

sudden, but that they twice returned to expel the disorderly foe from the Hadrian Wall; and the advent of the new warriors was not secured by national compact, until they had given fatal proof of their power by many piratical descents. In her last struggle for Britain, Rome had not only to guard the Wall from the unsubdued Picts of the North, but also to repel the Saxons from the South and the East. When Maximus contended for empire, he carried off to die at Aquileia (A.D. 388) or in Armorica the guardian legions and the warlike youth of Britain; incursions from the north succeeded; petitions went to Rome, and Stilicho sent a legion to the succour of the province (A.D. 397 or 399, according to Turner). Recalled by the invasion of Alaric* to the great fight at Pollentia (A.D. 402), the victorious troops returned again to expel the Picts from the long-contested Wall. In 406 Constantine was elected their emperor, and his and their arms triumphed in Gaul and Spain, till the treason of his officer Gerontius was succeeded by his captivity at Arles, A.D. 411. In 410 Rome, no longer defended by Stilicho, was sacked by the Goths; but before that (A.D. 409) the Picts and Scots were ravaging the north, and the *cities* of Britain, deprived of their soldiers, refused obedience to the Imperial authority, declared independence, and were abandoned by the despair of Honorius †.

Forty years of civil discord followed—of strife between Roman and British parties—between *civitates* accustomed to municipal privileges and colonial rights, and chieftains who more than ever trusted to the sword. There is no history of these dissensions ‡, but the mournful pages of Gildas declare the result to be interminable civil wars, not ending even in the readmission of the

* Gibbon, v. 194.

† Zosimus, lib. vi. quoted by Gibbon.

‡ A.D. 418. "In the ninth year after the sacking of Rome by the Goths, those of Roman race who were left in Britain, not bearing the manifold insults of the people, bury their treasures in pits, thinking that hereafter they might have better fortune, which never was the case; and taking a portion, assemble on the coast, spread their canvas to the winds, and seek an exile on the shores of Gaul."—*Ethelwerd's Chronicle*.