

the same country howe writing out of France into England, and complaiing of the same in diuers his letters, as first to Offa, where he thus writeth. Ego paratus eram cum muneribus Caroli regis ad vos venire, & in patriam reuertir: Sed melius visum est propter pacem gentis meae, in peregrinatione remanere, ne sciant quid fecissem inter eos, ubi nullus securus esse, vel in salubri consilio proficere potest. Ecclesia sancta a Paganis vastata, altaria perueriis scdata, monasteria adulterijs violata, terra sanguine dominorum & principum scdata, &c. **Againe ouer the sayd Alcuinus writing to the foresayd Edelred a litle a boue mentioned, after the same tenor reporteth:** Ecce Ecclesia sancti Cuthberti sacerdotum Dei sanguine aspersa (omnibus spoliata ornamentis) locus, cunctis in Britannia venerabilior, Paganis gentibus datur ad depradandum. Et ubi primum post decessum S. Cuthberti ab Eboraco, Christiana religio in nostra gente fumpit exordium: ibi miseris & calamitatis cepit initium, &c. **Item, writing to Osbert a noble pierce of the Mercians, complaiing on the same maner, sayth:** Regnum nostrum Northumbroreum penè perijt, propter intestinas dissentiones, & fallaces conuersiones, &c.

Item, in another place the sayd Alcuinus writing to delard Archbishop of Caunterbury, complaiyneth moanfully: Hoc dico propter flagellum, quod nuper accidit patrie infulae nostrae, quae prope trecentis & quadraginta annis a parentibus inhabitata est nostris. Legitur in libro Gildae sapientissimi Britonum, quod idem Britones propter auaritiam & rapinam principum: propter iniquitatem & iniustitiam iudicum: propter desidia praedicationis Episcoporum: propter luxuriam & malos mores populi: patriam perdidere. Caueamus haec eadem vitia nostris temporibus inolescere, quatenus benedictio diuina nobis patriam conseruet in prosperitate bona, quam nobis misericordissima pietate perdonare dignatus est, &c.

Ouer and besides the same author Alcuinus writing to the foresayd Edelred king of Northumberland, maketh record of a straunge sight which he himselfe did see the same time in y cite of Yorke, to raime bloud: wherof, his words which he wrote concerning the same, to the said king Edelred be these. Quid significat pluuia sanguinis, quam quadragesimali tempore in Eboraco ciuitate, quae caput est totius regni in Ecclesia beatiprincipis Apollolorum, vidimus de borealibus partibus domus, (sereno aere) de summitate minanter cadere? Nonne potest putari, à borealibus partibus venire sanguinem super terram? **That is: what signifieth the rayne of bloud which in tyme of Lent in the Citie of Yorke, the chiefe Citie of that dominion, and in the church of S. Peter the chiefe of the Apostles, we our selues did see to fall from the Church top (the cleimnt being cleare) out of the North partes of the temple, &c. This wondrous sight testified by Malmesburienis, is thought of Fabian to happen in the second yere of the raigne of Brightricus (as with the tyme doth well agree) which was the yere of our Lord, 780. & is thought of some oppositors to betoken the comming of the Danes into this land, which entred shortly after about viij. yeres, in the 9. yere of the raigne of Brightricus king of the west Saxons, which Brightricus in defence therof, sent forth his Steward of his household with a small companie which shortly was slaine: but by the strength of the sayd Brightricus and the other Saxon kings, they were compelled to voyd the land for that tyme, which was, An. 790. To this Brightricus king Offa, as is aforesaid, gaue his daughter Ethelburga to wife, by whom he at length was impoyoned, besides certaine other of his nobles: upon whom, the said Queene before hym had practised the same wickednesse, who then after that, fledde ouer to Charles the great into France, where he beyng offered for her beautie to marrie either to him, or to his sonne, because she chused rather his sonne, married neither the one nor yet the other: but was thrust in a Monastery, where she then playing the harlot with a Monke, was expelled from thence, and ended her lyfe in penury and misery.**

In the meane tyme while this Edelburga was thus working her feates in England: Irene Emperesse of the Greeces, was as busie also for her part at Constantinople. who first through the meanes of Pope Adrian, took by the body of Constantine Emperour of Constantinople, her owne husbands father. And when she had burned the same, she caused the ashes to be cast into the sea, because he disannulld Images. Afterward raigning with her sonne Constantine the 4. sonne to Leo the 4. (whome also we declared before to be excommunicate for taking away Images) beyng at dissention with him, caused him to be taken & laid in prison. who afterward through power of frends beyng restored to his Empire againe, at last she caused the same her owne sonne to be cast in prison, and his eyes to be put out so cruelly, that within short space he dyed. After this the sayd Irene Emperesse, with the counsaile of Therasius Bishop of Constantinople, held a Councell at Nicea,

where it was decreed that Images should agayne be restored to the church: which Councell, after was repealed by an other Councell holden at Franckford by Charles the great. At length she was depoyed by Nicephorus (who raigned after) and was expelled the Empire: who after the example of Edelburga aboue mentioned (conspicuously punished for her wickednesse) ended likewise her lyfe in much penurie and misery.

About the tyme when the foresayd Brightricus was impoyoned by Edelburga his wife, died also king Offa, which was about the yere of our Lord, 795. or as some say, 802. After which Offa (as is aforesaid) succeeded Egbert, then Kenelphus, after whom succeeded Kenelmus his sonne, who in his yonger age was wickedly murdered by his sister Quindreda, and Akebertus, about the yere of our Lord, 815. And in the Church of Winchcombe was counted for an holy Martyr. After him succeeded his vncle Ceolulphus, whom Bernulphus in the first yere of his raigne expelled and raigned in his place. who likewise the third yere of his raigne was overcome and expelled by Egbert kyng of the west Saxons, and afterward slayne by the East Angles. And the kingdom of Mercia also ceased, and came into the handes of the west Saxons.

Whereto I haue brought, as thou seest (good Reader) the confused and turbulent raignes of these vij. Saxon kings, who after the expulsion of the Britaines, ruled and raigned alunder in sundry quarters of this land together, vnto this present tyme of Egbert king of the west Saxons. By whom it so pleased God to begin to reduce and vnite all these scattered kingdomes into one monarchicall forme of dominion. wherfore, as in the foresayd Egbert beganeth a new alteration of the common wealthe here in this land among the Saxons: so my purpose is (the Lord willing) with the same Egbert to enter a new beginning of my third booke, after a briefe recapitulation first made of such things as in this second booke before, are to be collected and noted, especially touching the monasteries builded, the kingdome which haue entered the life and profession Monastike: also Queenes & Queenes daughters, which the same tyme professed solitary life in monasteries, which they or their auncetors had erected.

The conclusion of the story precedent, concerning the seuen kingdoms of the Saxon kings aboue mentioned.

And thus hast thou (gentle Reader) concerning the vij. kingdoms of these Saxons, ruling altogether in England, the course and order of their doings briefly described and discoursed vnto thee, in such order, as the matter beyng so intricate, in such confusion & diuersitie of things incident together, would permit: following especially in this story hitherto, the line of the Northumberland kings as the other stories most follow the line of west Saxons. The which seuen kingdoms of these sayd Saxones, after they had vtually expelled and chased out the Britaines from their land, like as they neuer were in quietnes among themselves, raigning thus together till the tyme of this Egbert: so also after the raigne of Egbert, the whole realme beyng reduced into one regimēt, no lesse were they impugned & afflicted by the Danes continually fro tyme to tyme, till the last conquest of William the Normand. Thus it pleased (God euer) lightly to reuenge with bloud, bloody violence, and the vniust dealings of men, with iust and lyke retribution. But of this let the christian Reader consider, as Gods grace shall worke in him. In the meane tyme we, as much as in vs do lye, satisfiing the part of an Historiarian, haue thus hether to set forth and declared concerning these vij. foresayd kingdoms: first the names and lineall descent of the kings severally by themselves, as by the table precedent inay appeare, then what were the doings and actes of the same. How first being Pagans, they were conuerted to the christian faith: what things in their time happened in the church, how many of them, of kings were made monkes: how deuout they were then to holy church and to the churchmen, and especially to the church of Rome. But the churchmen then were much otherwyse in lyfe, then afterward they declared themselves to be. Through which deuotion of the said kings, first came in, the Interpence or Romeshots in this Realme. as by Iue first in his dominion, then by Offa in his Lordship, & afterward by Adelwulph brought in and ratified through the whole Realme: where also is to be noted, that by the foresayd Kings and Queenes of the sayd Saxons, the most part of the greatest Abbais & Monneries in this realme, were first begun and builded, as partly the names of some here

The troubles of thekingdome of Northumberland described by Alcuinus.

The wickednes of Irene condignly rewarded.

Kenelmus king of Mercia innocently slayne.

Ceolulphus Ceolulphus, Bernulphus kings of Mercia. Thekingdome of Mercia ceaseth.

Ex Historia Malmesberis.

How it rayned bloud in Yorke.

Anno. 780.

Brightricus K. of West Saxons.

Ethelburga daughter to Offa, impoyoned her husband.

Wickednes reuenged.

Irene.

Anno. 784.

Images restored agayne by Irene at Constantinople. The second councell at Nicea.

Vniust dealings of men iustly rewarded.