

## CHAPTER XIV.

Coronation of William I.—Fortresses, and Norman Governors.—William goes to Normandy.—Oppressions of the Norman Chieftains.—Insurrections.—William in London.—Siege of Exeter.—Insurrections in the North, and Danish Invasion.—Devastation of Northumbria.—Confiscated Properties.—The Nobles and the People.—The March to Chester.—Norman Clergy.—Croyland.—The Camp of Refuge.—The last National Struggle.

FROM the day of his coronation, the 25th of December, 1066, we shall date the commencement of the reign of William I. It has been dated from the death of Edward the Confessor, on the 5th of January in that year; and also from the battle of Hastings, on the 16th of October. The difference appears of little importance; but it really involves a great point of our constitutional history. If the Norman duke won the crown by the victory of Hastings, we may date his accession from the 16th of October. If, more than two months after that eventful day, he was elected king, and, consequently, crowned king, we must date his accession from the day of his coronation. Successful as the arms of William had been, the crown continued elective, as in the Saxon time. His own chaplain, William of Poitiers, says he was "electus in regem," elected king,—which election was followed by his coronation. It was an election, and a coronation, under conditions, thus recorded in the Saxon Chronicle: "Then, on Midwinter's-day, archbishop Aldred hallowed him to king at Westminster, and gave him possession with the books of Christ, and also swore him, ere that he would set the crown upon his head, that he would so well govern this nation as any king before him best did, if they would be faithful to him."\* He did not "so well govern this nation," and this nation was not "faithful to him." Thence came long years of trouble.

"These Saxons, by God's goodness, King Henry the first's favour, their own patience and diligence, put together the planks of their shiprack'd estates, and afterwards recovered a competent condition." Thus writes the quaint old historian of "The Wor-

\* See Sir Harris Nicolas' "Chronology of History," pp. 272—279.

thies of England." This shipwreck, and this recovery, form the history which we have to work out during the next two centuries.

William of Normandy was encamped at Hastings, when he heard that a division of his army, having landed at Romney, had been attacked by the people of that port. William marched to Romney, and revenged himself by a slaughter of its inhabitants. Dover had a strong garrison, and there, around the castle, "built upon a steep rock overhanging the sea," was a large English force collected. The Normans set the town on fire, and the castle was taken. William's army was falling away by sickness. "A great number of soldiers, who devoured flesh-meat half raw, and drank too much water, died of dysentery."\* The conqueror waited for reinforcements from Normandy; and at length, leaving the coast, marched along the Watling Street to London.

Some weeks had elapsed since the terrible day of Senlac. The people knew that their Saxon king had fallen; but they were not ready to acknowledge that the foreign winner of one field should be the king of England. There was a lineal descendant of their ancient kings amongst them,—Edgar, the grandson of Edmund Ironside. He was unquestionably the heir to the crown; and the very remote claim of William of Normandy, through his affinity to Emma, the queen of Ethelred, was not to be put in comparison with that of a true son of the race of Cerdic. The sons of Harold had no claims comparable with his; and the pretensions of Edwin and Morcar, the powerful chiefs who were brothers-in-law of Harold, were not founded upon any higher right than that of their Saxon origin. The people of the south, and of London, chose Edgar Atheling as king. It was an unwise choice to oppose a feeble boy to the most ambitious man of his age, at the head of a conquering army. The two great earls of Mercia and Northumbria withdrew to the north. William advanced towards London, and the people exhibited a show of resistance; but they finally made their submission, through the archbishop, and great nobles, who did homage to the invader at Berkhamstead. He was crowned king at Westminster, on Christmas-day. On that occasion, there was a great tumult, which indicated that rival influences and fierce passions could with difficulty be kept in check. Westminster Abbey was surrounded by Norman troops, while the solemn ceremony went forward. Aldred, the archbishop of York, put the question to the English, whether they would have William for their king, and the

\* Ordericus Vitalis, Forester's translation, book iii. c. 14.

same question was put by the bishop of Coutances to the Normans; "and the whole assembly loudly gave their willing assent in one voice, though not in one language." \* The Norman troops outside, believing, as some of the chroniclers say, that their leader was in danger, when they heard the shouts, set fire to the adjoining houses. The spectators rushed from the abbey. The king and the prelates were left alone at the altar; and in the midst of the din without and the solitude within, William took the usual oath of the Anglo-Saxon kings, and was consecrated by the trembling bishops, himself in great alarm. So writes Ordericus. It is difficult to understand the origin or the object of this tumult. At the previous meeting at Berkhamstead, some of the English nobles and prelates had agreed to receive William as king. Camden says, that they yielded, "*victori Normanno multa et magna pollicenti*,"—to the victorious Norman on his promising many and great things. This may be conjecture. But the Norman chiefs would have learnt that the ancient rites of the coronation involved the taking of a regal oath which would forbid any arbitrary exercise of sovereign power. We may thus not unreasonably conceive that, at a preconcerted signal, when the form of the people's acclamation had been gone through, the more solemn form of swearing to govern justly as the best of the Anglo-Saxon kings had governed, was to be interrupted. Upon the right of conquest, the Norman soldiers rested their hopes of that unreserved plunder of the Saxon people which their leader had promised them; and though he himself professed that he claimed the crown under the will of Edward the Confessor, and was politic enough to use, in the beginning of his reign, that moderation which belonged to a legal title, the hordes of needy adventurers, who had truly placed the crown upon his head, would have been much more satisfied that he should reign under the law of the strongest. The king, as the events of the two succeeding years will show, was wiser than his followers. The victory of Hastings was not the conquest of the realm. He had a difficult policy to carry through. He had to propitiate the rapacity of his own people; and he had to avert the hatred of those whom he claimed to rule over. The estates of the crown were his; he had confiscated the possessions of the family of Harold. But the domains of those who were strong, such as the great earls of the north, were yet to be held by them in security. He treated Edgar Atheling with kindness; he welcomed some of

\* Ordericus Vitalis.

the chieftains to his court. He exhorted his adherents to moderation. He so regulated the collection of his revenue that the burthen should be equally distributed. He prohibited all riotous assemblies. He provided for the safe passage of traders, and the transport of merchandise by sea and land. But, with all these wise proceedings, the king could not, from the very nature of his position, resist the employment of a stronger arm of government than that of conciliation. He built a fortress to overawe "the fierce and numerous population" of London. He gave the custody of other strongholds to his Norman leaders. In the castle of Winchester, which he erected, he placed William Fitz-Osborn, as lieutenant of the south. His half-brother Odo, bishop of Bayeux, was established at Dover, as governor of Kent. Where the country was considered settled, there the rule was entrusted to Norman chiefs. But scarcely a fourth of England had as yet been offended by these foreign intrusions; and no part had endured any violent change in its tenure of property, or in the ancient laws. The king was now called "Conquestor," or "Conquereur;" but not in our modern sense of "Conqueror." That term involved no idea of the forcible subjection of a people. It signified an "acquirer;" one who had sought and obtained a right. While the king was present to control his followers, there was quiet, a sullen and enforced repose. The leaders of the people, to some extent, believed in his right intentions. One of that class of country-gentlemen, who, in the middle of the seventeenth century, were well read in the legal antiquities of their nation, says, "It is not imaginable his victory could have made him so absolute as within three months to receive the whole kingdom in peace, had he not joined a fitting moderation with it." \* In this moderation the people confided for the security of their homes, and the preservation of their institutions.

It is the holy season when the Church, by fasting and humiliation, is preparing for the great festival of Easter. King William has gone to Pevensey, to take ship for his own Normandy. The stipendiary soldiers who had assisted him in his great exploit are here dismissed to their homes, with ample rewards. A train of English and Norman nobles are with him. Edwin and Morcar; Stigand, the archbishop; Edgar; Waltheof; the earls of Northampton and Huntingdon; Ethelnoth, the lord of Canterbury,—these English have come to swell the pomp with which the victor is

\* "Considerations on the Government of England," by Sir Roger Twysden. Printed for the Camden Society.

hailed in his progress. Are they unwilling hostages, or pliant servants of their new master? The duke parades the riches of the kingdom which he has won; and the English chiefs are admired for their graceful persons, and their flowing hair. It is Lent; but the obsequious bishops and abbots receive their sovereign with an anticipation of the festivities of Easter. The festival is kept at Fécamp with unusual magnificence. William's queen, Matilda, is the partaker of these splendours. After the gaieties of the court, William employs himself in his peaceful duties. He attends the consecration of churches. He issues ordinances for the public good. The spring, the summer, the autumn are passed, and he is still in Normandy. Modern historians have indulged in speculations why the Conqueror should have risked so long an absence from England. Hume supposes that he was guided by a policy as atrocious as it was dangerous—that, during his absence, his rapacious captains might harass the English into insurrection; and that he might then return, and seize upon the possessions which he had spared under the semblance of a legal administration. There is a much readier solution of the difficulty. In every circumstance that could contribute to his personal gratification, Normandy was to William, as it was to several of his successors, of far more importance than England. It was the country of his birth, and of his education. Its abbeys were more rich, its palaces more sumptuous, its cities more full of stately buildings, than those of England. He was familiar with its language and its laws. The feudal system, which made him the lord of all the Norman territory, was far more agreeable to his views than the Saxon institutions which admitted of free tenures. There was a wide field for his ambition in the extension of his Norman dominions; and the wealth which could be extracted out of the industry of England would furnish new means for the prosecution of that ambition. The possession of England as a province of Normandy must never be relinquished; but to place England above Normandy, by making it the chief seat of the Norman-Anglo government, would be no wise or pleasant policy. The rich lands of the Thames and the Severn would properly be the fiefs of the Norman knights; but their homes should be on the Seine and on the Orne.

During the long absence of the Conqueror from England, his chieftains commenced a system of oppression which might have exterminated a people less bold and enduring than the Anglo-Saxon race. Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, and William Fitz-Osborn,

“the king's lieutenants, gave no heed to the reasonable complaints of English subjects, and disdained to weigh them in the balance of equity.”\* The men-at-arms outrageously robbed the people. The women were exposed to their gross licentiousness. There was no punishment but for those who complained of their wrongs. Such is the testimony of the chronicler we have just quoted; who wrote very soon after these times; and, though born in England, spent the greater part of his life in a Norman monastery. No writer who lived near those days is more honest than this monk of St. Evrault. He was devoted to the glory of Normandy, but he had the feelings of an Englishman; and he expressed them with a frankness which strongly contrasts with the sycophancy with which other Norman chroniclers describe the actions of their powerful men. The tyranny of the invaders drove many of the best and bravest into exile. Then the Anglo-Saxon of Kent and East Anglia became the Varangian of Constantinople. Ordericus has briefly told the story of “the flower of the English youth,” who valiantly served in the armies of Alexius, the Greek emperor. Gibbon relates how “a band of adventurous youths resolved to desert a land of slavery; the sea was open to their escape; and, in their long pilgrimage, they visited every coast that afforded any hope of liberty and revenge.”† There was a band of Scandinavians in the service of the Greek emperors, nearly half a century earlier; and the knowledge of this fact perhaps determined the course of the Saxon exiles. In the decline of his great powers, Walter Scott constructed a romance on this period of Byzantine history. But, unequal as his narrative is, he has drawn no more perfect picture than that of the “tall stranger at the Golden Gate,” with his piercing blue eyes, his fair hair, his composed countenance, and his ponderous battle-axe.‡ The position of Alexius, at the period of the Norman oppression in England, was favourable to this emigration. He was attacked by the Normans under Guiscard; and the Saxon was too happy to prove against the Norman that the battle of Hastings had not been lost through any want of the ancient courage.

Those who thus formed the body-guard of Alexius, and whose posterity are held to have spoken their native English as late as the fifteenth century, § abandoned their country, hopelessly and for

\* Ordericus Vitalis. The only English translation of this interesting “Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy,” is that recently completed by Mr. Forester.

† “Decline and Fall,” vol. vii. p. 123, Smith's edit.

‡ “Count Robert of Paris.”

§ Gibbon, note 48 to chap. lv.

ever. But others sought in foreign aid for their country's deliverance. They invited Sweyn, king of Denmark, to repossess the land in which Canute had been king. They invited Count Eustace, once so obnoxious to the Saxon, to seize upon Dover. He came; but his expedition was unsuccessful. In the west the people depended on themselves. Edric, commonly known as "The Forester"—Edric of the woods—refused obedience to Fitz-Osborn, as Earl of Hereford; and with the aid of the British, held the district against him. The two sons of Harold sailed from Ireland, and ascending the Avon, ravaged the country near Bristol. But the English, though ready to resist the Norman oppression, would not submit to the greater evil of those who, pretending to be deliverers, acted as pirates and marauders. William was alarmed by the news of all this disaffection and disquiet. He hastily left the administration of Normandy to his queen and his son Robert, and sailed from Dieppe for Winchelsea, on the night of the 6th December. He kept his Christmas at London; and assembled around him the English bishops and nobles. "He received each with open arms, gave them the kiss of welcome, and was affable to all."\* The archives of London contain a charter, written in Anglo-Saxon, which the city historians say was granted on that occasion: "William the king friendly salutes William the bishop, and Godfrey the portreeve, and all the burgesses within London, both French and English. And I declare that I grant you to be all law-worthy, as you were in the days of King Edward; and I grant that every child shall be his father's heir, after his father's days, and I will not suffer any person to do you wrong. God keep you."† The Londoners were satisfied; and the king departed to carry his arms to the west and to the north.

The year which elapsed from the coronation of William had witnessed no extension of his sovereignty. In the four years which succeeded his return from Normandy, the subjection of the English people was completed. As his power strengthened so did his severity. From 1068 to 1072, the history of the king is the history of the country; and in the development of his character we trace how he went gradually on from mildness to ferocity; from a show of justice to the most lawless exercise of power; from the ordinary cruelty of a despot to an avidity for blood and devastation, which few tyrants have been able to equal. The course of this man was regulated by the same strong will, whether he moved in gentleness

\* Ordericus Vitalis. † Maitland, "History of London," vol. i. p. 57, ed. 1756.

or in terror. He had none of the capricious impulses of ordinary tyrants; and few of the petty jealousies. If a rival were weak, he fed him and flattered him. If a rival were strong, he imprisoned him or murdered him. If a city or a district gracefully yielded after a brief resistance, he asked no forfeiture of life or liberty in its defenders. If resistance were obstinate and universal, there was no punishment short of the extermination of the people, root and branch. One great end he never lost sight of, whether he worked by clemency or by terror—the plunder of the land. "He had fallen into avarice, and greediness he loved withal."\* He plundered by direct confiscation and exaction. He plundered through his subordinate plunderers. It is a fearful and disgusting history. It would be humiliating to feel that the people from whom we are sprung did not turn and rend "this very stark man and very savage"—this man "stark beyond all bounds to those who with-said his will,"—did we not know that no oppression could ultimately subdue this long-suffering race; and that the instruments of their partial subjection were, in little more than a century, united with them in building up a system of government which should, at every new storm of tyranny, become stronger and more defiant.

In studying the original narratives of the four eventful years in which William completed the subjugation of the Saxon race, we cannot withhold our wonder at the surpassing energy of this remarkable man. He is in his forty-second year; capable of enduring the most severe fatigue; utterly regardless of unfavourable seasons; marching with wonderful rapidity from the south to the north, from the west to the east; leaving the high roads, to lead his men, by shorter paths, over barren mountains, and through dangerous fords; always fearless and self-confiding. At the Christmas of 1067 he is feasting in London. In those days the climate of England,—then covered with thick forests and dreary marshes, and with rivers overflowing their banks,—was far colder in the winter and spring, than in the cultivated England of our time. Yet William waited not for sunny days to march into districts where his Normans had yet established no dominion. In January his army is before Exeter—the walled city which had been growing into great importance since the time of Athelstan. The burghers had fortified it with towers and entrenchments; and had gathered forces from other places of Devon and Cornwall, to oppose the foreign king. William had sent messengers to demand their allegiance;

\* Saxon Chronicle.

and they replied,—“We will neither swear allegiance to the king, nor admit him within our walls; but will pay him tax, such as we have been wont to pay;” and William replied, “It does not suit me to have subjects on such conditions.” The men of Exeter were bold, and they fought stoutly for eighteen days. But they finally surrendered. William displayed exemplary moderation. He saved the city from pillage, and he made no immediate confiscations. But he planted a garrison within the walls; and the castle of Rougemont was built out of the ruins of forty-eight houses which had been destroyed in the siege. The king marched into Cornwall, where he met no resistance. Easter fell that year on the 23rd of March, and he celebrated the festival at Winchester. At Whitsuntide, his queen Matilda, who had arrived from Normandy, was crowned in that city. But in that royal seat of the Saxon race, rich in accumulated treasures, and filled with an industrious population, William did not long tarry. Edwin of Northumbria had, with his brother Morcar, given his adhesion to the Norman; and he was tempted, as Harold was tempted, by the charms of a daughter of the great duke. William, in the early days of his new and doubtful sovereignty, had promised this lady to the powerful earl. But when he became more secure, William “refused to give him the princess who was the object of his desire, and for whom he had long waited.”\* The brothers, indignant at the promise-breaker, summoned the English and Welch to their standard; and sent their messengers in every quarter to rouse the people to rebellion. The provinces beyond the Humber were the first to rise. But the prompt vigour of the king put down the insurrection before it became general. Edwin and Morcar submitted; and William made a show of favour and forgiveness. He was scarcely strong enough to punish. But during this expedition, he planted a line of fortresses, to overawe the people in the settled districts, and to arrest the advance of those who were not yet under the yoke. In this year Edgar Atheling fled, with his mother and sisters, to Scotland, and they were received with kindness by Malcolm, the king.

The submission of Edwin and Morcar had not arrested the disaffection of the north. In 1069, wild bands of Saxons were living in tents, having abandoned the towns which were watched and controlled by the Norman garrisons. One of the chiefs of William, Robert de Comines, had received the county of Durham, as his earldom. He entered Durham at the head of five hundred men,

\* Ordericus Vitalis.

took possession of the bishop's palace, and commenced the usual course of spoliation. In the stillness of night, the English gathered together in great numbers; and before day-break burst into the city, set fire to the palace where the intrusive earl and his followers were sleeping after late revelry, and massacred all the Norman soldiers except two. York then rose upon its foreign garrison. These events took place in the beginning of the year. Again the king came in person against the insurgents, and routed them with unsparing slaughter. The queen Matilda, who, at Winchester, had given birth to a prince, afterwards Henry I., now returned to Normandy. It was a time of fearful uncertainty. In June, the sons of Harold again came in force, and landed near Plymouth. They were repulsed. But a more formidable enemy was at hand. For two years, Sweyn, the king of Denmark, had been preparing for an invasion. His son Canute came, with a mighty fleet, in June. These forces were repulsed on the south and eastern coasts; but in August the invaders sailed for the Humber. They were here joined by a fleet under Edgar Atheling, and some English earls. As this army advanced towards York, the Normans in garrison set fire to the houses, and the city was burning for three days. The Normans made a sally upon the Danes and English, who had invested the city, and were utterly defeated with immense loss. William was hunting in the Forest of Dean, when the news of this defeat arrived. He swore, with one of his terrible oaths, that not a Northumbrian should escape his revenge. He had collected about him a new body of auxiliary troops, and he marched to the north with an overwhelming force. But he trusted not to force alone. His agents were busy amongst the Danish chiefs; and their powerful army retired to their ships. The English, who had joined the Danes at the Humber, fell back to the Tyne. York was left to be defended by Earl Waltheof alone. The insurrectionary spirit had spread upon the news of the Danish landing, and William had to fight his way through a hostile population in the midland counties. At length he reached Pontefract. The winter was come with rain and snow. The river Aire had become a torrent, and was impassable by boats. Three weeks was the fiery king detained; till at length a ford was found and the army crossed. Their march was through the wild hills and the pathless forests of a district now rich with modes of industry then undreamt of,—by paths so narrow that two soldiers could not walk abreast. He entered York, which he found abandoned. But there he sat down, to spend the festival

of Christmas in the organisation of a plan of vengeance that would have better fitted one who had never had the name of the great teacher of mercy on his lips. He dispersed his commanders in separate divisions over a surface of a hundred miles, with orders to destroy every living man, and every article that could minister to the sustenance of life. Houses were to be burnt; the implements of husbandry were to be broken up; the whole district from the Humber to the Tees, from the Wear to the Tyne, was to be made a desert. And it was made a desert. Throughout this region, when, fourteen years after, the survey recorded in Domesday-book was completed, the lands of Edwin and Morcar were entered as *wasta*—laid waste. Many others belonging to the sees of York and Durham, and to Waltheof, Gospetric, and Siward, the Saxon lords, had the terrible word *wasta* written against them. Malmesbury, writing half a century afterwards, says, "Thus, the resources of a province, once flourishing, were cut off, by fire, slaughter, and devastation. The ground for more than sixty miles, totally uncultivated and unproductive, remains bare to the present day." Ordericus winds up the lamentable story with these words:—"There followed, consequently, so great a scarcity in England in the ensuing years, and severe famine involved the innocent and unarmed population in so much misery, that, in a Christian nation, more than a hundred thousand souls, of both sexes and all ages, perished of want. On many occasions, in the course of the present history, I have been free to extol William according to his merits, but I dare not commend him for an act which levelled both the bad and the good together in one common ruin, by the infliction of a consuming famine. For when I see that innocent children, youths in the prime of their age, and gray-headed old men, perished from hunger, I am more disposed to pity the sorrows and sufferings of the wretched people, than to undertake the hopeless task of screening one by lying flatteries who was guilty of such wholesale massacre. I assert, moreover, that such barbarous homicide could not pass unpunished. The Almighty Judge beholds alike the high and low, scrutinising and punishing the acts of both with equal justice, that his eternal laws may be plain to all."

Detestable as these cruelties appear to us, it is satisfactory to find that they were held in detestation by those who lived near the times in which they were perpetrated. It was not a characteristic of these ages, which we are accustomed to think barbarous, that the monastic writers, who possessed all the knowledge of the

period, should speak with indifference of men eating human flesh, under the pressure of famine; of perishing creatures selling themselves into perpetual slavery to obtain food; of corpses rotting in the highways, because none were left to bury them.\* Nor are we quite warranted in believing that the great Norman chieftains, even whilst they received enormous grants of confiscated properties, could look with unmixed satisfaction upon pasture lands without herds, and arable lands without men to till them. Alain of Brittany, the nephew of the Conqueror, received a grant of all the villages and lands in Yorkshire which belonged to the Saxon earl Edwin, and here he built the castle of Richmond, whose keep still crowns the high hill round which the Swale has its winding course; where the streets with Norman names still attest the presence of the conquering race; and in which romantic town the charters of the dukes of Brittany, extending over two centuries, are still preserved as the origin of municipal rights and privileges. But Alain of Brittany, once in possession, would have an interest, which no sternness of his imperious lord could control, in gathering around him peaceful cultivators and confiding handicraftsmen. William de Percy, who found that his eighty manors yielded only a tenth of the rent which they produced in the time of the Confessor, would discover some surer means of obtaining rent than by fire and sword. Gilbert de Lacy, who dispossessed all the ancient free proprietors of a great district round Blackburn and Rochdale, and was the sole lord of many servile tenants, would, nevertheless, limit his exactions by some regard to his own interests. Robert d'Omfreville, who, upon the grant of the forest of Riddesdale, swore upon the sword of William that he would clear the country of wolves, and of all the men who were hostile to the conquest, would discover that if his domain were to be of any value, he must be somewhat more merciful than to confound the unquiet men with the wolves as equal enemies. A little while after the very period in which Ordericus has described the devastation of the north, which he calls "the lasting disgrace" of William, he says, speaking, we may believe, of the more settled districts, "the cultivators of the soil renewed their labours in some sort of security;" and he adds, that the English and Normans had begun to intermarry. It is thus that, in spite of wars and revolutions, of tyrannies and confiscations, the eternal laws of Providence in time assert their predominance over the transient efforts of man. The property of

\* Roger de Hoveden.

England had, in a great degree, changed its masters; but the population of England, wasted as it was, was still there. If the old proprietors were dispossessed, there were still the tenants and the serfs. There were no vast hordes of the Norman peasants crowding over from their own pleasant seats, to thrust out the children of the soil from eating the bread of their laborious poverty. We indeed find mention of the arrival from Gaul of men and their wives, with household accompaniments, such as are recorded in an old ballad:

"William de Coningsby  
Came out of Brittany  
With his wife Tiffany  
And his maide Maupas  
And his dogge Hardigras,"

But we doubt whether Thierry does not exaggerate such instances as Coningsby and his wife Tiffany, and Noel and his wife Cestraria, when he says, "From the time that the conquest began to prosper, not young soldiers and old warlike chiefs alone, but whole families, men, women, and children, emigrated from every remote district of Gaul to seek their fortunes in England." Had there been any extensive colonization of this nature, so that the Norman should have dispossessed the Saxon population, as the Saxon had dispossessed the British, the great body of the English nation, in succeeding generations, would have been Norman. "The whole cloth thereof," to use Fuller's words, would have been Norman, instead of that cloth being "guarded (fringed) here and there with some great ones of foreign extraction." The dominant race were men in armour, who kept their followers for knight-service, but who left to their tenants the inglorious duties of the seed-time and harvest. The church lands were still the undisturbed possessions of the cathedrals and abbeys, though the bishops and abbots might be changed. The ancient churls would still cluster round these tolerant masters and instructors, who, to do them no more than justice, were of higher natures than to be instruments of unprofitable oppression. Trodden down, villified, despised as was the Saxon race, it had lost the unity of a Nation, but there still was a People.

The rough work of conquest is nearly over. The north is devastated. But the submission of the wretched inhabitants of the north provokes the resentment of Malcolm, king of Scotland, and he becomes their enemy. At the head of an army he crosses the Tyne, and completes the work of devastation. He was, no doubt,

fancying that he was asserting the right of Edgar to the crown, and that the pretensions of the Atheling would one day be acknowledged, for he sought Edgar's sister, Margaret, in marriage; and from this alliance came what has been called "The Union of the Races," when Henry I. married Matilda, the daughter of Malcolm and Margaret. From the desolated Yorkshire, William, in the March of 1070, led his army to Chester. Ordericus has given a vivid description of this march: "With unwearied vigour he made his way through roads never before travelled by horses; across lofty mountains and deep valleys, rivers, and rapid streams, and dangerous quagmires in the hollows of the hills. Pursuing their track they were often distressed by torrents of rain, sometimes mingled with hail. At times they were reduced to feed on the flesh of horses which perished in the bogs." Where William marched through a desert, there is now the densest population in the world; and not a river that rushes through these beautiful valleys is without the mill-wheel on its banks; and from the hollows of the hills rises a cloud which tells of industry producing national wealth, compared with which all the plunder of Saxon England would be as dust in the balance. At length the king, contending with a mutinous soldiery, who were suffering cold and hunger, and the attacks of hostile marauders, reached Chester and put down the insurrectionary spirit in Mercia.

At Easter the king is again at Winchester. The Church has had his care. The Saxon prelates he holds unworthy; and the Pope has sent him three legates to assist in the work of purification. Stigand, the archbishop, who had supported Godwin and crowned Harold, was deposed. Other prelates were set aside "for criminal life, and ignorance of pastoral duties." Norman monks took possession of the monasteries, and expelled the Saxon clergy. The Norman lords had their ecclesiastical friends and favourites. Ivo Taillebois ruined the Saxon abbot Ulfketul by his accusations; and the abbey of Croylund was given to Ingulphus who had been secretary to the Conqueror. He was an Englishman; and we are therefore not surprised to find that, although bred in Normandy, he behaved with a brotherly kindness to his ejected predecessor. "Seeing that this venerable person was worthy of all favour and filial love, and was distinguished for his most holy piety, I had him placed in his ancient stall; nor did I, so long as he lived, consider myself as being fully the husband, but always as a sort of bride-man or steward of the mon-

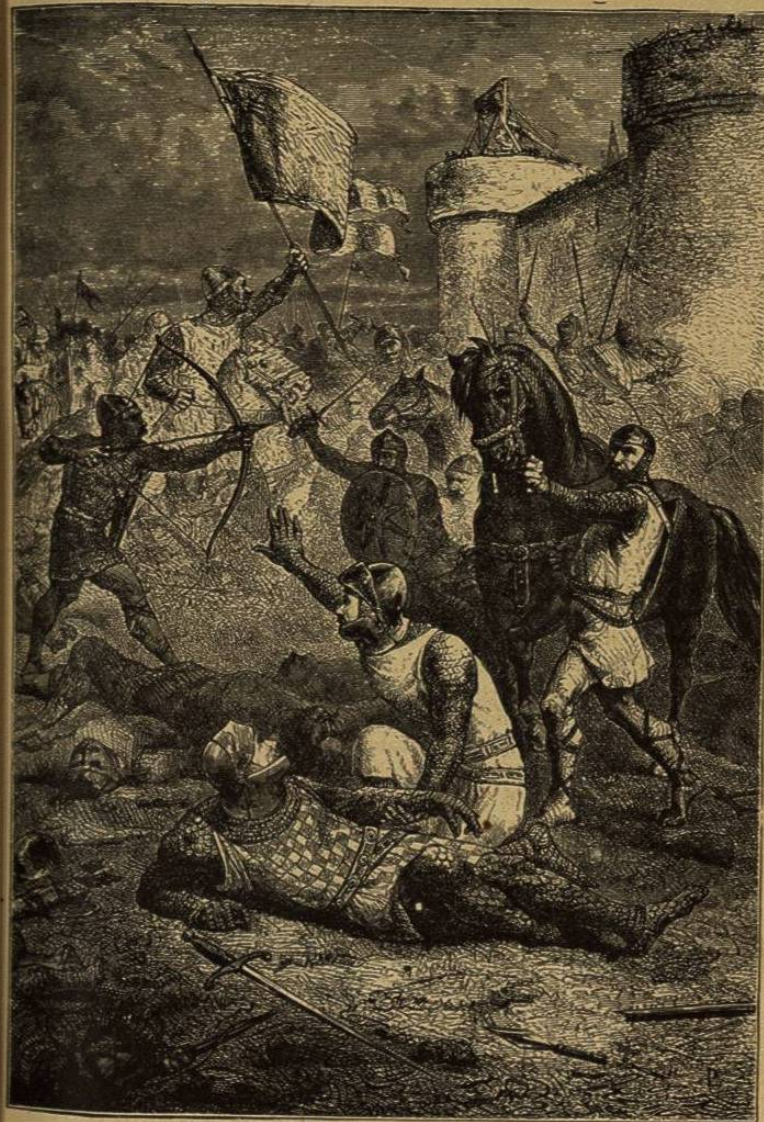
astery." The Norman bishops and abbots, who gradually dispossessed the Saxon, were for the most part of loftier and more cultivated minds than the men of war who elevated them to wealth and power. Many who came into vast possessions, employed them in raising magnificent buildings, upon which we still gaze with admiration. They stood between the conqueror and the people, to mitigate their oppression, and to save the property of the Church, which was essentially public property—the inheritance of the lowliest—from the grasp of private rapacity. Ambitious and luxurious as some might be, others were humble and self-denying. One of the most learned of the Norman monks, Guitmond, was offered an English bishopric by William; he replied, "I look upon England as altogether one vast heap of booty, and I am as afraid to touch it and its treasures, as if it were a burning fire."\* They were not all as Ordericus has described "some churchmen, who, to appearance, were religious, but constantly followed the court, and became abject flatterers;" and whom, in their elevation, he compares to wolves devouring their flocks. These had a natural fellowship with the adventurers of the laity, whom the honest Norman depicts as "ignorant upstarts, driven almost mad by their sudden elevation." Such a bloated tyrant was Hugh d'Avranches, constable of Chester, who "set no bounds either to his generosity or his rapacity"—"who wasted his own domains"—and "indulged in gluttony to such a degree as to become so fat that he could scarcely walk."† Another of this class was Ivo Taillebois, whom the people of the fens "supplicated as their lord on their bended knees;" and who, at his good pleasure, "tortured and harrassed, worried and annoyed, incarcerated and tormented them."‡ This mirror of chivalry "would-follow the various animals of the people of Croyland in the marshes with his dogs; drive them to a great distance, drown them in the lakes, mutilate some in the tail, others in the ear; while often by breaking the feet and the legs of the beasts of burden, he would render them utterly useless."§ Still it would be unjust to believe that such specimens of the "Norman gentleman" constituted the majority of those who had dispossessed the "Saxon barbarian." Ingulphus gives us a very different picture of a Norman, who thought that life had higher duties than to take lance in hand against grumbling churls, and destroy the property of those who had still something to call their own. There was a real agricultural improver in those days, living in the same district where

\* Ordericus Vitalis.

† Ibid.

‡ Ingulphus.

§ Ibid.



"ROBERT THREW HIMSELF ON HIS KNEES BEFORE HIS PROSTRATE FATHER."  
— Vol. i. 230.



Ivo Taillebois amused himself with laming cattle and hunting swine. Richard de Rulos inclosed the waste marshes of Deeping; shut out the overflowings of the Welland by a great embankment; built within the embankment numerous cottages; and made in the meadow land, which had previously been impassable bogs, quite a pleasure-garden of fertile fields.\* The example of this good and sensible Norman changed the character of the great fen district, and the people of Multon, and Weston, and Spalding, "in imitation of those at Deeping, by a common enactment agreed to among them, divided among themselves, man by man, their marshes."† Such were the healing influences that very speedily mitigated the evils of the Conquest. Such is the course of most political revolutions. If the spirit of a people be not wholly trodden out—if their arts and their industry have not wholly perished—if knowledge and religion still throw a gleam over the darkness—if the memory of the past inspire hope and endurance—tyranny is only a passing storm, which purifies whilst it destroys.

Ingulphus was installed as abbot of Croyland in 1076. Four years before, that region of waste waters encompassing patches of fertility, had been the scene of the last struggle of Saxon nationality. Hereward, as the good monk wrote some twenty years later, had left a fame for undaunted prowess, "as we still hear sung in our streets." He had been exiled under the displeasure of his father, Leofric, the lord of Born, and had fought in foreign lands. After the conquest, his patrimonial possessions had been seized on the death of his father, and his mother was turned out to starve by a foreign minion of the Conqueror. He came to England, collected a band of the friends of his youth, and drove the intruders from his inheritance. Ingulphus presents to us a singular picture of the times, in describing how Hereward, not being a belted knight, repaired to his uncle, the exiled abbot of Peterborough, and there, after solitary watchfulness and prayer in the church from sunset to sunrise, made offering of a sword which the abbot blessed; and laying that sword upon his neck, devoted him to the duties of knighthood. This, the writer says, was the custom of the English; but that the Normans despised this mode of consecration, and held the soldier thus hallowed by the Church to be still a plebeian. According to them, the king, or the lord, must make a knight. But the Saxon knight bore himself as bravely as the noblest of those who had won their spurs in the Norman ranks. He raised the

\* Ingulphus.

† Ibid.

standard of revolt, and drove the foreign abbot and his monks from Peterborough. Ivo Taillebois, the lord of Hoyland, led a great force against Hereward; but he was repulsed again and again. The fame of the Saxon's exploits went through the land, and fugitives gathered from every quarter to his "Camp of Refuge." William had become jealous of Earls Edwin and Morcar, and had commenced a persecution which threatened their personal safety. Morcar fled to the camp of Hereward. Edwin endeavoured to escape to Scotland; but his flight was interrupted through treachery, and he was slain, leading a few followers, as he attempted to ford a swollen river. The head of the young Earl was carried to William, who appeared indignant at the death of one who was mourned, not only by English, but by Normans; and he banished those by whom Edwin had been betrayed. With Morcar came to Hereward many an ejected chief, and many a deprived churchman. The isle of Ely, which was the chief seat of Hereward's force, was a surer protection, for a time, against the Norman cavalry than the defiles of Yorkshire, through which William had led his army in the pursuit of the rebellious Northumbrians. But the king, who had at first despised the insurgents of the fens, saw that this was no trifling outbreak which an Ivo Taillebois could put down. William possessed the highest talent for war—that talent which regulates the movements of an army by the most comprehensive view of the physical character of a district, and knows when to fight, and when to employ more effectual means than fighting. The king collected a large naval force in the Wash, and blockaded every arm of the sea that was an inlet to the fens. Wherever a road led into that district, he closed all access by his troops. The camp of Hereward was entrenched in the midst of waters, in some places stagnant and thick with reeds, in others rapid; but in all places dangerous for the passage of horse or foot. He commenced the building of a great causeway; but at every pile they drove, Hereward came suddenly upon the labourers, and the work made no progress. The Normans said that Hereward was in league with the powers of darkness; and William, to satisfy his followers, called a sorceress to his own aid, and she ascended a wooden tower to be the guardian of the causeway. The Saxons opposed no rival conjurations, but burnt the tower with its witch. Three months did William blockade the Camp of Refuge. At last he found a way more practicable than his bridges. The monks of Ely began to feel the approaching scarcity of the wheaten bread and fresh meat to which

they had been accustomed; and they made terms with the king for the discovery of a passage from the fens to the camp. The Norman troops entered the Isle, occupied the monastery, and finally stormed the entrenchments. Resistance was at an end. Morcar became a captive, and the king kept him imprisoned for years. Hereward threw himself into the marshes, and escaping to his own estate, long kept up a partizan warfare. He at length submitted, when a longer struggle was hopeless. The metrical Chronicle of Geoffrey Gaymer recites how he fell fighting, without helm or hauberk, against fifteen Normans. Ingulphus, a more trustworthy historian, says, that having "made peace with the king, and obtained his patrimonial estate, he ended his days in tranquillity, and was very recently, by his especial choice, buried in our monastery by the side of his wife."