

Chap. IV. The Government of the Danes.

Upon this unhappy event Canute was proclaimed King, who making use of the old Maxim that a Traitor is never to be depended upon, put most of those who had betrayed his Predecessors to death, & among the rest Edric, his son, & great numbers of the Nobility related to him; & to break still more the power of the English Nobility, he gave many of their Estates to the Danes, & wink'd at their plundering whatever they pleas'd.

In this terrible manner did Canute lay the foundation of his Government, which producing a general discontent, made it necessary for him to take every precaution to secure his Possessions; he had most to fear from Ethelred's two Sons in Normandy; to avert that Storm, he propos'd to marry Emma Ethelred's Widow, which she barely consented to.

The following Year he very wisely at a great Council held at Oxford, reestablish'd the antient Saxon Laws, to these he adher'd pretty strictly the rest of his Reign that pass'd for the most part in peace. He died in 1036. without naming his Successor.

He seems to have been a Valiant Man, & a Wise Prince; He at first treated his English Subjects with great cruelty; but when the barbarous Customs of these times are considered & the great injuries He had receiv'd from Ethelred, & the Manner the Danes had been treated in that Reign, He will appear in a less cruel light; He lower'd indeed the power of the Nobility, & left few of them remaining, but to their faction & treachery were in great measure owing all the evils this Country had suffer'd for fifty Years before.

After Canute's death His two Son Harold & Hardicnute divided the Kingdom, the last of these remain'd in Denmark most of the time that Harold liv'd; this last Prince's short Reign furnishes us with nothing remarkable except the murder of Ethelred's son Alfred; He dying in 1040. Hardicnute succeed'd to the whole Kingdom; He was Alfred's half Brother being son of Emma, who in revenge of His Brother's death, order'd Harold's body to be dug up & cast into the Thames.

We have nothing further to say of this Prince who died in 1042. except the tenderness He shew'd His Mother & His Half

Another Edward whom he invited over, & kept with him.

Chap. V. From the restoration of the Saxon
Race to the arrival of the Normans.

The English tired of the Foreign Yoke, rose in all parts & expelled the Danes, & gave the Crown to Edward, from his gentle behaviour call'd the Confessor, who preferring a private life, was with great difficulty brought to accept it, & the more so as one of the Conditions was His Marrying the Daughter of Earl Godwin a very amiable Princeps herself, but sprung from a very turbulent family; Her Father having with His Sons the Hereditary Government of half the Kingdom, by which means He govern'd England despotically & was the occasion of all the Misfortunes of this Reign.

The first Step Edward took by the advice of Godwin was to seize His Mother's Treasures at Winchester, for so far was the King from being rapacious, that He took off the heavy tax of Danegeld; tho' this gain'd Him the affection of the people, yet His great partiality for the Normans with whom He pass'd His early life, lost Him the hearts of the Nobility;

of these He invited over several, to some He gave Bishopricks; He bestowed the Archbishoprick of Canterbury on one Probert a Norman Monk, on whose Counsel He greatly depended, & thus by degrees introduc'd the Norman Language & Customs into England.

Earl Godwin highly exasperated at the Archbishop's favour, began to sow Sedition amongst the Nobility, when an Accident happen'd that produc'd an open revolt; Eustace Count of Brologne