

with the Viking armies in England. According to the account of the siege of Chester (c. 912) preserved in the *Three Fragments of Annals*, many Irishmen, foster-children of the Norsemen, formed part of the besieging army under the chieftain Hingamund,¹ who had been expelled from Dublin some time previously. To these Irishmen Aethelflaed, the lady of the Mercians, sent ambassadors appealing to them as "true and faithful friends" to abandon the "hostile race of Pagans" and to assist the Saxons in defending the city. The Irish then deserted their former allies and joined the Saxons, "and the reason they acted so towards the Danes," adds the chronicler, "was because they were less friendly with them than with the Norsemen."²

The Vikings who formed settlements in Ireland during the reign of Turgeis (839-845) seem to have mingled freely with the Irish, for we find them not long after their arrival stirring up the clans to rebellion against the *ard-rí*³ and joining the native princes on plundering expeditions. The annals mention several such alliances. Cinaedh, Prince of Cranachta-Breagh, who had revolted against Maelsechnaill with a party of plunderers, laid waste the country from the Shannon eastward to the sea.⁴ Another Irish prince, Lorcan, King of Meath, accompanied Olaf and Ivarr when they broke into the famous burial-mounds⁵ at New Grange, Knowth and Dowth, on the Boyne, and carried off the

¹ *Ann. Cambriae*, A.D. 902; (Steenstrup: *Normannerne*, III., pp. 37-41).

² *Three Fragments of Annals*, p. 230 ff.

³ *Annals of the Four Masters*, A.D. 845, 852; *Annals of Ulster*, A.D. 846. *Three Fragments of Annals*, A.D. 862.

⁴ *Annals of the Four Masters*, A.D. 848.

⁵ The plundering of these burial-mounds—"a thing that had never been done before"—made a deep impression on the Irish Annalists; it was thought that the Vikings discovered the existence of the treasure by magic, "through paganism and idol worship" (*War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, p. 115). The same source (p. 25) records