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was divided into the three commotes of Rhuddlan, Coleshill and Prestatyn. But it has already been shown that this district was seized by the English of Mercia not later than the end of the eighth century,⁷⁴ and all the evidence goes to show that the bulk of it remained in English hands until it was reconquered by Owain Gwynedd in the twelfth. Even the names of the commotes show how late was the organisation of this country as a Welsh cantref, for they bear the names of the castles built by the Normans to secure their hold upon the district. At the period which is now under consideration, Tegeingl was a part of Mercia, save perhaps the portion around Llanellwyr or St. Asaph, where the bishops of this quarter of Wales maintained a precarious and uneasy footing on the storm-swept frontier between the two races. It is true that nothing is known with any certainty of the history of the see before the twelfth century, but the place was then regarded as a bishop's seat of old standing and some ancient title no doubt underlay the extensive claims of the successors of St. Kentigern to territorial lordship in the northern part of the Vale of Clwyd.

II. THE CANTREFS OF POWYS.

Central Wales may be regarded as a broad table-land, through which rivers great and small furrow their way in winding courses to the sea, but which has few clearly marked mountain ranges or stretches of fertile plain. The ancient kingdom of Powys⁷⁵ took in most of this region, extending in its widest limits from the neighbourhood of Mold to the river Wye, near Glasbury and Hay.⁷⁶ It included some productive districts, such as the lower valley of the Dee and the well-watered meadows of the upper Severn, so that its children were not altogether without warrant in hailing it as "Powys, the Eden of Wales".⁷⁷ But most of it

⁷⁴ Pp. 201-2.

⁷⁵ The view of Zeuss (*Gr. Celt.* (2), pp. 1053-4), that the name is to be connected with the "poues = quies" of the Oxford glosses and to be interpreted as meaning "settlement," still holds the field (*Celt. Br.* (2), p. 218).

⁷⁶ In the "Dream of Rhonabwy" (*Mab.* 144) the limits of Powys are given as "oporford (*i.e.*, Pulford, near Chester) hyt yg gwauan yg gwarthaf arwystli" (some point near Llangurig in South Montgomeryshire). But this was in the twelfth century, after the separation from the province of "Rhwyng Gwy a Hafren".

⁷⁷ "Powys paradwys Cymry" (*Myv. Arch.* I. 114 (92); *IV. Anc. Bks.* ii. p. 259).

was pastoral upland, a country well fitted to be the nurse of a race of hardy, independent warriors, lovers of tribal freedom, haters of the sluggish and toilsome life of the lowland tiller of the soil, and tenacious holders of ancient privileges.⁷⁸ Such were the men of Powys, inheritors of the old Brythonic traditions, in whom incessant warfare with the Mercian English kept alive the ancient tribal characteristics.

Tribal independence does not seem, however, in this case to have brought about the division of the country into separate chieftaincies, for, so far as the scanty records show, there was but one kingdom of Powys and this maintained its unity until it was absorbed in the kingdom of Gwynedd in the ninth century. The founder of the dynasty was one Cadell Ddyrnllug (the Blackfisted?), a contemporary of St. Germanus.⁷⁹ He was, so the story ran, the swineherd of the tyrant King Benlli, and, when the gates of the royal stronghold were churlishly shut against the saint and his companions, offered the shelter of his cottage to the men of God and killed and dressed for their supper the calf of his solitary cow. The inevitable sequel follows; fire from heaven struck the citadel of Benlli (which was probably perched on Moel Fenlli⁸⁰ in the Clwydian range), so that it was instantly consumed and never again rebuilt, while Cadell and his nine sons became kings of Powys. Their progeny still ruled the country when the *Historia Brittonum*, which is our authority for the legend, was composed.⁸¹ Whatever may be the historical basis of the story, it is certain that the family which governed Powys during the period 600-850 traced their origin to Cadell. The Selyf ap Cynan who fell in the battle of Chester was his descendant in the seventh generation,⁸²

⁷⁸ See Cynddelw's poem entitled "Breiniau Gwŷr Powys" in *Myv. Arch.* I. 257 (186).

⁷⁹ *Hist. Britt.* cc. 32-5; pedigrees in Harl. MS. 3859, as given in *Cymr.* ix. 179, 181, 182, with Phillimore's notes. The old Welsh "Durnluc," for which see *Cymr.* vii. 119, was altered at an early date (see, for example, Jesus Coll. MS. 20 in *Cymr.* viii. 87) to "Deyrnllwg," and thus was evolved the mythical region of Teyrnllwg, placed by *Iolo MSS.* 86, between the Dee and (apparently) the Cumbrian Derwent.

⁸⁰ The hill-fort on Moel Fenlli was occupied in the Roman period (p. 89 above) and there is a Llanarmon, under the patronage of St. Germanus, not far off.

⁸¹ "Et a semine illorum omnis regio Povisorum regitur usque in hodiernum diem" (*Hist. Britt.* c. 35). The passage is found in all the MSS. of the *Historia*.

⁸² P. 181.

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and the Elise to whose memory was erected the monument popularly known as "Eliseg's Pillar" stood as his representative in the tenth.⁸³ Elise was the son of Gwylog and Sanan, daughter of Noe ab Arthur of Dyfed; ⁸⁴ he flourished in the middle of the eighth century, and, so far as can be ascertained from old readings of the now obliterated inscription on his monument, waged successful war against the English. His grandson Cadell died king of Powys in 808 ⁸⁵ and was succeeded by his son Cyngen. Under Cyngen the realm of Powys was reduced to sore straits, for in 822 it was overrun by the English, but this was but a temporary check, since Cyngen, who set up the stone cross to his great-grandfather's memory, was clearly in possession of Ial, and speaks, indeed, of the whole realm of Powys as though it were under his sway. After a long reign he closed his career with a pilgrimage to Rome, where he died in or about 854, the last king of Powys of the line of Cadell.⁸⁶

During the period which is now being dealt with much of what was reckoned Powys in later ages was in the hands of the English. The line of Offa's Dyke not only ran through Tegeingl, but also intersected the districts known in the Middle Ages as the commotes of Ystrad Alun and Yr Hob and of Maelor, the English Bromfield; it left little to the Welsh save moor and mountain. It would appear that the ancient home of the kings of Powys in this part of their dominions was the commote of Ial, a long strip of upland which took in the western part of the valley of the Alun and abutted upon the Dee where it works its devious way through the gorges of Llangollen. Here was the hill-fort, named after Brân, a famous figure of Celtic story,⁸⁷ which guarded the upper waters of the

⁸³ The inscription on "Eliseg's Pillar" is only known from a transcript by Edward Llwyd. See Penn. ii. 7-10; *Arch. Camb.* I. i. (1846), 17, 32; VI. ix. (1909), 43-8. At present hardly a word can be read (*Lap. W.* 200). Romilly Allen points out that in form the monument belongs to a well-known Mercian type (*Arch. Camb.* V. xvi. [1899], 19). According to Phillimore, Llwyd's Eliseg is probably a misreading of Eliset, which represents Elisedd, the old form of Elise and Elis (*Cymr.* ix. 181).

⁸⁴ *Cymr.* ix. 175.

⁸⁵ Harl. MS. 3859 s.a.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ A doublet of the name Dinas Brân appears to be preserved in Dinbren or Dinbran, the name of the township in which the castle stands. See *Goss. Guide*, pp. 130-1. The township is now, with the rest of the parish of Llangollen, in the Nanheudwy division of the hundred of Chirk, but appears to have been originally in Ial.

"wizard stream"; here was the pillar which told of the valour of King Elise, and here was the ancient church, Llanarmon yn Ial, which commemorated the services of St. Germanus to the founder of the fortunes of the house of Powys.⁸⁸ Ial was the heart of Northern Powys and remained in the possession of the Welsh as long as they retained their independence. Higher up the Dee was the small commote of Glyndyfrdwy, not yet rendered famous by the exploits of its great chieftain, Owen Glyndwr, and still more to the west the valley broadened out into the plain of Edeyrnion, a commote which took its name from Edern, or Eternus, ap Cunedda. No record is preserved of any dynasty deriving its origin from Edern and it is probable that the district, with the two subsidiary commotes of Dinmael and Glyndyfrdwy, was at an early date brought under the sway of the rulers of Powys. It included one important church, that of Corwen or Corfaen,⁸⁹ where there is an ancient cross of the same type as Elise's Pillar.⁹⁰

Westward of Edeyrnion lay the border cantref⁹¹ of Penllyn, of which the centre was Llyn Tegid or Pimblemere,⁹² now Bala Lake. Ardudwy and Meirionydd hemmed it in on the west and it was thus exposed to the attacks of the men of Gwynedd, to whom it ultimately fell in the days of Llywelyn ab Iorwerth. Encircled by lofty mountains, which enclose as in a girdle the broad waters of the lake and their fringe of meadows, the land is one of legend rather than of history, playing but a small part in the conflicts of mediæval Wales, but rich in romantic memories. It was the realm of Gronw the Radiant, who stole the love of the magic bride of Llew Llaw

⁸⁸ It was probably the Llanarmon to which Gruffydd ap Cynan made a death-bed gift of ten shillings (*Buch. Gr. ap C.* 128 (734)). There was a special cult of Germanus in Powys, for the five principal churches dedicated to him are within the old bounds of the province (Rees, *Welsh SS.* 131; add to the four mentioned Castle Caereinion). In this connection it is interesting to note that the saint was mentioned in the inscription on Elise's pillar.

⁸⁹ For the old form see *Bruts*, 324; *B. Saes. s.a.* 1164; *Tax. Nich.* 286; *Arch. Camb.* I. ii. (1847), 241.

⁹⁰ *Arch. Camb.* V. xvi. (1899), 19.

⁹¹ So treated in all the lists, though styled a cymwd in the Statute of Rhuddlan (*LL.* ii. 908) and the Record of Carnarvon (261).

⁹² The name first appears in *Gir. Camb.* vi. 176 (*Descr.* i. 5), where the form is "Pemmelesmere". Rejecting the impossible derivation from "pum plwyf," the five parishes of Penllyn, one may suggest that Penllyn itself furnishes the first element of the compound.

CHAP. Gyffes and perished miserably by the hand of the injured husband ;⁹³ Llywarch the Aged, warrior and poet, is said to have lived there in the sixth century and to have held his court on the mound near Llanfor Church which bears his name ;⁹⁴ even the great Arthur took his place among the legendary heroes of the lakeside, for was not *Caer Gai* the home of his foster-father Cynyr and the young *Cai ap Cynyr* the companion of his boyish sports ?⁹⁵ *Caer Gai* may have been the royal residence at the head of the lake from which the district took its name of *Penllyn* (Lakehead), although in later times *Y Bala*, which signifies "The Outlet,"⁹⁶ was the seat of the chief stronghold of the region.

The mountain ridge which divides the valley of the *Dee* from that of the *Ceiriog* formed the backbone of the commote of *Nanheudwy*,⁹⁷ which included an important church, once the mother church of a wide area,⁹⁸ but apart from *Llangollen* was undistinguished. Another commote of the second rank was *Cynllaith*, watered by the stream from which it took its name and having as its centre the church of *Llansilin*. *Sycharth*, which was perhaps the ancient "*llys*" of the commote, had not yet become famous as the home of *Owen Glyndwr*. Further south came the rich commote⁹⁹ of *Mochnant*, the "fair wooded country" of a mediæval Welsh poet,¹⁰⁰ where the valley of the *Tanat* broadens out into a fertile plain beneath the very shadow of the *Berwyn* range. In the twelfth century political conflicts brought about a division of this region into the two commotes of *Uch Rhaeadr* and *Is Rhaeadr* (Above and Below Rhaeadr), and from that day to this the rushing stream

⁹³ *Mab.* 74-81. The mound at *Pont Mwnwgl y Llyn* anciently bore, it is said, the name of *Gronw Befr* (*Penn.* ii. 215).

⁹⁴ "*Pabell Llywarch Hên*," a stone enclosure, and "*Castell Llywarch*," a mound, have long been known at *Llanfor* (*Camb. Reg.* i. 192 ; *Evans, Rep.* ii. p. 453 ; *Penn.* ii. 209 ; *Lewis, Top. Dict. s.v. Llanvawr*).

⁹⁵ See *Goss. Guide*, p. 153 ; *Celtic Folklore*, p. 693 ; note 62 to chap. iii. above.

⁹⁶ *Gibson*, 662 ; *Evans, Dict. s.v.*

⁹⁷ This form may represent "*Nannau Dwy*," "the glens of *Dee*". Cf. the "*Nanneudui*" of *Ann. C. MS. B. s.a.* 1132.

⁹⁸ *Thomas, St. Asaph*, p. 505-6.

⁹⁹ The original *Mochnant* was a commote (*Mab.* 62, *kymwt ym powys a elwir . . . mochnant*).

¹⁰⁰ *Llywarch ap Llywelyn* calls it "*uochnant kein amgant coedawc*" (*Myv. Arch.* I. 305 (215)).

which takes its name from the well-known waterfall in the Berwyns has been a boundary line, first separating Powys Fadog from Powys Wenwynwyn and then the county of Denbigh from that of Montgomery. But the region is naturally one; it found its ecclesiastical centre in Llanrhaeadr Mochnant, the church of St. Doewan, which was still served by a college or community of clergy as late as the days of Edward I.¹⁰¹ Pennant, the church of the female saint Melangell, was also an ancient sanctuary, remarkable to this day for the girth of its venerable yews, but it lay hid in a fold of the mountains, remote from the centre of the commote, and can never have held the dominant position of Llanrhaeadr.

The river Cain gave its name to the cantref of Mechain,¹⁰² which took in the whole of the valley of this stream and was bounded on the south by the river Efyrynwy, now known as the Vyrnwy. A great forest in its centre divided it into the commotes of Mechain Uwch Coed and Mechain Is Coed (Above and Below the Wood).¹⁰³ It was one of the most desirable parts of Powys, with abundance of land suited for tillage and no lack, at the same time, of fish and game. "Llys Fechain," the court of the cantref, stood on the banks of the Cain to the east of Llanfyllin, and its site is probably indicated by the mound known as Tomen Gastell.¹⁰⁴ "Llan Fechain," the prince's chapel, dedicated to that special patron of Powys, St. Garmon, was not far off. But Llanfechain was far outshone in importance as a holy place by the church of Meifod, on the southern border of the cantref.¹⁰⁵ Founded by a scion of the royal house of Powys, Tysilio son of Brochwel of the Tusks (Ysgythrog), ruled by a "clas" which could offer bards and other wayfarers a regal hospitality, and wielding authority over the daughter churches of Pool, Guilsfield, Alberbury and

¹⁰¹ *Tax. Nich.* 286a (ecclesia de Rauraeader); Thomas, *St. Asaph*, p. 520.

¹⁰² For the first part of the name (= field, plain) see *Urk. Spr.* 198, s.v. magos. It is seen also in Machynlleth, Mathafarn, Mathrafal and Mallwyd (*Goss. Guide*, cxix.).

¹⁰³ The townships of the two commotes of Mechain, save for the parish of Llanfyllin, are given in *App. Land Com.* 451.

¹⁰⁴ Llys Fechain is a township in the parish of Llanfechain (Thomas, *St. Asaph*, p. 755).

¹⁰⁵ For the church of Meifod see Thomas, *St. Asaph*, pp. 774-81; for Tysilio, *Welsh SS.* 277-79. Cynddelw's poem is printed in *Myv. Arch.* I. 243-7 (177-9).

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Llanfair Caereinion, Meifod was the premier church of Powys, and, until the foundation of the Cistercian abbeys of Ystrad Marchell and Valle Crucis, was the chosen burial-place of its kings.¹⁰⁶ Its praises were sung by Cynddelw—

Stately is the holy place by candle shine,
Gracious its men with their long drinking-horns of flashing blue.¹⁰⁷

It was "a privileged monastery," a "sepulchre of kings," lifting its proud head above the flooded meadows of Efyrynwy.¹⁰⁸

A number of smaller commotes lined the Severn from Molverley to Berriew. Deuddwr, the land of the "two waters," occupied the peninsula formed by the confluence of the Vyrnwy and the Severn; Ystrad Marchell lay around the church of Guilsfield, of which the Welsh name is Cegidfa (Hemlock Field); Llannerch Hudol was a small tract to the south and west of Welshpool. The dwellers in these lands fronted the Mercian villages on the western slopes of the Long Mountain, Buttington, Leighton, Forden, and the rest, and, keepers as they were of the fords of the Severn, were chiefly intent upon the border warfare. Romance might tell of the halcyon days when Arthur and his attendant knights had spread their camp for a full mile along the river in the plain of Argyngroeg,¹⁰⁹ but such ease and security were not known in the age of Offa. It is possible that Pool itself, called Welsh Pool to distinguish it from Poole in Dorset, may owe its origin to an English settlement,¹¹⁰ thrown across for the defence of a ford, though there was on the hillside hard by a Welsh ecclesiastical foundation, known to the natives as Trallwng Llywelyn, or Llywelyn's Bog.¹¹¹ A little further south was the strong post

¹⁰⁶ Madog ap Maredudd (d. 1160) and Gruffydd Maelor (d. 1191) were buried at Meifod.

¹⁰⁷

"Berth y lloc wrth lleu babir,
Berth y chlas ae chyrn glas gloyuhir."

"Pabir" is a variant of "pabwyr," the two being derived from different forms of "papyrus" (*Mots Latins*, p. 192). "Clas" and "lloc" both suggest the monastic origin of the church; the latter, from the Lat. "locus" (*Mots Latins*, p. 182; *Gildas*, ed. Williams, p. 262), is retained in the compound form "mynach-log".

¹⁰⁸ "Breiniauc loc," "guydva brenhined," and "balch y lloc rac y llifeir-yeint" are the phrases referred to.

¹⁰⁹ *Mab*. 148.

¹¹⁰ It would otherwise have hardly had an English name.

¹¹¹ *Bruts*, 290, 339. The name is explained by Edward Llwyd (Gibson, 653); cf. also *Cymr.* xi. 39, where a number of similar forms are given.

of Castell Coch, which became in later times, under the name of Powis Castle, the principal fortress of Southern Powys. The ancient capital of this region was, however, in a remoter and safer quarter. Mathrafal, regarded in Welsh mediæval literature as the "principal seat" of Powys and one of the three royal residences of Wales,¹¹² stood on the banks of a tributary of the Vyrnwy, a little above Meifod. In front was a fertile plain, yielding the necessary produce for the royal kitchen and stable; behind stretched in wave after wave the rolling hills of the great commote of Caereinion. This was the heart of Southern Powys, where its princes might hope to find in their direst extremity a refuge from English or Norman attack.

In the cantref of Cydewain, which lay between the Rhiw and the Severn, was the church of Aberriw (now Berriew), where St. Beuno fled from before the face of the invading English,¹¹³ and the fortified steep of Dolforwyn, fabled by some to have witnessed the drowning of the hapless Sabrina in those dim days of which Geoffrey of Monmouth has told the story with such surprising particularity.¹¹⁴ A cantref which filled a far larger space in Welsh history was Arwystli, the land of the head waters of the Severn. It was originally, no doubt, a part of Powys, but an early connection sprang up between its chieftains and the realm of Gwynedd, so that it was frequently treated as belonging rather to Aberffraw than to Mathrafal, and, in particular, it became permanently attached to the bishopric of Bangor.¹¹⁵ As in the case of Mechain, its two commotes were known as Uwch Coed and Is Coed, from a stretch of forest in the midst of the cantref; the respective manors or royal courts appear to have been at Talgarth, near Trefeglwys, and Caersws. There were also in the cantref two notable churches. Llandinam was the mother church of

¹¹² *Trallwng* is now pronounced *Trallwm*; cf. "carlwm" for the older "carlwng" (Evans, *Dict. s.v.*).

¹¹³ *LL.* ii. 50, 380, 584. It should be added that the position of Mathrafal is not as well attested as that of Aberffraw and Dinefwr, and the story of the transference of the capital thither from Shrewsbury in the eighth century is of modern growth (note 10 to chap. vii.).

¹¹⁴ Chap. vi. note 38.

¹¹⁵ *Hist. Reg.* ii. 5. Local tradition, and not Geoffrey, is responsible for fixing the site of the tragedy here (*Penn.* iii. 186).

¹¹⁶ *Trans. Cymr.* 1899-1900, 157.

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Llanidloes and Llanwnnog; it had an abbot as late as the twelfth century and was still held by a group of clergy at the time of the Edwardian conquest.¹¹⁶ Llangurig was not so wealthy, but could also boast of a "clas," as well as of a patron saint, St. Curig, who was in high esteem as a worker of miracles in the surrounding district.¹¹⁷ The bishop of Bangor had a manor at Llanwnnog, to which he no doubt resorted when his duties brought him to Arwystli.¹¹⁸ Beyond Arwystli was Cyfeiliog, the westernmost of the commotes of Powys proper which just touched the sea at the head of the tidal estuary of the Dovey. Its position on the confines of Gwynedd, Powys and Deheubarth made it the scene of many a conflict, and often did war rage around the stronghold of the chief at Tafolwern. The sister commote of Mawddwy was sheltered, on the other hand, by the beetling crags of Aran Fawddwy, and its history was uneventful; in its inmost retreat was "y Llan ym Mawddwy," the spot hallowed by the bones of St. Tydecho, who had withstood the great Maelgwn Gwynedd himself, and, it was reverently believed, still kept watch and ward over the fair fields of the commote.¹¹⁹

The cantref of Meirionydd may be reckoned as in some measure a part of Powys, for its ancient name was Cantref Orddwy, or the cantref of the Ordovices.¹²⁰ But, from the time of the Meirion or Marianus (grandson, as was alleged, of Cunedda) who gave it its more familiar name, it appears to have been for many generations under the rule of its own dynasty, represented about 870 by a certain Cynan ap Brochwel.¹²¹ One or two interesting names occur in the pedigree of this line. Gwrin Farfdrwch (of the Ragged Beard),

¹¹⁶ *Arch. Camb.* V. xi. (1894), 29 (Arustly); III. vi. (1860), 331 (Dolfin abbas Llandinan); *Tax. Nich.* 291b. Llandinan is the old spelling; see *Cymr.* xi. 46-7.

¹¹⁷ The township of Llangurig (divided into Llan i fyny and Llan i waered) formed the manor of "Clas Arwystli" (*App. Land Com.* 451). See *Gir. Camb.* vi. 17-8 (*Itin.* i. 1) for the virtues of St. Curig's crosier.

¹¹⁸ *Rec. Carn.* 115.

¹¹⁹ *Camb. Reg.* ii. 375-8. The poem there printed calls Tydecho
"Crefyddwr cryf o Fawddwy
Ceidwad ar eu holl wlad hwy."

("A great man of religion from Mawddwy and guardian of all their land.")

¹²⁰ *Celt. Br.* (2), pp. 302-3.

¹²¹ Pedigree XVIII. in Harl. MS. 3859 (*Cymr.* ix. 178).

who perhaps gave his name to the neighbouring church of Llanwrin, furnished Geoffrey of Monmouth¹²² with one of the figures of his ever-shifting panorama, that of the just and clement king who found the ancestors of the Irish cruising aimlessly about in the seas to the north of Britain and gave them the island in which they afterwards became so mighty a people. Another of the line bore the name of Idris, still commemorated in that of the loftiest of the many heights of Meirionydd; for Cader Idris was the chair of no Druid or astronomer, but takes its name from a brave descendant of Meirion, who fell in battle on the banks of the Severn about 630.¹²³ The realm which obeyed this forgotten dynasty extended from the estuary of the Dovey to that of the Mawddach and further included the valley of the Wnion. It was a land of rocky confusion, where crag rose above crag; "shaggy and fearsome," says Giraldus, beyond any other region of Wales.¹²⁴ Shepherds perched on two opposing peaks might exchange abuse in the morning, but the day, he avers, would be far advanced ere they could meet in the valley bottom to settle their differences. Yet Meirionydd had its stretches of fertile soil. In the heart of the cantref, where the Disynni spreads itself out ere it is lost in Cardigan Bay, was "Tywyn Meirionydd," the Sandy Plain of Merioneth, where St. Cadfan founded in the sixth century a notable church.¹²⁵ Towyn was not inferior in importance to any save the two cathedral churches of North Wales; it was the mother church of the whole of the commote of Ystum Anner,¹²⁶ it had an abbot in the twelfth century,¹²⁷ and, again recalling Llandinam, was held by a number of clergy in the days of Edward I.¹²⁸ Like

¹²² *Hist. Reg.* iii. 11, 12.

¹²³ "Strages sabrine et iugulatio iudris" (Harl. MS. 3859, s.a. 632—*Cymr.* ix. 158). Cf. the notices of Tighernach—"cath Iudruis rig Bretan (the battle of Idris, king of the Britons) qui in eo cecidit" (*Rev. Celt.* xvii. (1896), p. 182)—and of the Annals of Ulster, s.a. 632 (= 633)—"bellum Iudris regis britanum". The date is in harmony with the position of Idris in the pedigree. Cf. *Goss. Guide*, 79; it should, however, be added that in the Celtic annals "jugulatio" often refers, as probably here, to ordinary killing in battle, and does not of necessity imply throat-cutting.

¹²⁴ *Gir. Camb.* vi. 122-3 (*Itin.* ii. 5).

¹²⁵ There is a full account of Cadfan in *Welsh SS.* 213-5. For the so-called Cadfan stone see note 135 to chap. vii.

¹²⁶ B. Willis, *Bangor*, p. 276.

¹²⁷ Note 57 to chap. vii.

¹²⁸ *Tax. Nich.* 291b.

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Lofty fane of Cadfan by the margin of the blue sea,
and prayed for its welfare—

Prosper may its turf and its corn and its seed,
nor forgot its abbot, the liberal rewarder of poetic merit, for at
Towyn there was

Peace and mead borne in vessels
And easy converse exchanged with a bard.

Less is known of the civil sites of the cantref. It was divided by the Disynni into the two commotes of Talybont and Ystum Anner, two names which may indicate two ancient seats of the lords of Meirionydd, for there is a mound at Talybont (near Llanegryn), and Ystum Anner can be located at Llanfihangel y Pennant, where stands the fortified rock of Castell y Bere. But history speaks of castles also at Cynfael, near Towyn, and Cymer, near Dolgelly, and it is not easy to say which stronghold was the temporal, as Towyn was the spiritual, centre of the district in the days of its independence.

The southern portion of the ancient Powys was known in the Middle Ages as "Rhwing Gwy a Hafren," the land betwixt Wye and Severn.¹³⁰ It was a district which formed no part of the patrimony of the rulers of Powys descended from Bleddyn ap Cynfyn (d. 1075), but many circumstances point to its having once been included in the province. Tradition alleged that the southern limit of Powys was Rhyd Helyg on the Wye, near Hay; ¹³¹ in 1176 Bishop Adam of St. Asaph sought to establish a claim to the whole of Rhwing Gwy a Hafren, no doubt on the plea that his diocese covered the whole of Powys,¹³²

¹²⁹ *Myv. Arch.* I. 360-2 (248-50). If one sets aside as the work of a later hand the poem to Owain ap Gruffydd ap Gwenwynwyn, the rest of the poems attributed in the *Myvyrian Archaeology* to Llywelyn Fardd fall naturally into the latter half of the twelfth century. The common date, 1230-1280, is a clumsy attempt to reconcile hopeless anachronisms.

¹³⁰ The form occurs, not only in the lists of cantrefs and commotes, but also (in Latin) in Gir. Camb. i. 30, 35 (*De Rebus*, i. 5, 6); vi. 19 (*Itin.* i. 1).

¹³¹ *Iolo MSS.* 31; *Camb. Qu. Mag.* iii. 403.

¹³² The claim to Kerry was avowedly only a first step or trial of strength. See Gir. Camb. i. 32-3 (totam . . . terram usque Vagam (Wye) . . . occupare proposuit).

while the early history of our Radnorshire, so far as it can be unravelled, seems to make it an Ordovician country.¹³³

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Setting aside the two small commotes of Keri¹³⁴ and Cymwd Deuddwr,¹³⁵ of which the former is now in Montgomeryshire,¹³⁶ Rhwng Gwy a Hafren comprised the commote of Gwerthrynion and the cantrefs of Buellt, Elfael and Maelienydd. Buellt, being so much of our Brecknockshire as lies north of the Epynt range, was not entitled geographically to be reckoned among the lands between the Wye and the Severn, but the *Historia Brittonum* shows that about 800 it was joined with Gwerthrynion under the rule of Ffernael,¹³⁷ and thus it was no doubt included in the term as the definition of a political area. The mountains of the north of Buellt are separated from those of the south by the broad valley of the Irfon, and here, or close by, were the chief sites of the cantref, the courts of the four commotes of Treflys, Penbuellt, Dinan and Is Irfon,¹³⁸ the ancient church of Llanafan Fawr, where the tomb of Afan Buellt was shown, chief of the saints of this region,¹³⁹ and St. David's church of Maes Mynis, which dominated Is Irfon and was the mother church of Llanfair ym Muellt (St. Mary's in Buellt), the modern Builth.¹⁴⁰ Gwerthrynion was on the opposite side of the Wye, occupying the region between that river and the Ieithon. The name is obviously formed from

¹³³ On the whole question see the discussion in Owen, *Pemb.* i. 203 (Phillimore).

¹³⁴ "Keri" is mentioned in *Mab.* 62. The modern village bearing the name is properly Llanfihangel yng Ngheri (Pen. MS. 147 in Evans, *Rep.* i. p. 915).

¹³⁵ Omitted from the lists. It is represented by the parish of Llansantffraid "Cwm Toyddwr"—see Pen. MS. 147 (Evans, *Rep.* i. p. 915, *K. dayddwr*); *Reg. Conway*, p. 9 (Comottewthur); Owen's *Pemb.* i. 203. The "two waters" are the Wye and the Elan; from the latter is probably derived another name of the commote, *viz.*, Elenydd or Elenid (*Mab.* 62; *Gir. Camb.* i. 117; vi. 119, 138, 171, 173; *W. People*, p. 45; Owen's *Pemb.* i. 203).

¹³⁶ In all the lists of cantrefs and commotes Ceri is associated with Gwerthrynion or Maelienydd, not with Cydwain or Arwystli; this is also implied in its position in the diocese of St. David's and was common ground between the disputants in 1176 (*Gir. Camb.* i. 35 (*De Rebus*, i. 6)).

¹³⁷ *Hist. Britt.* cc. 48, 49; note 144 to chap. vii. above.

¹³⁸ Treflys is close to Llangammarch, Llys Dinan, near Newbridge on Wye. The court of Is Irfon was probably at Llanfair, where Builth Castle was afterwards raised; Penbuellt would seem to have been in the southern part of Llangammarch parish (Carlisle).

¹³⁹ *Welsh SS.* 208-9.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 53.

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Gwrtheyrn, better known in its older guise of Vortigern, and the legend of the country was that the notorious bearer of that name had fled hither to escape the fulminations of St. Germanus, and that after his death his descendants had been settled in the commote as its rulers.¹⁴¹ Some alleged that the tyrant had actually come to his shameful end in "the castle of Gwerthrynion on the river Wye," by which is probably meant Rhayader, but there were several other claimants for this distinction.¹⁴² It is certain, however, that the early chieftains of Gwerthrynion traced their origin to Gwrtheyrn Gwrthenau, and it should further be noted that here, as in other quarters of Powys, there was a church under the patronage of Germanus. St. Harmon's, where there is known to have been a "clas,"¹⁴³ was probably pointed out by tradition as the spot where the saint, with all the clergy of Britain, prayed on the bare rock for forty days and forty nights for the conversion of the reprobate king.¹⁴⁴

South Radnorshire was occupied by the cantref of Elfael, separated from Buellt and Brycheiniog by the swift-running stream of the Wye. Save along the banks of this river the cantref was a region of grassy highlands and did not rank as one of the coveted tracts of Wales. The broad-backed chain of hills to the south of Aberedw served to divide it into the commotes of Uwch Mynydd and Is Mynydd (Above and Below the Mountain), which had in Norman times their respective castles of Colwyn and Painscastle; what strongholds had in earlier days been held by the native chieftains in these two commotes there is little evidence to show. Of the ancient churches of Elfael the most notable was undoubtedly Glaschw. It was one of the greater Dewi churches, founded, as was believed, by the saint himself,¹⁴⁵ and here was kept a most precious legacy of his, the portable bell called "Bangu" which was endowed with miraculous powers.¹⁴⁶ In the White Bard

¹⁴¹ *Hist. Britt.* cc. 47-9.

¹⁴² *Triad* i. 91 = ii. 6. For the other stories see *Dict. Nat. Biog.* s.v. Vortigern.

¹⁴³ "Clas Garmon" is the name of one of the two townships of St. Harmon's (Carlisle).

¹⁴⁴ *Hist. Britt.* c. 47.

¹⁴⁵ Life by Rhygyfarch in *Cambro-Br.* SS. 123.

¹⁴⁶ *Gir. Camb.* vi. 18 (*Descr.* i. 1). Cf. *Cambro-Br.* SS. 136 (nola).

of Brycheiniog's catalogue of the churches raised in honour of St. David it is the

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Church by the green hillside,
Towering among the thickets, a sanctuary that faileth not.¹⁴⁷

Its "clas" was a daughter community of the great house of Mynyw, and Glascwm thus came to be regarded as a manor of the bishop of St. David's, whose rights in the place have not yet become wholly extinguished.¹⁴⁸

In its physical features the cantref of Maelienydd,¹⁴⁹ extending from the Teme to Radnor Forest and the neighbourhood of Llandrindod, was not dissimilar. The Ieithon was its principal river, winding its way south through miles of gorse-clad moor and upland pasture. From an early period the cantref was divided into three commotes,¹⁵⁰ which took their names from the principal royal residences within them. Rhiwlallt lay along the Lug, where stood, near Llangynllo, the spot, known to the English as Weston, which originally bore the name.¹⁵¹ The "swydd" or "shire" of Buddugre was the northern portion of the cantref, the particular Buddugre or "Hill of Victory" which formed the centre of this commote being on the banks of the Ieithon.¹⁵² The "swydd" of Dinieithon was the southern limb of Maelienydd, and no doubt the "din," or fortress, on the Ieithon from which it took its name was that of Cefn Llys, where the river winds around and almost isolates a steep hill which must have been in primitive as in Norman days a natural stronghold of great importance. Of the saints of Maelienydd none could compare in importance

¹⁴⁷ "A glascwm ae eglwys gyr glas uynyt

Gwyteluod aruchel nawd ny achwyt" (*Myv. Arch.* I. 271 (194)).

The Red Book text has "echwyd," with the same meaning.

¹⁴⁸ *Black Book of St. David's*, 291, 331; *Carlisle, Top. Dict.*; *App. Land Com.* 445.

¹⁴⁹ No doubt derived from a proper name which would in old Welsh be Mailgen. There is no ancient authority for the form "Moelynaidd" favoured by Jonathan Williams (*Hist. Radn. passim*). The deanery of Maelienydd included Keri and Gwerthrynion, and some of the lists appear to make the cantref no less extensive; in the oldest, however, that in Dom. viii., it has three commotes only.

¹⁵⁰ For a list (not very carefully put together) of the parishes and townships of these commotes see *Radnorsh.* (2), 142 (Nos. 3, 4, 8).

¹⁵¹ L. G. Cothi, 239, 243, 245, 246, 330.

¹⁵² It is the "Bedd Ugre" of the maps. For the true form see *Bruts*, 409, *Cymr.* ix. 328; for the meaning and other instances, *Evans, Dict. s.v.*

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with Cynllo, the sphere of whose influence, in this and the neighbouring district of Gwerthrynion, included no less than thirteen modern parishes.¹⁵³ His principal church was at Llanbister, to which accrued the largest income of any church in the archdeaconry of Brecon.¹⁵⁴

III. THE CANTREFS OF DEHEUBARTH.

The original "dextralis pars Britanniae" or "Deheubarth Kymry" embraced the whole of South Wales, in which sense the term is used by Asser¹⁵⁵ and by those who drafted the charters in the *Liber Landavensis*.¹⁵⁶ But in later parlance¹⁵⁷ the name Deheubarth came to be restricted to the realm, which included most of the South Welsh area, formed by the accretion of Ceredigion, Ystrad Tywi and Brycheiniog around the ancient kingdom of Dyfed, and in this sense it was exclusive of Gwent and Morgannwg. In the present section an attempt will be made to trace the earlier history of the constituent elements of this later Deheubarth.

Ceredigion, the territory which Ceredig ap Cunedda is said to have carved for himself out of the country of the Demetæ, appears to have had throughout its history the same borders as the modern county of Cardigan,¹⁵⁸ which thus hands on the tradition of the territorial unity of this district. Its bounds are given by a man of Ceredigion in the eleventh century¹⁵⁹ as follows—to the east, lofty mountains; to the west, the ocean; north and south, broad rivers (*i.e.*, the Dovey and the Teifi)—and this is still a good general description. The eastern boundary, from Glandovey to Lampeter, crosses and recrosses the watershed of Plynlimmon in somewhat devious fashion, but it is still true to say that Ceredigion is a land between the mountains and the sea, with all its rivers, including the two

¹⁵³ I refer to Llanbister, Llangynllo, Nantmel and their chapels as given by Rees (*Welsh SS.* 351).

¹⁵⁴ *Tax. Nich.* 274b (Lanbyst, £30 : 13 : 4).

¹⁵⁵ C. 80. Cf. note in Stev. 233-4. Asser more than once has "Britannia" in the sense of Wales (cc. 7, 79 (*bis*)).

¹⁵⁶ *Lib. Land.* 161, 162, 163, 169, 192, 212, 223, 230, 237.

¹⁵⁷ In *B.T.*, for instance.

¹⁵⁸ There is some evidence of an extension of Ceredigion at one period so as to include the cantref of Cemais (Owen, *Pemb.* i. 222-3), but this can only have been a temporary success of its chieftains.

¹⁵⁹ Ieuan ap Sulien of Llanbadarn about 1090 (*H.* and *St.* i. 664-5).