

The Quantocks and their Place-Names.

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THE etymology of the Place-name, Quantock, anciently written Cantok, is an interesting but rather elusive study. Some have derived it from "Gwantog," *i.e.*, full of openings or combes. Some have regarded "Cant-ioc" as a diminutive, meaning "little headlands;" Dr. Pring in his "Briton and Roman on the site of Taunton," has suggested "Cuan," Gaelic for hill, and "Toich," country, *i.e.*, the hill country: some have playfully mentioned the old "Quantum ab hoc," but no one, as far as I know, seems to have thought that Cantok, like Caer Caradoc, may have been named from a person. Crantock in Cornwall, and also in Cardigan is named from Carantacus, and this Saint, a contemporary of King Arthur, is connected with Carhampton according to Leland. At any rate, Carantacus was known under the Quantocks, and, if we desire to speculate, there is no reason why that well-known stone on Winsford Hill should not commemorate Carantacus.

To come to more solid facts and documents, perhaps the earliest mention of Cantok is in the composite word Cantucudu, *i.e.*, Cantok Wood, in Centwine's famous West Monkton Charter, when he gave twenty-three mansiones to Glastonbury "in loco juxta silvam famosam quae dicitur Cantucudu." This is dated A.D. 682, and the light it gives us is interesting. The fame of

this Cantok Wood, and of its goodly trees, was already known. The Charter of Centwine was subsequently confirmed by King Ina, the Saxon prince, who figures so largely in our local annals. The late Professor Freeman has a note about Centwine's Conquest.¹ "In 682, Centwine, fighting against the British, gained for the West Saxons the sea coast west of the mouth of the Parret . . . in short Centwine's victory made the English masters of Quantock . . . How far west towards Dunster, Porlock, I do not profess to say . . . in this campaign I conceive that the West Saxons won the sites of Bridgwater and Watchet; and we may, I think, venture to picture Centwine as forcing the gate, the Lydiard, and driving the Welsh up the valley where, in after days, Crowcombe was given (by Gytha) for the repose of the soul of Godwin." This conflict may have given rise to the name Willsneck or "Waelas Nek," the pass of the *waelas*, as the British were called by the Saxons, running just under Bagborough Hill, the latter being the old name for the highest point of the Quantocks. We all know of Conquest Farm in Lydeard Episcopi parish, but there is a field still known as the "Great Field of Battle," in Crowcombe parish, where the contending forces of Saxons and British might have fought, as the former pushed down between Willet (Waelas?) Hill and Willsneck in the direction of Williton (Waelas-Ton?) and Wacet or Watchet, so well known as a Saxon port in after years. Place-names point to the fact that towards Brendon and Exmoor the Waelas stood their ground longer than around the flat country to the east and south of the Quantocks. It was on the Taunton side that the Saxons, therefore, first touched the Quantocks, in all probability, and the *famosa silva* was that adjoining Monkton, and stretching north over Broomfield and along the deep combes of Aisholt and Over Stowey. The road their conquering soldiers took was probably along Quantock ridges, from King's Cliff, by Lydeard Farm in Broomfield parish, up Buncombe Hill to Cothelston, Bag-

1. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. xviii, p. 43.

borough, Triscombe Stone, Crowcombe Combe Gate, and so on down to Stapol Plain, West Quantockshead to Doniford and Watchet. This is a very old route, said to be partly indicated on old Crowcombe Estate maps, and is exactly what we should expect to find. From Wecet and Porlock the Waelas would be driven across the Severn Sea to South Wales, or, further down, towards Exmoor, North Devon, and the Cornish coasts.

It is worth while to note the course of two invasions upon the Quantock country and West Somerset, the one spiritual and the other military. Keltic christianity, coming from South Wales, as we gather from S. Dubritius of Porlock, S. Columban (mentioned by Leland, at the extreme west of Somerset, and also figuring at Cheddar),² S. Carantacus at Carhampton, (Carntoun being shortly written for Carantokes Towne, according to Leland),³ S. Decumanus, and many others, made itself felt first along the coast of the Severn sea. The church dedications of North Somerset point to a Keltic fringe. The Severn sea was a natural highway for the Sailor Saints, and Gildas, himself a sailor on the Severn sea, has said in his *Hist. Brit.*, 31: "Transmigrare maria terrasque spatiosas transmeare non tam piget Britannos sacerdotes quam delectat." (c. A.D. 560).

But the Saxons would seem to have approached West Somerset from exactly the opposite direction, and to have followed the Roman lines of communication from the south, and along the Mendips, until the Uxellae aestuarium was reached. Nor was the Mendip height the sole highway at the disposal of the Saxon foe, for indeed the ridges of the Poldens and of the Quantocks, no less than the Mendips, furnished a similar natural line of communication or "dorsum" to the Severn waters as the conquerors pushed their way down further west. The unalterable features of the land themselves suggest this

2. Somerset Record Society. Vol. i, pp. 22, 194.

3. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. xxxiii, pt. ii, p. 97.

kind of progress, in Roman, as well as in Saxon times, the valleys themselves being of little use, from a strategic point of view, unless held in connection with the ridges above them. History and the researches of archæology confirm this *primâ facie* supposition, gathered from geography. The Severn terminus of ancient Mendip lies at Brean-down and the fortress of Worlebury Camp. Roman remains have been found at Portus de Radeclive, Redcliff or Reckly, about two-and-a-half miles from Axebridge, a Portus in the ancient "Hundred of Banwell."⁴ The terminus of the Poldens was the old "Burgh de Capite Montis," *i.e.*, the Doneham of Domesday, also called Cheldelmunt,⁵ the Downend near Dunball Station. A primitive Castrum would appear to have existed here, and the Portus might have been Bridgwater itself. There are signs, however, of a road to Stretcholt in Paulet to Black Rock on the Parret. The terminus of the Quantock ridges would have been Doniford and Wecet.

But we seem to know Wecet, and further west, Porlock, in history more as Saxon than as Roman ports. In tracing the dim outlines of the Saxon Conquest from the south, the Quantocks are certainly no less interesting than the Mendips or Poldens. In the Danish campaigns of King Alfred, these hills, as furnishing a base to Athelney Island, have an interest second to none. They provided by far the quickest and safest retreat to the Sabrina amnis from Petherton Park, one of the old Royal Forests, and along their whole length their combes furnished admirable refuges for the "men of Somerset," who, as Ethelwerd, the chronicler, tells us, alone assisted him, together with "the servants who made use of the King's pastures."⁶

In the Charter of Aethelwulf, A.D. 854, giving the boundaries of the Manor of Taunton Dean, a large southern por-

4. Somerset and Dorset Notes and Queries, Dec., 1898.

5. Somerset Record Society. The Placita.

6. Jubilee Edition of King Alfred's Works. Vol. 1, p. 70.

tion of the Quantocks is included.⁷ Some of the Quantock place-names are interesting. From Lydeard S. Lawrence the boundary runs “ad occidentalem partem vallis quæ Truscombe nominatur,” then eastwards to Rugan or Bugar Beorh, *i.e.*, Bagborough. Thence along a horse-path over the hills to Aescholtes (Aisholt)—thence past piscis fontem (Vish-pool) or Bish-pool, and “sic ad Elwylle,” Thence across Quantock ridge again, somewhere near or along Buncombe to Kingston, Hestercombe, Sidbrook and Bathpool. By this boundary some important Quantock parishes, from Triscombe, southwards, fall under the famous Manor of Taunton Dean, with all its old world customs and privileges. The manor became the property of the Bishops of Winchester.

The mention of Cantuctune, or the ton of Cantok in King Alfred's will (871—885) is very interesting. “The Land at Cantuctune” is mentioned together with Carumtune (Carhampton), Burnhamme, Wedmor and Cheddar, and, together with other estates, is left in the most formal way, as private property, to the eldest son, Eadweard, who succeeded King Alfred. It is also inherited property, which adds a little to its interest, and throws the title further back. Williton, Carhampton, Cannington, Andredesfeld, are all Royal Hundreds, and represent a goodly block of land in which Cantok or Quantock is a main geographical feature. The Saxonisation of this part of West Somerset had been going on gradually—not quickly—since Centwine and Ina's days. Taunton, or the Ton on the Tân (the coloured river)—in allusion to its tawny waters in flood—had sprung up, and many another Saxon Ton, but where was Cantucton? Had it arisen in some portion of that *famosa silva* of Cantucudu? Was it on the west or on the east side of the long ridge of Cantok? Was it the same as Cannington? The West Saxon kingdom was developing itself in many ways along the Severn sea. Wecet or Watchet was of growing importance, and was actually the

7. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. xviii, p. 79.

place of a Royal mint, the Saxon kings holding in their own hands and as their *Dominicum*, much of the surrounding land. From the top of Quantock the five Royal Forests of Somerset were within view, also "sacred Pedridan," and the precincts of immortal Glastonbury, whose round tor so visible from sea and land, exercised a wonderful centripetal power. It was not, perhaps, without a purpose that the Saxon kings held Burnham on one side of the Parret and Cannington on the other in their own hands, guarding the entrance to this holy land already of ancient renown. The private possessions of the West Saxon kings were known to all, and at the setting forth of King Alfred's will, there are present the Archbishop and "all the West-Saxon witan's witness."⁸

To turn to Domesday, the only Cantoche there given is a vill in or near Crowcombe parish, adjoining Lydeard S. Lawrence. Collinson⁹ says that this was the vill which took its name from the Quantock Hills. But there is Little Quantock Farm in Crowcombe parish, on the west side of the ridge of Quantock, and Quantock Farm in Over Stowey parish, on the east side of the ridge, about half-a-mile from one another. The one place might have been confused with the other. The Domesday Cantoche is the property of Alured de Hispania, who has so many Quantock places, *e.g.*, Spaxton, Nether-Stowey, Planesfield, Radlet, Merridge, Stringston, Alfoxton, Dytech, and others. But there is a Little Quantock also in Enmore. In the Inquis. p.m. 13 Ric. II (No. 103), William Taillour has "Lytel Cantok in paroch. de Enmore." This "little Quantock" would be a long distance from the Crowcombe "little Quantock." There is also a Quantock Farm about one mile from Monkton, and in the Exchequer Lay Subsidies under "Monketon et Hamme," occurs the name Jurdana de Cantok.

In Enmore there is still a place called Quantock Barn, on

8. Jubilee Edition of King Alfred's Works. Vol. 1, p. 399.

9. Vol. iii, p. 513.

the west side of Enmore Park, there is also a Quantock Wood close by, also a Quantock Mead, and a Higher and Lower Quantock Close adjoining Blakesole or Blackesala. In Brown's *Somerset Wills*, Thomas Mallet of Enmore, Oct. 15th, 1580, gives to his son, John Mallet, amongst other bequests, "Quantock in Spaxton." In a MS. book, amongst the Spaxton documents, there is an arrangement for church seats, in which a place is reserved for "Quantock Farm, part of the domain of Enmore." In the Chartulary of deeds of the Hylle family (*temp.* Hen. IV), Thomas Fitchet grants to Master Robert Cros or Crosse, Rector of Spaxton, all his lands in Spaxton, Lillington, Moreland . . . together with certain services in Cantok and Durburgh."

It is hard, indeed, to localise Cantok or Cantoche as a definite place. It may be at West Monkton, or Spaxton, or Crowcombe, and is singularly elusive. Mr. Eyton would put it in the Williton Hundred at or near Crowcombe, *i.e.*, at Little Quantock Farm, the west side of the Quantocks, the place above alluded to.

In the *Exon. Domesday* we have mentioned as separate places (1) Cantoca, belonging to Alured de Hispania, and evidently the same as the Cantoche already mentioned, (2) *Cantoctona*, a *mansio regis*. Here, apparently, is the Cantuctune of King Alfred's Will, appearing in the *Exon. Domesday*. It looks as if exact identification should follow now. But *Cantoctona* is almost as elusive as Cantok or Cantoche. It seems to be convertible with Candeton or Cannington, although it is difficult to understand how the "oc" or ock, so essentially a part of Quantock can drop from it.

In a Charter dated 17th July, 1204, King John gave to the Canons of Taunton the pasture of Kingeshull from Wulfeldsont to Hunteneswell in free, pure and perpetual alms.¹⁰ In the *Rotuli Chartarum* of King John, it is worded, "Pasturam et galnetum de Kingeshill a Wffoldessate usque Hunteneswell

10. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. ix, pt. ii, p. 9.

. . . ecclesiæ apostolorum Petri et Pauli de Tanton . . . quæ solebat reddere ad firmam meam de Somertun sedecim denarios." In the Testa de Neville (Henry III), it is thus described under Hundred de Andreaffeld, "Canoniam de Tanton tenet unam pasturam super Cantok de dono J. Regis in puram eleem : quæ vocatur Kingeshill et solebat reddere per annum ad scaccarium apud London xvi denarios."

Kingshill and Priors Down are still Place-names on the Quantocks, and lie in the parish of Broomfield, to the east of Buncombe Hill. In an Inquis. p.m., 2 Henry V, Elizabeth uxor W. de Monte Acuto has amongst other properties Bromfield juxta Cantok.

It seems as if there was a good deal of Royal property on the Quantocks, judging from this gift of King John, and that it was connected with the Royal firma of Somerton, a town so full of ancient Saxon associations. Indeed, we are justified in supposing that before Norman times, and before the Petherton Forest perambulation, Cantok was part of a Royal Forest. The fact is noted in the *Rotuli Hundredorum* (temp. Edw. I), in the following passage. "Item dicunt quod quatuor villani ad Castellum in hund. de Andredsfield fuerunt de dominico dom. Regis pertinenti ad Sum^{ton} qui singulis annis solebant reddere apud Sum^{ton} xj s et vicecomites illum redditum sibi appropriaverunt jam xxx annis elapsis ad firmam illam sine warrento et solebat ille locus esse Porcheria d'ni R. antiquitus dum Canntok fuit foresta." The Castellum is Roborough Castle in Broomfield parish, close to Enmore.¹¹

The antiquity of Roborough Castle stands revealed, and apparently it must be distinguished from the Rowboroughs, localised by the Rev. F. Warre on Bagborough hill, popularly called Willsneck, and not far off from Broomfield. "On the top of Bagborough hill are several cairns," writes Mr. Warre, "commonly called Rowboroughs, which most likely mark the place where the slain were buried. A few years ago a Roman

11. Somerset Record Society. Vol. 3, p. 162.

coin was found near these cairns." Allusion to this find is made by Prebendary Scarth in a paper on "Roman Somerset."¹² As far as I can discover this Quantock Place-name has dropped out of use, but it seems to be extremely ancient. It is possible to trace it in the gift of Edward the Elder, King Alfred's son, of Lydeard (Bishop's Lydeard) to Asser, Bishop of Sherborne, in 904. Lydeard is given, together with Buckland and Wellington.

"Dis synt da land gemaero to Lidgerd (Lydiard). Aerest on linlegh of linlegge upp on strem to Tostanford of Cottanforda (Cotford) uppon strem to gosford of gosford uppon strem to Stanforda of stanforda on fasingafeld of fasingafeld on pyttapuldre, of pyttapuldre onaest of aeste adimeonfled to readanclife of readanclife to rupanbeorge (Rowbergh) of ruganbeorge to ludanpylle of ludanpylle to fricanfenne of fricanfenne uppon to gattibricge of gattibricge to uppon an slaed (Slades) to holanpege of holanpege uppon slaed to bacganbeorge (Bagborough) of bacganbeorge to pynestane of damstane to rupanbeorge (Rowbergh) of dam beorge to epichemhamme, of dam hamme to collslade of colislade (Coleslade) adune on strem to horspadesforde of dam forda uppon strem to oxenagete, of dam gete to motlege of motlege on siderocestorre (Sidroc's Tor or hill?) of siderocestorre to frecandorne (a thorn bush) of frecandorne on suoccanmere of suoccanmere on stangedelfe (stone quarry) on hreod alras (reed alders) of hreod alron on tideford of dam forda adune on strem to cunecanford (King's ford) of cunecanford on cingegesgete (Kings gate) of cingegesget on suran apuldran (sour apple trees) of suran apuldran od hit cymp est on linlege.

Roughly speaking this boundary would appear to begin near Cotford, at the western extremity of Bishop's Lydeard, and work round the Quantocks. The present parish includes Lydeard Hill, just abutting on the Bagborough hill and common above Aisholt. Lydeard is a very curiously shaped

12. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. xxiv, pt. ii, p. 18.

parish, and stretches right over the Quantock ridges till it meets Spaxton and Merridge. It is certainly one of the most interesting of all the Quantock parishes, if only on account of its connection with the Saxon Kings, and Asser, the biographer of King Alfred. It is a little curious that a Sidroc's Tor should be mentioned in this Quantock document, and the very name, which seems now to have been lost, tantalise the imagination if we may connect this Sidroc with the Sidroc of the Saxon chroniclers. King's ford and King's gate denote the regal association of Lydiard, and this gift of Edward the Elder is, from a Quantock point of view, second only in interest to the Charter of Aethelwulf (854), King Alfred's father, which enlarged the boundaries of the Manor of Taunton Dean. Later on in Saxon history, after 1053, Gytha, the mother of Harold, and wife of Godwin, gave Crowcombe, in which lies Cantok (Little Quantock) to the Church of S. Swithin at Winchester, in expiation of the crimes of Earl Godwin. This would be presumably Royal property, part of the Saxon Domini-
 cum in the Cantok country, inherited from King Alfred, and, further back, from his predecessors. Gytha's endowment was nullified at the Conquest, and Crowcombe was given to Earl of Morton.

We must also remember that in a Charter of privileges granted by King Edward—Alfred's son—to the Monastery at Taunton in 904, there are x Manentes at Crauuancumbe. Further, there is a confirmation by King Edgar to Winchester of land at Crowcombe, Banwell and Sherborne (Schealdeburnam), and in 978 there was a confirmation of King Edward's Charter at a Witenagemot at Cheddar of x Manentes at Crowcombe, xx at Cumbtun, xx at Shirborne, and xx at Banwell. (Birch's *Cartularium Saxonicum*). It may be noted that Bishop Asser, the Bishop of Sherborne, was closely connected with Banwell and Congresbury, King Alfred having given him two monasteries there. But all these Quantock gifts and charters, whether to the Taunton Priory, to the

Church of S. Swithin, to Asser, point to the reality of Cantok, or Cantoctona, as a Royal property in Saxon times.

The Place-names, Bagborough and Rowebergh, turn up again in a Wells Concord between Bishop John and John de Membury, of West baggebergh, about a waste piece of land on Cantok, claimed by the former as belonging to Bishop's Lydiard, by the other as belonging to Bagborough. The date is 1314, and an extract from it is interesting, as giving certain historic place-names.

"The boundaries are from the east corner of Robert de Calewe's croft under Cantok; eastward along the fossatum called Boledich; eastward to the secunda bunda called la Fennslo: thence north (a little west of) to the third bunda called Alferode (Alfreds Road?); eastward to the fourth bunda called la Redewell; eastward to the fifth bunda called Coleslade, which is the outside (forinseca) bound between West-baggebergh and Assheholte manors. The men of Bagborough may not exercise common rights eastward of Coleslade. The bounds across the mountain to Est-baggebergh, within which they have rights, are from Coleslade south to the second bunda called Oxenham: direct south to the third called la Rowebergh; through the middle of the bunda: thence direct south to the fourth called Bulgonescros, and so to Est baggebergh to Robert de Calewe's croft."¹³ Mr. Hugo in his paper on "Hestercombe," in the *Som. Arch. Proceedings*, vol. xviii, p. 148, observes: "I have a fine contemporary copy of this Concord, which I purchased at the sale of the celebrated Surrenden collection." The Quantock Place-names are interesting, especially if we compare them with those of the Lydeard document of 904—four hundred years previously. The Bacganbeorge of King Edward's gift is the Baggebergh of the Concord of 1314, only there is the further definition of Est and West Baggebergh. Coleslade appears to be the same, and to this day there is a bit of the Quantocks called *The*

13. Report of MSS. Wells Cathedral, pp. 84-5.

Slades, lying on the boundary of Bagborough and Aisholt parishes, and in the Week Tything of Stoke Courcy parish, *i.e.*, in Over Stowey parish. Rupanbeorge, of King Edward's gift to Asser, is surely the Rowebergh of the 1314 Concord, and the Rowboroughs of the Rev. F. Warre, and it is a pity that this name should ever be allowed to die out on the Quantocks. The Oxenagete of King Edward's gift may be near the Oxenham of the 1314 Concord. About Alferode (Alfred's Road?), we may surely conjecture that it was named after King Alfred. At least it is a conjecture that has a degree of plausibility about it, for, judging from the wording of the Concord, it would be somewhere along Cantok ridge near Bagborough. This road led, according to old maps, from Buncombe and Bagborough, as already noticed, right down to the ancient port of Wecet or Watchet, where there was a Saxon mint in old days, as a coin of Edward the Elder, to be seen in Taunton Museum, proves. Moreover, here was a strategic road along Cantok that connected Petherton and Athelney on the south, with the Severn sea on the north, that sea that became a refuge to the Saxons, who, when the Danes harried the land, were driven from their Somersetshire homes, in that fateful year 878. As Huntingdon, the chronicler, has expressed it, "Part, therefore, of the people fled beyond the sea, part followed King Alfred, who hid himself, with a few men, in the marshes, and part submitted to the enemy." Is it too much to believe that King Alfred, brought to bay in West Somerset, resolved to defend these Royal Hundreds of Andersfeild, Cannington (or Cantuctune?) Carhampton and Williton, by the side of the Severn sea, to the last, using Athelney as his fort? Here was part of the old Saxon dominicum, and it was worth fighting for. The land itself, and that "sorrowful wilderness of waters," helped his Fabian tactics, and patient courage won the day.

That there was a Herepat or War path we gather from a 12th century Charter, quoted in the documents belonging to

the alien Priory of Stoke Courcy at Eton College.¹⁴ It runs as follows: "Grant by Hugh de Bonville to the Church of S. Andrew of Stoke Courcy for the sustentation of the monks, and in augmentation of former gifts, of part of his wood and pasture in Cantok, on the west side of the wood which he had given to the Church of S. Peter of Over Stowey (de Superiori Staw), extending from the bounds which John Chaunel had placed in the said wood, between the great road of Solmere on the lower part, and the great road called Staw Herepat on the upper part, to the head of Ramescuba (Ramscombe)." This Herepat can be easily identified on the Quantocks, and is what is known generally as the Stowey Road, running from Crowcombe Combe Gate to Over Stowey, striking across the old road to Doniford, outside Crowcombe Park, at right angles. This wood on Cantok was part of the property belonging to W. de Falaise and the de Courcy family at Stoke Courcy, and was a Domesday additamentum. Collinson says that these Over Stowey woods were "a chace of the de Courcy family," a statement he may have gathered from the learned antiquary, Mr. Palmer, of Fairfield.

There are many other Place-names on the Quantock Hills, which, if not of so great an historical interest as those already given, are, nevertheless, worth mentioning. There is S. David's Well, near Quantock Farm in Over Stowey parish, a Keltic dedication, also S. Peter's Well, close to Over Stowey Church, which gives us a clue to the dedication of the Church.¹⁵ There is Seven Wells Combe, with some magic in the number seven, reminding us of the Seven Sisters of the Yeo (Collinson, iii, 203), and of Barnwell in Northamptonshire, where there were seven wells in which weakly children were dipped.¹⁶ There is S. Agnes' Well at Cothelston, S. John's Well at Holford. There was the famous Hunteneswell of King John's

14. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. xliii.

15. See also *Weaver's Wells Wills*, p. 116.

16. *Hope's Holy Wells*, p. 99.

1204 Charter, which may possibly be Holwell, celebrated for the experiments of Philosopher Crosse; there is Jeffrey's Well, a boundary in Ramscombe, at the top of Dyer's Mead; there is Lady's Fountain in Kilve Common, called surely after the Virgin Mary, itself a boundary now, and giving a name to Ladies Combe. There is a Witches Well in Parleston lane in Kilve parish, just below Parleston Common. It might be possible to localise the ealuuylle or Aldwell and the acuuylle or Oakwell of the West Monkton Charter, also the Piscis fontem (Vishpool or Bishpool?) of the Aethelwulf document, the latter being close to Aisholt. There is a Blindwell in Stowey, and a well famous for its healing influences on the eyes near Quantock Barn in Enmore Park.

The word Castle is kept in connection with Douseborough or Danesborough Castle, under which old folk say that the believing ear can hear sounds of music as of a full band of music; also in Stowey Castle, under which giants and ogres live (so the old gossips say), putting out their hands to frighten children; also in Ruborough Castle in Broomfield, which has tales of its own. I cannot find that the Danes or Denes, as the old men call them, have left many Place-names behind them. They might have left their name to Danesborough, but there are so many possible derivations for this word, *e.g.*, Dinas, Dane, or Dawns, *i.e.*, beacon borough. Perhaps the Quantocks or Cantuctune, as King Alfred's domain, was not hospitable enough to them to allow of their staying long.

The word "Ball," meaning, I suppose, a rounded hill or eminence between the combes, turns up in Lord's Ball, the south side of Ramscombe, and Friarn Ball at the entrance to Seven Wells Combe, and Broomball or Brimball in East Quantoxhead. On Exmoor there are many "balls," such as Cloutsham Ball. The word "Down" appears in Fleury or Flory Down, and Priors Down, in Over Stowey and Broomfield respectively. Bugar Beorh, which seems to be the old way of spelling Bagborough, may be the "Beacon Burgh." What is known as

Fire-beacon hill now, is the hill above Crowcombe Park, above Little Quantock, and not Hurley Beacon as the map states. Tor is used in connection with Cothelston hill, I believe, but Cothelston itself would seem to mean the ton of Cotele, a family known formerly in West Somerset. The word ridge or edge is found in Herridge combe, East Quantoxhead; in Holford edge, in Ladies edge, in Sheridge Wood, adjoining Kilton Common; Hawkridge, at the bottom of Aisholt; Merridge, in Spaxton parish, below Buncombe; Swinage (Swine Edge) in Kilve.

The word Cleeve or Clift, for a hanging side, is found in Wilvey Cleeve in Stringston parish, near Alfoxton; also in the Clift near Quantock Farm, Over Stowey. There is a reduplication of Quantock Place-names on the Brendon and Exmoor hills, *e.g.*, Stowey Water in Cutcombe, and Stowey on the Quantocks, Ramscombe on the Quantocks, and Ranscombe in Wootton Courtney, Luxboro Farm in the Aisholt Valley, Luxborough Parish on the Brendons, and so on. This class of Place-name seems to be Keltic rather than Saxon. The word "Drift," meaning "a flock or herd of animals," survives on the Quantocks, so does the old Forest word, Meare, meaning boundary. The old "Bunda," or dry-wall banks, are quite a feature on the Quantocks, and from the very look of them it is possible to distinguish them from modern inferior efforts. The object of planting beeches on the boundary fences seems to be to get the python-like roots of the beech to bind it all in one mass, as with knotted ropes, which it effectually does. On the open ridges and slades of the Quantocks, signs of cultivation and of ridge and furrow ploughing can often be seen. The banks dividing these cultivated patches were of a slight character, not like the parish boundary banks, as they were not required for long. After cultivation the Quantock arable went back to heather. Here and there charcoal pits meet the eye in secluded parts, signs of an industry no longer carried on.

There is also a Bincombe as well as Buncombe, the former

in Holford, meaning the head of a combe, and evidently a Keltic word. Five Lords Bench or tump is a round mound above Five Lords Wood, and Bincombe, where five lords of the manor are supposed to have met. Just about here the boundaries of Dodington, Holford, Durborough (the hamlet above mentioned, partly in Holford and partly in Stoke Courcy), Over Stowey, and Stringston Hill commons meet. It is just below Little Douseborough. The slopes of Douseborough are partitioned in a curious way. The top or Douseborough Ring is in Stringston parish; below, on the North Holford, lies a strip called Curril Common, and then comes Woodlands Hill or Kilton Common, and further to the east Dodington and Buckingham Plantation. On the south side of Douseborough, come the boundaries of the Stowey Customs, a large tract of heathy hill, 488a. 3r. 22p., which has never been rated, and from which the Stowey parishioners have gathered wood from time immemorial. On the Tithe map these Customs appear as Nos. 551, 555, 556, 561. Part of the Customs is called locally Longsides Customs. At the higher end, and towards the head of Ramscombe, is an old name, Horthorne, *i.e.*, a boundary thorn. At the upper end of Ramscombe is Ramscombe Customs, a portion which the Stowey people say should never have been inclosed. Opposite to Ramscombe Customs, and parted by the stream along which an old boundary wall is distinctly to be seen for a long distance, is Lords Customs. Kilve parish has more "open Commons," which have never been rated, than any other Quantock parish, the total area being 731a. 2r. 2p. The Kilve Hill Woods, which are rated, are 164a. 0r. 0p. In Kilve parish lies Longstone, a well-known boundary between East Quantoxhead and Kilve: Great Hill and Hareknaps (370 acres); Somerton Hill and Somerton Wood. If we can connect Somerton with the Royal Saxon "Firma" at Somerton, in the same way that we can certainly connect Roborough Castle, Kingshill and Priors Down in the Broomfield part of Quan-

tock, then we have a Quantock Place-name of the greatest interest in Kilve parish, especially if we connect it with Swin-age or Swine ridge, linking it with a Royal Porcheria.

It may be noticed that in addition to the Stowey Customs, there is a piece of land called Custom or Newspring, of 29a. Or. Op. (No. 157 in the Holford Tithe Map). But whenever and wherever it occurs, the word is worth noticing. There are some more gruesome names on the Quantocks which may carry a story of their own. There is "Dead Woman's Ditch," a bank that runs across the Over Stowey Customs and in the direction of Jeffrey's Well; in the Combe below there is "Dead Boy," a small hollow running up to the green path that leads to Halsway, lying in Kilve Common. Perhaps one of these names suggested to William Wordsworth, when he lived at Alfoxton, the Ballad of "The Thorn" or "Ruth," who is certainly a Quantock character. In Durborough Common, lying above Dodington, and in Holford parish, was Walford's Gibbet, the subject of an unpublished poem of W. Wordsworth. Not long ago the wooden posts of the grim relic where the murderer, Walford, hung for a year and a day, was ploughed up, and the exact site of the gibbet and cage revealed.

There does not seem to be much indication of Quantock mining at any rate in ancient times. The copper mines at Dodington and at Stowey are well known, but they are of comparative recent date. There are no local phrases or Place-names indicating mines on the Quantocks. The old people would speak of "Moynes," which is, we believe, an old way. Frobisher, the great Elizabethan navigator, writes about "moines." (*See Hakluyt's Frobisher*). The wealth of the Cantok land lay in its acorns, mace for swine, and pasture for sheep, and its timber, both small and great. The "worts," too, have been considered a harvest for the poor man, to be celebrated by the Quantock Revels, from time immemorial up to living memory. The villagers say, "Are you going to 'Wort-hill?'" meaning up on the Quantocks.

From the above notices, and from the evidence of Place-names, we may reconstruct, in some measure, the history of this regional tract of country known as Cantok or the Quantocks. If we take the valley of the Parret as a boundary of Dumnonia, the Quantocks would have lain within this ancient kingdom. Here and there were earth-works and primitive Belgic fortresses, such as we may still trace at such places as Roborough Castle or Stowey Castle, probably utilised by the Saxon conqueror. Far back in the ages it was a deeply-wooded tract, as we infer from the expression, "*famosa silva*," in Centwine's West Monkton Charter. In the days of the Saxon Kings it would appear to have been a Royal Forest. "*Dum Canntok foresta fuit*," is the explanatory note of that compiler of the *Rotuli Hundredorum* already quoted. The hunting of the forest was probably done from Taunton, King Ina's town. In that Charter of privileges granted by King Edward to the Monastery at Taunton, A.D. 904, there was an obligation to provide the King with *pastus unius noctis*, also to entertain the hunting retinue, and to feed the dogs, and to take them on to "*Curig vel Willettun*." This arrangement was an old-standing one with the Monastery, and existed before A.D. 904. To quote the exact words: "*Erat namque antea in illo supra dicto monasterio pastus unius noctis regi et viii canum et unius Canicularis pastus, et pastus novem noctium accipitrariis regis et quicquid rex vellet inde ducere usque ad Curig vel Willettun cum plaustris et equis et si advenae de aliis regionibus advenirent debebant ducatum habere ad aliam regalem villam quae proxima fuisset in illorum via*," etc., etc. This *pastus* was in force, therefore, in King Alfred's day, and we may picture this Quantock hunting and hawking procession setting out from Taunton, sweeping the ridges of the Quantocks, and putting up at Williton, on their way, doubtless, to the next *regalis villa* of the sporting Saxon Kings on Exmoor or at Porlock. The old monks of Taunton, who had to speed the party on their way, no doubt entered into all the minutiae

of the proceedings with the utmost zeal and alacrity, and helped to find good sport. The Place-name "Hart hill," in the Over Stowey Woods on Quantock, also "Yellow Stags," near Halsway, may be far-away reminders of these days. The traditions of hunting were kept up on the Quantocks by Cardinal Beaufort in Henry VIth reign, when he came to Halsway, in Stogumber parish, as we are reminded by the late Rev. F. Warre, who, as the Rector of Bishop's Lydeard, and a member of an ancient Quantock family, which, together with the Pophams, owned to a collateral descent from the Stradlings of Halsway (Sir Edward Stradling married Joan, the daughter of the Cardinal), might be expected to know.¹⁷

Of twenty Quantock parishes, more or less lying upon the Quantock hills or close under them, nine lay in the Royal Hundred of Williton, viz., Nether Stowey, Dodington, Kilton, Kilve, East Quantoxhead, West Quantoxhead, Bicknoller, Stogumber, Crowcombe; four in the Royal Hundred of Cannington, viz., Aisholt, Spaxton, Over Stowey and Strington; three in the Royal Hundred of Andersfield, viz., Broomfield, Enmore, Goathurst; two in Taunton Dean Hundred, viz., Bagborough and Cothelston. Of the remaining two, Bishop's Lydeard lay in Kingsbury West Hundred, and Holford in Whitley Hundred. It is not, therefore, unreasonable to conclude that a large portion of the *Vetus Dominicum* of the West Saxon Kings and Princes lay within the area of these parishes. The payment of acknowledgments from such places as Roborough, Prior's Down, Kingshill in Broomfield, to the Royal Firma of Somerton, points, surely, to the ancestry of the properties. In the Andersfield Hundred, West Bower, the reputed birth-place of Lady Jane Seymour, was Royal property. Durleigh, close by, was Parcel of the Duchy of Lancaster.¹⁸ Amongst lands and tenements held in Durleigh by John, son of Walter Mychell, 8 Henry VII, is "North

17. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. v, p. 12.

18. Somerset Record Society. Somerset Chantries. Vol. 2, p. 242.

Bowre, worth £10, held of the King, as of the Honor of Trowbrugge, parcel of the Duchy of Lancaster, by Knight Service, and suit of the Court of the said Duchy held at Durley." Does not the same fact of the *Vetus Dominicum* appear in the statement of Humphrey Blake, who in Charles I's reign, held Plainsfield or Planesfield "as of the manor of Hampton Court by Knight's Service?"¹⁹ Or does it not appear even more conspicuously in the descent of the Tything of Week or Wick, partly in Over Stowey and partly in Stoke Courey, held by the Queen as we learn from Kirby's *Quest*, together with the Hundred of Cannington, "de dono regis?" Do not we trace here membra of that lordly *Dominicum* shadowed in King Alfred's Will? From Domesday we know that Harold held Stowey on the east side of the Quantocks, and Capton in Stogumber on the west side. If we look to the West of England rather than to the parts around Winchester and Salisbury for the *nidus* of West Saxon power, there is reason for it, and we may be allowed to give credit to Asser's statement, "*Occidentalis pars Saxoniae semper Orientali principalior est.*"

We get more light still from the history of the early Saxon Church in West Somerset and in the neighbourhood of the Quantocks. By the endowments of the pious Saxon kings and princes, beginning with Centwine, the Quantock country came under ecclesiastical influences. In the West Monkton Charter, as we have seen, Glastonbury was favoured, and by virtue of the Charter of Aethelwulf in 854, the boundaries of the Manor of Taunton, the possession of the ancient See of Winchester, and one of the greatest sources of its wealth, were greatly enlarged. Gytha, wife of Godwin, gave Crowcombe to the Church of S. Swithin, taken away at the Conquest from the Church and given to Robert, Earl of Morton, half-brother of William the Conqueror, but part of it returning again, later on, it may be noticed, by the gift of Godfrey de Craucumbe to the nuns at Studley in Oxfordshire.

19. Exchequer Bill and Answer, Chas. I, Somerset. No. 169.

There was also the well-known gift of Lydeard to Asser, Bishop of Sherborne, and Bishop's Lydeard has remained with the Church ever since. Athelney was represented on the Quantocks by the little chapel of Adscombe in Over Stowey parish, if we so conclude from the entry in Kirby's *Quest.*²⁰ Perhaps Durborough, where there used to be a chapel and a sprig of the Holy thorn, the latter within living memory, must be regarded as a Quantock possession of Glastonbury, the gift of Elflem (Collinson ii, p. 243), both Durborough and Durborough Common lying within the parish of Holford, and adjoining Dodington on the north-east slopes of these hills.

The Norman kings and nobles added to these Saxon gifts. King John in 1204 endowed the Taunton Priory with part of his Cantok dominicum; the lords of Stoke Courcy Castle and the successors of the Falaise family give pasture, woods and privileges to the Church of S. Peter at Over Stowey, and to the monks of the alien Priory of Stoke Courcy.²¹ In 1219 the master and brothers of the Hospital of St. John hold one third of a virgate of land and 300 acres of wood in Over Stowey on the Quantocks.²² Holford Church and Rectory, by the gift of the Norman lords of Stoke (Courcy), the Falaise family, were attached to the alien Priory of Stoke (Courcy), being subsequently devoted to the purposes of Eton College, in whose possession they still remain. Kilton Church and Vicarage formed part of the many "advocationes" of the Bath Priory, with its cell at Dunster. Bicknoller fell largely under the influence of the Dean and Chapter of Wells, the patronage of the Church still lying with them, as a *Capella dependens* upon Stogumber.

It is the Severn sea which after all enhances the charms of the Quantock country, and gives it its deep historical interest. Yonder tawny flood that rushes twice a day up the Parret

20. Somerset Record Society. Vol. 3, p. 17.

21. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. xliii, p. 81.

22. Feet of Fines. Hen. III. A.D. 1219.

mouth, and looks in the distance almost like a lake bounded by Brean Down, has carried on its breast the exploring merchant, the adventurous privateer, and the evangelising sailor saint. The æstuarium Uxellæ was known to Phœnician, Roman, Briton, Saxon, Dane and Norman. The Mor E syllog or Mor Havren is the ancient British name for the Severn sea, Mor Havren, “a nomine puellæ,” as Giraldus Cambrensis tells us. When in a boat in Bridgwater Bay how conspicuous is the geographical landmark of Ynys Witrin or Glaston’s Isle ! that smooth and green mound which lies under heaven with so many holy and hallowing memories. What a central spot it makes in the classic land of Somerset ! and indeed in the whole kingdom of ancient Wessex ! Yonder in the midst of the hurrying flood of *Sabrina amnis* lies Echin, “adjacens Angliæ,” the Steep Holm, upon which Gildas sojourned. Close by is Ronnett or Ronech, the Saxon Bradanreolic,²³ and the Danish Flat Holms, “proximior Walliæ,” whither S. Cadoc went. The very wealth of synonyms tell the story of the flow of nations backwards and forwards, and recal the associations of this ancient region where “Seaward Quantock stands as Neptune he controlled,” to use Michael Drayton’s words.

One of the handmaids of Archæology is Geography. The broad features of sea, river and moor lying below the Quantocks suggest the course of History. Yonder, along the tidal Pedridan, the flat-bottomed ships could rest safely and easily on the soft beds of ooze and slime and be careened at low water : yonder at Cannington there rises a round hill which could serve as a fortress, probably the *Cynwit* of the Saxon Chroniclers ; further up the waste of waters (to carry our imagination back), there were refuges, “eyots,” islands, covered with alder wood, and guarded by quaking morass. The key to the land was at the Parrett mouth, and through this shifting reflux portal the way to South Wales, the

23. Bosworth Smith’s A.S. Dictionary.

country of the Silures, the Usk (Isca) and Caer-leon, to Monmouth, and the "nobilem Danubiæ sylvam" or the Danicam sylvam of old Giraldus Cambrensis (Itin. Camb. Ch. V), where the Danes hid in Alfred's time. Between the two shores was constant and busy intercourse. It is certainly curious that Hugo de Neville of Stoke Courcy Castle should have asked the King²⁴ in 1225 for six oaks from the Forest of Dene (the Danes wood of Giraldus Cambrensis) for repairing his houses at Stoke Courcy. It shows a port, possibly at Stoverd or Stolford, and quick sea communication between Wales and the Parrett mouth. This port the Danes themselves might have used before the battle of Cynwit.

What more grateful flood than that of Sabrina amnis, open to the pulse of the Atlantic, and still throbbing with busy life! Old Gildas, the lonely anchorite, so the story goes, of the Steep Holms wrote thus, "Britain is enriched by the mouths of two noble rivers, the Thames and the Severn, as it were two arms, by which foreign luxuries were of old imported." With show of reason we might place the Severn sea, the waterway to Ireland and to Armorica, above the river Thames, in the romantic shaping of our annals. Even the realm of Rex Arturus, shadowy elsewhere, seems to have a local habitation and a name along the shores of the Severn sea, whether at Caer-Leon or at Glastonbury. Inland, is there any part of Britain more replete with Saxon life or with a better title to be the real "Vetus Dominicum" of Saxonia than Somerton the erstwhile capital of Somerset, of which the ancient Burgh of Ilchester was a membrum,²⁵ with its Royal appanages stretching out on this side and on that?

The poet Wordsworth has celebrated in his "Ecclesiastical Sonnets," the hill of the proto-martyr, S. Alban.

"Whose flowery platform seems to rise

"By nature decked for holiest sacrifice."

24. Rotuli Cl. Litt. Vol. ii, p. 62.

25. Rotuli Hundred. Vol. ii, p. 128.

But the green mound of Glaston's Isle is full of greater memories than S. Alban's Mount. Should any Cathedral or Abbey Church in our land boast of its ancestry, a Church of Glastonbury can reply with truth, *Vetustior* ! Around this ancient island, British, Saxon and Norman Christianity throve with one continuous growth, and Glastonbury, for all time, must be the sacred "Delos" of our land and the Mecca of our factions. To use the late Professor Freeman's words, who, more than anyone else, struck the leading notes of our local history, "Here at Glastonbury we can muse, and muse without let or hindrance on the greatest memorials of the great age which made the English kingdom."²⁶

26. Som. Arch. Proceedings, vol. xxvi, p. 39.