

two smaller Saxon kingdoms, the one called Bernicia, containing the present county of Northumberland and the bishoprick of Durham; the subjects of the other, called Deira, extending themselves over Lancashire and Yorkshire. 4. These kingdoms were united in the person of Ethelred, king of Northumberland, by the expulsion of Edwin, his brother-in-law, from the kingdom of the Deira, and the seizure of his dominions. In this manner, the natives being overpowered or entirely expelled, seven kingdoms were established in Britain, which have since been well known by the name of the Saxon heptarchy.

5. The Saxons, being thus well established in all the desirable parts of the island, and having no longer the Britons to contend with, began to quarrel among themselves. A country divided into a number of petty independent principalities, must ever be subject to contention, as jealousy and ambition have more frequent incentives to operate. 6. After a series therefore of battles, treasons, and stratagems, all their petty principalities fell under the power of Egbert, king of Wessex, whose merits deserved dominion, and whose prudence secured his conquests. By him all the kingdoms of the heptarchy were united under one common jurisdiction; but, to give splendour to his authority, a general council of the clergy and laity was summoned at Winchester where he was solemnly crowned king of England, by which name the united kingdom was thenceforward called.

7. Thus, about four hundred years after the first arrival of the Saxons in Britain, all the petty settlements were united into one great state, and nothing offered but prospects of peace, security, and increasing refinement.

It was about this period that St. Gregory undertook to send missionaries among the Saxons, to convert them to Christianity. 8. It is said, that before his elevation to the papal chair he chanced one day to pass through the slave-market at Rome, and perceiving some children of great beauty, who were set up for sale, he enquired about their country, and finding they were English pagans, he is said to have cried out in the Latin language, Non Angli sed Angeli, forent, si essent Christiani,—“They would not be English, but angels, had they been Christians.” 9. From

\* Inquiring further the name of their province, he was answered Deira (a district of Northumberland). “Deira,” replied St. Gregory, “that is good; they are called to the mercy of God from his anger; that is, DE IRA. But