

## ENGLAND BEFORE THE CONQUEST

Cnut. After Cnut's death and the brief reigns of his two sons, Edward the Confessor, last of the line of Alfred, sat on the English throne. At his death Harold, the son of Earl Godwin, was elected king, but the crown was also claimed by William, Duke of Normandy, in virtue of a promise made by Edward the Confessor and



Edward the Confessor

of an oath he had extracted from Harold. He prepared a great army and came over to enforce his claim, and one of the decisive battles of the world was fought at Senlac, near Hastings, when Harold, the last of the English, as he has been called, was slain.

England at one blow was a defeated country mourning for her dead. But for all the storm and stress she had gone through in the past thousand years she reaped a rich reward. As the Britons in the days of the Roman occupation had turned from their