# Bradley Arthur Granville

# Owen Glyndwr and the Last Struggle for Welsh Independence

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# A. G. Bradley
# Owen Glyndwr and the Last Struggle for Welsh Independence / With a Brief Sketch of Welsh History

## PREFACE

IF this little book purported to be a biography in the ordinary sense of the word, the scantiness of purely personal detail relating to its hero might be a fair subject of criticism. But men of the Glyndwr type live in history rather by their deeds, and the deeds of those they lead and inspire. This is peculiarly the case with the last and the most celebrated among the soldier patriots of Wales. Though so little remains to tell us of the actual man himself, this very fact has thrown a certain glamour and mystery about his name even in the Principality. While numbers of well-informed Englishmen are inclined to regard him, so far as they regard him at all, as a semi-mythical hero under obligations to Shakespeare for such measure of renown and immortality as he enjoys, if the shade of Henry the Fourth could be called up as a witness it would tell a very different story. It is at any rate quite certain that for the first few years of the fifteenth century, both to England and to Wales, to friends and to foes, Owen was in very truth a sufficiently real personality. What we do know of him, apart from his work, might well suggest infinite possibilities to the novelist and the poet. It is my business, however, to deal only with facts or to record legends and traditions for what they are worth, as illustrating the men and the time.

Glyndwr is without doubt the national hero of the majority of Welshmen. Precisely why he takes precedence of warrior princes who before his day struggled so bravely with the Anglo-Norman power and often with more permanent success, is not now to the point. My readers will be able to form some opinion of their own as to the soundness of the Welsh verdict. But these are matters, after all, outside logic and argument. It is a question of sentiment which has its roots perhaps in sound reasons now forgotten. There are in existence several brief and more or less accurate accounts of Glyndwr's rising. Those of Thomas, written early in this century, and of Pennant, embodied in his well known *Tours in Wales*, are the most noteworthy, – while one or two interesting papers represent all the recent contributions to the subject. There has not hitherto, however, been any attempt to collect in book form all that is known of this celebrated Welshman and the movement he headed. I have, therefore, good reason to believe that the mere collection and arrangement of this in one accessible and handy volume will not be unwelcome, to Welsh readers especially. Thus much at least I think I have achieved, and the thought will be some consolation, at any rate, if I have failed in the not very easy task of presenting the narrative in sufficiently popular and readable guise. But I hope also to engage the interest of readers other than Welshmen in the story of Glyndwr and his times. If one were to say that the attitude of nearly all Englishmen towards Wales in an historical sense is represented by a total blank, I feel quite sure that the statement would neither be denied nor resented.

Under this assumption it was thought well to attempt a somewhat fuller picture of Wales than that presented by the Glyndwr period alone, and to lead up to this by an outline sketch of Welsh history. The earlier part, particularly, of this contains much contentious matter. But in such a rapid, superficial survey as will fully answer our purpose here, there has scarcely been occasion to go below those salient features that are pretty generally agreed upon by historians. The kind manner in which my *Highways and Byways of North Wales* was received, not only by English readers but by Welsh friends and the Welsh press, makes me venture to hope that my presumption as a Saxon in making

this more serious excursion into the domain of Welsh history will be overlooked in consideration of the subject dealt with.

A continuous intimacy of many years with the Glyndyfrdwy region begat a natural interest in the notable personage who had once owned it, and this gradually ripened into a desire to fill, however inadequately, what seemed to me an obvious want. Before venturing on the task I took some pains to ascertain whether any Welsh writer had the matter in contemplation, and so far as information gathered in the most authoritative quarters could be effective it was in the negative. As this was at a time when the Welsh people were considering some form of National memorial to Glyndwr, the absence both in fact and in prospect of any accessible memoir of him overcame what diffidence on racial grounds I had naturally felt and encouraged me in my desire to supply the want.

A full list of the authorities I have consulted in the preparation of this work would, I have reason to understand, be too ponderous a supplement to a volume of this kind. Before noting any of them, however, I must first acknowledge the very great obligations I am under to Professor Wylie for his invaluable and exhaustive history of Henry IV.; not merely for the information contained in the text of his book, but for his copious notes which have been most helpful in indicating many sources of information connected with the persons and events of the time. The following are some of the chief works consulted: Dr. Powell's translation of Humphrey Lloyd's *History of Wales* from the chronicle of Caradoc of Llancarvan, Ellis' original letters, *Annales Cambriæ*, Rymer's *Fœdera*, Williams' *History of Wales*, Warrington's *History of Wales*, Tyler's *Henry V.*, Adam of Usk, Matthew of Paris, Hardyng's and other chronicles, Giraldus Cambrensis, the historians Carte, Walsingham, and Holinshed, Bridgeman's *Princes of South Wales*, Lloyd's *History of the Princes of Powys Fadog*, the Iolo MSS., Owen's *Ancient Laws and Institutions of Wales*, *Archæologia Cambrensis*, the Brut, and, of course, the Rolls series. Among living writers who have been helpful in various ways and have my best thanks are Mr. Robert Owen, of Welshpool, the author of *Powysland*, the Revd. W. G. Dymock Fletcher, of Shrewsbury, who has made a special study of the neighbouring battle-field; Professor Tout, who has published an interesting lecture on Glyndwr and some instructive maps connected with the period; and Mr. Henry Owen, the well known authority on Pembrokeshire and author of *Gerald the Welshman*; nor must I omit a word of thanks to Mr. Owen Edwards, whose kind encouragement materially influenced my decision to undertake this book.

I am under most particular obligations to that well known Welsh scholar, Mr. T. Marchant Williams, for suggestions and criticisms when the book was still in manuscript, and also to my lamented friend, the late Mr. St. John Boddington, of Huntington Court, Herefordshire, for assistance of a somewhat similar nature.

I am also greatly indebted to Miss Walker, of Corwen, for several photographic scenes in Glyndyfrdwy, which she most kindly took with an especial view to reproduction in these pages, and to Messrs. H. H. Hughes and W. D. Haydon, both of Shrewsbury, who rendered a like service in the matter of Glyndwr's other residence at Sycherth.

# CHAPTER I
# INTRODUCTORY SKETCH OF WELSH HISTORY FROM THE SAXON CONQUEST OF ENGLAND TO THE RISING OF GLYNDWR 400-1400

THE main subject of this book is the man whose memory, above that of all other men, the Welsh as a people delight to honour, and that period of Welsh history which he made so stormy and so memorable. But having what there is some reason to regard as a well founded opinion that (to the vast majority of English readers) the story of Wales is practically a blank, it seems to me desirable to prepare the way in some sort for the advent of my hero upon this, the closing scene of Cambrian glory. I shall therefore begin with a rapid sketch of those nine centuries which, ending with Glyndwr's rising, constitute roughly in a political and military sense the era of Welsh nationality. It is an audacious venture, I am very well aware, and more especially so when brought within the compass of a single chapter.

Among the many difficulties that present themselves in contemplating an outline sketch of Welsh history, a doubt as to the best period for beginning it can hardly be included. Unless one is prepared to take excursions into the realms of pure conjecture and speculation, which in these pages would be altogether out of place, the only possible epoch at which to open such a chapter is the Saxon conquest of England. And I lay some stress on the word England, because the fact of Wales resisting both Saxon conquest and even Saxon influence to any appreciable extent, at this early period, is the keynote to its history.

What the British tribes were like, who, prior to this fifth century, lived under Roman rule in the country we now call Wales, no man may know. We do know, however, that the Romans were as firmly seated there as in most parts of Britain. From their strong garrisons at Chester, Uriconium, Caerleon, and elsewhere they kept the country to the westward quiet by means of numerous smaller posts. That their legions moved freely about the country we have evidence enough in the metalled causeways that can still be traced in almost every locality beneath the mountain sod. The traces, too, of their mining industry are still obvious enough in the bowels of the mountains and even beneath the sea, to say nothing of surface evidence yet more elaborate. That their soldiers fell here freely in the cause of order or of conquest is written plainly enough in the names and epitaphs on mortuary stones that in districts even now remote have been exposed by the spade or plough. But how much of Christianity, how much of Roman civilisation, these primitive Britons of the West had absorbed in the four centuries of Roman occupation is a matter quite outside the scope of these elementary remarks. Of civilisation beyond the influence of the garrisons there was probably little or none. As regards Christianity, its echoes from the more civilised parts of the island had probably found their way there, and affected the indigenous paganism of the mountains to an extent that is even yet a fruitful source of disagreement among experts. Lastly, as it seems probable that the population of what is now called Wales was then much more sparse in proportion to the rest of the island than in subsequent periods, its condition becomes a matter of less interest, which is fortunate, seeing we know so little about it.

With the opening of the fifth century the Romans evacuated Britain. By the middle of it the Saxon influx, encouraged, as every schoolboy knows, by the Britons themselves in their weakness, had commenced. Before its close the object of the new-comers had developed and the "Making of England" was in full operation.

For these same conquered Britons many of us, I think, started life with some tinge of contempt, mingled with the pity that beyond all doubt they fully merit. Mr. Green has protested in strong terms against so unjustifiable an attitude. He asks us to consider the condition of a people, who in a fiercely

warlike age, had been for many generations forbidden to bear arms; who were protected by an alien army from all fear of molestation, and encouraged, moreover, to apply themselves zealously to the arts of peace. That men thus enervated made a resistance so prolonged is the wonder, not that they eventually gave way. If this nation, which resisted for a hundred years, is a fit subject for criticism, what can be said of their conquerors who, five centuries later, in the full enjoyment of warlike habits and civil liberty, were completely crushed in seven by a no more formidable foe?

While the pagan Saxons were slowly fighting their way across England towards the Severn and the Dee, the country about and behind these rivers had been galvanised by various influences into an altogether new importance.

After the departure of the Romans, the Welsh tribes, less enervated probably than their more Romanised fellow-countrymen to the east, found in the Scots of Ireland rather than the Picts of the North their deadliest foes. It was against these western rovers that the indigenous natives of what for brevity's sake we are calling Wales, relearnt in the fifth century the art of war, and the traces of their conflicts are strewn thick along the regions that face the Irish Sea. But while these contests were still in progress, three powerful tides of influence of a sort wholly different poured into Wales and contributed towards its solidity, its importance, its defensive power, and its moral elevation.

## 400-500, Cunedda

(1) Out of the north, from Cumbria and Strathclyde, came the great prince and warrior Cunedda, whose family seem to have taken possession, with or without resistance, of large tracts of Wales, Merioneth, Cardigan, and many other districts deriving their names in fact from his sons. His progeny and their belongings became in some sort a ruling caste; a faint reflection of what the Normans were in later days to England.

Cunedda is said to have held his Court at Carlisle, and to have wielded immense power in the north and north-west of Britain. If he did not go to Wales in person he undoubtedly planted in it his numerous and warlike offspring, who, with their following, are usually regarded as the founders of the later tribal fabric of Wales, the remote ancestors, in theory at any rate, of the Welsh landed gentry of to-day; but this is a perilous and complex subject.

## Christianity

(2) In this century, too, came the first wave of a real and effective Christianity, with its troops of missionaries from Brittany and Ireland, in the front rank of which stand the names of St. David and Germanus or Garmon, Bishop of Auxerre. The latter is generally credited with the organisation of the Welsh Church, hitherto so vague and undefined. It was, at any rate, during this period, that the Church assumed definite territorial form, and that the Welsh diocese and the Welsh parish, their boundaries roughly approximating to the present ones, came into existence. Through the fifth, sixth, and well into the seventh century, church building and religious activity of all kinds flourished marvellously in Wales; while Christianity was being steadily and ruthlessly stamped out over the rest of Britain by the advancing pagans, native chieftains vied with foreign ecclesiastics in building churches, cathedrals, and cells; and great monastic houses arose, of which Bangor Iscoed, on the Dee, with its two or three thousand inmates, was the most notable. The mountainous region that in former days had been among those least influenced by it was now the hope of the island, the seat of religious fervour, the goal of the foreign missionary and the wandering saint.

## Arrival of the Saxons, 577

## British refugees in sixth century

(3) The third, and perhaps not the least powerful, factor in the making of Wales was the advance of the Saxons. After their great victory of Deorham they destroyed the British strongholds of Bath, Gloucester, and Cirencester, and about the year 577, or 130 years after their first landing in Britain, they appeared on the Severn. The exact fate or disposal of the natives, whom with ceaseless fighting they thus drove before them, is a matter of perennial controversy. The ferocity of the conquerors, aggravated, no doubt, by the stubborn resistance of the conquered, is a fact beyond all question and should be emphasised, since its direful memories had much to do with the inextinguishable hatred that was felt for so many centuries, and to a certain degree is still felt, by many Welshmen towards their Saxon foes. It may fairly be assumed that the extirpation (though the term is much too strong) of the native stock was most marked in the eastern parts of Britain, and that as the tide of conquest swept westward its results in this particular were much modified. But however great the slaughter or however considerable the native element that was retained upon the soil by its conquerors, it is quite certain that the influx of British refugees into Wales throughout the sixth century must have been very large. Among them, too, no doubt, went numbers of men and women of learning, of piety, and sometimes perhaps even of wealth, for one need not suppose that every Briton waited to be driven from his home at the spear's point.

## Cynddylan at Uriconium and Shrewsbury

A fierce onslaught in great force brought the invaders to the walls of the Roman-British city of Uriconium, where Cynddylan, Prince of Powys, with all the power of Central Wales, made a vain but gallant effort to arrest the ruin:

Cynddylan with heart like the ice of winter.
Cynddylan with heart like the fire of spring.

He and his brothers were at length all slain, and his armies routed. Uriconium or Tren was sacked, and higher up the valley the royal palace at Pengwern, as Shrewsbury was then called, was destroyed.

These terrible scenes are described for us by Llywarch Hên, one of the earliest British bards, himself an actor in them, who thus laments over the wreck of Pengwern:

"The Hall of Cynddylan is dark
To-night, without fire, without bed;
I'll weep awhile, afterwards I shall be silent.

"The Hall of Cynddylan is gloomy
To-night, without fire, without songs;
Tears are running down my cheeks.

"The Hall of Cynddylan, it pierces my heart
To see it roofless, fireless;

Dead is my chief, yet I am living."

or again, on the destruction of Tren:

"The eagle of Pengwern screamed aloud to-night
For the blood of men he watched;
Tren may indeed be called a ruined town.

"Slain were my comrades all at once
Cynan, Cynddylan, Cyncraith,
Defending Tren the wasted city."

In a few years the Saxons were beaten back, and Pengwern, with the surrounding country, once more became British, and remained so till the days of Offa, King of Mercia.

## Augustine and the Welsh bishops, 601

By the close of the sixth century Christianity had been introduced by Augustine into the south-eastern corner of England, and there is no more suggestive scene in Welsh history than the famous meeting of the great missionary with the Welsh bishops on the banks of the Severn. It accentuates in a striking manner the cleavage between the Eastern or the Latin Church, and that of the West and of the Welsh. Augustine, about the year 601, fresh from his victories over paganism among the Kentish Saxons, and having journeyed far through still heathen regions, approaches these Western Christians with a kindly but somewhat supercilious and superior air. The seven Welsh bishops – or so-called bishops, for the full development of the office as understood later was not yet completed – were ready waiting for him on the banks of the lower Severn. They were a deputation of the Welsh Church, and, seeming already to scent patronage in the air, were fully prepared to resent any sign of it in the Roman missionary. The latter, it appears, knew very little about the Western Church, with its roots in Ireland, Armorica, and Gaul, and what he did know he did not like.

The arrogance of Augustine fully justified the Welshmen's suspicions, and he still further roused their indignation by hinting that they should take their instructions and receive their consecration from Canterbury, as representing Rome. Coming from a man who appeared to them but the missionary bishop of a handful of recently converted barbarians, this was a little too much for ecclesiastics who had behind them three or four centuries of Christianity, and knew nothing whatever of the Latin Church. Augustine, too, spoke disparagingly of their customs, and with particular severity of the absence of celibacy in their Church. This must have touched them to the quick, seeing that numbers of the offices and benefices in the Western Church were more or less hereditary, and that even saintship was frequently a matter of family, the tribal sentiment being predominant. All these things, together with their difference in Easter observance and in shaving the head, horrified Augustine, and he spoke so freely as to put all hope of combination out of the question. Indeed, the Welsh divines were so offended that they refused even to break bread beneath the same roof as the Roman saint. At a second conference Augustine, seeing he had gone too far, proposed that, even if they could not conform to each other's customs, they should at least combine in efforts to convert the rest of England. Such endeavours did not commend themselves in the least to the Welshmen. Whatever missionary zeal may have existed among Welsh churchmen it did not include the slightest anxiety about the souls of the accursed conquerors of Britain, the ruthless ravagers and destroyers of their once civilised and Christian country. It is probable that Augustine did not realise the fierce hate of the despoiled Celt towards the Saxon. At any rate his patience at length gave way, and as a parting shot he in effect told the Welshmen that since they shewed themselves so criminally careless about Saxons' souls, they

should of a surety feel the prick of Saxon spears. This random threat, for it could have been nothing more, was strangely fulfilled within a few years' time, when the victory of the pagan Ethelfred at Chester, which sundered the Britons of Wales from those of North-Western England, culminated in the sacking of Bangor Iscoed and the slaughter of twelve hundred monks.

## 601

This futile conference of 601 marks the beginning of the long struggle of the Welsh or Ancient British Church to keep clear of the authority of Canterbury, and it lasted for some five hundred years. Till the close of the eleventh century the bishops of the four Welsh dioceses were, as a rule, consecrated by their own brethren. St. David's perhaps took rank as "primus inter pares" for choice, but not of necessity, for there was no recognised Welsh metropolitan. Ages afterwards, when Canterbury had insidiously encroached upon these privileges, the Welsh clergy were wont to soothe their wounded pride by the assurance that this transfer of consecration had come about as a matter of convenience rather than of right. Long, indeed, before the final conquest of Welshmen by Edward the First, their Church had been completely conquered, anomalous though such an inverted process seems, by Norman bishops. A Welshman, though his sword might still win him political recognition and respect, had little more chance of Church preferment in the thirteenth century than he had in the eighteenth or the first half of the nineteenth. As early indeed as 1180 that clerical aristocrat of royal Welsh and noble Norman blood, Giraldus Cambrensis, pertinently asks the same question which from generation to generation and from reign to reign through the Hanoverian period must have been on every native churchman's tongue in the Principality, "Is it a crime to be a Welshman?"

## The Latin and British Churches

There is no occasion to enlarge upon the subtle methods by which the Norman Church anticipated the Norman sword in Wales. Sleepless industry no doubt was one. Another was the agency of the newer monasteries, filled with Norman, English, and foreign monks and for the most part devoted to the Latin Church. Persistent denial of the validity of St. David's in the matter of consecration may in time, too, like the continuous drip of water on a stone, have had its effect upon the Welsh, even against their better judgment. On one occasion we know that some of their princes and nobles, stung by what they regarded as excessive exactions on the part of the Church, stooped so far as to throw in the faces of their prelates the taunt that their consecration was invalid. Such an attitude did not tend to lighten the immense pressure which was exercised in favour of the supremacy of Canterbury; and long before Welsh princes had begun to take orders from Norman kings, Welsh bishops were seeking consecration from Canterbury, unless indeed their thrones were already filled by Norman priests.

## Divisions of Wales

It is not only the ecclesiastical but also the secular divisions of Wales, that in a great measure date from these fifth and sixth centuries. The three chief Kingdoms, or Principalities, into which the country was apportioned, stand out from these days with consistent clearness till they are gradually broken into fragments by the Norman power: On the north was Gwynedd; in the centre, Powys; on the south, Deheubarth or South Wales. As St. David's was the premier see of the four Welsh dioceses, so Gwynedd was even more markedly the first among the three Welsh Kingdoms. Its ruler, when a sufficiently strong man to enforce it, had a recognised right to the title of "Pendragon" and the lip

homage of his brother princes. When a weak one, however, filled the precarious throne, any attempt to exact even such an empty tribute would have been a signal for a general outbreak.

Gwynedd included the present counties[1] of Flint, Anglesey, Carnarvon, and most of Merioneth, together with the northern part of Denbighshire.

## Powys

Powys cannot be so readily defined in a line or two, but, roughly speaking, it was a triangle or wedge driven through Central Wales to a point on the sea, with a wide base resting on the English border, the present county of Montgomery representing its chief bulk. Its capital was Pengwern or Shrewsbury, till the eighth century, when Offa, King of Mercia, enraged at the inroads of the Welsh, gathered together his whole strength and thrust them permanently back from the plains of Shropshire to the rampart of hills along whose crests he made the famous Dyke that bears his name. Thenceforward Mathraval, and subsequently Welshpool, became the abode of the Princes of Powys.

## Deheubarth

The Southern Kingdom, or Deheubarth, was also something of a triangle, but reversely placed to that of Powys, its point lying on the English border, and its broad base stretching along the Irish Sea from the mouth of the Dovey to the capes of Pembroke.

Of these three divisions, Powys, as will be obvious even from the brief and crude description of its boundaries here given, had the greatest difficulty in holding its own against both Saxon and Norman. South Wales, on the other hand, was the thorniest crown, for it included to a greater degree than the others semi-independent chieftains, such as those of Morganwg and Cardigan, who were inclined to pay their tributes and their homage only when their overlord, who held his Court at Dynevor on the Towy, was strong enough to enforce them.

## Warfare in Wales

Thus for nearly seven centuries there were separate sources of strife in Wales, and three distinct classes of warfare. First there came the meritorious defence of the country against Saxon, Dane, and Norman, in which, upon the whole, there was much creditable unanimity. Secondly, during the lulls from foreign invasion, there was almost constant strife between North and South, Powys holding as it were the balance of power between them. Lastly there were the purely provincial quarrels, when heady chieftains fell out with their superiors, as a form of entertainment to which South Wales, as I have already remarked, was peculiarly prone.

## Roderic divides Wales, 877

But, after all, it is not quite accurate to give such emphasis to the existence and definition of the three Kingdoms till the death of Roderic the Great in 877. Several kings had essayed with varying

[1] The present counties of Wales were not in existence as such till after the final conquest by Edward I. Even then, as we shall see, only six were created; the larger part of the Principality retaining its feudal lordships until the reign of Henry VIII. There were ancient subdivisions of the three Welsh Kingdoms ruled over by petty Princes owing allegiance to their immediate overlord; and their names still survive in those of modern counties or districts. Ceredigion, for instance, remains as Cardigan, Morganwg as Glamorgan, while the vale of Edeyrnion and the county of Merioneth still preserve the memory of two sons of the conquering Cunedda. But the units of old Welsh delimitation were the "Cantrefs" and the "Commotes," which even to this day are often used for purposes of description, as well as occasionally for ecclesiastical and political divisions. Of Cantrefs there would be something like three to the modern county, while each "Cantref" again consisted of two "Commotes." Back

success to rule all Wales, but it was Roderic who with scanty foresight finally divided the country between his three sons, laying particular stress on the suzerainty of Gwynedd. The prevalent custom of gavelkind worked admirably, no doubt, in private life among the primitive Welsh, but when applied to principalities and to ambitious and bloodthirsty princelings the effect was usually disastrous. To mitigate the dangers of his unwise partition, Roderic ordained a scheme which would have proved of undoubted excellence if the practice had only been equal to the theory. This was to the effect that if any two of the Princes of Wales quarrelled, all three were to meet in conclave in the wild pass of Bwlch-y-Pawl, through which the present rough road from Bala to Lake Vyrnwy painfully toils. Here they were to settle their difficulties peacefully; and as it was presumed that only two would be parties to the quarrel, the third was to act as arbiter. For some centuries after this we know very well that the successive rulers of the three Kingdoms drenched Wales in blood with their quarrels, but no tradition remains of a single conference at this wild spot among the hills, where the infant Vyrnwy plunges down through heathery glens and woods of birch and oak to the most beautiful artificial lake perhaps in Christendom.

## Cadvan

The sins of omission must of necessity be infinite in dealing with so vast a subject in so compressed a space, and sins of omission, if not confessed in detail, sometimes affect the accuracy of the whole. Something, for instance, ought to be said of the pastoral character, even in these early days, of all Wales, except perhaps Anglesey and West Carnarvon; of the tribal organisation and the laws of gavelkind; of the domestic and family nature of the Church, whose minor benefices at any rate were largely hereditary, and whose traditions were intensely averse to centralisation. Among other things to be noted, too, is that Cadvan, who flourished in the seventh century, is generally regarded as the first genuine King of Wales, just as Roderic, nearly three hundred years later, was the great decentraliser.

## 815. Saxons conquer Cornwall

Another important date is that of 815, when a Saxon victory in Cornwall destroyed the last vestige of British independence in England. For hitherto the Britons of Wales had by no means regarded themselves as the mere defenders of the soil they occupied. Steeped in the prophecies of Merlin and his contemporaries, which assured them of the ultimate reconquest of the whole island of Britain, they still cherished dreams which may seem to us by the light of history vain enough, but in the opening of the ninth century they still fired the fancy of a proud, romantic, and warlike race.

## Saxons made little way

Amid the conflicting evidence of rival chroniclers, Saxon and Welsh, it is not often easy to select the victors in the long series of bloody combats that continued throughout the centuries preceding the Norman Conquest. Whatever victories the Saxons gained, they were not much less barren than their defeats. Nominal conquests were sometimes made of the more vulnerable districts, but they were not long maintained. At the next upheaval such loose allegiance as had been wrung from the provincial ruler was repudiated without a moment's thought, and often indeed the Saxons beyond the border found themselves in their turn fighting for hearth and home.

## The Danes, 890

In the ninth century the Danes appeared upon the scene. Though they harried Wales from time to time, both in the interior and on the coast, their doings in England were so incomparably more serious that their Welsh exploits almost escape our notice. About the year 890, Danish outposts were established beneath the Breiddon hills, that noble gateway of mid-Wales, through which the Severn comes surging out into the Shropshire plains. Hither four years later came that formidable Danish leader, Hastings, with the Anglo-Danish forces of East Anglia and the north behind him. King Alfred, who was in the west, hastened to the scene and contributed to this strange spectacle of Saxons and Cymry fighting side by side. A decisive victory at Buttington, near Welshpool, rewarded their efforts, and though the struggle between Dane and Saxon was of great service to Wales by bringing a long immunity from the attacks of her hereditary foe, the Danish name calls for little more notice in Welsh annals.

Seeing that vague dreams of reconquest still lingered among the Welsh, England's difficulty, to apply a familiar modern aphorism, should have been Cambria's opportunity. But readily as the three Welsh Princes, when their common country was in danger, were accustomed to combine, and efficiently as they raided in independent fashion across the English border, cohesion for a serious aggressive movement was almost hopeless. The moment that they were safe, they turned their arms against each other. The whole history of Wales, from the days of Roderic to those of Edward, with a few brief intervals, is one long tale of bloody strife.

## No Saxon settlement

Nor were the Princes of Gwynedd, Powys, and Deheubarth always content to fight their quarrels out alone. As time went on they grew more accustomed to their Saxon neighbours, even if they did not love them more. Occasional amenities became possible. Intermarriages between the two aristocracies were not unknown, and when they had progressed thus far a Prince of Powys would scarcely have been human if he had not occasionally been tempted to call in Saxon aid against his powerful rivals of Gwynedd or Deheubarth. But in spite of this dangerous game, played often enough and in later Norman days so fatal, the soil of Wales, so far as any serious occupation or dominion is implied, remained inviolate throughout the whole Saxon period.

## Strathclyde Britons occupy the Vale of Clwyd

## Saxon settlement prevented by Strathclyde Britons

## Victory of Anarawd, 878

One very narrow escape from a permanent lodgment of Saxons, of which the Welsh chronicle tells us, should not perhaps be passed over. It occurred in the days when Anarawd, one of the sons of Roderic, was ruling over North Wales, at the close of the ninth century. More than a hundred years before, the Mercians, under Offa, had driven the Welsh finally from Shropshire and pressed them back behind the famous Dyke, whose clearly marked course still preserves the name of their warlike monarch. The great Saxon victory on Rhuddlan March, at the mouth of the Clwyd, had occurred soon afterwards, and the wail of the defeated is still sounded in one of the most notable of Welsh

airs. But Offa's Dyke had been since then considerably overleaped, and the slaughter of Rhuddlan had been long avenged. When the descendants of these same Mercians poured once more into the pleasant country that lies upon the north shore between Chester and the Conway, the invaders of the "Perfeddwlad," as this region was then called (a term I shall use for convenience throughout this chapter), proved too powerful for Anarawd. He was driven back into Snowdonia and Anglesey, and the Saxons settled down in the Vale of Clwyd and upon either side of it, with a deliberation that, but for an opportune accident, would have probably converted a large slice of North Wales into a piece of England for all time. But just as the Strathclyde Britons in the days of Cunedda had brought to Wales in the time of her need after the Roman departure a valuable and warlike element, so their descendants, four centuries later, came just in time to save what are now the Celtic districts of Flint and northern Denbigh from becoming Saxon. These people, hard pressed in north Lancashire, Cumberland, and even beyond, by Danes and Saxons, decided to seek a new home, and their thoughts naturally turned to Wales. They made overtures to Anarawd, begging that he would grant them of his abundance sufficient territory for their needs. But Anarawd's kingdom had, as we have seen, been sadly circumscribed, and his homeless subjects from the east of the Conway were already on his hands. A bright thought struck him, and he informed his Strathclyde kinsmen that if they could reconquer the Perfeddwlad they were welcome to it. Necessity, perhaps, nerved the arms of the wanderers, and the Saxons, who, as Dr. Powell quaintly puts it, "were not yet warm in their seats," were driven headlong out of Wales. The Mercians, however, were not the kind of men to sit quietly down after such an ignominious expulsion; they made vigorous preparations for taking their revenge, and retrieving their fortunes and their honour. The Strathclyde Britons sorely doubted their powers of resistance to the great force which now threatened them, so, carrying all their cattle and effects back again across the Conway, they begged Anarawd in his own interest as well as in theirs to support them. The Prince of Gwynedd rose nobly to the occasion and, joining all his forces to those of his immigrant kinsmen, they met the returning Saxon invaders near Conway, and in a pitched battle drove them back to the Dee with prodigious slaughter, never to return. So the country between the two rivers was preserved to the Cymric race and saved from becoming, as for the moment looked extremely probable, another Cheshire or Shropshire.

Anarawd, however, could not rest content with his triumph over the Saxons. As an illustration of the thirst for war that seems to have been chronic with most of the Welsh Princes, it may be noted that, with the Saxons vowing vengeance on his borders, he did not hesitate to march into South Wales and make an unprovoked attack upon its Prince, his own brother.

## Howel Dda, 940

But with the death of Anarawd and his brothers, various contingencies, which need not detain us here, made Howel Dda, or Howel the Good, both the heir and the acceptable ruler of all three provinces. His reign was unique in Welsh annals, for it was not only long, but almost peaceful. This excellent Prince turned his brilliant talents and force of character almost entirely to the civil and moral elevation of his people. He drew up his famous code of laws, which, as is sometimes asserted, unconsciously influence the legal instincts of remoter Wales even to this day. In the preparation of this great work he summoned his bishops and nobility and wise men to meet him at Ty Gwyn on the Towy, for it should be noted that this ruler of a temporarily united Wales was in the first instance Prince of Deheubarth.

## The laws of Howel Dda enacted

Here this select assembly spent the whole of Lent, fasting and praying for the Divine aid in their approaching task. Howel then picked out from among them the twelve most capable persons,

with the Chancellor of Llandaff at their head, and proceeded to examine in exhaustive fashion all the laws of the Cymry. Of these they eliminated the bad, retained the good, and amended others to suit present requirements. This new code was then ratified by the entire assembly before it dispersed. Three copies were made, and it is significant of the change already creeping over the Welsh Church, that Howel and his four bishops are said to have journeyed to Rome and submitted one of them to the Pope for his approval. The Laws of Howel Dda may be read to-day by anyone with access to a reference library. The rights of every class of person are herein clearly set forth, and the precise value of each man's life according to his rank, and of every animal's hide and carcase accurately defined. The tribal sanctity of land, too, is well illustrated by a law forbidding the owner of an estate to mortgage it to anyone but a kinsman. Books, harps, swords, and implements of livelihood were exempted from distraint, while among livestock horses were placed in the same category, as being necessary for defence. Suits in connection with land could not be heard between February and May, or between May and August, since these were the periods of seed-time and harvest, while all cases touching inheritance were to be heard by the King himself. The latter is pictured to us as sitting in his judicial chair above the rest of the Court, with an Elder upon either hand and the freeholders ranged upon his right and left. Immediately below the King sat the Chief Justice of the Province, with a priest upon one side of him and the Judge of the Commote upon the other.

## Value of articles fixed by Howel Dda

After hearing witnesses and taking depositions, the two judges and the priest retired to consider the verdict. This done, the King took counsel with them, and, if he agreed, delivered judgment himself. If the case was too involved, however, for a satisfactory decision, the matter was settled by the simple expedient of single combat. A fixed price, as I have remarked, was set upon almost everything, both living and inanimate. One is surprised, for instance, to find an apple tree worth 60*d.*, and a tree planted for shelter worth 24*d.*, while a coracle is only worth 8*d.* A salmon net is appraised at just double the last amount, while a spade, again, is rated at a penny only. Though the skin of an ox or hart is fixed at 8*d.* the near extinction of the beaver is significantly shewn by its value of 120*d.* Dogs, too, vary most curiously on the list. A common cur is held at 4*d.*, a shepherd dog at 60*d.*, and the best sporting dogs at four times the latter sum. There is special mention, too, of chargers, hunters, roadsters, pack-horses, and draught-horses for carts and harrows. Horses are not to be broken till their third year; while three rides through a crowd is the legal test of "warranted broken." Cows and mares, too, are prohibited from ploughing. We learn also in this singular price-list the current value, among other things, of a battle-axe, a bow with twelve arrows, a white-hilted sword, a shield enamelled with blue and gold; of plaids, too, striped and chequered stuffs, mantles trimmed with fur, robes, coats, hose, buskins, shoes, gloves, caps, bonnets, girdles, and buckles.

There are stringent laws against cruelty to animals and in favour of hospitality. Game laws existed of the strictest kind, classifying every animal of the chase and dealing with the management of hounds, and the etiquette of hunting. For their ardour in these pursuits, the Welsh were distinguished among nations, not being surpassed even by the Normans themselves.

The customs obtaining in the royal household are tabulated in Howel Dda's code with extraordinary minuteness, and the duties of every official, from highest to lowest, strictly defined; from the Chaplain, Steward, Judge, and Master of the Horse down to the porter and birdkeeper. The perquisites, it may be noted, of the Master of the Horse are all colts under two years old, taken in war, and all gold and silver spurs thus acquired; those of the porter, every billet of wood he could snatch from a passing load, with one hand, as he held the gate with the other, and any swine out of a herd that he could lift breast high by its bristles only!

Of the bards there is so much to be said elsewhere that we need only remark here that the duties of the Bardd Teulu, or Poet Laureate, were to follow the army and sing the "Unbennaeth Prydain"

or "Monarchy of Britain" before, and if triumphant after, the battle; to perform at all times before the Court, and also privately to the Queen, only in so low a tone as not to disturb the King and his courtiers. This illustrious functionary was valued at 126 cows.

A remarkable official was the "Crier of Silence," who beat a particular pillar in the great hall with a rod when the noise became excessive, and had for his perquisites the fines that were exacted for any such undue boisterousness. Strangest by far of all was the King's "footholder," whose duty it was to sit under the table at meals and nurse his Majesty's foot, and to "scratch it when required."

Nor can we forget the "Pencerdd," the Chief of Song, who was of popular election and presided at the Bardic Gorsedd held every third year, and held only at Aberffraw in Anglesey, the royal residence of Gwynedd; for the Eisteddfodau were held by all the Welsh Princes apparently at will. The Pencerdd was expected to know by heart the prophetic song of Taliesin. He lodged in the quarters of the heir apparent, and was presented by the King with a harp and key.

## Renewed conflicts, 950

Howel the Good died about 950. With the divisions and disputes of his sons and nephews Wales quickly lost its unanimity, and once more the flame of war was lit from one end of the country to the other by these foolish broilers, in attempts to despoil each other of their respective portions. The question was at length settled for a while by a great battle at Llanrwst, where the men of North Wales utterly discomfited those of the South, pursuing them with fire and sword far beyond the northern boundaries of Deheubarth.

## Growing intercourse between Welsh and Saxon

## Eadgar rowed by Welsh Princes on the Dee

Towards the close of the tenth century we begin to get glimpses of those amenities between Cymry and Saxon, which a now common religion, a common foe in the Danes, and considerable private intercourse, had rendered inevitable. We find King Eadgar himself, for instance, at Bangor, helping Iago ap Idwal, Prince of Gwynedd, against his nephew Howel ap Ievan. Everything, however, being amicably arranged, the Saxon King actually remains in friendly fashion at Bangor, and bestows gifts and endowments upon its see. Finally the two recent disputants return with Eadgar to Chester, and take an oar in that celebrated crew of kinglets which rowed the Saxon monarch upon the Dee. Gwaithvoed, Prince of Powys, who was invited to assist in this somewhat inglorious procession, seems to have been the only one of the Welsh *Reguli* who refused the honour. "Tell the King," said Gwaithvoed, "I cannot row a barge, and if I could, I would not do so, except to save a life, whether king's or vassal's." On being pressed by a second messenger from Eadgar, his brief answer was: "Say to the King, 'Fear him who fears not death.'"

It is not easy to define the precise attitude of the Welsh Princes towards the King of England as the Saxon period drew towards its close. Though the ancient Britons had become crystallised into Welshmen, the old tradition of the island as a whole with an "Emperor" in London, and a general scheme of defence against foreign foes, was not yet dead. The Saxons, though little loved, had become an accepted fact, and there seems to have been no particular reluctance among the Welsh princes to pay lip homage, when relationships were not too strained, to the "King in London," and tribute, too, as representing the ancient contribution to "the defence of the island."

## Llewelyn I., 1000

For the last hundred years prior to the Norman conquest, one follows the bloody path of Welsh history in vain efforts to find some breathing space, wherein rulers turned their attention to something besides the lust of power and the thirst for glory. It was about the year 1000 when the first of the three Llewelyns succeeded to the throne of North Wales. Under a King whose title was absolutely indisputable, and who possessed some force of character, it seemed as if the sword was now for a season, at any rate, to remain undrawn. But it was not to be; for in no long time the throne of South Wales fell vacant, and there was, unhappily, no direct heir. So the nobles of the Province, fearing, and with some reason, that Llewelyn would seize the opportunity to attach the Southern Kingdom to his other dominions, brought forward a creature of their own, a low-born adventurer, who claimed to be of the royal lineage. This precipitated the catastrophe which it was designed to prevent, and Llewelyn fell upon Deheubarth with the whole force of Gwynedd. The fight lasted through a whole day, and the slaughter was immense, but the Northerners again prevailed.

## Griffith ap Llewelyn

But there were also years of peace under Llewelyn ap Seisyllt, and of conspicuous prosperity, so the chronicler tells us, in which "the earth brought forth double, the people prospered in all their affairs, and multiplied wonderfully. The cattle increased in great numbers, so that there was not a poor man in Wales from the south to the north sea, but every man had plenty, every house a dweller, every town inhabited." Llewelyn fell ultimately before Carmarthen, and his throne was seized by Iago ap Idwal, a collateral relative. He in turn was quickly overthrown and slain by Llewelyn's warlike son Griffith, who enjoyed what from a purely military point of view might be called a successful reign.

The Danes at this time began again to make attacks on Wales, but were defeated in Anglesey, and again in the Severn valley.

## Griffith ap Llewelyn attacks South Wales

Flushed with victory, and without a particle of excuse, Griffith now turned upon South Wales, ravaged it with fire and sword, and drove out its new Prince, Howel ap Edwy. Howel, however, came back with an army of Danes and Saxons, so had times changed in Wales, but only to meet with disaster and defeat at the hands of the vigorous Griffith. Yet again the indomitable Howel returned with a fresh army to try his luck, and so certain was he this time of victory that he brought his wife to witness it. But again disaster overtook him, and his wife, instead of sharing his triumph, was carried off to share his conqueror's bed.

Thus rolls on the tumult and the turmoil of the old Welsh story. The wonder is when and how the laws of the wise and peaceful Howel Dda found scope for application, and we can only suppose that the partial nature of these fierce struggles atoned in some measure for their continuity. Yet through all this devastation Church property, of which there was now a considerable amount and of a tangible kind, seems to have been well respected. The Danes alone were regardless of shrines and monasteries; and we hear of them at St. David's and Llanbadarn and other sacred spots along the seacoast doing wild work.

## 1040

## Harold and Griffith

The twenty years preceding the battle of Hastings were busy years in Wales, and the foremost name of that epoch in England came to be perhaps more dreaded among the native Welsh than that of any other Saxon since the days of Offa. But Harold, Earl of the West Saxons and commander of the English armies, got much deeper into Wales than Offa had ever succeeded in doing, and indeed came much nearer than any of his predecessors to a conquest of the country. Griffith ap Llewelyn, Prince of Gwynedd by right, and of all Wales by force, was, as we have seen, no mean soldier. He was Harold's adversary, and the last Welsh Prince to face the Saxon power. This, the final quarrel of five centuries of strife, was, for a wonder, not of Griffith's seeking.

We have seen how greatly modified the cleavage between the two peoples had by now become. Intermarriages had taken place in the higher ranks, alliances had been formed, and Saxon influences in matters such as land tenure and Church government had been sensibly felt beyond the Severn and the Dee. So now, while the shadow of the Norman invasion was hanging over unconscious England, Algar, Earl of Chester, falling out with King Edward, did nothing particularly unusual when he fled to the warlike son of the first Llewelyn, and tried to embroil him in his quarrel. Griffith was peacefully hunting at his second residence at Aber near Bangor, and had indeed made good use of a few years of peace, but he was not the man to turn a deaf ear to any prospect of a fight. The upshot was a very serious war, in which Griffith and his ally were for a long time singularly successful. They defeated Edwin of Mercia in a great battle near Welshpool; they afterwards took Hereford, won a victory at Leominster, and penetrated as far as Wiltshire.

## Harold in Wales

## Death of Griffith, 1061

A brief truce ensued with Harold, who had been opposing them, and then the struggle began afresh. The tables were now completely turned. Harold's memorable invasion of Wales took place, in which he was assisted to success by the many enemies Griffith had made in his high-handed annexation of Deheubarth. The Welsh Prince, after a stirring reign of thirty-four years, perished during this campaign of 1061 at the hand of a hired assassin. His head, like that of many another Welsh leader, was sent across the border in a basket, and received at Gloucester by Harold with much demonstrative satisfaction. The latter, in the meantime, had marched to the Conway, and afterwards through South Wales. He had been victorious everywhere; and now nominated fresh rulers to the vacant thrones of Gwynedd and Deheubarth, under promise of vassalage to the English Crown.

The tenure of the three Welsh Princes was always complicated and, indeed, liable to fluctuation with the balance of power, both in Wales and across the border. In theory, Powys and South Wales owed lip homage and a nominal tribute to the Prince of Gwynedd as "Pendragon." The latter, on behalf of Wales, owed a similar service to the King of England and, as I have mentioned before, was not inclined to dispute it so long as his independence was respected. Harold's so-called conquest only altered matters to the extent of making the three Welsh provinces theoretically equal and individually vassals of the English Crown. This paper arrangement would have probably remained a dead letter or would have been maintained just so long as there was an arm strong enough to maintain it. But a

people were coming to eliminate the Saxon as an aggressive power, and to take his place, – a people who would not be satisfied with lip homage and occasional tribute.

## 1066. Welsh and Normans

The great struggle in England between Norman and Saxon seemed by the mere force of contagion to set the Welsh Princes once more by the ears. Some of them, however, in accordance with their generous tradition of loyalty to the soil of the Britain they had lost, joined the West Saxons in their resistance to this new and formidable foe. Others essayed to make use in their domestic quarrels of the crafty Norman, who was only too glad to get a finger so cheaply into the Welsh pie.

The followers of William of Normandy, indeed, lost no time in turning their attention to Wales. Within ten years of the battle of Hastings, – almost immediately, that is to say, after the completion of the conquest of England, – they began their marauding expeditions across the border, and were not unnaturally surprised at finding themselves confronted by a people so entirely different from those they had just subdued. But these initial successes taught the Welsh nothing, and they still continued their fatal internecine strife.

## The Normans in Wales

The first serious lodgments of the Normans were made at Montgomery, where a baron of that name built the castle, whose fragments still look down from their rocky throne upon the windings of the upper Severn. Rhuddlan, at the mouth of the Clwyd, the site of an even then ancient fortress, was next occupied and strengthened. Flushed with their easy conquest of England, the Normans had already begun to regard Wales as if it also belonged to them; and still the quarrelsome Welsh chieftains continued to engage these formidable new-comers in their disputes. At Chester, Hugh Lupus, its Earl of famous memory, and the nephew of the Conqueror, held in secure confinement the person of the Prince of Gwynedd whom he had seized by treachery. He then proceeded to farm out the realm of the captive prince, but as he only received £40 as rental the sum is more eloquent than any words would be to express the nature of the hold he had won over it. It is more than likely the contractors had a bad bargain even at that figure.

## Lupus, Earl of Chester, invades North Wales, 1075

In the conspiracy of 1075, when William was on the continent, many of the Welsh nobles joined, and had consequently their share of the hanging and mutilating that followed its discovery. Lupus, however, marched an army through the North and built or rebuilt castles at Bangor, Carnarvon, and Anglesey. He was closely followed by the Conqueror himself, who with a large force proceeded with little apparent opposition through the turbulent South, received the homage of its king, Rhys ap Tudor, and its petty Princes, and then repaired with great pomp to the cathedral of St. David's, at whose altar he offered costly gifts. This kind of triumphal progress, as the Saxons well knew, though the Normans had yet to learn the fact, did not mean the conquest of Wales. King William in this single campaign seems to have imbibed some respect for Welshmen, for he spoke of them on his death-bed as a people with whom he had "held perilous conflicts."

Infinitely more dangerous to Welsh liberty was the experiment next tried by a native Prince of acquiring Norman aid at the expense of territory. The story of the conquest and settlement of Glamorgan is such a luminous and significant incident in Welsh history, and was of such great future importance, that it must be briefly related.

## Norman settlement in Glamorgan

## 1091

The present county of Glamorgan was represented, roughly speaking, in ancient Wales by the subkingdom, or, to use a more appropriate term, the lordship of Morganwg. It had acquired its name in the ninth century through the martial deeds of its then proprietor, "Morgan Fawr," or "Morgan the Great." Morganwg, though part of Deheubarth, was at times strong enough to claim something like independence, and indeed the uncertain relationships of the smaller chieftains of South Wales to their overlord at Dynevor may well be the despair of any one attempting to combine tolerable accuracy with unavoidable brevity. But these remarks are only relevant for the purpose of emphasising the comparative importance at all times in Wales of the country we call Glamorgan; and this was due not only to its size and to its seacoast, but to its comparative smoothness and fertility. In the year 1091, in the reign of William Rufus, one Iestyn, a descendant of Morgan the Great, was ruling over Glamorgan, and as he was upon anything but friendly terms with his feudal superior, Rhys ap Tudor, Prince of South Wales, he bethought him of calling in alien aid, a habit then growing lamentably common among Welsh chieftains.

## Iestyn and Einion

## Fitzhamon

## William Rufus and Wales

## Marriages with Normans

## Turberville at Coity

The Saxons had ceased to exist as a military power, and the Normans stood in their shoes. Iestyn knew nothing of Normans, but he had a friend named Einion who was reputed to have had much experience with them. To Einion, then, he repaired and promised him his daughter's hand, which presumably carried with it something substantial, if he would bring a band of Normans to his assistance in his dispute with Rhys. Einion consented to be his intermediary and without much difficulty secured the services of Robert Fitzhamon and twelve knightly adventurers who served under him. The Normans in due course arrived and rendered Iestyn invaluable assistance in resisting his lawful sovereign. They then, so runs the chronicle, having received their pay, quite contrary to Norman custom peacefully re-embarked at Cardiff and weighed anchor for home. But Iestyn, before they had well cleared the harbour, was injudicious enough to repudiate the promise of his daughter to Einion, whereupon the exasperated princeling put to sea, interviewed Fitzhamon, and persuaded him to return with his friends and his forces and eject the faithless Iestyn from his rich territory. One may well believe it did not take much to win over the Normans to so attractive and congenial an

undertaking. At any rate they reversed their course with much alacrity, returned to Cardiff, ejected Iestyn, and after some fighting, assisted by Einion's people, divided the province among themselves, each building one or more great castles, whose ruins are notable features in Glamorganshire scenery to-day. The blood of Fitzhamon's knightly followers courses in the veins of many an ancient family of South Wales, and one of them at least is still directly represented in name as well as lineage. This conquest must be placed among the earliest in Wales, and it became the type of many future Norman settlements, though it was the outcome of an incident, while the others were for the most part deliberately planned. The reign of Rufus was memorable for these filibustering expeditions. They were executed under the sanction of the King, who found in them a cheap method of granting favours to his barons, particularly those who had perhaps not come out so well as they could have wished in the partition of England. They might, in short, take of Wales as much as they could keep, subject only to holding what they acquired as feudatories of the King. There will be more to say about these Marcher barons later on. In the meantime, Brecheiniog, or Brecon, had been also conquered by another Norman, Bernard de Newmarch, with a similar band of followers, and secured by a similar system of castle building. Montgomery and other points in North and South Wales had been occupied, but they were for the most part purely military outposts. The occupation of Brecon and Glamorgan by a Norman aristocracy is a salient and permanent factor in Welsh history. This does not, however, imply that such filibustering barons were allowed to settle quietly down in their seats. Before the end of the reign, indeed, they were driven out, and William Rufus himself, who marched through Wales more or less upon their behalf, had, after all, to retire discomfited: but they were soon back again. It was not wholly by brute force that they held their own. Life would hardly have been worth living upon such terms, and as a matter of fact, so far as one can read between the lines of these old chronicles, there does not seem to have been at first the same antipathy between Norman and Welshman as had formerly existed between Saxon and Welshman. Marriages carrying Welsh property with them seem to have been readily arranged. A singular and romantic instance of this was in the matter of Coity Castle, whose ruined walls still hold together near Bridgend, and of the Turbervilles who even yet, after all these centuries, retain their name and position in Glamorganshire. For Paine Turberville, one of Fitzhamon's twelve knights, having been by some mischance forgotten in the distribution of land, inquired of his chief where he was to look for his reward. "Here are arms and here are men," replied Fitzhamon; "go get it where you can." So Turberville went to Coity, which was still unconquered, and summoned Morgan, the Welsh lord, to surrender it into his hands. Whereupon Morgan came out leading his daughter, and passing through the army, with his sword in his right hand, came to Paine Turberville, and told him that if he would marry his daughter, and so come like an honest man into his castle, he would yield it to him; but if not, said he, "let not the blood of any of our men be lost, but let this sword and arm of mine and those of yours decide who shall call this castle his own." Upon that Paine Turberville drew his sword, took it by the blade in his left hand and gave it to Morgan, and with his right hand embraced his daughter. After settling matters to the satisfaction of all parties he went to church and married her, and so came to the lordship by true right of possession; and by the advice of his father-in-law kept under his command two thousand of the best of his Welsh soldiers.

Turberville, having now achieved so secure a position without the aid of Fitzhamon, very naturally refused to pay him tribute or own him as his overlord, but voluntarily recognised Caradoc, the son of the dispossessed Iestyn, as his chief. This caused unpleasantness, but Turberville, with his two thousand Welshmen and his father-in-law's help, was too strong for Fitzhamon, and he had his way. It must not, however, be supposed that these martial settlers as a class by any means followed the example of the later Norman adventurers in Ireland, and became "more Welsh than the Welsh themselves." They were too near their King, at whose will they held their lands, and not far enough removed from the centre of Anglo-Norman life, to throw off its interests and lose touch with their connections. Nevertheless the confusion of authority in South and Mid-Wales increased considerably as time went on; for not only did Norman barons marry Welsh heiresses, but occasionally a Welsh

chieftain would win back a Norman-Welsh lordship by marriage, and present the anomalous spectacle of a Welshman holding Welsh land as a direct vassal of the King of England in entire independence of his district Prince. But these occasional amenities among the higher aristocracy but little affected the mass of the Welsh people, who stood aloof with lowering and uncompromising sullenness.

### Welsh and Norman

It was this intolerance of foreigners, bred in the bone and blood of Welshmen, or this excessive patriotism, call it what you will, that made possible their long and heroic resistance to the Norman yoke, and for so long upheld the tottering thrones of their not always honest, and always quarrelsome, Princes. They hugged their pedigrees and cherished their bards, who in turn played with tireless energy upon the chords of national sentiment and martial memories. No transfer of land to Normans, whether due to the sword or to more peaceful methods, was regarded as otherwise than temporary. As in parts of Ireland at the present day, generations of occupation by an alien stock commanded no respect beyond what belonged to the force of ownership. The original owners might be long extinct in fact, but in the mind they were the owners still. The Anglo-Saxon has a short memory; and is practical even in matters of sentiment. Four or five generations are sufficient to eliminate the memory of the humble or alien origin of the *parvenu*, and are quite enough to fill his cup of social reverence to the brim; perhaps fortunately so. The Celt, and particularly the Welsh Celt, is fashioned differently. With him the interloper remained an interloper far beyond his children's children, and this mental attitude had much to do with the facility with which a popular leader could at all times stir up strife in Wales, whatever might be the odds against success.

We have seen, then, the first wedge of alien occupation driven into this hitherto virgin refuge of the ancient British stock. For we must remember that, in spite of continual warfare, the Saxons had made no impression calling for notice in a brief survey like this. We must remember, also, that the Norman settlements were wholly military. The followers that came with these adventurers were just sufficient to garrison their castles. They were but handfuls, and lived within or under the protection of the Norman fortress: their influence upon the blood of the country may, I think, be put aside with certain reservations, as scarcely worth considering.

### 1105. Pembroke and the Flemings

The severance of half the present county of Pembroke from Wales in the reign of Henry the First must by no means be passed over if one is to get a proper idea of what was meant by Wales at the time when this story opens. It was in this King's reign that a large body of Flemings were flooded out in the Low Countries by a great inundation, and despairing of finding a fresh home in their own crowded fatherland, they applied to the King of England to allot them territory out of his presumed abundance.[2] In their appeal the King saw another means of putting a bridle on the Welsh, at no expense to himself, to say nothing of the advantage of posing as a philanthropist. He granted therefore to the Flemings just so much of the south-western promontory of Wales as they could hold and conquer, together with the peninsula of Gower, which juts out from the coast of modern Glamorgan. Pembroke was the more important and populous colony of the two. The native inhabitants, it may be presumed, were few in the twelfth century; at any rate the Flemings had no difficulty in driving them inland and forming a permanent settlement. There was no assimilation with the natives; they were completely pushed back, and in a short time Normans came to the assistance of the Flemings. The great castles of Pembroke, Manorbier, Haverford-west, and Tenby were built,

[2] Some accounts say that Henry first received them in England, but got uneasy at the number which accumulated there and ordered them all into south-west Wales. Small lodgments of Normans and other aliens would seem to have preceded the Flemings. Back

and speaking broadly the south-western half of the modern county of Pembroke became as Teutonic, and in time as English, as Wiltshire or Suffolk. Continual fighting went on between the native Welsh and the intruders, keeping alive the animosity between the two races and laying the seeds of that remarkable cleavage which makes the county of Pembroke present to-day an ethnological curiosity without a parallel in the United Kingdom.

The Flemings, as English subjects and constantly reinforced by English arrivals, lost in time their nationality and their language, and became as thoroughly Anglo-Saxon as the most fervent Salopian or the most stolid Wiltshireman. They remain so, in a great measure, to this very day. Intermixture with the Celtic and Welsh-speaking part of the county has been rare. The isolated position of further Pembrokeshire makes this anomaly still more peculiar, cut off as it is from England by nearly a hundred miles of Welsh territory, and more particularly when the fact is remembered that for centuries there has been no religious or political friction to keep these two communities of a remote countryside apart. Somewhat parallel conditions in Derry or Donegal, though of much more recent origin, are far more explicable owing to the civil strife and religious hatred which are or have been rife there. Even so the mixture of Scotch-Irish Protestants with Celtic Catholics has, I fancy, been much greater in Ireland than that of the Anglo-Fleming Protestants of further Pembroke and of Gower with their Welsh neighbours of the same faith "beyond the Rubicon" in the same counties.

These conquests may, however, be regarded as constituting for some time the extent of solid Norman occupation. The story of Wales is one long tale of continuous attempts by Norman barons on the territory of the Welsh Princes, varied by the serious invasions of English Kings, which were undertaken either directly or indirectly on behalf of their Norman-Welsh vassals. Upon the whole but slow headway was made. Anglo-Norman successes and acquisitions were frequently wiped out, for the time at any rate, by the unconquerable tenacity of the Welsh people, while every now and again some great warrior arose who rolled the whole tide of alien conquest, save always further Pembroke, back again pell-mell across the border, and restored Wales, panting, harried, and bloody, to the limits within which William the Norman found it.

## 1156

## Henry II. and Owen Gwynedd

One of these heroic leaders was Owen ap Griffith, Prince of Gwynedd, who arose in the time of Henry II. of England. Not only did he clear North Wales of Normans, but he so ruthlessly harried Cheshire and the Marches, and so frightened the Prince of Powys that the latter joined the Norman-Welsh nobles in a petition to the King of England begging him to come up in all haste with a strong force to their aid. Henry, under whom England was rapidly recovering strength and cohesion, now essayed that profitless and thorny path of Welsh invasion, which his predecessors, Norman and Saxon, had so often trodden, and his successors were so often and so vainly to tread.

## Henry II. defeated by Owen Gwynedd

## Rhys ap Griffith

## Henry II. again in Wales, 1166

## Battle of Crogen

## Henry returns to England

He marched with a large army to Chester and, being there joined by the Prince of Powys and the Norman-Welsh barons, encamped on Saltney Marsh. Owen with the forces of North Wales had come out to meet him as far as Basingwerk, and as the vanguard of the royal army advanced against the Welsh through the wooded defile of Coed Eulo the sons of Owen fell suddenly upon it, and with great slaughter rolled it back upon the main force. The King, then taking the seashore route, made head for Rhuddlan at the mouth of the Clwyd. But near Flint, in another narrow pass, he met with even a worse disaster. For here his vanguard was again attacked, many of his knights and nobles slain, his standard overthrown, and he himself in danger of his life. Eventually he reached Rhuddlan, garrisoned it, came to terms with Owen, and went home again. But there were two fierce and uncontrollable Princes now in Wales: Owen himself, "Eryr Eryrod Eryri" – the "Eagle of the Eagles of Snowdon" – and Rhys ap Griffith, the scarcely less warlike ruler of South Wales. The period was one of continuous conflict in Wales and on the border, and it ended in something like a national movement against all the centres of Norman power, both royal and baronial, that were sprinkled over the country. This was in 1165, and Henry, vowing vengeance, advanced once more to the Welsh border. He had learnt wisdom, however, in his former campaign, and moved cautiously to Rhuddlan in order to make a preliminary investigation of the state of affairs. It was evident that nothing but a great effort would be of any avail; so returning to England he gathered a large army and sat down at Chester. In the meantime Owen Gwynedd as suzerain or Pendragon of Wales, with Rhys, Prince of Deheubarth, and even the two Princes of vacillating Powysland, which had recently been split in half, and in fact with the whole strength of the Cymry, raised the dragon standard at Corwen on the Dee. The two armies met eventually upon the banks of the Ceiriog, just beneath the hill where the Castle of Chirk, then called Crogen,[3] now lifts its storied towers. The slopes of the Welsh mountains, even to Snowdon itself, were in those days sprinkled freely, if not thickly clad, with timber, and a feature of this expedition was some two thousand woodcutters employed to open the country for Henry's army and secure it against those ambuscades in which the Welsh were so terribly proficient. But Owen Gwynedd came down from the Berwyns this time to meet his foe and, as I have said, a long and fierce battle was waged in the deep valley of the Ceiriog. The Welsh were in the end forced to retreat, and recrossing the Berwyn they took post again at Corwen, and, as tradition has it, on the lofty British camp at Caer Drewyn on the north bank of the Dee. Henry followed and sat down with his army on the high ridge of the Berwyn, above Pen-y-pigin, the river flowing through

[3] This was a Welsh fortress on or near the site of the present castle, whose origin will be spoken of in another chapter. Back

what was then no doubt a swampy valley between the two positions. It was the old story, a wearisome enough one in the long strife between England and Wales. Henry dared not advance in the face of the difficult country before him and the Welshmen's superiority in hill and woodland fighting. Moreover his provisions had run out, and to make matters worse the weather broke up, so there was nothing to be done but to march his great army home again. The Welsh Princes now attacked and destroyed many of the King's castles in the North, and on the border recovered Flint or Tegengle, which Henry had nominally annexed, and in the South sorely pressed the Norman barons in Glamorgan, Brecon, and Gwent. But the old madness of greed and jealousy which in Welsh Princes seemed inseparable from success, now took possession of Rhys and Owen; they turned on their late allies of Powys, fickle ones, no doubt, and divided their inheritance between them.

## Howel ap Owen Gwynedd

As for Owen Gwynedd, we must leave him and his deeds to the fame which, wherever Welshmen congregate, endures for ever, and pass on to a brief mention of his son Howel, who has earned immortality in a curiously different field. Amid the passions and storms of that fierce age in Wales, it is strange enough, not to find a poet-Prince, but to find one singing in such strains as did Howel ap Owen Gwynedd. Warlike ballads are readily conceivable in such an atmosphere as that in which Howel lived, and of war and hunting he wrote. But he also wrote sonnets, many of which are extant, to the yellow bloom of the furze, the blossoms of the apple tree, the laugh of his bright-eyed sister, to fields of tender trefoil, and to nightingales singing in privet groves. He shared the fate of so many Welsh Princes and fell by the dagger, the assassins being his half-brothers. Both he and his famous father were buried in Bangor Cathedral.

It may be well to point out that one of the causes of this chronic strife between the Welsh Princes, besides the prevalent custom of gavelkind, was that of fostering out the children of the royal houses; for when the inevitable struggle for the succession ensued, each claimant was backed up and vigorously assisted by the whole interest of the family in which he had been reared.

## Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd

## Madoc's colony in Mexico, 1169

To another son of Owen Gwynedd belongs a tale, notable in Welsh tradition at any rate, if not in serious history. Madoc, who had for his portion the country lying round the western base of Snowdon, found the struggle for the possession of it perhaps too wearisome, for he manned a small fleet and sailed out over the western seas for many months till he discovered a strange country, good in all things for the habitation of man. From this venture, so the legend runs, Madoc returned, and, collecting a following of three hundred men in North Wales, again safely crossed the Atlantic and there founded, in what is supposed to have been Mexico, [4] a colony of Welshmen, from whom sprang the royal dynasty of Montezuma.

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[4] If this were merely a fairy tale it would certainly be out of place here; but as regards the Welsh colony it has been considered not wholly unworthy of the attention of some serious ethnologists. It may further be remarked, without comment, that a comparatively modern and (in the vulgar sense) popular short history of Wales treats the whole story as authentic fact without even a suggestion of any legendary attributes! There we will leave it. Back

## Dafydd ap Owen Gwynedd, 1170

Dafydd, the usurping half-brother and murderer of the poet-Prince Howel, had better luck than he deserved. King Henry, now bent on making friends with the Welsh, particularly the North Welsh as being the most formidable and homogeneous, gave him in marriage his sister Emma and with her the rich barony of Ellesmere. Troops from South Wales were already helping Henry in Ireland, and now Dafydd with a large force of his own people crossed to Normandy to fight the battles of his royal brother-in-law in that country. It is characteristic of Welsh politics that while Dafydd was in France, the only one of his brothers whom he had not killed or imprisoned took occasion to seize Anglesey and the four Cantrefs that now make Carnarvonshire.

## Giraldus Cambrensis

Norman manners and customs seem about this time to have considerably infected the Welsh aristocracy. That celebrated ecclesiastic and author, Giraldus Cambrensis, comes upon the scene at this close of the twelfth century, and has much to tell us out of the fulness of his knowledge of Wales. He was of illustrious birth, half Welsh, half Norman, and Archdeacon of Hereford, though his mere office by no means suggests his importance, much less the importance he attributed to himself. It is his entertaining descriptions of the Welsh life he knew so well that have immortalised him, and his mixed blood would seem to have endowed him with the impartiality which he professes. He was violently opposed among other things to the encroachments of the Norman Church in Wales; for the Pope, as I have stated, had now become recognised as omnipotent, and Canterbury as the source of all authority. Giraldus strove hard to get St. David's created an Archbishopric, and to persuade the Pope to send thither his pallium, the symbol of consecration. Though it is true he was himself burning to be installed at St. David's, Giraldus probably reflected the popular opinion of contemporary Welshmen in favour of recovering the old independence of the Welsh Church. The Crusades were now at their zenith, and Archbishop Baldwin undertook at this time his famous progress through Wales on behalf of the holy cause. Giraldus accompanied him as chaplain, interpreter, and friend on this protracted tour, and, happily for us, as special reporter too. The Archbishop's exhortations caused some passing enthusiasm throughout the country, though the practical results do not seem to have been considerable. Some say that Baldwin's main object was to hold high mass in St. David's Cathedral, and so put the coping-stone, as it were, on the annexation of the Welsh Church.

As regards the Crusades the Welsh in the Middle Ages do not seem to have been great rovers or much given to doing business on great waters; always, of course, excepting Madoc ap Owen Gwynedd, the discoverer of America!

## Giraldus on the Welsh people

> "These people," says Giraldus, alluding to the Welsh, "are light and active, hardy rather than strong, and entirely bred up to the use of arms; for not only the nobles, but all the people are trained to war, and when the trumpet sounds the husbandman rushes as eagerly from his plough as the courtier from his Court. They live more on flesh, milk and cheese than bread, pay little attention to commerce, shipping, or manufacture, and devote their leisure to the chase and martial exercises. They earnestly study the defence of their country, and their liberty. For these they fight, for these they undergo hardships, and for these willingly sacrifice their lives. They esteem it a disgrace to die in bed, an honour to die on the field of battle."

> "Their arms and their coats of mail," he goes on to tell us, "are light, so also are their helmets, and shields, and greaves plated with iron. The higher class go to war on swift and well-bred steeds, but are ready at a moment's notice, should the nature of the ground require it, to fight on foot as do the mass of their people. In times of peace the young men by wandering in the dense forests and scaling the summits of the highest mountains inure themselves to the hardships of war when the necessity arrives."

They were addicted neither to gluttony nor drunkenness, and could readily go for two days without food, eating in any case but twice a day. They could lie out, moreover, all night in rain and storm, if an enemy had to be watched, or an ambush to be laid. There were whole bands of the better-born young men whose sole profession was arms, and to whom free quarters were given upon all occasions. The Welsh among other things were a clean-shaven race, reserving only their moustaches, and keeping the hair of their head short. The teeth of both sexes too were a special matter of pride. On this account they even abstained from hot meats, and rubbed their teeth constantly with green hazel till they shone like ivory. "They have powerful understandings, being much quicker at their studies than other Western nations, ready in speech and confident in expressing themselves, even to the lowest class." Their love of high birth and long pedigrees was then as now conspicuous, and the tribal system though rapidly modifying under Saxon and Norman influences encouraged them to think much of their ancestors, and to be quick in avenging insults to their blood. This custom, indeed, was carried to such lengths, that the Welshman's tendency to family quarrels, coupled with his sensitiveness for the family honour, was neatly satirised by an old proverb which affirmed that he "loved his brother better dead than alive."

## Giraldus on Welsh warfare

Giraldus, who may be regarded as a well-informed neutral in the matter, criticises the injudicious manner in which war had hitherto been prosecuted against his countrymen. He deprecates, for instance, the use of heavy-armed soldiers and a profusion of cavalry, which the active Welshmen in their mountain country are easily able to elude and often to defeat. He declares that the only way to conquer Wales would be by winter campaigns, when the leaves are off the trees and the pastures withered. "Then," he writes, "English troops must be pushed forward at all hazards, for even if the first are slaughtered any number of fresh ones can be purchased for money; whereas the Welsh are restricted in the number of their men." The question of commissariat, the crux of all Welsh campaigns in those days, seems to have escaped the notice of the clerical critic.

Having thus descanted on their virtues, Giraldus now assumes the Anglo-Norman on the strength of his half blood, and enumerates their weak points.

> "The Welsh are flighty," he tells us, "and readily undertake things which they have not the perseverance to carry out. They have little respect for oaths, and not much for the truth, and when a good opportunity occurs for attacking an enemy they regard neither truces nor treaties. In war they are very severe in their first attack, terrible by their clamour and looks, filling the air with horrid shouts and the deep-toned clangour of very long trumpets. Bold in the first onset they cannot bear a repulse, being easily thrown into confusion, as soon as they turn their backs. Yet though defeated and put to flight one day, they are ready to resume the combat on the next, neither dejected by their loss nor by their dishonour; easier in short to overcome in a single battle, than in a protracted war. Their great weakness after all," concludes Gerald, "lies in their internal jealousies. If they were inseparable, they

> would be insuperable, and above all, if instead of having three Princes they had but one, and that a good one!"

For their music this invaluable chronicler has nothing but enthusiasm, dwelling upon the sweetness of their instruments, the harp and the "crwth" (a primitive violin) in particular, and, above all, on their habit of singing in parts, and not, as most other nations do, in unison.

## Religious fervour in the twelfth century

### Abbeys

However distasteful the aggression of the Roman Church may have been to the mass of the Welsh people in the twelfth century, this period brought a great revival of religious fervour, even if it came largely from alien sources. The rude churches of wood or wickerwork that five and six centuries before had marked the dawn, not of Christianity, but of organised Christianity, now gave place to solid and sometimes beautiful specimens of early English or Norman art. Many of them, not greatly altered by the restorer's touch, still stand amid the grandeur of majestic mountains or the loneliness of surf-beaten shores, and seem in consequence to speak more eloquently of these far-off, mysterious times than their more imposing contemporaries, which are set amid tame and commonplace surroundings. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, too, the great Welsh abbeys were in their prime. Valle Crucis, whose graceful ruins still defy the ages amid the matchless beauties of the Vale of Llangollen, was the pride of Powys; Ystradfflur (*Strata Florida*) in Cardigan shared with the Cistercian House of Aber Conway the honour of recording and safeguarding the chronicles of the Principality and of giving burial to her most illustrious dead. In a wild Radnor valley stood the great Franciscan abbey of Cwm Hir, while in the green meadows where the silver streams of the Mawddach and the Wnion meet in the shadow of Cader Idris, you may yet see the ivy clustering on the ruins of the once powerful foundation of St. Illtyd. Some centuries older than any of these, the most ancient of Welsh abbeys was still intact upon Ynys Enlli, the remote island of Bardsey, and served the churches that were so thickly sprinkled along the rugged coasts of Lleyn. It had been the "Rome of the Cymry." Thousands of pilgrims had annually turned thither their weary steps. It was accounted a good thing to go there, and still better to die there; and though divided from the mainland by three miles of water, whose tides rage with notorious violence, the dust of "twenty thousand saints" lies, as all good Welshmen know, beneath the sod of this narrow and stormy isle. These are but a few haphazard examples of the centres of religion, which, amid the fierce passions of the Celt and the restless greed of the Norman, struck at least one peaceful note in nearly every Cambrian valley.

## Powys and the English power

### Norman encroachments

We are now within less than a century of the final overthrow of Welsh independence. Enough has been said to show how gradually and with what hard fighting the disintegration of Wales was brought about, and still fiercer struggles were yet to come. The Princes of Powys, though liable to fitful attempts at independence, had now virtually submitted to the English King, and even ranged themselves at times against their countrymen. North Wales was still intact, always excepting that debatable land between the Dee and Conway, the Perfeddwlad, which was lost and retaken more times than it would be possible to take account of here. The great region of South Wales, however, from

the edge of Hereford to Cardigan Bay, presented a rare confusion of authority. One scarcely ventures to touch the subject within such narrow limits as ours must needs be. Hardly as they were sometimes beset, even to the length of being driven from their lands and castles, the Norman adventurers steadily ate up bit by bit the old Kingdom of Deheubarth. Each man had just so much territory as he could win by the sword, and, what was more important, only so much as he could keep by it. They all held their lands, whose limits were but vaguely defined by charter or title-deed, since they were undefinable, direct from the King of England, and had by virtue of their office the right to sit in Parliament, and to support the royal canopy at coronations with silver spears.

### Wales in the thirteenth century

In their own domains they possessed absolute authority, so far as they could exercise it, even over the lives of their tenants. Small towns began to grow under the protection of their castle walls, and were occupied by their retainers. Courts were established in each lordship, and justice was administered to the Anglo-Norman minority after English custom and to the Welsh majority after the custom of old Welsh law, and in the native tongue. Let me repeat, I am but generalising. The condition of Wales at the opening of the thirteenth century was far too complex to admit of analytical treatment within such a brief space as this. The exceptions to every rule were numerous. The King of England himself, for example, owned many lordships and was represented in them by a Justiciar or Bailiff, and sometimes this functionary was actually a Welshman. Here and there again a Welsh noble held property as a Norman Baron from the King while occasionally a Norman did allegiance for his barony to a Welsh Prince, and posed as a Welshman.

### Landed system

The landed system of Wales in the Middle Ages is still more hopeless for purposes of brief description. The indigenous tribal system, when land was held in families, or “gwelis,” by the descendants of a privileged though perhaps a large class, had been steadily undergoing modification since the later Saxon period,[5] and in all directions it was honeycombed not only by encroaching Normans, with their feudal and manorial land laws, and by the monastic houses, but long before the twelfth century many Welsh princes and chieftains had felt the Saxon influence, and had drifted into the manorial system, so far at least as their own private possessions were concerned.

### Llewelyn the Great, 1195

With the close of the twelfth century the most illustrious of all Welsh Princes, the only possible rival of Glyndwr, Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, comes upon the scene as a beardless boy; and in connection with this famous person it may fairly be said that though there was plenty of fight left in the still unconquered moiety of South Wales, and a little even in Powys, it is with Gwynedd that the interest of the last century of Welsh resistance mainly rests. Son of Iorwerth the broken-nosed, who, though the rightful heir of Owen Gwynedd, was rejected on account of this disfigurement, Llewelyn the Great is supposed with good reason to have been born in the castle of Dolwyddelan, whose ruinous walls, perched high upon the wild foot-hills of Moel Siabod, still look down upon the infant Llugwy as it urges its buoyant streams through one of the most beautiful of North Welsh valleys.

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[5] See Seebohm’s *Tribal Wales*. Back

## Llewelyn marries King John's daughter

Nurtured amid the clash of arms, the boy was only twelve years old when he asserted his right to the throne, and won it against his Norman-loving uncle, Dafydd, whom we left, it will be remembered, fighting in France. The young Prince, backed by a strong following in North Wales, and by the arms of Powys, deposed his uncle and commenced the long career which earned him that pre-eminent fame in warlike deeds which attaches to his name. By the time he was of age he was fully recognised as "Brenin holl Cymru," or Pendragon, by all that was left of Wales. John, who now occupied the English throne, so fully recognised the dawn of a new and formidable personal influence in his tributary realm that he bestowed upon Llewelyn in marriage his illegitimate daughter Joan, together with a handsome dower.

The first few years of the thirteenth century were fully occupied with ceaseless strife between the Welsh Princes, their relatives, and the Norman nobles settled in their midst. It will be sufficient to say that Llewelyn, high-handed and autocratic, lost nothing of his importance in such congenial work, and by 1209 had left his mark upon the English borders so rudely that King John and his vigorous son-in-law at length came to blows. The former, collecting a large army, penetrated to the Conway River, behind which, in the mountains of Snowdonia, Llewelyn with all his people and all his movables defied attack.

## John invades Wales, 1209

## 1212

## Llewelyn sides with the barons against John

John, with whom went many of the nobles of Powys, sat down at Deganwy Castle, one of the great strategic points of ancient Wales, and one whose scanty ruins are familiar to visitors at Llandudno and Conway. But the Welsh slipped behind them and cut off their supplies. Nor could the King move forward, for across the river rose the grim masses of the Snowdon mountains. His people were reduced to eating their horses, disease was ravaging their ranks, and there was nothing for it but to go back; so John returned to England with rage at his heart. Nothing daunted he returned again to the attack, marching this time by way of Oswestry and Corwen. He was now both more daring and more fortunate, seeing that he succeeded in throwing a portion of his forces into Bangor. This checkmated Llewelyn, and he sent his wife to see what terms could be exacted from her father. His reply indicated that the cession of the unfortunate Perfeddwlad, and a fine of twenty thousand head of cattle was the least he could accept, and with these terms the Welsh Prince complied. The latter condition was probably inconvenient; the former was merely a question of might for the time being. Any territorial arrangement with John was likely to be of only temporary consequence, for that undesirable King was perpetually under the ban of the Church, and had none too many friends. So in 1212, when Pope Innocent absolved all John's feudatories from their allegiance, it furnished an admirable excuse for Llewelyn to reoccupy the whole of his ancient dominion of Gwynedd. When, two years later, John's own barons rose against him, they formed an alliance with the powerful Prince of Gwynedd, who captured Shrewsbury, and thereby contributed no little to the pressure which caused the signing of Magna Charta.

Llewelyn subsequently swept through both Mid- and South Wales, sacking and gutting many of the hated Norman castles, till he came to be regarded in the South with as much devotion as in his own province. Every dispute concerning territory or boundaries was submitted to his judgment. Even the Flemings of Pembroke for the first time since their occupation tendered their homage to a Welsh Prince.

### Llewelyn recognised by John as ruler of Wales

### Llewelyn's son rebels against him

But between the death of John and the accession of Henry III., the nobles of England forgot their obligations to Llewelyn, while the Marcher barons whose castles he had sacked were eager enough to turn this indifference into hostility. The result of all this was that Llewelyn found himself threatened by the whole power of England and of Anglo-Norman Wales in the event of his refusal to abandon his recent conquests. Llewelyn ap Iorwerth, wise in his generation, sought a personal interview with the young King, his brother-in-law, at which he undertook to do him homage; a formality which, I have more than once observed, Welsh Princes had no reluctance upon principle in conceding. On this occasion, moreover, Llewelyn's pride was fully gratified. He was officially recognised as Prince of all Gwynedd, with the second title of Lord of Snowdon, and his suzerainty over the other divisions of Wales was formally acknowledged. We find him emphasising this diplomatic triumph by granting that bone of contention, the Perfeddwlad, to his son Griffith, and the latter with the fatuity so common to his race returning this piece of parental affection by laying violent hands on Merioneth, another district within his father's Principality. This was a wholly outrageous proceeding and Llewelyn, finding remonstrance unavailing, hastened eastward with a strong force to chastise his incorrigible offspring. The latter was quite prepared to fight, and we have the edifying picture of father and son facing each other in arms in a cause wholly wanton, and as if there were no such thing as Normans and Saxons, to say nothing of South Welshmen, ever and always threatening their existence. A reconciliation was happily effected, but when Llewelyn found himself with most of the soldiery of his province around him in arms, the temptation was too great, and throwing treaties to the winds, he fell upon the English border and harried it from Chester to Hereford. Drawn thence south-westwards by signs of restlessness on the part of that ever-rankling sore, the Anglo-Flemish colony of Pembroke, he swept through South Wales and fought a great battle on the confines of their territory, which the fall of night found still undecided.

### Continuous war, 1234

From now onwards till 1234 there was little peace in Wales, and above the ceaseless din of arms the star of Llewelyn ap Iorwerth shone with ever increasing glory. Then came a confederation of Norman barons against King Henry, who, turning for support to Llewelyn, entered into a solemn league and covenant both with him and with his tributary princes. It was so strong a combination that Henry shrank from coping with it. It was the first occasion on which Anglo-Norman Barons and Welsh Princes on an important scale had formed a treaty of alliance with each other and, still more, had honourably observed it. Even more singular perhaps was the outcome, when, Henry being forced to a compromise, a Welsh Prince found himself in the unprecedented position of being able to exact conditions for the great Norman feudatories of Wales from a Norman King.

## Death of Llewelyn II., 1240

Llewelyn, having buried his wife Joan in the abbey of Llanfaes near Beaumaris, himself died at Aber in the year 1240, after a stormy but, judged by the ethics of the time, a brilliant reign of over half a century. His triumphs were of course for the most part military ones. But no Welsh Princes having regard to the decline of Cymric power had ever accomplished quite so much. He had forced his authority upon all Wales except the lordship Marches, but he had also been a sleepless patriot, driving the English arms back and greatly weakening the English influence throughout the whole Principality. With this scant notice of a long and eventful reign we must take leave of the warlike son of Iorwerth. He was buried at Aber Conway in the abbey he had founded; but his stone coffin was removed in later days to the beautiful church at Llanrwst, where amid the historic treasures of the Gwydir Chapel it still recalls to the memory of innumerable pilgrims "the eagle of men, who loved not to lie nor sleep, who towered above the rest of men with his long red lance and his red helmet of battle crested with a savage wolf, Llewelyn the Great."

## Griffith sent to the Tower by Henry III

Wales, though rapidly approaching the era of her political extinction, was now so unusually strong and even aggressive that the English King was compelled to watch the course of events there with a vigilant eye. From the Welsh point of view it was of vital importance that Llewelyn's successor in Gwynedd should be both acceptable to his people and strong in himself. Unhappily he was neither, unless indeed obstinacy may count for strength. Of Llewelyn's family two sons alone concern us here. Griffith, the elder of these by a Welsh mother, has been already alluded to as going to war in such wild fashion with his father. Rightly or wrongly he was regarded as illegitimate, though that circumstance, it may be remarked parenthetically, was not such a vital matter in Old Wales. But his father's marriage with an English King's daughter suggests the possibility of making too light of a former and less distinguished alliance. Be that as it may, the younger of the two, the son of the Princess Joan and nephew of Henry III., succeeded in seating himself on his father's throne, though not without protest from the Welsh nobility who did not by any means relish his English blood. Dafydd had all the English influence behind him, while his close connection with the King seemed to make for peace. But Griffith, the elder, in spite of his presumed illegitimacy, was the popular candidate, and Dafydd did not improve his own position by proceeding to strip his half-brother of his private property, and immuring his person in Criccieth Castle. All Wales protested. The Bishop of Bangor went so far as to excommunicate his temporal ruler, and King Henry himself on his distant throne expressed unmistakable disapproval of the whole business. But Dafydd cared neither for King nor Bishop. To the former he replied that if Griffith were at liberty there would be no peace in Wales, a possibility that seems by no means remote when one considers the performances of this young man in his father's lifetime. Henry was not to be thus put off, and approached the Marches with a strong army. This unmistakable procedure and the almost unanimous support it met with from the Welsh nobility frightened Dafydd into a promise of submission. But the upshot of all this was not precisely what Griffith's Welsh friends had expected. He was released from Criccieth, it is true, but only to be transferred to the Tower of London pending Henry's decision as to his ultimate fate.

## Death of Griffith

Much more important than this disposal of Griffith's person was the extraction from Dafydd by his uncle of one of the most humiliating treaties ever wrung from a Welsh Prince, a treaty which might

well cause his father, the great Llewelyn, to turn in his grave beside the Conway. Every advantage that Llewelyn's strong arm had gained was tamely abandoned by his unworthy son. The Princes of Powys and South Wales were absolved from their oath of homage to the ruler of Gwynedd, which Principality shrank once more to the banks of the Conway. In the meantime Griffith with his young son Owen was left by Henry to languish in the Tower, till, filled with despair, he made a bold bid for freedom. Weaving ropes out of his bed-clothing he let himself down by night from his prison window; but, being a corpulent man, his weight was too much for such slender supports, and he fell from a great height to the ground, breaking his neck upon the spot.

## Dafydd makes war on the English

## 1244

## Henry III. in Wales

The Welsh were greatly exasperated at the news, laying the death of their favourite most naturally at Henry's door, and as the Marcher barons had been encouraged of late in their aggressions and tyrannies by the decline of Welsh strength, the time seemed ripe for another general rising. Dafydd now came out as a warrior and a patriot leader, and Wales rallied to his standard. He was, however, so appalled by the memory of the awful oaths of allegiance he had sworn to his royal uncle and the vengeance of Heaven he had invited in case of their non-observance, that he sent secretly a sum of money to the Pope, – all in fact he could scrape together, – begging for absolution. His Holiness granted this readily enough and professed to recognise his right to independence. But Henry, hearing of it, and disturbed by these manœuvres of the Vicar of God, secretly forwarded twice the amount of money sent by Dafydd to the Pope, who thereupon reversed all his previous decisions. We do not hear whether the Welsh Prince got his money back. He certainly got no value for it. So now in these years of 1244-45 war raged once more throughout Wales and the Marches, and Dafydd, though unendowed with his father's warlike talents, nevertheless by his patriotic action regained the affection of his people. Henry was busy in Scotland and it was nearly a year before he could get to Wales in person; when he did, he pushed his way, with only one brisk fight, to that time-honoured barrier, the Conway estuary, and sat down with a large army of English and Gascons on the green pastures around Deganwy Castle, where he gazed with inevitable helplessness at the Welsh forces crowding on the marsh across the river, or lining the outer ramparts of Snowdonia that frown behind it. The troubles of King John, and even worse, befell his son. Matthew of Paris has preserved for us a "letter from the front" written by a knight, who gives a graphic description of the sufferings of the army, not forgetting himself in the narration of them. Cold, sickness, and hunger were their lot, varied by fierce skirmishes with the Welsh and desperate fights over the English provision boats, which made their way from Chester round the Orme's Head into the Conway. Aber Conway Abbey was ruthlessly sacked by the English soldiery, much to the regret, it should be said, of our "special correspondent" and greatly to the rage of the Welsh, who in revenge slaughtered every wounded Englishman they could lay hands on.

No definite result accrued from this war. Dafydd died a few months after this amid the regrets of his people, whose affection had been secured by his later deeds. He had atoned for his former pusillanimity by the stubborn resistance which marked the close of his life. His death made way for the last and, to Englishmen, the most illustrious of all the long line of Welsh Princes.

## Sons of Griffith appointed to joint rulership of N. Wales

## Henry III. again in Wales

Dafydd left no heir. Strictly speaking, his legal successor was a Norman, Sir Ralph Mortimer, who had married Gwladys, a legitimate daughter of Llewelyn. Such a successor was of course out of the question, and, as Henry abstained from all interference, the nobles of North Wales naturally fell back on the illegitimate branch, that of Griffith, who perished in the moat of the Tower of London. This unfortunate Prince, whose body was about this time removed to Conway and buried with great pomp, had three sons, Llewelyn, Owen, and Dafydd. It would seem as if all past experiences were lost upon the nobles of Gwynedd, since they were fatuous enough to appoint the two elder of these Princes to the joint rulership of their province. The partnership survived an English invasion which Henry made on hearing that the chieftains of South Wales were calling on the new Princes of Gwynedd to aid them, in the belief that a diversion would be opportune. Once more the English appeared on the Conway. As usual, the Welsh with their stock and movables had slipped over the river into the impregnable wilds of Snowdonia, and the King returned as he went, burning St. Asaph's Cathedral on his march. There was now peace in Wales for some years; a lull, as it were, before the great conflict that was to be the end of all things. But peace and plenty, in the words of the chronicler, "begat war." For want of enemies the two brothers turned their arms against each other. Owen, the younger, was the aggressor in this instance, and he justly suffered for it, being overcome by Llewelyn and immured for the rest of his life in the lonely castle of Dolbadarn, whose ivy-mantled shell still stands by the Llanberis lakes.

## Llewelyn III. (or ap Griffith)

## 1257-58

Dafydd, the third brother, had supported Owen, and he, too, was seized and securely confined. Llewelyn, now supreme in North Wales, becomes the outstanding figure around which the closing scene of the long and heroic resistance of the Welsh henceforth gathers. South Wales was in a distracted state. The Lord Marchers and the King's Bailiffs, backed by English support, had taken fresh heart from Welsh dissensions and were pressing hardly on those native chieftains who did not side with them. Every chieftain and noble in Wales whose patriotism had not been tampered with now took up arms. Llewelyn was universally recognised as the national leader, and the years 1257-58 were one long turmoil of war and battle in every part of Wales. Llewelyn had cleared off all recent aggression, fallen with heavy hand on the old settled barons, and smitten the traitors among his fellow-countrymen hip and thigh. A battle was fought on the Towy, which some chroniclers say was the bloodiest ever engaged in between Welsh and English, to the worsting of the latter and the loss of two thousand men.

## King Henry attacks Llewelyn

The Perfeddwlad had been granted to Prince Edward, then Earl of Chester. His agents there had distinguished themselves, even in those cruel times, for intolerable oppression. Llewelyn in his vengeance swept Edward's new property bare from the Conway to the Dee. The future conqueror

and organiser of Wales was at this moment hardly pressed. His Welsh friends, like the then Prince of Powys, were heavily punished by Llewelyn and their lands laid waste. Edward sent to Ireland for succour, but the Irish ships were met at sea by those of Llewelyn and driven back. Henry now returned to his son's assistance, and, drawing together "the whole strength of England from St. Michael's Mount to the river Tweed," executed the familiar promenade across the wasted Perfeddwlad, and experienced the familiar sense of impotence upon the Conway with its well defended forts and frowning mountains alive with agile spearmen.

Once again the tide of battle rolled back to the English border, and the first serious punishment we hear of the Welsh receiving curiously enough was at the hands of some German cavalry imported and led by Lord Audley, whose large horses seem to have struck some terror into the mountaineers. But this is a detail. Llewelyn may almost be said to have repeated the exploits of his grandfather and reconquered Wales. Even Flemish Pembroke had been forced to its knees. His followers to the number of ten thousand had bound themselves by oath to die rather than submit, and these, being picked men and inured to war, were a formidable nucleus for the fighting strength of Wales to rally round. The revolt, too, of Simon de Montfort against Henry was all in favour of Llewelyn, who took the former's part and was able to render him considerable personal service in the decline of his success.

### 1267. Llewelyn makes peace and is recognised by Henry as Prince of all Wales

Through many years of intermittent strife and varying fortunes the balance of power remained with Llewelyn, till in 1267 a peace was made at Shrewsbury very greatly in his favour. By this agreement Henry in consideration of a sum of money undertook to recognise Llewelyn as Prince of all Wales and entitled to receive homage and fealty from every prince and noble in the country save the sadly shorn representatives of the old line of Deheubarth. But after two years' enjoyment of this contract the King's death and the succession of the strenuous Prince Edward threw everything once more into confusion.

### Llewelyn and Edward I., 1275

It is true that Edward, who was in the Holy Land fighting Turks, took two years in finding his way home. But when he did so, in 1274, and was crowned King he threw his father's treaty with Llewelyn to the winds; an action for which, it is true, the latter gave him some excuse by refusing to attend at his coronation, not from recusancy, but from a well-grounded fear that his life would not be safe from certain Anglo-Norman nobles whose territory he would have to pass through.

### Llewelyn's betrothed wife seized by the English

Now comes a passage in Llewelyn's stormy life that his admirers would fain forget, since it records how for love of a woman he reversed the indomitable front he had hitherto shown to the invading English, and submitted almost without a blow to the dictation of the returned Crusader, whom he had so often beaten of old in the Welsh Marches. It was perhaps the memory of these former rebuffs that made the proud and warlike Edward so vindictive towards Llewelyn. A weapon, too, was at this moment placed in his hands which was to assist him in a manner he had not dreamed of. The young daughter of the late Simon de Montfort, to whom the Welsh Prince was betrothed and whom he is said to have deeply loved, was sailing from France to become his bride. In anxiety to escape the English, the ship that bore her unluckily ran among some Bristol vessels off the Scilly Islands. The captains seized the prospective bride and carried her at once to Edward, who was on the point of invading Wales with two armies. Four years of peace had doubtless weakened the strong

Welsh league that had worked such wonders against Henry III. Numbers of his old friends at any rate failed to respond to Llewelyn's call. The Prince had now before him the alternatives of immediate union with his betrothed, or of war and chaos with a lukewarm or hostile South Wales and certainly a hostile Powys added to the power of England.

## Llewelyn makes peace with Edward I

After being cooped up for some weeks in the Snowdon mountains by the royal army, Llewelyn signed at length a treaty with Edward, the conditions of which were as humiliating as if he had been crushed to the earth by a series of disastrous battles, whereas he was in truth the still recognised suzerain of all Wales. To put the case, or the gist of it, briefly: all Wales except the Snowdon lordships (the present Carnarvonshire) was to revert absolutely to the King of England, Welsh and alien lords alike becoming his tenants. Even Anglesey was to revert to the Crown in the event of Llewelyn's dying without issue. Nothing was to be left of Welsh independence but the "cantrefs," or lordships, constituting Snowdonia; and over this remnant Llewelyn's heirs were to be graciously permitted to reign in peace. The Prince's passion had proved greater than his patriotism; the treaty was signed at Conway, and King Edward, who had advanced unopposed to Cardiganshire, withdrew his troops.

## Llewelyn's marriage

"The force of love," says the chronicler, groaning over this depressing episode, "does indeed work wonders." Llewelyn, not long afterwards, was married in great pomp at Worcester in presence of the whole Court of England, the King himself giving the bride away, and the late ruler of all Wales and now lord merely of Snowdonia, with a life interest in Anglesey, retired to the obscurity of his contracted honours. Here, amid the Carnarvon mountains, he began ere long to feel the prickings of conscience, and remorse for the weak part he had played.

Edward, too, kept open the wound by frequently summoning him to this place or that on various pleas, and the Welsh Prince, dreading treachery and remembering his father, Griffith's, fate, as constantly refused to go without a guaranty of safety. The greater part of the present counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan were already King's ground. As forming part of the old Principality of South Wales, and therefore not Marcher property, they had come to Edward. A county court had before this been established at Carmarthen, and efforts to make this territory shire ground had been feebly made, but they were now vigorously renewed, and the Perfeddwlad was treated in savage fashion. Ferocity was the distinguishing mark of all the servants of Edward I.

## Cruelty of Edward's government, 1281

## Dafydd turns patriot

## Llewelyn and Dafydd unite for resistance

## Llewelyn rejects all terms

## Outside sympathy for Wales

From every part of Wales came the cry of despairing Welshmen ground to powder by the insensate tyrannies of the King's Bailiffs and the Lord Marchers, now left entirely to their own wild wills. Llewelyn's third brother, Dafydd, who had played the part of King's friend and traitor to his own people for most of his life, was rewarded by the Barony of Denbigh. It was the year 1281 and the time was now ripe for the last scene of the last act in this long, sanguinary struggle. Many of the chieftains of Wales, thinking, as they had often thought before, that death was preferable to the intolerable oppression from which the country now suffered, approached Dafydd at Denbigh and assured him that if he would even thus tardily be reconciled to his brother Llewelyn and lead them, they would strike yet one more blow for freedom. Dafydd, probably with their knowledge, was smarting under some real or fancied slight from his patron, King Edward, though maybe his heart was really touched at the extreme sufferings of his countrymen. At any rate he played the man to an extent that more than atoned for his unworthy past. Dafydd and his brother Llewelyn now met at the former's castle upon the high rock of Denbigh, and there the Welsh chieftains who had declared for death or freedom rallied to the standard raised by the grandsons of Llewelyn the Great, and held upon "the craggy hill in Rhos" the last formal council of either peace or war that was to be recorded in the pages of Welsh history. The news of the proposed rising had reached England before Llewelyn had left his palace at Aber, and had caused some consternation. Edward and his barons had regarded the Welsh question as settled, and thought that on the death of the now pacified and uxorious Llewelyn the last vestige of independence would quietly lapse. The Archbishop of Canterbury was greatly distressed. He sent word to Llewelyn that he was coming to see him for the love he bore to Wales, and without the King's knowledge; and he then, in actual fact, travelled all the way to Aber and used every argument, persuasive and coercive, he could think of to turn the Welsh Prince from what seemed a mad and hopeless enterprise. He threatened him with the whole physical power of England, the whole spiritual power of Rome. Never did the last Llewelyn, or indeed any Llewelyn, show a nobler front than on this occasion. For himself, he was materially well provided for and beyond the reach of the persecution that pressed upon most of his fellow-countrymen. But they had called to him in their despair, and desperate as the risk might be he had resolved to stand or fall with them. A schedule of conditions was sent him from the English King and his council, under which everything was to be overlooked, if only he and his people would return to their allegiance. Among other things an English county, with a pension of £1000 a year, was offered him in lieu of Snowdon. Llewelyn replied with scorn that he wanted no English county, that his patrimony was lawfully his own by virtue of a long line of ancestors; that even if he himself were base enough to yield up the Snowdon lordships, his subjects there would never submit to a rule that was hateful to them and had brought such misery on their

neighbours of the Perfeddwlad. It was better, he declared, to die with honour than to live in slavery; and it may perhaps be repeated to his advantage that Llewelyn himself was only a sufferer so far as his proper pride was concerned, though it is possible he felt some pricks of conscience about the concessions made two years previously. At any rate he nobly atoned for them. There is evidence that admiration for the gallant stand made by this remnant of the Welsh was being kindled not only across the seas but even among Englishmen themselves. "Even Englishmen and foreigners," says Matthew of Paris, who was assuredly no Welshman, "were touched with pity and admiration."

## Dafydd rejects Edward's terms

Prince Dafydd, who was offered his pardon on condition of immediately repairing to the Holy Land, was equally stubborn, though perhaps the temptation to be otherwise was not so great. He replied to the effect that he had no intention of undertaking a Crusade at the dictates of others. However admirable was this tardy patriotism, his past record from that point of view was wholly dishonourable, for he had been consistently a King's man. On the other hand, if, as was possibly the case with many Welsh nobles, he had sincerely believed that submission to English rule was the wisest thing for Welshmen, his abrupt repudiation of the man whose favours he had sought and received is not readily excusable. In this direction it is urged that the Anglo-Norman garrisons in these first years of Edward's reign had made life so intolerable that Dafydd was sufficiently touched by his countrymen's sufferings to risk everything and join his gallant brother in so forlorn a hope. "It was better for the kingdom at large that Wales should be governed," wrote the brothers to Edward, "by her own Princes, paying that homage to the King of England which they had never refused, than by greedy strangers whose only thought was to oppress her people, despoil her churches, and advance their own private interests."

## Fighting on the Menai Straits

The fall of the curtain upon this remnant of Welsh independence was now but a matter of a few months. Edward's answer to the Princes was the despatch of a fleet to Anglesey, and of an army along the north coast route, containing large numbers of Gascons, and even some Spaniards. Edward himself went as far as Conway, meeting on the way with a heavy repulse and considerable loss in what was soon to be Flintshire. Dafydd, who was commanding in the north, was pushed into Snowdonia. The English army in Anglesey bridged the Menai with boats, and a strong detachment, crossing before the connection was complete, encountered the Welsh near Bangor. The invaders, however, were all cut off and slain in a fierce battle fought upon the shore, among them being many barons, knights, and squires.

These successes could only delay the end and exasperate the inevitable conquerors. Llewelyn, not wishing to be starved into surrender among the Snowdon mountains, had gone south to rouse the new shire land of Cardigan and Carmarthen, and the warlike Radnor tenants of the Mortimers. The Earl of Gloucester with another English army had meanwhile penetrated into South Wales and defeated a large force of Welsh patriots at Llandilo in the valley of the Towy.

## Death of the last Llewelyn

### Llewelyn's head carried through London in triumph

Llewelyn came up, fighting his way through Cardiganshire, and had reached Builth on the Wye, when, on December 11th, he met his fate. The story of his death is too much confused, and there is no space here for repeating the slightly varying versions of the tragedy, but it seems quite clear that he was tempted away from the main body of his army by treachery, and slain when he was without arms in his hands. His head was struck off and despatched at once to King Edward at Conway, who, receiving it with great joy, sent it immediately by sea to his army in Anglesey. Thence the gruesome trophy was forwarded to London, where crowds of people met it outside the city and placed upon the gory brows a wreath of ivy in mockery of the old Welsh prophecy that a Prince of Welsh blood should once more be crowned in London. It was then fixed upon the point of a lance and carried in triumph through the streets to the pillory, and from the pillory to its final resting-place above the gate of the Tower.

### Capture and execution of Dafydd

Thus perished the last representative of the long line of Welsh Princes that may be said to have had its rise with the sons of Cunedda eight centuries before. The last dim spark of Welsh independence flickered feebly for a few weeks, till the very recesses of Snowdonia, for almost the first time in history, gave back their echoes to the blast of English bugles, and the wild passes of Nant Francon and Llanberis felt the tramp of alien feet. Dafydd found himself alone, a hunted outlaw in the forests of the Vale of Clwyd. He was soon captured and taken to Shrewsbury, where a Parliament was then sitting. Llewelyn's remains had been treated with doubtful logic and poor chivalry as a traitor. What treatment he would have met with at Edward's hands as a prisoner we cannot know. But Dafydd could expect nothing but the worst and he received it. He was tried as an English baron at Shrewsbury and sentenced to be quartered, disembowelled, and beheaded. His quarters were distributed among four English cities, Winchester and York, it is said, quarrelling for the honour of his right shoulder, while his head was sent to moulder by his brother's over the gateway of the Tower of London. A story runs that while his entrails were being burned his heart leaped from the flames and struck the executioner who was feeding them.

## 1282. Edward settles the new government of Wales

### The Statutes of Rhuddlan

All resistance worthy of mention was now over in Wales. The six centuries or thereabouts of its history as a separate nation in whole or in part had closed. A new epoch was to open, and Edward was the man to mark the division between the past and the future in emphatic fashion. Hitherto, though statesmanlike in his views, he had been in actual deed both cruel and unjust to Wales, and allowed his agents to be still more so; but now that resistance was crushed he dropped the warrior and tyrant and showed himself the statesman that he was. Most of the Welshmen that had remained in arms received their pardons, though a few took service abroad. The King exacted no sanguinary vengeance, but followed, rather, the more merciful and practical course of providing against the

chance of his Welsh subjects requiring it in future. He went to Wales with his Court and remained there for nearly three years. He made Rhuddlan his principal headquarters, rebuilding its ancient castle; and at Conway, Harlech, and Carnarvon, besides some less formidable fortresses, he left those masterpieces of defensive construction that have been the admiration of all subsequent ages. From Rhuddlan in due course he issued the famous statutes called by its name, which proclaimed at once the death-knell of Old Wales and the fact of its territorial fusion with the realm of England. The details of the settlement were laborious, and the spectacle of an English Court spending in all nearly three busy years in Wales is evidence of the thoroughness with which Edward did his work.

It is enough here to say that with the exception of modern Denbighshire, which was left in lordships, Edward carved North Wales into the present counties of Flint, Anglesey, Carnarvon, and Merioneth. Powys and South Wales being honeycombed with Anglo-Norman lordships and reconciled Welsh chieftains, he shrank probably from disentangling a confusion that brought no particular danger to himself, and from a course that would have embroiled him with the whole feudal interest of the Marches.

The still mainly Welsh districts, however, of Cardigan and Carmarthen, he had already, as we have seen, formed into counties. They were now, like those of the North, to be governed by lieutenants, sheriffs, and justices, and in all things to resemble English counties, except in the privilege of sending representatives to Parliament. Wales was kept separate from England, however, in so far as its immediate feudal lord was not the King of England, but the King's eldest son; and the Principality of Wales at this time, it must be remembered, meant only the royal counties.

## Edward's intentions just

Edward's laws for the conquered country were just and his intention not ungenerous. He reduced the rentals hitherto due to the Welsh Princes and listened patiently to the grievances of the people. He enacted that both in counties and lordships the old Welsh laws should be those of the Welsh so far as possible, and that justice should be administered in both languages, and he sent the Archbishop of Canterbury on a long visitation to take note of the destruction to churches perpetrated during the recent wars, and to arrange for their repair.

He was severe on the bards, it is true, but he did not slaughter them, as an old fiction asserts. Their wandering avocations were sternly repressed, and with the business that he had in hand it is not easy to see what other course he could have taken with men whose trade then chiefly consisted in recalling the wrongs of Wales and urging revenge. The whole business was concluded by a great tournament at Nevin, on the Carnarvon coast, which was attended by the flower of Welsh, English, and Gascon chivalry.

## The King's return to London

When the King returned to London after his long absence, he went with splendid ceremonial and a vast procession to the Tower and to Westminster Abbey, causing the regalia of the exterminated Welsh Princes and the skull of St. David to be borne before him. Nor must one omit mention of the immortal but grim joke which tradition says that he played upon the Welsh nobility before leaving the country. For does not every schoolboy know how, having promised them a Prince who was born in Wales and could speak no English, he sent Queen Eleanor to Carnarvon for the birth of Edward the Second?

### 1295

A good deal can be said of the century that was to elapse before our story opens, but not much that is of vital import. In 1295, thirteen years after the conquest, Madoc ap Meredith, a connection of Llewelyn's, made a last attempt to rouse the Welsh. It proved abortive, but was serious enough to stop Edward from going to France, and to take him down to Conway, where it is said that on a certain occasion a high tide cut him off from his men, and nearly delivered him into the hands of the insurgents.

### Wales through the fourteenth century

It would be too much to say that the next hundred years in Wales were those of peace and prosperity. But by comparison with the past they might not untruly be called so. No serious friction occurred between the two races; while the long wars with France and constant broils with Scotland engrossed the attention of the Welsh aristocracy, both Norman and native. Nor, again, was it only the nobles and gentry that found respite from their domestic quarrels in a combined activity upon the unfortunate soil of France. Welsh soldiers as well as Welsh gentlemen served by thousands in the armies of England, and few people remember that about a third of the victorious army at Cressy were Welshmen. This long companionship in arms and partnership in almost unparallelled glories must have done something to lessen the instinctive antipathy with which the two peoples had from time immemorial regarded each other. Yet how much of the ancient enmity survived, only requiring some spark to kindle it, will be evident enough as I proceed to the main part of my story, and the doings of the indomitable Welshman who is its hero.

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