

fourth century ; when the light of Christianity penetrating the gloom of their umbrageous oaks, their admirable fabric of religion and morality gradually yielded to a system, which, in some of its most important doctrines, resembled, yet infinitely surpassed, their own.*

By embracing Christianity, the legislative dignity of the Druids was not immediately affected ;† for according to the Manks tradition they and their descendants continued, for several years, the teachers and rulers of the people.‡ But at length an irruption of northern barbarians, spreading anarchy and devastation through the country, overthrew their dominion ; and a long period ensued, in which the history of this island is involved in darkness and fable, till the descent of

ORRY,

in the tenth century.

This prince was of the Danish line, and after subduing the Orcades and Hebrides, at last established his throne in Mona. Though he assumed the government by violence, his reign was undisturbed by any domestic commotion : and to his polity the Manks are indebted for the origin of their Constitutional Representatives ; who for several succeeding ages sometimes feebly opposed, but more frequently sanctioned regal oppression. After a long reign, Orry was succeeded by his son,

GUTTRED :

A prince who devoted his attention to the welfare of his subjects : he erected the noble relic of Danish architecture, Castle-Rushen ; and in that durable monument of his regal grandeur lies obscurely buried.

The third prince of the Danish line was

REGINALD,

who sacrificed the dignity of his character to lust and intemperance. His vices accelerated his ruin : for having seduced a lady, whose brothers were soldiers of fortune, they revenged her dishonour by the death of her seducer. On this event,

OLAVE,

having assumed the crown without the approbation of the king of Denmark, was with much apparent friendship invited to his court : but on his arrival was arraigned, and executed as a traitor to the supremacy of the Danish throne. His brother,

OLAIN,

succeeded him, who, after an equitable reign, died in Ireland, and had for his successor

ALLEN :

whose memory has been branded with every crime. He was poisoned by his governor, and most probably succeeded by

HABON :

a gallant prince, who, for refusing homage to the English crown, was deprived of the diadem of the isles. It was however soon afterwards restored to him, with a plenitude of honour. He was created by the English monarch admiral of a numerous fleet, with which he annually circumnavigated the British isles ; to guard them from the ra-

* See Chap. XII.

† During this period, the Isle of Man, according to Boetius and other writers, was the fountain of all pure learning ; the residence of the Muses ; and a literary retirement for the heirs of the crown of Scotland. From this it may be presumed that the erudition, genius and virtue of the Druids for some ages survived their religious establishment in this country.

‡ Ninnius mentions the invasion of this island by one Binle, a Scot ; and other writers its reduction by Edwin, king of Northumberland ; but these were temporary ravages, and not conquests.