

a very vigorous opposition from the natives, but, being reinforced from Germany,\* and assisted by their countrymen on the island, they routed the Britons; and although retarded in their progress by the celebrated king Arthur,† they had strength enough to keep possession of the conquest they had already made. Cerdic, therefore, with his son Kenrick, established the third Saxon kingdom in the island, namely that of the West Saxons, including the counties of Hants, Dorset, Wilts, Berks, and the Isle of Wight.

11. It was in opposing this Saxon invader that the celebrated prince Arthur acquired his fame. However unsuccessful all his valour might have been in the end, yet his name made so great a figure in the fabulous annals of the times, that some notice must be taken of him. 12. This prince is of such obscure origin, that some authors suppose him to be the son of king Ambrosius,‡ and others only his nephew; others again affirm that he was a Cornish prince, and son of Gurlouis, king of that province. However this be, it is certain he was a commander of great valour; and, could courage alone have repaired the miserable state of the Britons, his might have been effectual. 13. According to the most authentic historians, he worsted the Saxons in twelve successive battles. In one of these, namely, that fought at Caerbadon, in Berks, it is asserted that he killed no less than four hundred and forty of the enemy with his own hand. But the Saxons were too numerous and powerful to be extirpated by the desultory efforts of single valour; so that a peace, and not a conquest, was the immediate fruit of his victories. 14. The enemy, therefore, still gained ground; and this prince, in the decline of life, had the mortification, from some domestic troubles of his own, to be a patient spectator of their encroachments. His first wife had been carried off by Menlas, king of Somersetshire, who detained her a whole year at Glastonbury,§ until Arthur, discovering the place of her retreat, advanced with an army against the seducer, and obliged him to give her back. 15. In his second wife, perhaps, he may have been more fortunate, as we have no mention made of her; but it was otherwise with his third consort, who was car-

\* A large country of Europe, comprising many kingdoms and states.

† A British prince, who established Christianity at York, in the room of paganism or worshipping of idols.

‡ King of the Britons.

§ Glastonbury is a town in Somersetshire, noted for a famous abbey.