

BOULOGNE TO AMIENS

seventeenth century, date back to 1231, and were built on the foundations of the ancient town of Bononia, generally identified with the Roman Gesoriacum, though not on very reliable authority. From its position on the high grassy cliffs of Picardy, guarding the little river Liane and looking out over the waves to the white line of the English shore, Boulogne in other days had an importance quite distinct from that which we now assign to it. The Viking sailing down the English Channel saw it as one of the outposts of a new and fair land open to the conquest of fire and sword, and in his primitive fashion of asserting the mastery, destroyed the city on the cliff. Later on, these ravages were made good under the rule of Rolf, the "Ganger," by this time master of Neustria; the city was restored and became the head of a countship, which dignity it retained until late in the fifteenth century, when Louis XI. cast envious eyes upon it, and by a stroke of craft approaching near to genius, united it to the crown of France, declaring the Blessed Virgin to be patroness of the town and himself her humble vassal, holding it under her suzerainty, which no man in France dared to deny. Henry VIII. laid siege to Boulogne in 1544 and gained it for England; but the day of English prestige in France had gone by, and her right of possession was of very