

## WALES AND THE CONQUEST

their rights invested them with powers constituting in practice an intolerable tyranny. Twelfth-century historians said of the Earl of Shrewsbury that "he had torn the Welsh with nails of iron." This Robert de Bellesme merely acted in the same fashion as Robert de Maupas, Robert de Rhudlan, Hughes Le Loup, and many others. One can easily understand consequently that the Welsh entered with enthusiasm into the great scheme of the Saxons for shaking off the Norman yoke. In 1130 a general rise to arms was followed by an attack upon all the fortresses of the frontier. Terrible reprisals followed, and the rising was only a momentary break in the irresistible progress of the Conquest. At the end of the thirteenth century there were about one hundred and forty *Lordship Marches* in Wales, and in all of them tyranny, disorder, and oppression reigned unchecked.

Nevertheless Wales, though considerably diminished in extent, still existed. In the northern extremity, known generally as Gwynedd, a long line of princes, descending from Cunedda, succeeded one another as sovereigns. The hopes of Britain were centred in them, and all its cherished beliefs in a future return to supremacy.