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**Chronicles 1 (of 6): The Historie of
England 5 (of 8) The Fift Booke of
the Historie of England.**

Raphael Holinshed

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Constantinus at the generall sute of the Britains vndertaketh to gouerne this Iland, he is crowned king, his three sonnes, he is traitorouslie slaine of a Pict, Constantius the eldest sonne of Constantine hauing bene a monke is created king, the ambitious & slie practises of duke Vortigerne to aspire to the gouernment, he procureth certeine Picts and Scots to kill the king who had reteined them for the gard of his person, his craftie deuises and deepe dissimulation vnder the pretense of innocencie, he winneth the peoples harts, and is chosen their king.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Having ended our former booke with the end of the Romane power ouer this Iland, wherein the state of the Iland vnder them is at full described; it remaineth now that we procéed to declare, in what state they were after the Romans had refused to gouerne them anie longer. Wherefore we will addresse our selues to saie somewhat touching the succession of the British kings, as their histories make mention.

CONSTANTINUS. *Gal. Mon.*

Matt. Westm. Constantinus the brother of Aldroenus king of little Britaine, at the sute and earnest request of the archbishop of London, made in name of all the Britains in the Ile of great Britaine, was sent into the same Ile by his said brother Aldroenus vpon couenants ratified in manner as before is recited, and brought with him a conuenient power, landing with the same at Totnesse in Deuonshire. Immediatlie after his cōming on land, he gathered to him *Caxton* saith 12000. but *Gal.* and others say but 2000. a great power of Britains, which before his landing were hid in diuerse places of the Ile. Then went he foorth with them, and gaue battell to the enimies, whom he vanquished: & slue that tyrannicall king Guanius there in the field (as some bookes haue.) Howbeit, this The British historie disagreeeth from the Scottish. agréeth not with the Scottish writers, which affirme that they got the field, but yet lost their king named Dongard (as in their historie ye maie read.)

But to procéed as our writers report the matter. When the Britains had thus ouercome their enimies, they conueied their capteine the said Constantine vnto Cicester, and there in fulfilling their promise and couenant made to his brother, crowned him king of great Britaine, in the yéere of our Lord 433, which was about the fift yéere of the emperour Valentinianus the second, *Matth. West.* saith 435. and third yéere of Clodius king of the Frankners after called Frenchmen, which then began to settle themselues in Gallia, whereby the name of that countrie was afterwards changed and called France. Constantine being thus established king, ruled the land well and noblie, and defended it from all inuasion of enimies during his life. He begat of his wife thrée sonnes (as the British historie af-

firmeth) Constantius, Aurelius Ambrosius, and Vter surnamed named Pendragon. The eldest, because he perceived him to be but dull of wit, and not [Page 552] verie toward, he made a moonke, placing him within the abbie of Amphibalus in Winchester.

In a groue of bushes as *Gal.* saith. *Matth. West. Beda. Orosius. Blondus.* Finallie this Constantine, after he had reigned ten yéeres, was traitorouslie slaine one day in his owne chamber (as some write) by a Pict, who was in such fauor with him, that he might at all times haue frée accesse to him at his pleasure. Neither the Romane writers, nor Beda, make anie mention of this Constantine: but of the other Constantine they write, which immediatlie after the vsurper Gratian was dispatched out of the way (as before ye haue heard) was aduanced to the rule of this land, and title of emperour, onelie in hope of his name, and for no other respect of towardnesse in him, afore time being but a meane souldier, without anie degré of honour. The same Constantine (as writers record) going ouer into Gallia, adorned his sonne Constantius with the title and dignitie of Cesar, the which before was a moonke, and finallie as well the one as the other were slaine, the father at Arles by earle Constantius, that was sent against him by the emperour Honorius; and the sonne at Vienna (as before ye haue heard) by one of his owne court called Gerontius (as in the Italian historie ye may see more at large.) This chanced about the yeere of our Lord 415. 415.

¶ This haue we thought good to repeat in this place, for that some may suppose that this Constantine is the same that our writers take to be the brother of Aldroenus king of little Britaine, as the circumstance of the time and other things to be considered may giue them occasion to thinke, for that there is not so much credit to be yéelded to them that haue written the British histories, but that in some part men may with iust cause doubt of sundrie matters contained in the same: and therefore haue we in this booke béene the more diligent to shew what the Romans and other forreine writers haue registred in their bookes of histories touching the affaires of Britaine, that the reader may be the better satisfied in the truth. But now to returne to the sequelle of the historie as we find the same written by the British chroniclers.

This Vortigerne was duke of the Geuisses and Cornewall, as *Rad. Cestr.* reporteth.

Gal. Mon. After that Constantine was murdered (as before ye haue heard) one Vortigerus, or Vortigernus, a man of great authoritie amongst the Britains, wrought so with the residue of the British nobilitie, that Constantius the eldest sonne of their king the fore-remembred Constantine, was taken out of the abbie of Winchester where he remained, and was streightwaies created king, as lawfull inheritour to his father.

Ye haue heard how Constantius was made a moonke in his fathers life time, bicause he was thought to be too soft and childish in wit, to haue anie publike rule committed to his hands: but for that cause speciallie did Vortigerne séeke t'aduance him, to the end that the king being not able to gouerne of himselfe, he might haue the chieftest swaie, and so rule all things as it were vnder him, preparing thereby a way for himselfe to atteine at length to the kingdome as by that which followed was more apparentlie perceiued.

CONSTANTIUS. *Matt. West* saith 445. This Constantius then the sonne of Constantine, by the helpe (as before ye haue heard) of Vortigerne, was made king of Britaine, in the yere of our Lord 443. But Constantius bare but the name of king: for Vortigerne abusing his innocencie and simple discretion to order things as was requisite, had all the rule of the land, and did what pleased him. Wherevpon first, where there had béene a league concluded betwixt the Britains, Scots and Picts, in the daies of the late king Constantine, Vortigerne caused the same league to be *Hector Boet.* renewed, & waged an hundred Picts, and as manie Scots to be attendant as a gard vpon the kings person, diuers of the which (corrupting them with faire promises) he procured by Constantius murdered. subtile meanes in the end to murder the king, and immediatlie vpon the deed doone, he caused the murtherers to be strangled, that they should not afterwards disclose by whose The subtile dealing of Vortigerne. procurement they did that déed. Then caused he all the residue of the Scots and Picts to be apprehended, and as it had béene vpon a zeale to sée the death of Constantius seuerelie punished, he framed such inditements and accusations against them, that chieflie by his meanes (as appeared) the giltlesse persons were condemned and hanged, the multitude of the British people béeing

woonderfullie pleased therewith, and giuing great commendations [Page 553] to Vortigerne for that déed. Thus Constantius was made awaie in maner as before ye haue heard, after he had reigned (as most writers affirme) the space of fiue yéeres.

After his death was knowne, those that had the bringing vp and custodie of his two Aurelius Ambrosius.

Vter Pendragon. yoonger brethren, Aurelius Ambrose, and Vter Pendragon, mistrusting the wicked intent of Vortigerne, whose dissimulation and mischieuous meaning by some great likelihoods they suspected, with all spéed got them to the sea, and fled into litle Britaine, there kéeping them till it pleased God otherwise to prouide for them. But Vortigerne could so well dissemble his craftie workings, and with such conueiance and cloked maner could shadow and colour the matter, that most men thought and iudged him verie innocent and void of euill meaning: insomuch that he obtained the fauour of the people so greatlie, that he was reputed for the onelie staie and defender of the common wealth. Herevpon it came to passe, that when the councell was assembled to elect a new king, for so much as the other sonnes of king Constantine Vortigerne chosen king of Britaine. were not of age sufficient to rule, Vortigerne himselfe was chosen, diuers of the nobles (whom he had procured thereto) giuing their voices to this his preferment, as to one best deseruing the same in their opinion and judgement. This Vortigerne, as by indirect meanes and sinister procéedings he aspired to the regiment, hauing no title therevnto, otherwise than as blind fortune vouchsafed him the preferment: so when he was possessed, but not interested in the same, he vncased the crooked conditions which he had couertlie concealed, and in the end (as by the sequele you shall see) did pull shame and infamie vpon himselfe.

Vortigerne furnisheth the tower with a garrison, he bewraieeth his crueltie, Aurelius and Pendragon brethren to the late king Constantius flie into Britaine Armorike, what common abuses and sinnes did vniuersally concurre with a plentifull yeere, the Scots and Picts reuenge the death of their countrimen, Vortigerne is in doubt of his estate, the Britains send for suc-

cou to the Saxons, they come vnder the conduct of Hengist and Horsus two brethren, where they are assigned to be seated, they vanquish the Scots, disagreement in writers touching the Saxons first comming into this Iland.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

VORTIGERNE. 446. Vortigerne, by such diuelish meanes and vnconscionable practises (as you heare) stealing away the hearts of the people, was chosen and made king of Britaine, in the yéere of our Lord 446, in the 3 consulship of Aetius, 1197 of Rome, 4 of the 305 Olympiad, 4112 of the world, the dominicall letter going by F, the prime by 10, which fell about the 21 yéere of the emperour Valentinianus, the same yéere that Meroneus began to reigne ouer the Frenchmen. Before he was made king, he was earle or duke of the Geuisses, a people which held that part of Britaine where afterwards the west Saxons inhabited. Now when *Hector Boet.* he had with treason, fraud, and great deceit at length obtained that for the which he had long looked, he first of all furnished the tower of London with a strong garrison of men of warre.

Then studieng to aduance such onelie as he knew to be his speciall friends and faouurers, 415. he sought by all meanes how to oppresse other, of whose good will he had neuer so litle mistrust, and namelie those that were affectionate towards the linage of Constantine he hated deadlie, and deuised by secret meanes which way he might best destroy them. But these his practises being at the first perceiued, caused such as had the gouernance of the two *Fabian.* yoong gentlemen with all spéed to get them ouer (as ye haue heard) into Britaine Armorike, there to remaine out of danger with their vnclé the king of that land. Diuers of the Britains also, that knew themselues to be in Vortigerne his displeasure, sailed ouer dailie [Page 554] vnto them, which thing brought Vortigerne into great doubt and feare of his estate.

Gylidas. Plentie of wealth accompanied with store of sinnes. It chanced also the same time, that there was great plentie of corne, & store of fruit, the like wherof had not béene seene in manie yéeres before, and therevpon insued riot, strife, lecherie, and other vices verie heinous, & yet accounted as then for small or rather none offenses at all. These abuses & great enormities reigned not onelie in the temporalitie, but also in the spiritualitie and chéefe rulers in the same: so that euerie man turned the point of his speare (euen as he had consented of purpose) against the true and innocent person.

The commons also gaue themselues to voluptuous lust, drunkennesse, and idle loitering, whereof followed fighting, contention, enuie, and much debate. Of this plentie therefore insued great pride, and of this abundance no lesse hautinesse of mind, wherevpon followed great wickednesse, lacke of good gouernement and sober temperancie, and in the necke of these as a iust punishment, death and mortalitie, so that in some countries scarce the quicke sufficed to burie the dead.

Scots and Picts inuade the Britains. And for an augmentation of more mischéeffe, the Scots and Picts hearing how their countrimen through the false suggestion of Vortigerne, had bene wrongfullie and most cruellie put to death at London, began with fire & sword to make sharpe & cruell warre against the Britains, wasting their countrie, spoiling and burning their townes, and giuing them the ouerthrow in a pitch field, as in the Scottish historie more plainlie appeareth. To be bréefe, the Britains were brought into such danger and miserie, that they knew not what way to take for remedie in such present perill, likelie to be ouerrun and vtterlie vanquished of their enimies. In the meane time Vortigerne not onelie troubled with these imminent euils, but fearing also the returne of the two brethren, Aurelius Ambrose, and Vter Pendragon, began to consider of the state of things, and estéeming it most sure to worke by aduise, called together the principall lords and chéefe men of the realme to haue their counsell and opinion, how to procéed in such a weightie businesse: and so debating the matter with them, measured both his owne force, and also the force of his enimies, and according to the condition and state of the time, diligentlie considered and searched out what remedie was to be had and prouided.

Gyldas.

Wil. Malm. Beda. The Saxons sent for. 10000 hath *Hector Boet.* *Gyldas* and *Beda* mention onelie but of 3 plates or gallies, but *Hector Boet.* hath 30. At length after they had throughlie pondered all things, the more part of the nobles with the king also were of this mind, that there could be no better way deuised, than to send into Germanie for the Saxons to come to their aid: the which Saxons in that season were highlie renowned for their valiancie in armes, and manifold aduentures heretofore atchiued. And so forthwith messengers were dispatched into Germanie, the which with monie, gifts, and promis-

es, might procure the Saxons to come to the aid of the Britains against the Scots and Picts. The Saxons glad of this message, as people desirous of intertainment to serue in warres, choosing forth a picked companie of lustie yoong men vnder the leading of two brethren Hingist and Horsus, got them aboard into certeine vessels appointed for the purpose, and so with all speed directed their course towards great Britaine.

449. This was in the yeare of our Lord 449, and in the second yeare of Vortigerns reigne, as the most autentike writers both British and English seeme to gather, although the Scottish *Wil. Malm.* writers, and namelie, Hector Boetius doo varie herein, touching the iust account of yeares, as to the perusers of the writings aswell of the one as the other may appeare. But others take it to be in the 4 yeere of his reigne: whereto Beda seemeth to agrée, who noteth it in the same yeare that Martianus the emperour began to rule the empire, which was (as appeareth by the consularie table) in the consulship of Protogenes and Austerius, and third yeere of Meroneus king of France.

These Saxons thus arriuing in Britaine, were courteslie receiued, & hartilie welcomed of king Vortigern, who assigned to them places in Kent to inhabit, and forthwith led them against the Scots and Picts, which were entred into Britaine, wasting & destroying the countrie before them. Héerevpon comming to ioine in battell, there was a sore fight betwixt the parties for a while. But at length when the Saxons called to their remembrance that the same was the day which should either purchase to them an euerlasting name of manhood [Page 555] Scots vanquished by the Saxons. by victorie, or else of reproch by repulse, began to renew the fight with such violence, that the enimies not able to abide their fierce charge, were scattered and beaten downe on ech side with great slaughter.

The king hauing gotten this victorie, highlie rewarded the strangers according to their well *Henrie Hunt.* deseruings, as by whose prowess he had thus vanquished his enimies, which (as some write) were come as farre as Stamford, and vsed at that time to fight with long darts and speares, whereas the Saxons fought onelie with long swords and axes.

Gal. Mon. ¶Some haue written that the Saxons were not sent for, but came by chance into the Ile, and the occasion to be this. There was an ancient custome among the English Saxons a people in Germanie, as was also at the first among other nations, that when the multitude of them was so increased, that the countrie was not able to susteine and find them, by commandement of their princes, they should choose out by lots a number of yoong and able personages fit for the warrs, which should go forth to seeke them new habitations: and so it chanced to these, that they came into great Britaine, and promised to serue the king for wages in his warres.

Hengistus the Saxon shooteth at the crowne and scepter of the kingdome by craftie and subtile practises, a great number of forren people arriue in Britaine for the augmentation of his power, of the faire ladie Rowen his daughter,whereof Wednesdaie and Fridaie tooke their name, of the Iutes, Saxons, and Angles, Vortigerne being inflamed with the loue of Hengists daughter forsaketh his owne wife and marrieth hir, Vortigerne giueth Hengist all Kent, the Saxons come ouer by heaps to inhabit the land, the British nobilitie moue the king to auoid them, he is depriued of his kingdome, the miserable destruction made by the Saxons in this land, skirmishes betwixt them and the Britains.