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**Harold, the Last of the Saxon Kings, by the Author of  
'Rienzi'.**

**Lytton Edward George**

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**HAROLD,**

**THE**

**LAST OF THE SAXON KINGS.**

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**VOL. II.**

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HAROLD,

THE

LAST OF THE SAXON KINGS;

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“RIENZI;” “THE LAST OF THE BARONS;”

ETC. ETC. ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BOOK V.

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DEATH AND LOVE.





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BOOK V.

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CHAPTER I.

HAROLD, without waiting once more to see Edith, nor even taking leave of his father, repaired to Dunwich,\* the capital of his earldom. In his absence, the King wholly forgot Algar and his suit; and in the meanwhile the only lordships at his disposal, Stigand, the grasping Bishop, got from him without an effort. In much wrath, Earl Algar, on the fourth day, assembling all the loose men-at-arms he could find around the

\* Dunwich, now swallowed up by the sea.—Hostile element to the house of Godwin!

metropolis, and at the head of a numerous disorderly band, took his way into Wales, with his young daughter Aldyth, to whom the crown of a Welch king was perhaps some comfort for the loss of the fair Earl; though the rumour ran that she had long since lost her heart to her father's foe.

Edith, after a long homily from the King, returned to Hilda; nor did her godmother renew the subject of the convent. All she said on parting was, "Even in youth the silver cord may be loosened, and the golden bowl may be broken; and rather perhaps in youth than in age when the heart has grown hard, wilt thou recal with a sigh my counsels."

Godwin had departed to Wales; all his sons were at their several lordships; Edward was left alone to his monks and relic-venders. And so months passed.

Now it was the custom with the old kings of England to hold state and wear their crowns thrice a-year, at Christmas, at Easter, and at Whitsuntide; and in those times their nobles came round them, and there was much feasting and great pomp.

So, in the Easter of the year of our Lord 1053,

King Edward kept his court at Windshore,\* and Earl Godwin and his sons, and many others of high degree, left their homes to do honour to the King. And Earl Godwin came first to his house in London—near the Tower Palatine, in what is now called the Fleet—and Harold the Earl, and Tostig, and Leofwine, and Gurth, were to meet him there, and go thence, with the full state of their sub-thegns, and cnechts, and house-carles, their falcons, and their hounds, as became men of such rank, to the court of King Edward.

Earl Godwin sate with his wife, Githa, in a room out of the Hall, which looked on the Thames, — awaiting Harold, who was expected to arrive ere night-fall. Gurth had ridden forth to meet his brother, and Leofwine and Tostig had gone over to Southwark, to try their band-dogs on the great bear, which had been brought from the North a few days before, and was said to have hugged many good hounds to death, and a large train of thegns and house-carles had gone with them to see the sport; so that the old Earl and his lady the Dane sate alone. And there was a cloud upon Earl Godwin's large forehead, and he

\* Windsor.