

BOOK XII

Chap. I — *Cadfan acquires by treaty all Britain on this side of the Humber, and Aethelfrid the rest.*

After this all the princes of the Britons met together at the city of Leicester, and consented to make Cadfan their king, that under his command they might pursue Aethelfrid beyond the Humber. Accordingly, as soon as he was crowned, they flocked together from all parts, and passed the Humber; of which when Aethelfrid received intelligence, he entered into a confederacy with all the Saxon kings, and went to meet Cadfan. At last, as they were forming their troops for a battle, their friends came, and made peace between them on these terms: that Cadfan should enjoy that part of Britain which lies on this side of the Humber, and Aethelfrid that which is beyond it. As soon as they had confirmed this agreement with an oath made to their hostages, there commenced such a friendship between them, that they had all things common.

In the meantime, it happened, that Aethelfrid banished his own wife and married another, and bore so great a hatred to her that was banished, that he would not suffer her to live in the kingdom of Northumbria. Whereupon she, being with child, went to king Cadfan, that by his mediation she might be restored to her husband. But when Aethelfrid could by no means be brought to consent to it, she continued to live with Cadfan, till she was delivered of the son which she had conceived. A short time after her delivery, Cadfan also had a son born to him by the queen, his wife. Then were the two boys brought up together in a manner suitable to their royal birth, one of which was called Cadwallon, the other Edwin. When they were nearly arrived at men's estate, their parents sent them to Salomon, king of the Armorican Britons, that in his court they might learn the discipline of war, and other princely qualifications. This prince, therefore, received them graciously, and admitted them to an intimacy with him; so that there was none of their age in the whole court, that had a free access, or more familiarly discoursed with the king than they. At last, he himself was an eyewitness of their exploits against the enemy, in which they very much signalised their valour.

Chap. II — *Cadwallon breaks the covenant he had made with Edwin.*

In process of time, when their parents were dead, they returned to Britain, where they took upon them the government of the kingdom, and began to form the same friendship as their fathers. Two years after this, Edwin asked leave of Cadwallon to wear a crown, and to celebrate the same solemnities, as had been used of old in Northumbria. And when they had begun a treaty upon this subject by the river Douglas, that the matter might be adjusted according to the advice of their wise counsellors it happened that Cadwallon was lying on the other side of the river in the lap of a certain nephew of his, whose name was Brian. While ambassadors were negotiating between them, Brian wept, and shed tears so plentifully, that the king's face and beard were wet with them.

The king, imagining that it rained, lifted up his face, and seeing the young man in tears, asked him the occasion of such sudden grief.

“Good reason,” said he “have I to weep continually, as well as the whole British nation, which has groaned under the oppression of barbarians ever since the time of Maelgwn, and has not yet got a prince, to restore it to its ancient flourishing state. And even the little honour that it had left, is lessened by your indulgence; since the Saxons, who are only strangers, and always traitors to our country, must now be permitted to wear the same crown as you do. For when once they shall attain to regal dignity, it will be a great addition to their glory in the country from whence they came; and they will the sooner invite over their countrymen, for the utter extirpation of our race. For they have been always accustomed to treachery, and never to keep faith with any; which I think should be a reason for our keeping them under, and not for exalting them. When king Vortigern first retained them in his service, they made a show of living peaceably, and fighting for our country, till they had an opportunity of practising their wickedness; and then they returned evil for good, betrayed him, and made a cruel massacre of the people of the kingdom. Afterwards they betrayed Aurelius Ambrosius, to whom, even after the most tremendous oaths of fidelity, at a banquet with him they gave a draught of poison. They also betrayed Arthur, when, setting aside the covenant by which they were bound, they joined with his nephew Mordred, and fought against him. Lastly, they broke faith with king Ceredig, and brought upon him Gormund, king of the Vandals, by whose disturbances our people were robbed of their country, and the king disgracefully driven out.”

Chap. III — *A quarrel between Cadwallon and Edwin.*

At the mention of these things, Cadwallon repented of entering into this treaty, and sent word to Edwin that he could by no means induce his counsellors to consent to his petition. For they alleged that it was contrary to law and the ancient establishment, that an island, which has always had no more than one crown, should be now under subjection to two crowned heads. This message incensed Edwin, and made him break off the conference, and retire into Northumbria, saying, he would be crowned without Cadwallon's leave. When Cadwallon was told this, he declared to him by his ambassadors that he would cut off his crowned head, if he presumed to wear a crown within the kingdom of Britain.

Chap. IV — *Cadwallon is vanquished by Edwin, and driven out of the kingdom.*

This proved the occasion of a war between them, in which, after several engagements between their men, they at last met together themselves beyond the Humber, and had a battle, wherein Cadwallon lost many thousands of his followers, and was put to flight. From hence he marched with precipitation through Albany, and went over to Ireland. But Edwin, after this victory, led his

army through the provinces of the Britons, and burning the cities before him, grievously afflicted the citizens and country people. During this exercise of his cruelty, Cadwallon never ceased endeavouring to return back to his country in a fleet, but without success; because to whatever port he steered, Edwin met him with his forces, and hindered his landing. For there was come to meet him from Spain a very skilful soothsayer, named Pellitus, who, by the flight of birds and the courses of the stars, foretold all the disasters that would happen. By these means Edwin, getting knowledge of Cadwallon's return, prepared to meet him, and shattered his ships so that he drowned his men, and beat him off from all his ports.

Cadwallon, not knowing what course to take, was almost in despair of ever returning. At last, it came into his head to go to Salomon, king of the Armorican Britons, and desire his assistance and advice, to enable him to return to his kingdom. And so, as he was steering towards Armorica, a strong tempest rose on a sudden, which dispersed the ships of his companions, and in a short time left no two of them together. The pilot of the king's ship was seized immediately with so great a fear, that quitting the stern, he left the vessel to the disposal of fortune; so that all that night it was tossed up and down in great danger by the raging waves. The next morning, they arrived at a certain island called Guernsey, where with great difficulty they got ashore. Cadwallon was forthwith seized with such grief for the loss of his companions, that for three days and nights together he refused to eat, but lay sick upon his bed.

The fourth day he was taken with a very great longing for some venison, and causing Brian to be called, made him acquainted with it. Whereupon Brian took his bow and quiver, and went through the island, that if he could light on any wild beast, he might make booty of it. And when he had walked over the whole island without finding what he was in quest of, he was extremely concerned that he could not gratify his master's desire; and was afraid his sickness would prove mortal if his longing were not satisfied. He, therefore, fell upon a new device, and cut a piece of flesh out of his own thigh, which he roasted upon a spit, and carried to the king for venison. The king, thinking it to be real venison, began to eat of it to his great refreshment, admiring the sweetness of it, which he fancied exceeded any flesh he ever had tasted before. At last, when he had fully satisfied his appetite, he became more cheerful, and in three days was perfectly well again. Then the wind standing fair, he got ready his ship, and hoisting sails they pursued their voyage, and arrived at the city Quidalet. From thence they went to king Salomon, by whom they were received kindly and with all suitable respect; and as soon as he had learned the occasion of their coming, he made them a promise of assistance, and spoke to them as follows.

Chap. V — *The speech of Salomon, king of Armorica, to Cadwallon.*

"It is a grief to us, noble youths, that the country of your ancestors is oppressed by a barbarous nation, and that you are ignominiously driven out of it. But since other men are able to defend their kingdoms, it is a wonder your people should lose so fruitful an island, and not be able to withstand the nation

of the Angles, whom our countrymen hold in contempt. While the people of this country lived together with yours in Britain, they bore sway over all the provincial kingdoms, and never could be subdued by any nation but the Romans. Neither did the Romans do this by their own power, as I have been lately informed, but by a dissension among the nobility of the island. And even the Romans, though they held it under their subjection for a time, yet upon the loss and slaughter of their rulers, were driven out with disgrace. But after the Britons came into this province under the conduct of Maximian and Conan, those that remained never had the happiness afterwards of holding an uninterrupted possession of the crown. For though many of their princes maintained the ancient dignity of their ancestors, yet their weak heirs that succeeded, though more in number, entirely lost it, upon the invasion of their enemies. Therefore, I am grieved for the weakness of your people, since we are of the same race with you, and the name of Britons is common to you, and to the nation that bravely defends their country, which you see at war with all its neighbours.”

Chap. VI — *Cadwallon's answer to Salomon.*

Wuen he had concluded his speech, Cadwallon, who was a little put to the blush, answered him after this manner: “Royal sir, whose descent is from a race of kings, I give you many thanks for your promise of assisting me to recover my kingdom. But what you say is a wonder, that my people have not maintained the dignity of their ancestors, since the time that the Britons came to these provinces, I am far from thinking to be such. For the noblest men of the whole kingdom followed those leaders, and there remained only the baser sort to enjoy their honours; who being raised to a high quality, on a sudden were puffed up above their station; and growing wanton with riches gave themselves up to commit such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles; and (as Gildas the historian testifies) were not only guilty of this vice, but of all the enormities that are incident to human nature. And what chiefly prevailed, to the entire overthrow of all goodness, was the hatred of truth with its assertors, the love of a lie with the inventors of it, the embracing of evil for good, the veneration of wickedness for grace, the receiving of Satan for an angel of light. Kings were anointed, not for the sake of God, but such as were more cruel than the rest; and were soon after murdered by their anointers, without examination, having chosen others yet more cruel in their room. But if any of them showed any mildness, or seemed a favourer of truth, against him, as the subverter of Britain, were all their malice and their weapons bent. In short, things pleasing to God or displeasing, with them had the same weight, even if the worse were not the weightier.

“Therefore, were all affairs managed contrary to public safety, as if the true physician of all had left them destitute of cure. And thus was every thing done without discretion, and that not only by secular men, but by the Lord's flock and its pastors. Therefore, it is not to be wondered, that such a degenerate race, so odious to God for their vices, lost a country which they had so heinously corrupted. For God was willing to execute his vengeance upon them, by

suffering a foreign people to come upon them, and drive them out: of their possessions. Notwithstanding, it would be a worthy act, if God would permit it, to restore our subjects to their ancient dignity, to prevent the reproach that may be thrown upon our race, that we were weak rulers, who did not exert ourselves in our own defence.

“And I do the more freely ask your assistance, as you are of the same blood with us. For the great Maelgwn, who was the fourth king of Britain after Arthur, had two sons, named Ennianus and Runo. Ennianus begot Belinus; Belinus, Iago; Iago, Cadfan, who was my father. Runo, who, after his brother’s death, was driven out by the Saxons, came to this province and bestowed his daughter on duke Hywel, the son of that great Hywel who shared with Arthur in his conquests. Of her was born Alan; of Alan, Hywel your father, who while he lived was a terror to all Gaul.”

Chap. VII — *Brian kills Edwin’s magician.*

In the meantime, while he was spending the winter with Salomon, they entered into a resolution, that Brian should pass over into Britain, and take some method to kill Edwin’s magician, lest he might by his usual art inform him of Cadwallon’s coming. And when with this design he had arrived at Hamo’s Port, he took upon him the habit of a poor man, and made himself a staff of iron sharp at the end, with which he might kill the magician if he should happen to meet with him. From thence he went to York, where Edwin then resided; and having entered that city joined himself to the poor people that waited for alms before the king’s gate. But as he was going to and fro, it happened that his sister came out of the hall, with a basin in her hand, to fetch water for the queen. She had been taken by Edwin at the city of Worcester, when after Cadwallon’s flight he was acting his hostilities upon the provinces of the Britons. As she was therefore passing by Brian, he immediately knew her, and, breaking forth into tears, called to her with a low voice; at which the damsel turning her face, was in doubt at first who it could be, but upon a nearer approach discovered it to be her brother, and was near falling into a swoon, for fear that he might by some unlucky accident be known and taken by the enemy.

She therefore refrained from saluting him, or entering into familiar discourse with him, but told him, as if she was talking upon some other subject, the state of the court, and showed him the magician, that he was inquiring for, who was at that very time walking among the poor people, while the alms were being distributed among them. Brian, as soon as he had taken knowledge of the man, ordered his sister to steal out privately from her apartment the night following, and come to him near an old church, without the city, where he would conceal himself in expectation of her. Then dismissing her, he thrust himself in among the crowd of poor people, in that part where Pellitus was placing them. And the same moment he got access to him, he lifted up his staff, and at once gave him a stab under the breast which killed him. This done, he threw away his staff, and passed among the rest undistinguished and unsuspected by any of the

bystanders, and by good providence got to the place of concealment which he had appointed.

His sister, when night came on, endeavoured all she could to get out, but was not able; because Edwin, being terrified at the killing of Pellitus, had set a strict watch about the court, who, making a narrow search, refused to let her go out. When Brian found this, he retired from that place, and went to Exeter, where he called together the Britons, and told them what he had done. Afterwards having despatched away messengers to Cadwallon, he fortified that city, and sent word to all the British nobility, that they should bravely defend their cities and towns, and joyfully expect Cadwallon's coming to their relief in a short time with auxiliary forces from Salomon. Upon the spreading of this news over the whole island, Penda, king of the Mercians, with a very great army of Saxons, came to Exeter, and besieged Brian.

Chap. VIII — *Cadwallon takes Penda, and routs his army.*

In the meantime, Cadwalla arrived with ten thousand men, whom king Salomon had delivered to him; and with them he marched straight to the siege against king Penda. But, as he was going, he divided his forces into four parts, and then made no delay to advance and join battle with the enemy. wherein Penda was forthwith taken, and his army routed. For, finding no other way for his own safety, he surrendered himself to Cadwallon, and gave hostages, with a promise that he would assist him against the Saxons. Cadwallon, after this success against him, summoned together his nobility, that had been a long time in a decaying state, and marched to Northumbria against Edwin, and made continual devastations in that country. When Edwin was informed of it, he assembled all the petty kings of the Angles, and meeting the Britons in a field called Heathfield, presently gave them battle, but was killed, and almost all the people with him, together with Osfrith, his son, and Godbold, king of the Orkneys, who had come to their assistance.

Chap. IX — *Cadwallon kills Osric and Aidan in fight.*

Having thus obtained the victory, Cadwallon marched through the provinces of the Angles, and committed such outrages upon the Saxons, that he neither spared age nor sex; for his resolution being to extirpate the whole race out of Britain, all that he found he put to extreme tortures. After this he had a battle with Osric, Edwin's successor, and killed him together with his two nephews, who ought to have reigned after him. He also killed Aidan, king of the Scots, who came to their assistance.

Chap. X — *Oswald routs Penda in fight, but is killed by Cadwalla coming in upon him.*

Their deaths made room for Oswald to succeed to the kingdom of Northumbria; but Cadwallon drove him, with the rest that had given him disturbance, to the very wall which the emperor Severus had formerly built between Britain and Scotland. Afterwards he sent Penda, king of the Mercians, and the greatest part of his army, to the same place, to give him battle. But Oswald, as he was besieged one night by Penda, in the place called Heavenfield, that is, the Heavenly Field, set up there our Lord's cross, and commanded his men to speak with a very loud voice these words: "Let us all kneel down, and pray the Almighty, living and true God, to defend us from the proud army of the king of Britain, and his wicked leader Penda. For he knows how justly we wage this war for the safety of our people." They all therefore did as he commanded them, and advanced at break of day against the enemy, and by their faith gained the victory. Cadwallon, upon hearing this news, being inflamed with rage, assembled his army, and went in pursuit of the holy king Oswald; and in a battle which he had with him at a place called Burn, Penda broke in upon him and killed him.

Chap. XI — *Oswiu submits to Cadwalla. Penda desires leave of Cadwallon to make war against him.*

Oswald, with many thousands of his men, being killed, his brother Oswiu succeeded him in the kingdom of Northumbria, and by making large presents of gold and silver to Cadwallon, who was now possessed of the government of all Britain, made his peace and submission to him. Upon this Alhfrith, his brother, and Oethelwald, his brother's son, began an insurrection; but, not being able to hold out against him, they fled to Penda, king of the Mercians, desiring him to assemble his army and pass the Humber with them, that he might deprive Oswiu of his kingdom. But Penda, fearing to break the peace, which Cadwallon had settled through the kingdom of Britain, deferred beginning any disturbance without his leave, till he could some way work him up, either to make war himself upon Oswiu, or allow him the liberty of doing it.

At a certain Pentecost therefore, when Cadwallon was celebrating that festival at London, and for the greater solemnity wore the crown of Britain, all the kings of the Angles, excepting only Oswiu, being present, as also all the dukes of the Britons; Penda went to the king, and inquired of him the reason, why Oswiu alone was wanting, when all the princes of the Saxons were present. Cadwallon answered, that his sickness was the cause of it; to which the other replied, that he had sent over to Germany for more Saxons, to revenge the death of his brother Oswald upon them both. He told him further, that he had broken the peace of the kingdom, as being the sole author of the war and dissension among them; since Alhfrith, king of Northumberland, and Oethelwald, his brother's son, had been by him harassed with a war, and driven out of their own country. He also desired leave, either to kill him, or banish him the kingdom.

Chap. XII — *Cadwallon is advised to suffer Penda to make an insurrection against Oswiu.*

This matter caused the king to enter upon much deliberation, and hold a private consultation with his intimate friends, what course to take. Among the rest that offered their proposals, Margadud, king of the Demetians, spoke as follows: — “Royal sir, since you have proposed to expel the race of the Angles from the coasts of Britain, why do you alter your resolution, and suffer them to continue in peace among us? At least you should permit them to fall out among themselves, and let our country owe its deliverance to their own civil broils. No faith is to be kept with one that is treacherous, and is continually laying snares for him to whom he owes fidelity. Such have the Saxons always been to our nation, from the very first time of their coming among us. What faith ought we to keep with them? Let Penda immediately have leave to go against Oswiu, that by this civil dissension and destruction of one another, our island may get rid of them.”

Chap. XIII — *Penda is killed by Oswiu. Cadwaillon dies.*

By these and other words to the same effect, Cadwallon was prevailed upon to grant the permission desired. And Penda, having assembled a vast army, went to the Humber, and laying waste that country, began a fierce war upon the king. Oswiu was at last reduced to such extremity, that he was forced to promise him innumerable royal ornaments, and other presents more than one would believe, if he would desist from ruining his country, and return home without committing any more hostilities. But when the other could by no entreaties be prevailed upon to do it, the king, in hopes of divine assistance, though he had a less army, however, gave him battle near the River Winwaed, and having killed Penda and thirty other commanders, gained the victory. Penda’s son Wulfhere, by a grant from Cadwallon, succeeded to the kingdom, and joining with Eafa and Eadberht, two leaders of the Mercians, rebelled against Oswiu; but at last, by Cadwallon’s command, made peace with him.

At length, after forty-eight years were expired, that most noble and potent king of the Britons, Cadwallon, being grown infirm with age and sickness, departed this life upon the fifteenth before the calends of December. The Britons embalmed his body, and placed it with wonderful art in a brazen statue, which was cast according to the measure of his stature. This statue they set up with complete armour, on an admirable and beautiful brazen horse, over the western gate of London, for a monument of the above-mentioned victory, and for a terror to the Saxons. They also built under it a church in honour of St. Martin, in which divine ceremonies are celebrated for him and the others who departed in the faith.

Chap. XIV — *Cadwaladr succeeds Cadwallon.*

He was succeeded in the kingdom by Cadwaladr, his son, whom Bede calls the youth Elidwalda. At first, he maintained the government with peace and honour; but after twelve years' enjoyment of the crown, he fell into a fit of sickness, and a civil war broke out among the Britons. His mother was Penda's sister, by the same father but a different mother, descended from the noble race of the Gewisse. For Cadwallon, after his reconciliation with her brother, made her the partner of his bed, and had Cadwaladr by her.

Chap. XV — *The Britons are compelled, by pestilence and famine, to leave Britain. Cadwaladr's lamentation.*

During his sickness, the Britons (as we said before) quarrelling among themselves, made a wicked destruction of a rich country; and this again was attended with another misfortune. For this besotted people was punished with a grievous and memorable famine; so that every province was destitute of all sustenance, except what could be taken in hunting. After the famine followed a terrible pestilence, which in a short time destroyed such multitudes of people, that the living were not sufficient to bury the dead. Those of them that remained, flying their country in whole troops together, went to the countries beyond the sea, and while they were under sail, they with a mournful howling voice sang, "Thou hast given us, O God, like sheep appointed for meat, and hast scattered us among the heathen."

Also Cadwaladr himself, in his voyage, with his miserable fleet to Armorica, made this addition to the lamentation, "Woe to us sinners, for our grievous impieties, wherewith we have not ceased to provoke God, while we had space for repentance. Therefore, the revenge of his power lies heavy upon us, and drives us out of our native soil, which neither the Romans of old, nor the Scots or Picts afterwards, nor yet the treacherous Saxons with all their craft, were able to do. But in vain have we recovered our country so often. from them; since it was not the will of God that we should perpetually hold the government of it. He who is the true Judge, when he saw we were by no means to be reclaimed from our wickedness, and that no human power could expel our race, was willing to chastise our folly himself; and has turned his anger against us, by which we are driven out in crowds from our native country. Return, therefore, ye Romans; return, Scots and Picts; return, Ambrons and Saxons: behold, Britain lies open to you, being by the wrath of God made desolate, which you were never able to do. It is not your valour that expels us; but the power of the supreme King, whom we have never ceased to provoke."

Chap. XVI — *Cadwaladr with his people goes to Alan. The Saxons seize all Britain.*

With these dolorous complaints he arrived at the Armorican coast, and went with his whole company to king Alan, the nephew of Salomon by whom he was

honourably received. So that Britain, being now destitute of its ancient inhabitants, excepting a few in Wales that escaped the general mortality, became a frightful place even to the Britons themselves for eleven years after. Neither was it at the same time more favourable to the Saxons, who died in it without intermission. Notwithstanding the remainder of them, after this raging plague was ceased, according to their old custom sent word over to their countrymen, that the island of Britain was now freed of its native inhabitants, and lay open to them, if they would come over and inhabit it. As soon as they had received this information, that odious people, gathering together an innumerable multitude of men and women, arrived in Northumbria, and inhabited the provinces that lay desolate from Albany to Cornwall. For there was now nobody to hinder them, excepting the poor remains of the Britons, who continued together in the thickets of the woods in Wales. From that time the power of the Britons ceased in the island, and the Angles began their reign.

Chap. XVII — *Cadwaladr is, by the voice of an angel, deterred from returning to Britain.*

After some time, when the people had recovered strength, Cadwaladr, being mindful of his kingdom, which was now free from the contagion of the pestilence, desired assistance of Alan towards the recovery of his dominions. The king granted his request; but as he was getting ready a fleet, he was commanded by the loud voice of an angel to desist from his enterprise. For God was not willing that the Britons should reign any longer in the island, before the time came of which Merlin prophetically foretold Arthur. It also commanded him to go to Rome to pope Sergius, where after doing penance, he should be enrolled among the saints. It told him withal, that the Britons, by the merit of their faith, should again recover the island, when the time decreed for it was come. But this would not be accomplished before they should be possessed of his reliques, and transport them from Rome into Britain. At the same time also the reliques of the other saints should be found, which had been hidden on account of the invasion of pagans; and then at last would they recover their lost kingdom. When the holy prince had received the heavenly message, he went straight to king Alan, and gave him an account of what had been told him.

Chap. XVIII — *Cadwaladr goes to Rome and dies.*

Then Alan had recourse to several books, as the prophecies of the eagle that prophesied at Shaftesbury, and the verses of Sibyl and Merlin; and made diligent search in them, to see whether the revelation made to Cadwaladr agreed with those written oracles. And when he could find nothing contradictory to it, he admonished Cadwaladr to submit to the divine dispensation, and laying aside the thoughts of Britain, perform what the angelical voice had commanded him. But he urged him to send his son Idwal and his nephew Ine over into the island, to govern the remainder of the Britons; lest a nation, descended of so ancient a race, should lose their liberty by the incursions of barbarians. Then Cadwaladr, renouncing worldly cares for the sake of God and his everlasting

kingdom, went to Rome, and was confirmed by pope Sergius: and being seized with a sudden illness, was, upon the twelfth before the calends of May, in the six hundred and eighty-ninth year of our Lord's incarnation freed from the corruption of the flesh, and admitted into the glories of the heavenly kingdom.

Chap. XIX — *The two Britons, Idwal and Ine, in vain attack the nation of the Angles. Aethelstan the first king of the Angles.*

As soon as Idwal and Ine had got together their ships, they with all the forces they could raise, arrived in the island, and for forty-nine years together fiercely attacked the nation of the Angles, but to little purpose. For the above-mentioned mortality and famine, together with the inveterate spirit of faction that was among them, had made this proud people so much degenerate, that they were not able to gain any advantage of the enemy. And being now also overrun with barbarism, they were no longer called Britons, but Gualenses, Welshmen; a word derived either from Gualo their leader, or Guales their queen, or from their barbarism. But the Saxons managed affairs with more prudence, maintained peace and concord among themselves, tilled their grounds, rebuilt their cities and towns, and so throwing off the dominion of the Britons, bore sway over all Loegria, under their leader Aethelstan, who first wore a crown amongst them. But the Welshmen, being very much degenerated from the nobility of the Britons, never after recovered the monarchy of the island; on the contrary, by quarrels among themselves, and wars with the Saxons, their country was a perpetual scene of misery and slaughter.

Chap. XX — *Geoffrey of Monmouth's conclusion.*

But as for the kings that have succeeded among them in Wales, since that time, I leave the history of them to Caradoc of Llancarfan, my contemporary; as I do also the kings of the Saxons to William of Malmesbury, and Henry of Huntingdon. But I advise them to be silent concerning the Kings of the Britons*, since they have not that book written in the British tongue, which Walter, archdeacon of Oxford brought out of Brittany, and which being a true history published in honour of those princes, I have thus taken care to translate.

* This advice might be thought judicious, if we could be persuaded of authenticity of Geoffrey's cherished discovery, but there are lamentable defects, of a grave character, attending upon this British volume.

1. It was first made known six hundred years after the events which it relates.
2. No ms. copy is now in existence, nor any record of its ever having been multiplied by transcription.
3. It relates stories utterly at variance with acknowledged history.
4. It abounds in miraculous stories, which, like leaven, ferment and corrupt the whole mass.
5. It labours under great suspicion from the mendacious character of the people, whose credit it was written to support.

With these remarks we leave the work to the consideration of the reader who may compare it, if he likes, with the Chronicles of Gildas and Nennius, which form the next portions of this volume.