would be likely to give him warning if he knew that a raid was to be expected from the mountains; he did not want the home that fed him broken up, or the cattle he tended taken away. In these ways a large admixture of Welsh blood must have come about near the borders of Wales.

These remarks have been made, not only to explain what probably occurred, but also to suggest one of the probable causes of friction between Ceawlin and his Angle subjects, for there can be little doubt that he made the mistake of looking at them as his subjects. In fact, Ceawlin was too old to be able to change his ideas.

All his life he had been an autocrat, and had driven out the Welsh, and he could not brook any change. He made the mistake of trying to sew a bit of new cloth into an old garment, and the rent when it came was in the old garment.

The taxes he levied at first were light, owing to the immense amount of spoils that were taken, but as years went on, and the tribute demanded became heavier, we can detect many causes for friction between Ceawlin and his newly acquired subjects.

Why should they provide ship-money to bring in a lot of Saxons from the continent? we can fancy them asking.

As regards the actual course that Ceawlin's campaigns probably took, little can be said here; even to make suggestions would demand a greater

knowledge of the country than that to be derived from maps. It is natural to suppose that Ceawlin began with Staffordshire, as that would be most convenient for Angles arriving from the east. Since Tamworth later became the capital of Mercia, it was probably one of the most important centres of distribution now, and thus the Angles began to look to it for administration.

We may with complete confidence assume that it was during the first stage of the conquest of each district that the Townships and Hundreds were established. There is no other period at which we can by any means explain their origin. It does not follow that they were originally exactly the same as we find them now. And yet, knowing the extraordinary respect that Englishmen have always shown to ancient boundaries, we may with equal confidence assume that there was seldom any direct change of boundaries, and that such changes as have taken place have almost always consisted merely of throwing together certain Hundreds or Townships of minor importance, to make larger ones. In this way it is quite likely that some of the less important Hundreds and Townships have disappeared, having been absorbed to make larger ones. Fortunately in this part of England the ancient Townships still remain as civil parishes, and some large ecclesiastical parishes have several of these civil parishes within their borders. Then another fortunate circumstance lies in the fact that the 25-inch Ordnance Survey was based on these civil parishes, and so we have excellent coloured maps of them. All local museums should possess copies of these maps of

their district, as they are records of very ancient monuments of our race.

These Townships are so small that we can hardly suppose that there were many instances of two or more of them having been amalgamated; and that therefore they do truly represent the pristine territorial divisions established when the district was first conquered.

The Hundreds, on the contrary, are so large, that it seems probable that there may have been some amalgamation of the smaller and less important Hundreds, with more important ones in later times. If the Hundreds had remained the same, and if we accept the supposition that a Hundred was the district apportioned to one hundred warriors with their families, we should, of course, be able to make a rough estimate of the numbers of the pristine settlers.

The number of Hundreds still existing are as follows: Shropshire, 14; Staffordshire, 5; Cheshire, 7; which would only give us a total of 2600 warriors. And that number multiplied by five, to give their families, only amounts to 13,000 persons, a small number to people such a large region. And yet, apart from the fact that there were probably more Hundreds in Staffordshire and Cheshire, it is easy to account for a larger population, if we bear in mind that the invaders, when they came, recognized a status not only of birth but also of wealth; and the hundred warriors that presumably went to occupy a territorial Hundred, were all eorls, and that each of them probably brought in several families of ceorls.

If this was the case, then it is evident that

we may with confidence treble our original number of warriors, and it seems evident that there must have been a great many more than that sum produces. Even so the help of the Welsh labour in cultivating such large districts must have been very welcome—in fact, the invaders could hardly have managed without it; and we can see how it gradually came about that the Mercians made friends with the Welsh, and for years were in league with them, against both Northumbria and Wessex. It would probably take Ceawlin two years to occupy Staffordshire, and then he would in 581 have begun to conquer Shropshire east of the Severn.

It seems likely at any rate that about this time, having secured Staffordshire for his Angle friends, he would turn his attention to the Severn, and perhaps begin by taking and completing the destruction of Uriconium. Archæologists tell us that there is evidence that the chief destruction of the Uriconium must have occurred before this time. However that may be, it is unlikely that it has been quite deserted, and the very name "Wroxeter," which the invaders gave it, seems to bear witness to the fact that they found a Roman city there, and something more than vacant ruins. Having thus made his northern frontier safe, Ceawlin probably turned his attention to that part of Worcestershire which lies east of the Severn. He must by this time have had many Saxon settlers ready to come in, either by sea and the Severn, or overland through Gloucestershire. Warwickshire also may have been peopled by these, as well as by the Angles in its northern

districts. Perhaps archæology as well as etymology may yet have something to say on this distribution of settlers.

All this time, with rich spoils coming in, Ceawlin could have found no difficulty in keeping a large army together, and maintaining its discipline. And yet, as time went on, many of the older warriors would desire to settle down in peace on some chosen spot, and so we may be sure that Ceawlin would desire to strike northwards before such elements of disintegration had begun to weaken his control.

It would be hopeless, in the present state of our knowledge, to attempt to work out his northern career of conquest in detail. The most that can be attempted is to give a broad sketch, with due consideration of the chief difficulties that had to be faced.

We find north of Newport a small stoke, Pickstock. Its objective was probably the Cheswardine district up to Hales and Market Drayton.

Then, about six miles north-west of Newport, we find Hinstock, which was probably made with a view to clearing out and settling up the country up to the River Tern. All this must have been comparatively easy work, but, at Stoke-on-Tern, we see Ceawlin starting on a campaign that, in the end, involved more difficult problems.

Stoke-upon-Tern was evidently made with a view to taking Hodnet and the Hawkstone Hills. This would present no great difficulty to an army like Ceawlin's, although there is a great earthwork called Bury Walls amongst those hills, and the Welsh probably still clung to such fortresses,

useful as they had been in the tribal warfare of the past, but useless against an enemy who had come to stop, unless they could be relieved. The Hawkstone Hills were but an incident in this campaign, and its main object probably was to take and colonize all the land up to the river Roden.

The river Roden runs out of a vast morass between Whitchurch and Ellesmere, and known generally as the Fenns Moss, though it is sometimes also called Whixall Moss on the Shropshire side.

The Fenns Moss has had more to do with the shaping of the northern Welsh border than any other single natural feature, although its importance is accentuated by the meres and deep dingles near Ellesmere, and by the deep Wych valley on the Cheshire side.

The Fenns Moss is on the water-shed, and from it the Roden carries its waters to the Severn, and the Wych brook to the Dee.

High as the Fenns Moss stands, one remarkable feature of it is, that it cannot be seen from any point more than half a mile from its borders. It comes upon the traveller as a surprise, as doubtless it did upon Ceawlin and his followers.

The Fenns Moss, with its adjuncts, the Mere country and the Wych Valley, was undoubtedly the originating cause of the Hundred of Maelor Saesneg, that remarkable bit of Wales which juts out some ten miles east of the Dee into the richest pastures of Cheshire and Shropshire. It is still full of Welsh place-names. The furthest district being the ancient township, now parish of Iscoyd,

and the furthest bank which slopes down to Shropshire on one side, and to Cheshire on the other, is called Brynowen, and hard by is the farm of Maes y Groes.

Outside Maelor there are practically no Welsh place-names. There is, indeed, an interesting lake fortress near Whitchurch called Pan Castle. But the Welsh household word "Pan" was so early adopted by the English that they may have given the name.

A "Caidee" exists in a dingle in Cheshire about half a mile from Maelor, and an old title-deed even shows that there was, not so long ago, a Welsh place-name in the rough country beyond Malpas, near the foot of the Cheshire Hills. But such sporadic exceptions do but serve to make the general contrast of place-names more remarkable. Nowhere else, on the Welsh border, is this contrast of place-names so clearly defined, and nowhere else does it so exactly coincide with the modern boundary of Wales.

Then, again, certain English place-names bear witness to the fact that here the English were up against the Welsh. We find Welshampton, and Whixall Welsh End, and Comberland Farm, and Combermere.

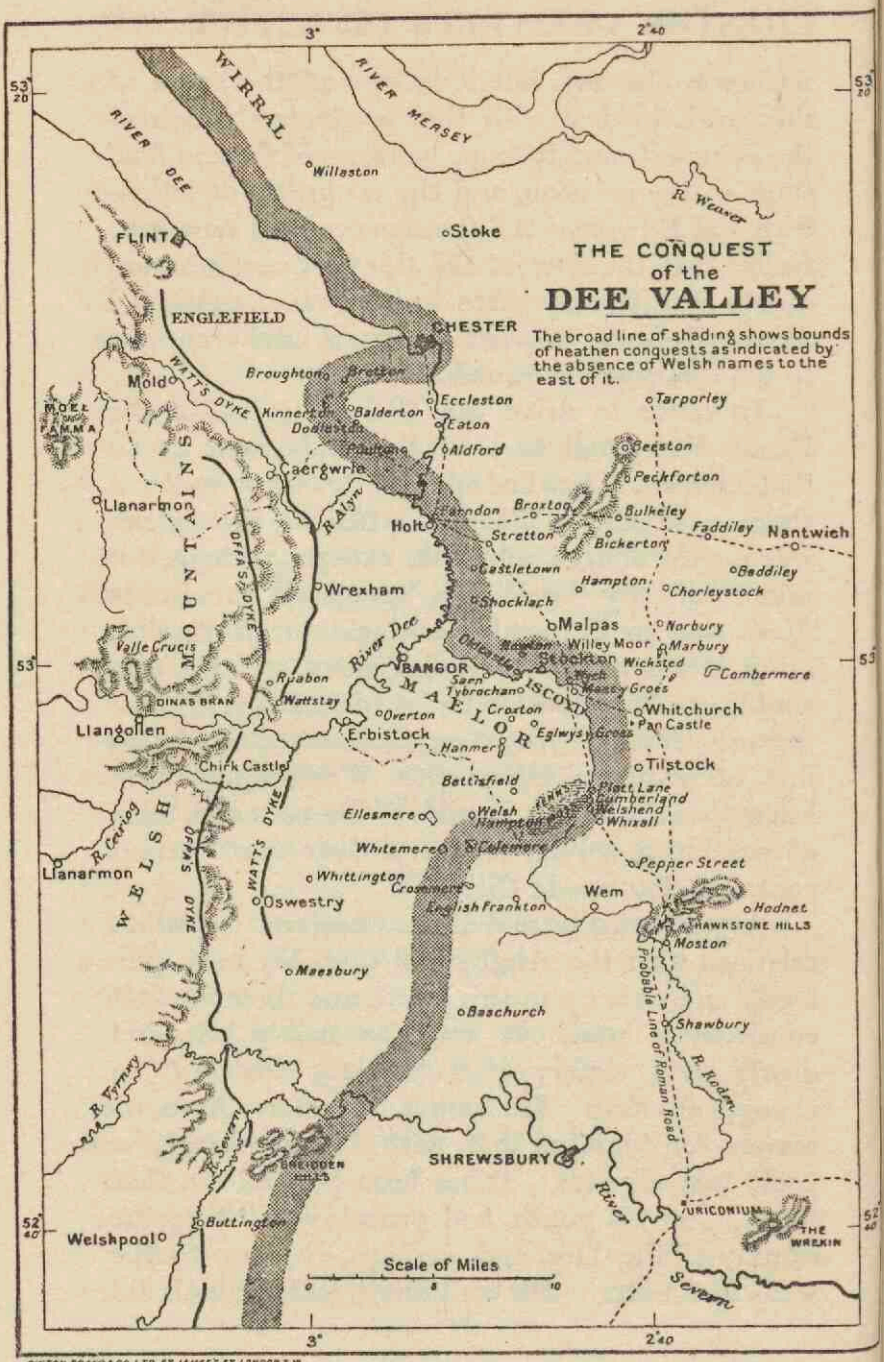
We naturally ask how it came about that this exposed inland promontory of Wales preserved its integrity amidst the storm of war, whilst the great Welsh fortress of Chester remained a ruin for centuries, and has no Welsh place-name around it?

The Hundred of Maelor is the lock to many secrets of Welsh border warfare, and military

science is the key, but it is beyond the scope of this work to deal with this particular branch of the conquest, and it must be reserved for the final stage of the invasion, and the conquests of Ethelfrith and Edwine. All that concerns us now is to realize that the flow of the tide of Ceawlin's conquests was turned aside by the morass-guarded Maelor-Saesneg, to what is now Whitchurch, and to the rich pastures round Nantwich.

In order to drive the Welsh back into the Fenns Moss, and to hold the lands right up to that morass, Ceawlin appears to have made a stoke, now called Tilstock. After all, the district was a safe one to settle in, except, perhaps, for minor raids by the Welsh, because if the Fenns Moss was an impassable obstacle to an English army, it was also to a Welsh army, and Ceawlin could turn his attention to his advance northwards towards Chester without any serious fears as to his line of communication with Wednesbury. He knew that the Welsh in mid-Wales were incapable of combined action, and that their most serious concentration was in Cheshire.

A word must be said about Chester. Ceawlin's relations with the Angles had probably been perfectly amicable up to this point, and their conduct consistently loyal. It was the nearly lost, and dearly won, victory of Fethanleag that was to change all that. He would, therefore, have no reasons for doubting that, with their assistance, he could take Chester. It has been pointed out that Ceawlin, in his youth, had probably sailed up the estuary of the Dee, and, perhaps, even up to the walls of Chester. He well knew, as Ethelfrith did

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later, that the seaport fortress of Chester could not be invested without a fleet. We know that Ethelfrith had a fleet, because it was used, shortly after his death, by Edwine to take Anglesey and the Isle of Man. But Ceawlin could easily arrange to send a fleet by the time he had concentrated his forces near Chester. We know now that this was not to be. The loss of Cutha and the best leaders of the Saxons at Fethanleag, made further conquests in the north impossible to Ceawlin, and he had to leave the conquest of the rest of Cheshire to the Angles.

We may fairly conclude that the conquest of the Tilstock district, and the driving of the Welsh into Maelor, took the whole of the campaigning season of 583, and that Ceawlin did not begin his great advance into Cheshire before 584. Therefore we must suppose that it was early in that year that he made a stoke at Chorley Stock, about six miles north of Whitchurch, or Dodington, as it was then called; for the Weston, which is the old name of Whitchurch, could hardly have been made as yet. Dodington must have been an Angle settlement, since places with that form of name are found, nearly all of them, in Angle districts.

Faddiley, which has been identified as the Fethanleag of the Chronicle, and with every probability in its favour, is only between one and two miles north of Chorley Stock.

Faddiley is a township of Cheshire, and so there can be no doubt that it is a conquest name, and the name too of a fairly extensive district. At Chorley Stock Ceawlin appears to have waited

for a strong contingent of Angles from the east before he advanced. He well knew that it would be a very different affair fighting these Northern Welsh to fighting the cowed and oft-defeated and ill-trained Welsh of South and Mid-Wales.

These Northern Welsh were descendants of the Cymru, brought in about two centuries before from the north by Cunedda Gwledig, and they had themselves conquered the old Goidelic Wales, and almost all the later leaders of the Welsh were descended from them.

We know from Bede how nearly they defeated Ethelfrith, a generation later, at Chester. In fact, Fethanleag and Chester appear to have been the hardest fought battles of the whole conquest, but unfortunately for the Welsh all the skill, and discipline, and experience was on the side of the English, and the Welsh tribal levies had no chance against them.

Philologists tell us that according to the laws of etymology there is no case for the identification of Fethanleah with Faddiley. If we grant their premises, those who have no knowledge of their science must accept their conclusions, but they seem in this case to have built on very shaky foundations. The question seems to be whether the sound "eth" of Fethanleah could become changed into the sound "ad" of Faddiley. With regard to the consonant "th" philologists do not appear to raise any great difficulty, since there is a Smedley derived from "smethe."

Moreover, the large township of Baddiley is contiguous to Faddiley, and the propensity of local rustics to assimilate place-names, more

especially when it produces a jingle between the names, would be very likely to cause them to change Fathiley to Faddiley.

However, we are told that the real difficulty is with the root vowel "a"—and it is with regard to this difficulty that it is hoped that further considerations may induce philologists to speak with less confidence and less dogmatically.

No one will question the fact that Faddiley was an Angle settlement. It may even have been formed before the battle, or assuming the battle to have taken place at Faddiley, the settlement may have been formed immediately afterwards, and have taken its name from it, "the Field of troops" or "Troops Field."

Again assuming this to have been the case, then the name Fethanleah would have been pronounced locally according to the dialect of the particular branch of the Angles that settled at that spot.

But the chronicler must have derived his information about Fethanleah from a man or men from Wessex, possibly from King Ceolwulf himself, and their pronunciation must have differed from that of the Angles of Cheshire even more than the dialect of Dorsetshire differs from that of Yorkshire at the present day. Whilst for the present it must be admitted that the verdict of etymology is adverse to the claims of Faddiley, assuming the local pronunciation of that name to have been correctly rendered by the chronicler, yet there is such a decided general resemblance between the names "Fethanleah" and "Faddiley" that it is hoped that philologists will reserve their final judgment for the reasons above given, and be prepared to

give a generous consideration to the claims of Faddiley to have been the Fethanleah of the Chronicle as viewed from the military standpoint.*

* The claims of Faddiley to have been Fethanleah were pronounced untenable from the etymological standpoint by Mr. W. H. Stevenson in an article on "Dr. Guest and the English Conquest of South Britain," in the *English Historical Review*, Vol. XVII, pp. 637 and 638, footnote 55. The wild suggestions by which Dr. Guest got Ceawlin to Faddiley there receive the trenchant criticism they deserve, but since, for all that, it is contended that Ceawlin did fight at Faddiley, a few remarks pleading for a reconsideration of the etymology of that name are necessary.

With regard to the identification of Fethanleah with Faddiley we are told that "there is no case for it. We have no indication whatever of the site of this battle." Then, to sum up the rest of the remarks, it appears that the difficulty is to get the "eth" of Fethanleah into the "ad" of Faddiley.

Little need be said about the "th" sound, since a "Smedley" from "smethe" is quoted, and in Doomsday Book for Cheshire, we find almost all the names that now have "th" in them spelt with a "d" or sometimes a "t," such as Burdworth—Budewrde, Dyserth—Dissard, Rostherne—Rodestorne. The Normans seem to have disliked the "th" sound, though it survived where local pronunciation was too strong for them.

Then we are told that "the real difficulty is with the root vowel." That there should be any difficulty in allowing that the root vowel "e" could become changed to "a" is what is so surprising, since it is easy to find more than two dozen place-names in Cheshire that have done this, even since the time that Doomsday Book was written, and the name Fethanleah was given five centuries before that.

Let two instances suffice. The township of Baddiley is even larger than the large township of Faddiley, and their boundaries march together for a mile.

In Doomsday Book Baddiley is spelt "Bedelei."

Unfortunately, Faddiley is not mentioned, but it cannot be unreasonable to suppose that if it had been, it might have been spelt "Fedelei," and that the sound change in the vowel took place in the interval between 1084 and 1271 when Faddiley is first mentioned in an ancient deed as "Fadile." It would be interesting to know how soon Bedelei became Baddiley.

The other name selected for consideration is Marbury, partly because it is only five miles south of Faddiley, but chiefly because there can be no doubt at all as to the origin of this name. In Doomsday Book Marbury is spelt "Mereberie," and that that is the correct original form of the name there can be no question, since it is derived from the beautiful mere beside which Marbury is situated. Again, we should like to learn when and where Mereberie is first recorded as Marbury.

It may not be sound etymology, but it strikes an untrained

Of course everything depends upon the identification of Wednesbury with the Wodnesbeorg of the Chronicle, but this being granted, or at least accepted as a working hypothesis, then we can hardly bring ourselves to believe that such a bold strategist as Ceawlin would be content until he had at least tried to take Chester, and it has been shown that by the year 584 he may easily have reached South Cheshire. This being granted, the Welsh of Cheshire and North Wales must have become thoroughly alarmed by Ceawlin's advance and have called up all the men they could muster to resist it.

Without going into details, such a general levy would inevitably result in the collection of a large Welsh army from Cheshire at or near Tarporley and of another and perhaps larger one from North Wales at Farndon on the Dee.

The Welsh were compelled to strike quickly since it must have been very difficult for them to hold a large army together. They could not live on the country without robbing their own people, and even if they won, the prospect of spoils would have been meagre. Their capacity to keep the field in full strength must have been limited to about a month at most, their object must have been to strike at once, and if possible before the Saxons were fully prepared.

Tarporley is on the main north-and-south road which runs from Warrington past Whitchurch,

observer like the writer, that there is a strong tendency in English to convert the "e" in place-names into an "a." We see it prevailing even at the present day, as we know that most people speak of Berkshire as Barkshire, and of our great horse-race as the Darby. May not Fethanleah have changed its root vowel in a similar manner?

and it must always have been an important track, if not indeed a road.

From Farndon a road, which must always have been an important one, runs due east past Broxton through the best pass in the Bickerton Hills to Bulkeley, and joins the Tarporley road at Ridley, and thence runs past Faddiley to Nantwich.

The name Bulkeley seems to indicate that the first Angle settlers here learned that the Welsh called this pass "the Bwlch," but however that may have been, it must always have been recognized as the best place to cross the Bickerton Hills; at this day it is called the Gap.

Tarporley is five miles and Farndon nine miles from Ridley, where the roads join, and this under the above circumstances would unquestionably have been the place at which the northern and western Welsh forces would have met.

From Ridley, if they learned that Ceawlin was at Chorley Stock, they would certainly have advanced about a mile and a half to take up the strong position offered by Faddiley, about two miles north of Chorley Stock.

Thus military considerations do in a very remarkable manner seem to indicate that the great battle of Fethanleah must have taken place at Faddiley; there is no other place in Cheshire to compete with its claims, if indeed Ceawlin, in league with the Angles, did attack Cheshire.

When faced with the apparent solution of a problem of this kind by means of simple deductions from military science, the usual attitude of the literary critic is to decline to look at the

map and return to his library, merely exclaiming, "How very ingenious!"

It should be pointed out, however, that there is no diabolical ingenuity about this explanation of the site of the battle of Fethanleag.

The writer, like so many before him, was in the first instance attracted by a general resemblance of the name Faddiley to Fethanleah, and by the unquestionable fact that if Ceawlin's ultimate design was to take Chester, it would be extremely likely that a great battle would be fought somewhere in this part of Cheshire.

Although the verdict of etymology is adverse to the positive identification of Faddiley with Fethanleah, it does not and cannot positively condemn it, since the general resemblance of the two names is so striking.

We must be mindful of the aphorism of Bishop Stubbs, that no theory or principle works in isolation, and the most logical conclusion from the truest principles (in this case of etymology) are practically false, unless in drawing them allowance is made for the counter-working of other principles equally true in theory, and equally dependent for practical truth on co-ordination with them.

Since the principles of etymology have failed to help us to identify Fethanleah, it is time to turn to the principles of strategy and see what they tell us, and we find that Faddiley is decidedly the most likely spot in Cheshire at which the army of Ceawlin would have met the army of the Welsh, assuming (and a very reasonable assumption) that Ceawlin with his training and undoubted strategic ability, knew about Chester and the important

position held by that port-guarding fortress, and decided to take it in order to complete the great work of his life.

It should be borne in mind that it is no more guesswork to suppose that a great leader was wise and far-seeing, than it is to follow the fashion in assuming that he must have been stupid and narrow-minded because forsooth he and his have been dubbed barbarians.

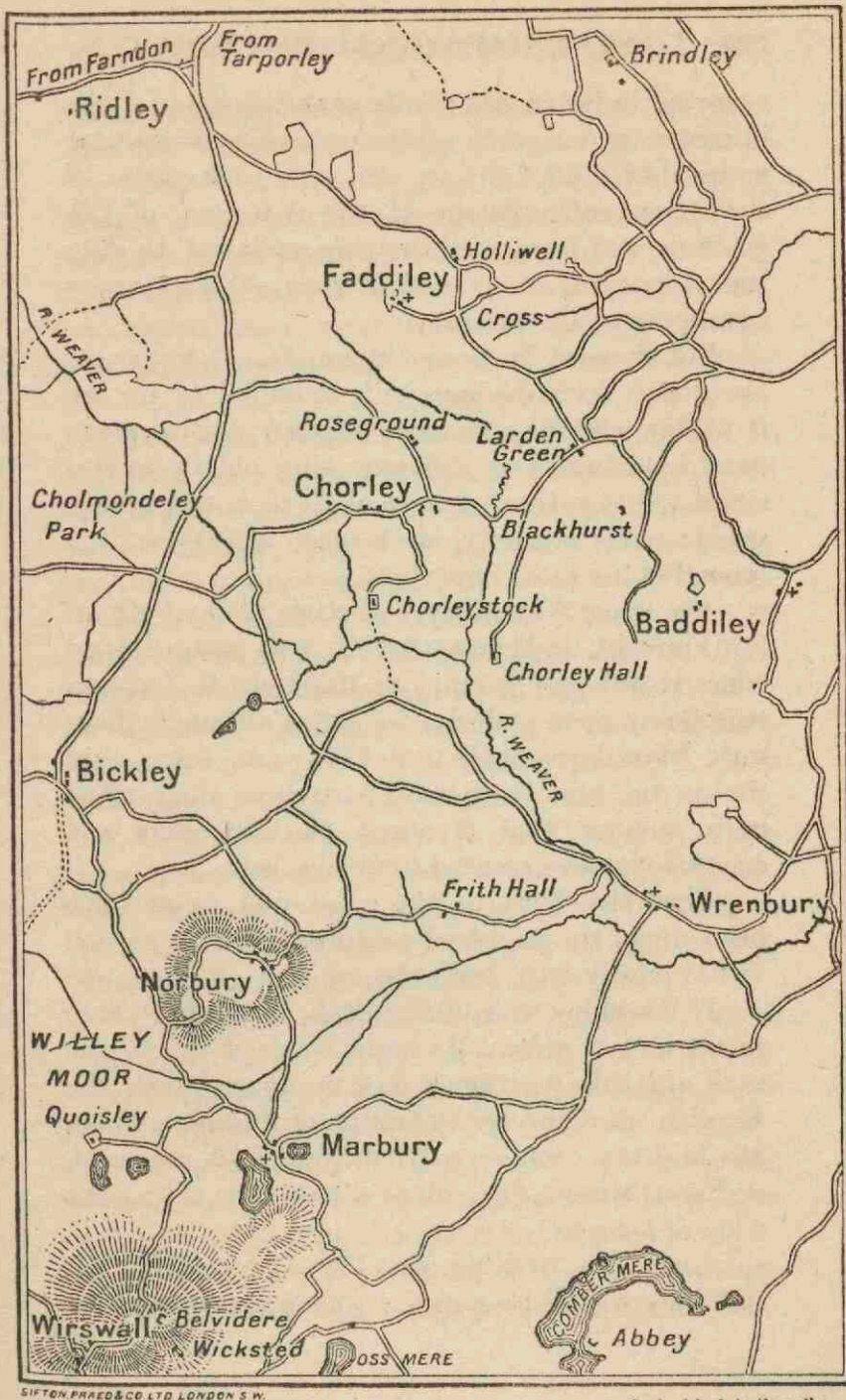
The first thing to be demanded of an explanation of an unknown period of history is that it shall be coherent, the second that it shall be adequate; it can hardly be denied that the explanation offered here is both, and it points to the fact that Fethanleah was Faddiley.

Faddiley as we see it to-day is situated in a country of broad pastures, famous for dairy-farming and fox-hunting, which extend for miles to the east beyond Nantwich, and to the west to the Bickerton Hills, which begin to rise about three miles away. That this was always a district of pastures is indicated by the many place-names ending in "ley" broadcast over the country, and all of them the names of pasture farms.

To the north-west the ground rises slightly from Faddiley to Ridley woods, but only about fifty feet in a mile.

To the south the land sinks about forty feet to a small muddy stream, a tributary of the Weaver.

The centre of the position is now marked by a farm called Hollywell House on the Nantwich road, which is here joined by a country lane from the direction of Baddiley. Everywhere the land

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Scale, 1 inch to the mile.

is spread in broad and gentle undulations, so slight in fact as nowhere to offer any serious advantage in hand-to-hand fighting, although such slopes as there are are in favour of the defenders of the position, and moreover, they are sufficient to give the defenders an extended view of an enemy advancing to the attack.

But it must be borne in mind that so far we have only been dealing with Faddiley as we see it to-day, and its condition thirteen centuries ago must have been very different—due chiefly to two causes: firstly, the clearance of all trees and brushwood; and secondly, drainage. Of these the second is the most important.

The name "Faddiley," whether it was Fethanleah or not, indicates that it was pasture land when it was first given, and therefore that it was reasonably open and clear of trees, although there may have been, and probably were, some, and bushes too, and these may have been distributed in a manner that favoured the defenders and enabled them to conceal their numbers.

That the front to the south-east must have been open, we may fairly assume, or the position would hardly have been chosen.

If Faddiley was Fethanleah, then it is easy to see how it gained its name, since if the Welsh took up this position a day or more before the English attacked, many troops or bands of them would have been seen from the south and east, and so it would, for lack of a name, be called the "ley of troops."

And now, writing on the assumption that Faddiley was Fethanleag, we have to account for

the confidence the Welsh must have had that Ceawlin would have to fight them there on their own chosen and partly prepared position, and by means of a frontal attack, and that no manœuvring to a flank was possible.

This is easily explained if we take into consideration the enormous difference that drainage, constantly going on and being perfected for centuries, makes in a country.

The little muddy stream on the right flank of the position at Faddiley, that now could be jumped by an active man, would then have been a morass with here and there stagnant pools on its course, and filled with reeds and rushes and tangled brushwood, and there is a similar stream on the left flank of Faddiley, but with that we need not concern ourselves, beyond noting the fact that it would add to the assurance of the Welsh that they must be engaged by a frontal attack if they remained at Faddiley.

We have seen Ceawlin advancing from Marbury in a direct line for the Gap in the Bickerton Hills, and forming a small stoke at Chorley Stock to cover his crossing of the Weaver by the existing ford ; its position is extremely well chosen.

By this time he would have become aware of the presence of the Welsh in force at Faddiley, and if necessary would delay his advance until he was sure that the Angles had reached Baddiley, about two miles away to the east, since he could not cross a morass and attack the Welsh in position without their assistance.

This delay may have been of some duration since Ceawlin knew his opponents well, and their

utter incapacity to manœuvre, and their tendency to cling to a strong and well-chosen position.

He knew that they would not venture to advance into the difficult country between Chorley Stock and Baddiley, indicated by Baddiley Mere and the place-name Blackhurst, and attack his separated forces in detail, as more capable opponents would have done; he could thus arrange for a simultaneous advance on a chosen day towards the Fethanleah or field of troops.

If this was the case, then on that morning Ceawlin and his Saxons would advance from Chorley Stock towards the north-east, and the line of the present road to Larden Green, a mile from Faddiley, probably indicates the spot where he crossed the muddy valley with its tangled brake, which protected the right flank and front of the Welsh at Faddiley, and he would thus come in touch with the Angles who had timed their advance to join him, and protect his crossing of the morass.

If these reasonable surmises are correct, they enable us to realize that the Welsh had a capable commander, since he had taken up a position which forced his opponents to commit themselves to a frontal attack on a position from which he could see everything, whilst he could make his own dispositions to meet that attack unseen.

They would also lead us to suppose that the advance of Ceawlin's army with the Saxons on the left and the Angles on the right must have been on both sides of the road from Larden Green. As the Saxons would thus have their flank protected by a morass, their advance may have been

quicker than that of the Angles, whose right flank was more exposed. At any rate, if Henry of Huntingdon is correct, they appear to have given the Welsh an opportunity to crush them with a well-delivered attack, whilst the Angles looked on, not altogether displeased that allies, of whom they were becoming jealous, should thus suffer.

Every one must admit that, if Ceawlin, in alliance with the Angles, did attack Cheshire, it is a remarkable coincidence that, not only would he be likely to come into collision with the Welsh somewhere in the neighbourhood of Faddiley, but also that Faddiley itself fulfils all the requirements of the very best position the Welsh could take up.

On the one hand, Faddiley was a strong position where the local features compelled the English to deliver a frontal attack in full view of the Welsh, with the slope of the ground favouring the defence.

On the other hand, Faddiley guarded the junction of the two roads which led to the valley of the Dee.

Much more might be said in favour of Ceawlin having advanced from Marbury, and why the line of the modern road from Whitchurch to Tarporley was then impossible, owing to Willeymoor, which it crosses, having then been a great marsh.

Perhaps the most interesting detail to be noted is Wicksted, the only Stead in this neighbourhood; it is on the highest cultivated ground in this part of the country (500 feet).

The modern name "Belvidere" indicates the probable site of the original Stead. The farm

Wicksted Hall is hard by in a more sheltered position.

Wicksted is a mile south of Marbury, and commands a complete view of the Cheshire Hills, and of the whole line of Ceawlin's advance towards them.

The remarkable point about the entry in the Chronicle relating to the battle of Feathenleag is that it states that, although Ceawlin took many villages and spoils innumerable, yet "in wrath he returned to his own."

It would, of course, be quite absurd to suppose that a veteran leader like Ceawlin could have been enraged with the Welsh for killing his son in fair fight; he understood, as well as any man, that the fortune of war must be accepted. Sorrow we might expect but not anger, unless the death of Cutha was due to the fact that he had not been properly supported in battle, and so his valuable life had been needlessly sacrificed. That only could be an adequate cause for great and continuing anger on the part of Ceawlin, none other can be suggested.

If this reasoning is sound, then we can hardly escape from the conclusion that it was the Angles who failed to rush to the help of Cutha and his Saxons, at the crisis of the battle.

Henry of Huntingdon tells us that the battle was of that character, and that the Welsh achieved an initial success, and killed Cutha; but that Ceawlin, by a final charge, changed the fortune of the day from defeat to a great victory, after which he took spoils innumerable. Whether Henry of Huntingdon possessed information which has since

been lost, we do not know, but his account of the battle bears the impress of truth.

We can well imagine that if the Welsh attacked the Saxons first, with an overwhelming charge, that the jealous Angles may not have been altogether displeased to see the Saxons suffer, and have failed, for a few fatal minutes, to come to their support, knowing that in the end they could achieve the victory.

If so, this failure in true loyalty on the part of the Angles would have been certain not to escape the keen eye of Ceawlin, and we can well understand his anger. Although from necessity Ceawlin may have been compelled to pass the matter over and smother his indignation in the rejoicings over the victory, we can see that his relations with the Angles would ever afterwards become embittered. By the loss of Cutha, and some of the ablest of the leaders of the Saxons, who we may be sure died fighting round the son of their great king, Ceawlin, after securing his share of the large spoils gained by the victory, probably left Cheshire never to return, and went back to his own Wednesbury, for we cannot for a moment suppose that he returned to Wessex. Henceforward he probably devoted himself to the rule, and administration, of the lands he had won ; and to the collection of taxes, which became more and more necessary as years went on, if immigration was to continue on anything like the scale of former years.

Ceawlin was the last man in the world to yield anything he had won, or to allow the complaints and expostulations of his Angle subjects to modify

his schemes of conquest and colonization. We must bear in mind that Northumbria was far too weak as yet to take a hand in the conquest of the Midlands, and Ethelfrith, who eventually confirmed those conquests by the taking of Chester, did not begin to reign until the year Ceawlin died.

The Angles, therefore, had no other course open to them but to obey Ceawlin for the sake of his protection, until his rule became unbearable, and they became stronger.

Ceawlin had yet seven more campaigning seasons before the great slaughter at Wednesbury in the year 592. Those he doubtless filled up with further small acquisitions of territory, chiefly across the Severn, and these districts he appears to have settled with Saxons, but his losses at Fethanleag probably prevented his doing anything in the first year or two.

He probably visited Wessex every winter, but in 591 he appears to have found affairs in the Midlands becoming critical, and demanding his constant presence, for he appointed his nephew Ceolric as local king in Wessex. The Chronicle announces the fact with the brief statement that "Here Ceol reigned six years," and it does not make use of the usual expression that he succeeded to the kingdom.

It seems evident that the social and legal business in Wessex could not go on without the constant presence of a king. It must be admitted that of Ceolwulf the brother of Ceolric, it is also said in the Chronicle, under the year 597, that he began to reign among the West Saxons, and not that he succeeded to the kingdom; but this

only seems to show that the West Saxons were still loyal to the memory of Ceawlin, and since his grandson Ceolwald was living, though as yet a mere youth, they hoped he would in time become fitted to reign over them; but in this they appear to have been disappointed, since we are told that in 611 Cynegils succeeded to the kingdom.

It seems evident that there was no lack of loyalty on the part of the West Saxons to Ceawlin and his family, and we must look elsewhere for the authors of the massacre at Wednesbury which drove Ceawlin thence in 592.

Enough has already been said to show that this must be attributed to the Angles. The brief but terrible entry in the Chronicle tells almost as much by its omissions as by its statement.

"Here was a great slaughter at Wodnesbeorg and Ceawlin was outdriven." No mention is made of any battle, the very names of the murderers are not recorded, a sense of shame for the English race seems to check the pen of the chronicler, though it is possible that their names were not known. There need not have been a pre-arranged massacre, the Angles may simply have come to Wednesbury in an angry mood, perhaps bringing their tribute to Ceawlin. Then harsh words may have arisen, and so the fell deed was done.

However the great slaughter came about, it is evident that after it the Angles would have to prepare to defend themselves from attacks from Wessex, and so the kingdom began which was soon after known as Mercia.

It took Ceawlin a year to assemble a fresh

army, with the assistauce of the two chieftains named Cwichelm and Crida, and probably his nephew Ceowulf brought the greater part of it from Wessex. But Ceawlin's best leaders had been slaughtered at Wednesbury, and the Angles appear to have found no difficulty in dealing with his hastily raised army, since we learn from the Chronicle that in 593 Ceawlin, Cwichelm, and Crida perished.

Again the silence of the Chronicle as to the place of the battle and the names of the opponents is remarkable. If the battle had been with the Saxons in Wessex we should surely have been told more. Perhaps the victors concealed their names in shame, for having killed the great descendant of Woden, who had done more than any other man to win their homes for them. At any rate the conquerors of Ceawlin have not had their names recorded.

It is inconceivable that Ceawlin's nephews Ceolric and Ceolwulf, the sons of his trusted brother Cuthwulf, turned against their uncle in his old age, or that they could have found any considerable party in Wessex to follow them if they had done so. There appear to be only two reasons for such an idea having arisen, and to have been generally adopted by historians. One is that Ceolric reigned in Wessex during Ceawlin's life-time. This has been explained. It is quite reasonable to suppose that the reigning king and Bretwalda would appoint a local king to carry on the government in Wessex, during his enforced absence in the Midlands.

The second reason is that Ceawlin is said to

have been expelled, and it has been assumed that he was driven into exile, and that he was therefore an outlaw from Wessex. This is an immense assumption to build on the statement that "Here was a great slaughter at Wodnesbeorg and Ceawlin was outdriven." Surely the natural explanation is the right one, namely, that Ceawlin was driven out of Wednesbury.

The originating cause of this false version of history seems to have been, that historians have jumped to the false conclusion that the Wodnesbeorg of the Chronicle was an earthwork in Wessex near Swindon. If it was, then it follows that Ceawlin was indeed expelled from Wessex. We know now, however, that that Wanborough could not possibly have been the Wodnesbeorg of the Chronicle. The early form of the name "Wemburge" alone proves it, though such an idea might well perish from its own intrinsic absurdity.

If, on the other hand, we may identify the Wodnesbeorg of the Chronicle with the great town of Wednesbury near Wolverhampton, so perfectly suited as it is for a central base for Ceawlin's campaigns, a totally different explanation of the expulsion of Ceawlin is given, and one that is adequate, since it explains everything.

In fact, the only way to controvert the conclusion that it was the Angles who were guilty of the massacre at Wodnesbeorg and drove out Ceawlin, is first to prove that Wodnesbeorg was not Wednesbury, but that it was some place in Wessex.

As for Ceolric and Ceolwulf, it is quite absurd to suppose that these sons of Ceawlin's trusted

and (according to William of Malmesbury) beloved brother Cuthwulf, could have rebelled against their uncle, and have raised a mutinous faction against him in Wessex, and the loyalty of the men of Wessex to their great king, who had so often led them to victory, cannot be questioned.

Since it had been suggested by competent historians, the writer has to admit that he was at one time captured, though not captivated, by the idea that the explusion of Ceawlin must have been due to Ceolric, but it ever went against the grain, and above all it was inadequate, since it raised more difficulties than it explained. On the other hand, the version that the slaughter at Wodnesbeorg was at Wednesbury, and was due to the Angles, not only explains every difficulty at the time, but also it has a far-reaching effect, and helps to explain many later problems that arose in the long struggle between Mercia and Wessex.

It will be seen that this minor difficulty about Ceawlin's end has been solved by first of all facing and explaining a greater one. One of the greatest questions of the conquest of Britain by the English has always seemed to the writer to be, what were the relations between the southern and northern invaders of Britain? These have been largely dealt with as occasions arose, and it has been shown that, whereas the southern invasion was always united under a leader, until the time of Ceawlin, the northern invasion, or invasions, were less united; partly because unity was there hardly possible, but chiefly because it was not so necessary, owing to the overwhelming success of the southern invasion. Then it has further been shown

that the two sets of invaders cannot be supposed to have remained in ignorance of each other's doings, but that they may often have correlated their actions, and have rendered mutual assistance, more especially as regards the supply and control of marine transport.

However, all these points are open to discussion, and different persons may hold different views about them; but there is one about which there can be no doubt at all, though it raises a question of the utmost importance.

No one can deny that at some place, on some particular date, the armed forces of these two invasions, the southern and the northern, must have met.

The question that arises is, What did these jealous and long separated invaders do when they met?

This question gives rise to several subsidiary ones, the chief of which is, Was this first meeting made by previous arrangement or by chance?

The way in which these questions will be answered, as well as other questions that may suggest themselves in this connection, depends upon the answer that must be given to another question, the most important and dominating of all.

Was there on one side or the other a leader of surpassing ability, experience, and renown, and of such rank, and of precedence by birth, as to have been likely to command the willing allegiance of the jealous chieftains and warriors of both sets of invaders?

There can be but one answer to this question, Ceawlin.

This answer enables us to assume, with a probability that almost amounts to certainty, that the first meeting of the armies of the Saxons and Angles took place in the year 578, the year after the battle of Deorham, and near Wednesbury, and that this meeting took place by previous arrangement.

And with equal certainty we may assume that that meeting was not only amicable, but even cordial and enthusiastic, and that no questions as to leadership cast a cloud upon it. It has been shown that these cordial relations probably continued without any signs of jealousy for seven years, until at the battle of Fethanleag, in the year 584, something was done which aroused the wrath of Ceawlin, and it has been further shown that the anger of such a veteran leader as Ceawlin could only have been excited by some failure, or some hanging back at a critical moment of the battle, on the part of the Angles.

If this reasoning is sound, then we can only admire the supreme greatness of Ceawlin, since his character shines brighter in adversity. He appears to have so far smothered his anger, and controlled his sorrow for the loss of a beloved son, and many of his best followers, that he was able to continue to rule the Angles settled in the districts he had won for eight years more. Doubtless he had foreseen that a rupture was inevitable before very long, and yet as he was responsible for the incoming of hosts of Saxons, arriving as quickly as the exigencies of marine transport made possible, and as their distribution and safe settlement depended on him, he stuck to his post

at Wednesbury, from which place alone it was possible for him to guard and guide them, and prevent any friction between them and their Angle neighbours. If this, or something like it, was the case, and it seems hardly possible to doubt it, we can but admire the firmness and courage of the aged conqueror.

Tact and diplomacy were probably impossible to Ceawlin, and his only policy could have been to select wise courses, and stick to them against all opposition, trusting that when the inevitable storm arose he would be able to control it. If so, he appears to have reckoned without the truculence of those ignorant northern warriors who were incapable of appreciating Ceawlin's great schemes for the good of the whole race of the English. Treachery he did not suspect, least of all in the form of a massacre in his own citadel, and so he was outdriven.

A year later Ceawlin made one vain attempt to win back his supremacy, and doubtless to execute vengeance on the murderers of his friends, but he was slain in battle by the very men for whom he had won homes.

Ceawlin's end was one of the greatest tragedies known to history, but the military version of it seems to show that he did not go down in shame, but in honour, overwhelmed not only by misfortunes in the loss of friends, but also by circumstances which were beyond his own vast experience and capacity, but which were the natural fruits of his great achievements.

Thus the story ends. And yet we cannot refrain from glancing once more at the Chronicle

under the year 827, if only to remind ourselves how the memory of Ceawlin was cherished by the men of Wessex, by whom some have supposed that he was driven into exile and slain. It states that this year King Egbert conquered the kingdom of the Mercians and all that was south of the Humber; and he was the eighth king who was Bretwalda. Aella King of the South Saxons was the first who had thus much dominion; the second Ceawlin King of the West Saxons, etc., etc. Moreover, elsewhere direct descent from Ceawlin is claimed for King Egbert.

This seems to be positive evidence that Ceawlin died as King of Wessex, and that when his descendant claimed that title, he also claimed the glorious title of Bretwalda, once held by his great ancestor; only Egbert succeeded in giving complete effect to it, whereas Ceawlin, through his misfortunes, had failed. It was indeed fitting that a king of Wessex, and a descendant of Ceawlin, should be the first to unite England.

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