

APPENDIX B

THE CORBOULD LEGEND

GERBALD, HIS TREASURE

Gerbald having come back from the Mediterranean Sea with much gold treasure and other spoil and still more ships, glad with success, to Friesland,

was angered because whilst he was away it had been planned that he should obey the new customs of coming and going at the will of his brother overlords, and of placing shares of spoil in the Common Barn for them and the free folk to share, and he takes witness at once.

By two faithful hús-carls he sends tidings by the word to those who were angry for the like cause to come to him.

Many came to him.

After a feast of welcome, Gerbald spake these words :—“ Kinsmen and Faithful Friends. Our ancient freedom is about to be taken from us, shall we fight for it, or leave our land ? If we stay as we are we shall be shorn of our rights.

We have sailed the open seas and brought back the fishes that live in them which belong to the fisherman since no man owns the seas. We have taken from weaklings what they had neither the strength nor the wit to hold, and by the cunning of our own northern wit, matched in fair fight against the sluggards of the south, we have come by many a sound ship, many a weapon to aid us in the fight or chase, and many a gay trinket to adorn our women.

Are we to give the first fruits of all these to men who stay at home and chew the cud of idleness ? I say No, and again No.

Then the wise ones mooted, and counselled that as they had had more than enough of seeing the dew of Woden flow from their own kith and kin, and as most thought to sail to other lands, each should choose for himself.

They put this to Gerbald, and he resolves to go to Ænglelande, to which land he is no stranger, and he spake again :—

“ Who sails the westernway ?

“ Who fares with me to Ænglelande ? Many of our kin are there and have made part of it ours. Guthrun is there, and Thordi his very shadow is near Hedleaga, and let them look to it, for they speak evil of us without truth ; but there, they are too small fishes for my net ! ”

“ It is a friendly land, its lakes and rivers are free to our ships. We will first sail up the Dufva, which they call Waveney, past the first ford to the place they call Skål in our own tongue. The folk in that part of Ænglelande are ruled over by one king—there is talk of an Overking, but his spears seem blunt, and the overlords strive among themselves there as here. If our kinsmen who live on the



Herbold the Vykunge &

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IV. AELVRIC OF GERBOLDISHAM who held Garboldisham, Norfolk, in 1040. The area of his land and its rating appear in Domesday Book.

V. GODBOLD, held lands at Wiston, Suffolk, in the time of King Edward the Confessor; in King John's time these lands passed to the Horksleys. The Lordship of Neyland included part of Suffolk and, besides other lands, the Essex villages of Great and Little Horkesley, the latter was held in the 12th year of King John's reign by Robert son of Philip de Horkesley and continued in that family for many generations. The Priory of St. Peter at Little Horkesley was founded by Robert de Godebold and was formerly a cell in the Abbey of St. Martin of Troarn, Normandy, the Abbots of which had many curious dealings with Little Horkesley—one was the exchange of Horkesley Parish Church for lands which the Priory of Bruton held in Normandy.

Until the end of the reign of James I the Corboulds of Bardwell, Suffolk, apparently spelt their name either Godbold or Corbold—as they chose at the moment.

VI. GOBAUDE, the Norman, came over with William the Conqueror, and is in Leland's Copy of the Roll of Battle Abbey.

VII. CUBALD OF CUTHBALD, who held lands in Suffolk in the time of King Edward the Confessor; vide Domesday Book. Cuthbeald became Cu'beald.

Susan CUBAUD was living in Suffolk in 1273.

Walter COBALD, living at Monk Soham in 1310, and at Thorp, Suffolk, in 1335, married before 1335, Johanna . . ., and had Geoffrey COBALD, who lived at Weybred and Fressingfeld, Suffolk, in 1361. The latter married before 1361, Alice . . ., and they had a son John COBALD, b. circa 1360, who lived at Weybred 1397.

Thomas COBALD was elected Mayor of Great Yarmouth, Suffolk in 1349. In 1379 he bequeathed to the High Altar at Yarmouth his "best holiday vestment there to be used as long as it shall last: to Martin Wodesyde chaplain, one missal, two vestments and a chalice." After his decease they were to go to St. Mary's altar in that church and there to continue for ever.

William COBALD, clericus, chaplain at Windham (Wymondham), Norfolk, died 1464, leaving £5 towards the building of Windham Church.

William COBALD of Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, died c. 1441. His will, 1442, is at Bury. He married Annabella . . ., who died c. 1432. Her will, 1433, is at Bury.

James COBALD, clericus, Rector of Barsham, Suffolk, in 1450; Vicar of Mutford, Suffolk, 1465.

northern coast of Gaul spake truly when I was with them not many days ago, things may so happen in Ænglelande that such men as we, relying on our strong arms, daring to put our fate to the hazard, can turn the way of battle as we will if we but be there in time."

"Who sails the westernway?"

This and more spake Gerbald, and his words were gravely marked for he was a fighter famed and feared, a mighty navigator and a very cunning man.

Many plan to go with Gerbald, and, an even east wind springing up with a fair sea, forty ships sailed to Ænglelande, and ten more ships with them laden with gear and treasure, on the first faring: on the second faring, the same forty sailed and five laden with gear and treasure, and five were sailed to Viborg to bring back woollen cloth.

Some plan to go to Norway, for there lived Gerbald's own kinsman Rol, him they called Robertus when he took Gisla to wife. Rol liked a fight more than most; but he did not like a blow on the head whilst he slept and bootless fighting all day; and as there was no end to that, he sailed to Gaul. From him came Robertus, and Gulielmus, and from them came Hamon, and Ricardus who took to wife his kinswoman Gunilda.

Some fared to the fiords, but their sons lived no better under Eric Bloody-axe.

Some plan to sail to Iceland and the further land. And to the Western Isles fared Kerbal, the bold Lion, with Einar and Armuinn of the torn face who made music. Some plan to sail to the South.

But Gerbald commanded that a few shall stay with those older ones who had dwelt so long on the land that they had in sooth become as the birch trees, and to uproot them now to fare oversea to new lands would go hard with them; besides, some must stay to tell tidings, and their thralls must be there to tend beacons.

Now, in the springtime of two years before, Gerbald had sailed up the Waveney River and had seen that the land was fertile and fair; and he had seen and desired someone who was fairer still, Elswitha, the young and most comely golden-haired daughter of a Saxon king who was friendly,

and so was she.

At glepja never was the way with Gerbald or his kin, so he was twice welcome to go back; and to this place fares Gerbald full of purpose, the place now called after him Gerboldisham, for the Saxon gave him, with Elswitha, (these) lands as a dowry on a solemn oath and promise, and took witness before all, that when Gerbald the Dane was borne to Valhalla, Elswitha his wedded wife should not fare with the lands, or ever become heritage, and that she should remain free to say yes, or no.

And Helwis half-sister of Gerbald offered herself, and was held, in gentle thraldom to that end, and yet not all for the liking of her brother. She had her will; but was soon free and a wedded wife, as all saw would happen.

At that place Gerbald abided most of his life, always faring back to these new lands after many voyages.

Gerbald and Elswitha had three sons and some daughters. One bright day she slowly spake these words "It grows dark, Gerbald, keep us together."

Then the Gods took Elswitha, the kindest and fairest of women. Never lived one more faithful than she.

As became a king's daughter she was brave beyond belief, yet without any defence in herself, and she was gracious to all—even to her thralls.

From the first to the last Gerbald knew that he was well wedded, and now he was filled with sorrow, and others were too.

Woe worth the day; but it was doomed so. After all, everyone must bear his own burden.

Soon after that, Gerbald dreamed that a golden light filled his hall in the night, and Thor's black raven and two golden ones settled on his bed, and the loemingi flew silently round them. On the next night he dreamed the same.

On the third night he dreamed that the three ravens came and were settling again, when all went black, and up rears the Devil* himself with his baleful light at the foot of the bed. Gerbald laughed outright at him in scorn, and spake these words:—"I am master here: I will that you fare to the place whence you came." But the wise ravens knowing his power and anger flew at him and tore, till there was no longer strength in it, the Devil's left arm which he had uplifted,—and what he then lost Gerbald gained—and the Devil fared shrieking away and nevermore has been seen by Gerbald's kin. For, so long as they are just, they, as is not given to all men, have power over the spirits of darkness, power to heal, power over the left as over the right.† They are foresighted men and women and dream truth—some of them know things without the telling.

Then the golden light came back, and he heard the loom call out clearly to him that he should live seven times as many days as he had seen ravens in all that night.

So on the morrow he called his sons to be alone with him and told them of his dream, and got ready.

To the eldest Thorbald he gives great silver treasure, gear, many bags of sceattas, and many ships, and bids him sail away after a score of days to where the land is fruitful, and yet always to tell tidings with his brothers and to hold himself ready to fare to their aid in times of need. Men came from Thorbald.

To the second Kolbald who was the father of Codbeald, he gives lands, treasure, many bags of sceattas, gear, and a score of big ships, and counsels him to use some of them for trading with near countries, and not to wantonly quarrel with any of the overlords in Ænglelande as was his wont, and not to slay more of them than needs be, so that in fighting times he and his men would be able to sway the battle as would serve them best.

To the youngest Garbald who was the father of Aelfric, Cubbeald and Corbeald, and who, like Elswitha, helped the weak and was never first in stirring strife, and yet was like Gerbald, his father, a fighter in very sooth when once he had started, he spake these words: "Fare in Ænglelande as thy wit and will are, and lead the

*"Hell herself," in one version. Compare meaning of the German word "Kobold."

† Vide Appendix C.

folk to become useful men in all ways." To him he gives treasure, many bags of sceattas, one ship and much land. This was Garbald the Christian.

And then Gerbald commanded them all to continue to fight fairly and be just men, and to do nothing that should make their name of less fame and honour; and to try to agree amongst themselves, yet all could see that they would not; and that his old round war-shield, which was faced with gold on which was marked the head, the wings, the body and the legs of Thor's Raven, and the back of which was malâ spiot, was to be upheld ready by the eldest of his sons and their sons; and that that sign, Thor's Raven, was to be known by all of them as a token for their coming together when needs be.

And then he told them where he had hidden great wealth in a place not open. He commanded them to use it only in times of great need, and as used all must work to set back what was taken out.

He told them of its power and that sometimes overkings would be moved to the will of another by it; and that the hiding-place must be known only to three at one time, his sons or their sons, and if one died then the next in wisdom or kinship must be told and no other, and though she be of the very nearest in kinship seldom must it be told to a woman, and never to a woman not of kin. If the three agree that it shall be used, let it be used; if not, then they must fight until one be killed and another chosen in his place, and again until they do agree.

Gerbald minded the bodings, and thought that about now would be the meet time to tell them to his sons if they did not know. He warned them that Grimir, who always foretold truth, had said "What Gerbald has, his sons' sons shall lose through the idle chatter of a woman; and after two and fifty score of years they shall find it again, and more, through another woman of kin who shall dream truth. Sons after sons will be venturers over the great seas and men will come from them; though none too many. Some will be drowned, but not while fishing."

Thorbald, Kolbald and Garbald, each for all, spake these words:—"All that you have told us we hear: we will hold it." And on the one and twentieth day after his dream,

Across the forever
Across the ice-cold frozen wastes
Across the great silence

From beyond Valhalla, Elswitha beckoned to him.

They who stood beside know that Gerbald fared to her gladly in peace.

He had the hellshoon fitted to his feet; and out of the water up on to dry land by where they had buried Elswitha, his ship was drawn, and the heavy stones put in it to upright it; then he was laid in it, and the howe heaped over them both.

He was well remembered, for he was a just man and unafraid; he trusted in nothing but his own daring and hardihood. He was always willing to fight, and always fought fairly.

Such was Gerbald the King's Thegn.
So live.

God grant us all good days without end. Amen.