

UNDER THE ENGLISH CROWN

This mountainous part of the country, being more remote and inaccessible than the rest, remained the citadel of the power and ideals of Wales, as well as the sacred source from which its bards drew their inspiration. It was the Welsh home of independence, and from all sides the national hope turned to these princes, living withdrawn in their fastnesses close by the country's venerated Snowdon. Even the subjects of the Lord Marchers looked to them against a power which they had submitted to but never recognised. Though faintly enough, Wales still radiated as a nation from this little corner, where an invincible faith, in the face of every evidence, persisted in seeing itself still unconquered and firm.

The Conquest of 1282 changed all this. It was but the last act of the drama which for two centuries had been enacted between a passionate race, all dreams and idealism, and one positive, forceful, and steeped in hard practicality—the drama, in fact, between the Celts and the Anglo-Saxons. The enchanter Merlin had no chance against the Norman bastard. He continued, however, to beat a retreat which had already lasted for seven centuries, the Saxons and the Angles