

plundering on French, British, and Irish coasts—places which, at an earlier date, they had not ventured to assail.

The Saxon war, begun in 772 (Eginhard), brought the people of Denmark directly into touch with Western Europe. Sigfred, the Danish king, received Widukind, the Saxon chief, when he sought refuge from Charlemagne's armies. In 777 an embassy was sent from Sigfred to Charlemagne, and though the Danes took no general part in the struggle, in 803 Godfred, the successor of Sigfred, advanced with a fleet to Sleswick to protect his land, and in 808, after a raid across the Elbe, he built the first Danework in the hope of making invasion impossible. This earliest earthwork has been described by Mr. H. A. Kjær in *The Saga-book of the Viking Club* (iv. pp. 313-325). The conduct of the war must have opened the eyes of the Baltic folk to the opportunity of plundering in regions which, up to that time, they had regarded as beyond them in every sense. They found that monasteries were wealthy and unprotected; gold and silver, rich clothes, wine and dainties, cattle and captives to sell in the market, could be had for the taking, in places which they had thought unassailable and impracticable. When once this new world was opened up, as in later ages America was opened, adventure was the obvious duty of every one who wished to better himself. But as we now-a-days find that a war teaches us geography, so it needed the Saxon war to call attention to the wealth and weakness of these western regions.