

hereditary foes from the north\*. The extremity of danger alarmed the nobles, with Gwrtheyrn or Vortigern at their head, into a decisive measure; the Saxons were called to aid. 'The blue-eyed Saxons' came; most probably they had often come before without invitation. Nor can the application to them by a party in Britain be thought strange. Already, 150 years before, Carausius had made a compact with these hardy pirates; again, A.D. 350, Magnentius had aided their progress; and now, the Romans having withdrawn, there was literally no power but that of the Saxons which could be brought to fight the Picts. They had risen to command a powerful confederacy of the German tribes north of the Elbe, and their swords were ready for every encounter.

By universal consent Hengist stands for their leader, and his place of landing with Horsa his brother is in Kent at Wippidsfleet† (A.D. 449). "King Vortigern gave them land in the south-east of this country, on condition that they should fight against the Picts. Then they fought against the Picts, and had the victory wheresoever they came."—*Sax. Chron.*

It is a pity that we must not believe Geoffrey when he says that Vortigern, after the victory, gave Hengist lands in Lindsey, as much as he could compass with a leathern thong; that Hengist thus encompassed a rocky hill, and built there his Than or Thong Caster; that there his daughter Rowena captivated the weak representative of Brutus, drank his health and shared his throne. The kingdom of Kent was the maiden's dower. By Hengist's advice, Occa (Octa), Ebusa and Cherdich followed with 300 ships and plenty of soldiers to fight the Picts, and settle themselves in the provinces of Deira and Bernicia, which were afterwards united into Northumberland.

There is nothing improbable in the assertion that they did so.

\* According to Gildas aid was supplicated from the Patrician 'Ætius, thrice consul' (his third consulate was in 446); Bede says it was not obtained; yet Gibbon declares the independent Britons implored and acknowledged his salutary aid (vol. vi.).

† Turner says, Ebb'sfleet.