

BOOK IX

Chap. I — *Arthur succeeds Uther his father in the kingdom of Britain, and besieges Colgrin.*

Uther Pendragon being dead, the nobility from several provinces assembled together at Silchester, and proposed to Dubricius, archbishop of Legions, that he should consecrate Arthur, Uther's son, to be their king. For they were now in great straits, because, upon hearing of the king's death, the Saxons had invited over their countrymen from Germany, and, under the command of Colgrin, were attempting to exterminate the whole British race. They had also entirely subdued all that part of the island which extends from the Humber to the sea of Caithness. Dubricius, therefore, grieving for the calamities of his country, in conjunction with the other bishops, set the crown upon Arthur's head.

Arthur was then fifteen years old, but a youth of such unparalleled courage and generosity, joined with that sweetness of temper and innate goodness, as gained him universal love. When his coronation was over, he, according to usual custom, showed his bounty and munificence to the people. And such a number of soldiers flocked to him upon it, that his treasury was not able to answer that vast expense. But such a spirit of generosity, joined with valour, can never long want means to support itself. Arthur, therefore, the better to keep up his munificence, resolved to make use of his courage, and to fall upon the Saxons, that he might enrich his followers with their wealth. To this he was also moved by the justice of the cause, since the entire monarchy of Britain belonged to him by hereditary right. Hereupon assembling the youth under his command, he marched to York, of which, when Colgrin had intelligence, he met him with a very great army, composed of Saxons, Scots, and Picts, by the river Douglas; where a battle happened, with the loss of the greater part of both armies. Notwithstanding, the victory fell to Arthur, who pursued Colgrin to York, and there besieged him.

Baldulf, upon the news of his brother's flight, went towards the siege with a body of six thousand men, to his relief; for at the time of the battle he was upon the sea coast, waiting the arrival of duke Cheldric with succours from Germany. And being now no more than ten miles distant from the city, his purpose was to make a speedy march in the nighttime, and fall upon the enemy by way of surprise. But Arthur, having intelligence of his design, sent a detachment of six hundred horse, and three thousand foot, under the command of Cador, duke of Cornwall, to meet him the same night. Cador, therefore, falling into the same road along which the enemy was passing, made a sudden assault upon them, and entirely defeated the Saxons, and put them to flight. Baldulf was excessively grieved at this disappointment in the relief which he intended for his brother, and began to think of some other stratagem to gain access to him; in which if he could but succeed, he thought they might concert measures together for their safety. And since he had no other way for it, he shaved his head and beard, and put on the habit of a jester with a harp, and in this disguise walked up and

down in the camp, playing upon his instrument as if he had been a harper. He thus passed unsuspected, and by a little and little went up to the walls of the city, where he was at last discovered by the besieged, who thereupon drew him up with cords, and conducted him to his brother. At this unexpected, though much desired meeting, they spent some time in joyfully embracing each other, and then began to consider various stratagems for their delivery. At last, just as they were considering their case desperate, the ambassadors returned from Germany, and brought with them to Albany a fleet of six hundred sail, laden with brave soldiers, under the command of Cheldric. Upon this news, Arthur was dissuaded by his council from continuing the siege any longer, for fear of hazarding a battle with so powerful and numerous an army.

Chap. II — *Hywel sends fifteen thousand men to Arthur's assistance.*

Arthur complied with their advice, and made his retreat to London, where he called an assembly of all the clergy and nobility of the kingdom, to ask their advice, what course to take against the formidable power of the pagans. After some deliberation, it was agreed that ambassadors should be despatched into Armorica, to king Hywel, to represent to him the calamitous state of Britain. Hywel was the son of Arthur's sister by Dubricius, king of the Armorican Britons; so that, upon advice of the disturbances his uncle was threatened with, he ordered his fleet to be got ready, and, having assembled fifteen thousand men, he arrived with the first fair wind at Hamo's Port [Southampton], and was received with all suitable honour by Arthur, and most affectionately embraced by him.

Chap. III — *Arthur makes the Saxons his, tributaries.*

After a few days they went to relieve the city Caer Liudcoit, that was besieged by the pagans; which being situated upon a mountain, between two rivers in the province of Lindisia, is called by another name Lindocolinum [Lincoln]. As soon as they arrived there with all their forces, they fought with the Saxons, and made a grievous slaughter of them, to the number of six thousand; part of whom were drowned in the rivers, part fell by the hands of the Britons. The rest in a great consternation quitted the siege and fled, but were closely pursued by Arthur, till they came to the wood of Celidon, where they endeavoured to form themselves into a body again, and make a stand. And here they again joined battle with the Britons, and made a brave defence, whilst the trees that were in the place secured them against the enemies' arrows. Arthur, seeing this, commanded the trees that were in that part of the wood to be cut down, and the trunks to be placed quite round them, so as to hinder their getting out; resolving to keep them pent up here till he could reduce them by famine. He then commanded his troops to besiege the wood, and continued three days in that place.

The Saxons, having now no provisions to sustain them, and being just ready to starve with hunger, begged for leave to go out; in consideration whereof they

offered to leave all their gold and silver behind them, and return back to Germany with nothing but their empty ships. They promised also that they would pay him tribute from Germany, and leave hostages with him. Arthur, after consultation, about it, granted their petition; allowing them only leave to depart, and retaining all their treasures, as also hostages for payment of the tribute. But as they were under sail on their return home, they repented of their bargain, and tacked about again towards Britain, and went on shore at Totness.

No sooner were they landed, than they made an utter devastation of the country as far as the Severn Sea, and put all the peasants to the sword. From thence they pursued their furious march to the town of Bath, and laid siege to it. When the king had intelligence of it, he was beyond measure surprised at their proceedings, and immediately gave orders for the execution of the hostages. And desisting from an attempt which he had entered upon to reduce the Scots and Picts, he marched with the utmost expedition to raise the siege; but laboured under very great difficulties, because he had left his nephew Hywel sick at Alclud. At length, having entered the province of Somerset, and beheld how the siege was carried on, he addressed himself to his followers in these words: "Since these impious and detestable Saxons have disdained to keep faith with me, I, to keep faith with God, will endeavour to revenge the blood of my countrymen this day upon them. To arms, soldiers, to arms, and courageously fall upon the perfidious wretches, over whom we shall, with Christ assisting us, undoubtedly obtain the victory."

Chap. IV — *Dubricius's speech against the treacherous Saxons. Arthur with his own hand kills four hundred and seventy Saxons in one battle. Colgrin and Baldulf are killed in the same.*

When he had done speaking, St. Dubricius, archbishop of Legions, going to the top of a hill, cried out with a loud voice, "You that have the honour to profess the Christian faith, keep fixed in your minds the love which you owe to your country and fellow subjects, whose sufferings by the treachery of the pagans will be an everlasting reproach to you, if you do not courageously defend them. It is your country which you fight for, and for which you should, when required, voluntarily suffer death; for that itself is victory and the cure of the soul. For he that shall die for his brethren, offers himself a living sacrifice to God, and has Christ for his example, who condescended to lay down his life for his brethren. If therefore any of you shall be killed in this war, that death itself, which is suffered in so glorious a cause, shall be to him for penance and absolution of all his sins."

At these words, all of them, encouraged with the benediction of the holy prelate, instantly armed themselves, and prepared to obey his orders. Also Arthur himself, having put on a coat of mail suitable to the grandeur of so powerful a king, placed a golden helmet upon his head, on which was engraven the figure of a dragon; and on his shoulders his shield called Pridwen; upon which the picture of the blessed Mary, mother of God, was painted, in order to put him frequently in mind of her. Then girding on his Caliburn, which was an

excellent sword made in the isle of Avalon, he graced his right hand with his lance, named Ron, which was hard, broad, and fit for slaughter.

After this, having placed his men in order, he boldly attacked the Saxons, who were drawn out in the shape of a wedge, as their manner was. And they, notwithstanding that the Britons fought with great eagerness, made a noble defence all that day; but at length, towards sunsetting, climbed up the next mountain, which served them for a camp: for they desired no larger extent of ground, since they confided very much in their numbers. The next morning Arthur, with his army, went up the mountain, but lost many of his men in the ascent, by the advantage which the Saxons had in their station on the top, from whence they could pour down upon him with much greater speed, than he was able to advance against them. Notwithstanding, after a very hard struggle, the Britons gained the summit of the hill, and quickly came to a close engagement with the enemy, who again gave them a warm reception, and made a vigorous defence. In this manner was a great part of that day also spent; whereupon Arthur, provoked to see the little advantage he had yet, gained, and that victory still continued in suspense, drew out his Caliburn, and, calling upon the name of the blessed Virgin, rushed forward with great fury into the thickest of the enemy's ranks; of whom (such was the merit of his prayers) not one escaped alive that felt the fury of his sword; neither did he give over the fury of his assault until he had, with his Caliburn alone, killed four hundred and seventy men. The Britons, seeing this, followed their leader in great multitudes, and made slaughter on all sides; so that Colgrin, and Baldulf his brother, and many thousands more, fell before them. But Cheldric, in this imminent danger of his men, betook himself to flight.

Chap. V — *The Saxons, after their leader Cheldric was killed, are all compelled by Cador to surrender.*

The victory being thus gained, the king commanded Cador, duke of Cornwall, to pursue them, while he himself should hasten his march into Albany: from whence he had advice that the Scots and Picts were besieging Alclud, in which, as we said before, Hywel lay sick. Therefore, he hastened to his assistance, for fear he might fall into the hands of the barbarians. In the meantime, the duke of Cornwall, who had the command of ten thousand men, would not as yet pursue the Saxons in their flight, but speedily made himself master of their ships, to hinder their getting on board, and manned them with his best soldiers, who were to beat back the pagans in case they should flee thither: after this he hastily pursued the enemy, according to Arthur's command, and allowed no quarter to those he could overtake. So that they whose behaviour before was so cruel and insolent, now with timorous hearts fled for shelter, sometimes to the coverts of the woods, sometimes to mountains and caves, to prolong a wretched life. At last, when none of these places could afford them a safe retreat, they entered the Isle of Thanet with their broken forces; but neither did they there get free from the duke of Cornwall's pursuit, for he still continued slaughtering them, and gave them no respite till he had killed Cheldric, and taken hostages for the surrender of the rest.

Chap. VI — *Arthur grants a pardon to the Scots and Picts, besieged at the Lake Lomond.*

Having therefore settled peace here, he directed his march to Alclud, which Arthur had relieved from the oppression of barbarians, and from thence conducted his army to Moray, where the Scots and Picts were besieged; after three several battles with the king and his nephew, they had fled as far as this province, and entering upon the lake Lomond, sought for refuge in the islands that are upon it. This lake contains sixty islands, and receives sixty rivers into it, which empty themselves into the sea by no more than one mouth. There is also an equal number of rocks in these islands, as also of eagles' nests in those rocks, which flocked together there every year, and, by the loud and general noise which they now made, foreboded some remarkable event that should happen to the kingdom. To these islands, therefore, had the enemy fled, thinking the lake would serve them instead of a fortification; but it proved of little advantage to them. For Arthur, having got together a fleet, sailed round the rivers, and besieged the enemy fifteen days together, by which they were so straitened with hunger, that they died by thousands.

While he was harassing them in this manner Guillamurius, king of Ireland, came up in a fleet with a very great army of barbarians, in order to relieve the besieged. This obliged Arthur to raise the siege, and turn his arms against the Irish, whom he slew without mercy, and compelled the rest to return back to their country. After this victory, he proceeded in his first attempt, which was to extirpate the whole race of the Scots and Picts, and treated them with an unparalleled severity. And as he allowed quarter to none, the bishops of that miserable country, with all the inferior clergy, met together, and bearing the reliques of the saints and other consecrated things of the church before them, barefooted, came to implore the king's mercy for their people. As soon as they were admitted into his presence, they fell down upon their knees, and humbly besought him to have pity on their distressed country, since the sufferings which he had already made it undergo, were sufficient; nor was there any necessity to cut off the small remainder to a man; and that he would allow them the enjoyment of a small part of the country, since they were willing to bear the yoke which he should impose upon them. The king was moved at the manner of their delivering this petition, and could not forbear expressing his clemency to them with tears; and at the request of those holy men, granted them pardon.

Chap. VII — *Arthur relates the wonderful nature of some ponds.*

This affair being concluded, Hywel had the curiosity to view the situation of the lake, and wondered to find the number of the rivers, islands, rocks, and eagles' nests, so exactly correspond: and while he was reflecting upon it as something that appeared miraculous, Arthur came to him, and told him of another pond in the same province, which was yet more wonderful. For not far from thence was one whose length and breadth were each twenty feet; and depth five feet. But whether its square figure was natural or artificial, the wonder of it was, there were four different sorts of fishes in the four several

corners of it, none of which were ever found in any other part of the pond but their own. He told him likewise of another pond in Wales, near the Severn, called by the country people Llyn Liwan, into which when the sea flows, it receives it in the manner of a gulf, but so as to swallow up the tide, and never be filled, or have its banks covered by it. But at the ebbing of the sea, it throws out the waters which it had swallowed, as high as a mountain; and at last dashes and covers the banks with them. In the meantime, if all the people of that country should stand near with their faces towards it, and happened to have their clothes sprinkled with the dashing of the waves, they would hardly, if at all, escape being swallowed up by the pond. But with their backs towards it, they need not fear being dashed, though they stood upon the very banks.

Chap. VIII — *Arthur restores York to its ancient beauty, especially as to its churches.*

The king, after his general pardon granted to the Scots, went to York to celebrate the feast of Christ's nativity, which was now at hand. On entering the city, he beheld with grief the desolation of the churches; for upon the expulsion of the holy Archbishop Sanxo, and of all the clergy there, the temples which were half burned down, had no longer divine service performed in them: so much had the impious rage of the pagans prevailed. After this, in an assembly of the clergy and people, he appointed Pyramus his chaplain metropolitan of that see. The churches that lay level with the ground, he rebuilt, and (which was their chief ornament) saw them filled with assemblies of devout persons of both sexes. Also, the nobility that were driven out by the disturbances of the Saxons, he restored to their country.

Chap. IX — *Arthur honours Augusel with the sceptre of the Scots; Urien with that of Moray; and Lot with the consulship of Lothian.*

THERE were there three brothers of royal blood, viz. Lot, Urien, and Augusel, who, before the Saxons had prevailed, held the government of those parts. Being willing therefore to bestow on these, as he did on others, the rights of their ancestors, he restored to Augusel the sovereignty over the Scots; his brother Urien he honoured with the sceptre of Moray; and Lot, who in time of Aurelius Ambrosius had married his sister, by whom he had two sons, Gawain and Mordred, he reestablished in the consulship of Lothian, and the other provinces belonging to him. At length, when the whole country was reduced by him to its ancient state, he took to wife Guinevere, descended from a noble family of Romans, who was educated under duke Cador, and in beauty surpassed all the women of the island.

Chap. X — *Arthur adds to his government Ireland, Iceland, Gotland, and the Orkneys.*

The next summer he fitted out a fleet, and made an expedition into Ireland, which he was desirous to reduce. Upon landing there, he was met by king Guillamurius before mentioned, with a vast number of men, who came with a design to fight him; but at the very beginning of the battle, those naked and unarmed people were miserably routed, and fled to such places as lay open to them for shelter. Guillamurius also in a short time was taken prisoner, and forced to submit; as were also all the other princes of the country after the king's example, being under great consternation at what had happened. After an entire conquest of Ireland, he made a voyage with his fleet to Iceland, which he also subdued. And now a rumour spreading over the rest of the islands, that no country was able to withstand him, Doldavius, king of Gotland, and Gunvasius, king of the Orkneys, came voluntarily, and made their submission, on a promise of paying tribute. Then, as soon as winter was over, he returned back to Britain, where having established the kingdom, he resided in it for twelve years together in peace.

Chap. XI — *Arthur subdues Norway, Denmark, Aquitaine, and Gaul.*

After this, having invited over to him all persons whatsoever that were famous for valour in foreign nations, he began to augment the number of his domestics, and introduced such politeness into his court, as people of the remotest countries thought worthy of their imitation. So that there was not a nobleman who thought himself of any consideration, unless his clothes and arms were made in the same fashion as those of Arthur's knights. At length the fame of his munificence and valour spreading over the whole world, he became a terror to the kings of other countries, who grievously feared the loss of their dominions, if he should make any attempt upon them. Being much perplexed with these anxious cares, they repaired their cities and towers, and built towns in convenient places, the better to fortify themselves against any enterprise of

Arthur, when occasion should require. Arthur, being informed of what they were doing, was delighted to find how much they stood in awe of him, and formed a design for the conquest of all Europe. Then having prepared his fleet, he first attempted Norway, that he might procure the crown of it for Lot, his sister's husband. This Lot was the nephew of Sichelm, king of the Norwegians, who being then dead, had appointed him his successor in the kingdom. But the Norwegians, disdaining to receive him, had advanced one Rikiwulf to the sovereignty, and having fortified their cities, thought they were able to oppose Arthur. Gawain, the son of Lot, was then a youth twelve years old, and was recommended by his uncle to the service of pope Simplicius, from whom he received arms. But to return to the history: as soon as Arthur arrived on the coast of Norway, king Rikiwulf, attended with the whole power of that kingdom, met him, and gave him battle, in which, after a great loss of blood on both sides, the Britons at length had the advantage, and making a vigorous charge, killed Rikiwulf and many others with him. Having thus defeated them, they set the

cities on fire, dispersed the country people, and pursued the victory till they had reduced all Norway, as also Denmark, under the dominion of Arthur.

After the conquest of these countries, and establishment of Lot upon the throne of Norway, Arthur made a voyage to Gaul, and dividing his army into several bodies, began to lay waste that country on all sides. The province of Gaul was then committed to Flollo, a Roman tribune, who held the government of it under the emperor Leo. Upon intelligence of Arthur's coming, he raised all the forces that were under his command, and made war against him, but without success. For Arthur was attended with the youth of all the islands that he had subdued; for which reason he was reported to have such an army as was thought invincible. And even the greater part of the Gallic army, encouraged by his bounty, came over to his service. Therefore Flollo, seeing the disadvantages he lay under, left his camp, and fled with a small number to Paris. There having recruited his army, he fortified the city, and resolved to stand another engagement with Arthur. But while he was thinking of strengthening himself with auxiliary forces in the neighbouring countries, Arthur came upon him unawares, and besieged him in the city.

When a month had passed, Flollo, with grief observing his people perish with hunger, sent a message to Arthur, that they two alone should decide the conquest for the kingdom in a duel: for being a person of great stature, boldness and courage, he gave this challenge in confidence of success. Arthur was extremely pleased at Flollo's proposal, and sent him word back again, that he would give him the meeting which he desired. A treaty, therefore, being on both sides agreed to, they met together in the island without the city, where the people waited to see the event. They were both gracefully armed, and mounted on admirably swift horses; and it was hard to tell which gave greater hopes of victory. When they had presented themselves against each other with their lances aloft, they put spurs to their horses, and began a fierce encounter. But Arthur, who handled his lance more warily, struck it into the upper part of Flollo's breast, and avoiding his enemy's weapon, laid him prostrate upon the ground, and was just going to despatch him with his drawn sword, when Flollo, starting up on a sudden, met him with his lance couched, wherewith he mortally stabbed the breast of Arthur's horse, and caused both him and his rider to fall. The Britons, when they saw their king lying on the ground, fearing he was killed, could hardly be restrained from breach of covenant, and falling with one consent upon the Gauls.

But just as they were upon rushing into the lists, Arthur hastily got up, and guarding himself with his shield, advanced with speed against Flollo. And now they renewed the assault with great rage, eagerly bent upon one another's destruction. At length Flollo, watching his advantage, gave Arthur a blow upon the forehead, which might have proved mortal, had he not blunted the edge of his weapon against the helmet. When Arthur saw his coat of mail and shield red with blood, he was inflamed with still greater rage, and lifting up his Caliburn with his utmost strength struck it through the helmet into Flollo's head, and made a terrible gash. With this wound Flollo fell down, tearing the ground with his spurs, and expired. As soon as this news was spread through

the army, the citizens ran together, and opening the gates, surrendered the city to Arthur.

After the victory, he divided his army into two parts; one of which he committed to the conduct of Hywel, whom he ordered to march against Guitard, commander of the Pictavians; while he with the other part should endeavour to reduce the other provinces. Hywel upon this entered Aquitaine, possessed himself of the cities of that country, and after distressing Guitard in several battles, forced him to surrender. He also destroyed Gascony with fire and sword, and subdued the princes of it. At the end of nine years, in which time all the parts of Gaul were entirely reduced, Arthur returned back to Paris, where he kept his court, and calling an assembly of the clergy and people, established peace and the just administration of the laws in that kingdom. Then he bestowed Neustria, now called Normandy, upon Bedevere, his butler; the province of Andegavia upon Kay, his steward; and several other provinces upon his great men that attended him. Thus, having settled the peace of the cities and countries there, he returned back in the beginning of spring to Britain*.

Chap. XII — *Arthur summons a great many kings, princes, archbishops, etc. to a solemn assembly at the City of Legions.*

Upon the approach of the feast of Pentecost, Arthur, the better to demonstrate his joy after such triumphant success, and for the more solemn observation of that festival, and reconciling the minds of the princes that were now subject to him, resolved, during that season, to hold a magnificent court, to place the crown upon his head, and to invite all the kings and dukes under his subjection, to the solemnity. And when he had communicated his design to his familiar friends, he pitched upon the City of Legions as a proper place for his purpose. For besides its great wealth above the other cities, its situation, which was in Glamorgan upon the river Usk, near the Severn Sea, was most pleasant, and fit for so great a solemnity. For on one side it was washed by that noble river, so that the kings and princes from the countries beyond the seas might have the convenience of sailing up to it. On the other side, the beauty of the meadows and groves, and magnificence of the royal palaces with lofty gilded roofs that adorned it, made it even rival the grandeur of Rome. It was also famous for two churches; whereof one was built in honour of the martyr Julius, and adorned with a choir of virgins, who had devoted themselves wholly to the service of God; but the other, which was founded in memory of St. Aaron, his companion, and maintained a convent of canons, was the third metropolitan church of Britain. Besides, there was a college of two hundred philosophers, who, being learned in astronomy and the other arts, were diligent in observing the courses of the stars, and gave Arthur true predictions of the events that

* It is wonderful that the contents of this book should ever have passed for authentic history; our ancestors of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries must have been singularly ignorant of every thing concerning the latter ages of the Roman empire, and the formation of the modern kingdoms of France and Germany, &c., if they could believe that king Arthur ever held his court in Paris.

would happen at that time. In this place, therefore, which afforded such delights, were preparations made for the ensuing festival.

Ambassadors were then sent into several kingdoms, to invite to court the princes both of Gaul and all the adjacent islands. Accordingly, there came Augusel, king of Albany, now Scotland; Urian, king of Moray; Cadwallon Lawhir, king of the Venedotians, now called the North Wales men; Sator, king of the Demetians, or South Wales men; Cador, king of Cornwall; also, the archbishops of the three metropolitan sees, London, York, and Dubricius of the City of Legions. This prelate, who was primate of Britain, and legate of the apostolical see, was so eminent for his piety, that he could cure any sick person by his prayers. There came also the consuls of the principal cities, *viz.* Morvid, consul of Gloucester; Mauron, of Worcester; Anaraut, of Salisbury; Arthgal, of Cargueit or Warguit; Jugein, of Leicester; Cursalen, of Chichester; Kinmare, duke of Dorobernia; Galluc, of Salisbury; Urgennius, of Bath; Jonathal, of Dorchester; Boso, of Ridoc, that is, Oxford. Besides the consuls, came the following worthies of no less dignity: Danaut, Map Papo; Cheneus, Map Coil; Peredur, Mab Eridur; Guiful, Map Nogoit; Regin; Map Claut; Eddelein, Map Cledauc; Kincar, Mab Bagan; Kimmare; Gorboroniam, Map Goit; Clofaut, Rupmaneton; Kimbelim, Map Trunat; Cathleus, Map Catel; Kinlich, Map Neton; and many others too tedious to enumerate. From the adjacent islands came Guillamurius, king of Ireland; Malvasius, king of Iceland; Doldavius, king of Gotland; Gunvasius, king of the Orkneys; Lot, king of Norway; Aschillius, king of the Danes. From the parts beyond the seas, came Holdin, king of Ruteni; Leodegarius, consul of Bologna; Bedevere, the butler, duke of Normandy; Borellus, of Cenomania; Kay, the steward, duke of Andegavia; Guitard, of Pictavia; also the twelve peers of Gaul, whom Guerinus Carnotensis brought along with him: Hywel, duke of the Armorican Britons, and his nobility, who came with such a train of mules, horses, and rich furniture, as it is difficult to describe. Besides these, there remained no prince of any consideration on this side of Spain, who came not upon this invitation. And no wonder, when Arthur's munificence, which was celebrated over the whole world, made him beloved by all people.

Chap. XIII — *A description of the royal pomp at the coronation of Arthur.*

When all were assembled together in the city, upon the day of the solemnity, the archbishops were conducted to the palace, in order to place the crown upon the king's head. Therefore Dubricius, inasmuch as the court was kept in his diocese, made himself ready to celebrate the office, and undertook the ordering of whatever related to it. As soon as the king was invested with his royal habiliments, he was conducted in great pomp to the metropolitan church, supported on each side by two archbishops, and having four kings, *viz.* of Albany, Cornwall, Demetia, and Venedotia, whose right it was, bearing four golden swords before him. He was also attended with a concert of all sorts of music, which made most excellent harmony.

On another part was the queen, dressed out in her richest ornaments, conducted by the archbishops and bishops to the Temple of Virgins; the four

queens also of the kings last mentioned, bearing before her four white doves according to ancient custom; and after her there followed a retinue of women, making all imaginable demonstrations of joy. When the whole procession was ended, so transporting was the harmony of the musical instruments and voices, whereof there was a vast variety in both churches, that the knights who attended were in doubt which to prefer, and therefore crowded from the one to the other by turns, and were far from being tired with the solemnity, though the whole day had been spent in it.

At last, when divine service was over at both churches, the king and queen put off their crowns, and putting on their lighter ornaments, went to the banquet; he to one palace with the men, and she to another with the women. For the Britons still observed the ancient custom of Troy, by which the men and women used to celebrate their festivals apart. When they had all taken their seats according to precedence, Kay the steward, in rich robes of ermine, with a thousand young noblemen, all in like manner clothed with ermine, served up the dishes. From another part, Bedevere the butler was followed with the same number of attendants, in various habits, who waited with all kinds of cups and drinking vessels. In the queen's palace were innumerable waiters, dressed with variety of ornaments, all performing their respective offices; which if I should describe particularly, I should draw out the history to a tedious length. For at that time Britain had arrived at such a pitch of grandeur, that in abundance of riches, luxury of ornaments, and politeness of inhabitants, it far surpassed all other kingdoms. The knights in it that were famous for feats of chivalry, wore their clothes and arms all of the same colour and fashion and the women also no less celebrated for their wit, wore all the same kind of apparel; and esteemed none worthy of their love, but such as had given a proof of their valour in three several battles. Thus was the valour of the men an encouragement for the women's chastity, and the love of the women a spur to the soldier's bravery.

Chap. XIV —*After a variety of sports at the coronation, Arthur amply rewards his servants.*

As soon as the banquets were over, they went into the fields without the city, to divert themselves with various sports. The military men composed a kind of diversion in imitation of a fight on horseback; and the ladies, placed on the top of the walls as spectators, in a sportive manner darted their amorous glances at the courtiers, the more to encourage them. Others spent the remainder of the day in other diversions, such as shooting with bows and arrows, tossing the pike, casting of heavy stones and rocks, playing at dice and the like, and all these inoffensively and without quarrelling. Whoever gained the victory in any of these sports, was rewarded with a rich prize by Arthur. In this manner were the first three days spent; and on the fourth, all who, upon account of their titles, bore any kind of office at this solemnity, were called together to receive honours and preferments in reward of their services, and to fill up the vacancies in the governments of cities and castles, archbishoprics, bishoprics, abbeys, and other posts of honour.

Chap. XV — *A letter from Lucius Tiberius, general or the Romans, to Arthur being read, they consult about an answer to it.*

But St. Dubricius, from a pious desire of leading a hermit's life, made a voluntary resignation of his archiepiscopal dignity; and in his room was consecrated David, the king's uncle, whose life was a perfect example of that goodness which by his doctrine he taught. In place of St. Samson, archbishop at Dole, was appointed, with the consent of Hywel, king of the Armorican Britons, Chelianus [Kilian], a priest of Llandaff, a person highly recommended for his good life. The bishopric of Silchester was conferred upon Mauganius, that of Winchester upon Diwanius, and that of Alclud upon Eledanius. While he was disposing of these preferments upon them, it happened that twelve men of an advanced age, and venerable aspect, and bearing olive branches in their right hands, for a token that they were come upon an embassy, appeared before the king, moving towards him with a slow pace, and speaking with a soft voice; and after their compliments paid, presented him with a letter from Lucius Tiberius, in these words: —

“Lucius, procurator of the commonwealth, to Arthur, king of Britain, according to his desert. The insolence of your tyranny is what fills me with the highest admiration, and the injuries you have done to Rome still increase my wonder. But it is provoking to reflect, that you are grown so much above yourself, as wilfully to avoid seeing this: nor do you consider what it is to have offended by unjust deeds a senate, to whom you cannot be ignorant the whole world owes vassalage. For the tribute of Britain, which the senate had enjoined you to pay, and which used to be paid to the Roman emperors successively from the time of Julius Caesar, you have had the presumption to withhold, in contempt of their imperial authority. You have seized upon the province of the Allobroges, and all the islands of the ocean, whose kings, while the Roman power prevailed in those parts, paid tribute to our ancestors. And because the senate have decreed to demand justice of you for such repeated injuries, I command you to appear at Rome before the middle of August the next year, there to make satisfaction to your masters, and undergo such sentence as they shall in justice pass upon you. Which if you refuse to do, I shall come to you, and endeavour to recover with my sword, what you in your madness have robbed us of.”

As soon as the letter was read in the presence of the kings and consuls, Arthur withdrew with them into the Giant's Tower, which was at the entrance of the palace, to think what answer was fit to be returned to such an insolent message. As they were going up the stairs, Cadur, duke of Cornwall, who was a man of a merry disposition, said to the king in a jocose manner: “I have been till now under fear, lest the easy life which the Britons lead, by enjoying a long peace, might make them cowards, and extinguish the fame of their gallantry, by which they have raised their name above all other nations. For where the exercise of arms is wanting, and the pleasures of women, dice, and other diversions take place, no doubt, what remains of virtue, honour, courage, and thirst of praise, will be tainted with the rust of idleness. For now, almost five years have passed, since we have been abandoned to these delights, and have

had no exercise of war. Therefore, to deliver us from sloth, God has stirred up this spirit of the Romans, to restore our military virtues to their ancient state." In this manner did he entertain them with discourse, till they were come to their seats, on which when they were all placed, Arthur spoke to them after this manner.

Chap. XVI — *Arthur, holding a council with the kings, desires every one of them to deliver their opinions.*

"My companions both in good and bad fortune, whose abilities both in counsel and war I have hitherto experienced; the present exigence of affairs, after the message which we have received, requires your careful deliberation and prudent resolutions; for whatever is wisely concerted, is easily executed. Therefore, we shall be the better able to bear the annoyance which Lucius threatens to give us, if we unanimously apply ourselves to consider how to overcome it. In my opinion we have no great reason to fear him, when we reflect upon the unjust pretence on which he demands tribute of us. He says he has a right to it, because it was paid to Julius Caesar, and his successors, who invaded Britain with an army at the invitation of the ancient Britons, when they were quarrelling among themselves, and by force reduced the country under their power, when weakened by civil dissension. And because they gained it in this manner, they had the injustice to take tribute of it. For that can never be possessed justly, which is gained by force and violence. So that he has no reasonable grounds to pretend we are of right his tributaries. But since he has the presumption to make an unjust demand of us, we have certainly as good reason to demand of him tribute from Rome; let the longer sword therefore determine the right between us. For if Rome has decreed that tribute ought to be paid to it from Britain, on account of its having been formerly under the yoke of Julius Caesar, and other Roman emperors; I for the same reason now decree, that Rome ought to pay tribute to me, because my predecessors formerly held the government of it. For Belinus, that glorious king of the Britons, with the assistance of his brother Brennus, duke of the Allobroges, after they had hanged up twenty noble Romans in the middle of the market place, took their city, and kept possession of it along time, Likewise Constantine, the son of Helena, and Maximian [Maximus], who were both my kinsmen, and both wore the crown of Britain, gained the imperial throne of Rome. Do not you, therefore, think that we ought to demand tribute of the Romans? As for Gaul and the adjacent islands of the ocean, we have no occasion to return them any answer, since they did not defend them, when we attempted to free them from their power."

As soon as he had done speaking to this effect, Hywel, king of the Armorican Britons, who had the precedence of the rest, made answer in these words.

Chap. XVII — *The opinion of Hywel, king of Armorica, concerning war with the Romans.*

“After the most profound deliberation that any of us shall be able to make, I think better advice cannot be given, than what your majesty in your great wisdom and policy now offers. Your speech, which is no less wise than eloquent, has superseded all consultation on our part; and nothing remains for us to do, but to admire and gratefully acknowledge your majesty’s firmness of mind, and depth of policy, to which we owe such excellent advice. For if upon this motive you are pleased to make an expedition to Rome, I doubt not but it will be crowned with glorious success; since it will be undertaken for the defence of our liberties, and to demand justly of our enemies, what they have unjustly demanded of us. For that person who would rob another, deserves to lose his own by him against whom the attempt is made. And, therefore, since the Romans threatened us with this injury, it will undoubtedly turn to their own loss, if we can have but an opportunity of engaging with them. This is what the Britons universally desire; this is what we have promised us in the Sibylline prophecies, which expressly declare, that the Roman empire shall be obtained by three persons, natives of Britain. The oracle is fulfilled in two of them, since it is manifest (as your majesty observed) that those two celebrated princes, Belinus and Constantine, governed the Roman empire: and now you are the third to whom this supreme dignity is promised. Make haste, therefore, to receive what God makes no delay to give you; to subdue those who are ready to receive your yoke; and to advance us all, who for your advancement will spare neither limbs nor life. And that you may accomplish this, myself will attend you in person with ten thousand men.”

Chap. XVIII — *The opinion of Augusel.*

When Hywel concluded his speech, Augusel, king of Albany, declared his good affection to the cause after this manner. “I am not able to express the joy that has transported me, since my lord has declared to us his designs. For we seem to have done nothing by all our past wars with so many and potent princes, if the Romans and Germans be suffered to enjoy peace, and we do not severely revenge on them the grievous oppressions which they formerly brought upon this country. But now, since we are at liberty to encounter them, I am overwhelmed with joy and eagerness of desire, to see a battle with them, when the blood of those cruel oppressors will be no less acceptable to me than a spring of water is to one who is parched with thirst. If I shall but live to see that day, how sweet will be the wounds which I shall then either receive or give? Nay, how sweet will be even death itself, when suffered in revenging the injuries done to our ancestors, in defending our liberties, and in promoting the glory of our king! Let us then begin with these poltroons, and spoil them of all their trophies, by making an entire conquest of them. And I for my share will add to the army two thousand horse, besides foot.”

Chap. XIX — *They unanimously agree upon a war with the Romans.*

To the same effect spoke all the rest, and promised each of them their full quota of forces; so that besides those promised by the duke of Armorica, the number of men from the island of Britain alone was sixty thousand, all completely armed. But the kings of the other islands, as they had not been accustomed to any cavalry, promised their quota of infantry; and, from the six provincial islands, *viz.* Ireland, Iceland, Gotland, the Orkneys, Norway, and Denmark, were reckoned a hundred and twenty thousand. From the duchies of Gaul, that is, of the Ruteni, the Portunians, the Estrusians, the Cenomanni, the Andegavians, and Pictavians, were eighty thousand. From the twelve consulships of those who came along with Guerinus Carnotensis, twelve hundred. All together made up a hundred and eighty-three thousand two hundred, besides foot which did not easily fall under number.

Chap. XX — *Arthur prepares for a war, and refuses to pay tribute to the Romans.*

King Arthur, seeing all unanimously ready for his service, ordered them to return back to their countries with speed, and get ready the forces which they had promised, and to hasten to the general rendezvous upon the calends of August, at the mouth of the river Barba, that from thence they might advance with them to the borders of the Allobroges, to meet the Romans. Then he sent word to the emperors by their ambassadors; that as to paying them tribute, he would in no wise obey their commands; and that the journey he was about to make to Rome, was not to stand the award of their sentence, but to demand of them what they had judicially decreed to demand of him. With this answer the ambassadors departed; and at the same time also departed all the kings and noblemen, to perform with all expedition the orders that had been given them.