

Englishmen with Englishmen, and not of Englishmen with Northmen.

The death of Eadred, in 955, handed over the realm to a child-king, his nephew, Eadwig. Eadwig was swayed by a woman of high lineage, Æthelgifu; and the quarrel between her and the older councilors of Eadred broke into open strife at the coronation feast. On the young king's insolent withdrawal to her chamber, Dunstan, at the bidding of the Witan, drew him roughly back to his seat. But the feast was no sooner ended than a sentence of outlawry drove the abbot over sea, while the triumph of Æthelgifu was crowned, in 957, by the marriage of her daughter to the king, and the spoliation of the monasteries which Dunstan had befriended. As the new queen was Eadwig's kinswoman, the religious opinion of the day regarded his marriage as incestuous, and it was followed by a revolution. At the opening of 958 Archbishop Odo parted the king from his wife by solemn sentence; while the Mercians and Northumbrians rose in revolt, proclaimed Eadwig's brother Eadgar their king, and recalled Dunstan. The death of Eadwig, a few months later, restored the unity of the realm; but his successor, Eadgar, was only a boy of fourteen, and throughout his reign the actual direction of affairs lay in the hands of Dunstan, whose elevation to the see of Canterbury set him at the head of the Church as of the State. The noblest tribute to his rule lies in the silence of our chroniclers. His work, indeed, was a work of settlement, and such a work was best done by the simple enforcement of peace. During the years of rest in which the stern hand of the Primate enforced justice and order, Northmen and Englishmen drew together into a single people. Their union was the result of no direct policy of fusion; on the contrary, Dunstan's policy preserved to the conquered Danelagh its local rights and local usages. But he recognized the men of the Danelagh as Englishmen: he employed Northmen in the royal service, and promoted them to high posts in Church

and State. For the rest he trusted to time, and time justified his trust. The fusion was marked by a memorable change in the name of the land. Slowly as the conquering tribes had learned to know themselves by the one national name of Englishmen, they learned yet more slowly to stamp their name on the land they had won. It was not till Eadgar's day that the name of Britain passed into the name of England, the land of Englishmen, England. The same vigorous rule which secured rest for the country during these years of national union, told on the growth of material prosperity. Commerce sprang into a wider life. The laws of Æthelred, which provide for the protection and regulation of foreign trade, only recognize a state of things which grew up under Eadgar. It was in Eadgar's day that London rose to commercial greatness.

VII.

CNUT, THE GREAT DANISH KING.—FREEMAN.

[On the accession of the second Æthelred, named the Unready, the Danish wars began again, and soon passed into their third phase—an attempt on the part of the King of all Denmark to subjugate the kingdom of England. The fatal policy was adopted of buying off the invaders. This led to more frequent invasions, and to ever-increasing demands for money, until at length the country was exhausted and could pay no more; while, under the enervating influences of the time, the English military system seems to have utterly broken down. The Conquest, nearly finished by Swegen, was completed by his son Cnut, who thus became King of all England. He won his success by unscrupulous means, but a great change came over him as soon as his power was firmly established.]

THIS gradual change in the disposition of Cnut makes him one of the most remarkable, and, to an Englishman, one of the most interesting, characters in history. There is no other instance—unless Rolf, in Normandy, be admitted as a forerunner on a smaller scale—of a barbarian conqueror, en-