

THE
 T O U R
 I N
 NORTH WALES,
 MDCCLXXIII.

I NOW speak of my native country, celebrated in our earliest history for its valour and tenacity of its liberty; for the stand it made against the *Romans*; for its slaughter of the legions*; and for the subjection of the nation by *Agricola*, who did not dare to attempt his *Caledonian* expedition, and leave behind him unconquered so tremendous an enemy.

WHEN our first invaders landed in *Great Britain*, *North Wales* was possessed by the *Ordovices*, a name derived from the language of the country, signifying the situation; being almost entirely bounded by the river *Deva*, or the modern *Dee*, and another river of the name of *Dyvi* †. The one flows into the *Irish* sea below *Chester*, the other into the same sea on the borders of *Cardiganshire*.

THE spirit which the people shewed at the beginning, did not desert them to the last. Notwithstanding they were obliged

* *Vita Agricolaæ.*

† Mr. *Llwyd* in *Cambden* II. 778.

2 OF WALES. FLINTSHIRE.

to submit to the resistless power of the *Romans*, they never fell a prey to the enervating charms of luxury, as the other nations of this island did. They never, with womanish invocations, requested the aid of the deserting conquerors, or sunk beneath the pressure of the new invaders; they preserved an undaunted courage amidst their native rocks, and received among them the gallant fugitives, happy in congenial souls. The hardy *Saxons*, for above three centuries, could not make an impression even on our low lands. *Offa* was the first; who extended his kingdom for some miles within our borders. His conquest was but temporary; for we possessed *Chester*, the capital of the *Cornavii*, till the year 883, when it was wrested from us by the united force of the Heptarchy beneath the able *Egbert*. This indeed reduced our confines; but did not subdue our spirit. With obdurate valour we sustained our independency for another four centuries, against the power of a kingdom more than twelve times larger than itself: and at length had the glory of falling, when a divided country, beneath the arms of the most wise, and most warlike of the *English* monarchs.

FLINTSHIRE.

I NATURALLY begin my journey from the place of my nativity, *Downing* in the county of *Flint*. To give a general idea of this shire, the reader must learn, that it is left of the twelve *Welch*. Its northern side is washed by the estuary of the *Dee*, the *Seteia Estuarium* of *Ptolemy*. The land rises suddenly from the shore in fine inequalities, clayey, and plenteous in corn and grass, for two, three or four miles, to a mountainous tract that runs parallel to it for a considerable way.

F L I N T S H I R E .

3

THE lower part is divided by picturesque dingles, which run from the mountains, and open to the sea, filled with oaks. The inferior parts abound with coal and freestone; the upper with minerals of lead and calamine, and immense strata of limestone and chert. The principal trade of the country is mining and smelting.

The northern part of the county is flat, and very rich in corn, especially wheat, which is generally exported to *Liverpool*. The shire, in most places, raises more than is sufficient for the use of the inhabitants. It is extremely populous; and in the mineral parts composed of a mixed people, whose fathers and grandfathers had resorted here for sake of employ out of the *English* mine counties; many of whose children, born of *Welsh* mothers, have quite lost the language of their fathers.

A LOFTY range of mountains rise on the west, and form a bold frontier. Our county is watered by several small rivers; such as the *Allen*, the *Terrig*, and the *Wheeler*; part of its western boundary by the *Clwyd*; and *Maelwr*, a disjoined part of the country, by the *DEE*.

WE are ignorant of the classical name of this little province. The *Ordovices*, of which all west of *Cheeshire* was part, were subdivided in the time of the *Romans*, in all probability, as the rest of the country was. They had *Reguli* or Lords who ruled over little districts, and united under a common leader when the exigencies of the time required. These factions weakened the state, separated their interest, and facilitated their conquest by the first invaders.

B 2

THE

C E A N G I. L A N G U A G E.

THE names of these districts are now unknown. *Gwynedd* is the most antient we are acquainted with for the country of *North Wales*. The portion I inhabit was called *Tegangle*, which comprehends the three modern hundreds of *Colehill*, *Prestatyn*, and *Rudland*. The name is preserved in the montanous parts of this parish, and some others, to this day called *Mynnydd Tegang*. I reject the translation of *Tegangle* into *Fair England*, as a mongrel compound. The word is of a much more antient date; it being derived from *Cangi* or *Ceangi*, a set of people, according to the learned *Baxter*, belonging to every *British* nation; who attended the herds and resided with them in different grazing grounds at different times of the year. The neighboring *Cornavii* had their *Ceangi*, who wintered in *Wiral*, and took their summer residence in *Tegangle*; a word to be properly derived on that account from *Teg*, fair, *Cang*, the name of the people, and *Lle*, a place. To corroborate which, at this very day is a plain in the parish of *Caerwys*, a part of the old *Tegangle*, adjoining to this mountain, that still retains the title of *Maes can barod*, or the plain of the hundred summer residences. For this reason I presume to differ from Mr. *Baxter*, in his notion of the summer residence of these *Cangi*. He places it near the *Canganorum Promontorium*, or *Braich y pwll* head in *Caernarvonshire*; but those were the *Cangi* of the *Ordovices*, these of the *Cornavii*.

It may be remarked, that, contrary to what happens to most subdued nations, our country preserved its own language: and the conquerors even deigned to adopt the names of the *British* towns and people, latinizing them from the original words. Thus *Londinium* from LUNDEIN, *i. e.* LLONG DIN OR
 DINAS,

L A N G U A G E.

5

DINAS, *the city of ships**, from its considerable commerce; DEVA from its situation on the river *Deva* †; DUNMONII from *Dunmwyn*, or *the hill of ore*; BRIGANTES from *Brig*, choice or chief men; *Coritani*, or rather *Coitani*, from *Coed*, a wood ‡. On the retreat of their *Roman* masters, the latinized names were dropt, except in a very few instances, and their own resumed; but the rest of the *Britons*, who submitted to the *Saxon* yoke, universally received with it the names of places from their conquerors.

THE whole of *Flintshire* was subdued by the *Saxons* immediately after the taking of *Chester* by *Egbert*. It was an open country, destitute of inaccessible rocks and mountains, like the rest of *North Wales*; and consequently incapable of defence against so potent an enemy. The conquerors, as usual, new-named the towns, villages, and hamlets; but could not cancel the antient. Thus *Hawarden* still is known to the *Welsh* by the name of *Penwardd Lâg*, or *Halawg*; *Mold* by that of *Wyddgryg*; and *Hope* by that of *Estyn*; which (with the continuance of our language to this day) proves that even at that time it mixed but little with our conquerors. Numbers of *Saxons* were settled among us, who held their lands from the *Mercian* governors or earls: we find in the *Doomsday* book many of their names who had possessions in this tract; such as *Ulbert*, *Osmer*, and *Elmer*.

THE first notice of any sub-division of the tract called *Flintshire*, appears in the *Doomsday* book. When that survey was taken, it was made a part of *Cheeshire*, to which it was considered as

DOOMSDAY BOOK.

* *Cambden* I. 370.† Or *Dyfi*.‡ Mr. *Pegge*.

WHITEFORD PARISH.

an appendage, by conquest. Old records affirm, that *the county of FLINT appertaineth to the dignity of the sword of CHESTER*. It was soon subdued by *Robert de Rothelent*, commander in chief under *Hugh Lupus*, who carried his arms far into *Wales*; and secured his conquests in the marches by building, or rather by adding new works to the castle of *Rudland*, which he had wrested from one of our princes.

THE tract from *Chester* to the *Clwyd* was then considered as a hundred of *Cheeshire*, and called in the *Doomsday Book Atiscros* hundred. Numbers of places still existing are mentioned in it, disguised often by the *Norman* spelling. *Whiteford*, the place in question, is called *Widford*: notice is also taken of some of the present townships, such as *Tre-mofyn*, *Tre-bybton*, and *Merton*, under the names of *Mofstone*, *Widford*, *Putecaine*, and *Meretone*. *MOSTONE* was then a *plough-land*, *terra unius Carucæ*. It had on it four *villeyns* and eight *boors*; (*Bordarii* *,) a wood a league long, and forty *perches*, *perticatæ*, broad, and was valued at twenty shillings.

WIDFORD is joined with *Putecainè*: The first seems to have comprehended our present *Trelan*, or the place where the church-village now stands. These had one *plough-land*, two *villeyns*, and twelve others between men and maid servants, fisheries, and a wood half a league long and forty *perches* broad; the value was the same with that of *Mofstone*.

WITH *Meretone* is joined the third part of *Widford*; and the *Berewicha* or hamlet of *Caldecote*, the last at present a township

* *Borda* signifies a cottage, with a small piece of land annexed, held by the service of finding for the lord, poultry, eggs, &c. for his *burdd*, or table.

of

WHITEFORD PARISH.

7

of the parish of *Holywell*. In this division was a presbyter, a church, and six villeyens. Here was a wood half a league long and twenty perches broad. One *Odin* held these of the earl.

At the time of the conquest, all this tract of *Flintshire*, which was called by the Saxons *Englesfeld*, and afterwards by the Normans *Atiscros*, was in possession of *Edwin*, the last Earl of *Mercia*; and on his defeat and forfeiture, bestowed, with the earldom of *Chester*, on *Hugh Lupus*. The whole was in a manner depopulated and reduced to a waste, I imagine by the two inroads made into those parts by *Harold*, at the command of *Edward* the confessor, to revenge on *Griffith ap Llewelyn* the insult offered him, by giving protection to *Algar*, one of his rebellious subjects*.

It is observable, that there were only seven churches at that time in the whole hundred: 1. *Haordine*, the present *Hawardin*; 2. *Widford*; 3. *Bissard*, *Boteuuaral*, and *Ruagor*; 4. *Inglecroft*, *Brunfor*, and *Alcbene*; 5. *Danfrond*, *Calston*, and *Wesbie*; 6. *Preftetone* and *Ruestoch*; and finally, the 7th at *Roelend*; besides one that lay waste at *Cancarnacan* and *Wbenefcol*. Parochial divisions had not yet taken place. Mr. *Agard* †, a writer in the latter end of the sixteenth century, remarks, that the old historians make no mention of either parishes, parsons, vicars, incumbents, or curates. The people attended, in those days, either the cathedral churches, or the conventual; which were served by the prelates or monks, and those often assisted by presbyters, clerks,

* *Powell*, 100.

† *Antiquary Discourses*, I. 194.

and

T R E - M O S T Y N .

and deacons. As piety gained strength, other churches, for the conveniency of the devout, were erected by the nobility and men of property, who were desirous of spiritual assistance within their precincts; and to this were owing the churches, which, at the period in question, were so sparingly scattered over the land. The places which enjoyed this advantage had the title of *Lhan* prefixed; as that of *Tre*, which signifies primitively a habitation, is to the townships.

T R E - M O S T Y N .

THUS in our parish is *Tre-mostyn*, remarkable for the antient feat of the family of the same name, which acquired it by the marriage of *Jevan Vychan* with *Angbarad*, heiress of *Howel ap Ithel Vychan* of *Mostyn*, in the reign of *Richard II*. The great gloomy hall is of very old date, furnished with the high *Dais*, or elevated upper end, and its long table for the lord and his jovial companions; and another in the side, the seat of the inferior partakers of the good cheer. The walls are furnished, in a suitable manner, with antient militia guns, swords, and pikes; with helmets and breast plates; with funereal achievements; and with variety of spoils of the chase. A falcon is nailed against the upper end of the room, with two bells hung to each foot. With these incumbrances it flew from its owner, a gentleman in the county of *Angus*, on the morning of the twenty-fourth of *September 1772*, and was killed near this house on the morning of the twenty-sixth. The precise time it reached our country is not known; therefore we are uncertain whether this bird exceeded in swiftness the hawk which flew thirty miles in an hour in pursuit of a woodcock; or that which made a flight out of *Westphalia* into

T R E - M O S T Y N .

9

into *Prussia* in a day : instances recorded * by the learned Sir *Thomas Brown*. The adjacent kitchen is overlooked by a gallery leading to the antient apartments of the lady of the house, at a period when the odours of the pot and spit were thought no ill favours. At one end of the gallery is a great room, remarkable for a singular event. During the time that *Henry* earl of *Richmond* was secretly laying the foundation of the overthrow of the house of *York*, he passed concealed from place to place, in order to form an interest among the *Welsh*, who favored his cause on account of their respect to his grandfather, *Owen Tudor*, their countryman. While he was at *Mostyn*, a party attached to *Richard III.* arrived there to apprehend him. He was then about to dine ; but had just time to leap out of a back window, and make his escape through a hole, which to this day is called the *King's*. *Richard ap Howel*, then lord of *Mostyn*, joined *Henry* at the battle of *Bosworth*, and after the victory received from the King, in token of gratitude for his preservation, the belt and sword he wore on the day : he also pressed *Richard* greatly to follow him to court ; but he nobly answered, like the *Sbunamitish* widow, *I dwell among mine own people*. The sword and belt were preserved in the house till within these few years. It is observable, that none of our historians account for a certain period of *Henry's* life, previous to his accession. It is very evident, that he passed the times, when he disappeared from *Bretagny*, in *Wales*. Many cotemporary bards, by feigned names, record this part of his life, under those of the *LION*, the *EAGLE*, and the like, which were to restore the

* Miscellany Tracts, Tr. V. p. 38.

C

empire

T R E - M O S T Y N .

empire to the *Britons*: for the inspired favorers of the house of *Lancaster* did not dare to deliver their verses in other than terms allegorical, for fear of the reigning prince.

THERE is little more remarkable about the house than what is common to others built at different times. Here are two remarkable portraits; one of Sir *Roger Mostyn*, knight, with a white beard and locks, in black, with great breeches stuck round the waist-band with points. This piece of magnificence gave rise to a very coarse proverb, applied to inferior people ambitious of acting beyond their station. The other portrait is of his Lady, *Mary*, eldest daughter of Sir *John Wynne* of *Gwedir*, baronet. Both are full lengths, dated 1634, and I think painted by *Mytens*.

HERE is another picture, not less remarkable for its ridiculous composition, than for the distinguished person painted in it. A kit-cat length of Sir *Roger Mostyn*, the first baronet; in a strange long flaxen wig, a breast-plate, buff skirts, and antique *Roman* sleeves; a black holding his helmet; his lady reading, with one hand on a scull; and by her husband a lap-dog. This gentleman was the most eminent loyalist of our county: raised a regiment in support of the crown, consisting of fifteen hundred men, in twelve hours time*, mostly colliers; and garrisoned his house, which, in *September* 1643, was surrendered to the parliamentary forces, with four pieces of cannon and some arms †.

BUSTS.

THE busts collected in *Italy* deserve mention. That of the elder *Brutus* is particularly fine, as if formed in the instant that

* *Whitelock*, 78.† *Ibid.*

the