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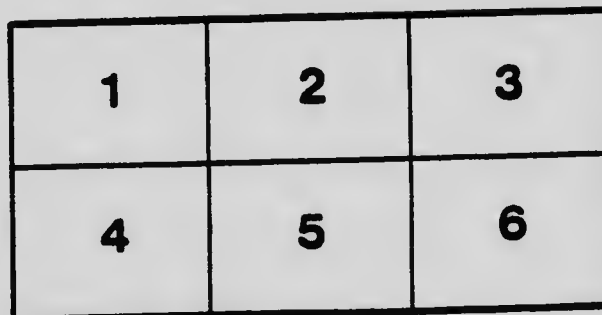
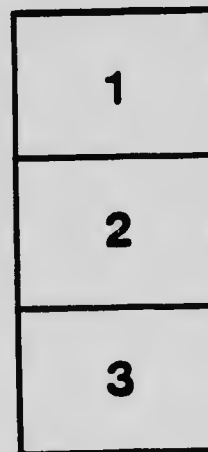
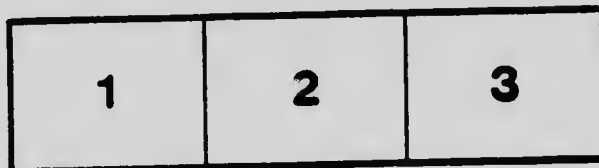
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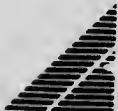
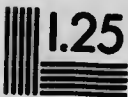
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A SCENE OF REVELRY IN A NORMAN HALL



# FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

(1066-1215)

BY

ESTELLE ROSS

AUTHOR OF "THE BIRTH OF ENGLAND" ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY

EVELYN PAUL



TORONTO

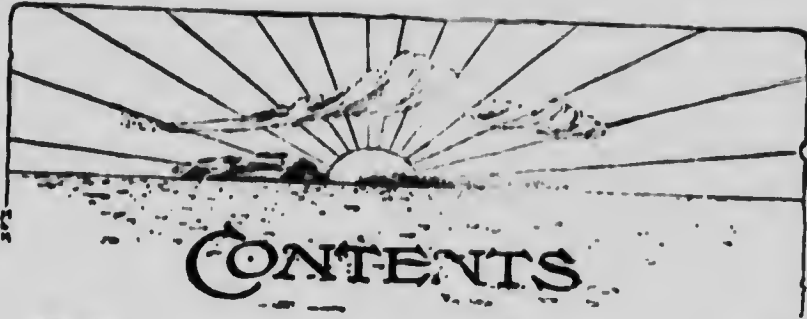
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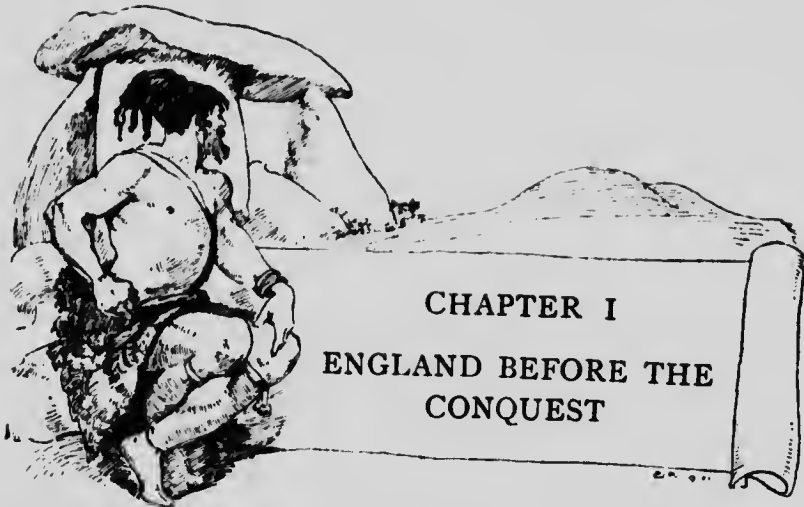
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CHAPTER I  
ENGLAND BEFORE THE  
CONQUEST

**B**EFORE telling the story of England<sup>1</sup> from the Conquest to the Charter, I would like to sketch in a few words the history of Britain from the earliest time till Harold fell on the heights of Senlac.

Nearly two thousand years ago there lived in Britain a wild and barbarous people, who when they were not hunting animals for food were fighting one another. The dawn of civilisation had not yet broken on this little island, bounded by the triumphant sea, although it was high noon in other parts of Europe. Italy and Greece were then the centres of light and learning, though the glory of Greece was beginning to decline before its rival. The Romans were becoming the most powerful people in the world, conquering nation after nation. Fifty-five years before the birth of Christ, in the time of Julius Caesar, they turned their attention to Britain. They had heard from merchants and traders that this was the tin-producing land. Caesar

<sup>1</sup> See "The Dawn of British History" and "The Birth of England."

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

himself organised an expedition to these shores, and landed here, but withdrew his legions before he had time to make any real conquest. The Britons, with their long, streaming hair, their bodies stained blue with woad, seemed to the cultured Romans contemptible, and the land itself a dreary, uncultivated waste.

It was not till a hundred years later, A.D. 43, that the attention of Rome was again turned

to this country. This time the Romans came determined to make it a Roman province. The Britons fought hard for their independence. Great leaders rose up from time to time, determined to resist the Roman rule. Chief among them was Caractacus, who in the end was taken as a prisoner to Rome, where he exclaimed in wonder at that city on the seven hills, with its palaces, its temples and its magnificent buildings: "How is it that you who live in mansions should covet our hovels?"



Boadicea

Another name that stands out prominently on the roll of British heroes who resisted the might of Rome is that of Boadicea, the warrior queen who led her people to battle and

fiercely urged them on till at last, when all was lost, she took poison to escape the indignity of capture by the Romans.

Then the Romans ruled in Britain for over three hundred years, and did much to make it a more habitable land. They hewed down forests, drained marshes, made roads; they built walled cities, and so solid was

## ENGLAND BEFORE THE CONQUEST

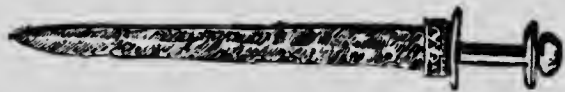
their work that much of it remains to this day. In A.D. 410 the Roman legions were recalled from Britain to defend their own country. The people had become accustomed to Roman rule; they had not been allowed to bear arms, and they had forgotten how to defend themselves. They were soon quarrelling one with another, when they should have united in all their strength to oppose fresh foes who now threatened to wrest their island from them.



Saxon Drinking Horn

At that time there were living in the north of Germany two tribes, the Angles and the Saxons, a fierce people who had never bowed to Roman rule. They were sea-rovers, and in their pirate boats pushed forth to seek fresh lands to conquer.

In A.D. 450 Hengest and Horsa, leaders of these Viking tribes, invited by the Southern Britons to help them to fight the Picts and Scots from the North,



Saxon Sword

landed at Ebbsfleet. That day was the beginning of English history. The men who came to "aid" the Britons began to rob them of their own land, and they were quickly followed by a host of their kinsmen, who seized the country to the East and South. Before the Saxon conquest was completed the Britons had to go through terrible sufferings. They were either ruthlessly massacred, for no quarter was given after a battle, or were driven to the wild mountainous regions of Wales

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

and Cornwall, where some of their descendants live to this day.

The country was conquered gradually by the two tribes named above and a kindred tribe, the Jutes. When they had firmly riveted their power upon the country, the land was divided into seven kingdoms, and these kingdoms were continually warring with one another, constantly changing their boundaries. Until the gradual rise of Wessex, and its position as the leading kingdom under Alfred, this little country was so disunited that it was a prey to every invader. It suffered especially from the incursions of the Danes, who killed and destroyed wherever they went. It was necessary that it should be welded into one kingdom under one king. Alfred played his part nobly in resisting the Danes, but after his death they gradually gained the upper hand, and England became a part of the great kingdom of Norway and Denmark under



Viking Warrior



## ENGLAND BEFORE THE CONQUEST

Cnut. After Cnut's death and the brief reigns of his two sons, Edward the Confessor, last of the line of Alfred, sat on the English throne. At his death Harold, the son of Earl Godwin, was elected king, but the crown was also claimed by William, Duke of Normandy, in virtue of a promise made by Edward the Confessor and



Edward the Confessor

of an oath he had extracted from Harold. He prepared a great army and came over to enforce his claim, and one of the decisive battles of the world was fought at Senlac, near Hastings, when Harold, the last of the English, as he has been called, was slain.

England at one blow was a defeated country mourning for her dead. But for all the storm and stress she had gone through in the past thousand years she reaped a rich reward. As the Britons in the days of the Roman occupation had turned from their

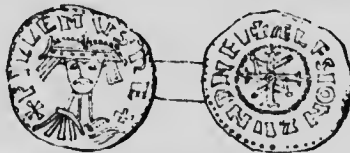
## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

old Druidical religion to Christianity, so the Angles and Saxons, worshippers of Odin and Thor, gradually turned to Christ. Thus the fierce northern spirit was

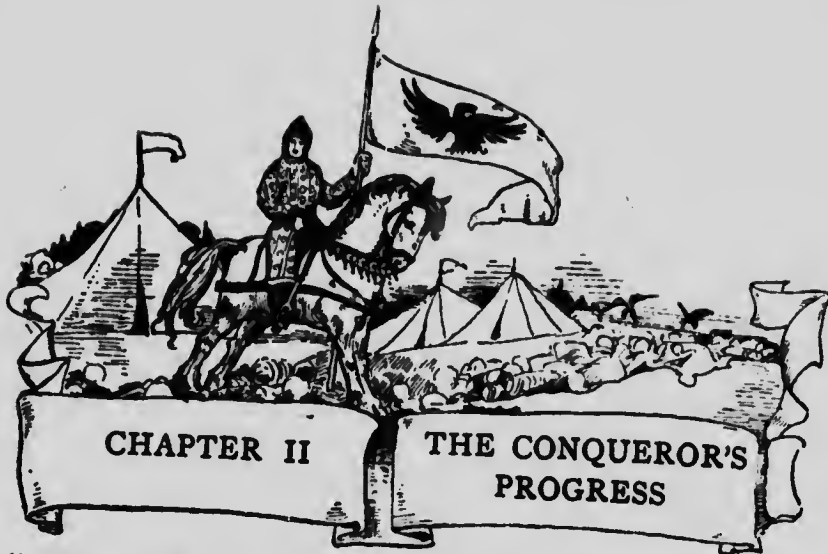


Harold

blended with the spirit of peace. The people dimly realised that life might be lived on earth without endless warfare, and civilisation in its truer sense began.



Silver Penny of William I. or II.



**H**AROLD INFELIX," legend tells us, was inscribed on the tomb of the last of the English kings. "England Infelix" might be written across the page of history that tells the story of our race after Senlac had been lost and won.

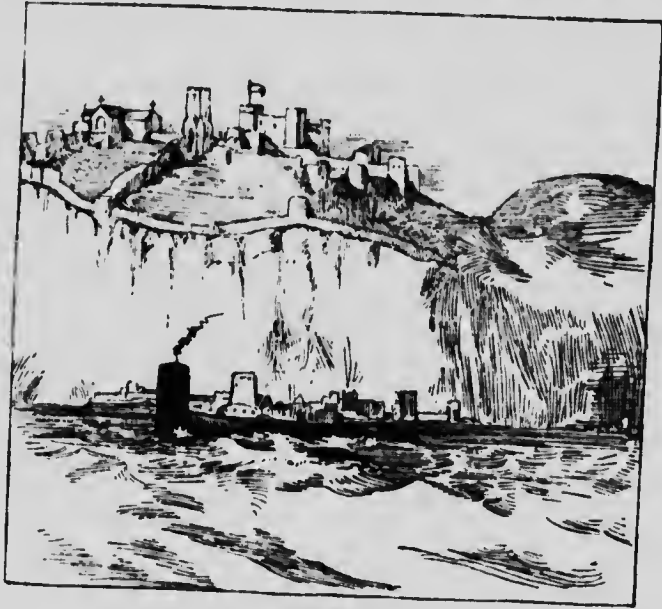
This encounter marked only the beginning of the Norman conquest of England, and had any great leader arisen among the English people it might never have been accomplished.

We left<sup>1</sup> the Duke of Normandy after the battle (1066) pitching his tent on the spot where Harold had fallen, surrounded by the wounded and the dead, but rejoicing in the victory. He was too able a man not to realise, even in his hour of triumph, that he was only at the commencement of the struggle. He knew that there was hard work before him, and on the morrow he

<sup>1</sup> See "The Birth of England."

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

made his plans to return to Hastings. He hoped that the news of his victory would have spread far and wide, and that the people, the great English earls especially, would come and submit to him, and acknowledge him as their lord. He waited for several days wondering



Dover

why they tarried, and he waited in vain. No more delay was advisable, and so he marched on to Romney, a fortified town. The sight of the Normans and their leader awed the English soldiers, and they surrendered at once. Cheered by this success, the Normans now marched on to Dover, where Harold had built a castle on the edge of the cliff. It was in an impregnable position, and could not be taken by assault. The Duke realised at once that prompt action was necessary, and he commanded his men to fire the town. The

## THE CONQUEROR'S PROGRESS

defenders of the castle saw that they were in a trap, and to avoid being burnt to death they surrendered. The conquerors were now contemptuous—was this all the fight the English were going to show? "Tomorrow we march to London," commanded their leader.

It was no use wasting time on these small towns that were frightened into submission by the mere sight of the enemy.

The Duke, at the head of his men, his face stern, his voice ringing out in command, seemed to the few people who gazed from the wayside as the army passed by an invincible conqueror. He was a gallant figure on horseback, clad in a shirt of mail; and hardly less gallant seemed his Norman barons and the well-drilled soldiers. They marched along the ancient Watling Street, which even then belonged to past centuries, for it was the Roman road from Dover through London to Chester and the North.

Suddenly their march was barred: a body of Saxons who were lying in ambush started out and confronted them. They were led by no armed warrior, but by two ecclesiastics, Archbishop Stigand and the Abbot of Canterbury. They were not intent on bloodshed, but rather on compromise. They were willing enough to submit on condition that Kent should remain as free after the conquest as it had been before. Impatient of delay, William granted their request, and marched on towards London, where in the interval Edgar Ætheling had been chosen king. He claimed the throne by right of birth, as the grandson of Edmund Ironside, but by no other right could he hope to hold it, for he was a weak and feeble youth. There were two rival claimants:

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Harold's brothers-in-law, Edwin and Morcar, the chiefs of Northumbria and Mercia. The whole of the North of England favoured the election of the latter, while London was prepared to fight for the Ætheling.

William had to cross the Thames to reach London.



Crown of William I.

He expected that the citizens would offer a vigorous resistance, so he did not march straight on to the town, but to Wallingford, in Berkshire, and there he crossed. He wished to be able to prevent any help coming to London from the North, so he made his camp at Berkhamstead. From this base,

bands of Norman troops continually harried the district round London, and soon the Londoners were in a desperate plight, for William managed to cut off from the city the supplies of food that came into it day by day and there was dread of famine.



Sceptre of William I.

The Duke of Normandy's cause was being fought for him, for in the minds of the more thoughtful citizens the fear that the Ætheling could never hold his own against this man of destiny, who had so far carried all before him, daily became more of a certainty. Archbishop Stigand, who had been the chief of Edgar's supporters, realised that his cause was losing ground. A meeting of the bishops and the important townsmen was called, and Edgar Ætheling was

## THE CONQUEROR'S PROGRESS

present. The situation was discussed in all its bearings, the plight of the city, the power of the Duke. Trade was at a standstill, something must be done at once. All eyes turned to the fair-haired youth. Would the miracle happen, and he, the descendant of the great Alfred, be inspired to take command and to fight his own battles? In his pale face burned none of the fire



Edgar doing Homage to William

of enthusiasm that would lose all rather than surrender. Debate went on around him, and he took but a slight part in it. Then the resolution was put that they should submit to William and, without any outburst of loyalty for the weak representative of the royal house, it was carried.

A melancholy procession marched out of the city, headed by the young King bearing the keys, with Archbishop Stigand by his side. They rode to Berkhamstead, and there Edgar did homage to the Conqueror.



William of Normandy entering London



## THE CONQUEROR'S PROGRESS

Having succeeded thus far William thought it wise to make immediate preparations for holding London, and he ordered the erection of a fortress—a fortress which, altered and added to many a time in the course of the centuries, stands even yet, and is known as the Tower of London. Standing in the little Norman Chapel of St John in the Tower, and gazing at the massive stone pillars, we seem to see in them emblems of the permanence and power of the Conquest.

William was aware that the Ætheling's surrender, essential as it was, did not ensure his hold upon the English throne. He fully understood the importance of holding the country by force of law as well as by the power of the sword; he knew that many people would accept him when he was anointed king who would think it wrong to submit to him as a successful adventurer, so he made all preparations for being crowned.

We may see him in imagination on Christmas Eve, 1066, three months after Senlac, as he rides into London. Over his embroidered vest hangs a mantle of fur. On either side of him ride Odo of Bayeux, the fighting bishop, and his friend, William Fitz-Osbern. They are followed by the nobles and by the soldiers, all proud of their leader. The Duke slept the night at the palace of Blackfriars. The next morning he took a boat and was rowed down the Thames as far as London Bridge, whence he walked with his escort to London Stone, where his followers were waiting. From here the stately procession wended its way through the narrow London streets to the great abbey church of Westminster, then lately fresh from the builder's hands. William's wife, Matilda of Flanders, was not there to share his triumph. She had been left as regent in

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Normandy, and had heard of the victory when at Mass in the Priory of Nôtre Dame. Immediately she had fallen on her knees and thanked God, and had ordered



News of William's Victory brought to Matilda

that henceforth the priory should bear the name *Nôtre Dame de Bonnes Nouvelles*.

The crowds of English who lined the streets gave no cheer of welcome, their faces were sullen with distrust. There was none of that deep murmur of applause with which monarchs expect to be greeted on such a day. The lines on the Conqueror's face deepened, but he showed no other sign as he rode proudly forward—he was their master, and he knew they knew it. The bells of the churches were ringing out the glad message "Peace on earth, good will to men," but in the hearts of the people there was no responding echo. William

## THE CONQUEROR'S PROGRESS

had taken all precautions, however, and the streets leading to the abbey were lined with his horsemen. When he entered the abbey with two hundred and sixty of his retinue, he found it half full of people, and decorated, as was the custom. Gilbert of Coutances began the ceremony by asking the Normans in French if they were willing to have the Duke of Normandy as their king. "Ay, ay, ay," rang out clearly from one or two hundred throats. Then Edred, Archbishop of York, asked the English in English if they too consented. Needs must when Satan drives, they said in their hearts, as they cried "Ay, ay." Thus was William elected. The shouts resounded outside the church, where the soldiers were impatiently waiting for the ceremony to be over. Wild, lawless men many of them were, and they longed for a skirmish to quicken their blood.

"What's that?" they cried one to another.

"The Duke's in danger! The English have attacked him. Fire the houses!"

"Charge into the church—rescue for the King of England," was shouted from man to man.

The flames from burning houses leapt to the sky. The English in the church were frightened—was this the act of William the Norman? Was this what they had to expect for having trusted to his promises?

Meanwhile, inside the abbey, William was left alone with Archbishop Edred and a few of the clergy, and the ceremony was hastily concluded. In the simple words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle it is thus recorded: "Then on midwinter's day, Archbishop Edred 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 on his head, that

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

he would so well govern this nation as any king before him best did, if he would be faithful to them."

William was now King of England, though he had con-



English Earl

quered but a small part of it. He left no stone unturned to strengthen his hold on the country. He possessed himself of plenty of means, for he claimed as of right the treasure of Edward the Confessor, and of Harold. His followers, for their part, were not backward in claiming the fulfilment of the promise he had made to them in Normandy—that they should share in the rich spoils of England. The bitterness of defeat was intensified to the English by the cruel confiscation of their land which now took place.

William did not forget his promises; but first he had to reward his patrons at Rome. The blessing of the Pope, and the consecrated banner he had sent, had done their work, and in gratitude the King of England sent to Rome rich treasures, and, as a memorial of the battle, Harold's ill-fated standard, worked in gold and sparkling with gems, displaying the figure of a warrior. The churches that had prayed for the Duke's

## THE CONQUEROR'S PROGRESS

success, and burned tapers to the Virgin in his honour, came in, too, for their share of plunder, and were enriched by beautiful ornaments for the altar, and other costly gifts.

Almost everyone in the victorious Norman army claimed to be rewarded in some way or other. To some were given the lands of the English nobles who had fallen in battle; others acquired English property by wedding rich English widows. William gave these ladies in marriage with no thought of their feelings. As the women of a conquered race, they were compelled to submit. Very bitter it must have been to them, as they mourned their dead, to know that one who could not even speak their own tongue would appeal to William for an English wife, and that the dread missive might any day be brought to them: "A Norman lord desires your hand; the King has commanded that you should wed him, and will admit of no remonstrance."

Among those who were thus eagerly claiming their share in the spoils of victory, one figure stands out in the white light of chivalry. Guilbert, son of Richard, refused to have any part in the plunder, and his name has come down in history with those of other generous souls who will not gain by another's loss.

William, having acquired the land by conquest, could not refuse to reward his followers; moreover, though he now claimed to hold the throne by right of coronation, in reality he still held it by the sword. The generation that knew him had to suffer for the good of those that were to come after, for the Norman conquest, so cruel in its working, was the necessary preliminary to the England that we know to-day.

All things being settled, three months after his

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

coronation he returned to Normandy. He wished to show himself there in his splendour, to recount to Matilda face to face the deeds and daring of the Normans. He felt safe in leaving the country in charge of his two trusted friends, Odo of Bayeux and William Fitz-Osbern. With his native shrewdness he thought it wise to take the claimants to the throne, the Ætheling, and Earls Edwin and Morcar, with him. He was longing to hear the plaudits of his Norman people. Those who had doubted his wisdom in coming over would now hail him as the Conqueror. Greater than his Viking ancestor Rollo, greater than his father Robert, he was now both Duke and King.

He had been crowned at Christmas, he would celebrate Easter at Fécamp. To the monks of Fécamp he owed many fervent prayers that had helped him to victory. Tapers had been burnt night and day before the shrines, and here he would return thanks.

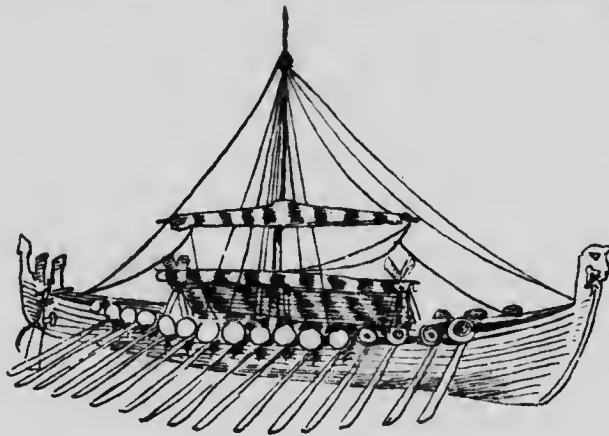
There was to be a great gathering of many of the bishops and abbots and nobles of France. "The arrival of William," says Odericus Vitalis, the historian of the time, "with all his regal pomp filled Normandy with rejoicing."

It was a gorgeous scene: the church brilliantly lit, the crowd of ecclesiastics and nobles in their gay apparel, William the cynosure of all eyes, more resplendent than any of them in his richly embroidered gown. He was attended by English youths with long flowing hair, who seemed beautiful as women to the close-cropped Normans.

When the service of thanksgiving was over there was a feast, and the company sat down to eat and drink from vessels of gold and silver and buffalo horn tipped

## THE CONQUEROR'S PROGRESS

with gold, the spoils of the English. Never had been seen such splendour. In William's career this was "the one crowded hour of glorious life" which is given to few even of the greatest. Little could he then foresee the long and bitter struggle against friend and foe, brother and son, and the dismal end that must have seemed almost welcome even to his bold spirit.





**M**EANTIME, while the master was away, all was not going well on the other side of the Channel. Odo and Fitz-Osbern were not the men to hold the country. They were pitiless to the conquered people and imposed heavy burdens upon them. The unjust exactions naturally caused many risings to take place, and these were put down with brutal severity. The Norman soldiers plundered the houses of the English, who could get no redress.

To the people of the countryside, one of the first signs that their new masters meant to rivet their hold upon England was the arrival of Norman masons and carpenters, accompanied by cart-loads of stone and other building materials. Land was cleared, and day by day folk saw growing up here and there throughout the country a solid Norman fortress, which in its grim strength seemed to typify the iron hand that had them in its grip. Sometimes these strongholds were only



## THE WASTING OF THE NORTH

meant for defence. A mound was first made, and on this was built a round tower, hollow inside, and perhaps of only one storey, with below this a dungeon. In other cases the building was more imposing, rectangular in shape, and intended for people to live in as well as for purposes of warfare.

There was a spirit of rebellion throughout the country. Copsige, a Saxon who had espoused William's cause, had been given the title of Earl of Bernicia, and Oswulf the deposed earl had been obliged to fly. The rule of Copsige was a short one, however. Oswulf's adherents attacked the house where he was staying, and he was compelled to flee to a church close by for sanctuary. But the fierce Northerners, enraged because the Normans had dispossessed their lord for this turn-coat, set fire to the church. Copsige, driven from his hiding-place by the flames, rushed madly to the porch, where Oswulf awaited him and he was slain.

The people of Kent, groaning under the tyranny of their ruler, the merciless Odo, in their sad plight asked Eustace of Boulogne to come and help them to storm the castle of Dover. It was that same Eustace who had caused Godwin's banishment in the time of Edward the Confessor. He gladly accepted the invitation, for he was jealous of William, and moreover he was a man who was always eager for adventure. On a dark night he sailed with a fleet to Dover, and, finding the English ready, the castle was attacked at once. Two days the siege lasted, and then Eustace ordered his followers to return to the ships. The townsmen, who sided with the Normans, charged through the gates of Dover, and Eustace and his men

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

fled pell-mell. Some fell into the sea, some were stabbed, but he managed to escape.

Many of the English, who saw that there would be no freedom in England from the Norman rule, and who could not reconcile themselves to accepting it, emigrated to foreign parts. Some went as far as Constantinople, where they became hired soldiers of the Byzantine emperor. Others returned to the cradle of the English race in North-western Germany.



Norman Noble

News of the widespread unrest reached William in Normandy and he resolved to return at once and celebrate Christmas, the anniversary of his coronation, in London. He came back more vigorous than ever, vowing by the splendour of God, his favourite oath, that he would subdue these English who would not realise that they were a conquered people.

He would have them know that they were rebelling, not against the Norman Duke, but against their anointed King. He was anxious too that Matilda should be crowned Queen of England.

On his arrival he issued this proclamation to the people of London, "Be it known to all what is my will.

## THE WASTING OF THE NORTH

It is that you all should enjoy your national laws as in the days of King Edward; that every son should inherit from his father, and that no man should do you any wrong."

William during the whole of his reign was oftener in camp than in court, and no sooner was he again in England than he marched on Exeter, the centre of a rising in the West which was causing anxiety. The leading spirit of revolt there was Githa, Godwin's wife, who in her old age had known the bitterness of losing three sons on one day, Harold, Leofwin and Gurth, all of whom fell at Senlac. Githa was a dauntless leader; she spent her money lavishly in arranging for the fortification of the town, and the citizens rallied to her. When within four miles of the city, William sent envoys to demand the submission of the citizens.

"We will submit to no foreign king," replied their spokesman, and then, dreading perhaps the awful outrages which would be committed should the city fall into the Conqueror's hands, they added: "We will pay the tax we have paid to former kings."

"By the splendour of God," cried William, "I accept no such condition," and he commanded his troops to march on to Exeter.

The distant city, set on a hill, protected on one side by the River Exe, and surrounded by a massive wall, could not be won in a day. The citizens, cowed for a moment, made a last attempt at compromise, and sent their leading men to give hostages and to make terms of peace with their redoubtable foe. When this was arranged the envoys returned to the town, only to find that the citizens had changed their minds, and intended to shut and barricade their gates against the

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Conqueror. When William reached the city and realised their intentions he took immediate revenge on one of the luckless hostages, who, placed in front of the east gate of the city, within full view of the ramparts, had his eyes torn out. During the siege, which lasted eighteen days, many of the Normans fell, and William at last ordered that the walls should be undermined. When the wretched inhabitants saw that further resistance would be unavailing they submitted, and William, who, with all his fierceness, had better impulses at times, would not allow his soldiers to enter the town whilst the blood fever was on them.

Githa escaped unhurt, but her troublous life was drawing to a close. With her were her daughter, Gunhilda, and many of the women. Though weary they were undaunted; nevertheless they knew that they had no further power to hinder the Norman conquest, and that, though Githa had called on God to avenge the death of Harold, the prayer had not been answered. The destiny of the great English people was perhaps a greater thing than a private wrong. Githa and the women journeyed south, and lived for many months on a little island called Flatholme. They waited there, half starved and wretched, for a fleet that would take them to a place of refuge. At length Githa reached Flanders, and there she died. Gunhilda spent the rest of her days in the peaceful shelter of a convent.

When Githa and the others had got safely away from Exeter the citizens formally submitted to William and craved his forgiveness. The clergy came out to plead with him, bearing their books and holy relics, and the King gave them a free pardon. He at once ordered a fortress to be built, an emblem of Norman

## THE WASTING OF THE NORTH

power designed to keep the people in awe, and to remind them that he was their king.

The North of England and the Fen country still remained unsubdued. The story of the devastation of

the North is the saddest record in all this reign. York was the furthest limit of the Norman occupation, and here Edwin and Morcar, who had revolted against William, led the people.



Edgar Ætheling, with his mother, Agatha, and his sister, Margaret, and many English chiefs, had fled to



Scotland, there to be received with open arms by King Malcolm. The bond of union between them was strengthened by Malcolm's wish to marry Margaret. She had no wish to wed him or any other suitor, but he was an ardent wooer, and urged by her mother and brother she consented. She had desired to enter a convent and lead a life of prayer and deeds of charity, but her destiny was otherwise, and she fulfilled it with the high spirit of a granddaughter of Edmund Ironside. She married Malcolm, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us, "that she should increase the glory of God in this land, lead the King aright from the path of error, bend him and his people together to a better way, and suppress the bad customs which the nation had formerly followed: all of which she afterwards did."

William fully appreciated how this union threatened his power in the North. He started his campaign by laying siege to Oxford, which had a more grievous

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

fate than Exeter, for the Normans on entering set fire to the town.

To add to William's difficulties, Sweyn, King of Denmark, was also in the field as claimant to the English throne. Why should he, the descendant of Cnut, stand idly by while the Norman Duke possessed himself of the kingdom? When the news of Senlac was brought to him he had made immediate preparations for invading England. He set sail with a large fleet, and as the Danish boats were seen sailing up the Humber the people rose as one man to join him as a deliverer from the Norman power. Edgar with a band of Scotsmen marched into Northumbria. York was taken by the English, and the Norman garrison of three thousand men were put to the sword.



Hunting was ever William's favourite relaxation, and in the intervals of subduing his English subjects he would enjoy the sport with all the ardour that he threw into everything that he did. He was hunting in the Forest of Dean with some of his friends when the crackling of dry leaves, and the snapping of branches, told of a horseman riding in hot haste.

"York has surrendered to the English and three thousand of our men have been slain."

William threw down his bow and arrows, "By the splendour of God they shall pay for this."

In blood and tears they were indeed to pay, they and their children's children.

William's brow was dark as he pondered. These stubborn English—conquered and they did not

## THE WASTING OF THE NORTH

know it—should be punished, by the splendour of God!

Meantime the Danish boats were anchored on the coast of Lindsey, and the men were ravaging the coasts and inland. William lost no time in moving a strong force against them, whereupon they retreated before him, and, though some of the Danes were killed, most



The Danes ravaging the Coast

of them managed to escape in their ships and they retreated into Holderness. William marched to Stafford and the town and country alike shared in his wrath. The city was burned almost to the ground, the fields of corn, the pleasant homesteads were destroyed. It was many years before Staffordshire recovered from that vengeful visit of the King.

For their part, the Danes were not idle. The King had learned that they intended to celebrate Christmas Day in York, and he swore that it should be a feast

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

of blood. There were many rivers, swollen by the heavy rains, to cross in his march from Nottingham, where he had been staying, but he pressed forward till he came to Castleford in the West Riding of Yorkshire.



Peasant

There the bridge had been broken down and the river was in flood. How was he to get his men across? Where could he find a ford? The English were encamped on the other side of the river ready to attack. Lisois, a Norman soldier, and sixty followers, after long searching, found a shallow part of the river over which they crossed on foot and the small force attacked the English with such vigour that they fled. The way was now open for William to cross the river and the army resumed its wearisome march to York. We hear little of the sufferings of the soldiers on these marches, though they must have been intense. The

men were made of stern stuff and did not complain, but many of the Norman nobles were growing weary of the prolonged conflict. And, besides, they had left their wives behind in Normandy and they longed to rejoin them. The King never hesitated when there



## THE WASTING OF THE NORTH

was trouble of this kind, "Leave me if you like—but only cowards leave!" And, though they urged the entreaties of their absent ladies, still it stung—"only cowards leave!"

The King marched on to York, to find, not the bitter resistance he had hoped to encounter and punish, but a deserted city in ruins. He left some of his soldiers behind to repair the castles, and then with deliberate purpose he set to work to punish the North for its stubborn resistance. It was a policy so cruel in its inception and realisation that one cannot read of it even at this distance of time without horror. It is known as "the wasting of the north"—and waste is one of the saddest words in all our language. It was a method of killing the population by slow starvation. It is through the land that we live, and during the months that followed the fruitful land was laid bare. The fields of corn, waving like seas of gold in the autumn wind, were set fire to, the trees with promise of abundant fruit were hacked down, the green pasture-land of the cattle wasted, and sheep and oxen were cruelly mutilated and left to die in agony; the huts of the peasantry, and the more prosperous dwellings of the small landowners were razed to the ground.

Can we not imagine a woman crouching under the shadow of a broken palisade gazing with wild eyes at a bleak and barren patch of ground that was once her home, clasping her child in her arms trying to keep it warm against her emaciated body, looking into its drawn face, and seeing with joy that the lips were ashen coloured and the blue eyes fixed in death? Such scenes as this were to be seen in all directions. Starving men and women, carrying their weak children,

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

haunted the countryside, the light of madness in their eyes, the utter weariness of despair shadowing their faces, driven to devour even the putrid flesh of animals.

William, taking the name of his Maker in vain, by the splendour of God had vowed vengeance on the North; by the pity of One whose name he did not so lightly take upon his lips he might have stayed his hand. The few remaining people who did not seek distant homes, whose vitality was so great that they could not die of want, fell victims to the pestilence. The North of England, now teeming with prosperous manufacturing towns sending their merchandise to the farthest ends of the world, was a desert.



Norman Brooch

There is a legend of how one town alone was spared, the old minster town of Beverley, which had once been ruled by a holy archbishop, known as St John of Beverley. All around the land was ravaged, and the King's soldiers were marching on the town. The people were gathered together in the churchyard, in mournful expectation that their last hour had come. The Norman leader rode straight up to the door of the church, and with sacrilegious arrogance would have ridden into the building, but as he reached the porch his horse fell dead, and he was thrown violently to the ground. He was not killed, but was so horribly deformed by the accident that thenceforth men could not bear to look upon him. The Normans, seeing in this occurrence the vengeance of John of Beverley, fled in terror from the town, and the people were left in peace to offer up prayers and thanksgiving to their patron saint.

For many years afterwards Yorkshire remained a

## THE WASTING OF THE NORTH

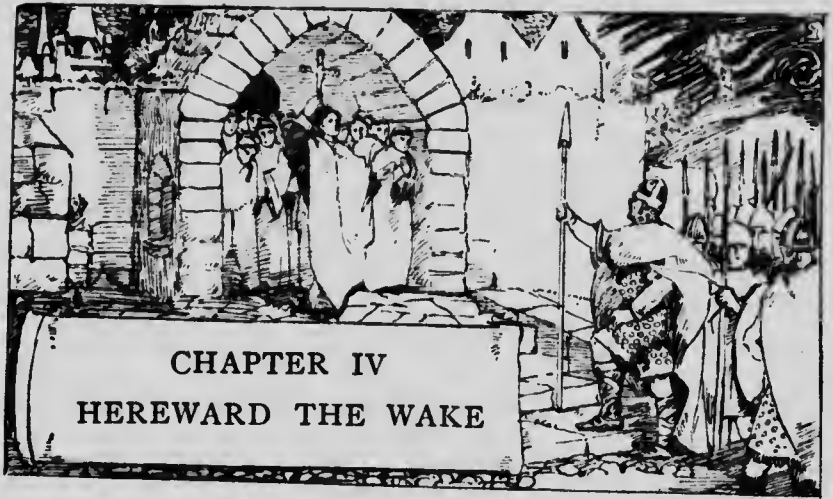
desert. In the great Domesday Survey of England, taken seventeen years later, you may see, over and over again, the words "waste—waste—waste," applied to portions of the county.

Nature repairs man's ravages; the grass grew again where it had been trampled down, saplings grew to sturdy trees and, after many years of desolation, descendants of the outraged peasantry came back to build for themselves homes, and to cultivate the pleasant land once more.

The time had not yet come for William to repent, but when, years after, he lay on his death-bed the thought of his cruelty to the North troubled his last hours. The third Christmas after his coronation was spent in the town of York. As he had been able to feast on the battlefield of Senlac, so he was able to make merry in a ruined city.



Copsige and Oswulf



#### CHAPTER IV HEREWARD THE WAKE

**T**HE England that we know to-day would never have emerged from the chaos of the eleventh century if there had not been in the conquered Anglo-Saxon race the spirit of the old Vikings, the spirit of Hereward the Wake.

Many of the deeds of this hero are more or less mythical, but the story of resistance to the power of the Norman has become a cherished tradition of our race.<sup>1</sup> He was the son, so legend has it, of the stern Earl Leofric and the dauntless Lady Godiva; a son who rebelled against his father, and was made an outlaw by King Edward the Confessor. As a boy he would not submit to authority or restraint, and he grew up to be a daring man, always on the look-out for adventure, and willing to risk his life in any chance encounter.

He was staying in Flanders, that haven for black

<sup>1</sup> See "The Story of Hereward," by Douglas C. Stedman, B.A. *Told through the Ages Series*, 1s. 6d.

## HEREWARD THE WAKE

sheep from England, when refugees brought him the news of the Norman conquest.

"Your lands are confiscated to the Normans—your mother is likely to be driven out of Bourne—the home of your fathers has been given to King William's cook—and you are here in exile," they told him.

It seemed a taunt to Hereward. "I will return to my country," he said, "I will claim my patrimony—I fear not William, Duke of Normandy, nor ten thousand such as he."

This was no idle boast. Hereward knew no fear, but yet the English refugees were silent. Hereward might be the Duke's match in courage and daring, but what of skill and statesmanship? Would he, the outlaw, the swashbuckler, as some thought him, be able to stand against the mighty conqueror? They should see.

There were many who might rally to him if he came to England, amongst them Edwin and Morcar, and Edgar Ætheling, who all had done homage to William, but nevertheless were constantly plotting against him. Then, too, there was Waltheof, the champion of the English, the son of Siward the Strong, who though young in years was old in deeds. William had indeed tried to propitiate these rebels, but they made promises of loyalty to him only to break them as soon as they felt it convenient.

During that winter (1070-1071) the Danish fleet under Earl Osbern, the brother of Swend, had remained in English waters, and the men of the expedition had filled in their time and fed themselves by plundering all along the coast. The marauders were difficult to catch, for they would fly back to their ships with their booty, and once on board would push out to sea with

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

a roaring laugh for any pursuers who might come up just too late to prevent their embarkation.

Hereward received tidings of all that was going on, and having made careful preparations he set sail for his native country. He landed in England unnoticed and unknown, and immediately took horse for his ancestral home at Bourne. On his journey thither he was recognised, and the cry "Hereward is come again!" was shouted from one to another among the peasant folk. His first duty was to rescue his mother, and to turn out the usurper, the glorified scullion. Taillebois, the earl-cook, was feasting in the great hall, surrounded by his roystering companions. The fun was at its height, the laughter and wine flowed freely, and the thick voices of the men were raised in convivial song. Some of the guests and retainers had got past that stage even, and were sound asleep with their heads on the table.

At this juncture Hereward rushed in. "Awake, awake!" he cried, as he drew his sword and stabbed one, then another, then another. When he had had his fill of slaughter he went to his mother's room, and found her in a state bordering on despair, outraged by the indignities that had been put upon her. The meeting was an affecting one. How changed was everything since Lady Godiva had parted from her wayward son! All that she asked of life now was that she might spend the rest of her days in retreat far from worldly cares in the Abbey of Croyland near Peterborough, and this wish was realised shortly after.

Hereward's spirit was up now and he put himself at the head of an armed band of outlaws who had been waiting for such a leader, and whose numbers were

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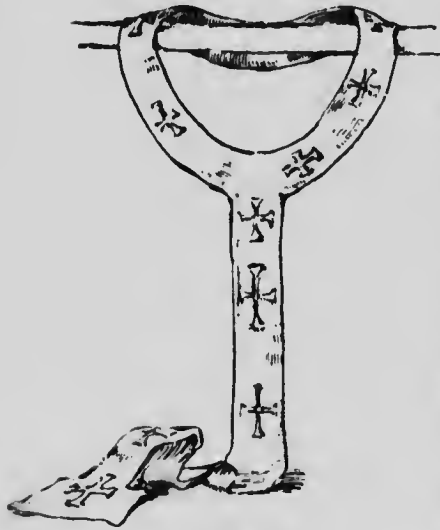


Hereward at Bourne

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

added to daily as the exploits of the bold and daring Englishman were noised abroad.

In the county of Cambridgeshire, watered by the River Ouse, and intersected by many streams, a dismal swamp in those days and in winter often covered with water, lay the island of Ely, an inaccessible tract of land, twenty-eight miles long by twenty-five broad.



Pall

Here at different times came most of the English who could not reconcile themselves to the Conqueror. Their lands had been confiscated, their homes broken up; they had nothing to lose but their lives, and they wished for no better death than to fall in a final struggle against the Norman rule. Hereward was accepted as the chief of this desperate band of patriots, and he gradually acquired authority over all Lincolnshire, Hunt-

ingdonshire and Cambridgeshire. It was only natural that he should join with the Danes, who were now beginning to grow equally desperate. They had plundered far and wide and had exhausted the country, so that now they had but scanty fare. There were rich prizes still to be had, and they knew it. Hidden away in the chests of the monasteries, and adorning the shrines of the churches was gold in plenty. Croyland, Ely, Peterborough—these had not been laid under contribution as yet. Peterborough was



## HEREWARD THE WAKE

so wealthy that it was often called the Golden Borough.

Hereward may at first have been a little loth to rob Peterborough, but he soon found an excuse. The abbot, who was an Englishman, had lately died, and William, whose policy it was to fill up all important posts with his own countrymen, appointed in his stead a Norman named Thuroid, known by repute to be harsh and tyrannical.

Thuroid did not expect to be popular in the neighbourhood, and so he got together an armed band of retainers to accompany him to Peterborough.

Hereward was incensed with the monks for making no protest at this appointment, and his anger dissipated what few scruples he may have had. He was at this time hard pressed for money, and the thought of the rich harvest to be reaped by a successful raid on the abbey was too great a temptation in his difficult strait.

Meanwhile at Peterborough the monks had met in solemn conclave to discuss the coming of Thuroid and the difficulties of their lot. As they were wondering how they could bear the ills that had come upon them



Thuroid

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

a messenger sought admission. "It is urgent," he shouted, as they kept him waiting. "Hereward and his band of outlaws are intending to attack the monastery."

"It is sacrilege," said one.

"Sacrilege—little cares he for sacred things—'tis said——"



"Much is said of Hereward the Wake," said Herluin, who in the absence of Thuroid took the lead. "We have no time to hear of his exploits, we must guard our treasures. Who will conceal them till this evil day is past?"

"I will," cried Yware, the churchwarden. "Listen—to-night when all is quiet, and the servants sleeping so that none can spy upon me, I will take the sacred testaments and Mass hackels, cante copes and reefs. I will conceal them where none can find them."

## HEREWARD THE WAKE

"'Tis well," said Herluin.

At dead of night in the minster church of Peterborough, lit by dim candlelight, two figures might have been seen like ghosts flitting about in the darkness. They were stripping the sacred images of the gold and jewels that decked them, emptying chests of their treasures and silently bearing them to some place of safety. Yware was weary. The first streaks of dawn were in the sky before his task was done, but he had no time for rest. At a wicket door of the minster his horse was saddled, waiting.

"Go bid Thuold come to our rescue ere it be too late," Herluin had urged him.

The dawn that saw Yware galloping over the marshes discovered through the mist that hung over the river a fleet of boats, and the silence of the morning was broken by the plashing of oars. The trophy on the leading vessel was the badge of Hereward, "Wake-not," and from other boats hung the shields of the wild and ruthless Danes.



Amice—Collar worn by the Clergy

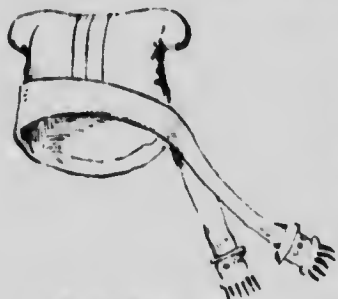
There had been no sleep that night in the cells of the monks, for they, feeling that the shadow of doom was upon them, talked to one another in whispers of the dark deeds of Hereward, and prayed silently for deliverance.

Herluin called for all the sacred relics to be brought out to serve as a charm against the wicked outlaw, but the hearts of the monks were heavy within them, even as they gazed on the gilt casket that contained the filings of St Peter's chains. "Has not Hereward sworn to set fire to the monastery?" they said one to the other.

It was a brilliant June morning. Hereward and

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

his men, with the Danish leaders and their followers, disembarked from the boats and marched with swinging step to the monastery gates. Herluin headed the monks who, unarmed, were assembled in the courtyard. He held up the crucifix and appealed to the oncomers not to profane that sacred emblem.



Early Form of Mitre

It was too late for such an appeal, the blood of the wild, lawless men was up. Already the sweet morning air was polluted by the smell of burning timber—the monastery was on fire. Soon flames were leaping up in all directions, seeming to challenge the sun by their brilliancy. As the gates came crashing down, into the courtyard trooped Herward and his band. The monks made a feeble attempt to prevent them from entering the minster, but in vain. They soon swarmed over the building; every ornament, every relic was seized, the rood-screen was broken, and one of the men climbed up on to the holy rood and took the diadem, all of pure gold, from the image of Our Lord's head, and seized the golden bracket underneath its feet.

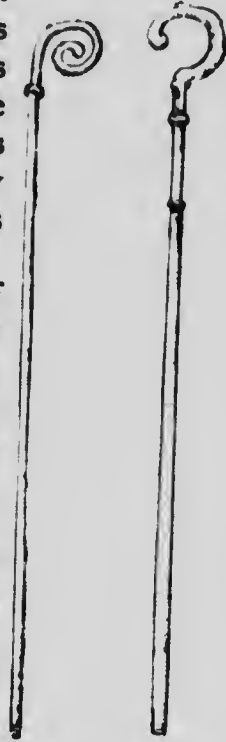
But there were other treasures, so report said. Where was the gold and silver pastoral staff? Where was the money? They must have been hidden, but could not have been taken far! A little door suddenly attracted attention—"To the steeple!" cried the robbers. It was the work of a moment to hew down the door, and up the steep stairs scrambled the outlaws. True enough, there in a little chamber was the golden pall and the golden staff; it was a very Aladdin's cave of

## HEREWARD THE WAKE

gold and silver, and precious jewels. Hastily they gathered together all these riches and clambered down the stairs again. The minster, strewn with the wreckage of their depredations, seemed to appeal, if anything inanimate can appeal, for mercy. The monastery was burning fiercely, but the church was spared. The houses round were a mass of flames—it was a burning city, and seemed to the terrified monks a foretaste of the fires of hell, in which they confidently believed and hoped Hereward and his band would burn for ever.

As Thuroid with his band of Normans hastened to the assistance of the monastery they saw the sky red with flames. They rode on into the city and went straight to the desecrated church. It was empty. Hereward and his men had re-embarked in their boats with their spoil. Thuroid sought for the monks but could not find them—had they escaped or had they perished? As he was searching the ruins he came at last upon one monk who was too ill to be moved, and he eagerly questioned the sick man, who, however, could tell him little. He feared, said he, lying there alone in his misery, that the end of the world had come.

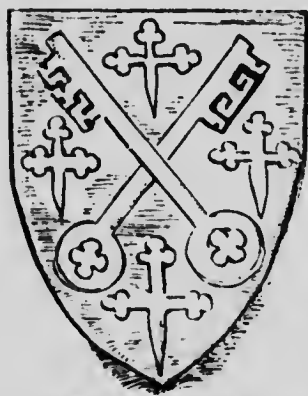
Thuroid immediately set to work to have the abbey cleared. Within a week the monks returned and Mass was daily said once more within the walls of the minster.



Croziers or Pastoral Staves

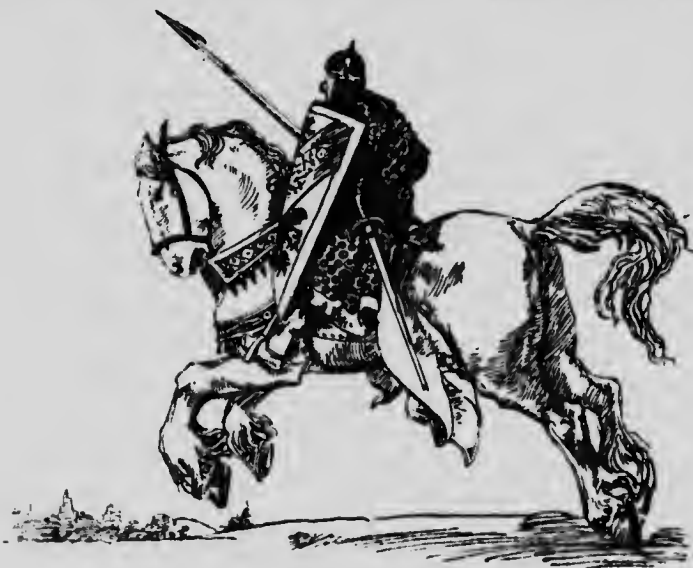
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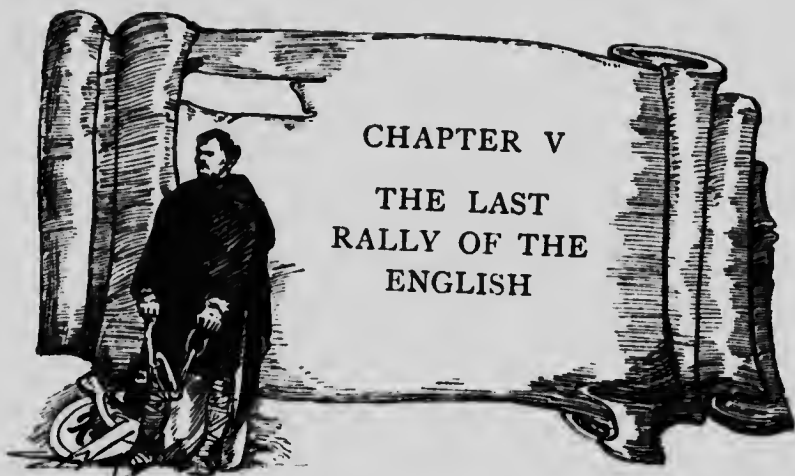
Meanwhile Hereward had divided the plunder, and the Danes who had taken part in the expedition had rich booty for their reward. Well satisfied, they sailed off to Denmark, but on their way a storm arose and many of the vessels were wrecked. The ship containing the spoil was driven ashore, but the precious ornaments were landed and put for safety in a church. That same night the Danes set to guard the church made merry, and got very drunk, and by some accident the church was set fire to, and the treasure was destroyed.



Arms of Peterborough

As for Hereward and his band they were excommunicated for this deed, but they cared little for that.





**W**HAT of Edwin and Morcar during this time of turmoil? During the first conquest of the North (autumn 1068) they had ruled as William's earls over Mercia and Deira. William had apparently a very great regard for Edwin, so much so that he promised him one of his daughters in marriage—whether Matilda or Agatha is not definitely known. A great attachment had sprung up between the Norman princess and the English earl, and he was only too anxious to wed her, but the Conqueror, perhaps thinking that his promise was compliment enough, and that he might betroth his daughter to a more eligible suitor, constantly deferred the marriage. Edwin at last grew very angry, and he and Morcar returned to their earldoms in revolt against William. William had hoped to secure Waltheof's loyalty by marrying him to his niece, Judith. This was no love match and the marriage proved very unhappy, Judith being often at enmity with her husband.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Edwin and Morcar later on made their peace with the Conqueror once more, but this time he no longer trusted them and kept them virtually prisoners. They managed to escape and make a last dash for liberty, though they dreaded betrayal at every chance encounter. They wandered about for some time in the woods, living as best they could, and sleeping in the open. In history up to this time we find their names always linked together, now they have to play their small separate parts. Edwin resolved to go to Malcolm in Scotland, and Morcar to join Hereward once again. For six months Edwin wandered through the country. He had but a small following, and recruits were few. One day the band fell in with a company of Normans eager for a fray. The leader recognised Edwin. What would he not give to slay this rebel? Would it not mean promotion and a gift of confiscated lands? Edwin recognised that with his small band he could not hope for success in a fight, and ordered his followers to gallop for their lives towards the coast. Presently they could go no farther, for a river ran right across their path. The pursuing Normans were almost upon them—"A bridge!" "A ford!" Could they swim, or would horses and riders be drowned in the current? The sea was in sight, the river was swollen by the incoming tide. As they hesitated, the Normans galloped up. Edwin, trapped like some hunted animal, made a valiant stand, but was soon overpowered and slain. The Norman leader, flushed with victory, cut off his head.

"I will bring the King this trophy," he cried, holding it up by the hair.

Two of his followers claimed their share of credit



## LAST RALLY OF THE ENGLISH

for the deed, and all rode as quickly as they could to William's camp. "What reward for the head of Edwin the traitor?" they cried, as they passed the guards, and pressed into the King's tent. They loosed the cloth in which the grim object was wrapped, and held it up for the King to see, expecting an exclamation of satisfaction. William stared at it, and was silent. Little had the sorrows he had inflicted on England touched him as yet, but this fair head seemed to move him.

"Who has done this?"

The murderers were astonished at his angry tone, and told a confused tale of their encounter with Edwin. "Take them away," said William curtly; "they shall pay dearly for the deed."

Morcar had meanwhile joined Hereward at the Camp of Refuge to take part in what was destined to be the last rally of the English. King William had resolved to attack the isle which had become a menace to his power in the land. The monks of Ely sat side by side with the fighting-men. In order to provision the Camp, Hereward and some of his followers would go on foraging expeditions, and be away for several days at a time. It was partly because the island was such an easy place to defend and provision that all William's genius was required to subdue it. He resolved to make an attack by land and by water, and to establish a blockade, in order to starve out the garrison. He ordered his ships to collect in the Wash, and to guard the coast carefully, so that no boat could land in the Fen country, and he sent his soldiers out in parties to guard every road which led to the isle.

The great difficulty for the Normans was that the

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

whole country was undrained, marshland and swampy. The River Ouse constantly overflowed its banks and it was impossible to get at the Camp, for the soldiers floundered in the mire. Resourceful as ever, William ordered his men to make a path above the high level of the water. They drove piles into the mud and made a causeway two miles long, with bridges over the Ouse and the other rivers which had to be crossed.

Hereward was well aware of what was going on.



The Normans trying to cross the Swamps

The work proceeded very slowly and he was constantly appearing at the head of a small body of men, attacking the Normans and leaving them to drown in the marshes—horses, riders and all.

William, at his wit's end, thought to terrorise the credulous English by a curious device. He ordered a wooden tower to be built at the head of the causeway, and on the top of this, when it was finished, he stationed a sorceress. She was to use all her mystic arts to bring destruction on the English. Hereward watched the wooden tower being erected. He seemed to be everywhere, a sort of De Wet of old time; he

## LAST RALLY OF THE ENGLISH

turned up in the most unexpected places, but he allowed the tower to be erected and the sorceress to take her stand on the roof without interference. When all was ready and the witch was playing her part by showering curses on the Wake and his followers, Hereward quietly set fire to the reeds, and the flames soon spread to the tower, which was burnt to the ground, sorceress and all.

In spite of his daring and resourcefulness Hereward was getting anxious. The blockade had lasted three months, and food was scarce in the isle. Many complaints were brought to him of the weariness of the struggle, and many of his followers deserted. At last, despairing of possible success, the monks of Ely made their way to the camp of the Normans, and offered to show them how they could cross the marshes in safety and attack the isle. They made but one condition, and that was that they should be left in possession of their monastery.

The Normans profited at once by this offer, and attacked the isle of refuge in the rear, and after a severe struggle the English surrendered almost to a man.

Thus ended the last attempt of the English to



## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

challenge the fact of the Conquest. The after history of the leaders may be briefly told.

Morcar at once submitted to the King, but William would trust him no further, and to the end of his life, with but a brief respite, he was kept in close imprisonment.

Waltheof some time after was arrested, and when the midwinter meeting of the Witan took place at Westminster he was brought before the assembly and accused of high treason. His wife, Judith, hated him and had betrayed him to the King. Waltheof defended himself, but unavailingly. He was kept for months in prison, and turned to the consolations of religion as the world seemed slipping away from him, and daily he would repeat to himself the psalms he had learnt as a child. At Whitsuntide his trial took place and he was condemned to death.

The sun had scarcely risen one beautiful May morning when the summons came. The execution was to be in secret, for it was thought there might be an attempt to rescue him. Accompanied by a few soldiers, bearing himself proudly and dressed as became his rank, he was led out of Winchester. When the procession reached the place of execution, on one of the high downs overlooking the town, a few of his former comrades were on the spot. He was not to go out of the world without a friendly voice to bid him farewell. He took off one or two jewels that he wore and handed them to his friends without a word. And then he knelt and prayed. The executioner was impatient—he had been bidden to use despatch, in an hour or two the town would be awake. He touched Waltheof on the shoulder.

## LAST RALLY OF THE ENGLISH

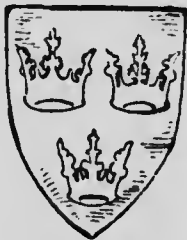
"Rise, we must do the bidding of the King."

"Let me but say the Lord's Prayer for you and for me."

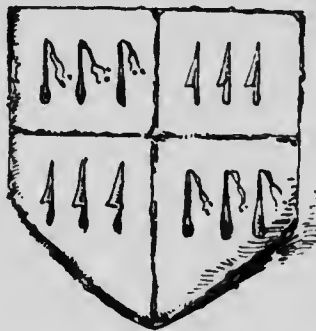
"Our Father," he began. . . . "Forgive us our trespasses"—the words were scarcely out of his mouth when the executioner's patience was exhausted, there was a glint of steel in the morning light, and the Earl's head rolled to earth. But severed though it was, those around declared that it continued the prayer, "Deliver us from evil."

Though many had fallen in battle Waltheof was the only Englishman to perish by the sword of the executioner during William's reign.

In the confusion of the final struggle at Ely, Hereward had escaped with a small band of followers, and for some years he carried on the struggle with a few devoted comrades, but at last he too surrendered. He was a man after the Conqueror's own heart, and William for years had desired to have him as his vassal. When, therefore, this valiant Englishman came to him in submission he inflicted no punishment. He knew that the hardest penalty which so stubborn a foe could suffer had been imposed by Fate when Hereward the Wake bowed his knee to the Norman Conqueror and swore to be his man.



Arms of Ely



Arms of Croyland



**W**E have now to go back some years, to William's youth in Normandy, and tell how when he was a young man he fell in love with Matilda, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Flanders. For seven years, it is said, he paid his court to her, but she would not respond to his advances. She was in love with Brihtric Meaw, the lord of the Manor of Gloucester, who in his turn did not care for her. William never took "no" for an answer and at last he became very impatient. Matilda was living at Bruges and one day he met her coming home from Mass. He bade her attendants leave them together, and during the interview that followed, finding that Matilda was in no melting mood, he knocked her down and struck her several times. Those were rough times, and whether to avoid a repetition of this stormy wooing, or because she was tired of waiting for Brihtric Meaw to change his mind, she accepted the Duke, who through his life proved a devoted husband. There was little or no home life for the Duke and his bride. He always preferred warfare to the difficult duties connected with the politics of his duchy, and he

## MATILDA OF FLANDERS

found in Matilda an effective substitute in the task of government. As I have told you, he left her as regent in Normandy when he came over to conquer England.

When William went back to his wife with the good news of his success, she asked him to give her a share of the fair lands of England. Whom should he reward more readily than her whom he loved so dearly? There were many confiscated lands, and she had but to name what she wanted.

"The Manor of Gloucester, the lands of Brihtric Meaw," she replied. He had flouted her, and now her hour had come.

"Is there aught else?" asked her husband.

"Confiscation and imprisonment for Brihtric Meaw."

"Give your orders."

She lost no time, and the unfortunate Brihtric was seized at his Manor of Haneley, taken to Winchester, and was there imprisoned till he died.

Matilda of Flanders tasted the sweetness of revenge, but must have found in it, for she was at heart a



## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

noble woman, something of bitterness. It is a dark stain on a character that was in other respects generous and upright.

The King and his wife returned to England together.



Brihtic Meaw

He was anxious that she should be crowned as his queen, and a magnificent banquet was arranged for the occasion. When the ceremony of coronation was over the company sat down to dine. The *pannetier* had brought in the salt and the carving knives, and the other servers had performed their tasks, but the guests had not yet fallen to. They looked towards the great door and in rode Marmion, the champion, armed *cap-a-pie*, and in a loud voice recited his challenge:

“If any person denies that our most gracious sovereign Lord William and his spouse Matilda are not King and Queen of England, he is a false-hearted traitor and a liar, and here I, as champion, challenge him to single combat!”



## MATILDA OF FLANDERS

Three times this challenge was repeated, but no man broke the silence that succeeded the defiant words. Then, seeing that none desired the encounter, the champion withdrew.

Matilda was not to spend much of her life in England, for she was wanted in Normandy to take up the reins of government in place of the King.

The King and Queen had many children. The eldest, Robert, was known as Courthose (short-stockings), because of his short legs; the second, William, as Rufus the red-haired; the third, Henry, as Beauclerc the scholar.

Of the King's daughters, Cecily, the eldest, longed for a tranquil life in retreat from the world, and at the church which her father had founded at Fécamp, on Easter Day 1075, she took the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and the golden ring which wedded her as a bride to the Church was placed upon her finger. In the dark habit of her order she passed out of the brilliantly lit abbey to the shadow of the cloister. There she studied and prayed and tended the sick and was among the most devoted of the holy women. When the abbess died, thirty-eight years later, she was elected in her stead, "and there an Abbess lived, and there an Abbess passed to where beyond these voices there is peace."

Her sister Constance remained in the world of action. Not for her the silent cloister, the service of the altar. Her father gave her as a bride to Alan of Brittany to induce him not to rebel against him, and as his wife she lived a busy, useful life.



Norman Helmet

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Robert was to be one of the disappointments of his father's life. Before the Duke invaded England he had called on his Norman barons to do homage to his eldest son, who was to succeed him in Normandy, and some years later Robert did homage to the King of France as overlord of Maine. During William's long absence in England Matilda was three times made regent, and Robert's name had been associated with



Musical Instruments

her as deputy for his father. Robert was anxious that his father should give up Normandy to him, and William, who considered the homage of the barons and the regency as temporary measures only, in order to secure the succession, had no mind to grant his request. Such a man as he was not likely to abdicate in favour of his son. He perceived that Robert, though brave and skilful in the arts of war, had no depth of character, though he was extremely ambitious. The sons of the reigning barons to whom Robert told his grievances encouraged him in every way. "Son of a king," they would address him, "thy father's people must guard the royal treasure very strictly, since thou hast not a penny to give to thy followers. How canst thou resign thyself to such poverty, while thy father is so rich? Demand from him a part of his England, or at least a part of Normandy, which he promised thee before the assembled chiefs."

Incited by his friends, Robert sought an interview with his father to demand fuller recognition of his claims. His father sternly admonished him as to his duty, and bade him choose wiser friends.

## MATILDA OF FLANDERS

"Be obedient to me in all things, and share my dominions everywhere with me."

"I am no longer a child," retorted the son. "I will not be your slave. I ask but for my right in Normandy."

"I will not strip before I go to bed," replied his sire.

Robert strode away in a violent rage. He sought his companions and talked over this rebuff. He would no longer be treated as a child, no longer be lectured as a schoolboy; he was a man and a soldier.

Not only was he rebellious against his father, but he had quarrelled with his two brothers, William and Henry, who took their father's part in the dispute. They felt they had little to gain by aiding Robert, and everything to lose by angering their father. They were sitting at dice in an upper room of their lodging in the town of L'aigle, when they caught sight of Robert in the courtyard below, his face stern and gloomy. "We will cool his anger," said they, and



## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

by way of doing, so poured water on his head. Furious at the insult, he left the town at once, and laid siege to Rouen, where, however, he was unsuccessful.

It is said that during Robert's rebellion against his



The present Abbey of Caen

father, William laid siege to the castle of Gerberoy, one of Robert's strongholds. A sortie was made by the garrison, in the course of which Robert unhorsed a powerful knight, fully clad in armour, and wounded him in the arm.

As he fell the

warrior uttered a cry of pain, and Robert recognised his father's voice. The King was rescued, but the bitterness of the knowledge that he had been wounded by his eldest son remained with him. Robert felt ashamed of his victory, and was anxious for a reconciliation. The King at first would not hear of it, though all urged him. His counsellors pleaded Robert's youth; the father replied that surely no father had been treated as he had, his son had disgraced him in the eyes of other kings. The bishops pleaded with him to forgive as he might hope to be forgiven, and the Queen pleaded for their eldest-born. William yielded at last, but he

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The Conqueror wounded by his Son, Robert

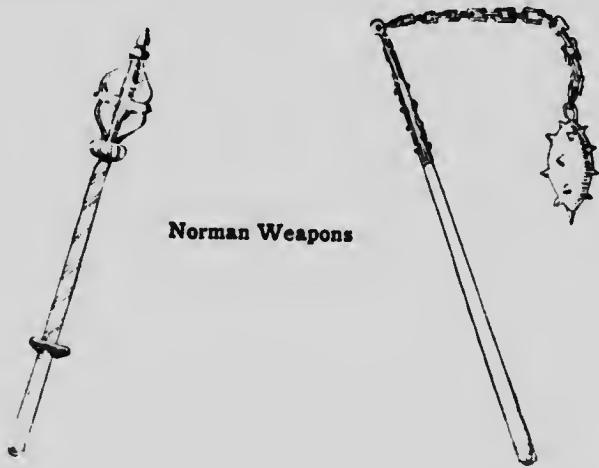
## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

knew Robert too well by now, and did not expect him to keep the peace,

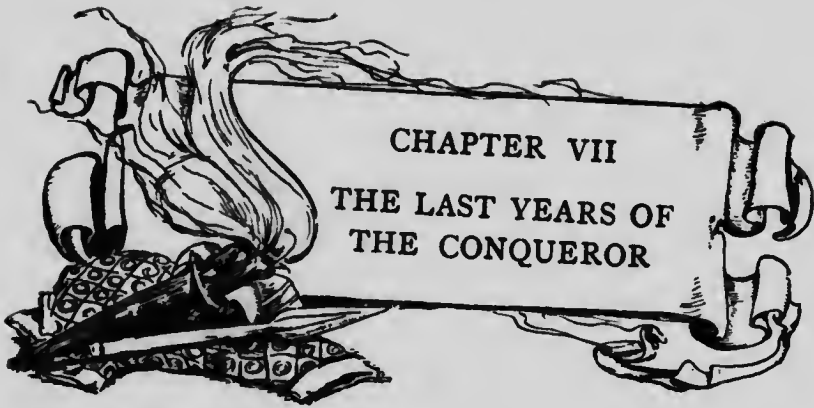
Some time after his forebodings were fully realised. Robert rebelled again, and this time there was no reconciliation.

A deeper sorrow clouded the King's life three years later. On the 3rd November 1083, Queen Matilda passed to her rest. She was buried in the church she had founded at Caen, and which she lovingly remembered in her will, which runs thus: "I give to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity my tunic worked at Winchester, by Alderet's wife, and the mantle embroidered with gold which is in my chamber to make a cope. Of my two golden girdles I give that which is ornamented with emblems, for the purpose of suspending the lamp before the great altar."

William sincerely mourned the death of Matilda to the day of his death.



Norman Weapons



**W**ILLIAM was now king in reality as well as by right of coronation. The Conquest was at an end, not so much because the English people assented to the rule of the Norman as because there was no rallying point. Edwin and Morcar, Hereward and Waltheof all were subdued or dead.

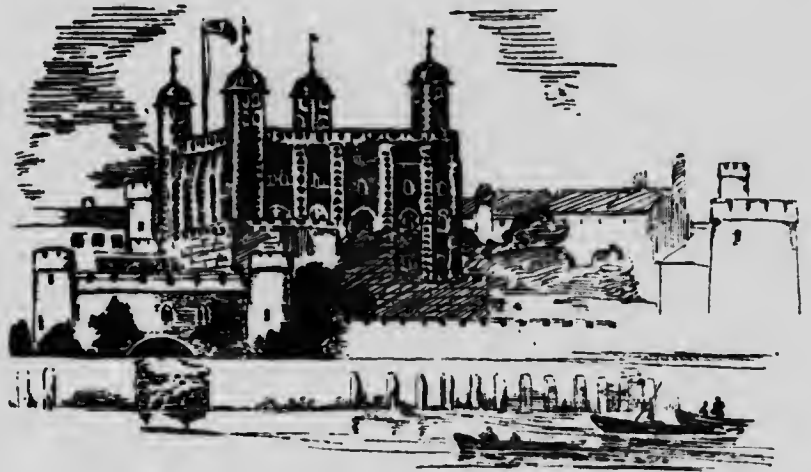
The land was nominally at peace. Great Norman castles had arisen throughout the country, at Warwick, Nottingham, York, Lincoln, Cambridge, Huntingdon, London—to name but a few places—each stronghold a sign to the people of the strength of their conqueror.

If trouble was expected in any neighbourhood the commander of the castle would lay in a stock of provisions, levying contributions upon the people of the countryside, of salt meat, flour, wine and beer, and other articles that would keep. And when the trouble came the castle would be ready to stand a siege without inconvenience.

The lands of the English had for the most part passed into Norman hands, but the Norman lords were not as grateful to William as they might have been.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

They were wild and turbulent spirits, and they disliked the idea of any lordship over them. They hated to acknowledge him as their overlord, but even more than that they hated having to supply him with money. So though the English were settled, and accepted their position, William had now to reckon with his own followers. In order to prevent them becoming too independent, he insisted that they should not only do



The Tower of London

homage in person, but that their vassals should do double homage, both to their lord and to the King, to whom they owed first allegiance. This was very important, for it prevented the great nobles acquiring almost kingly power, and defying the king in the districts over which they ruled.

The richest gifts had been bestowed by William on Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, his half-brother. He was Earl of Kent, and had a large estate in that fertile county. He was a crafty man, and ambitious to become



## LAST YEARS OF THE CONQUEROR

Pope, and as he could not wait for the chance of being elected, he set to work to gather a band of soldiers and sufficient money to enforce his claim. William was informed of his brother's movements, and more than suspected that Odo had schemes other than those connected with the papacy. He did not let his suspicions appear, but one day when Odo was at court, and seemingly on good

terms with the King, the Bishop was suddenly surrounded. But no one touched him. It was sacrilege to arrest a servant of the Church. The King saw their hesitation, and knew the reason.

"I arrest not the Bishop of Bayeux, but the Earl of Kent," he said, in his deep, ringing voice.

Odo gave no further trouble; his lands were confiscated, and he was kept in close confinement during the lifetime of William.

An important measure in the reign of William was the great survey of England which is recorded in the Domesday Book (1086). In the Peterborough Chronicle we read: "After this the King took much thought and held deep speech with his Wise Men over the land, how



## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

it was settled or established, and with what kind of men. Then he sent over all England into each shire, and had it made out how many hundred hides there were in the shire, what the King himself had in lands, and of livestock on the land, and what rights he ought to have every twelve months off the shire. Also he had written how much land his Archbishops had, and his suffragan bishops, and his abbots and earls, and, though I tell it at length, what or how much each man that owned in England had in land and live-stock, and how much money it might be worth. So very narrowly he had it inquired into that there was not one single hide, nor



Silver Penny of William I.  
or II.

one yard of land, nor even—it is shame to be telling of, but he did not think it shame to be doing it—one ox, nor one cow, nor one swine was left out that was not set down in this record, and all the records were afterwards brought to him.”

It is a wonderful document this book of the dooms or judgments, and of immense value to all students of this period. The survey did not cover all England. Northumberland and Durham; Cumberland, Westmorland and North Lancashire were not mentioned, the three last indeed were not yet parts of England. We find it recorded that the population of England then was about two million people, and that twenty-five thousand of them were serfs.

The original Domesday book was probably written out by Archbishop Lanfranc. William intended this survey as a step towards taxing the country. In each county the first name inscribed is that of the King, and underneath it is written the list of his possessions in that

## LAST YEARS OF THE CONQUEROR

county. It was called by the Normans the Royal Roll, and it was kept in the treasury of Winchester Cathedral.

The whole survey was made in a year. Commissioners were sent to each of the different districts. It is especially interesting nowadays, when we hear so much of land taxation, to read that William ordered that it should be recorded if any of the land had increased in value since it was held by the Normans.

Many of the people were very indignant at being forced to give particulars of their property, and there were many disturbances while the survey was being completed.

William was, as we have seen, a keen sportsman, so much so that it was said that "he loved the tall deer as if he their father were." The sport was cruel enough, but his method of gratifying his desire for it was even more so. His favourite dwelling-place when in England was at Winchester, as it was more convenient than London for a king who had to rule both in Normandy and England. It had one drawback, however, from his point of view; it was in Hampshire, where good hunting was not to be had. To remedy this, William deliberately wasted a tract of cultivated land, some thirty miles in extent, and made the New Forest. Twenty-six parishes, eighty religious houses and many churches were destroyed. The people in the South had to suffer for the King's pleasure as terribly as those in the North had been made to suffer from his wrath. He made cruel forest laws, too, ordering that "whoever killed a stag should have his eyes torn out." He refused to allow the English, many of whom had been dependent for their food on the chase, to bear arms. Hunting in the royal forests, and all the forests of

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

England, was a perquisite of the crown, and the King could grant or refuse the privilege, much to the annoyance not only of the poor but of the Normans themselves.

It is interesting to remember that it was William who introduced the long bow into England. With it, it may be said, he conquered the country; and with it, in a later reign, the English, who had learnt so much by the Norman conquest, triumphed over the French.

It was hardly to be wondered at that though the English were conquered there was still a great deal of discontent. In place of the Danegelt, which had been the only tax up to this time, William levied heavy taxes on the English. So intolerably hard was the life of the people that they were driven either to become Normans or outlaws. Some of them shaved their beards, cropped their hair and wore the Norman dress, and others took to the green wood, and lived by plunder. Consequently travelling became very dangerous, and the life of the more peaceful inhabitants was menaced at every turn. Houses would be stocked with all manner of weapons, and on the evening when these marauders were abroad, the master of the house would read the prayers for those in peril on the sea.

In order to prevent any rising of the English under cover of darkness, William ordered that every night a bell should be rung at eight o'clock, as a notice to all those who heard it to put out their fires and blow out their candles, and, if they did not want to sit up in the dark, go to bed. This bell was called the curfew, from the French words *couvre feu*. This rule also served as a precaution against fire, for, as most of the houses were built of wood, the slightest carelessness with an un-

## LAST YEARS OF THE CONQUEROR

guarded light might burn them to the ground. To us, who, nowadays, are accustomed to the freedom that comes from a representative form of government, it seems strange to realise the absolute power of this Norman king, who cared little for the feelings of his subjects if they came into conflict with his desires. The common people had to suffer cruelly, not only from the tyranny of the King, but from the lawless exactions of those who wielded the power and authority of the lord of the soil. The curfew bell is still rung in certain old-world villages, though the law was repealed in the reign of Henry I.

There were constant disputes with Philip, King of France, with regard to a small strip of land on the borders of Normandy, the French Vexin. Mantes was the principal town in this province and the men of this town constantly raided Normandy, stealing the cattle and doing a great deal of damage. William was furious. He sent to the King of France and demanded that the Vexin should be ceded to him. Philip paid no attention whatever to this cool request, and the Conqueror crossed over to France to settle matters. He made his way to Rouen, where he was taken ill, and he was such a long time recovering that Philip made a stupid joke about him. When it was repeated to William he was so furious that he vowed vengeance not only on the King of France but on the unfortunate town of Mantes. When the harvest was ripe and the grapes were hanging in rich clusters from the vines, he set out to ravage the country. He had left Yorkshire a desert and he would punish this land in the same way. The corn was fired, the vines were trampled underfoot, the trees were uprooted, the fruitful land was made desolate. When he reached

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Mantes he gave orders, "Fire the town." He saw the flames darting up to the sky, he saw the beautiful cathedral a sheet of fire, he saw the people fly terrified into the open country to escape death. As he rode in triumph through the town, his horse trampled upon some still smouldering embers and stumbled and fell. The King was much hurt in the fall and in great pain

was carried to the Priory of St Gervase, outside Rouen.



In the few weeks that remained of his life a feeling of deep penitence came over him for all the misery that he had caused. "Of how many thousands of young as well as old belonging to that illustrious England have I been the unhappy slayer?" he said. And then he thought too with bitter remorse of the burning of Mantel. He sent money for the churches

of the town to be rebuilt and to the convents and churches in England, so that he might, after the fashion of those days, make his peace with heaven.

The leading dignitaries of the Church gathered round the dying monarch. There was one whom William especially craved to see, the saintly Anselm, and he hurried to Rouen, but was taken ill on the journey, and was not able to offer the last consolations of the Church to the remorseful monarch. His sons William and

## LAST YEARS OF THE CONQUEROR

Henry were present at his bedside. They were anxious to hear how he would dispose of his dominions. They questioned him and he told them.

"The Dukedom of Normandy before I fought at Sanguelac with Harold I granted unto my son Robert, which honour cannot be revoked, yet I know it will be a miserable reign for he is a foolish and proud knave."

"As to the crown of England I bequeath it to no one. The Duchy of Normandy I inherited from my father, but the Kingdom of England I won by my own good sword. I leave the decision to God, only desiring that my son William, who has ever been dutiful to me, may obtain it and may prosper."

"What will you leave me, father?" cried Prince Henry.

"Five thousand pounds weight of silver out of my treasury."

"What is that to me if I have neither lands nor home?"

"Be patient, Henry, thou art the younger son, thy time will come after thy brothers."

Henry, having nothing further to gain from his father, made all possible haste out of his presence, and went off at once to have the silver weighed and to see that he had the full value promised to him. William Rufus was equally decided in his actions. He journeyed as quickly as he could to the coast and took boat for England. He wanted to be proclaimed King and to seize the royal treasure, before Robert could come upon the scene.

When his sons had left, William granted a free pardon to many who had rebelled against him, and to Odo of Bayeux among them.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

On the eighth of September it was known that he was sinking fast. Early on the morning of the ninth he was aroused by the sound of a bell. It was the hour of prime. He lifted his hands in prayer, "I commend my soul to Mary, the Holy Mother of God, that by her supplications she may reconcile me to her Son."

Hardly was the King dead when his attendants



The Abbey of St Stephen, Caen

mounted their horses and rode off; the serving-men stripped the room, and even the King's body, and likewise went to their homes; the great Conqueror was left alone!

The clergy, ever mindful of their holy offices, came to the death chamber, rever-

ently laid out the body, lit the candles at the head and feet and knelt to pray of their charity for the soul of William, King of England.

All was in confusion. The sons had made no arrangement for their father's funeral, and for the moment there was a difficulty as to who would pay for it. Hearing this, a poor knight, Herluin by name, came forward, and out of love of God, and respect for the memory of the dead, undertook to pay all charges. The body was conveyed on a barge by the river to





Death of the Conqueror

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Caen, where it was met by the abbot and a procession of monks and townspeople. As the procession was nearing the Abbey of St Stephen cries of "Fire!" sounded on every side. A house was alight and the flames were spreading rapidly. The element which had marked other crises of the King's career in life met him on his journey to the grave. The crowd following the bier fled to rescue their property, if need be, from the flames. A few monks and the abbot alone remained to bear the body to the cathedral. There they found that many had assembled, among them the King's son Henry, who, having secured his treasure, was now free to honour the dead. Odo of Bayeux too, already released, was among the mourners. The Mass was sung by the Bishop of Evreux, who preached the funeral oration, reciting all the valiant deeds of William, and bidding his hearers pray for the King's soul, and forgive any wrong that they had suffered through him. He had scarcely finished when, through the dim aisles of the church, a harsh voice rang out, "This man was a robber. The ground whereon this church was built belonged to me and mine. The man for whom ye pray took it from my father to build this church. I forbid you to bury the body of the spoiler there or to cover it with my earth."

Prince Henry and the bishops hastily conferred together, and then called the interrupter to them. There was no doubt that the charge was true, and they were obliged to promise full payment. In the meantime, in order that the King might be buried, they paid the man sixty shillings as the price of the seven foot of earth where the body was to be laid.

Before the Conqueror's body was quietly laid to

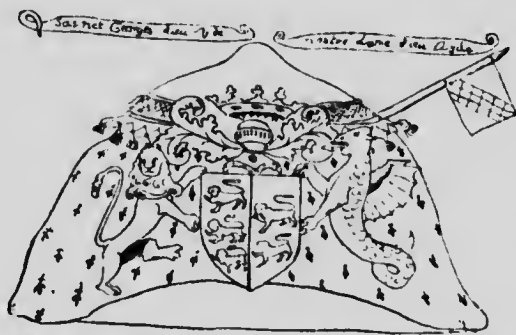
## LAST YEARS OF THE CONQUEROR

rest there was another difficulty ; the coffin had been so hastily made that it came to pieces.

William Rufus, who had cared so little for his father that he allowed a stranger to pay for the last rites, later on erected a gorgeous monument of gold and silver and precious stones over his remains. On it was an epitaph in Latin which told of William's conquests in France, and ended with the reflection :

"The great King William lieth here  
Entombed in little grave,  
So great a lord, so small a house  
Sufficeth him to have."

No word of England was engraved on his tomb. Some five hundred years later, at the time of the Huguenot risings in the sixteenth century, the cathedral was despoiled, and the shrine of the Conqueror was broken to pieces, the coffin opened and the bones scattered. A new tomb was afterwards erected, which we can see to-day, but this does not contain the ashes of the Conqueror of England.



Arms of William the Conqueror, King of England  
and Duke of Normandy



**W**ILLIAM RUFUS had not reached these shores when the Conqueror's end came (1087). He took with him his father's ring as a sign of his father's choice. He was at this time a man of twenty-four, not lacking in courage, but lacking in every other great quality.

The late King's wishes were well known in England, and without the formality of an election, eighteen days after the Conqueror's death, William II. was anointed by Lanfranc, and received the homage of the Norman barons settled in England, and of the English themselves. Most of them felt very glad at heart that the Dukedom of Normandy and the Kingdom of England were no longer under one ruler.

No sooner was the ceremony over than Rufus rode with a kingly escort from London to Winchester. He wanted to see the royal treasure, to handle it, to feel that he possessed it. William Pontefract was appointed to open the doors of the strong-room. No magician's cave glittered more with gold and gems than this dark chamber.

Rufus's eyes glittered, as well they might, when he

## THE RED KING

thought that all this was his own. Then, remembering the strenuous years of his father's life, and that he was now lying in the tardily bought grave in Caen cathedral, he called to his goldsmith and asked how much would be wanted of all this treasure to make a splendid tomb for the late King. Bars of gold, vessels full of jewels and brilliant enamels were allotted. The goldsmith rejoiced to have such rich materials for the work, and promised to make a worthy canopy for the tomb of the Conqueror.

William Rufus's troubles as a reigning monarch were now to begin. Robert, who felt that, as the eldest son, he should have had the kingdom of England, persuaded the Norman barons to rise in his favour, and Odo of Bayeux placed himself at their head. Rufus, realising that he was in danger of losing the country, resolved to conciliate the English, so that they might unite with him. He summoned some of the leading Englishmen to a conference and promised many reforms, among others that the cruel forest laws should be relaxed. The English rallied to him, and a summons was issued: "Let every man that is not worthless, whether in a town or out of a town, leave his house and come."

Thirty thousand Englishmen responded to this appeal and Rufus now laid siege to Rochester, garrisoned by Odo and his followers. They held it against him for some time, until, running short of provisions, and despairing of help from Normandy, Odo went to the King and agreed to submit. This, however, was merely a trick. The King's envoys returned with him to receive the submission of the garrison, but directly they



Arms borne by Rufus

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

were inside the courtyard Odo commanded the warders to raise the drawbridge, and the King's men were Odo's prisoners.

Rufus now issued an order that any of the English



The Trumpets sounded as Odo went out

who refused to come to his aid and help to raise the siege should be branded with the terrible word "nithing," worthless. The siege lasted for some time longer, then Odo saw that he was beaten, and he made terms. He promised to surrender on condition that he should be

## THE RED KING

allowed to return to Bayeux unmolested, and he begged as a special favour, which, however, was not granted, that martial music should not be played on the day of his humiliation. The trumpets sounded as he went out, and the soldiers who had so long been surrounding the castle greeted him with the cry, "halter and gallows!" With his departure the rising in favour of Robert came to an end.

Rufus, not content with this, soon went over to Normandy and harassed Robert's duchy. After some damage had been done the two brothers made peace with one another in order to make common cause against Henry, whom they besieged in his castle on Mount St Michael. This castle, built on a steep rock surrounded by the sea, was almost impregnable, but Henry's great difficulty was that the water supply ran short. In his trouble he sent to his brothers asking that water should be sent in. Rufus would have refused, it was against the rules of the great game of war, but Robert insisted, "Dost thou esteem greater the value of a draught of water, which is everywhere to be had for asking, than of thy brother, though thou hast but him and me."

The siege ended in a compromise, but Henry had suffered so severely that he lost nearly all his belongings. On the death of Archbishop Lanfranc, the wise counsellor of William, Ralph Flambard became Rufus's trusted adviser and proved a very bad one. The King did not hold himself bound by his promise to govern with justice, and the English had to learn that the son was a harder master than the father had been.

One of the burdens which pressed most heavily on the poor folk was the practice of requiring the country

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

people to provide everything for nothing when the King made his progresses through the country. At the best it was a hard struggle for the people to pay their dues to the King and provide for their own necessities, and the rumour that he was to pass through the neighbourhood made their hearts sink within them. Many would abandon their cottages and fly into the woods to hide till he had gone. The servants and soldiers of the King in their callousness not only expected free quarters and board and lodging, but they also considered that everything they could possibly lay their hands on belonged to them. When they had eaten and drunk their fill they would wash their horses' feet with any wine that remained, and load them with the provisions which were left over, and ride away.

There was also grave injustice done to the luckless people who were accused of hunting in the royal forests. In vain did they plead innocence; they were sentenced to trial by fire.

This was nothing better than a form of torture, though in those days men believed in its efficacy for revealing the truth. The accused were obliged to carry a red-hot iron in their hands, and if, after a few days, they could show their hands with no scar on them, it was held to be a proof of their innocence. In the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle we have an account of one of these ordeals. "On the day appointed the whole fifty suffered their sentence in its utmost rigour; it was a painful sight to see; but God by preserving their hands from all burning, clearly showed their innocence and the malice of their persecutors."

Probably there was some humanity shown to the



# ENGLAND IN THE XII<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY



## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

unfortunates which accounted for this marvel. Rufus was told of the result but he would not be balked of his revenge.

"By the holy face of Lucca," he said—it was his favourite oath, "God is no judge in these matters, I am the judge!" and he imposed severe penalties on his victims.

Omens were not wanting that the Red King's days were drawing to a close. Abbot Fulchred, preaching in the newly consecrated Gloucester Cathedral, finished his sermon with the prophecy, "Lo! the bow of wrath from on high is bent against the wicked, and the arrow swift to wound is drawn from the quiver. It shall soon smite and that suddenly, let every man that is wise amend his ways and avoid his stroke." At this time Rufus was staying at Winchester, and he was haunted by forebodings of disaster. One morning a monk came to the castle and asked to have audience. He told Rufus of a terrible dream he had had the previous night. He had seen Christ sitting on a throne, supplicated by a woman who was saying, "O Saviour of mankind, look down with pity on thy people groaning under the yoke of William." The King laughed contemptuously and asked if he was expected to put off a hunting-party he had already planned because of the dreams of a snoring monk. A great repast was held in Winchester Castle, and after the King, Prince Henry and the guests had partaken all got ready for the chase. At this moment a workman came in and presented the King with half-a-dozen new arrows. He looked at them with the eyes of a man who knows a well-made arrow when he sees one. "By the holy face of Lucca," he said, presenting two to Walter Tyrrel, his intimate friend, "a good marksman should have good arrows."

## THE RED KING

In the bright July sunshine the King and his companions rode into the New Forest, that place of ill-omen to the Conqueror's race. The trees made a welcome shade, the sward yielded to the hoofs of the horses as they galloped over it. When they reached their destination the parties separated, Prince Henry with some companions going one way, Rufus and Tyrrel another. They kept together, boon companions as they were, looking forward to a day's pleasure. A wild deer, pursued by the hounds, passed them; Rufus took aim, but the string of his bow broke. The deer, its piteous eyes wild with terror, stopped still for a second, and Rufus signalled to Tyrrel to shoot. Apparently he did not understand, and the King cried out impatiently, "Shoot, as if it were the devil." An arrow whizzed through the air; from whence it came none ever knew; it pierced Rufus in the breast, and he fell dead. Tyrrel fled and immediately took ship to the Continent, fearing that he would be accused of the murder. The King lay there deserted. But the rumour of his death quickly spread. Prince Henry, hunting in another part of the forest, had taken refuge in the house of one of the peasantry in order to mend a broken bowstring. An old woman came in and asked who he was. The brother of the King, she was told. "He will soon be king," she said ominously, and as he was leaving the hut he met men who told him of his brother's death.

Some peasants passing through the forest bore the Red King's body to Winchester, for Henry, as callous to his brother's end as he had been to his father's, had galloped off with all speed to secure the royal treasure.



**CHAPTER IX**  
**THE GREAT**  
**ARCHBISHOPS**

**A** CHANGE came over the Church in England with the Conquest, partly due to the first fire of religious enthusiasm having died away. The Church began to be a powerful force in the kingdom, not only spiritually, as it had always been, but politically. There were some mighty men who ruled over its destinies, who were able to hold their own with the kings in the constant friction that arose as to the relative positions of Church and State.

Such a one was Lanfranc, an Italian by birth, who was born at Pavia, 1005. His earlier studies were of law and philosophy, and he became a distinguished scholar. When he left Pavia he journeyed to Normandy and founded a school at Avranches. Whilst he was working there, and making his school famous throughout the whole of Europe, Ordericus Vitalis tells us that he, "like another Plato, learned to philosophise. But one day the love of the eternal flashed into his mind, and the love of true wisdom enlightened his soul."

His conversion, like that of Paul at Damascus, came in a moment, and when it came he no longer felt content

## THE GREAT ARCHBISHOPS

with his high position at Avranches, and with the renown of his scholars; he desired a life of simple poverty, away from the distractions of ambition. But he knew that there would be a great outcry if he let it be known that he was going to leave. Therefore, without saying a word to anyone, he went away one day into the wild country that lay around the city. As he was crossing a forest he was attacked by robbers, who took from him all that he had, and left him bound to a tree. In this pitiful plight he remained all night; but his sufferings did not turn him from his purpose to live a life of complete isolation from the world.

In the morning some travellers released him. He questioned them, and they told him that there dwelt, a little farther on at Bec, a most holy man named Herlwin, who with a few followers lived a life of simplicity and devotion. Lanfranc journeyed on till he came to a cluster of rude-looking huts, by the side of a stream, in a clearing of the forest. He saw a man busy attending to the baking of bread.



Norman Pitcher

"God save you, brother!" he cried.

"Are you from Lombardy?" asked the other, recognising his accent.

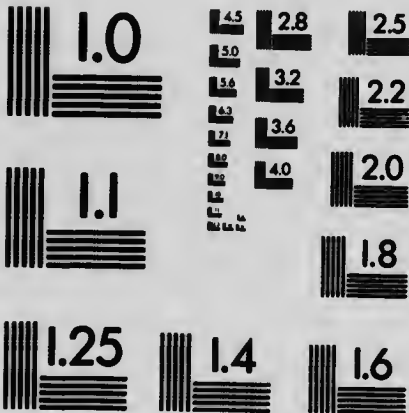
"I am," replied Lanfranc. He was certain as he spoke that this must be Herlwin, and he fell at his feet and begged that he might be received into the order.

It soon became evident to the quiet little community at Bec that this was no ordinary convert seeking retirement from the world, but a man of learning. Herlwin was not himself well educated, and he begged Lanfranc to teach him, and to teach the others. Gradually under



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## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

his tuition there grew up at Bec a school which rivalled in fame the one from which he had fled. Lanfranc was elected prior, and gradually the small cluster of huts became insufficient to accommodate all who came there.

Meantime the fame of the little community had reached the ears of the Duke of Normandy, and he, with his usual insight, recognised in Lanfranc a man



of great ability. It was at the time when William was having difficulties with Rome in arranging his marriage with Matilda of Flanders. The Pope had forbidden the marriage at the Council of Rheims, giving as his reason the fact that they were too closely related to one another. Lanfranc sided with the Pope, and the Duke was so angry that he ordered the Prior of Bec to leave Normandy. The prior, undismayed, made ready to obey. The brethren at Bec had but one horse, a poor, lame creature, and on this Lanfranc rode to see



## THE GREAT ARCHBISHOPS

the Duke. William, thinking he was a long time coming, had ridden out to meet him, and hasten his departure. He expected to see Lanfranc riding in state accompanied by a retinue, and when he discovered that the traveller urging on a miserable nag was the offending prior, he was astonished.

"Give me a better horse and I shall go quicker," said Lanfranc, unperturbed.

The Duke liked his humour, and the two became fast friends; Lanfranc promised to plead in favour of William's proposed marriage with Matilda at Rome, where he was shortly going to attend an important council.

Lanfranc was not allowed to remain much longer in retirement at Bec. Not long after he was made abbot of the Monastery of St Stephen's, at Caen, which Duke William had founded. It was a red-letter day in his life when he was inducted, and he found that his fame had preceded him. After he had received the benediction from the Archbishop of Rouen, he went to the chapter-house, where the brethren were waiting to receive him, and as he entered all went on their knees and made obeisance. The prior knelt with the rest and Lanfranc with courtly grace went up to him, and giving him the kiss of peace, led him to sit by his side. Then the newly elected abbot was taken to the refectory, where two of the monks, bending low, served him with towel and water for the ceremonial washing.

Lanfranc was worn out when he went to his room, and the next morning the abbey was hushed to stillness that he might not be waked rudely from his slumbers. The schoolboys who lived there—for there was a school at Caen—were roused in the usual way; their coverlets

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

were pulled off, but they were told to rise quietly, dress themselves, and go to their lessons without a sound.



Norman Bishop

An hour or two after, the ceremony of the day took place. Lanfranc, attired in the robes of abbot, wearing his mitre, and holding in his hand the pastoral staff, appeared in the chapel. The beautiful service was sung, and then the abbot went to the gate of the monastery and blessed the poor and ordered that they should be fed.

While Lanfranc was ruling with a firm hand over the monks at Caen, William was busy organising the Conquest of England. The Duke of Normandy had not forgotten the scholarly prelate, and some time after the Battle of Senlac he sent for him to come and help to reform the Church in England. It was William's policy to place Normans in all the important positions in the kingdom, and he was anxious to have the right sort of ecclesiastics, men of wisdom and goodness, who would be able to steer their course with discretion. Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, was deposed, and William

## THE GREAT ARCHBISHOPS

knew of no one who would make so efficient an archbishop as Lanfranc. He was at first very reluctant to accept this great office; he did not wish to leave the orderly life at Caen and plunge into the turmoil of the still half-conquered England. When he wrote to Pope Alexander II., telling him of his appointment, he said: "In vain did I plead my own incapacity, my ignorance of the language and of the barbarous people. They did not admit my plea. . . . I took the burden upon me, and such are the unmitigated cares and troubles to which I am daily subjugated that I am weary of my life."

One of the difficulties between the King and the churchmen lay in the supremacy of the Pope. The headquarters of the Church were then, and are still for the Roman Catholic communion, at Rome, where the Supreme Pontiff directs its course. The Conqueror himself was well aware that there might be many difficulties owing to this papal authority, and that his kingly rights might be endangered. In order to safeguard these, he ordered that the Pope should not be acknowledged in his dominions without his permission, that no papal letter should be published, or punishment be pronounced against anyone in his kingdom without his being first informed.

Lanfranc on his election had to face many difficulties. The Cathedral Church of Canterbury had been burnt down, and the solemn service of his consecration had to be performed in a shed. Then he had immediately to leave the kingdom to go to Rome to receive the pallium, which signified the official recognition of the Pope of his appointment. When he returned his first care was to rebuild the cathedral, but it was not the

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

one which we see standing to-day. It must have been a somewhat inferior structure, for in the reign of Henry I. we read that another cathedral was built to replace it.

Lanfranc was a zealous partisan of the Norman cause in England, but his successor treated the English with marked consideration, realising that all were children of one Almighty Father.

A pleasant interlude in the difficult task of ruling the English Church was a brief holiday which Lanfranc



London Bridge in the Norman Period

spent at Bec, on the occasion of the dedication of the grand new monastery which had been built to replace the primitive huts. How different this visit from the first one, when, weary and footsore, he found the peace he sought with the brethren living by the side of the stream! Perhaps he regretted that he had not been allowed to end his days in that quiet place, away from the distractions and difficulties that beset him in England. He went as an honoured guest, but he

## THE GREAT ARCHBISHOPS

refused to have any special recognition, preferring to be treated as though still a member of the community.

On his return to England many duties awaited him. He had to assert his claim for the restoration of the lands of the Church ; he had to try to settle the vexed question as to whether or not the clergy should marry, and as to what was to be done if they were already married and would not part with their wives.

He was a generous man and built several churches, and two hospitals for the sick poor ; he also built a fine palace to live in.

Lanfranc was terribly distressed when he heard of the Conqueror's death, and those near him feared that his mind would give way. The necessity for action, however, gave him strength to throw off his despondency. He knew that there was much to be done, that he must use the weight of his authority and influence in seeing that the Conqueror's last wishes were fulfilled, and that his son William, who had ever been faithful to him, should reign in England. Rufus was anointed and crowned by Lanfranc at Winchester, and during the two remaining years of the Archbishop's life he was a wise counsellor to the unruly Red King.

His successor as Primate of the Church in England was Anselm, also an Italian, who was born at Aosta in 1033. As a lad he was full of imagination, and to his youthful fancy this world and the next were very close to each other. Round about the home of his childhood were the majestic mountains of Italy, and he thought that heaven was on the distant mountains that seemed to touch the clouds, and whose snowy tops glistened in the sunshine. He often reflected that perchance it would not be so very difficult to climb

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

the mountain-side, and reach the celestial city. One night he dreamed that he, a little pilgrim, set forth on the quest. As he toiled upward he was troubled to see the peasant maidens who worked in the fields idling over their task. He reached at length the city of light,



The Boy Anselm

and, entering the palace of the King, he complained to Him that he had seen His slothful handmaidens neglecting their work in the valley below. The King received him graciously, and bade the steward bring some pure white bread that he might be refreshed.

He told this dream to his mother, and she, who had first told

him of heaven and of the Great King, treasured up the remembrance in her heart. She rejoiced to see the bent of the child's mind. His father too agreed that the boy was different from the lads about him, and took steps to have him thoroughly educated. Anselm profited greatly by the instruction he received; he worked too hard, however, and had fits of terrible depression in con-

## THE GREAT ARCHBISHOPS

sequence. When he was fifteen he desired to retire from the world, and made his way to a monastery and begged to be admitted as a monk.

"Have you your father's consent?" asked the Abbot. Anselm shook his head. "Then you must wait till you are a man," said the Abbot kindly. The lad returned home and for some years lived the ordinary life of a youth of his age. But this did not satisfy him long, and when he was twenty-three he went forth on his travels, and crossed Italy into France. He had heard of the Abbey of Bec, and he made his way there, and entered the monastery at the time when Lanfranc was ruling as prior. Later on his father died and left him a fortune, but nothing tempted him from the life he had chosen. He remained at Bec, where he became prior and afterwards abbot. His was a more deeply spiritual nature than Lanfranc's. His fame as a wise and holy counsellor spread, and letters were often brought to him from people living in different parts of Europe asking for his advice. He took part in the life of the school, and had, like Arnold of Rugby in the nineteenth century, a very high ideal for his boys. He desired above all things that they should grow up to be men of firm character and aspirations. A teacher came to him one day and complained that the boys were unruly.

"What do you do?" asked Anselm.

"Beat them."

"And what sort of boys do they become?"

"Dull and brutal."

"You turn men into beasts," said Anselm sadly.

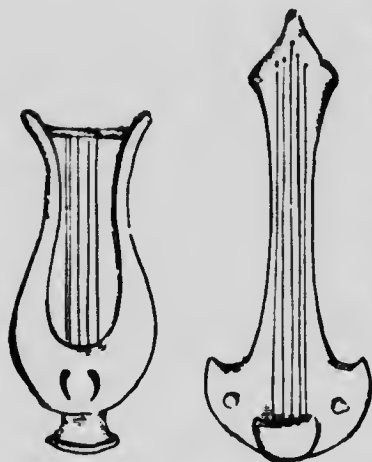
"What can I do? I constrain them as best I can."

"If you plant a young shoot in your garden, and

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

then hedge it in on all sides so that it cannot spread forth its roots and grow, it will become some misshapen thing. It will not grow aright even when it is set free. So these children have been planted in the garden of the Church, to grow and bring forth fruit for good. But you punish them so frequently that they bring forth nothing but evil. Can a goldsmith make a beautiful vessel by blows alone?"

Such was the spirit of the Abbot of Bec, who not only ruled his monastery with gentleness and wisdom but gave up his mind to deep and learned studies.



Musical Instruments

He cared for the sick and suffering, and would visit the monks in the infirmary and minister to them. There was one trait which especially showed the tenderness of his nature: he loved animals, and saw in them a sign of God's love for his creatures. He believed that it was the devil's work to be cruel to them. One day he saw a boy fasten a string on a bird's leg, and

then let it fly only to pull it back again. He remonstrated with the lad and told him that he reminded him of the devil dealing with his victims. Another day a frightened hare, chased by the hounds, ran for shelter under his horse. The huntsmen came up eager for sport. Anselm's eyes were filled with tears of pity, but he spoke in stern tones and forbade them to touch the terrified animal, which presently ran free into the woods.



## THE GREAT ARCHBISHOPS

He was called away from the quiet monastery for a life of fuller responsibility, if not of greater influence. For some time after Lanfranc's death Rufus, ever greedy for money, appropriated the income of the Archbishop of Canterbury and refused to appoint a successor.

Anselm came to England and made his way to the Court of the Red King and spoke plainly to him of the evil that he was doing.

"You should not believe scandal," replied Rufus flippantly.

The King's nobles were constantly urging him to appoint an archbishop. They had met the saintly Anselm and knew that no other could so worthily fulfil the duties of the office.

"He loves God alone," they pleaded with the King.

"He does not love the Archbishopric then," said Rufus incredulously. "And by the Holy Face of Lucca no one shall be Archbishop but myself."

Rufus in the midst of his follies was taken seriously ill, and thinking that heaven was angry with him for having appropriated the funds of the Church he sent for Anselm and confessed his sins and made promises of amendment. It was urged on him that he must immediately appoint a successor to Lanfranc at Canterbury. From his sick-bed he pointed to Anselm:

"I choose him as Archbishop."

There was a great shout of joy in the room, but Anselm was unmoved. He had no desire for worldly promotion, and pleaded that he did not feel fit to undertake the great responsibility. They argued with him, but he would not give in. They knew that he was the only man who might be a check on the lawlessness

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

of their monarch, so they urged and entreated him, but still he refused. Rufus grew impatient and they grew angry. They took Anselm by the shoulders and pulled and pushed him to the King's bedside, who placed the pastoral staff, the emblem that he was the shepherd of Christ's flock, in his hands and forced him to hold it.

He was taken to a church and there was consecrated and received the Archbishop's ring. As part of the ceremony the Bible was placed on his shoulder and opened at random, and the officiating cleric read the words, "He bade many. And sent his servants at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse"—an appropriate text, after the scene by the bedside.

Rufus soon regretted his penitence, and Anselm's difficulties began. He spoke of himself as "a gentle sheep yoked to a fierce bull," and soon these two, so unequally mated, began to quarrel.

Where once Harold's standard had been planted on the hill of Senlac a church had been built dedicated to St Martin, known as Battle Abbey, and Anselm was present to perform the service of consecration. He took this opportunity to preach in plain terms of the follies and vices of the King and his courtiers, of their weak love of dress and display. He appealed to the King no longer to seize the revenues of the Church but to appoint abbots to rule in the vacant sees.

"The abbeys are mine," said Rufus to him afterwards.

"They are God's," replied the Archbishop, "and the money which supports them was given to support His ministers."



Anselm made Archbishop

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Illustration by G. P. 1890.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Rufus confided to his intimates that he hated Anselm and that he should "hate him more every day."

Anselm left England and went to Rome, and whilst he was away Rufus met his death. Henry Beauclerc immediately summoned the Archbishop to return, but Anselm did not get on much better with the younger brother than with the older. They disputed as to whether the King or the Pope should have the right to elect the dignitaries of the Church, and on other points, and Anselm left the country once more. Later on there was a reconciliation and he returned to end his days in England.

When he died he was greatly mourned, for he had been one of the few Norman ecclesiastics who were really sympathetic to the English. He was a man who would have stood out in any age. In that age of fierce conflict his tender, just and upright nature shone with a light from the heaven which he had seen as a boy in his dreams, and in which, "among the spirits of light and power in the sphere of the sun," a greater dreamer than he, the poet Dante, saw him in his vision of Paradise.



Sacramental Wafer Box

## CHAPTER X.—HENRY BEAUCLERC



**H**ENRY, as we have seen, left his brother's body in the glades of the forest and galloped back to Winchester. He urged his horse forward as though he feared Robert, away on the First Crusade, might by some ill chance have returned. As he spurred his horse on in the direction of the capital and his dead brother's heritage, his thoughts travelled back for a moment to their childhood together, their boyhood and early manhood, their quarrels with Robert, their reconciliations. But Henry, essentially a man of business, did not let sentiment hinder his purpose. His thoughts soon turned to the future: "Rufus is dead—God rest his soul! I, Henry Beauclerc, am alive—I will be King of England. Robert, the thorn in my father's flesh, is expiating his sins in the Holy Land; he is not fit to sit on the throne of England."

Winchester, where the noble cathedral which we see to-day was already in some part at least standing, was soon in sight. Henry pressed on impatiently to the gates of the royal city, accompanied by some of the huntsmen, who had set forth so gaily in the

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

morning for their day's sport, a day which was to have so dramatic a close. They passed through the gates of the city, impatient not to lose a moment. It was no triumphal entry of the King of England, for, unheeding the passers-by, he rode on breathlessly



Winchester Cathedral

to the castle and demanded the presence of William de Breteuil.

"He is not here, sire," said the keepers, "he is hunting in the forest."

A messenger was despatched in hot haste, and after a little delay de Breteuil came riding furiously.

"The keys of the royal treasure," demanded Henry imperiously.

"Nay," said the faithful Breteuil, "we have promised otherwise."

"Promised?"

"Have you forgotten the faith we owe to your elder brother, Robert? He has received our homage."

## HENRY BEAUCLERC

"By the eyes of God," said Henry—he too had his favourite oath—"I am King!"

"Present or absent, Robert has a right to it," urged the other, trying to conciliate him.

Henry flushed with anger, and drew his sword. "This shall decide." The crowd cheered. Indifferent at first, they yielded to the challenge of Henry and felt that the spirit of the Conqueror was born again in his youngest son.

Breteuil knew he was on the losing side; he had struggled manfully but the odds were against him. The crowd surged forward to the castle—the treasure was unlocked.

A stop was put to the rioting when, at some little distance, a cart was seen lumbering slowly along the road. The little cortege scarce attracted attention at first; but it was noticed that the peasants leading the horse stopped and talked to passers-by, who would gaze curiously into the cart and follow it. And well they might, for on the floor of the cart, his body covered with rags, his red hair dishevelled, lay the remains of Rufus, King of England.

He had failed as a king; he had descended to base vices, to pettiness and meanness; wielding great power he had wrought great harm. There was none to mourn him, and the people in their hearts were glad that he would trouble them no more. A few monks performed the last offices, and his body was buried in the stately cathedral.

Henry rode to London and there, on 5th August 1100, he received the crown. He at once set about conciliating his new subjects, and especially tried to win the favour of the English, to whom he found

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

himself compelled to turn for support against the Norman barons. The charter which he issued immediately after his coronation is important, as it marks the beginning of liberty for the people. He promised the English people "to maintain your ancient liberties, to govern you after your own wishes. Stand by me



then faithfully ; if English bravery be with me, I fear not the threats of the Normans."

Henry now sought for a mate. In his wisdom he saw that could he but ally himself with the ancient house of Alfred he would win over many to his side. Malcolm of Scotland had married, as we have already seen, Margaret, the sister of Edgar Ætheling. Their daughter, Matilda, who was an orphan, was thus a granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, and it was her hand Henry sought in marriage. There was one obstacle, however, to this union. Matilda had been living with her aunt Christina in the Abbey of Romsey,



## HENRY BEAUCLERC

and had, it was said, been persuaded to take the veil, to avoid being compelled to marry a suitor whom she did not favour.

Anselm was at first unwilling that the vows to Holy Church should be annulled. The lady too was reluctant to be wooed. She had had many suitors, and, though not anxious to lead the cloistered life, preferred it to the prospect of being Henry's queen. It was represented to her that by marrying she would do much for the English people, whom she loved. "Oh, most noble and gracious woman," so they urged her, "if thou wouldst raise up from its nothingness the ancient honour of England, thou wouldst sign an alliance, and the blood of the two races would be mingled together as one."

The lady consented at length, and this union marked the strength of the movement in the fusing together of the English and Norman people, which had been gradually going on since the Conquest, and which was destined at last to swallow up race distinctions.

Henry was not to live in undisputed possession of his kingdom, and news reached him that Duke Robert was returning from the Holy Land. One of the first acts of the new King's reign had been to imprison in the Tower Ralph Flambard, his dead brother's evil counsellor. The Bishop, infamous though he was, did not lack social qualities, and he was possessed of an easy-going disposition that gained him many friends, some of whom helped him to contrive an escape—the first recorded escape from that historic prison-house.

All was well arranged; and on the appointed night the prisoner's guards were plied with drink, became drowsy and fell asleep. His serving-man then

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

entered the room with a huge flagon of wine, tightly coiled in the bottom of which was a strong rope. They tied the rope



to the fastening of the window, and Flambard with much difficulty managed to squeeze his fat body through the opening. He had forgotten to put on gloves, so that his flabby hands were horribly cut, as hand over fist he descended the rope and safely reached the ground. Swift horses were in readiness, and he was able to make good his escape to the coast, where he took boat for Normandy, and made his way to Duke Robert's court, who promptly made him Bishop of Lisieux.

Robert was a popular hero when he came back from the Holy Land. He was a courageous man and had taken part with glory in the siege of Nicaea, in the battle of Dorylaeum, where he was in command, and at the capture of Antioch.

Flambard had no great difficulty in persuading Robert to raise a force and sail to England to secure the crown, and in due course the expedition landed

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at Pevensey, where Robert was joined by many of the Norman nobles, the most important of whom was Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury. They marched towards Winchester, but Robert refused to take possession of the town when he heard that Henry's wife was ill there. The two armies met at Alton in Hampshire. Henry's force was composed largely of Englishmen, Robert's of Normans, and both were anxious to come to grips with one another. On the eve of battle, however, when all was ready for the encounter, the two brothers met and there was a reconciliation. Henry promised to give up his claim to Normandy, only reserving Domfront for himself. He also promised to give Robert a pension of three thousand marks a year. In return Robert renounced all claim on the throne of England and to homage from Henry.

In spite of this truce, Robert de Belesme, the most powerful noble in the kingdom, and the leader of the discontented barons, continued his warlike operations. He was called upon to answer for his treason before the King. He put in an appearance on the appointed day, and then asked leave to withdraw from the council-chamber to consult his friends. The King and his councillors thought he was a long time in returning, and at last, growing impatient, made inquiries, only to learn that he had been seen galloping away at all speed. The King now decided upon stern measures to bring him to subjection. At the head of an army of sixty thousand men he besieged Bridgnorth, which Belesme had fortified against him, for three weeks. The garrison then surrendered, and Henry and his army marched to Shrewsbury, where the castle was held by

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Belesme. Belesme, realising that the King's forces were too much for him, surrendered on the promise that his life should be spared. All his great estates were confiscated, and he was expelled from the country.

Henry now proceeded to punish the barons who had aided his brother, and Robert in anger returned to England to take their part. But Queen Matilda acted as mediator between the brothers, and again war was averted. Robert was attached to his sister-in-law, and the story goes that after a banquet, when he had drunk heavily, she persuaded him not only to consent to leave the country, but to renounce his pension. Whether this story be true or not Robert seems to have been unfairly treated.

Meantime, affairs in Normandy were going from bad to worse. Robert was an indifferent ruler. The people, and the clergy especially, suffered so much under his sway that they entreated Henry to come to their relief. Nothing loth, he decided to raise sufficient money for the expedition and taxed the English people almost to starvation point. It is said that, when they had absolutely nothing to give, they were driven from their wretched hovels, and their doors and windows were taken away and sold. Bands of labourers would seek the King out and throw their ploughshares at his feet, to show that they had nothing left to offer, and that the land could no longer be tilled. The people had suffered greatly in the reigns of the Conqueror and of Rufus, but the chronicler of the time complains that they suffered more now than before, for these exactions were claimed from people "utterly ruined—stripped of everything, against whom it was a cause of irritation that they had scarcely anything to lose."

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Having secured money for his expedition, Henry left his wife, Matilda, as regent in the country, and set sail for Normandy in the autumn of 1104, but this first expedition was rather to impress the Normans by his might than to do battle with them, for all he did was to make an armed progress round Domfront and one or two other towns.

The next year he decided to return with a more



definite policy in his mind. Robert was no ruler for Normandy: the seething discontent of clergy and people proved it over and over again. But before engaging in hostilities he suggested to the luckless Robert that he should voluntarily surrender Normandy. He told him bluntly that through his lack of seriousness, his incompetence as a ruler, he was not fit to hold his duchy. Robert, unwilling to accept his brother's estimate of his character and incompetence, naturally refused.

Henry landed at Barfleur and spent Easter at

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Carentan, where he found the church half full of the household goods of the peasantry, who used it as a sanctuary for their belongings in order to prevent their seizure by marauding soldiers.



Effigy of Henry I. at  
hester

At this Easter feast an amusing incident occurred. The English at that time wore their hair long, the Normans were close cropped, and Henry had adopted the English custom. His example had been followed by the nobles, and the habit greatly scandalised Serlo, Bishop of Séez.

Preaching before the King on Easter Day, with a seriousness worthy of a better cause, he thundered against the luxury of the day and entreated the King not to wear his hair as women wore theirs, and quoted what St Paul said on the subject. Henry was deeply moved by this outburst, and before he left the church consented to let Serlo cut off his locks. His nobles somewhat reluctantly followed his example.

It might have helped to better things if the Bishop had thundered against the cruelty of the age, when it was no uncommon thing for a captive to have his eyes put out or his limbs cut off.

We must not linger over Henry's campaign against his brother in Normandy. The decisive encounter took place at Tenchebrai on 28th September 1106, the forty-first anniversary of the Battle of Senlac. The forces of the two brothers met outside the town. Henry's army was commanded by Ralph of Bricquessart, the Earl of Meuland and the Earl of Surrey. Robert's

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was led by Mortain and Belesme. They were very evenly matched in point of numbers and prowess. The battle began by Mortain charging against Henry's van, but the men were so closely packed together that it was impossible for either side to gain a victory. A battle is as often won by strategy as by valour; a part of Henry's army was in reserve, and this detachment bore down unexpectedly on Robert's force and broke it in two. In the confusion which



Matilda

ensued, Robert was taken prisoner; the battle ended in a decisive victory for Henry, and Normandy became a dependency of the crown of England.

There is little more to tell of Robert's strange and adventurous career. Henry took him back to England and there for the remaining twenty-eight years of his life he lived in prison. The only change he got was in being removed from one castle to another. And though he did not have to suffer privations, for Henry in this respect treated him well, his restless spirit was broken in those long years of captivity.

After Robert had been in confinement some years

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Henry was asked by the Pope to justify his treatment of Robert, and his explanation was accepted. Henry pleaded that he did not attack Normandy till he knew it was in a state of utter wretchedness, and that he had been begged over and over again by the clergy to come to their aid. "At length," he said, "I laid siege to Tenchebrai, the real cavern of demons, where William, Count de Mortain, brought my brother against me with a large army, and I fought against it on the Starved Field in the name of the Lord and for the defence of my country. . . . As for my brother, I have not caused him to be bound in fetters like a captive enemy, but treated him like a noble pilgrim worn with long sufferings. I have placed him in a royal castle and supplied his table and wardrobe with all kinds of delicacies and luxuries in great abundance."



The Rood, Romsey Abbey Church





**I**N the year 1120, on one of his frequent visits to Normandy, Henry took with him his only son William, to whom, in their joy at the thought that a descendant of the great Alfred would once more sit on the throne, the English gave the title of Ætheling. When affairs were settled in the dukedom Henry and his son arranged to return to England.

The fleet was in readiness and hosts of courtiers and many nobles were to sail in the company which was to embark at Harfleur. While the final preparations were being made, a man came up to one of Henry's suite and begged that he might have an audience with the King—he had a favour to ask. He was Thomas, son of Etienne, and he pleaded with Henry for the privilege of being allowed to take him across in his own vessel *La Blanche Nef* (The White Ship).

"My father," he urged, "steered the *Mora*, in which the Duke of Normandy went to the Conquest of England."

"I have already chosen my ship," answered the King, "but my son shall journey with you."

All the youthful members of the Court wanted to accompany the Prince, and a number of the younger

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

knights and ladies in gay attire crowded on board, and with them were not a few young nobles who were coming to visit England. The vessel was so overloaded with the eager passengers that some of the older ones thought it prudent to disembark. Young Prince William was in high spirits—who so gay as he—the heir to England, the heir to Normandy, flattered and admired by all?

“Bring three barrels of wine,” he ordered, “let the men drink to our prosperous voyage in *La Blanche Nef*.”

The sailors, nothing loth, soon emptied the casks, and Thomas, son of Etienne, who was steering the vessel, partook as lavishly as any. In the evening, when all were over-merry, the signal for departure was given. The rowers—there were fifty of them—decided to try to overtake the King’s vessel, which had started some time previously. It was a bright moonlight night, a south wind was blowing, and the passengers on board the King’s ship thought in the stillness they heard a cry. “It is the sea birds,” they said one to another, but they felt a chill at their hearts.

Thomas, son of Etienne, in vain tried to steer the vessel on its proper course; his hand was unsteady, and the rowers in their mad haste did not notice that they were going towards a well-known danger spot, Catteraze, where were hidden rocks. Suddenly there was an ominous sound, a crunch as the vessel’s side was pierced, and the water poured in. There was just time to lower a boat and the young Prince was put into it, and urged to row away as quickly as he could. He rowed but a few strokes when, looking back to the sinking ship, he saw his half-sister, the Countess de la Perche, standing



"He rowed back to his sister's rescue"

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

on the deck. William's character had been cast in a manly mould; he rowed back to his sister's rescue, and no sooner was the boat alongside the *Blanche Nef* than the panic-stricken passengers jumped in, overloading it and sinking it like a stone to the bottom. Meanwhile the *Blanche Nef* heaved over and sank, with all on board save Thomas and a few of the crew, who clung to fragments of the wreck. Thomas asked in agonised tones as to the safety of the young Prince.

"He is lost!"

The words struck him to the heart, and with a cry he loosed his hold and sank.

Of that light-hearted company but one was preserved to tell the tale. The sole survivor, a poor butcher of Rouen, was picked up the next morning by some fishermen in a half-dying condition; he told the sorrowful story and the news quickly spread, but none dared tell the King.

Henry had landed safely in England and expected to be rejoined by his son. Though the youth's fate was known, and many were mourning for their dead, they dared not tell the bereaved father. At last, seeing that the news could not be longer kept from him, they deputed Theodore of Blois, who was but a youth, to break the sad tidings. The young man entered the King's presence and, kneeling at his feet, told him in simple words of the fate of the vessel and all that were in it.

Henry fainted away and for many days was grievously ill from the shock.

"He lived—for life may long be borne  
Ere sorrow break its chain;—  
Why comes not death to those who mourn?  
He never smiled again."



**H**ENRY'S wife Matilda had died some years previously. She was buried in Winchester, and the epitaph on her tomb and in the hearts of the people was, "Mold the Good Queen." The King had one other child, a daughter, Matilda, and on her all his hopes were now fixed.

In her character and defects the Princess was representative of the purposeful women of that Anglo-Norman time, women who ruled kingdoms when their lords were absent on a crusade or at war with their neighbours, and who, from leading a large life, were women of force and purpose, unscrupulous at times, but never lacking in courage.

Matilda was born in London, and her childhood ended when she was seven years old, for at that age her father arranged a great marriage for her. She was to wed Henry V., Emperor of Germany, a man of over forty. This magnificent union was paid for in bitter privations by the English people, for a dowry of ten

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

thousand marks was her marriage portion, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us, somewhat pathetically, that "it cost the English nation dear." The child princess was taken to Utrecht by the Bishop of Cambrai, and there she was solemnly betrothed, and a month later crowned, the Archbishop of Coln holding her in his arms for the service. She had come over with a number of English lords, but these were sent back again, for the child was to be surrounded by her husband's subjects and to learn their habits and customs. She grew up as a German lady and when she was fifteen she was married to Henry V., and for eight years she lived with her royal husband. Then he died and the Empress Matilda at twenty-three was a widow. The Emperor had found in her a very able helpmeet and she was loved by his people. When he was dying he placed in her hands the sceptre as a symbol that it was his wish that she should reign after him, and many of the princes of Germany urged her to become their sovereign. The strong, ambitious Matilda would have been willing to assume this responsibility, but her father had other plans. The *Blanche Nef* had foundered and she was now his only child. He was troubled as to the succession in England and he decided that she should reign after him.

With this purpose in view he summoned a great assembly of the barons and bishops, and English and Normans both attended. He called on all those present to swear to be faithful to Matilda and to acknowledge her as the lady of England and Normandy.

A young man came eagerly forward to be the first to take the oath. He was Stephen, Count of Blois.

Henry now bethought himself of finding another

## THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY I

husband for his daughter, and his choice fell upon Count Geoffrey of Anjou, a youth of fifteen. Henry had taken a great fancy to the boy; he had honoured him by being his sponsor when he was made a knight, and had given him rich gifts on that occasion<sup>1</sup>—“a



Stephen of Blois doing homage to Matilda

Spanish horse, a double steel coat of mail and cuisses—lance and arrow proof—spurs of gold, an escutcheon adorned with golden lions, a helmet enriched with jewels, a lance of ash with a Poitiers head, and a sword made by Galand—the most renowned of the ancient artificers.”

The boy was known as Plantagenet, from his liking for a sprig of flowering broom (*plante-de-genêt*—broom plant) which he always wore in his cap.

The marriage was not destined to bring happiness,

<sup>1</sup> Thierry's "Norman Conquest."

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

for the two got on very badly and quarrelled incessantly. A year after their marriage Geoffrey drove his wife out of Anjou. Some time later there was a temporary reconciliation, and a few years after a son was born to them whom they named Henry, after his grandfather.



Plante-de-genêt

The King was delighted at the birth of this boy and called together another solemn meeting of the nobles to swear fealty once more to Matilda, and also to her son after her.

Two years later Henry died suddenly. He had been hunting and returned with sharpened appetite to enjoy his dinner. On the table was a dish of lampreys, of which he was particularly fond. It is a fish like an eel, and was considered a great delicacy in those days, and only appeared on the tables of the great. Henry ate his fill and was taken very ill shortly afterwards. Some said he was poisoned, others that the fish had brought on his end. He died a few days later, in the year 1135.

Henry I.'s reign was very important in the evolution of the British constitution. He had, as you will remember, issued a charter on his coronation, a charter of great importance, for, coming as it did after the despotic rule of William Rufus, it promised to remedy many of the grievances under which people had been suffering. It was in some ways a recognition of the fact that the King holds his high office through the good will of his subjects, and that, as it is through them that he receives his revenue, it is in his interest as much as in theirs to see that they are well governed and contented. He re-



## THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY I

issued this charter several times during his reign, and in so doing he was able to impress upon his people that he had fulfilled many of his pledges. For thirty years of his reign, an unusually long time in mediæval days, there was peace in England, and during that time great progress was made in the government.

Henry I. had an eye for the right man for a place of trust, and many men of low degree rose to positions of honour solely through their intelligence and capability. To such men were given rich rewards in estates which had been forfeited to the crown. They would be made sheriffs and judges and advisers to the King. Henry found that he must have wise counsellors and that these men must be always at hand, not living on estates far away and having long journeys to travel before he could consult them. The head of these advisers was the Chancellor, who had under him a number of secretaries. At the head of them all was the Justiciar who took the King's place when he was away, and who ruled over the barons who formed the King's court—the Curia Regis, as it was called. This court made the laws, or rather consented to them. It had other powers as well. The



Norman Shepherd

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

hundred and county courts which were established before the time of the Conquest were still in existence,



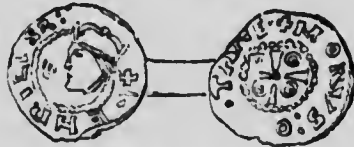
Knight of the Period of Henry I.

but they required reorganising, and Henry ordered that they should meet at the same time and place as they did in the days of Edward the Confessor. According to the feudal system the barons held that they were responsible to the King, and had a right to deal directly with him, but that those who held estates under them had no right of appeal from their judgment. But Henry I. saw, apart from weakening the power of the King, what grave injustice might be done through this system. In order to remedy it he sent round some of his advisers, who were called justices, and these travelled to the different county courts, and heard the cases, and took care that the barons should not deal unjustly with their tenants and vassals.

The Curia Regis had another very great work to do. It had to collect the taxes. These taxes were paid on to a chequer-table very much like a chess-board, marked out in squares, each square representing a certain sum of money, from thousands of pounds to pence, and the sums collected could thus be added up

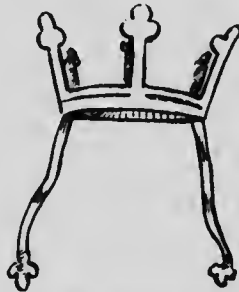
## THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY I

with ease. For this reason the court where the money was paid in was called the Court of the Exchequer. Henry did not so much make new arrangements as modify and improve old ones. In all his reforms he was aided by Roger of Salisbury, who started life as a poor monk and became Justiciar. Henry was somewhat extravagantly called by some of his admirers the Lion of Righteousness, and it was said of him after his death: "good man he was, and mickle awe was of him. Durst nane misdo against other on his time. Peace he made for man and deer."

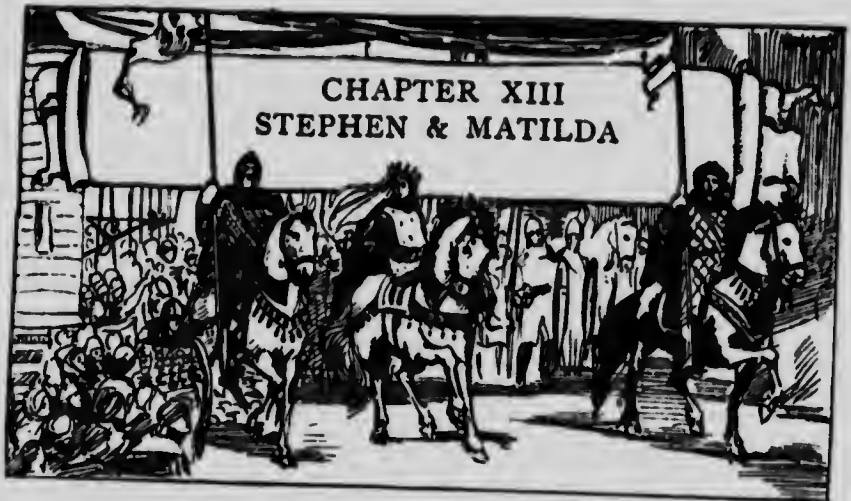


Coin of Henry I.

He had been in many respects a great king; he had laid the foundation of just government in England. He was a man of business, cool-headed, somewhat cold, but a wise governor. "God give him the peace he loved," said the Archbishop of Rouen, when he heard that he had passed away.



Crown of Henry I.



**O**NCE more we are to read of strife and misery through there being no fixed law of succession. The dead King's wishes counted for something, but the man in possession counted for more. Stephen, Count of Blois, the first to swear allegiance to Matilda, was the first to betray his trust. He claimed the throne as a nephew of Henry I., and in virtue of his sex, though in England there was no law to prevent a woman sitting on the throne. In any case he had an elder brother who had a better right, but Stephen cared little for that. Directly he heard of Henry's death he sailed at once for England, and, like his two predecessors on the throne forgot his reverence for the dead in his extreme anxiety to grasp all for himself.

He had a large following, for he was popular with his fellows, brave and generous. He had been a great favourite with Henry I., but he lacked the solid qualities that go to make a ruler of men.

## STEPHEN AND MATILDA

He landed on the coast of Kent, and, somewhat to his surprise, was received in silence by the people of the countryside. However, he marched straight to London, where he was eagerly welcomed. Matilda's claim was set aside ; Hugh Bigot had declared on oath that Henry had, in his last hours, disinherited her, and that he had absolved the bishops, barons and prelates from their oaths of fealty. We cannot take Bigot's word for it, for he was a treacherous man, but nevertheless many people believed him, and his assertion was of immense use to Stephen in forwarding his claim to the throne.

Stephen was elected King on St Stephen's Day, 1135, but there was no enthusiasm shown, for the hearts of some misgave them for their broken promise to the dead monarch. After his coronation the King's body was brought over to England, and Henry Beauclerc was laid to rest in the abbey he had founded at Reading, where he lies to this day, and where we in this century have raised a cross to his memory. Stephen attended his uncle's funeral in solemn state, and when it was over he tried to conciliate the people by making promises of good government, none of which he afterwards fulfilled.

But he was not to have it all his own way. King David of Scotland, Matilda's uncle, was faithful to her, and raided the North of England in the hope of furthering her cause. He marched down towards Towton Moor in Yorkshire, where the English were in waiting for him. Stephen could not be there for he was fighting in the South, and the English were led by the Bishop of Durham. Their standard was composed of the mast of a vessel set up on a cart. At

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

the top of it was placed a box containing the consecrated host, and round it were hung the banners of St Peter of York, St Wilfrid of Ripon and St John of Beverley. Thus the standard was a rallying signal not only for the English who feared the invasion of the

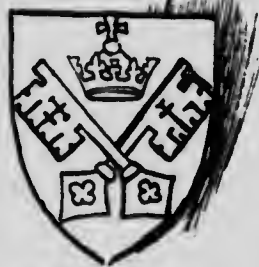


Ripon

Scots, but for those who respected the presence of the sacred Host and the three holy banners.

The science of war had changed as the years went on and the English had learnt something of the art of warfare from the Normans. The great battle-axe was seldom used. They had learned the skilful use of the bow and arrow for, as we have seen, the Conqueror introduced the long bow into England. Round the consecrated standard the flower of Norman chivalry had gathered, and envoys came telling them of the near approach of the wild Scottish army. Raoul, the Bishop, made a final appeal to the Normans.

"O most illustrious of this land," he cried, "ye who are the dread of France and were the conquerors of England—behold Scotland, after submitting to you, now undertakes to drive you from the land which you occupy. Vanquish these half-naked men who oppose to your swords and lances nothing but the skin of their own bodies. Their spears are long but the points are blunt. These men of Galloway in their vain boasting have cried that the beverage sweetest to them is the blood of the Norman.



St Peter of York

Let none of them return to boast that he has quaffed this liquor."

## STEPHEN AND MATILDA

When he had finished his oration he gave his hand to William of Albermarle and cried out, "I give thee my troth either to conquer or die." Every Norman repeated the oath, "I give thee my troth either to conquer or die," and as they said the words the Scots were seen approaching.

King David with his son Henry and but two hundred armed knights were followed by a motley crew, that seemed to the more civilised English and Normans to be composed of barbarians. There were Highland and Galwegian footmen, commanded by David, levies from Cumberland and Northumberland commanded by his son Henry. No sooner were they on the field than the battle began; with wild shouts of "Albin! Albin!" they rushed into the fray. At the first onslaught the men of Cumberland charged the Normans and broke through their ranks, but the better organisation of the Norman army told; they rapidly reformed and drove back the sturdy Cumbrians. The armour of the Normans, clad as they were in shirts of mail, protected them from the spears which broke on their helmets. The Norman archers sent volleys of arrows into the midst of the enemy. "It was fine," says a writer of that day, "to see the stinging flies issue in swarms from the quivers of the men of the South, and darken the air like a cloud of dust."

It was skill and not valour that was lacking in the wild men of the North. "I who wear no armour," shouted one of the chiefs, "will go as far this day as anyone with breastplate of mail." But the odds were against them, and the Scots were so thoroughly beaten that they were obliged to retreat in all haste to the North. And with this Battle of

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

the Standard (1138) the Scottish invasion came to an end.

In spite of this piece of good luck Stephen was unable to hold the kingdom. The Norman barons were too much for him. They fortified their castles and ruled as petty monarchs over their domains. The King was particularly exasperated by Roger, Bishop of



Badge of Stephen

Salisbury, and his son, who had been made Chancellor. He called upon them to give up their fortresses, which he pretended they were fortifying against him. Thus he made the Church, so powerful whether as friend or foe, his active enemy—the Church which boasted that she had put him on the throne, and that kings only ruled through her good favour! He could not have made a more fatal mistake, nor could Matilda have chosen a better time for landing to enforce her claims to the throne.

Had she been a woman of great character, and able at this juncture to take the tide at its flood, England would have been her. But as it was, she shares with Stephen the odium of the years of anarchy that were to follow, a sorrowful time for the common people, when each feudal baron administered so-called justice, inflicted fines, and condemned to death those who had offended him in his own little kingdom.

Matilda landed at Arundel and made her way to the castle of her stepmother Queen Adeliza, Henry I.'s second wife, where she was hospitably received. Stephen at once laid siege to the castle, but soon retired. His hands were full elsewhere, for the country was divided between the two claimants. Taking a

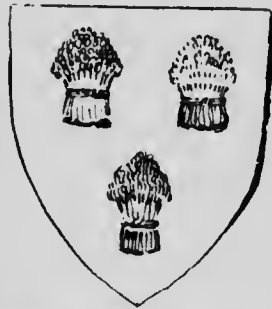


## STEPHEN AND MATILDA

broad and general rule, the whole of the West of England favoured Matilda, the East was true to Stephen.

The year 1140 was one of the blackest in English annals. The country was in a state of civil war. William of Newburgh, who wrote at that time, tells us "that every man did what was right in his own eyes, nay, not what was right but what was wrong also, for every lord was king and tyrant in his own house." Sometimes they fought on one side, sometimes on another, accepting payment for their services.

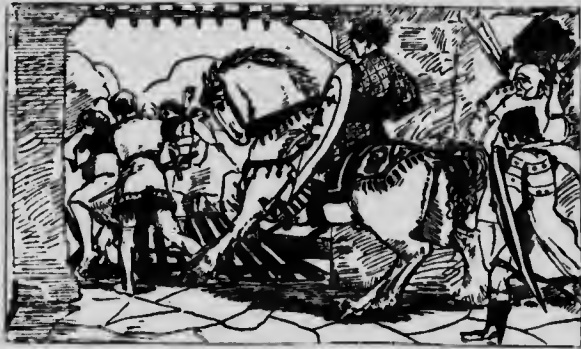
It was not till the next year, 1141, that the partisans of Stephen and Matilda came to a hand-to-hand struggle. Robert of Gloucester was Matilda's warmest adherent, and he and Ranulf, Earl of Chester, one of the most independent of the barons, held Lincoln, which fortress they had captured by strategy from the King's men in the following manner. It was Christmas time, and there was high revelry in the castle. The grim walls of the keep resounded with the songs of the minstrels and the soldiers. There were ladies staying there, and the Earl of Chester's wife and other noble dames came to pay them a friendly visit and to present their good wishes of the season. In the evening the Earl of Chester, accompanied by a few men, came to escort his lady and her friends home. The drawbridge was down and they were allowed to enter on their peaceful errand, but directly they were in the keep the garrison saw that they had been tricked, for Ranulf, hastily seizing the arms and weapons that were hanging in the hall, equipped himself with them, and bade his followers do



Arms of Ranulf, Earl of  
Chester

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

likewise. They then turned on the unprepared garrison, and drove them out of the castle. The news was taken to Stephen, who soon appeared before the castle walls. The garrison within were not prepared to withstand a long siege. Ranulf one night shortly after Christmas managed to slip out alone and make his way to Chester, where he gathered together a body of Welsh adventurers and other forces under the Earl of Gloucester, and



Ranulf at Lincoln Castle

marched back to Lincoln by Candelmas Day (Feb. 2) to encounter Stephen's forces, who were still besieging the castle. In the battle that took place Stephen's valour was magnificent. Deserted by all but a few of his followers, he with his little company on foot stood the charge of the enemy's horsemen. One after another of his opponents fell at his sword thrust, till at last it broke. A follower handed him a battle-axe; he grasped it in his strong hands, and with a powerful stroke swung the mighty weapon on Ranulf's helmet, and bore the Earl to earth. The axe also broke in Stephen's hands, and almost immediately afterwards he fell wounded. He staggered to his feet, however, shaking off a knight who tried to take him prisoner, for, said he, "I yield me to none but the Earl of Gloucester."

## STEPHEN AND MATILDA

He was taken as a captive to Gloucester, where Matilda was staying with Henry, Bishop of Winchester, who was always active in her cause. The Queen rejoiced at this opportunity of punishing him for



Stephen and Matilda

having usurped the crown, which, before her father, he had sworn should be hers. Stephen, weary but defiant, looked her straight in the face, and was met by a glance of arrogant pride.

"Take him to Bristol," she commanded, "and keep him there a close prisoner."

Many of the nobles who had fought with Stephen had now come over to Matilda, and a few weeks later a council of the kingdom was called. Matilda prepared for her triumph. Gorgeously appareled, accompanied by Norman lords in their bravest attire, she rode to

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Winchester. "Fling wide the gates," cried the Bishop, who was waiting at the entrance of the city to meet her.

"Fling wide the gates, for the Queen of England," echoed the crowd, who usually deem it advisable to shout on the winning side.

Accompanying the Bishop were all the leading clergy.



Royal Badge or  
Mark upon Mer-  
chandise, etc.

He, as their spokesman, declared that they had a right to choose the Queen. "Having," they said, "first invoked the aid of Almighty God, we elect as lady of England and Normandy the daughter of the glorious, the rich, the good, the peaceful King Henry, and to her we promise fealty and support."

At midsummer Matilda made a triumphal entry into London, and proceeded to Westminster, where she was to hold her court. It was her hour.

What might she not have done? Petitions came to her from all sides for redress of grievances and for help, and especially from the citizens of London for the renewal of King Edward's laws. They pleaded piteously to be released from the exorbitant taxation that she imposed upon them. Stephen had already filled his coffers at their expense. "You gave to my enemy to make him strong against me," said Matilda angrily, "and you expect that I will spare you."

She was proud and disdainful to all, and many who were willing to receive her because they were weary of Stephen's misrule found that they were only out of the frying pan into the fire.

The Londoners pleaded with her to release Stephen, but naturally she refused. It was hardly likely that he would leave her in the peaceful possession of her kingdom when he was at liberty.

## STEPHEN AND MATILDA

Stephen had a gallant champion in his wife, who kept the flag flying for him whilst he was in the donjon at Bristol. She saw with evident satisfaction that Matilda was alienating her supporters, and realised that there were a goodly number of people who could be rallied to her husband's cause. News was brought to Matilda of her doings, but she treated them as of no importance. Presently Stephen's Queen raised an army in Kent, and marched to London. Matilda was at her palace at Westminster sitting at a well-spread table when she heard the bells of the city ring out.

"The streets are filling with people," cried one who rushed to the door and looked out. "They are armed. 'Tis an angry crowd."

"What is this turmoil?" she asked imperiously.

"You are in grave peril, madam. The citizens incited by the Queen's followers are up in arms against you."

Her spirit quailed—she must fly for her life. She well knew that she would find no mercy at the hands of the citizens whom she had treated so harshly.

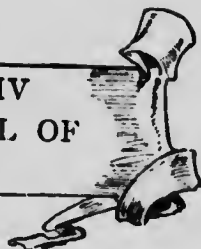
"Fly for your life," her attendant barons urged. "There is no safety but in flight."



Badge of Stephen



CHAPTER XIV  
THE DOWNFALL OF  
MATILDA



**T**HE Queen Matilda retreated to Oxford and Stephen's Queen held London for him. She worked well in her husband's cause; she reminded the people of Matilda's arrogance, and dwelt on the iniquity of keeping Stephen, their crowned King, a close prisoner. It was true, she urged, that Henry had disinherited his daughter on his death-bed. He knew her character, and did not at the last wish her to succeed; she was a usurper, Stephen was their lawful King. The citizens lent a willing ear, though it seemed to some of them that the peace for which they longed, alike for themselves and for their country, was not likely to come with either Stephen or Matilda on the throne.

At this juncture Matilda, by her injudicious conduct, lost one of her most powerful allies, Henry, Bishop of Winchester, who retired to his palace and transferred his support to Stephen. Matilda decided to march on Winchester, the old capital of the Saxon kings, and at that time the second largest city in the kingdom. Entering the town she took up her quarters at her palace, from which she could see the tower of the

## THE DOWNFALL OF MATILDA

Bishop's palace, and high above it floating in the air the flag of Stephen.

The city was in a most unhappy state, for Stephen's Queen brought a force to aid the Bishop, and the town was thus in a double state of siege. Matilda was besieging the Bishop's palace inside the walls, Stephen's Queen was blockading the city from without. The wretched inhabitants expected to be starved to death, and, to add to their misery, churches and houses were being set on fire.

Matilda's position now became desperate. Tidings were brought to her that Robert, Earl of Gloucester, her faithful ally, had been captured in an encounter with Stephen's followers. Her adherents in Winchester were deserting her, laying down their arms, flinging off their armour and escaping from the city. So stricken with panic were they that they dreaded it to be known that they had been Matilda's men. The countryside round was strewn with their belongings which they had cast off in their hurried flight. Riderless horses were found grazing by the roadside, gorgeous cloaks, helmets and breastplates were picked up by the peasant folk.

Matilda's cause was lost. She too must fly. With an escort she managed to force her way out of the town, but once out in the open country her attendants deserted her and she was left with but one follower, the faithful Brian Fitz-Count. After a hurried conference, they decided to try to reach Gloucester. It was a ride for life. The knight and the lady, weary beyond words, and suffering with hunger, dreaded to ask for food for fear of being recognised. They urged their horses on but there was fear at their hearts—would the

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

poor animals be able to stand the long journey? At last they reached Devizes. Matilda, too exhausted to speak, yet still in terror of being taken prisoner, was urged by her own fears to press on. How could it be done? She could not sit her horse any more. "I am half dead," she whispered. The last word suggested a safe method of transit for the wretched queen. She asked



for a bier to be brought to her and laid herself down on it. "Bind me as you would a corpse," she murmured. "None will know that I am not dead."

They bound the living woman to the bier, and she was borne out of Devizes, and the painful journey was continued. The peasant folk stared curiously at the funeral procession that seemed to be going to some distant place of burial. "A noble lady who wishes to rest with her own people," they thought to themselves.

In the end Matilda reached Gloucester in safety. Meanwhile negotiations were going on for the release



## THE DOWNFALL OF MATILDA

of Robert of Gloucester and Stephen. The rival parties at length came to terms and both were set free on All Saints' Day, 1141.

The country, exhausted by the long struggle, prayed in vain for peace; the wretched strife began again. Matilda now bethought her that her husband, who had been looking after his own interests in Anjou, might render her aid. She begged him to come and help her to enforce her claim, but he refused. In an evil hour Earl Robert of Gloucester decided to go over to Anjou to try to persuade him to change his mind.

This was Stephen's opportunity. Matilda was at Oxford, where she held her court. Stephen at once marched on the town, burnt it, and laid siege to the castle, where he kept the Queen a close prisoner. For a few months she remained quiet, Geoffrey evidently hesitating to throw in his lot with hers. At last she grew weary of the situation; and, besides, the garrison were starving.

To add to their misery it was a bitter winter; so severe was the weather, in fact, that the Thames was frozen over.

It had been snowing for days, and Matilda, as she looked out of her prison, gazed on a white world. How dark the figures moving to and fro looked against the pure whiteness of the field of snow! An idea flashed through her mind. She summoned her three most trusted followers to take counsel with her. "We must escape," she said to them, "or we shall starve ere Christmas bells are rung."

They shook their heads. "It is not possible," they said, as they gazed, shivering with cold, through the

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Norman window. "We cannot leave till the frost be gone."

"Listen," she said, "it is our only chance to fly now while the snow is on the ground. We must be shrouded in white from head to foot. Then silently, for our footfalls will not be heard on that soft carpet of snow, we must steal out late at night, and once clear of the castle we shall not be seen—for we shall be as white as the countryside."

Three days before Christmas Matilda was let down with ropes from the window of her chamber into the courtyard, and four ghostly figures might have been seen scaling the castle walls. So quietly they went, that it seemed as if they were spirits of the dead. If any saw them they gazed in terror, as the ghostly forms glided along in the darkness towards the river bank. They did not hesitate a moment, but carefully felt their way on the frozen surface of the water—there might be thin ice that would not bear them. They did not speak till they reached the opposite bank. "Safe," they murmured one to another, and breathed a prayer of relief.

Matilda was at liberty, and now there were two rulers of the land, Matilda, queen in the west, and Stephen, king in the east, and the weary struggle continued for three long years. Then Robert of Gloucester died (1148) and Matilda went back to Normandy. Perhaps it was that she was weary of the struggle, or possibly that she had thought of a way of ending the dispute. Henry, her son and Geoffrey's, was growing up and it would soon be time for him to realise his manhood and to receive the crowning honour of knighthood. When he was sixteen he went to the Court of his uncle, David



The Escape of Matilda

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

of Scotland, there to be received into the order of chivalry, and heard from him the solemn words, "I dub thee knight in the name of God and St Michael; be faithful, bold and fortunate."

The struggle between Stephen and Matilda had reached another stage: it was no longer a question of who was to reign now, but who was to succeed after them. Could the dispute be settled now, or would it be continued in the next generation, Stephen's son Eustace and Matilda's son Henry both struggling for the crown? Fate settled it. Stephen's gallant Queen died, and a year later his son followed her to the grave. Matilda's character matured as she grew older, and she showed great wisdom in her conduct at this crisis.

As has happened often since in English political history, the long struggle between the rival monarchs ended in compromise. Matilda suggested that Stephen should reign sole king as long as he lived, and should acknowledge Henry as his heir after his death. The barons urged Stephen to consent to the arrangement, and finally he gave way.

Of the sufferings of England during this divided reign, which ended with the death of Stephen in 1154, the record of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle speaks in graphic terms.

"They cruelly oppressed the wretched men of the land with castleworks: and when the castles were made they filled them with devils and evil men. Then took they those whom they supposed to have any goods both by night and by day, labouring men and women, and threw them into prison for their gold and silver, and inflicted on them unutterable tortures; for never were any martyrs so tortured as they were.

## THE DOWNFALL OF MATILDA

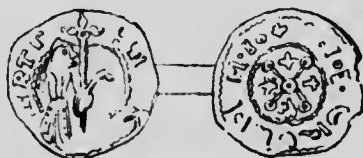
Some they hanged up by the feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; and some by the thumbs or by the head and hung coats of mail on their feet. They tied knotted strings about their heads and twisted them till the pain went to the brains. They put them into dungeons wherein were adders and snakes and toads;



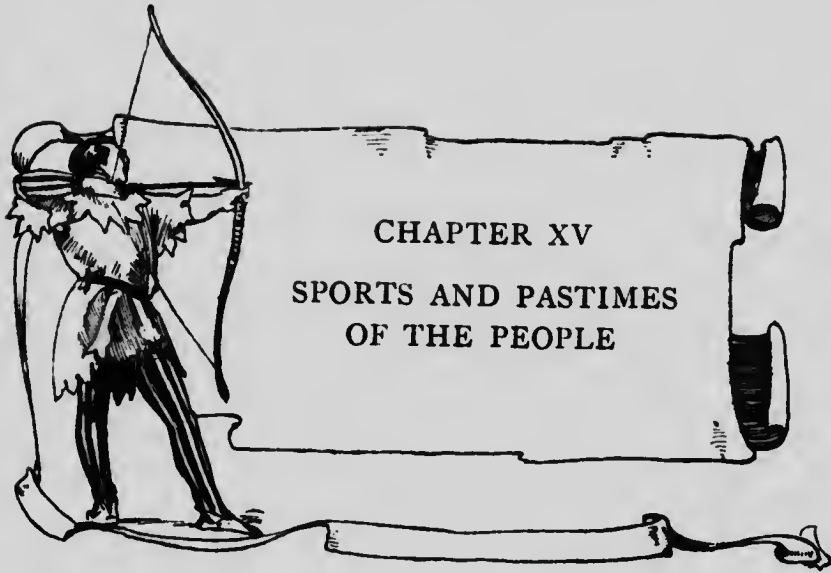
and so destroyed them. Some they placed on a crucet-house; that is in a chest that was short and narrow, and not deep; wherein they put sharp stones, and so thrust the man therein, that they broke all the limbs. In many of the castles were things loathsome and grim, called 'Sachentages,' of which two or three men had enough to bear one. It was thus made; that is, fastened to a beam; and they placed a sharp iron collar about the man's throat and neck so that he could in no direction either sit, or lie, or sleep, but bear all that iron. Many thousands they wore out with hunger. I neither

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

can nor may I tell all the wounds and all the pains they inflicted on wretched men in this land. This lasted the nineteen winters while Stephen was king; and it grew gradually worse and worse. . . . If two men or three came riding to a town, all the township fled from them, concluding them to be robbers. The bishops and learned men cursed them continually, but the effect thereof was nothing to them; for they were all accursed, and forsworn and abandoned. To till the ground was to plough the sea, the earth bare no corn, for the land was all laid waste by such deeds; and they said openly that Christ slept, and his saints."



Silver Coin, Stephen and Matilda



CHAPTER XV  
SPORTS AND PASTIMES  
OF THE PEOPLE

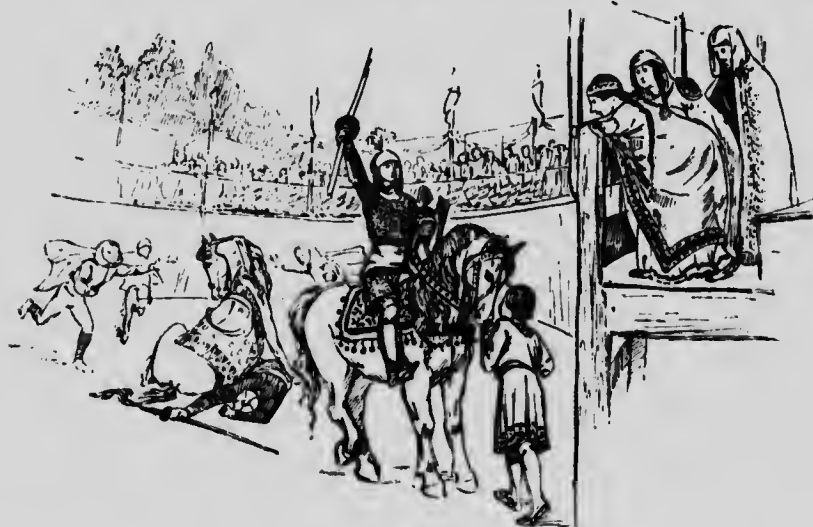
**I**T might seem, as we read the story of the years that followed the Norman conquest, that life was a sad round of constant warfare in one cause or another. But this, we are glad to think, is only one side of the picture. Through all this time the knights and their ladies, the citizens and the peasantry, had peaceful intervals, during which they were neither fighting, nor fleeing homeless from burning cities; nor dying of starvation by reason of famine or the wasting of the land. They had their periods of pleasure or life would have been unendurable.

In their times of recreation the men of those days loved, above all, to take part in mimic warfare, in tournaments and jousts. A tournament was a contest in warlike skill, and the knights took part in it in order to show their valour and courage. They were friendly encounters as a rule. Sir Walter Scott in "Ivanhoe" gives

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

a stirring account of a contest which took place when Richard I. was away on the Crusades, and Prince John represented him. The Prince, seated on a throne, gave signal to the heralds to proclaim the laws of the tournament. They were as follows:—

“ Any knight proposing to combat, might, if he



The Tourney

pleased, select a special antagonist from among the challengers by touching his shield. If he did so with the reverse of the lance the trial of skill was made with what are called the arms of courtesy, that is with lances at whose extremity a piece of round flat board was fixed, so that no danger was encountered save from the shock of the horses and riders, but, if the shield were touched with the sharp end of the lance, the combat was understood to be *à outrance*; that is, the knights were to fight with sharp weapons as in actual battle.



## SPORTS OF THE PEOPLE

"When the knights present had accomplished their vow by each of them breaking five lances, the Prince was to declare the victor in the first day's tourney, who should receive as prize a war horse of exquisite beauty and matchless strength, and in addition to this reward of valour it was now declared, he should have the peculiar honour of naming the Queen of Love and Beauty, by whom the prize would be given on the ensuing day.

"It was announced that on the second day there should be a general tournament, in which all the knights present who were desirous to win praise might take part, and being divided into two bands of equal numbers, might fight it out manfully, until the signal was given by Prince John to cease the combat.

"The second day was very popular, for many knights did not feel sufficiently skilled to take part in single combat. But nothing prevented the tournament from being a very dangerous pastime, and there were special laws to prevent bloodshed. Any knight breaking the rules of the tournament or otherwise transgressing the rules of honourable chivalry was liable to be stripped of his arms and having his shield reversed, to be placed in that posture astride upon the bars of the palisade, and exposed to public derision, in punishment of his unknighly conduct."

A joust was an encounter in which only two men took part as in a duel, and it was a more rigorous trial of skill and courage.

The next favourite pursuit with the King and the



Umbrella for Hawks

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

nobles was hunting. So great was the passion for the chase with William I. that as we know he ruthlessly devastated a large part of Hampshire, to make the New Forest.

Ladies joined the hunting parties, but they did not join in the killing of the wild animals as a rule, though

sometimes a Diana among them would shoot an arrow and bring down her quarry.

Hawking, too, was a favourite sport. The hawk was used, as the gun is used nowadays, to bring down the bird. When muskets were invented hawking ceased to be popular.



Degradation of a Knight

The training of a hawk was very difficult work. At first it would be kept in a dark room for three days, its legs bound with leather, and it would not be allowed to sleep nor eat. When it was exhausted by this treatment it allowed its trainer to put on it the hood, which was used to cover its head when it was not flying. The next stage in its education was to take it into the open air. A piece of raw meat was placed on the trainer's hand and the bird had to learn to fly at this. And, by gradual stages it

## SPORTS OF THE PEOPLE

learnt to fly at birds and bring them down, and to obey the voice of its owner.

In this sport women of noble birth as well as the knights took part, and a writer in the thirteenth century tells us "they excelled men in the knowledge and exercise of the art of falconry."



Another of the pastimes of the Norman period was archery, the shooting with bow and arrow at a target.

The townsman and smaller landowners had their share too in these pastimes, though they did not join with the nobles. The young sons of prosperous London citizens would engage in mimic warfare among themselves, and this prepared them for real warfare should they chance to have to take part in it, as was always very probable. They would be armed with shields and a pointless lance, and would perform wonderful evolutions, tilting at one another. They had periods for sport then as now, and Lent was the particular season for this game of war.



Types of Hawks used in Mediaeval Falconry

When the Easter holidays had begun, the youths of

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

London would play a game called water quintain. A pole would be fixed in the middle of the river and a shield fixed on it. The youths would hire a boat and the most skilful among them would stand at the prow, while the others would row with all the speed they could towards the projecting pole. Then as they



Quintain

reached it, with a steady blow, the lad at the prow would strike the shield. Should he break his lance against it and remain in his upright position he was deemed a skilled player, and all the crew shared in his triumph. But as often as not the luckless youth did not strike with sufficient violence to break his lance and he would fall into the Thames. The boat that had brought him would then row off and leave him in his plight, splashing in the water. As a rule the lad would be too mortified at his failure to think of the ducking, for his friends had come out to see his prowess and the banks of the rivers and the bridges were thick with sightseers. He had hoped to display his skill before the eyes of some fair lady, a rich merchant's daughter perhaps. How he had looked forward to greeting her after his triumph! And instead he found himself hauled out of the river, and hurried off, amid the laughter of the onlookers, dripping wet, to get into dry clothes.

On Shrove Tuesday a special game of ball was played, in which all local youths took part. The custom still survives in some country towns. At this time, too, cricket had its beginning, for a game was played in which a clubbed stick was used for hitting the ball.

Then with autumn and winter came indoor pleasures, when the great castles of the nobles would be filled with

## SPORTS OF THE PEOPLE

guests. The morning would begin by hosts and guests attending Mass in the private chapel. Then after the business of the day had been got through, dinner was served, usually before noon, and all the household sat down together. There was a raised platform at one end of the hall on which sat the heads of the household



Varlet with Hawks

and their distinguished guests. The servants and people of lesser distinction sat at the tables in the body of the hall. Everyone had a spoon to themselves, but the drinking cup was shared between two. The meat was put on to great slices of bread called trenchers, and these were shared between two.

On occasions of special festivity, the steaming joint would be brought in to the sound of music. There would be boar's head and venison, and the ale and wine would flow freely.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

"The tables were drawn, it was idleness all;  
Knight and page, and household squire,  
Loiter'd through the lofty hall,  
Or crowded round the ample fire."

The following is a characteristic picture of the times:—

The bare floor of the hall is strewn with rushes, the hounds, lately returned from hunting with their master, lie about in dignified repose, hawks sit hooded perched above their owners' heads. The seats are thrust back, and all are expectant for the entertainment to begin.



Bands of singers, dancers, conjurers, jugglers, storytellers, jesters are in readiness, each hoping to outdo the other and to win the special favour of the noble company. As each performer comes before the audience, it is evident that he is straining every nerve to amuse his patrons. The jester with his quips and cranks has left the hall, having caused

the company to roar with laughter, with his jaunty step, sure of his supper and a piece of money. The storyteller who followed has related with much animation the heroic deeds of mythical heroes of the past. Has the company drunk too much wine, or was he not in quite so good form as usual? He sees one and another whispering together, some are yawning, and one young knight has fallen asleep with his head on the table. Soon he goes forth and joins the jester.

"They didn't care for me," he grumbles, "that story used to thrill them."

"They've heard it a score of times I warrant," his companion replies. "Get something fresh, man. Did you hear them laugh when I told of the lady and the falcon?"

## SPORTS OF THE PEOPLE

"They are always wanting something new," says the storyteller sadly, "and now these performing animals take the place of us men and 'tis hard to see how we will earn bed and board."

Presently they are joined by the singer, who holds himself somewhat aloof. He has been singing a woeful ballad, and his eyes had chanced to rest on the daughter of the Norman Duke. She was a lovely lady, and he had noticed that she was listening with rapt attention to his lay. He felt that he was singing for her alone, and that no man could be so happy as the one fortunate enough to win her regard. Then, coming to the pathetic verse, which he felt sure would draw tears from those wonderful eyes, his voice failed him. He had been cut short without ceremony and bidden to retire. Was there ever such a misfortune?

And the beautiful lady was now laughing merrily in the hall at the antics of some performing animals without giving another thought to the singer.

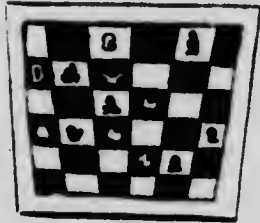
Indoor games, too, were played such as are played to-day. Chess was known and was played with very large pieces. A form of backgammon was played, and draughts, which was called the *jeu des dames*. Gambling games were very much indulged in by the crusaders, so much so that rules were made that no one in an inferior position in the army might play for money, "saving only knights and clerks"—and they were not allowed to lose more, under pain of a heavy fine, than twenty small silver pieces every day.

Dramatic episodes, called "miracles" or miracle plays, were sometimes presented in the great halls of the nobility and in the monasteries. Their theme was the heroism of the martyrs; how they had been stoned and

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

tormented, and how they had triumphed through the might of the faith that was in them.

The first miracle play that we hear of in England was written by a Norman abbot named Geoffrey, and was performed at Dunstable. It told of the martyrdom of St Catherine, and we read that Geoffrey in order to dress his actors borrowed the robes of St Alban's Abbey. There were miracle plays that told of Daniel in the lion's den, of the death and



Chess-board

resurrection of Lazarus, of St Nicholas, the patron saint of children, and many another.

This, too, was the time of the troubadours, who were romantic poets of the age of chivalry. King Richard had heard them in Provence and had invited some to his Court, that they might teach the English knights the gentler arts of chivalry, and tell them of the courts of love held by the knights of their own countries, for the burden of the troubadour's song was ever that love-making and devout service of fair ladies is the true business of life. One of this company of troubadours was Blondel, who sought and found the imprisoned Cœur de Lion, as we shall read in a later chapter.

An ancient Anglo-Norman carol has been preserved which suggests a picture of the Norman castle at Yuletide. In the courtyard are groups of retainers and servitors who pause from their various avocations to listen to the small band of musicians and singers who have come to hymn the "happy morn." Their strains have drawn to the windows of the castle brave knights and fair ladies, who look with favour upon the minstrels as they sing :



## SPORTS OF THE PEOPLE

"Lordings listen to our lay—  
We have come from far away  
To seek Christmas ;  
In this mansion we are told  
He his yearly feast doth hold :  
'Tis to-day !

*May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.*

Lordings, through our army's band  
They say—who spends with open hand  
Free and fast,  
And oft regales his many friends—  
God gives him double what he spends,  
To grace the day.

*May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.*

Lords, by Christmas and the host  
Of this mansion hear my toast—  
Drink it well—

Each must drain his cup of wine,  
And I the first will toss off mine :

Thus I advise,  
Here then I bid you all *Wassail*,  
Cursed be he who will not say *Drinkhail*."



Chessman of  
carved Bone,

found in the  
Island of Lewis



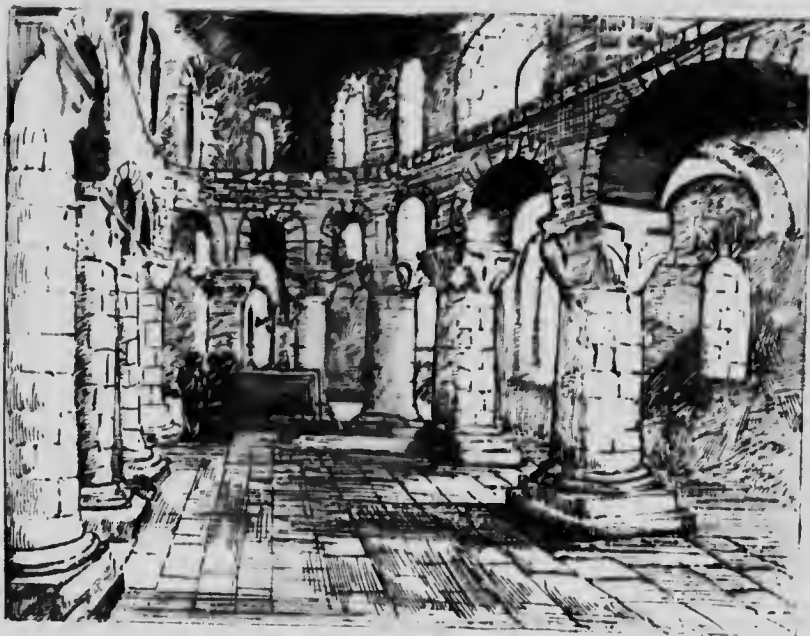
**N**EVER has there been such a time of church building as during the hundred years or so that followed the Norman conquest. And the extent of castle building may be judged from the fact that, during the reign of Stephen, three hundred and seventy-five castles were built, which were afterwards ordered to be pulled down. Truly the age was a famous one for masons and architects.

Ruskin tells us that "all good architecture is the expression of national life and character," and this is especially true of Norman architecture, for we have already seen how the grim strength of the Norman castles was to the English people an emblem of the relentless Norman rule which had come to stay.

Before Duke William came to England, Edward the Confessor had brought over Norman architects, and Westminster Abbey had been built and consecrated. Of that building, as it stood in his time, we can still see traces, for the Chapel of the Pix remains to this day. We can see there the massive round arches, the vaulting, the plain capitals, or heads of the pillars, characteristic of Norman architecture.

## CHURCH AND CASTLE BUILDING

Then again, in the Chapel of St John in the Tower, we can see one special characteristic of this style of building—that is, the wide-jointed masonry. The stones were laid so that between them were large gaps filled with mortar. There are several other points by which you can recognise early Norman architecture:



St John's Chapel, Tower of London

the massive round pillars, with plain capitals, sometimes in the shape of a cushion, but with little ornamentation, and that very simple. This was because the stonemasons of those days had only the use of an axe—the chisel was unknown. The round arch is another feature; this also is to be seen in St John's Chapel. The Church of St Bartholomew the Great, at West Smithfield, is a most interesting example of early Norman work, which too can be seen at Tewkesbury

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Abbey, at Gloucester Cathedral and in many other parts of the country. The severe architecture of Gloucester Cathedral has been transformed by the delicate tracery of stone, carved by successive generations of monks, and laid with loving care upon its plain and massive pillars and arches. Durham Cathedral is considered one of the finest examples of Norman work.

In three years William of Calais built the choir, which stands to-day, in its simple grandeur, as it stood nearly a thousand years ago.

It is hard to realise what enormous difficulties must have been overcome by those builders of an earlier age. The beams for the woodwork of the building were sometimes fetched from places at a great distance—from Wales to Durham, for instance. Twelve oxen would be yoked to the carts, and the journey would take many weeks.



Portion of Doorway,  
Durham Cathedral

Gradually the Norman architecture underwent a change, and the stern simplicity of the earlier style began to be altered, and more decoration was put into the work. The Temple Church in the Strand was built about this time of transition. It is one of the few round churches in England, and was built by the Knights Templars on the model of the church that was erected over the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. It has pointed instead of round arches.

Some of the most beautiful monasteries, too, were built in this period, and they are great even in their decay. Kirkstall, Furness and Tintern Abbeys were

## CHURCH AND CASTLE BUILDING

all founded in the twelfth century. At Furness Abbey, in Lancashire, are the remains of the church and monastery founded in the reign of Stephen. The Benedictine monks lived there, and we see the ruins of their chapter-house, refectory and guest hall.

The Norman style of architecture was gradually merged during the twelfth century into the Early English or Gothic, when, instead of round arch and massive pillars, pointed arches, sculptured capitals to the pillars, and small stones were used in the building. It was said that in Gothic architecture everything pointed heavenward. We do not often know the name of the architects of these noble buildings. The work was done under a master mason, and each individual workman had his share in it. He had not only to obey orders, and do his work by rule of thumb, but to use all the artistic faculty that he had to make his work worthy to live in stone. The beauty of this architecture was in its symbolism—the churches were built in the form of a cross, and if we study an old church we shall find in every part of it a beautiful thought enshrined in stone. The church would face the east, where the sun rose every morning. The nave (from the Latin *navis*, a ship) was



Northern Transept, Winchester Cathedral

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

meant to symbolise the good ship of the Church sailing in the seas of this troublesome world. The chancel signified the victory of the Church in heaven.

One of the most perfect of Early English churches is Salisbury Cathedral. William of Malmesbury, who wrote of it at the time it was built by Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, says, "He was a prelate of great mind, and spared no expense towards completing his designs, especially in buildings, but more particularly at Salisbury and at Malmesbury, for there he erected extensive edifices at vast cost and of surpassing beauty, the courses of stone being so correctly laid that the joint deceives the eye, and leads it to imagine that the whole wall is composed of a single block."

Here we see that the wide-jointed masonry of the Norman has now been superseded by a more finished and elegant style. The Early English architecture is also to be seen in its perfection in the choir and apse of Westminster Abbey.

But we must not linger over these churches, though the subject is one of fascinating interest; we have yet to take a look at the Norman castles. Many of them were strongly fortified, others depended rather for their security on the thickness of the walls of the keep than on any outer lines of defence. The strongly fortified castles were surrounded by a moat or ditch, and behind this was a massive wall, pierced with loopholes, through which missiles could be hurled in time of siege. The walls were twenty to twenty-five feet high, and wide enough to form a terraced walk.

It was no easy matter to enter such a stronghold, there were so many contrivances to keep out a possible enemy. First the moat had to be crossed by a draw-

## CHURCH AND CASTLE BUILDING

bridge which could be let down at will from the gatehouse, built in the massive wall. This entrance was protected by the barbican, a sort of watch-tower over the gateway, and the portcullis, an instrument of wood, shaped like a harrow, with iron or wooden spikes, which could be let down to harass an intruder. Through the gateway was the outer court, where, in later Norman times at least, were erected the outbuildings for the



Cutting Timber

garrison and servants. After crossing this court, a ditch, also protected by a gateway, had to be crossed to pass into the inner court. At the end of this inner court was the keep, a massive square building with turrets at each angle, entered high up by a wooden staircase, which could be removed in time of danger. These keeps were often small, dark, uncomfortable buildings, the narrow slits which let in light and air serving also as convenient loopholes from which to discharge missiles in time of siege, but not wide enough to admit firebrands from attackers.

As may be imagined, these massive stone castles cost great sums of money to build. They were so

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

strong that a baron could defy his neighbours when once safely within their walls with a sufficient store of provisions to withstand a siege. Some castles seemed to be rather dungeons than dwelling-houses. The walls varied in thickness from ten to thirty feet, and the staircase was built into the thickness of the walls. A well was often dug in one of the courts, so that in time of siege the garrison might be supplied with water. The hall, the storehouse and the chapel were contained in the keep. The hall was the most important room, for here the life of the castle went on. Here, in the earlier times, the household ate and slept, with little regard for privacy, though sometimes there were recesses in the thick walls where the heads of the household could sleep apart from the others. And sometimes there was an extra room to which the lord and his family could retire when they wished to be alone. All the company, save the privileged few who might have their sleeping places in the recesses, slept together in the hall where they had their meals, in the clothes which they had been wearing all day. As people became more civilised they wanted more privacy and comfort, and gradually other rooms were added, kitchens and sleeping-rooms for the servants, and bedrooms for the masters, their families and guests.

The Tower of London was probably the first Norman castle built in England, and the White Tower stands to this day. The walls are from twelve to fifteen feet thick, with narrow loops or slits in them, just wide enough to admit a little light. It was built by Gundulf, Bishop of Rochester. William Rufus had a great wall built round it and later on other buildings were added. In other parts of the country we may see remains of



## CHURCH AND CASTLE BUILDING

the Norman keeps, at Rochester, at Castle Hedingham in Essex, and at Peak Castle in Derbyshire.

Peak Castle is especially interesting. It is said that it was built (in 1176) by William Peveril, whose ancestor was a relation of William the Conqueror, and had come over with him. The grim fortress is perched on an almost impregnable spot, where an eagle might have built her nest; on one side is a sheer rock overhanging the mouth of the Devil's Cavern. It must have been a comfortless dwelling on the lonely height. There were two floors and perhaps two or even four rooms. They were very dark, for the windows were as small as possible. Glass was not used then, though sometimes oiled linen was employed to keep out the draught. There was neither fireplace nor chimney, so that when the fire



Chisel

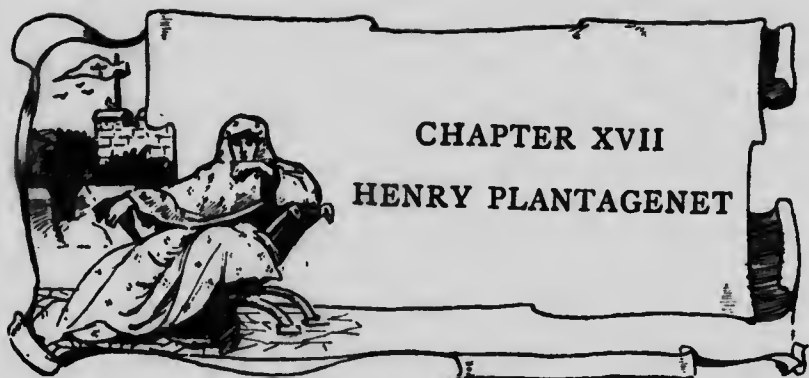


Chisel

was made in the middle of the hall the smoke had to escape as best it could.



Bermondsey Abbey



**N**EVER was monarch less regretted than Stephen, never did monarch come to a throne more ready to receive him than Henry to the throne of England. And not to England alone did he come, for he had great possessions in France, where he ruled as Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine and as Count of Anjou. He was known among his contemporaries as Henry Fitz-Empress. What sort of man was he who was destined to play so large a part in the making of England, and in the history of Europe in the twelfth century? A descendant of Alfred the Great, and the grandson of Henry Beauclerc, Henry Plantagenet had in his blood the heritage of greatness and power.

It was said that the Plantagenets had sprung from a demon ancestor, and Henry had at least one supernatural quality: it seemed as though he could be everywhere at once. He was practical in all things, and the short cloak he wore was as much a symbol of his nature as a peculiarity of his dress. His whole appearance suggested a man of action: strongly built, with hair cut short, a thick neck and legs that had lost



## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

their straightness through being so constantly in the saddle. As a ruler he had two invaluable qualities: personal charm, and a memory for men and things.

He was married, but we must go back for a few years to tell of his first meeting with his future wife. Louis VII. and Eleanor of Aquitaine were holding their court at Paris when Geoffrey Plantagenet came thither, accompanied by his son, and a train of knights and squires, to do homage to the King for Normandy and Anjou. When the castle of the King of France was in sight the procession halted. Geoffrey's herald went forward to meet the King's herald, formal courtesies were exchanged, and then the cavalcade crossed the drawbridge and rode



Coin of Louis VII.

into the outer court of the King's castle.

In the great hall the King and Queen were sitting in state. The monk-king, refined and delicate-looking, was overshadowed by the beauty and the bearing of the lady by his side, Eleanor of Aquitaine, whose kingdom included a large part of south-eastern France, and reached to the Pyrenees. She was tall and stately, dressed in magnificent robes, and depending from her shoulders was a mantle of cloth-of-gold which set off the beauty of her radiant hair, and on her garments was embroidered the cross of Aquitaine.

The young Henry Plantagenet, then but a lad of fourteen, was awed by the splendour of the Queen, as he stood by his father's side in her presence. She liked the sturdy boy with his close-cropped hair, the straightness of his gaze, his fearless bearing. She noted with satisfaction, for she loved flattery, from

## HENRY PLANTAGENET

the look on the lad's face, that he was another captive to her charms.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was one of the most remarkable women of her time, born with a spirit of adventure, daring and unscrupulous. She had been brought up to know no fear and had taken her place as head of her kingdom in all the fulness of its duties. Her dowry of the rich province of Aquitaine was greater than her husband's shrunken kingdom of France. She had scant respect for him, and alluded to him contemptuously as "a monk rather than a king," for he was fervently religious. Eleanor and a band of the noble ladies of France accompanied him on one of the Crusades. She was too masterful for Louis VII., and he was glad when, on the plea that they were too nearly related by blood, he was able to divorce her.

Eleanor had never forgotten the sturdy lad with his glancing eyes, nor had he forgotten her. She was now free and so they were married, when he was nineteen



Geoffrey Plantagenet

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

and she was seven and twenty. Thus, when Henry succeeded to the crown of England he could proudly boast that he was master of Europe "from the Arctic Ocean to the Pyrenees."



Eleanor of Aquitaine

Henry Plantagenet's first care, for he was ever a man of business, was to set about very needful reforms in England, and above all to turn out the foreign adventurers who had been overrunning the country in Stephen's reign.

He then tried to deal justly with the families who had suffered from confiscation, for many estates had been taken from one and given to another according

as Stephen or Matilda was triumphant. These estates were now restored to their lawful owners, and no more favour was shown to Matilda's friends than to Stephen's.

## HENRY PLANTAGENET

The building of castles had proceeded rapidly throughout Stephen's reign, and these strong fortresses, whose very existence was a menace to the peace of the country, were ordered to be pulled down. This was well, for in them the barons, as you have already heard, were able to live independent lives, defying their sovereign and harrying the countryside. Three hundred and seventy-five of these fortresses were razed to the ground. This was not done without much opposition, but it was at length successfully accomplished.

Hugh Bigod who, as we have already seen, was responsible for the story that Henry had disinherited Matilda on his death-bed, and had been a strong partisan of Stephen, was unwilling to accept Matilda's son. He was Earl of Norfolk, and Henry, in order to bring him and Stephen's son, William of Warenne, to terms, visited Norfolk. Bigod was compelled to surrender his castles, and Warenne to give up his estate in that county, though he was allowed to keep his hereditary lands. When this was settled, Henry, with business-like ability, thought it would be wise to revive the courts called "coronation" which the Conqueror used to hold thrice a year, and which had ceased to be held in the reign of Stephen. At Bury St Edmunds on Whit Sunday a solemn court was held. To it came the King's advisers, the great earls and barons and the heads of the Church. They sat in council with him, complaints were heard and suits decided. The crown was placed on Henry's head by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and then court and clergy went in solemn procession to Mass. The anointing with holy oil had been done on the first coronation day once and for all, and was not repeated.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Henry had to be a large part of his time absent from England, to give attention to his possessions on the other side of the Channel. It was very important that he should have competent ministers to rule for him in his absence, men who would be able to administer the affairs of the country and do justice among the people. He chose as his deputies Richard de Lucy and Earl Robert of Leicester; and his little son Henry would sometimes stand as the nominal regent of the King in his father's absence.

Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, who had been one of his warmest adherents, became one of his wisest advisers. He was a man well advanced in years, and he had for his secretary a young man, Thomas à Becket by name, of whom we are to hear more in a later chapter.

When a youth, Henry had met and loved a beautiful maiden, Rosamond Clifford, known in history as the Fair Rosamond. It would have been better if he could have forgotten her when he married Queen Eleanor, but we read that he built for her a fairy bower near his palace at Woodstock, a retreat embowered among the trees, to which he loved to resort when his state duties permitted him time for recreation. The bower was so secret that none knew of it. There was a hidden door in the royal garden, and when this was unlocked it discovered a path to a gate which opened into a wonderful maze, like that which you may have seen at Hampton Court, and any curious person who reached so far would be confused by the turning and twisting of the paths. They would wander up and down leafy aisles and make no progress, perhaps at last coming to the very point they had started from. Beyond this





Fair Rosamond and the Queen

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

maze was a clearing in the forest, and here, in a little house with a beautiful garden, lived Rosamond.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was once at Woodstock and sometimes she wondered where Henry went when he was absent so long. One afternoon while wandering in the garden she met him returning from a walk and she noticed clinging to his shoe a tiny thread of silk. She believed that none of her maidens had been embroidering that day and she suspected that there was some mystery. She watched Henry closely and discovered the secret door, but could not find the way through the maze, till one day, looking closely, she noticed a little silver thread. This, it appeared, was a clue, and, following it, she was led into the open, where she found herself in a lovely garden. In the sunshine was sitting a fair girl plying her needle and thread.

The haughty Eleanor was very jealous of this beautiful maiden, and a story, very widely believed, runs that she offered Rosamond her choice of a bowl of poison and a dagger. Poor Rosamond! She lived in such seclusion from the world that she did not know the identity of this regal woman who spoke so threateningly to her. But legend, which laid the dark crime of murder at Eleanor's door, seems to have erred, and the truth seems to be that Rosamond was induced to take the veil. When she learned the full truth about her lover she wept bitterly and would not be comforted. She was glad to turn for peace of mind to the holy nuns, and entered the monastery of Godstowe, where, after some years, she was received into the order, and whence, at last, she passed peacefully to where the weary are at rest.



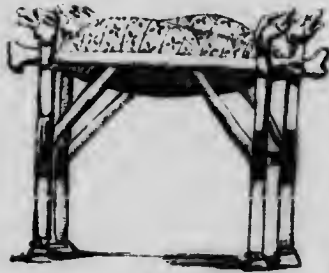
**G**ILBERT A BECKET, a worthy burgess of the city of London, when a young man took service in one of the Crusades in the hope of bettering his fortune. It was said—but the whole story is somewhat in the nature of a legend—that when he was in Palestine he was taken prisoner and became a slave to his captor, a wealthy Syrian. This man had a beautiful daughter and she was moved to sorrow for the poor English prisoner and helped him to escape. He had told her that he lived in England, that remote country from which many Crusaders had come, that he was called Gilbert, and that the name of the town in which he lived was London. The Syrian lady found that she could not live without the man whom she had learnt to love as well as to pity, and so one day she left her father's house and, with but two words to help her to find her destination, "Gilbert" and "London," she made her way to the coast, where she was able to embark with many returning pilgrims, and at last, to her joy, to reach the city where Gilbert dwelt. But how to

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

find Gilbert? There were so many Gilberts known to people to whom she spoke the magic word, though there was but one in the world to her. At last her perseverance was rewarded: she found Gilbert; she embraced her husband's faith, they were married, and the child of this romantic union was Thomas à Becket.

Gilbert à Becket was ambitious for this son, and had him thoroughly educated. When he was old enough he was sent abroad to learn French and to study science and law.

The lad profited greatly by his stay abroad and came back to England as fully equipped with courtly airs and graces as a knight's son could have been. He was a youth of genius, and his keen wit and easy manners made him an acceptable guest in many houses where otherwise he would not have been welcome, for the knightly class felt a contempt for trade.



Stool

He had not long returned to England when he made the acquaintance of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, who soon took a great interest in him. He discerned in the lad unusual qualities, which were hidden from his gay companions, who were overmuch given to feasting and the chase, and who cared little for religion and less for scholarship. He became secretary to the Archbishop, and was appointed Archdeacon of London. He had placed his foot on the first rung of the ladder of fame and in his heart was no limit to his ambition.

When Henry Plantagenet came to the throne he

## THE RISE AND FALL OF BECKET

made an intimate friend of Becket, who was about his own age. The two young men would take their pleasures together, and there are stories told of how after feasting they would leap over the tables and career about like a couple of schoolboys. Henry was at once anxious to promote his favourite, and he offered him the chancellorship. This office was the greatest in the kingdom, for the Chancellor was the King's chief counsellor, and, in many respects, the counterpart of the Prime Minister of to-day. Becket accepted the office with gratitude and began to be very luxurious in his attire and way of living, unlike his royal master, who was ever careless as to his dress.

There is a story told that the two friends were riding together, one winter day, through the streets of London. Becket was as usual richly clad, with a magnificent cloak hanging upon his shoulders. The two warmly-dressed men on their fine horses passed a thinly-clad beggar. Henry, ever observant, was struck by the contrast between the shivering, ill-fed man, clothed in rags, and the splendid Chancellor at his side.

"Do you not think," he said to Becket, "that it would be an act of charity to give that man something to cover his nakedness?"

"Yes," replied the Chancellor, and then, remembering that flattery was as potent a weapon as any for his advancement, he extolled the nobility of a King who could condescend to look at a beggar.

Henry reined in his horse in front of his miserable subject.

"Would you not like a new cloak?" he asked.

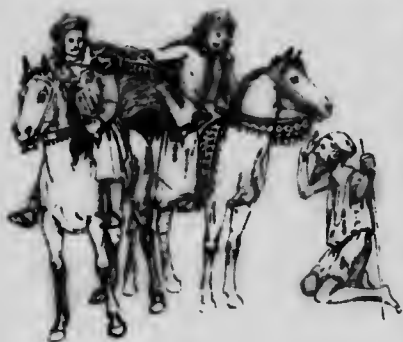
The beggar, taking him for some noble who saw

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

cause for mirth in his misery, answered only by a look of hopeless wretchedness.

The King turned to his friend: "Thou canst do a great act of charity, thou canst clothe the naked."

Becket, who would not have minded giving alms, replied by a smile; but Henry, partly as a boyish freak, partly perhaps from better motives, pulled at the Chancellor's cloak a magnificent garment of scarlet lined with fur. The Chancellor tried to draw it closer round him, but the King pulled vigorously, and at last Becket had to give it up. The King then handed it to the astonished



beggar, who was at a loss to understand the comedy enacted before him.

As they spurred on their horses Henry laughed long and loud at the Chancellor's disgusted face. The episode no doubt was soon forgotten by the light-hearted King, and he continued to shower benefits on his favourite, who grew very rich, and lived in such splendid style, and gave such gorgeous banquets that they were the talk of the country. Becket became very fastidious as to what he ate and drank. He would send any distance for rare delicacies for his table. He had seven hundred horsemen completely armed as part of his retinue, and some of the best born of the sons of the nobility learnt their knightly duties in his service. He gave costly presents to those who came to visit him, and had he been the King himself he could not have lived in greater state.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF BECKET

As Chancellor, his first duty was towards the King ; the greater the king the greater his chancellor was. He had to give his keenest attention to seeing that the royal exchequer was full of money to meet his master's expenses. In every way he showed that he was the servant of the King, and forgot that he was also the servant of the Church.

Theobald, his first patron, died in 1161, and the greatest ecclesiastical office in England was vacant. Henry did not hesitate in his choice, and determined that his devoted Chancellor should be appointed to the see. He thought thus to have Primate and Chancellor alike zealous in his service.

When he first mentioned the matter to Becket, the Chancellor was unwilling, and pointed to his brilliant robes.

"You are choosing a fine dress to figure at the head of your Canterbury monks," he said.

But the King insisted, and then Becket uttered a prophecy that it would be the parting of the ways with them.

"You will soon hate me as much as you love me now, for you assume an authority in the affairs of the Church to which I shall never assent."

The bishops, when they knew of the King's choice, at first refused to appoint Thomas, for the election was nominally in their hands. They did not consider that the worldly Chancellor, who had held his deacon's orders so lightly, and had enjoyed all the pleasures of a man of the world, was fit to rule over them. They



Candlestick

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

were, however, obliged to give way, and Thomas à Becket became Archbishop of Canterbury.

Henry now hoped that the Church was to be his servant, but he was soon to discover his mistake. Becket, knowing that he could not do justice to both appointments, resigned his office of Chancellor, and the King lost a valuable servant, who always knew where



Becket washing the Beggars' Feet

to lay his hands on money for his personal and state expenses.

When Thomas became Archbishop of Canterbury a great change came over him. His gorgeous apparel was laid aside; he wore a rough monk's dress, and sackcloth next his skin. He lived on herbs, and drank water as though every day were a day of penance, and he would daily wash the feet of thirteen beggars. Three or four times a day he ordered his chaplain to scourge him. His clothes became very dirty and full of vermin, for he would not change but once every forty days. He was as ostentatious in his asceticism as he had been in his luxury.



## THE RISE AND FALL OF BECKET

Henry was very angry when he heard of his late Chancellor's doings, and the Archbishop, far from trying to conciliate him, championed causes in which the Church differed from him. Thus these two, once bosom friends, became estranged.

This struggle was not only a personal struggle between Henry and Becket, it was one phase in that rivalry between Church and State which did not reach its climax till four hundred years later, in the reign of Henry VIII.

It was at its root a dispute concerning the authority of the Pope and the Church over which he ruled, and the authority of the King, the ecclesiastical power and the civil power. The Pope, as the head of Latin Christianity, asserted supreme power over Christian Europe. He was the successor of Peter in the Papal Chair, the vicegerent of God, and from the height of his greatness he claimed authority over all Christendom. Appointments to the highest offices in the Church were not considered settled until confirmed by him; he gave his blessing or refused it to kingdoms warring with one another. He could excommunicate rulers and people and lay countries under interdicts whereby all the services of the Church were suspended. Such was his supreme authority that archbishops felt safe in defying the King if the Pope supported them in any dispute. As may well be imagined, this was the cause of endless disputes, and the stronger monarchs realised how necessary it was to curtail the ecclesiastical power.

Becket appeared before the King clad in his monk's garb, and Henry could hardly bring himself to hold converse with him, such was his annoyance. He was now as anxious to humiliate Thomas as before he had

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

been to exalt him. There were several reasons for dispute. There had been a tax imposed on every hide of land, and the Church, together with other property-owners, had to pay her dues. Becket utterly refused to allow the Church to pay any longer, and it seems that on this point he scored a triumph. Henry was very anxious that many of the abuses of the Church should be reformed. There was one in particular which led to grave miscarriage of justice. The Church had a right, which she enforced at all times, to try offenders who were in any way connected with the Church, by a separate tribunal, composed only of clerics, and to inflict different and lighter penalties on the culprits. As the punishments in those days were often barbarously cruel, little wonder was it that many claimed benefit of clergy who were but slightly connected with the Church. This benefit was often extended to persons who could merely read and write—rare accomplishments in those days, when few except the clergy could claim even this amount of learning.

At a council held at Westminster (1163) the question of the right of the clergy to try their own offenders was discussed; Becket, championing the Church, refused to give way, and Henry and his former friend parted in wrath.

In order to try to come to some understanding over these disputes another council was held at Clarendon. The Bishop of Oxford presided over the gathering. The Archbishop was there, and in anything but a conciliatory mood. His austere life seemed to have had a bad effect on his nature. He knew no compromise. Henry was there too, dauntless and dogged, prepared to enforce the claim that the King should be supreme over the Church.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF BECKET

Before the formal assembly met, the subject had been talked over by the bishops and barons, and a report was drawn up. This report, which came to be known as the Constitutions of Clarendon, enacted among other things that clerical and lay offenders should be treated equally. No appeal was to be made to the Papal court without the King's consent, no bishop could leave the country without his permission. No longer were people to be allowed to place their belongings within the church or churchyard, and to claim sanctuary for them, though they might themselves seek refuge there from their pursuers.

Becket saw in these constitutions, fair as they seem to us now, nothing but so many assertions for undermining the power of the Church.

The bishops and barons waited to hear what he would say when the Constitutions were read. "Will you assent?" he was asked.

"Never!" he said passionately.

They pleaded with him, they urged him to reconsider his decision, to take a broader view, and recognise that the Church could not stand aloof from the general laws of the country. But Becket refused. The more they urged him the more obstinate he grew. They were almost giving up in despair when, much to the surprise of the gathering, he said:

"I will—saving the honour of God and the Holy Church."

There was a tumultuous shout of approval, but the Archbishop looked darkly at them all. He asked for



Seal of London, with Figure of Becket

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

time in which to study the lengthy document, for, while much was written down that had been law under Henry I., there were many new points that he said he would have to think over.

A copy of the parchment was given to him, and he strode out of the gathering. "It isn't settled yet," the barons said one to another.

Becket retired to his chamber and read through the Constitutions. He realised more than ever the full import of them. It would be a victory of the State over the Church. His whole soul revolted; he had assented, "weakly," "weakly," he said to himself, but he had not signed; it was not too late. He did not lack courage. If his life were in danger he would sacrifice his life, but he would not betray his Church.

The next day the bishops were called upon to set their seals to the great document, but Becket refused, and asked for further delay. His opposition, however, proved unavailing, and the Constitutions of Clarendon duly became law (1164).

The conflict between Becket and the King increased in rancour. Another assembly was to be held, this time at Northampton, and here the storm broke. Becket received a notice ordering him to attend the meeting, and his pride urged him to refuse. He knew that he was to be put on his trial, and that he was to be called to account for the money he had received as Chancellor. His enemies, and he had many, were bent on his downfall.

He arrived at Northampton and sought an audience with the King. The King was busy hunting, he could not be seen. The late favourite determined not to be baffled and later in the day followed him to Mass.

## THE RISE AND FALL OF BECKET

"What would you with me?" asked Henry.

"Safe conduct to France," answered the Archbishop.

"Before you go you must render an account of your



Becket before the Council

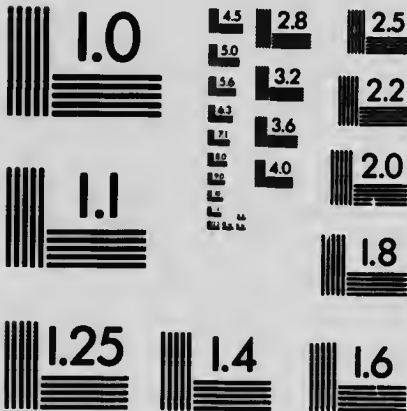
chancellorship," replied the King, who considered that this was the trump card he had to play.

For several days discussions went on. Henry claimed a large sum of money, Becket offered as a compromise to pay about a tenth part. On 13th October Becket finally appeared before the council. He began the day by celebrating the Mass for St Stephen, the first martyr, in which the opening words, "Princes did sit and speak against me," were well chosen for his plight.



# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

He rode from the church to the council chamber dressed in his magnificent robes of office, holding the reins in one hand and a cross in the other.

His presence as he entered the hall was superb. Holding aloft the silver cross, bearing himself as a prince of the Church, with a proud aloofness that boded ill for all attempts at conciliation, he passed up the hall. The Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London came up to him and in a whispered conference urged him to submit.

"The court has no jurisdiction over me," he said, "my supreme head is the Pope of Rome."

"Traitor! Traitor! Traitor!" resounded on all sides.

Becket stood there unflinching, alone, one against many, his eyes blazing, his mouth set hard in stern determination. "Were I a knight I would answer that foul slander with my sword," he cried proudly.

Seeing that he would not relent, sentence of degradation was passed on him in solemn tones by the Bishop of Chichester.

"We disown thee as our Archbishop; thou hast endeavoured to destroy the ordinances of the King. We declare thee a traitor and a perjurer, and place our cause in the hands of the Pope."

"This court has no jurisdiction over me," the Archbishop said again.

King Henry rose in his anger. He gave a swift glance at his one-time bosom friend and then turned to the assembly.

"By the faith which you owe me, do speedy justice to my liegeman."

The court then sentenced Becket to be imprisoned. The Archbishop heard their words unmoved.



## THE RISE AND FALL OF BECKET

"I forbid you to judge me," he said. "I appeal to the Pope."

He stalked out of the assembly to his lodging in the town. He was a ruined man. His friends urged him to fly for his life, and he realised that it was his only chance. He flung off his robes and put on the ordinary costume of a man of the world; he covered his tonsured head with a cap, and in the dead of night crept silently out of the house, accompanied by two faithful monks. It was a long, weary journey that they made on foot till they reached a remote part of Lincolnshire, and there he remained in hiding till he was able to make his way to the coast and take a boat for Flanders.

The King issued a decree banishing all his kin and confiscating his lands, and Becket from his place of exile responded by threats of excommunication. He put his case before the Pope, Alexander III., who was in a difficult position. For the sake of the Church he desired to support Becket, but he did not wish to offend Henry. He counselled a compromise, but Becket would not hear of it; he would only consent, he said, "saving the honour of my order."

Threats and counter-threats passed between the King and the Archbishop; Henry came over to France for a conference with the French King, and Becket, hearing of this, presented himself before them (6th



Chasuble of Thomas à Becket

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

January 1169) at Montmirail. He threw himself at Henry's feet and begged for a reconciliation, but still with the reservation "saving God's honour and my order." Henry, knowing that this would really mean the triumph of the Archbishop, angrily bade him depart, and Becket responded by threatening to have England placed under an interdict. Two more meetings took place in France, and though it was urged on all sides that the King and the Archbishop should exchange the kiss of peace, Henry refused.

At the second meeting, however, there was some show of friendliness, and it was arranged that Becket should return.

"It is borne in on me that I shall see you no more in this world," he said to the King as he bade him farewell.

The presage of death was upon him, the zeal to die for the Church which he had served, unwisely perhaps but still faithfully, possessed him. "It is in God's hands," he said, "I go to England to live or die as He thinks best."

In the bitter December weather Becket returned. "This is England," remarked one of his followers to him with a thrill at the thought of once more treading on his native soil.

"Fifty days from now you will wish yourself far away," said Becket sadly.

The country was glad to welcome him back. At Canterbury he was received with acclamation, especially from the poor and humble folk.

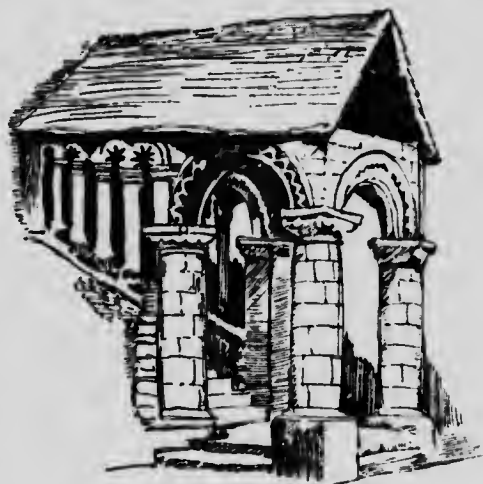
Then, seeing that the sun of popularity was shining in his favour, he marched in triumph along the historic road from Canterbury to London. He, in his monk's

## THE RISE AND FALL OF BECKET

garb, marched in front, giving alms to the poor to the right and to the left. He was followed by a body of scholars and clerics singing the impressive words of the *Te Deum*. A look of triumph passed over Becket's face as in the clear wintry air the words rose to heaven,

"Thou hast overcome the sharpness of death,  
Thou hast opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers."

But, alas! the Archbishop at once renewed his uncompromising warfare with the State. In his absence Henry's little son had been crowned by the Archbishop of York, in order that he should succeed his father without any dispute. Becket excommunicated the Archbishop for he said he had usurped a right that belonged to the Primate alone, and news was taken of this



Norman Staircase, Canterbury

and other excommunications, and of his arrogant behaviour generally, to the King, who was staying near Bayeux, in France.

Henry had hoped for a little time of peace. He was tired of the man, tired of the quarrel, and in a fit of anger he cried out, "Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?"

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

There were present in the Court three knights who heard these words. They exchanged glances; the same thought had struck them all. Surely this would be a way to the King's favour and to promotion. They made all speed to England.

Becket was at Canterbury, preparing to hold the Christmas festival. A feeling of oppression was on him, he knew that his end was near. In agony of mind he wrote to the Pope asking that the prayers for the dying should be said for him. Then, as though inspired, he preached in the cathedral church of Canterbury,

"as one never sure to preach again,  
And as a dying man to dying men."

He took for his text the words, "I come unto you to die in the midst of you." It seemed to the people gathered there that he knew that never again would he stand before them, never again give to the faithful the sacred wafer, the emblem of the body of Christ. His hour had come.

It was the twentieth of December when the three knights on their dire errand reached Canterbury. They asked for the Archbishop and were taken to his chamber.

"Who are the King's messengers," they said to him. "He bids you absolve those whom you have excommunicated."

"It was not I, but his Holiness the Pope," replied Becket.

They had some further parley, and then, seeing that he was obdurate, they retired. The Archbishop's friends suspected their intentions. Becket at once hurried to



The Murder of Thomas à Becket

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

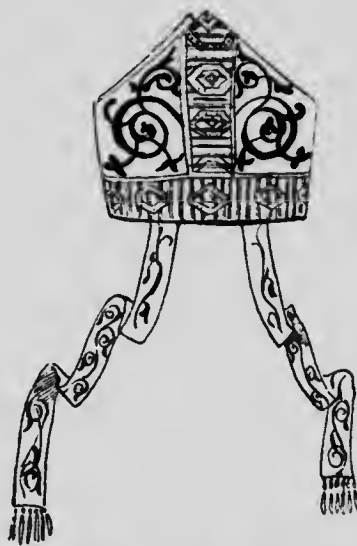
the cathedral; he entered and walked towards the choir, and as he did so the three knights, who had been lurking in the cloisters, came upon him. The cathedral aisles were dim in the closing light of the December day and the dark figures could hardly be recognised.

"Where is he," cried one of the knights, "the traitor!"

Becket undismayed stepped forward. "I am no traitor, but a priest of the Most High God."

The knights seized him; he was a strong man and he grappled with them, but it was three against one. There, on the altar steps as he stood, they stabbed him again and again.

"Into Thy hands, O Lord, into Thy hands," he gasped, as he sank to the ground. The proud and unbending spirit of the great prelate had yielded to none save Death.



Mitre of Thomas à Becket



**T**HE three murderers, exulting in their deed, hastened to tell their royal master that the "troublesome priest," the "low-born clerk," would trouble him no more. Becket's defeat was his victory. Henry's wild words had come from his heart, yet he had not expected that they would be acted upon. He did not wish personally to be involved in the murder, and now he could not avoid the reproach of having been the instigator of it. Becket alive was an enemy to be feared, a rebellious churchman at war with the State; Becket dead was a martyr.

Henry was at Argentan in Normandy when the news was brought to him. The messengers expected grateful thanks and rich rewards. They were woefully disappointed. The King said not a word, his face was overshadowed, he gave way to a paroxysm of despair, and for some time those about him thought he would go mad. For three days he refused to eat and no one was allowed access to him. The English people, the poor especially, received the news with horror and they immediately began to venerate the memory of

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Becket as though he were a saint. The cathedral of Canterbury was closed for a year and was stripped bare of its ornaments to expiate the stain of blood on consecrated ground. And almost immediately the news began to be spread abroad that miracles were being wrought at his tomb. To add to Henry's distress, the Pope now stepped in and threatened to excommunicate him, and to lay an interdict on his lands, unless he made reparation.



Badge of the  
Plantagenets

The King now crossed to England, but he did not long remain in the country, for he felt that his present unpopularity made it advisable for him to stay abroad. He had a project in hand which he felt would occupy all his faculties and help him to forget the terrible calamity which his rash words had caused.

To a sovereign who ruled over so large a part of Europe it seemed almost a disgrace that Ireland, so near to our coasts, was not part of his dominions. He was not the first King of England who had cast longing eyes upon Ireland. William Rufus had once threatened that: "for the conquest of that land I will gather together all the ships of my kingdom, and will make of them a bridge to cross over." But his words were not made good.



Ireland was behind England in point of civilisation. It had not had the stern discipline of Roman, Saxon and Norman conquest, though there had been many attacks and half-conquests. England owed Ireland a real debt, for it was from Erin that the first rays of Christianity had penetrated to Britain. Ireland,



## REMORSE OF HENRY

once Christianised, had not reverted to paganism, but was not yet under the sway of the Church of Rome.

There were many kings in Ireland in those days, and one of them, Diarmait, King of Leinster, had fled to Henry when he was driven from the island by Rory, King of Connaught. Henry, on condition that Diarmait did homage for his land, gave permission to any English adventurers who chose to do so to go over and help to fight the King of Connaught. Among those who joined this expedition was Richard de Clare, known as Strongbow. He married the King of Leinster's daughter, and on his death inherited his lands, assumed the title of Earl of Leinster, and ruled with almost royal state in the land.



Henry heard of this, and it was one of the motives which had decided him to cross the Irish Channel. He did not intend a strong man to be in possession there.

Having made his preparations, Henry landed on the Irish coast on 16th October 1171; and, as he did so, a white hare rushed up to him. It was caught and brought to the King, and the superstitious people saw that his soldiers were cheered, for such an event was considered a sure sign of victory. It was a country in grave disorder that he came to, and he, with his orderly instincts, at once set about the work of reform. He behaved as if he had the authority of an elected king, and he was the very man the country wanted to set it in order. He had a rude sort of palace of reeds and palisades built for him outside Dublin, and worked with a will at his self-imposed task. He in-

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

tended the island to be the heritage of his son John. But, alas for the eventual welfare of Ireland, he did not stay long enough.

Evil news came to the King from England. The Pope was not satisfied. Henry had not made full submission to him in reparation for the murder of the Archbishop. He demanded that this should be done at once; if Henry delayed the country would be laid under an interdict. This was a most potent weapon, for, should the country be laid under this ban, all the religious services in the Church would be stopped, the sacraments would no longer be administered, except to the dying, and no service of the Church might be read over the dead. Other news equally grave, and even more painful, came to him; his son Henry was in rebellion.

Henry left Ireland and for nearly two hundred years no English king set foot in the Emerald Isle. As you will remember, Henry the younger had been crowned in his father's lifetime, and it seemed to the young man that he ought to be King of England now, and he did not want to wait for his father's death. The case was much the same as that of Duke Robert and his father, William the Conqueror.

Henry, ever ambitious for the future of the house of Anjou, had sought alliances for his children which would strengthen their power in Europe. They were betrothed in their earliest years to heirs of reigning houses. At his death he intended to divide his domains amongst them.

His youngest son John, whom he dearly loved, was at this time about five years old. He was already promised in marriage to the daughter and heiress of

## REMORSE OF HENRY

the Count of Maurienne, who, seeing that Henry had promised his other sons the greater portion of his dominions, asked what was to be John's share. Henry appealed to his elder sons each to give something from their possessions to their younger brother. Henry the younger refused. "I am King of England," he said, "but you treat me as a boy—I have no power, but I have rights, and I will give nothing up."

This spirit of selfish ambition had led the young man into active hostilities against his father, who now applied himself with energy to breaking the revolt.

The son had his mother to back him, for the haughty Eleanor of Aquitaine was now on very bad terms with her second husband, and she not only encouraged his children's rebellion, but herself took the part of his adversaries against him.

It was a time of stress for Henry Plantagenet. France and Flanders, William the Lion of Scotland, and all the discontented barons were leagued against him. But he had faithful friends as well as implacable foes, and among them were Richard de Lucy, the Justiciar, and Ranulf Glanvill. Henry's adherents were able to hold their own in England, and William the Lion, who marched through Northumberland to Alnwick, was surprised and taken prisoner (1174).

Henry meantime was in Normandy, where he was able to punish Eleanor of Aquitaine for the rebellion of his sons. She was not subjected to any harsh treat-



William Longsword,  
Son of Henry II. and  
Fair Rosamund

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

ment, and she lived in the state due to her rank, but she was kept in close confinement. Later, when he crossed over to England, he brought Eleanor in his train, evidently thinking it prudent to keep her under close observation. No sooner had Henry landed on English



Henry II. on his way to Becket's Tomb

soil than he rode, accompanied by his retinue, from Southampton towards Canterbury, intent upon doing penance at the tomb of Becket, whose fate hung as a black cloud over his head. Within three miles of the city he called a halt, and dismounting he bade one of his followers lead his horse; he then divested himself of his kingly robes, unshod his feet, and with head bowed walked slowly towards the city.

When this curious procession entered Canterbury the King made his way to the cathedral, where a service was held. As the preacher, Gilbert Foliot, spoke of Henry's contrition for the murder which had been caused by his hasty words, all eyes turned towards the bent form of the haughty monarch who was willing to undergo deep personal humiliation to atone for his sin.

When the service was over the King, accompanied by bishops and barons, made his way to the crypt where lay the body of the martyr. Henry disrobed and knelt naked in front of the tomb. Then one by one the bishops and monks came forward with the lash, and as they in-

## REMORSE OF HENRY

flicted the strokes admonished him, "As the Redeemer was scourged for the sins of men, so be thou for thy own sin." Henry's tears fell fast as he underwent this ordeal.

It was commonly believed that for this act of penitence he would be forgiven, and from that hour his fortunes would mend.

Henry now turned his attention to the good government of the kingdom. He was in a very real sense a lawgiver to his people. He expanded and enlarged the scope of many of the reforms which had been instituted by his grandfather, Henry I. Like that monarch, he saw the necessity of a strong central power and yet of allowing the old institutions to endure. He, gifted with insight, saw how important it was to modify the power of the great barons. One of his most famous reforms was the institution of Scutage, or shield money. Up to the time of Henry II. every freeman was bound to come forward when called upon to take his share in defending the country and to serve abroad, and over and above this every knight was compelled to perform military service for his overlord. In consequence, any powerful barons who rebelled against the King could always bring into the field a band of trained knights to support them. In 1156 Henry enacted that this military service abroad could be commuted for a sum of money, and with the money thus raised he was able to hire soldiers for his foreign wars. Many were glad to avail themselves of this privilege; it struck a blow at the feudal power of the barons, and it also provided the King with a better army, for the paid soldiers were more zealous in his service. This measure partially disarmed the powerful barons, and it made for peace within the country.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Henry also instituted the Assize-at-Arms, whereby the amount of each man's wealth, for purposes of taxation, was discovered by inquest or inquiry. He called an assize at Clarendon (1166), and there, among many other important points discussed, we find the system of trial by jury first instituted. It was enacted that "twelve lawful men of each hundred, and four from each township, were sworn to present those who were known or reputed as criminals within their district for trial by ordeal. The jurors were thus not mere witnesses but sworn to act as judges." This was the beginning of our judicial system in England, which, altered in part, and added to, as it has been through the centuries, stands in the main to this day.

The closing years of the King's life were clouded by the rebellion of his sons. His elder son, Henry, died while in revolt against him, and Richard, who became heir to the throne, was no less a thorn in his father's flesh, intriguing with the King of France against him. He was betrothed to Philip's daughter Adela. It would weary you to give too many details of this struggle, but at last it was arranged that a conference should be held between Henry on the one side, and Philip of France and Richard on the other.

Before proceeding to the real business of the meeting Philip and Henry agreed to a truce for a certain number of months.

Then Philip of France called on Henry to acknowledge Richard as his heir. Henry, who had had enough of his eldest son's claims, refused. Richard was furious at his father's uncompromising manner.

"I demand to be acknowledged as heir of your dominions," he said imperiously.



Richard Cœur de Lion and Henry II.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Henry still refused. Richard repeated his demand but still could not get a satisfactory reply.

"Now," exclaimed Richard, "I believe what hitherto seemed to me incredible." With a gesture of anger he unbuckled his sword, and turned towards the King of France in the attitude of one who was about to do homage.

"I will take you as my liege lord," he said.

Philip gladly accepted, and the two went off together. The crowd which had been watching the interview dispersed, and Henry was left alone.

The bitter disappointment of Richard's disloyalty pressed the more heavily upon the King because his health was failing. He retired to his birthplace, the little town of Le Mans, which he dearly loved, and there he remained till 11th June (1189). News was brought him that Philip and Richard were making hostile preparations, but he seemed unable to exert himself to oppose them. Then he learned that they were marching on the town and he made hurried arrangements for a siege. Soon the French army was encamped round Le Mans, and, hoping thus to destroy Philip and Richard's forces, Henry gave orders that the outlying buildings should be burnt. The result was different from what he had calculated, however, for the wind blew the flames the other way and the town itself was soon a sheet of fire. The French army rushed in and dispersed Henry's followers, and he himself had to take refuge in flight, accompanied by some of his faithful knights, and by William the Marshal, who brought up the rear.

As they were in full gallop William encountered Richard.



## REMORSE OF HENRY

"God's feet," cried Richard, recognising him, "slay me, I am unarmed."

"I leave that to the devil," returned the faithful Marshal, spurring on his horse.

It was a terrible ride for the suffering King. After several days' journey he reached Azay, and he was lying there seriously ill when a conference was arranged to take place between him and Philip and Richard at Colombières. He was so ill when he reached the meeting-place that a cloak was spread for him to sit on. He indignantly refused. He would hear what they had to say standing up as a man. The day was sultry and a thunderstorm broke out in the middle of the conference. Even the elements seemed to conspire against the stricken monarch, and, utterly shattered in mind and body, he could not stand out against Philip's demands, and even consented to give the kiss of reconciliation to the heartless Richard.

"May I live long enough to punish you according to your deserts," he whispered to his rebellious son as they embraced.

He was taken to Chinon, and while lying there he asked to see a list of the traitors who had taken Richard's part against him.

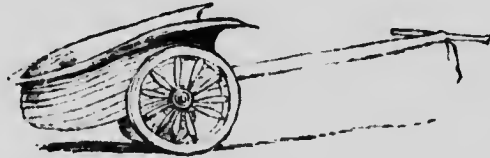
The first name on the list was that of his son John. The cup of his anguish was full. "John, my darling child," he cried, "has he forsaken me? I care no more for myself or for the world"; and he kept on murmuring to himself, till he passed away, "Shame, shame on a conquered king."

At the end of the reign of Henry I. great reforms had been made, but then came the nineteen years of anarchy of the reign of Stephen, when all the good that had been

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

done seemed to have been foiled. But Henry II. from his youth upward was wise and strong. He took up the reforms that had already been started by his grandfather, added to and improved them and put them on a more sure basis.

Henry II. stands out as one of the great kings of history. Though he was much abroad he never neglected his kingdom of England. He had had to suffer much, but had risen above his trials. He had lived down the odium that had come to him after the death of Becket, he had borne for many years the rebellion of his sons, though they broke his heart in the end. He never lost sight of his desire to carry forward schemes for the good government of this country, and though, save England, his empire, which was said to have extended from the Arctic Ocean to the Pyrenees, was lost in the reign of John, many of the reforms which Henry Plantagenet instituted have remained to this day.





CHAPTER XX  
NORMAN DRESS

**C**ARLYLE has told us in his wonderful book "Sartor Resartus," of the Philosophy of Clothes, that "neither in tailoring nor in legislating does man proceed by mere accident, but the hand is ever guided on by the mysterious operations of the mind." With this thought in remembrance we may usefully spend a little time studying the dress of the Normans. We know that the costume worn in battle was intended first and foremost to protect the wearer against the lances and spears of the enemy. For long years armour was worn, until after the invention of gunpowder, being no protection against bullets, it was discarded for ever.

We learn a great deal about the apparel of this period from the Bayeux tapestry, that invaluable piece of needlework which tradition says was worked by Matilda and her ladies, and on which is depicted the events which led up to the battle of Senlac. The men wore a coat of mail shaped like a shirt, with sleeves to the elbow. It was made of leather or canvas, and on it were sewn strong steel rings, as close to each other as

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

possible, so that it was entirely covered. This garment was called a hauberk. For adornment, and this was not forgotten even when the stern business of war was

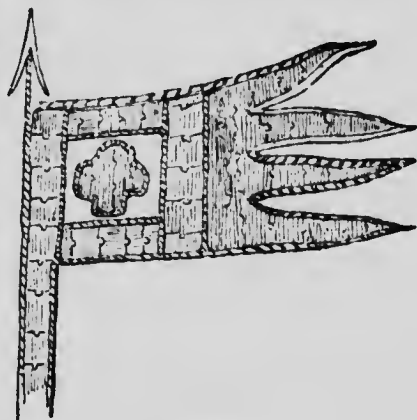


Hauberk

on hand, it had sometimes a purple border, made of metal or leather. The hauberk was not a complete protection, for the leg and part of the arm were left uncovered. The leg was covered by a sort of felt stocking, or by thongs of leather, bound criss-cross, and the arm by the quilted sleeve of the tunic. On the head was worn a peaked helmet (a casque) made of iron and bronze, with a vizor—that is, the part of the helmet that covered the face and could be lifted up and down. The warrior

bore in one hand a kite-shaped shield covered with leather and bordered with metal, on which was painted a strange device of dragon or griffin or serpent. In the other hand a lance was carried, and on the lances we have seen on the Bayeux tapestry are fixed little flags called *gonfanons*. The

horses in warfare had saddles made very high in front, in order to protect the rider's body as much as possible. The King's dress in battle, though much the same in essentials, was



Gonfanon

## NORMAN DRESS

more elaborate, as may be seen from the seals at the British Museum.

The everyday dress of the Norman men was practically the same as that worn by the English. They wore a shirt or tunic with long sleeves, confined at the



Norman Reaper



Norman Noble

waist with a girdle, over which was worn a short cloak fastened on the right shoulder with a fibula, or brooch, thus leaving the arm free. Sometimes, when boots were not available, they wore trousers which came down to the feet, or their legs were cross-gartered with leather of different colours. They wore a pointed hood, sometimes made of the skins of animals turned inside out, which could be drawn over the head at need. The clothes of the common people, though similar in design

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

to those worn by the better-to-do people, were of coarser stuff and unornamented.

The Norman nobility wore linen garments next their skin. Their tunics were made of silk and linen and the finest stuff that could be procured, and were lined with fur. They had enormous sleeves reaching down to the ground, and were bordered and richly embroidered in gold and silver. Furs were much appreciated by the nobility, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle gives an account of the furs which Margaret of Scotland gave to the English king. At first the nobles wore their hair close-cropped, and beards and moustaches.



Norman Lady

The costume of the Norman women was beautiful and dignified. They wore a tunic, and over it a long gown falling to their feet, its fulness sweeping the ground. It was slightly fitted to the figure and drawn in at the waist with a belt. The noble dames had their belts studded with jewels, and on their heads and round their necks wore a soft-coloured veil. Their hair was long and very beautiful. They wore it parted in the middle, and in two plaits, or sometimes loose. Their garments, like those of the men, had long hanging sleeves reaching almost to the ground, and were beautifully embroidered at the neck and hem, and sometimes round the hips.

As time went on the costume changed, though fashion did not march with the rapid strides it does nowadays. The close-cropped Normans allowed their

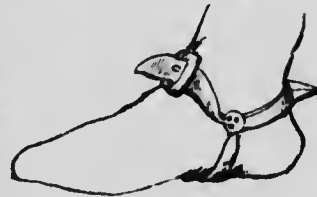
## NORMAN DRESS

hair to grow, and the young men as often as not were clean shaven. In the reign of William Rufus pointed toes to shoes became fashionable, and Ordericus Vitalis, the historian of the time, tells us of the great luxury of the men's dress, of their long hair, curled with irons, parted down the middle and bound with fillets, of the trailing skirts of their robes, of their pointed toes, which he describes as of the length of scorpions' tails. These ridiculous shoes were stuffed with tow in order to keep them in shape. The kings were often great offenders in the matter of luxury in dress. William Rufus was especially vain, and would not wear a pair of stockings if it cost less than ten pounds in our money.

The priests were continually rebuking the vanity of the age, but it was not till that memorable occasion when Henry I., having listened to a sermon on the foppishness of men, had his locks shorn off in the church itself, that men, for a time, reverted to the Norman practice of wearing the hair short. Henry II. did not devote much time to thoughts of dress, and he wore a short mantle in contrast to the long robes of the nobility; being a very energetic man he would not wear a dress that would impede his movements. Richard Cœur de Lion loved to apparel himself gorgeously, and in another chapter you will read of the magnifi-



Hauberk



Norman Spur

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

cent robe worn by him which was made to resemble the sky at night adorned with silver moons and glittering stars.

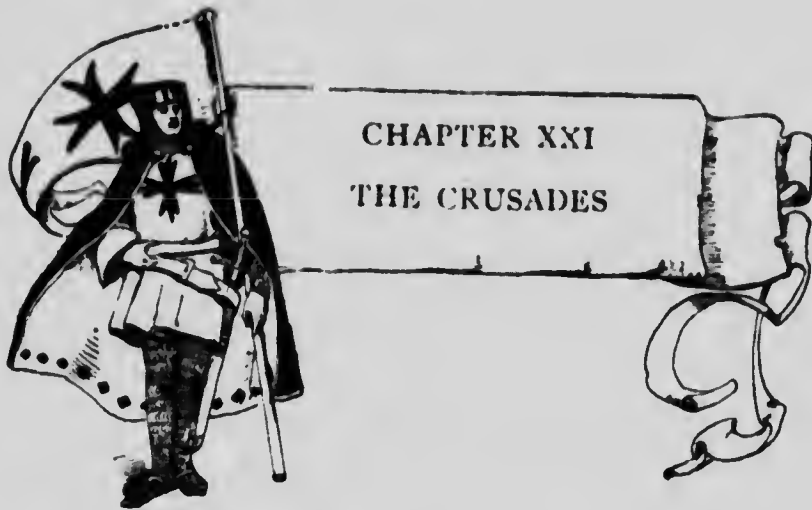


The noble ladies too were not behindhand in the extravagance of their costumes. They wore their sleeves and veils and skirts so long that the ends had to be tied up in loops. Their plaited hair was interlaced with ribbons and jewels, and on their head they wore a gold coronet or jewelled diadem.

We see in the Norman dress, despite its fantastic exaggerations, a love of beauty, of long flowing lines, of gorgeous colour, which is as much an expression of the Norman character as the peculiar dress of the Puritans expressed their austere spirit in a later time.







**W**E must turn for a time from England and France to the struggle of Christian Europe with the East for the possession of the Holy Land. What was the motive of the Crusades? What business had the West to send devastating armies to the East? Palestine, the Holy Land, which had been the scene of Christ's brief life on earth, was in the hands of the Mohammedans.

The special interest of the Crusades lay in the fact that they were sent out, not by one country and by one people, but by all the countries of Christendom. Religion united men and women in those days so that neither race nor speech could divide them. It was Christ against Mohammed—the Cross against the Crescent. Mohammed, who had been born some five hundred years after the birth of Christ (about A.D. 571), was the founder of Mohammedanism—the religion of the Turks. He believed in one God and that he was His

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Prophet, in token whereof he had been vouchsafed a vision of the Angel Gabriel, who had revealed to him the will of God.

When the nations of the West heard of the cruelty practised on the Christians by the Turks in Jerusalem their smouldering religious zeal burst into flame. People of all nations joined in the Crusades for varied reasons,



Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem

but the most potent was undoubtedly the desire to rescue the Holy Sepulchre from the Turks, and to win, through having borne the cross, the everlasting crown. To die in ordinary battle was good, to die on a Crusade was glorious. And though the baser alloy of the mere desire for adventure, the greed of possession, was mixed with the pure gold of high purpose, yet the Crusades taught men that there was a tie that bound each to all, the tie of a common faith.

The movement for the recovery of Palestine began

## THE CRUSADES

in the days of the Conqueror, though before that time many penitents had made pilgrimages to Jerusalem in the hope that amidst those sacred scenes at Bethlehem and on Calvary they might find peace for their souls. It was in vain that the wiser of their teachers reminded them that the time had come when neither at "Mount Gerizim nor yet at Jerusalem they should worship the Father." That was beyond their understanding, for it seemed to them that some special blessing must come, some special forgiveness be shown, to those who had made the arduous journey to tread where their Master's feet had trod.

In the year 1076 Jerusalem was conquered by the Turks, and the pilgrims to Jerusalem suffered greatly, for whereas toll had been taken from them before, now exorbitant demands were made which they had not the money to meet, and the holy buildings that they revered were defaced. Though the stream of pilgrims never ceased, many died on the journey, and more from the cruelties inflicted by the Turks.

Among the pilgrims was Peter, a native of Picardy, who had been a soldier and became a hermit. He went his solitary way to Jerusalem and when he arrived there was horrified to find that the Christians were being severely persecuted. He came back to Europe inspired by the one desire to rouse the Christians of the West to go to the rescue of their brethren in the East. It was necessary for him first to gain Pope Urban II.'s assent to his mission, and then, clad in the coarsest of pilgrim's clothes, and riding a mule, he traversed Italy and France, preaching in town and hamlet and urging his hearers to join in the Holy War. Peter the Hermit, whose spirit was so wonderfully exalted by this great

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

mission, was a small, insignificant man, and people paid scant heed to him till he began to speak. Then he became transfigured and his voice, now in appeal, now in denunciation, rang in the ears of the crowds who



Crusader

would gather round him. He sowed the seed, and Pope Urban II. in a great council at Clermont (11th November 1095) reaped the harvest. Bishops and clergy, nobles and common people, flocked to the city from all over Europe. It was wintry weather, and lodgings could not be found for the multitudes that came, and many had to camp out in the open fields.

When the Pope rose to address this gathering, he told in eloquent tones how Palestine was overrun by infidels, and how even the great city, the holy Jerusalem, was in the hands of the enemy. "Every spot there," he went on, "is hallowed by the words that He spake, by the miracle that He performed. . . . This city, this dwelling of Jesus Christ, the cradle of our salvation is no longer a partaker of redemption. In that very

## THE CRUSADES

temple whence Christ expelled the buyers and sellers, that the sanctuary might not be defiled, the doctrine of the Devil is now openly preached. Let everyone deny himself and take on him the Cross of Christ."

"*Deus vult! Deus vult!*" went up from thousands of voices as the multitude were carried away by the impassioned words.

Then the great concourse became silent as, one by one, the bishops and clergy came forward, fell at the



Wooden Effigy of Robert of Normandy, Gloucester Cathedral

feet of the Pope and begged to be allowed to take part in this Holy War. A red cross was placed on their shoulders and they went forth to urge others to follow their example.

Thus was gathered together the army of the First Crusade. Many names which we meet in history were included among those soldiers of the cross: Baldwin and Eustace, Robert, the son of the Conqueror, Edgar Ætheling, and many another.

The First Crusade ended in the siege of Jerusalem by the Crusaders. They had been blockading the city for over a month, during which time terrible suffering was endured, both from the attacks of the Turks and from the agony of thirst. Peter the Hermit rallied the almost despairing men with his courageous words, but the cause seemed all but lost. The story goes that, at this crisis, as the pilgrims gazed towards

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

the mount of Olivet, they saw a shining figure clad in armour who signalled to them and bade them persevere.

"St George of England," they cried, and they renewed the attack with increased vigour. Jerusalem was taken



Tomb of Godfrey de Bouillon (Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem)

and the triumphant Crusaders made use of their victory to massacre hundreds of Mohammedans. It was through streams of blood that they rode to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to offer thanks for their victory. They elected as King of Jerusalem one of their leaders,

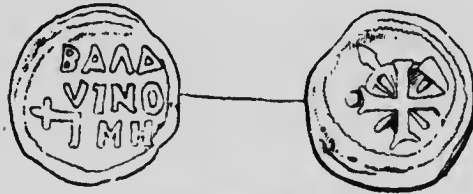
Godfrey of Bouillon, a wise and upright man.

He refused to be crowned, for he said, "I will not wear the king's crown on the spot where the Saviour of the world has worn the crown of thorns." And the First Crusade came to an end.

But with the capture of Jerusalem the Holy Land was not rid of the infidel. Geoffrey was succeeded by Baldwin I., Baldwin II. and Fulk of Anjou. Then

came Baldwin III., and in his reign Edessa was captured by the Turks, who were as ruthless as the Christians had been in their wholesale massacre.

The news speedily travelled and was the spark which kindled the flame of the Second Crusade, for it seemed



Coin of Baldwin I.

## THE CRUSADES

as though with the capture of Edessa the Holy Sepulchre might again fall into the hands of the infidel.

This Crusade was preached by one of the most saintly men of that time, or indeed of any time—St Bernard of



St Bernard of Clairvaux

Clairvaux. The son of a deeply religious mother, he was set apart from birth for a special mission. He founded at Clairvaux a monastery where the strictest rules were enforced. Many came to him, and among them his own brothers and sisters, anxious to retreat

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

from the world. The state of affairs in Europe was not favourable to a Crusade and it was not for some years that St Bernard succeeded in his aim.

At the Council of Vezelay (Easter, 1146) St Bernard with fiery zeal bade his hearers go forth to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. Louis VII., the monk king, was one of the first to join the Crusade, and he and Conrad of Germany were the two leaders. Among the vast host who followed them was a regiment of women Crusaders, fully armed with spear and shield, under Louis's wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. In the terrible journey thousands perished through treachery, thousands were murdered, and only a remnant of the gallant host which had set out reached Jerusalem. There it was decided to abandon all hope of rescuing Edessa and to concentrate on Damascus. This was done, but the siege had to be abandoned and the Second Crusade failed utterly.

At last, in 1187, the Sultan Saladin took Jerusalem from the Christians, although two Crusades had poured out blood and treasure for the rescue of the Holy Land. It was a terrible blow to Christendom, and Pope Gregory VIII. felt that it was his duty to urge the faithful once more to go on that perilous journey. He had not the burning eloquence of a Peter or a Bernard; nevertheless at his trumpet call he was able to rally thousands to the standard of the Cross, and Henry II. was amongst those who promised to join this Crusade. It was an age of adventurous spirits longing for action, and though many went sincerely believing that they could desire no better death than in trying to rescue the city in which Christ suffered, and the land in which he dwelt from the Turks, others went



## THE CRUSADES

from ignoble motives ; some because it was fashionable to go, some on the chance of bettering their fortunes. Henry imposed a heavy tax upon England to raise money for the Third Crusade. When he died, Richard threw himself with all the ardour of his nature into the work of making the final arrangements. In this Crusade were to be associated with him Frederick Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany, and Philip Augustus, King of France, who had succeeded Louis VII.

Richard was solemnly anointed and crowned as King of England with magnificent ceremony at Westminster. But England saw little of him during his reign. He was now thirty-two years old ; handsome, tall and dignified in figure, with rich brown hair and blue eyes, and in his veins ran both northern and southern blood, that of Normandy and Anjou. Unlike his father, he cared much for fine apparel, so that in look and bearing he was every inch a king.

He knew no fear ; he longed for adventure and for high renown ; but he was a born soldier rather than a born leader.

The first business of his reign was to raise more money from the wretched country to pay for the expedition. The people had already contributed to the full, but there was one class of their subjects whom the kings of that time plundered remorselessly when they required money. This was the Jews. The Christians were supposed to be forbidden by their faith to lend money on usury ; the Jews had no such limitation on their business transactions, and they grew very rich in consequence.

Richard's coronation had been marked by a massacre of the Jews, and they were now systematically robbed.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

But even they could not provide sufficient money, and Richard ended by selling privileges and titles so as to fill his purse. William the Lion paid him a large sum in order to be freed from paying homage to the English king, which he had been compelled to do since



Badge of Richard I.

his capture at Alnwick; Church benefices were sold, castles and towns; "I would sell London itself," said the King, "if I could find a purchaser."

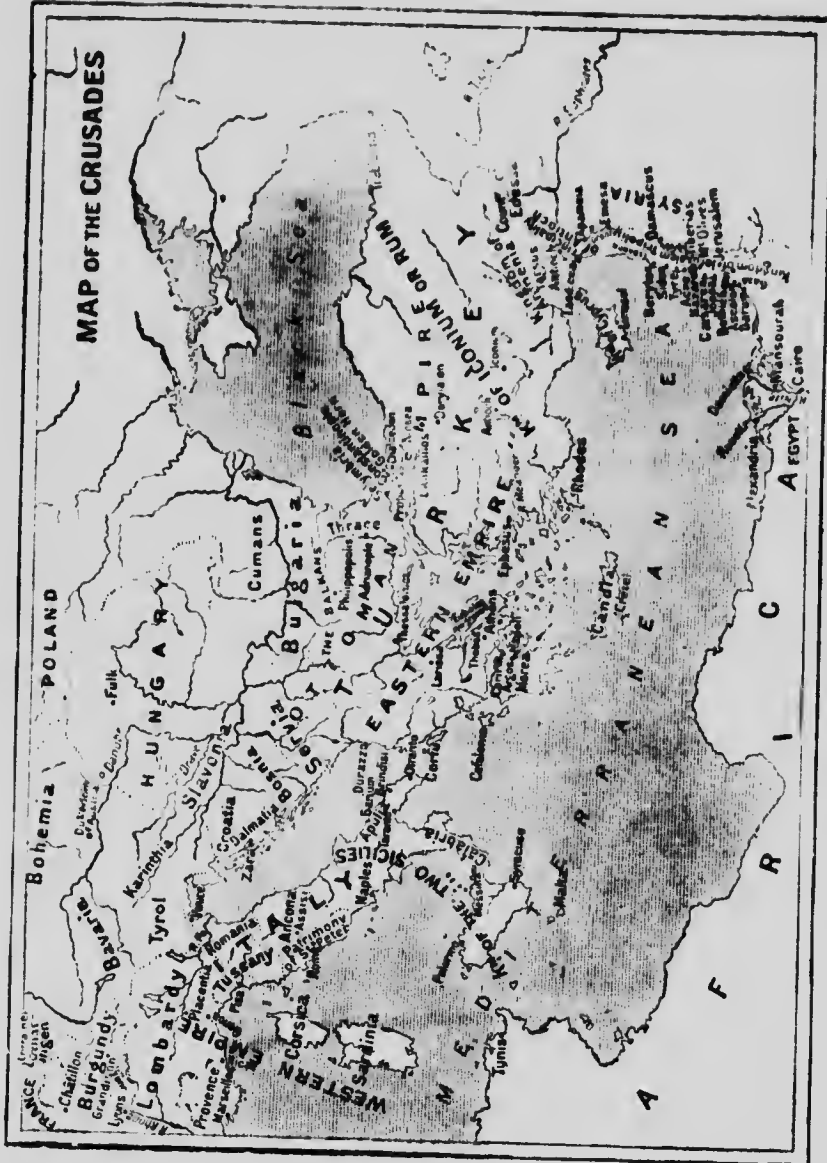
Having filled his coffers he made arrangements for the governance of England during his absence. He left William of Longchamp, a self-made man, as Justiciar; and, though he gave his brother John large estates, he did not trust him sufficiently to leave him any share in the government. So little did he rely on his good faith that he made him promise to live out of England for the next three years.

Richard and Philip of France made all haste now to start on their expedition. Frederick Barbarossa, now nearly seventy, the hero-king of Germany, had started the year before, on St George's Day, 1189. He had set his kingdom in order and had gone forth on this tragic expedition from which he was never to return. It was a long and weary journey by the banks of the Danube through Austria and Hungary. The Turks opposed the march of the Crusaders through Asia Minor, but Barbarossa pressed on successfully till he reached Seleucia, and there, in fording a river, this great and gallant King was drowned. His people mourned him

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## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

sincerely, and they believed, for long years after, that he was not dead, but that in time of peril he would come to the rescue of his country.

Richard Cœur de Lion, as he was called, and Philip of France were not ideal comrades for the enterprise they were to undertake together. With the French king was associated the ambitious Italian, Conrad, Marquis of Montferrat.

All who were going on the Crusade were summoned to meet at Easter, 1190, at Vezelay. Richard and Philip received their pilgrim staff and wallet, and when the latter leant upon his staff it broke in two. This was believed to be a sign of failure.

The plain of Vezelay was crowded with tents and looked like a white city in the spring sunshine. A hundred thousand of the picked men of England and France, the brave, the adventurous, the self-seeking and the unscrupulous, were there. In the tents that night the troubadours sang their romantic songs of love and gallantry.

The host remained two days encamped, and then started on the long march. Richard and Philip were to meet again at Messina. It was a prosperous voyage, but the Crusaders were glad when they saw the quaint Italian city, with its white domes and turrets, and knew that they would stand on firm ground again.

Messina had been chosen by Richard as the second meeting-place, because he had to see to the affairs of his sister, Joan. She had been married to William the Good, King of Sicily, and had had the rich dowry of a king's daughter. When she became a widow, the reigning King of Sicily refused to refund her money to her.

## THE CRUSADES

Directly Richard arrived at Messina he sent an embassy to King Tancred of Sicily.

"What would he have with me?" the King asked angrily, indignant that Richard should have landed uninvited on his shores.

Cœur de Lion's demands were somewhat exorbitant, for the chroniclers tell us that, beside the person of his sister and her dowry, he asked for a golden table twelve feet long and a foot and a half broad, two golden tripods, golden plates and basins, a silk tent and a hundred galleys fitted out for two years.



Coin of Tancred

The only item in this demand that Tancred showed no reluctance in parting with was the King's sister, Joan.

Richard was infuriated with Tancred, and the people of Messina for their part were up in arms against the Crusaders, who were eating up their provisions. A pitched battle took place and, "quicker than priest could chant matins," says an old chronicle, "did King Richard take the city," and hoist the English standard on the walls.

As a result of the siege, Richard, though he did not get his golden table, got forty thousand ounces of gold, which, at any rate, was more useful to him.

Philip, who had refused to take part in the siege, was very keen on sharing the booty. The two kings quarrelled and were reconciled, but during the six months they spent in Messina there were constant wrangles between them. They had been friends as boys; as men, though fighting in a common cause, they never could get on together.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Philip had one very good reason for his anger with Richard: the latter continued to refuse to marry his sister Alice. Worse still, Eleanor of Aquitaine had arranged another marriage for her son with Berengaria, daughter of the King of Navarre.

Philip was furious; "I see plainly enough," he said, "that you seek cause of malice against me, that you may have a pretext for not marrying my sister Alice, whom you had sworn to marry."



Berengaria

"I will never marry her," Richard declared contemptuously. His refusal was due not only to the fact that he had heard rumours concerning Alice which made her unsuitable to be his bride, but also that Berengaria was an heiress, and actually on the way to Messina in company with his mother.

A few days after their arrival Richard left Messina; he was no ardent wooer of the lady of his choice, and did not desire an immediate marriage.

"She must wait my good pleasure; I have waited hers," he said. 'Tis

time to sail, we have been six months here, she can follow the fleet."

In company with Richard's sister, Berengaria, who has been described as a doll-like woman, shy and somewhat stupid, with the dark eyes of her country, sailed from Messina. It was humiliating to the little lady to know that, having journeyed so far, her King Richard, whom she dreaded yet adored, was in no hurry to wed her.

## THE CRUSADES

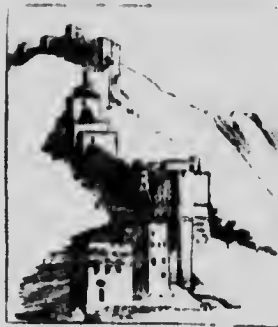
The fleet of two hundred vessels put out in a calm sea. The ships which contained the ladies bore the emblem of a lion, and followed in its wake. A terrible storm arose and the fleet became dispersed; one vessel foundered and all on board were drowned, others were wrecked on the coast of Cyprus, and all the passengers suffered terribly from sea-sickness.

The Emperor of Cyprus made friendly overtures to the shipwrecked crews, but they soon found that they were in a trap. He kept them as close prisoners, and they dreaded lest their parts in the Crusade would be ended by their being butchered by him.

Richard arrived at Cyprus just in time to save them, and intent on calling Commenus, the Emperor, to account. The Emperor blockaded the harbour, but all in vain; Richard and his knights landed and soon put the Greeks to flight. The little town of Limasol opened its gates to welcome them, and there Berengaria and her companions were lodged in comparative safety.

King Richard then bethought himself that he would like to add Cyprus to his kingdom. With a small body of men he fought the Greeks, himself singling out the Emperor and bringing him to the ground, but his antagonist remounted quickly and fled.

Berengaria, who had been very much neglected so far, now received her full share of her future husband's attention. He determined that the marriage ceremony should take place at once, in the beautiful town of



Wall of Antioch

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Limasol. The little Queen trembled before her King, as he sat enthroned, holding the sceptre of power and the orb of dominion, and she did him homage. She was crowned Queen of England and Empress of Cyprus, and after the ceremony a magnificent banquet was given. Berengaria sat on a golden chair and received the homage of her husband's subjects.

The King "was clad in rose-coloured velvet, his mantle was striped with silver half-moons, between which were scattered numerous golden suns, his hat was of scarlet cloth embroidered with figures of birds and beasts in gold, the sheath of his sword was silver."

A day or two after, wearing this gorgeous costume and riding a noble horse magnificently caparisoned, he went to interview Commenus, who was quite overawed by his grandeur. The Emperor made many promises which he did not keep, and in the end he was taken prisoner and kept in silver chains at Tripolis.



Seal of Louis VII.





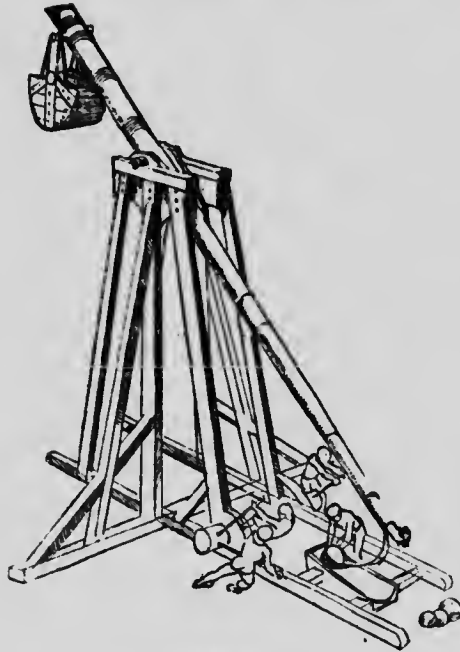
CHAP. XXII.—RICH-  
ARD AND SALADIN

**I**T would seem that Richard, with his various quarrels at Messina and Cyprus, had forgotten all about the main object of the expedition. He had tarried long, but now at last he set sail for Acre, where Philip of France had already arrived. Acre had been besieged for two years by a part of the Crusaders, and now Richard hurried there to try to end the siege (1191). When he reached Palestine he was so seriously ill that he could not move from his sick-bed; but, undaunted, he had his mattress carried out into the open, and lying there he directed and controlled the operations against Acre.

The principal implement of war used in this siege, and generally at that time, was the mangonel, a machine constructed to hurl large polished round stones at the enemy. So large were these stones sometimes that one of them is recorded to have killed twelve men. But a more deadly implement used in assaulting a walled town was the siege castle, a sort of wooden tower on wheels, built in several storeys. Although it towered above the walls of the city, it

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

could be moved about from one place to another. On the top storey the archers would be stationed; on another storey would be kept the ram, a heavy wooden beam used for battering in the walls, and on another



Mangonel

the mangonel. A deadly substance known as Greek fire was used for setting fire to a town. It was compounded of sulphur, naphtha, pitch, gum and salt boiled together, and when once it was lighted only vinegar or sand could extinguish the flames.

The army of the Crusaders was now so strong that Acre could not hold out, and Saladin, the noble Sultan of the Turks, was compelled to make terms. Acre was to be given up, the Holy Cross restored, two hundred knights and fifteen

hundred other Christian captives were to be surrendered, and a large sum of gold to be paid within forty days.

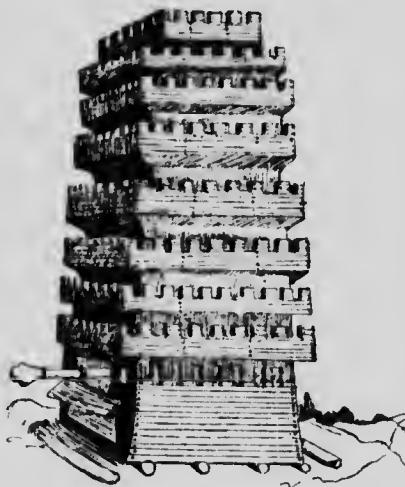
Meantime, Richard and Philip took up their abode in Acre; Richard, ever foremost, chose the royal palace from which to fly the flag of England, whilst the French flag flew from the house of the Templars. The two kings soon found plenty to quarrel about in dividing the spoil. Philip, weary of the struggle, and suffering from camp-sickness, now considered he had fulfilled his vow, and desired to return to France.

## RICHARD AND SALADIN

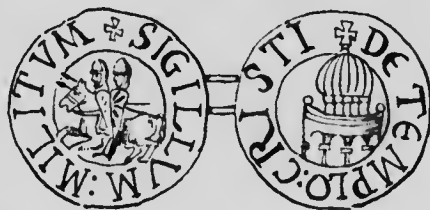
He left, promising not to molest England in the King's absence, and Richard remained to see that Saladin fulfilled his vow.

The forty days wore on, and the wretched captives, praying for release, received no sign from their leader. Either Saladin would not or could not pay, nor could he restore the Holy Cross. Richard, ever impatient, on the 14th August, six days before the time was out, left Acre, and pitched his tents outside the city, waiting for news from Saladin. None came. On the hot afternoon of the 20th August the captives were summoned before the King, and at his command his soldiers fell on them and massacred them, mutilating their bodies to see if the rumour that they had swallowed jewels and gold were true. The captives of Philip at the same hour were on the walls of the city. Five thousand lives paid for Saladin's broken pledge.

The West rang with this deed and applauded the heroism of Richard. One bishop alone raised a voice of protest, and an echo of his deep indignation must have sounded in the hearts of many, who knew that this ruthless massacre was a desecration of the name of Christ. Saladin vowed that he would never give



Siege Tower



Seal of the Templars

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

up the Holy Cross, and that henceforth never would he spare the life of a Christian. A renewal of hostilities was inevitable.

Acre was but the first step in the conquest of Palestine, for Saladin was far too powerful to be subdued by a single stroke of ill-fortune. Richard knew that he must immediately follow up his success, for his army was becoming demoralised by luxury and indulgence of every kind. Accordingly he ordered the Crusaders to march along the coast, and the fleet to sail close at hand, keeping the army in view. It was a terrible journey, for the men had to plough through loose sand, and struggle through thickets of prickly briers. Their clothes were torn, they were covered with dust and, to add to their misery, they were badly stung by swarms of insects. All the enthusiasm which they had felt as they camped in the spring sunshine at Vezelay had evaporated as they tramped across

"those holy fields,  
Over whose acres walked those blessed feet."

When a halt was called each night, and the tents were pitched, a herald would go forth and cry, "God and the Holy Sepulchre aid us!" hoping thereby to inspire the men to endure manfully their privations.

After a long and weary march the forces of Saladin and Cœur de Lion met at Arsouf. These two mighty armies—a hundred thousand Christians, and three hundred thousand Moslems—stood face to face. It was a troubled sea of human beings that covered the hill and plain of Arsouf, between Caesarea and Joppa. Here were dusky Ethiopians, Bedouins, Turks, and against them was arrayed the flower of European

## RICHARD AND SALADIN

chivalry, English, Normans and Angevins, ready to fulfil their vow. The Turks, gorgeous in the red turbans, and the dark-skinned negroes stood, picturesque but menacing, on the hill slopes, while behind them palm-trees stood dark against the autumn sky.

Christian and Mohammedan alike rejoiced to meet one another in open fight, and above the din was heard the blare of trumpets and the sound of horns. The voices of the Moslems rose in a mighty shout, "Allah is Great!"

"There is no God but Allah!" And the Christians replied with equal confidence, "Save, Holy Sepulchre!" "Save, St George!" Then the opposing ranks rushed impetuously together. Richard, a mighty figure on his famous brown horse, was in the thick of the onset, near by the Knights



Seal of the Hospitallers

Hospitallers, and his sword sent many a Turk to his death. The air was thick with sand, and so great was the confusion that some of the Crusaders slew their own comrades, not being able to distinguish friend from foe. Saladin, valiant as Richard, with his battle-cry, "Allah is Great!" rallied his followers again and again, but at last the Moslems were beaten, and they fled in wild disorder.

The palm-trees stood like giant watchers, their dark foliage motionless in the still night air; the stars shone serene in the calm, deep sky; but what a scene did they look upon! Men of many nations, Christian and Moslem, Ethiopian, Turk, English and Norman, horses and camels, lay there in inextricable confusion, dying and dead, the trappings that had shone so brightly in the morning sun trampled underfoot and half hidden by the sand.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Saladin was bitterly disappointed. He had longed to meet the lion-hearted Richard in open fight, for he had for him the respect that one brave man has for another ; they had met, and Richard had triumphed. The King of England now marched on to Joppa, where he found a ruined town surrounded by olive groves. Here the army rested for a time. The walls were rebuilt by the Crusaders, and Richard prepared to advance on Jerusalem. When all was ready, the Crusaders set out for the Holy City, but when they had gone some way Richard realised that he had not sufficient men to invest it, and that food and water were too scarce for the needs of his army. It was bitter December weather, and rain and snow barred their progress. Deeply disappointed, he had decided to retrace his steps when, from a hill-top where he stood, one of his attendants pointed out to him the city of Jerusalem in the distance. Richard lowered his eyes and refused to gaze on it, since it was not given to him to rescue it from the infidel.

Joppa and Ascalon, since they commanded the sea, were the keys to the situation, and, consequently, all provisions had to be landed at one or the other port. If they were in the hands of the infidel, it would be hopeless for a Christian army to hold Jerusalem, as the Crusaders would perish for want of supplies.

The army was disorganised by this time. Some of the soldiers left, and made their way to Joppa, others retired to Acre, and Richard was left with a small force. He retreated to Ascalon and set to work to repair the walls, working as hard as any man, and spending his money freely on the defences. Some of the French soldiers, desiring a little repose, joined their former comrades in the pleasant olive groves of Joppa.

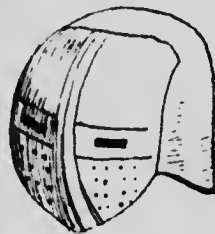
## RICHARD AND SALADIN

Saladin's next move was to try to seize Joppa, and a small body of Saracens entered the town. Richard immediately ordered part of his troops to advance by land, he himself with a little force of men went by sea, disembarked at the harbour, and pushed into the town, driving out the Saracens. He then camped outside the town, and Saladin attempted a surprise, but Richard was too wary to be taken in this way. His small band defended themselves bravely, and the Saracens were routed.

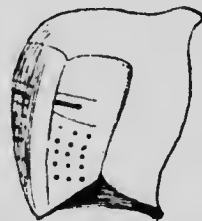


Badge of Richard I.

It was during this assault that Richard, leading the attack, was unhorsed. News of this mishap was brought to Saladin. With knightly chivalry he sent two magnificent chargers to his enemy, for he held it unfitting that so gallant an adversary should fight on foot.



Since Jerusalem could not be taken Richard was ready to abandon the campaign. Accordingly he sent a letter to Saladin, in which he spoke of the suffering of the country. "Franks and Moslems perish, the land is laid waste, and souls suffer as well as worldly goods. The Holy War has had its due, and we have only now to come to an agreement about Jerusalem and the Holy Cross. As to that city, it is the seat of our religion, and we cannot give it up."



Neither would Saladin. Jerusalem had a claim on the Mohammedan devotee no less than on the Christian, for it was from Jerusalem that Mohammed made his journey to heaven. Saladin, somewhat unreasonably, was equally unwilling to give up the portion of the Cross, worthless to him

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

as the symbol of an alien creed, but of inestimable value to those who believed that their Redeemer's form had been nailed upon it.

Eventually a three years' truce was arranged, and the Third Crusade came to an end.

Richard embarked at Acre, and, turning with longing eyes towards the land which he had tried in vain to free, he stretched out his hands and prayed that he might once again visit those shores, and that he might live to see the Holy Land a Christian country.

What was the result of the Crusades? What was there to compensate for the deaths of so many brave men? Some say that half-a-million warriors had left their bones to rot in the East. The good of them and the use of them were not in rescuing the Holy Sepulchre from the Turks, it was in their being, as Bishop Stubbs writes, "The first great effort of mediæval life to go beyond the pursuit of selfish and isolated ambitions; they were the trial feat of the young world, essaying to use, to the glory of God and the benefit of man, the arms of its new knighthood."

The commercial results were very important. Products of the East were brought to the West, and an intercourse began which was to prove enduring.

The social results were also important in that many unruly barons and knights were drawn off to these wars. This enabled the kings to strengthen their power, and hastened the removal of the worst faults of the feudal system.





## CHAPTER XXIII

### RICHARD RETURNS TO HIS KINGDOM.

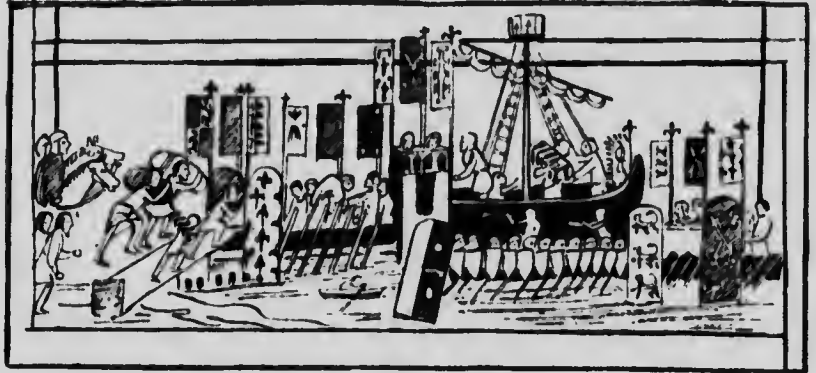
**I**T was time that Richard should return to his inheritance. He had not been without news from England during these years of absence, but though the news was disquieting he could not turn back. Now he was eager once more to take up his duties as king, and to settle with John, who had not kept faith with him, and had given William of Longchamp an arduous task to keep peace in the country.

Meantime Richard had embarked at Acre with a few of his followers, leaving behind him a memory which did not fade away for many a century. "Hush, hush," the mothers of the East would say to their children, "or King Richard will have you."

The returning Crusaders had a rough voyage, and near Venice the vessel was wrecked, but the passengers were saved. Richard entered the city, and there he dismissed his retinue, intending to continue his journey home by land. He did not wish to be recognised, and he therefore journeyed with only one follower, two

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

chaplains, and a few of the Knights Templars. In order to travel across Europe it was necessary to obtain permission from the kings or governors of the various territories through which he must pass. Richard



Crusaders embarking (from a MS.)

sent an offering of a large ruby to the reigning lord of Zara.

"Who has given you this?" he asked the messenger.

"A pilgrim from the East," was the reply.

"His name?"

"Hugh, the Merchant."

The jewel was a very beautiful one, and the lord of Zara recollected having seen it before. "This ring belongs to King Richard of England." The messenger trembled for the safety of the party, but the lord assured him, "I return your master's gift—he may depart."

Richard had made himself unpopular both with France and Austria in the Holy Land, and now the news began to be spread abroad in these countries that the pilgrim knight was none other than the renowned Cœur de Lion. Knowing that search was being made for him, he fled for his life with one faithful follower.



Blondel

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

He was resting one day after the fatigue of the journey at an inn, when he was recognised by followers of the Duke of Austria, who took him prisoner. The Duke handed Richard over to the custody of the Emperor of Germany, who kept him as a captive in a castle in the Tyrol, and set a ransom of one hundred thousand pounds upon his head.



Helm of Richard I.

This large sum had to be raised in England from an already impoverished people. With great difficulty and after many delays the money was forthcoming, though there is some doubt as to whether the Emperor of Germany ever received the whole of it. John, who did not wish his brother to return, offered

the Emperor an enormous bribe to keep him in prison.

Richard was not crushed by his misfortune. Indeed, he astonished his jailers by his gaiety and fortitude, and he became a great favourite.

The story goes that no one knew in what castle he was confined, and that one who loved him, a minstrel, Blondel by name, resolved to find him. Richard had been two years in captivity and his friends despaired of his release. Blondel sang his way through Germany, hearing the gossip of the people in the towns and inns, hoping by some chance to be directed to his master's prison. He was growing hopeless in his quest when Fate directed him to the village where the King was imprisoned. He lodged near the castle and made the usual inquiries of his hostess as to who lived there.

"There's been a prisoner there these two years," said the woman; "some say 'tis a noble lord."

Blondel cut her short. A noble lord two years in

## RICHARD RETURNS TO HIS KINGDOM

captivity! Might it not be him whom he sought? He turned over in his mind how he could find means of communicating with the prisoner. He had his viol in his hand and as he meditated his fingers touched the strings; almost unconsciously he played over a little song which Richard used to love. It was an inspiration. His next step was to gain entrance to the castle, which he did with difficulty, and in the courtyard the wandering minstrel touched his viol and sang his song, hoping that the captive might hear. The sunshine was streaming on the brickwork of the castle walls, and the minstrel played on. Suddenly he heard from within the donjon a clear voice joining in the refrain. It was the voice of him whom he sought.



Seal of Richard I.

Richard's ransom was ready at last and he returned to England. "Take care of yourself, for the devil is let loose," Philip of France wrote to John.

Richard arrived home on the 13th March 1194, and for the second and last time he dwelt in his own kingdom, showing himself to his people wearing his crown at Winchester. Then leaving the government in the hands of Hubert Walter, Archbishop of Canterbury, he sailed for France to look after his dominions there, and to settle his difficulties with Philip. Soon after he landed, John came to see him, for Eleanor of Aquitaine had begged him to forgive his brother. Richard was magnanimous and consented. "I forgive him," he said, smiling, "and I hope I shall as soon forget my injuries as he will my pardon."



Arrow and Com-  
bustible

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Whilst Richard was trying to settle his many difficulties in Normandy and Anjou he heard a rumour that the Duke of Limoges, one of his feudal lords, had found some buried treasure, a massive golden table with small golden figures of an emperor and twelve knights sitting round it. Richard vowed that he would have the spoil and the Duke was willing to share it with him, but the King wanted it all. Limoges refused peremptorily, whereupon Richard laid siege to his castle of Chalus and during the operations a well-aimed arrow struck him and this proved his death wound.

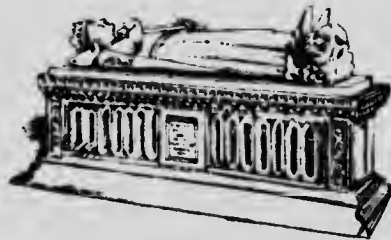
In the brief interval that remained to him, having named John as his successor, he called for a priest. He had not confessed for seven years, for he knew that he could not forgive his enemy Philip. The archer whose arrow had found its mark in Richard's side was brought before him.

"What have I done to thee that thou shouldst slay me?" he asked.

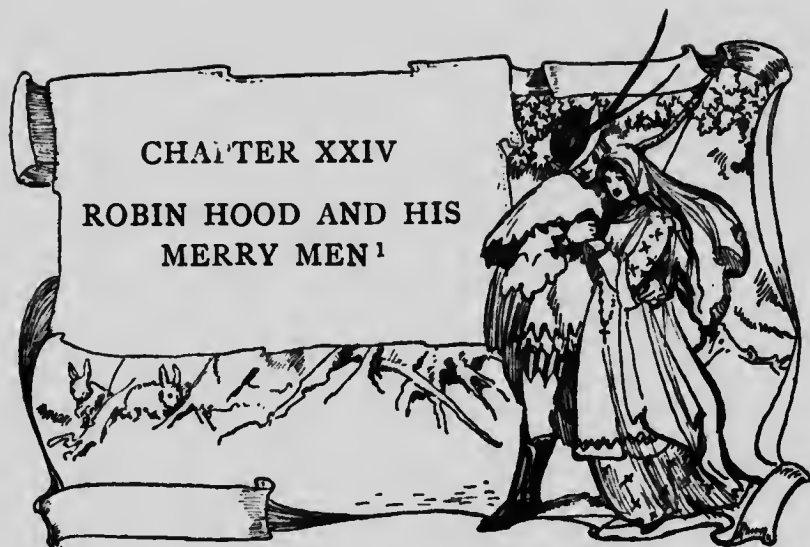
"Thou hast slain my father and two of my brothers with thine own hand, and thou wouldst fain have killed me too. Avenge thyself upon me as thou wilt; I will gladly endure the greatest torments which thou canst devise since I have seen thee upon thy death-bed."

"I forgive thee," said the dying King.

And so he passed away, and was laid to rest by his father's side in the Abbey of Fontevraud.



Tomb of Richard I. at Rouen



**W**E will leave the King and the Court for a time and travel in the realm ruled over by the legendary hero Robin Hood. Some say that he was an exiled noble, others that he was of yeoman stock, born under the greenwood tree, and that the leafy aisles of the forest had ever been his home. The story goes that his father was a King's forester and that he had under his care Sherwood and Barnesdale Forests. Robin was taught the use of the bow and arrow as soon as he had strength to hold them. His father and mother died when he was a youth, and shortly afterwards he killed one of the King's deer—an offence for which his life was forfeit.

Becoming thus an outlaw, he fled to the Forest of Sherwood, where many who for various reasons were

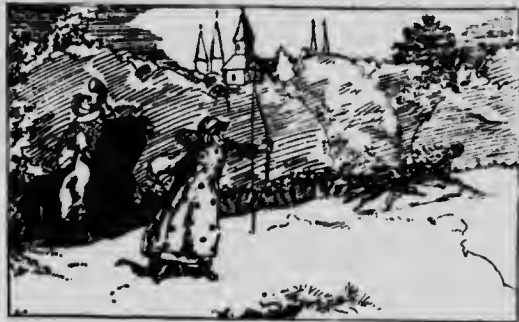
<sup>1</sup> For much of the information in this chapter I am indebted to "Stories of Robin Hood," by J. Walker McSpadden.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

fugitives from justice, lived a wild life; and he cast in his lot with them.

“Sherwood in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?  
Gray and ghostly shadows are clouding through the brake,  
Shadows of the dappled deer dreaming of the morn,  
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.”

These lawless men did not at first choose as their



Ladies hunting

leader the gallant youth who came among them and brought with him the spirit of good-fellowship and jollity. It was necessary that he should first give some signal proof of his prowess.

The Sheriff of Nottingham had set a reward of two hundred pounds on the young man's head, and we might think that, on this account, Robin would have avoided Nottingham and its neighbourhood. We shall see.

A great fair was held at Nottingham every year, at which all sorts of contests were decided. The greatest interest centred in the archers' contest for the golden arrow. In those days archery was much more than a mere sport, it was a very important accomplishment



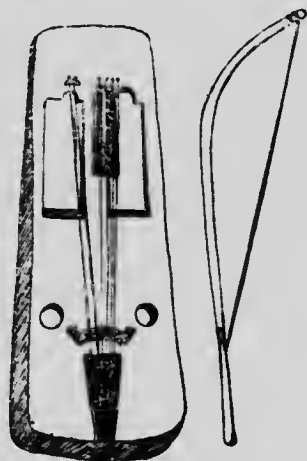
## ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

for the youth of all classes. The bow and arrow were weapons of warfare, and the issue of many a battle was decided by the skill of the archers. Then, too, it was with the bow and arrow that the wild creatures of the forest were killed ; so, you will see, it became every man to be a skilled marksman.

The time of the annual fair had come round ; in Nottingham nothing else was talked of, and the townsfolk discussed eagerly the chances of the various competitors. On the day when the contest was to begin, a beggar man asked leave to enter ; his apparel was ragged, his face shrouded by a hood. The people laughed at his ungainly figure and bandied jokes about the small chance he had of winning a prize.

In the amphitheatre, where the contests were to take place, boxes had been put up for the wealthy and the great. In one was seated the Sheriff of Nottingham with his wife and daughter ; in another the sleek Bishop of Hereford ; while in a third sat a beautiful girl, Marian, the daughter of the Earl of Huntingdon, whom Robin loved.

A trumpet sounded and the noise of chattering and laughter ceased, while the herald read out the terms of the archery contest which was now to begin. Three targets were to be set up at different distances, and he who shot nearest the bull's eye on the most distant target would be declared the winner and would receive



A Crwth (a very ancient Musical Instrument in use at this Period)

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

the coveted golden arrow, which he would present to the lady of his choice.

The hooded beggar shot well in the first round, but so did many another. In the second round his arrow found the bull's eye very near the centre. There were few competitors now left, for it was only the best in each round that was allowed to shoot again. The third round came, and as the beggar fitted an arrow to his bow he glanced at Lady Marian's box ; their eyes met, and he saw that, in spite of his disguise, she knew him for Robin of the Greenwood. His eyes sparkled, he drew his bow, took steady aim, and the shaft sped true to the very centre of the bull's eye. No other archer shot so well, and he was awarded the golden arrow. Many eyes were upon him as he glanced up at the boxes where sat the expectant ladies. The Sheriff's daughter expected that she would be the recipient of the arrow, but her brow contracted as, with a manly stride, the beggar passed her box to the one in which sat the beautiful Marian. His choice was acclaimed with lusty shouts from the great assembly, and all were merry save the Sheriff's daughter, who vowed in her heart to be revenged.

Robin went back to the outlaws and told how he had braved the Sheriff and won the golden arrow. The feat was acclaimed by all, and the band chose him as their leader, under the name of Robin Hood, and presented him with a horn, on which he was to blow three sounding blasts whenever he would summon them. Then they bound themselves by a promise that they would only rob the rich to give to the poor ; that they would champion the oppressed ; that they would defend and protect any woman who should come their way.

## ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

The foresters were always on the lookout for recruits, and Robin had a special knack of turning enemies into comrades. He would have a bout with



any man, play the game fairly and squarely, and be always willing to acknowledge the prowess of his adversary. One day he went forth eager for adventure, and crossing a brook met a tall stranger who would not give way for him on the narrow bridge. The stranger

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

carried a stout cudgel of oak, and, after they had aroused one another's ire, Robin cut himself one of equal length, so that they could settle their dispute by blows. They were evenly matched, for though the stranger was taller and stronger, Robin had superior agility and skill. After attacking one another for some time, the stranger at last, with a lucky hit, felled Robin with a blow that sent him into the stream. Then the stranger pulled him out again, and Robin, sitting dripping on the bank, summoned his merry men with three blasts of his horn. They came running up, all clad alike in Lincoln green, and when they saw their chief's plight were eager to avenge it, but he forbade them. It was a fair fight, let the best man win, said he.

The stranger asked his name.

"Robin Hood!"

"Robin Hood—'tis you whom I seek, I came to join your band—but after our encounter——"

"Shake hands," said Robin, "and teil us your name."

"John Little."

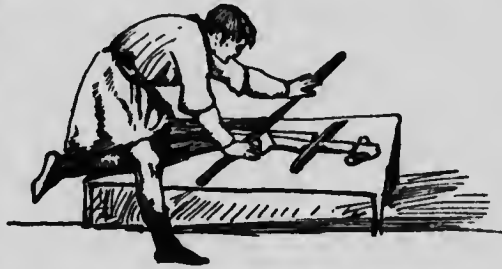
"We christen you Little John and make you free of the greenwood."

I have not space to tell you of all Robin's adventures, but I must tell of how he rescued the bride of Allan-a-Dale. One day when he was strolling in the forest he heard a beautiful voice singing of his love. He would not interrupt the singer, but bade his comrades, should they chance to encounter the wandering minstrel, to bring him to their meeting-place. The merry outlaws met Allan-a-Dale—for such was his name—but he was not singing blithely of his love, he was weeping bitterly. They brought him to Robin, who questioned him as to the cause of his sorrow.

## ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

"I was but yesterday singing of my love," he said, "a beautiful girl whom I was about to wed. Her brother came to hear of our approaching marriage and forbade it, for an old knight who had just returned from the Crusades desired the maid: he coveted her lands, and she is to be married to him this very day at Plympton."

The faces of the foresters beamed with delight. Here was an adventure after their own heart, the rescue of the maiden and the marriage of the woe-begone musician. Robin disguised himself as a minstrel, and made off at once for Plympton Church, where he saw the wedding procession with Allan-a-Dale's be-



Polishing a Sword

loved, and the grey-haired knight. The maid, in all her bridal finery, looked so sad that Robin could not forbear to whisper a word of comfort to her as she walked up the aisle. When the wedding party were standing at the chancel steps, ready for the service to begin, he blew three mighty blasts of his horn. The fat Bishop of Hereford, who was officiating, recognised him.

"Seize Robin Hood, there's a price upon his head!" he commanded. Robin stood there dauntless. He stretched his bow and dared anyone to pass the chancel rail. In the distance he heard the hurrying of many feet, as his merry men, eager to follow his commands, rushed to the church, and with them came Allan-a-Dale. They fought the attendants, they seized the girl's brother, they captured the would-be bridegroom. Then Robin called out in his ringing voice:

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

"By the laws of King Henry a maiden chooses whom she will wed. Let us hear her choice."

It was easy to see to whom the girl's heart turned as she gazed fearlessly into the eyes of Allan-a-Dale.

"Now we will have the wedding," said Robin, and in spite of the protests of the Bishop of Hereford, who cut a sorry figure, Allan was united to his lady, and the two went away hand-in-hand to join the merry band under the greenwood tree.

The happiness of these two made Robin ache for a sight of Marian. One day he went out hunting disguised so that none should know him, and on his way he met a good-looking page-boy. Just as he came up, the lad drew his bow and, with unerring aim, killed a hart. Robin asked why he had dared to shoot the King's deer. "I or you," said the page. "What does it matter?" He was evidently a lad of spirit, for he drew his sword, and compelled Robin to follow suit, and the two engaged. Though the boy was a skilful swordsman he was no match for the man, and as Robin felt a strange interest in his youthful adversary, and did not wish to harm him, he allowed himself to receive a prick.

He then questioned the page, who told him he had been sent by Queen Eleanor to seek out Robin Hood. As he spoke he took out his handkerchief, and the gleam of a golden arrow caught Robin's eye. In a flash he knew Marian, and his start of recognition told its own tale. Marian told him that Queen Eleanor had indeed sent her, for she was anxious that he and four of his followers should take part in a tournament which was to be held in London. They were to be granted an amnesty so that none could arrest them on their

## ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

journey. Robin was overjoyed both at the message and the messenger, and when they joined his comrades they had a joyous feast, dining off the hart which Marian had killed. When the repast was over, Robin told of Queen Eleanor's message, and selected the four of his followers who were to bear him company: Little John, Will Stutely, Will Scarlet and Allan-a-Dale.

The comrades started the next day dressed in their bravest, Robin in scarlet and his men in new suits of Lincoln green. On reaching London they had a private audience with the Queen, who welcomed them cordially.

The day of the tournament was a holiday for London town. The contest was to be held in Finsbury Field, then in the outskirts, now almost in the centre of the beating heart of the world, the city of London. Seats

and boxes had been erected round the field, and each of the King's archers had a tent over which a flag flew, bearing his colours.

To the sound of a fanfare of trumpets, King Henry II., Queen Eleanor, Prince Richard and Prince John rode into the great enclosure. When they were seated the heralds proclaimed the rewards the King would give to the victors in the contest. The prizes were a purse of gold, a purse of silver, a beautiful silver bugle, and a



Robin and Marian

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

generous supply of wine, beer and venison for the feasting afterwards.

Ten targets were set up, each with the colours of one of the King's men. The King's archers alone competed at first, and when the ten best had been selected an open target was set up, at which they could compete with all comers. The best shot at the open target would be proclaimed the champion archer of England.



Troubadour

The King was willing to stake any money on his archers, and the Queen, who believed in the prowess of her foresters, egged him on, until at last he wagered five hundred pounds that his men would outshoot the strangers.

When the time for the final contest came, Robin and his band, headed by Maid Marian, rode up to the Queen's box, and she decorated them with her colours, a scarf of green and gold. The King was very angry when it was whispered to him that her favourites were the daring outlaws of Sherwood.



Norman Pitcher

One by one they came up to shoot against the King's men. Will Scarlet, first of the outlaw band, was beaten by the King's archer; and the excitement waxed furious when it was found that two out of the first three rounds went to the King's

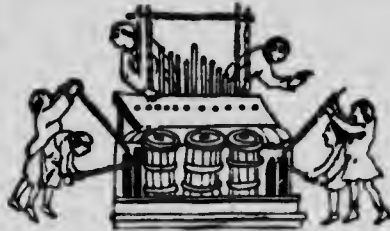


## ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

side. Little John's turn came, and never had he shot with greater skill than he did that day. It was a tie now between the King's men and the foresters, and there were only two more to shoot, Robin Hood and the King's archer, Gilbert. In turn they shot at the target, but so well matched were they that both might have claimed to be the victor. Another target had to be set up for them to try once more, and Robin placed a willow wand in the ground and bade Gilbert aim at that tiny mark. "I can scarce see it," he murmured, and his shot flew wide. In intense stillness, for the crowd was thrilled by the nearness of the struggle, Robin took aim, and his arrow split the willow wand in two.

The contest was at an end, the foresters were the victors, the Queen was jubilant, but the King's brow was dark. Eleanor presented to the men of Sherwood the money she had gained by her wager and bade them buy themselves finely tempered swords in memory of her. Then the King's awards were given them, which they took gleefully. Robin, however, refused the ale and the wine and the venison, and presented them to the King's archers, who had striven so well.

At length Henry II. died and Richard Cœur de Lion came to the throne. One day he bethought himself he would visit the gallant band in Sherwood, whose deeds and daring, whose chivalrous help of the poor and oppressed were matters of common report. He made his way to the forest, and there, under the



Organ (from a MS.)

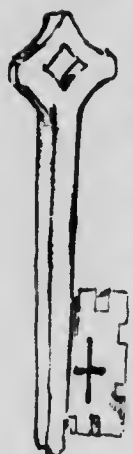
## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

greenwood trees, he found the redoubtable band, and, even before they knew who he was, Robin Hood and his men swore fealty to the Lion-hearted Richard.

The King pardoned them and promoted them to great honour, Little John to be Sheriff of Nottingham in place of his old enemy, Robin to be Earl of Huntingdon and to wed Maid Marian, whose lands were to be restored and bestowed jointly on her and on her gallant lover.

And so the little band of outlaws left the forest and lived in the world once more. But the love of the wild, free life was ever in their hearts, and they grew homesick for Sherwood. They had never been favourites with Prince John, and when he came to the throne his hand was against them. To Robin's lasting grief Marian died, and he himself was imprisoned in the Tower. He escaped with the help of one of his former comrades, and together they made their way back to Sherwood, where Robin, winding his horn, as was his wont in the old days, found that many of his men had already returned.

One day he was hunting in the forest when he encountered a body of the King's men sent to seek him. In the skirmish that followed he was wounded slightly. He thought little of the hurt, but a day or two after he was in a high fever. Making his way to Kirklees Abbey, he begged to be admitted, for the nuns knew more of medicine than other folk at that time. The abbess, who saw his pitiable state, decided he must be bled to reduce the fever. Some say she was the Sheriff's daughter, and that she took this means of avenging her old grudge; others that she did it believing it would relieve him. However this may be, Robin gradually



## ROBIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

grew weaker and he knew that his last hour was at hand. Then as he lay dying he longed for his companions, and rallying his ebbing strength he wound his horn. The familiar sound reached the ears of Little John, who made all haste to the abbey. At the sight of his friend, Robin rallied for a time. "Let me smell the greenwood ere I go," he said, "and give me my bow that I may shoot a last time, and where the arrow falls there dig my grave." Little John threw open the window, and Robin aimed his shaft at a mighty oak; it struck true, and the outlaw fell back exhausted. Then murmuring of the brave days that were no more, and of his loved Marian, his sturdy spirit took flight.

"Such outlaws as he and his men,  
Will England never see again."





## CHAPTER XXV

### ST HUGH OF AVALON

**M**ONASTERIES played a large part in the life of the people, not only because many men and women desired to leave the world and live useful and happy lives in retreat, but also because convents and monasteries were centres of all the civilising influences of life. There the beautiful missals were illuminated, there the poor were tended, the young were taught, there the fierce struggle for existence died down. Those who took the vows desired not a life of ease but a life of labour and love. It was love that in the early days was the keynote to the success of the monasteries, love to God showing itself in service to man. These were the homes of such men as the saintly Hugh of Avalon, who at one time was abbot of the monastery founded by Henry II. at Witham.

But we must go back a few years if we would learn more of him than this bare record of his rule. He was

## ST HUGH OF AVALON

born in France, about 1125, of noble parents, and his mother died when he was eight years old. His father, bowed down with grief, could not bear to remain any longer leading the active life of a man in the world, and decided to retire to a monastery. He took with him Hugh, his youngest boy, and the child was brought up in the cloister, and educated at a school kept by the monks. Perhaps it was the strong impression made on him in his extreme youth, or perhaps it was that he was born with a natural bent for the monastic life; in either case he seemed to be set apart from his childhood upward for the service of the Church. He rarely took part in the recreation of the school, but one day when he joined his companions in a game his master came up and admonished him, "Hughy, Hughy, I am bringing you up for Christ; sports are not your business." The lad did not resent this strictness, but rather began to desire to lead the religious life. He had a wonderful memory and knew the services of the Church by heart while still a child. In after life, when he was ruling as abbot, he would listen to the monks chanting the service, and would reprove them for their frequent inaccuracy, telling them that since boyhood he never made a mistake in the words.

One day he was taken on a visit to a very strict monastery, that of the Grande Chartreuse, near Grenoble. The buildings seemed to touch heaven, for they were erected on a hillside nearly four thousand



Cistercian Monk

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

feet above the sea. The monastery was far removed from the turmoil of the world, and the rule was severe. The austerity of the monks was, indeed, carried to extremes, for they believed, as did many in those days, that only by penalising the body could the soul be perfected, and that only by fasts and flagellations could they subdue the evil within them. They wore hair-shirts next their skin, and had very scanty bedding; they thought it a luxury even to wash, and should they indulge themselves in this they would not use a towel afterwards. The monks had one privilege in the Grande Chartreuse that was often withheld in other religious houses: they were encouraged to study, and each in his separate cell would meditate and read from the books they had access to in their beautiful library. Hugh of Avalon desired to join this order, but his own community did not wish to part with him, and he was made to promise to remain with them. But he broke his vow, so anxious was he to adopt the strictest rule of the religious life, and when nineteen years of age returned to the Grande Chartreuse



Censer

and was received into the order. He soon made his influence felt, for he was a young man of promise, and when the office of bursar fell vacant he was appointed. This post brought him into contact with the world, and gave scope to his power of dealing with men and events.

Meantime, in England, Henry II. was occupied amongst other things in founding monasteries, though he often neglected to endow them properly, and the monks were frequently hard pressed. To realise

## ST HUGH OF AVALON

fully the expense entailed in starting a monastery, with its abbey, its gardens, its various buildings, we have only to read a description of the Benedictine monastery of Reading, which was founded by Henry I.<sup>1</sup> This abbey was started in the year 1141 and took more than forty years to complete. The building was superintended by monks sent from Cluny, in France. The grounds of the monastery, which covered about thirty acres, were surrounded by a strong wall. In this wall there were four entrances, the principal of which was the Compter Gateway, a building in itself, for in it was a chamber which was used as a prison. Near by were the garden belonging to the abbey and the leper-house. Within the grounds was the church, where the monks offered up prayer and praise night and day, and on one side of it were the cloisters, where they would walk silently, deep in thought. The monks' quarters and their dormitory were beyond the cloisters. The abbot's house stood apart, and had a garden of its own. Within the walls, too, were a mill, a bakery and stables, and an infirmary, where the sick monks were tended. The monastery at Reading was thus as large as a small village, for it could accommodate some three hundred persons, not to speak of chance pilgrims and guests who might be tarrying there for a while.

It was a self-supporting community, and the monks were able to do everything for themselves. They made their bread, they brewed their ale, they fished in the



Monk of Chartreuse

<sup>1</sup> "The Story of the Town of Reading," W. M. Childs.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

river hard by for their Friday's fare. The more cultured monks were occupied in illuminating the missals, and in handicrafts, such as carving; and those with power of organisation looked after the guest-house, or after the general housekeeping of the



Abbey Gateway, Reading

monastery, a very responsible position where there were so many people to be fed and cared for.

Henry II. had started a monastery at Witham, in Lancashire, which was in a very different state from the prosperous Reading settlement.

He clearly saw that the monastery would fail if some able man was not found to take charge of it. He was told that the one person who could take it in hand was living at the Grande Chartreuse. If he could be induced to take the appointment all would be well. Henry sent over the Bishop of Bath to urge Hugh of Avalon to accept the post, but he declined, and it was not until the Archbishop of Grenoble decided that it was Hugh's duty to go that he could be prevailed upon to journey to England.

His heart did not fail him when he reached Witham, though the desolation there might have depressed a weaker man. The monks were living meanly, in huts made of twigs, and the new abbot realised that the first thing he had to do was to erect suitable buildings.



## ST HUGH OF AVALON

In his need he applied personally to the King, who, struck by the character of the man, was at last prevailed upon to contribute generously. The abbot never hesitated to go to Henry for help. He missed the noble library of the Grande Chartreuse, and confided to the King how much he longed for books.

"Why don't you set your monks to work to copy them?" asked Henry Plantagenet.

"We have no parchment," replied the abbot.

"What would that cost you?"

"One mark would last us for a long time?"

"Your demands are immoderate," replied the King, and then ordered that ten marks should be given to him.

When the bishopric of Lincoln fell vacant, Henry's mind was set upon appointing Hugh as the successor, and with some difficulty secured his election, for the canons nominally had the right of free choice. They did not at first care to have this foreign abbot, of whom they knew little or nothing, placed over them. Hugh only accepted the appointment when he knew that they really desired to appoint him, as he had no wish to undertake the responsible office of bishop. With his promotion he did not abate his austerities, and when he went to London to be consecrated, accompanied by clerks gaily apparelled, he, simply garbed as a monk, rode a mule, and carried his baggage and bedding behind him. His companions urged him to leave his baggage behind, but he was obdurate, so one of them, seeing it was useless to argue, quietly cut the cord which secured it to the



Censer

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

mule, and the Bishop, all unconsciously, rode on unencumbered.

The Bishop of Lincoln lived at Stow, and on the day he was enthroned there appeared in the river that ran through his garden, a beautiful swan with neck and beak



Monk writing

of a golden hue. It drove away the other swans, but one it chose as a mate. They told the Bishop of this strange bird and he asked to see it, for he loved all animals. He gave it bread, and from that day it would take food from none but him, or his bailiff if he were absent. It seemed as though the swan could talk to the Bishop, and the chronicler tells us that sometimes it used "to thrust its head and long neck into his wide

sleeve, and right up to his bosom, and there it would seem to mutter as though holding a friendly conversation with its master." It would watch by his bedside and none dared approach. The Bishop would be away for months at a time, and it was noticed that the swan always knew in advance when he was about to return, and at the last it seemed as though it had a premonition of his death.

Hugh of Avalon was a man of great moral courage; he hated the rigorous forest laws, and made a stand



St Hugh of Avalon riding to London

R

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

against them, once excommunicating the chief forester for a cruel deed. When King Henry heard this he was very angry, but the Bishop, undismayed, went to see the King. He found him sitting in Woodstock Chase surrounded by his courtiers, and sewing a bandage on his finger. Henry did not look up or show any sign of recognition, nor did his companions.



Leper, Twelfth Century

The Bishop seemed amused. "How like you are to your kinsman of Falaise," he said daringly, alluding to William the Conqueror's grandfather, who was a tanner.

Henry laughed at the impertinence, and the Bishop was able to explain his case.

One of the beautiful traits in Hugh of Avalon's character was his special tenderness for the poor forlorn lepers. In the Middle Ages leprosy was common, and it was one of the most terrible scourges that could afflict any human being—eating away their flesh and making them loathsome to look upon. The Bishop would tend them personally, would tell them of the consolations in store for them, and bid them remember the special pity which his Master and theirs had ever shown to those suffering from this terrible malady. Hugh would eat out of the same dish as the lepers and treat them as brothers. To another band of outcast people, the persecuted Jews, he held out the hand of fellowship, and they deeply mourned him when he died. He urged on all people, somewhat careless in this matter, greater reverence for the holy dead, and he kept even kings waiting rather than omit the beautiful last rites of the

## ST HUGH OF AVALON

Church for one who had passed away, sending word once to Richard, who was impatient at his delay, "I am occupied in the service of the King of Heaven."

In all his dealings with Henry, Richard and John, Hugh of Avalon was brave and fearless. He championed Richard's cause against John when the former was on the Crusade, but when he returned to England did not scruple to oppose him on a question of justice. Richard was, as usual, very short of money, and wanted some for his foreign wars. He called a council (1198), and through Hubert Walter, his Justiciar, demanded that a certain sum should be paid to him. Hugh was the first to rise up and protest; the Church, he said, was not compelled to contribute, except for service at home. Hugh, who was followed in his opposition by other leading bishops and barons, was successful, but he was obliged to retire to Normandy. Later on he made his peace with Richard, and was called upon to perform the last rites when Richard was buried at Fontevraud.

Hugh did not long survive him. He paid a visit to his beloved monastery at Grenoble and on his way home became ill. He reached his London house in the Temple, but he knew that his day was done. His early austerities had weakened him. He suffered much, and longed for death. "We should indeed be unhappy," he said, "if we were not allowed to die at all. My God, the fight has surely lasted long enough! Thy dear will be done, and it will be a great boon to me if Thou wilt put an end to this struggle."

He was buried, fully robed, in the cathedral church of Lincoln, then rising from its foundations, and King John and the King of Scotland were among those who helped to carry his bier.

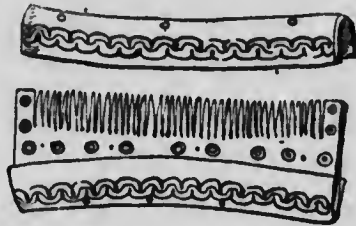


**A** HALF-HOLIDAY in London town could well be spent in seeing a little of what is left to us of the memorials of this time. As we enter the manuscript-room at the British Museum, before looking at the carefully guarded treasures in the glass-cases, our thoughts should travel back to some old monastery, perhaps to St Albans. We should see there, in a special room set apart for literary work, the scriptorium or writing-room, and the dark figures of the black-robed monks, with shaven crowns, bending with loving care over their task of writing or illuminating the fine manuscripts, some of which have been preserved with reverent care to this day. The more artistic monks were chosen for this task and they were shown how to prepare the parchment or vellum, how to rule faint lines so that the writing should be even, and the more skilled of them would be happily employed in designing the beautiful initial letters and painting the exquisite little illuminations that adorn the pages. Gravely and silently they would work on, copying perhaps the

## IN LONDON TOWN

Bible, or some other holy book, content to let the years slip by, content that the work should not bear their name, till the day came when they were laid to rest in the little graveyard of the monastery. Such a life had the Venerable Bede, who lived in an earlier time, and who wrote "The Ecclesiastical History of England," and such too had William of Malmesbury.

At the Museum is a copy of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) and the book of Joshua, translated into English some time in the eleventh century, so that the people who could not read Latin—and this was the large majority—should be able to under-



Comb of Norman Period

stand. You must remember, when you look at the book, and try in vain to decipher the page that is shown, that the English spoken in those days was very different from the English of to-day. Nouns and adjectives were declined as they are in German and Latin, and the language was for this reason, and also because the Anglo-Saxon words often terminated in a vowel, in some respects more beautiful and musical.

Here are some very fine illuminated manuscripts of before, and immediately after, the Conquest. They have ornamented initial letters and borders illuminated in silver and gold. Figures are introduced, sometimes showing Christ, or the Evangelists. The earlier ones are crude and quaint, with hands and feet out of proportion to the rest of the body, and expressionless faces. But as time went on the illuminations became more lifelike.

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

We may look also at the charters. First there is a copy of Magna Charta, of which you will read in another chapter. Here is one of William the Conqueror, a confirmation of a grant to St Mary's



An Archbishop  
(from a MS.)

Abbey, Coventry, to which one of the witnesses was William's troublesome half-brother Odo of Bayeux. Many of the charters deal with gifts of land to various churches. Thus there is a "notification by King Stephen of his grant for the health of his soul and those of Matilda his queen, of Eustace his son, and of his other children, and of the soul of King Henry I., his uncle, to Reading Abbey, of his manor of Bleberia." Another curious charter tells of William Warne's gift to the monks of St Pancras "of all land which they hold of his fee, undertaking to acquit them of Danegeld and all their services due to the king, and moreover grants to them tithe of corn, hay, lambs, fleeces, and cheeses, and the tenth penny of all his rents in England." Another charter here shown tells how Henry II. allowed an addition of eight days to Winchester Fair.



Seal of Magna Charta

Of great historic interest is the Bull of Pope Innocent III. in which the Pope agrees, after John's humiliating surrender to Pandulf, to take under his protection, and that of St Peter, John's dominions of England and Ireland.

The manuscripts of the histories of that time are deeply interesting to the student of history.



## IN LONDON TOWN

The writers of history in those days were usually the monks. Here can be seen in fine clear handwriting the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which tells of the history of England to 1079. This copy was made in the eleventh century. Here, too, we can see in manuscript William of Malmesbury's history. He was librarian of the Abbey of Malmesbury, where he spent his life. One of the books written by him was called "The Acts of the Kings of England," which goes down to 1125. The page of his history shown at the British Museum recounts his opinion of the character of the English at the time of the Norman conquest. He tells of their increasing indifference to religion, of the illiteracy of the clergy, so that "one who knew grammar was a prodigy and marvel to the rest," and of their drunkenness.

Roger of Hoveden, the next great authority for this period, died in 1201, and here we can see what is perhaps the original copy of his history, for there are notes in the margin which were probably made by the author. He was an officer in Henry II.'s household, and so would know a great deal about the history of his day. The page shown tells of Becket's appearance at the Council of Northampton: "he bore his cross in his right hand, while with his left he held the reins of his horse whereon he rode."

William of Newburgh (born 1136) is our authority for the time of Stephen, Henry II. and Richard I., and here we can see a copy of his chronicle, written in his lifetime. On the page shown the author writes of the enormous difficulty which was encountered in raising Richard I.'s ransom.

These are the great historians from the Conquest

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

to the Charter, to whom all writers must go for their information, and they may also go to lesser authorities whose chronicles are shown—Simeon of Durham, Henry of Huntingdon, and others.

The great seals of the kings of England are also in the manuscript-room. Charters were usually not signed, for few people could write, but the seals of the witnesses



Monks playing Bob-apple

were affixed. You can see the seals of the seven kings that reigned from the Conquest to the Charter. On one side of a seal, as a rule, the monarch is sitting on his throne, on the other he is on horseback. You may see, too, the seals of the great ecclesiastics, of Anselm and Theobald and others.

In the mediaeval-room there is much of interest that will help us to realise the state of civilisation and of the arts throughout Europe in those days. We may see here the badges of the pilgrims which were presented to those who made the long journey to some favoured shrine. Here are some which were presented to those who journeyed to the tomb of Thomas à Becket—the Canterbury pilgrims, as they were called. One shows St Thomas with a bell, on another the saint is on horseback.

It is not only at the British Museum that those of us who live in London can study the remains of this period; of its architecture I have written in another chapter. Let us now come to the Temple Church in the Strand, which dates back to the days of the

## IN LONDON TOWN

Crusades, for the Knights Templars, who built the Temple, were an order founded to look after and minister to the pilgrims to Palestine, and to guard the Holy Sepulchre against the infidel. On entering the church you will see on either side the recumbent effigies of knights. One of them is Protector Pembroke, Earl Marshal, who died in 1219. He was a man of noble character, and Shakespeare has introduced him in *King John* as pleading for the life of little Prince Arthur. William Marshal's son Gilbert is said to



Sir Geoffrey de Mandeville

rest here. He is garbed as a Crusader, but he never went on a Crusade, for, as you see, his legs are uncrossed. In the effigies of Crusaders, which you may see in churches all over the country, it is well to remember that if the knights' legs are crossed above the knee it signifies that they went on two Crusades, if at the ankle, on one. Gilbert Marshal was preparing to take part in a Crusade when he was killed in a tournament.

The recumbent figure of Geoffrey de Mandeville, which we see here, takes us back to the troublous days of Stephen, for he was one of the barons who fought against that king. Among his exploits was the plundering of Ramsey Abbey, and for this sacrilege he was excommunicated. A little time later, when he was besieging Burwell Castle, he lifted his helmet to enjoy

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

the fresh air for a moment, and was mortally wounded by an arrow. He had no time for repentance, and the Templars dared not bury him in consecrated ground. They soldered his body up in lead, and hung him on a tree in the orchard, which in those days flourished in the Temple gardens. But later on they obtained absolution for him, and his body was laid to rest, with the rites of the Church, in the Temple.

Among the effigies in this church of old-time memories is one to Robert Ros, one of the barons who compelled John to sign the Magna Charta. We know from the flowing hair of the effigy that he is not a Templar, for they always wore their hair short.

The badge of the Templars is a lamb bearing the banner of innocence and a red cross, and one of their emblems, to show their poverty, was two men riding on one horse. But this emblem with time faded away, and its meaning was forgotten, and a winged horse was substituted.



Old Mayoralty Seal (Thirteenth Century)



**J**OHN at last had his heart's desire. He had broken his father's spirit, he had betrayed his brother ; now he was King of England, "the brightest jewel in the Anjou crown," and also Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine. Anjou, Maine and Touraine were the portion of his nephew, Arthur, the son of his elder brother, Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany. Arthur was a boy of twelve, his father was dead, and his mother, Constance, the reigning Duchess of Brittany, was married again to the Earl of Chester. According to the law of succession to the throne of England, as it stands to-day, Arthur should have had the crown.

John was anointed King on Ascension Day, 1199, and the archbishop who crowned him made a speech in which he asserted that succession to the English throne was by election.

"Hearken all ye that are here present ! Be it known unto you that no man hath any antecedent right to succeed another in the kingdom, except he be un-animously chosen by the whole realm, after invoking of the Holy Spirit's grace."

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Philip of France at once took up the cause of Prince Arthur, not so much for the sake of the boy's right as with the hope of doing himself a good turn. Eleanor of Aquitaine, vigorous as ever, though she was just on eighty, lent the weight of her support to her son, and Constance hated her with a bitter hatred.



Crown of John (Fragment)

John intended to enforce his claim to the whole of Cœur de Lion's dominions, and in defence of Arthur's rights Constance saw the necessity of pitting the King of France against the King of England. Her first move was to arrange that Arthur should do homage to Philip for Anjou, Maine, Touraine and Normandy. Philip was nothing loth, for he had a secret ambition to unite under the King of France all those extensive territories on the Continent over which Henry II. had ruled. The little Prince was but a pawn in the game of these two monarchs.

Philip journeyed to Le Mans; the boy did him homage and the King, lightly touching the Prince with his sword, conferred on him the honour of knighthood. They then returned together to Paris.

When John heard of this he took steps to vent his wrath upon the citizens of the unfortunate town of Le Mans, the headquarters of Arthur's friends. He broke down their walls and threw many of them into prison. Then followed open war between Philip and John, the result of which was that Arthur had to do homage to his uncle for Brittany.

John had other affairs on hand at this time. He was tired of his first wife, and, making the usual excuse that she was too nearly related to him for the marriage to

## ARTHUR OF BRITTANY

be permitted by the laws of the Church, he obtained a divorce. He had seen a beautiful girl, Isabel, the heiress of the Count of Angoulême. She was the betrothed of Hugh de la Marche, but John would not be denied: she broke her troth and married the King.

On 22nd May 1200 Philip and John met. Arthur did homage to his uncle for Brittany but still remained under Philip's protection. He was now a boy of fourteen, and he took his part in a great tournament that was held in honour of Philip's son Lewis, betrothed to Blanche of Castile. A year later Arthur, in losing his mother, lost his one real ally.

The boy was alone, a puppet in the hands of the two rival monarchs. Philip to secure his alliance betrothed him to his daughter, Marie, a child of five, and later on forced him to play a man's part in the struggle with his uncle. Arthur placed himself at the head of the insurgent nobles of Poitou, who were in revolt against John. John, on hearing this, came over at once to France, and summoned his nephew to appear before him. Arthur in reply marched with army from Poitou to Mirabel, where his grandmother, Eleanor, lived and ruled over her province of Aquitaine. Hugh de la Marche joined Arthur, and they laid siege to her castle. Hugh hoped to capture the Queen and exchange her for Isabel. Eleanor retreated to the citadel of Mirabel, which was strongly fortified. Here she defied the besiegers, until her son, to whom she had sent messengers, came to her rescue. John attacked the castle by night, and captured Arthur, Hugh de la Marche and twenty-four barons of Poitou. Queen Eleanor begged him

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

to do no harm to the gallant boy, and John sent Arthur under kindly escort to Falaise.

Meantime Hugh de la Marche, unlucky in war and unlucky in love, and the barons of Poitou had very rough treatment. They followed John wherever he went, in carts drawn by oxen, bound hand and foot. When he at last embarked for England he took them with him. The barons were sent to Corfe Castle, where they were starved to death. Isabel pleaded for more lenient treatment for her former lover. He was confined in Bristol Castle, where Arthur's sister, known as the Pearl of Brittany, was also a prisoner. Some time after he was set free. Eleanor of Acquitaine's health was failing. She no longer could plead for lenient treatment for her grandson. He was removed from Falaise to the grim castle of Rouen, on the banks of the Seine, and here the last act of his life's tragedy was to be enacted. John, at one time, before taking a final step, thought to ally himself with Arthur, but the boy had tasted the sweets of independence, and he no longer trusted his uncle, whom he bade peremptorily restore to him the French inheritance of his uncle, Cœur de Lion. Arthur himself never claimed the English crown.

John saw that in a year or two he would be dealing, not with a pliable youth, but with a man of spirit, and he wished to be rid of so dangerous a foe—a foe moreover who would be a rallying point for the discontented among his people. His throne would never be safe so long as Arthur lived.

The story goes, and though there is no actual proof of its correctness it is probably true, that John took into his confidence Hubert de Burgh, the boy's keeper, and





Prince Arthur and his Jailer

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

by promises of rich gifts and the King's favour induced him to consent to put out Prince Arthur's eyes.

In the drama of *King John* Shakespeare gives us the story of the boy's appeal. But the dramatist, to add poignancy to the scene, makes Arthur a little lad, though he was actually at this time sixteen years old. Hubert comes into his apartment, and shows him the warrant, signed by his Uncle-King, for the infliction of the cruel torture. Hubert is relentless, but Arthur's passionate entreaties unnerve him. He wavers, then stamps his foot, angered at his own weakness. It is a sign to two accomplices to enter the room.



Hammers and Pliers

Arthur, in deadly terror at the sight of these ruffians, who come with cords and irons to fulfil their hideous task, in agony entreats Hubert to send them away; if this brutal act must be done, let Hubert do it himself, and he will submit without a word. No sooner, however, have the attendants left than the boy begins again his piteous supplication. Hubert is obdurate: Arthur had promised to submit, and he was not keeping his word.

“ Hubert, the utterance of a brace of tongues  
Must needs want pleading for a pair of eyes :  
Let me not hold my tongue ; let me not, Hubert !  
Or, Hubert, if you will, cut out my tongue,  
So I may keep mine eyes.”

As the boy is pleading the fire goes out, the irons become cold, and Hubert's resolution begins to waver. A grain of pity steals into his heart: “ Well, see to

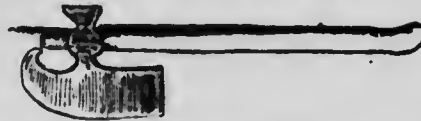
## ARTHUR OF BRITTANY

live," he cries at length ; " I will not touch thine eyes for all the treasure that thine uncle owes."

The Prince is saved, but he knows in his sad heart that his doom is sealed. His ultimate fate none ever knew with certainty, none save perhaps his Uncle-King. Some say that he died in prison, others that in trying to escape he leapt the castle walls and fell dead on the pavement below. The most sinister story of all, and that generally accepted, tells how one night, when the Prince was sleeping, he was awakened out of his troubled dreams and bade to dress. The River Seine flowed swiftly beneath the castle walls. A presage



of evil was on the boy as he was taken to the edge of the dark water, where a small boat was moored by the river-side. In the gloom he dis-

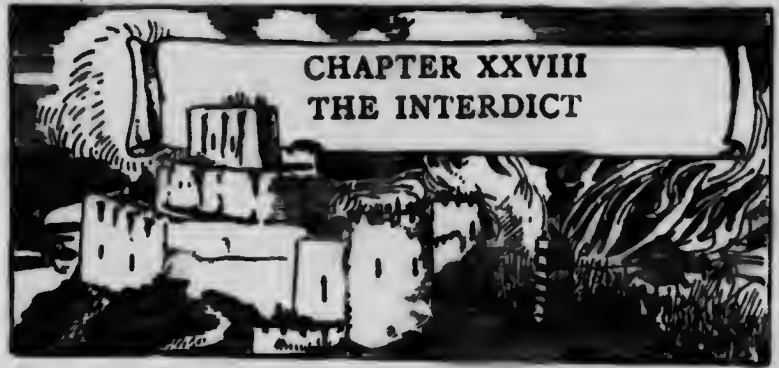


Carpenter's Axe

cerned that the boat contained two cloaked figures, and in the voice of one of them he recognised his uncle. The Prince's attendants urged him forward, he stumbled into the boat, and threw himself in a passion of terror at his uncle's feet. John said not a word, he drew a sharp weapon from under his cloak, stabbed the boy to the heart and threw the still warm young body into the Seine.



Shield



**A**RTHUR'S untimely end was the beginning of John's troubles, for, though the exact date and place were never known, the news of his death was soon common property. Some asserted that the boy was still alive and in concealment, but John never took the slightest pains to investigate such reports. A few weeks after Arthur's disappearance the Breton nobles assembled at Vannes, under the leadership of the Bishop of Rennes. John was accused of the murder and Philip II. was requested to summon him before his peers in France to take his trial. Philip had authority over him, not as King of England, but as Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine. John refused to appear, he was found guilty, and his estates in France were declared to be forfeited.

Philip immediately set to work to carry out the sentence. He marched into Normandy, and one by one the towns surrendered to him. Messengers brought these ill tidings to John at Rouen.

"The King of France is taking your castles, binding your governors to their horses' tails and imprisoning them."

## THE INTERDICT

"I will recover what I have lost," John replied, but he made no move.

And thus easily was Normandy lost to England, and later on Anjou and Guienne, rich provinces in the fertile land of France. But it was well for England. John's private loss and humiliation were to be her gain.

The barons, who had hitherto held a double allegiance to England and Normandy, now had to decide which should be the land of their choice. Those that remained in England and gave up their possessions in Normandy to other branches of their family became Englishmen, without any double allegiance. The kingdom gained, too, by the King having to concentrate on ruling this country, instead of being continually absent looking after his foreign dominions. It was necessary that England, and England alone, should be well governed before the time for expansion could come.

At this crisis Eleanor of Aquitaine, who had been a wise counsellor to her youngest son, died (1204). She was a great figure in English history, a woman who matured into a wise ruler and diplomatic counsellor, and who redeemed the follies of her youth in her long and useful career. She was of inexhaustible vitality, and undertook in her old age journeys over Europe to arrange suitable marriages and to reconcile differences. She spent the last two years of her life in retirement in a convent, and was laid to rest by the side of her husband and son at Fontevrault.



Effigy of Eleanor of Aquitaine

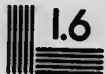


Seal of John



# MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

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## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

Her death was the turning point in John's career, as her influence over him had been for good. He was suspected of the murder of Arthur, he had lost his French possessions, and he had another trouble in store.

Hubert, Archbishop of Canterbury, died in July 1205. He had been a wise counsellor to an impatient master. Directly John heard of his death he went to Canterbury, claimed the Bishop's property, and extracted a promise from the monks that they would not elect anyone in Hubert's place for four months. But they did not keep their word. They met at dead of night, under the leadership of the abbot, without having sent word of their purpose to the bishops, who also had a voice in the matter, and elected their sub-prior, Reginald, to fill the vacant see. They sent him off at once to Rome, with strict injunctions to keep the matter secret, for they feared that John and the bishops would hear of it before the Pope had time to confirm his appointment.



Reginald was so elated at the honour that had been accorded him that he boasted of it while on his travels, and John and the bishops heard the news. Reginald reached Rome, to be followed almost at once by a party of monks sent by the bishops to protest against his election. John, meanwhile, pressed them to elect John de Grey, Bishop of Norwich, a special friend of his. A third embassy was sent to Pope Innocent III. to obtain his confirmation of this election and the pall. John, knowing that Rome was not unwilling to be influenced, sent money to bribe the officials to urge the Pope to accept his man. Innocent III. refused to accept either Reginald or John de Grey, because the



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The Interdict

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

former was not elected according to the rules of the Church, and the latter was elected before Reginald's claim had been disposed of. The Pope prevailed on the monks who were at Rome to elect Stephen Langton, one of his cardinals, to the vacant see. John's anger knew no bounds when he heard of this, and he refused



Litter of King John

to accept Langton as Archbishop. Innocent was indifferent to his wrath. With the power of the Church at his back he consecrated Langton. John still declined to receive the new Arch-

bishop, and the Pope sent a legate to England with powers to lay the country under an Interdict, should John persist in his refusal.

The legate arrived and John remained obdurate. He bade the Pope do his worst—lay the country under an Interdict if he would. But he threatened, in that case, to murder every Italian in England and drive out the clergy.

The Interdict was issued, and every church in England was closed. Sundays came, and saints' days, but no sound of prayer or praise was heard in consecrated building. The dead were buried without the beautiful service of the Church being read over them, and in unconsecrated ground. The Sacraments were not administered, except to infants and the dying. The more devout among the people, who were urgent in their desire to follow the faith of their fathers, suffered

## THE INTERDICT

greatly. A whole nation was shut off from the ministrations of religion because of a dispute about a clerical appointment.

The bishops acquiesced in the Interdict, wherefore John seized their lands and drove them out of the country. But he was not at all at ease in his mind. Though he defied the Pope he believed in his spiritual powers. He was so superstitious that all through his life he wore next to his heart a rare and beautiful gem, which had been given to one of his ancestors as an amulet which would protect any Plantagenet from harm.

Stephen Langton arrived in England and John refused to see him. He was still persecuting the clergy, and would not punish those who did them harm. One unfortunate clergyman, who had offended him, was, by his orders, crushed to death with a heavy weight of lead.

Innocent had another weapon, and an even more serious one, in his ecclesiastical armoury. He threatened that, if John did not give in, he should be outlawed from the Church of Christ, he should be excommunicated—the most dire punishment of all, for under this terrible ban he could not claim the loyalty of Christian people. In due course, the Pope pronounced the sentence :

“Thou shalt stand curs'd, and excommunicate :  
And blessed shall he be that doth revolt  
From his allegiance to a heretic ;  
And meritorious shall that hand be call'd,  
Canonised and worshipp'd as a saint,  
That takes a by any secret course  
Thy hateful life.”

John blusteringly went on his course, but he was beginning to feel fear at his heart. One Peter, a

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

hermit, had a dream that by the next Ascension Day John would have ceased to reign.

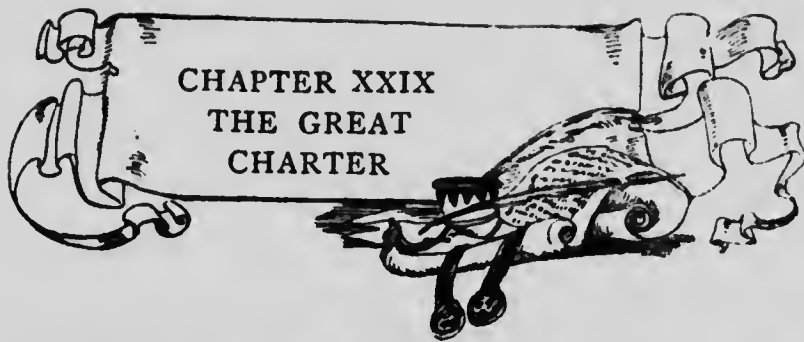
The King was harassed on all sides. Philip of France was preparing to wrest the kingdom from him. He was threatened with invasion from Ireland, the barons too were in revolt. At last he relented. He accepted Stephen Langton as Archbishop of Canterbury, and the papal legate, Pandulf, was sent to England to receive his submission.



John doing Homage to the Legate

It was on the 15th May 1213 that the legate landed at Dover, and John humbly handed him the crown, and received it again at his hands, thereby acknowledging himself a vassal of the Pope.

This act of submission took place on the eve of Ascension Day and John was still in the land of the living. He immediately vowed vengeance on the false prophet who had so unnerved him, and by his orders the hermit Peter was seized, drawn from Corfe Castle to Wareham, and hung. But it was whispered abroad that Peter had spoken truly: John was not a king but a vassal.



**T**HE struggle with France ended, so far as John was concerned, at the battle of Bouvines, 1214. This battle has its own special place in history as the first in which footmen triumphed over knights. After that defeat John returned to a day of reckoning with his barons and his people. Many of the barons were self-seeking in their demands for reform, but Archbishop Langton, their leader, was above all petty considerations, and he threw the weight of his influence on the side of the oppressed people. The King was to be compelled to recognise the rights of his people to good government.

Henry I. had issued a charter at his coronation setting forth the rights of the Church, the rights of the nobility and their obligations. This charter served Langton and the barons as a model when, in John's absence, they met secretly in the Church of St Edmundsbury to discuss the terms of a proposed charter, and they determined to obtain from the King a confirmation of its principles, with many additional provisions.

In order of rank each of the barons marched solemnly up to the altar, and swore before God that if John re-

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

fused to accept this charter they would make war upon him.



Norman Well

The failure in France, which had cost this country dear in money and in men, was not unwelcome news in England. This was not only because of John's personal unpopularity, but also because the baronial party realised that John, being driven into a corner by his failure, and his want of funds, would be bound to make terms with them.

On his return to England, they urged their claims upon him (January 1215), but he refused to listen. The barons waited till Easter, when they

assembled in arms to show that they were in earnest. A messenger was sent to John, asking him if he would concede their demands. "By God's teeth," he swore, "why do not the barons ask for my kingdom at once.

Their demands are idle dreams without a shadow of reason."

It was enough. The leader of the barons' party was Robert Fitz-Walter, who was made "Marshal of the Army of God and Holy Church." Under him the barons' army set out for Nottingham, and there laid



John hunting

siege to the castle. They were not successful, however, and after raising the siege they marched on to London, which was eager to welcome them, as also were other towns. The barons, now confident of success, sent a threatening message to those who remained faithful to John. "They would," so the missive ran, "direct their

## THE GREAT CHARTER

banners and their arms against them, and do their utmost to overthrow their castles, and burn their dwellings, and destroy their fishponds, orchards and parks."

This threat had the desired effect; many of John's adherents deserted him, and there were at one time but seven left. All the country was rising against their wicked King. It was his third bitter humiliation; he had to bow to the will of his barons, and a meeting was arranged between them and the King at Runnymede, a meadow between Staines and Windsor, on the 15th June 1215. The spot was historic before that meeting took place, for there in earlier days gatherings of the Anglo-Saxons were held under the giant oak-tree, now in its fullest luxury of summer foliage. Under the shelter of its massive branches the King and barons met. John was, as always, gorgeously attired; the barons, to show their determination, came fully armed, as for battle. John managed to control his feelings, and did not show word or look the anger that was in his heart. The Charter was handed to him, the great Magna Charta, the safeguard of our rights and liberties, and he directed that his seal should be affixed. The first baron to seal was the Keeper of the Great Seal, Hugh Neville, and all the barons in turn followed him.

But this was not enough. The barons had learnt to distrust John, and they acquired from him a pledge that



Old Norman Manor-house, Shropshire

## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

the provisions of the Charter should be observed. Moreover, twenty-five barons were appointed to see that he fulfilled his compact.

The historic scene was over. John strode away, mounted his horse and rode to Windsor, accompanied by a few knights, who dared not speak to him, for a dark shadow clouded his face. He went straight to his apartment, where he sat brooding in anger, grasping at straws that were strewn on the floor, tearing them to pieces as he would have liked to tear the parchment to which that day he had been forced to put his seal. "They have given me five and twenty over kings," he cried, in his wrath.



Helmet

Copies of the Charter were sent to every hundred-mote and town-mote, and it was ordered that it should be read twice a year.

Why is it that the Charter of John marks so great an epoch in our history? It was no new law; though much was written down in it that had been before vaguely accepted but not actually committed to writing. It emphasised the supremely important point that the King should keep the law. He had thought and acted on the assumption that he was above the law; herein it was set forth that he was as much bound by it as the meanest of his subjects, and that he had as definite duties towards them as they had towards him. When John set his seal to the Charter, political liberty was born.

The people had been heavily ground down by taxation which they were powerless to resist. They had been almost ruined by the contributions they had been



## THE GREAT CHARTER

forced to pay, first for Richard's Crusades, then for his ransom. They had been yet more cruelly mulcted to fill John's exchequer. In the Great Charter it was enacted that "no scutage or aid shall be raised in our kingdom (except in the case of the king's captivity, the knighting of his eldest son, and the marriage of his eldest daughter) but by the general council of the kingdom."

Many had been imprisoned without fair trial; never again could this be done. "No freeman shall be seized or imprisoned or dispossessed or outlawed, or in any way brought to ruin, otherwise than by the legal judgment of his peers and by the law of the land. To no man will we sell or deny or delay right or justice." The next year John died, and few kings were ever less regretted by their subjects.



Lantern

We have watched the growth of England for a hundred and fifty years from the time when the Norman Duke stood victor on the hill of Senlac. We have seen England gradually subdued by the mighty Conqueror, and have seen how, after many years, the Norman and the English population have become one people. During that time England's king has been overlord of vast Continental domains, till, with Henry II., he had authority over the greater part of France. We have seen the religious spirit of the people, in the youth of our country, find its expression in the great Crusades. The bitter sufferings of the poorer people, bound down by unjust taxation, and at the mercy of their feudal lord, have been shown us, and we have noted how out of



## FROM CONQUEST TO CHARTER

these sufferings has dawned the realisation in the minds of the wiser among the people that only by constitutional government could peace and happiness be secured to the country. In spirit we have stood with John and the barons under the oak-tree and watched the sealing of the Charter of our liberties, which was to grow, even as the tree had grown from the tiny acorn to the mighty oak, to be the British constitution under which we live to-day. In that pleasant meadow by the riverside we might fitly set up the statue of Liberty.



Charter

We have a goodly heritage in our great empire—a heritage won for us, as we have seen, by the men who dared and suffered in those distant days. Little could they have foreseen the noble fruitage of their endeavours, as little as they could have understood that the terrible infliction of the Norman conquest was necessary, in the wisdom of God, to make of the English nation a race of men and women fit for the destiny that awaited it. And the end is not yet. It is for us to press forward, to strive ever for "a wider, grander kingdom, and a deeper, nobler good."



Horseshoe



## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- A. D.
- 1066 Battle of Senlac. William crowned at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day.
- 1067 William revisits Normandy, and in his absence the North and West of England revolt.
- 1068 Rebellions crushed at Exeter and York.
- 1069-1070 The North devastated and utterly subdued.
- 1071 Last struggle of the English under Hereward.
- 1076 Revolt of William's sons in Normandy.
- 1085 Domesday Book compiled.
- 1087 Death of William I. and accession of Rufus as King of England and Robert as Duke of Normandy.
- 1089 Death of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1093 Anselm becomes Archbishop.
- 1096 The First Crusade, joined by Richard.
- 1100 Death of Rufus and accession of Henry I., who grants a Charter to his subjects.
- 1101 Robert of Normandy claims the crown.
- 1106 Battle of Tenchebrai and capture of Robert. Henceforward Henry rules Normandy, Maine and Anjou.
- 1120 Death of Prince William in the wreck of *The White Ship*.
- 1128 Matilda nominated heir to the throne. The barons, amongst them Stephen of Blois, swear allegiance to her.
- 1135 Death of Henry I. and accession of Stephen. Matilda contests Stephen's claim.
- 1138 Battle of the Standard. King David of Scotland utterly defeated.
- 1141 Stephen taken prisoner at the battle of Lincoln. Matilda is crowned Queen at London.
- 1142 Robert of Gloucester taken prisoner and exchanged for Stephen.
- 1146 Bernard of Clairvaux preaches the Second Crusade.
- 1153 Meeting of Stephen and Prince Henry at Wallingford.
- 1154 Death of Stephen and accession of Henry II.
- 1155 Henry makes Thomas à Becket Chancellor.

## CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- A. D.
- 1159 Scutage introduced. Henry, having now dismantled many castles and restored order, turns his attention to the Church.
- 1162 Becket becomes Archbishop, and at once sides with the Church against the King.
- 1164 Henry quarrels with Becket about the Constitutions of Clarendon, which the latter refuses to sign, and flees to Rome.
- 1170 Henry gives way, but breaks the truce when he learns of Becket's excommunications. Death of Becket.
- 1171 Henry invades Ireland. He does penance at Becket's tomb.
- 1174 Revolt of the barons in Normandy and England. Defeat and capture of William the Lion at Alnwick Castle. Henry appoints judges to go on regular circuits throughout the kingdom.
- 1183-1189 Henry quarrels with his sons.
- 1187 Capture of Jerusalem by Saladin.
- 1189 Death of Henry II. and accession of Richard I. Persecution of the Jews.
- 1191 Richard joins the Third Crusade. He relieves Acre, but fails to take Jerusalem.
- 1192 Truce between Richard and Saladin. Richard imprisoned in Germany on his way home.
- 1194 Richard returns home, and John submits.
- 1199 Death of Richard at Chaluz. Accession of John. Arthur of Brittany claims Normandy.
- 1202 John loses all his French possessions except Normandy to Philip of France.
- 1202 Murder of Prince Arthur.
- 1204 Normandy won by Philip. Stephen Langton elected Archbishop of Canterbury by the Pope. John refuses to acknowledge him.
- 1208 England laid under an Interdict.
- 1213 Excommunication of John. Revolt of the Barons, led by Stephen Langton.
- 1214 Battle of Bouvines.
- 1215 John accepts Magna Charta.
- 1216 Death of John, and accession of the infant Henry III.

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