CHAPTER III

EARLY GOTHTONIC PERSONAL NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS IN BRITAIN

Early Alien Influence. As briefly recalled in the opening chapter, the Teutons ultimately overcame the Celts in the greater part of England, resulting in the various dialects of the ænglisc tongue superseding the Cymric, and the perishing of the native names in England.

The population of England, during the Roman period, has been estimated at about 750,000,¹ and by the time of the Norman conquest it had doubled.² The increase, slow as it was, must not be put down entirely to the propagation of Cymry and Saxon, the inflow of other races had already commenced, adding to the population, and to the variety of our languages and our names.

Asser mentions that “Franci autem multi Frisones, Galli, Pagani, Britones et Scoti, Armorici”, both nobles and persons of low degree, submitted to the rule of Alfred (ninth century).³ The Franks and Frisians were the principal merchants of Western Europe, and considerable commerce was carried on by them with the Anglo-Saxons, who required manufactured articles and technical workmanship, which could not be obtained in England. Another great factor in the introduction of alien names into Britain was the considerable religious intercourse, which commenced with the arrival of Augustine and his companions in A.D. 596, and was maintained largely by the activity of foreign monks. It is manifest, therefore, that in any extensive list of English names, even at this early date, some may be alien. The great influence of the Norsemen, who themselves brought Frisians to the country, will be mentioned towards the end of this chapter.

Anglo-Saxon Personal Names. The researches of Turner (1799–1852),⁴ Kemble (1846), Birch (1885),⁵ and Searle (1887) have provided foundation for an inquiry into the nature of Anglo-Saxon (Old English) personal names.⁶

² Rise and Progress of the English Constitution, by Sir E. Creasy, 1907, p. 57. The author refers to various estimates of from a million to two million.
³ De Rebus gestis Ælfriceti.
⁵ Cartularium Saxonicum, by W. de G. Birch, 1885–93.
⁶ In compiling these notes I have availed myself freely of the valuable observations on O.E. nomenclature made by Kemble, Turner, Searle, and Redin.