

When the Teutons first settled in Britain, they found no traces of the Romans. The Roman legions were withdrawn in the year 418 (about) to defend the crumbling Roman Empire from the incursions of the "Goth and ruthless Hun." So it is that there is no trace of Rome's handiwork in the basis of English constitutional history. The law of the Teutons in England was a production of their own usages. Now, it has been the experience of history that local tribal government always precedes central national government. It is beyond my subject to discuss the formation of society; let it suffice that the Patriarchal was the first method of government. It was not the primitive form of family life, but represented a later development. It represented the leadership of the eldest male member of a family or group of families, including all relations by blood, marriage and adoption. The leader or chief was an absolute ruler, and owned practically the whole property of the family. The family was ruled more by custom than by law; the Patriarchal leader himself was bound by the customs of his forefathers. His compactly organized family maintained its identity, and became a source of power.

Thus it was with the Teutons. As the members of the Teutonic group increased, they quite naturally founded communities called villages in favorable locations. These Teuton villages were the centres of political activity. National organization they knew only for war. As time advanced, the freemen dominated in the villages: even in war each freeman had a vote in the distribution of booty, and, on occasion, could check the rapacity of his commander. As may be inferred, the Teutons were a warlike race inured to hardship and equally at home on land or on sea. Their settlement in England did not abate their national temperament. Concerted organized movements for conquests, however, made the Teutons, like the Franks, perceive the necessity of kingship for an abiding basis of national organization. Again, they soon recognized that the same cohesion was needed to enjoy conquest as to effect it. As a result of their new experiences they elected their military leader king.

The Teutons formed seven kingdoms in England, known as the Saxon Heptarchy; the last of the seven was founded about the year 585. Though originally there were three tribes of Teutonic settlers, the Jutes, Angles and Saxons, the name Anglo-Saxon, viz., Saxon of England, was given to the whole people, and the country was named after the Angles, viz., Angle-land or England. As a matter of course, there was constant quarrelling