JOHN JONES'S TALES

FOR LITTLE

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HAROLD.

SEATED on the throne of England, all Harold's efforts were directed to secure the power he had obtained; and knowing that he should soon have to defend his country against two mortal enemies, he used every means to increase his fleet and army. The most formidable of his opponents was, undoubtedly, William, Duke of Normandy, a brave, subtle, cool, and calculating prince, who could call to his standard a vast num-

ber of veteran soldiers trained to arms almost from their infancy, and inheriting from their fathers a military spirit and a desire of conquest, which had long been extinct amongst the Saxons of England. Nevertheless, it is sad to say, that the act which raises Harold higher than any other of his whole life in our esteem, was that which, in its consequences, proved his ruin; for had not his brother, Tosti, in revenge for his just expulsion, created a diversion, which distracted Harold's attention, and diminished his forces, the hard-won battle of Hastings, of which I shall presently have to tell you, must have ended in the destruction of William's forces, or would never have been fought, for all the immense power of Harold would have been directed to prevent the landing of the Conqueror.

Before I proceed to tell you what occurred after Harold's coronation, I had better point

out that William, Duke of Normandy, had no just claim whatever to the English throne. Edgar Atheling might very fairly pretend that Harold was an usurper, for his seemed undoubtedly the hereditary right; and it is not proved that the laws of the Saxons justified the people in setting aside the race of their original kings, although the succession was not always from father to son. But it is quite clear, that Edward the Confessor had no power whatever to give the crown after his death to a foreigner. Bearing this in mind, I will now relate what followed Harold's election. The Duke of Normandy, resolved not to resign without a struggle the ambitious projects which he had long nourished, had at first recourse to negotiation, and sent an embassy to Harold, requiring him to resign the crown to him, as the person to whom it had been promised by Edward the Confessor, instructing his ambassadors, if

Harold declined, to reproach him with the breach of his oath. Harold replied, wisely, firmly, and moderately. He stated that Edward the Confessor had no power to confer the crown of England; that he himself had been elected by the great council of the nation, who had that power; and that the oath which he had taken to assist William in ascending the throne was invalid—or of no force—first, because it was in itself illegal, and secondly, because it was extorted from him at a time when he was completely in the power of his present opponent. He added, moreover, in answer to William's threat of war, that he was capable of defending his right against any one who might assail it. This reply immediately induced William to set on foot very extensive preparations for invading England; but he proceeded with that cool deliberation which was one of the chief points in his character.

Tosti, on the contrary, gave way to all the violent passions of his nature, in his rage at seeing his brother, who had judged impartially between himself and the Northumbrians, raised to the throne of England. Before quitting this island, he had shown the bitter and virulent feelings of his heart, by murdering several of Harold's most attached dependents, cutting their bodies in pieces, and sending their mangled remains in a barrel as a present to his brother; and now nothing would satisfy him but the ruin of Harold. He had married, as I have told you before, the daughter of the Count of Flanders. William of Normandy had married another daughter, named Matilda, and to him Tosti flew as soon as he heard of his brother's election. William and Tosti naturally made common cause; but either the proceedings of the Norman were too cautiously slow for Tosti's hasty spirit of re-

venge, or else the shrewd Duke instigated him to make war upon Harold on his own account, in order to weaken his enemy before he himself attacked him. Tosti then determined to raise forces in Flanders; and with a fleet, some say of sixty ships, he sailed towards England, made a descent in the Isle of Wight, another in Kent, another in Yorkshire, and then, being repulsed everywhere, he had recourse to Harold Harfagar, King of Norway, who had lately raised a large fleet and army to obtain possession of the Orkney Islands. He negotiated also with Malcolm, King of Scotland; but there his advances were rejected.

The Norwegian monarch, deceived by Tosti's representations of the state of England, and allured by the prospects he held out, agreed to assist him with his whole forces. He collected a fleet of three hundred sail; and having been joined by Tosti, with his

smaller armament, he first, it would appear, entered the Tyne, and then, after having ravaged a part of Northumberland, set sail once more, and took his course straight up the Humber. Landing on the northern bank of the river, the united army of Flemings and Norwegians ravaged the country with fire and sword, committing the most barbarous cruelties. Unprepared for an attack in that quarter, Harold had been watching the coasts of Kent and Sussex to guard against the enemy he most dreaded; and every step he had taken since he mounted the throne had been successfully directed to strengthen the affection of the people for his person, and to prove to them that they had not raised to the royal dignity a prince unworthy of their confidence. He lessened the amount of taxation, narrowly inspected the administration of justice, showed himself easy of access, and without

diminishing the appearance of state and pomp which surrounded the royal dignity, supplied a great part of the expenses of his court from his own private revenues. The people rejoiced in such a sovereign, and hailed the first months of his rule as giving the promise of a glorious and happy reign. In the midst of such pleasing anticipations, Harold was startled by the intelligence that his brother Tosti, and Harold Harfagar, had landed with an army of sixty thousand men, had defeated his brothers-in-law, the Earls of Mercia and Northumberland, who had marched against them, and had taken the great city of York. Deceived by false intelligence in regard to the movements of William of Normandy, Harold had imagined that the invasion of his dominions was put off to a more favourable season of the year, and he was on the eve of disbanding his army, when the defeat of Edwin and

Morcar was announced. Some of his soldiers, we are assured, had already returned to their homes; but without an instant's delay, Harold led his troops across the country to attack the enemy which had gained such advantages. The Norwegians, it would seem, satisfied with their progress to the south, were preparing to return into Northumberland, when they were informed that Harold and his army were rapidly approaching. They halted then at a place called Stamford Bridge, on the river Derwent, and took up a position on some high grounds, with the bridge over the Derwent, strongly guarded by a body of chosen men, lying between them and the Saxon army. They likewise are said to have entrenched their camp, so that, when Harold came within sight, he found himself in presence of an army equal to his own, in a position which was unassailable without crossing a bridge in the hands of the enemy.

He nevertheless determined immediately to attack; and early in the morning began the struggle for the bridge. It was defended with the utmost gallantry; and even after all the rest of Harfagar's troops were driven back, one gigantic Norwegian maintained the post for a considerable time, to give his companions an opportunity of rallying. At length, however, the bridge was taken, and Harold led his troops over to the attack of the Norwegian army. The battle soon became general; and one of the most bloody fights that had ever taken place in England ensued. The Norwegians fought with the utmost determination, and contested every inch of ground from seven in the morning till three in the afternoon; but nothing could resist the vigour and skill of Harold, and the enthusiastic bravery of his troops. The fight ended in the complete rout and dispersion of the Norwegian army, but not till both

Tosti and the King of Norway had been slain. The slaughter was tremendous on the side of the invaders; for we find that when, by the permission of Harold, the survivors quitted England under Oläus, the son of Harfagar, twenty ships sufficed to carry back to Norway and Flanders the remnant of an army which had required three hundred and sixty to bring it to these shores. Triumphing in this great and glorious victory, Harold returned to York, where he gave his forces some repose, preparing for the storm which was gathering on the coast of Normandy; but here was committed the first great error in Harold's conduct. It was customary amongst the Saxons to divide the plunder fairly after a battle, and in this instance, besides other precious commodities, a quantity of gold fell to the victors, which twelve stout men could with difficulty carry on their shoulders. Harold, knowing

that the greater part of the immense wealth found in the Norwegian camp had been pillaged from his English subjects, might wish to restore to them their own; or he might judge that, as he could not carry on the war with Normandy without oppressing his people with taxation, it might be better to employ the spoil of one enemy in fighting another, for the known liberality of his character prevents us from attributing to him any sordid motives. However that might be, it is certain that he did not make the usual distribution of the plunder; and great discontent arose in his army on that account.

While still at York, Harold received intelligence that William, Duke of Normandy, had landed at Pevensey, in Sussex, and such was indeed the case. After spending nearly eight months in preparation, and overcoming many difficulties, the Norman prince, sup-

ported by all the chivalry of his land, had set sail from St. Valori, on the twenty-eighth of September, and reached Pevensey on the twenty-ninth. He disembarked his horses and men without the slightest opposition; for the invasion of Tosti and the King of Norway had compelled Harold to drain the southern provinces of troops. At Pevensey, William remained for several days, and built a fort, on which to fall back in case of need. He then advanced to Hastings, where he again encamped, and erected some important fortifications, resolving to await his enemy there. At the same time he published a manifesto, endeavouring to justify his invasion, and set up a claim to the crown. The document, however, had no effect upon the English, who saw through the flimsy pretences, and understood quite well that William came to conquer, and not to inherit.

As soon as Harold received information

of the invasion, he marched with all speed to attack his enemy, flushed with victory, and confident in his own skill and the valour of his troops. On arriving at London, he reviewed his army, but found that his forces were greatly diminished, not only by the slaughter which had taken place in Yorkshire, but by desertion occasioned by the dissatisfaction of the troops with regard to the partition of the spoil. Means were taken to recruit the forces with the utmost possible dispatch; and the wisest councillors of the king, especially his brother Gurth, advised him strongly to delay any attempt against the enemy, representing to him that his own forces would daily increase, while those of William would diminish. Full of courage and confidence, however, and undervaluing the power of his adversary, Harold rejected this wholesome counsel; nor would he hear of sending his generals to fight the enemy,

while he himself remained to collect fresh forces. He felt that the struggle between him and William was for a kingdom or a grave, and he resolved apparently to decide the contest by one great battle. The principal nobility of England flocked to Harold's standard, bringing as many of their retainers as they could; and, whatever some historians may have said to the contrary, it is evident that the war was a national warfare, and that Harold was supported by the unanimous opinion of the English people.

With his forces considerably increased by his short stay in London, the English king set out to attack his enemy at Hastings, and spies were detached from each army to watch the movement of the other. The Saxons approached within a few miles of William's encampment; and all the various rumours regarding the adversary's forces, which usually precede a battle, were brought

in, some magnifying the numbers of the Norman troops, and some declaring that William's host was but an army of priests for the Normans at that time were closely shaved, while the Saxons suffered their beards to grow. The English were full of ardour and confidence—the Normans of steady courage, not unmingled with just apprehension of danger, but incompatible with anything like fear. The Saxons, as was often their custom, spent a great part of the night preceding the battle in merriment and revelry; the Normans, on the contrary, occupied their time in preparation and prayer. Harold arrived on the ground, afterwards so celebrated as the scene of the most important contest that ever took place in England, in the afternoon of the 13th October, 1066; and on the following day, the 14th, which was his birthday, he drew up his host in battle-array, to enter upon his last fight for

crown and life, and the liberty of his native land. William was in no degree slack to meet him, and early on the same morning he also issued forth from his entrenchments, and took up a position opposite to the Saxons. Both armies were arrayed with considerable skill and judgment, so as to give the greatest effect to the arms which the two nations were accustomed to wield. The English force consisted entirely of infantry, armed with swords, battleaxes, and spears. The Norman army comprised both foot and horse, the greater part of the infantry being furnished with slings or bows, both of which weapons they knew how to use with deadly effect. The Saxons were drawn up in a deep, compact body, well fitted to resist the charge of the Norman horse, but not so well to undergo the terrible flight of their adversaries' arrows. The king, his two brothers, Gurth and Leofwin, with the royal standard,

were on a rising ground in the centre, exposed to every eye; and Harold determined that he would that day fight on foot, that he might not be said to have any advantage over the lowest serf in his army. The Norman infantry were drawn up in two lines, the archers and slingers in the first, and the heavy armed troops in the second. The cavalry, under the command of William himself, was disposed upon the wings, while a small body was held in reserve.

The battle began by flights of Norman arrows, which, falling thick into the English ranks, caused for a moment some confusion, amongst men unaccustomed to encounter the deadly sort of shower that was now poured upon them; and the Normans, seeing some agitation in the line, advanced to take advantage thereof, as if assured of victory. They were soon taught their mistake, however, and were repulsed from every part of

the line without making the slightest impression upon it. Again and again the attack was renewed, but with a like result; and the whole day, from the early morning till within an hour of sunset, the battle raged undecided. Though inferior to Harold in every great and kingly quality, William had a greater knowledge of war as an art. He saw that the want of absolute success, in the situation in which he had placed himself, was positive defeat—that to him, a drawn battle was a lost one. Night was approaching; if anything, the Saxons had the advantage; and he resolved to have recourse to a stratagem which had often been practised before, in order to break by a trick those firm and compact ranks, which he had not been able to shake by his cavalry or his archers. He feigned to fly, not absolutely in rout, but in some disorder. It was a stratagem the Normans were well acquainted with, and prepared to execute at

any moment. The Saxons were ignorant of the trick, and were deceived. They pressed eagerly upon the retiring forces of the enemy. They broke their ranks in the impetuosity of assured conquest. They scattered into small parties. The Norman cavalry had now the advantage; the ranks of the invaders closed up, as if by magic, at a preconcerted signal; and the confusion of triumph was changed into the confusion of defeat amongst the scattered bands of Saxons. But Harold neither lost courage, coolness, nor wisdom. He made almost superhuman efforts to rally and re-array his men; and he succeeded in gathering together and restoring to order and discipline a still imposing force, which was increased every moment by the arrival of fresh bands on the little rise which it occupied. Here, almost as the sun was setting, two, if not three tremendous attacks were made by the whole Norman power, foot and horse together, but still

no impression seems to have been made, till, during one of those terrible flights of arrows, Harold was struck to the ground; and all became confusion. The news of the king's death spread like lightning. Harold's two brothers were slain. The royal standard was taken; and the Saxon rule in England was broken by the sword of the Norman.

That Harold died on the fatal field of Hastings, I have no doubt; but yet his body was never very clearly distinguished from the rest of the slain. A corpse, covered with wounds, and disfigured by the feet of fugitives and conquerors, was generously sent by William to the mother of the fallen king, as the body of her son; and she received it as such, having offered its weight of gold for that, which she now received without payment. But a story became current at the time, which after-circumstances tended in some degree to confirm, that Harold was not really slain, but was carried, desperately wounded, to a mo-

nastery, where he was cured, and in which he devoted himself to the life of a monk. Certain it is that, many years after, William the Conqueror visited that monastery, and held long conferences with a Saxon monk therein, with whose real name none of the brethren were acquainted, and who was reported to have been brought thither terribly wounded, shortly after the battle of Hastings. Some historians of good credit have believed this monk to be no other than Harold; but I am not inclined to think that such was the case; and it may only be necessary to point out to you that, in almost every country where a popular king has been slain in battle, the same kind of story has been told of him. Such was the case in Spain, in regard to king Roderic; and such was the case in Scotland respecting King James, who fell at the battle of Flodden. It is not probable, indeed, that, unless the

Saxon nobility who surrounded Harold had actually seen him dead, they would themselves have quitted the field alive, for they had already shown that they held life cheap, when balanced against their duty to their country, and the defence of their beloved monarch. The slaughter of the Saxons was tremendous in the latter part of the day, for comparatively few had been slain till their ranks were broken and the flight began. Harold's two brothers-in-law, however, Edwin and Morcar, rallied a considerable number of the troops, and effected their retreat during the night, though, as long as day-light lasted, the Norman cavalry continued to pursue and slay the fugitives, giving no quarter, it is said, in order not to embarrass their after movements by making prisoners. The loss on the Norman side amounted, we are told, to six thousand men; and William himself, though he received no

wound, had three horses slain under him. This fact, if we are to believe the statement that the English used no missiles, shows that William ventured his person in the contest as boldly as Harold.

The Normans offered up praises and thanksgiving for their victory on the field of battle; and William permitted the Saxons to bury their dead in peace. He also, it is said, punished a soldier for mangling the body of his great rival; and, indeed, there can be little doubt that, however hardened his heart might be by worldly policy and ambition, he must have felt some remorse, when he thought of the death of the great and good man who had fallen, and of the immense number of gallant men and faithful subjects who lay upon the field of Hastings.

The consternation which spread throughout all England, when the news of this terrible defeat was carried into different provinces,

cannot be described; and in consequence thereof William found it no very difficult matter, by wise and prudent measures, to make himself master of the whole country Of the circumstances, however, which followed I will tell you more hereafter, when I come to speak of the Norman race of our kings. At present, I shall give you some account of the manners and customs of the Anglo-Saxons, or English, before the Conquest. It is necessary, my dears, that you should know something of their laws and habits, as, notwithstanding the number of Normans who came with William, and those who followed him at different periods, the great body of the people of this country are either of direct Saxon, or direct Danish race. The very language we speak is still founded upon the Saxon; and speeches or writings are looked upon, by those who understand such things, as better and finer the

more nearly they approach to the old Saxon tongue. Doubtless the mixture of a great number of tribes in the people of this country has given us a number of qualities not possessed by other nations; but as the greater portion of our blood is Saxon, so do we in character more resemble that people than any other which ever invaded this country. Our language, too, though it has derived, perhaps, richness and force from taking in new words and new forms of speech from the Romans, the Normans, and the Danes, and some from the Britons also, is chiefly Saxon, both in words and construction. Indeed, it is curious to observe how resolutely the Saxons kept their own language, showing the characteristic perseveringness of the people. The Normans settled in France, very soon lost their own tongue, and learned to speak a jargon of the language of the country. In England,

it was the same, for though they kept up the Norman-French for some time at the court, it gradually melted away into the Saxon.

Amongst the Saxons, as amongst almost all the nations of Europe at the time, there were several ranks or classes. Hengist, Horsa, and other Saxon leaders who invaded the island, brought with them a number of brave companions, serving under them voluntarily, and looking forward to honour and reward. Amongst these companions, the great leaders distributed a large portion of the lands they conquered, which were held as their own property, and transmitted from father to son. The son that succeeded his father, however, was obliged, on taking possession of the estate, to make the king a fixed present or due, which was called a heriot, according to his rank and station. This heriot consisted of one, two, or four

horses, a quantity of arms, and a sum of money. The possessors of these lands were called Thanes; and I believe the heriots were all originally paid to the king. As the Saxon conquest of Britain proceeded, it was necessary to divide the country in order to its proper government, and the great divisions were called shires. The principal magistrate of each shire was called alderman, and afterwards earl; and he was generally chosen by the king from the most powerful Thanes in the shire. This earl led the forces of the county in time of war, and gradually a distinction took place between the earl's Thanes and the king's Thanes; and it is probable that the former paid their heriots to the earl, and not to the king. Since then, great changes have been introduced; but, nevertheless, a great deal of the land in this country is still held upon what is called the *same tenure*, that is to say,

the same condition, of paying a heriot when a son succeeds to his father. It is a great pity that in all the changes which have been made, more especially at the time of the great rebellion, all these dues and heriots were not swept away together, and the whole land, throughout the country, declared free from every other tax but those imposed by parliament.

The Thanes had only three great duties to perform in return for the lands granted to them. The first of these was to defend the country in time of war, attending the king when going against an enemy. The second, was to assist in building and protecting the royal fortresses; and the third, to keep the bridges and roads in repair. They had a great many privileges in return, however, and by the Thanes almost all the great offices of the state were filled. The estate of a Thane was generally divided into two portions, one

of which, the nearest to his dwelling-place, was called the Inlands, and was cultivated by himself, for his own sole profit. The other was called the Outlands, and was let by him to farmers, who cultivated it for their profit, giving him a certain portion of the produce. These farmers formed principally the second class or rank, and were called Ceorls. They were always free-born men, of free-born parents, and though they might follow any profession they chose, they generally addicted themselves to agriculture. The Ceorl could rise to the rank of a Thane in various ways. If he obtained five hides of land upon which was a church, a bell-tower, a kitchen, and a great gate, he was considered as a Thane. If he made three voyages beyond sea, with a ship and cargo of his own, he became noble. If he went into the church, and took priest's orders, the same was the case; and if he distinguished him-

self so much in war, that his Earl or Duke, bestowed upon him five hides of land, or a gilt sword, helmet, and cuirass, he attained nobility.

Below the Ceorl, however, there were two other ranks, which were to be found in every part of Europe, but the introduction of which into this country is not easily to be accounted for, especially when we remember that they formed by far the most numerous classes, and yet were constantly diminished by a multitude of circumstances, besides death. These were, first, the Serfs, or slaves, of which the Anglo-Saxons had an immense number. Some were gathered together in villages upon estates, performing all the offices of a labourer, in cultivating the lands to which they were attached, and they could be sold either with or apart from those lands, like the cattle. Others were domestic slaves, living in the house and performing menial offices there.

Others were taught mechanical arts, which they exercised for the benefit of their proprietor. It is hardly possible to suppose that the first Saxon conquerors who invaded England brought over many mere serfs with them, for their ships were crowded with military followers of a much higher rank; and though the laws and customs of the country reduced many persons to slavery for crimes, faults, and even for debt, yet we cannot believe that either this means, or that of making slaves of prisoners taken from the enemy, was sufficient to supply the country with the number of slaves which we find it contained, without a regular and very extensive commerce in human flesh being carried on between the Saxons and foreign nations. However that may be, it is clear that, under the first Saxon kings, a slave was looked upon as but little differing from the cattle upon the estate. Their wives, their children, were

all slaves likewise. The master might kill or sell them at his pleasure, and, in fact, they were in a most degraded position. The first improvement in their condition seems to have been produced by the introduction of the Christian religion; and, as the Saxon laws improved, considerable care was taken of them. A Christian slave could not be sold to a Jew or a Pagan. If he were of Saxon birth, he could not be sold out of the country. The church demanded, and the law enforced the rule, that each slave should be allowed a portion of his time to work for his own benefit, and thus many of them became very wealthy. The quantity of work to be done by the slaves was generally regulated by the bishop, and the clergy strongly recommended the liberation of slaves as a good and pious work. They set the example themselves, indeed; and a law was at one time passed, by which the slaves of every

bishop became free at his death. Other laws, protecting their persons, appeared from time to time; and before the Norman conquest, the condition of the serfs was greatly improved. Out of this class rose another, between the Ceorl and the villain, called the Freilazin, or Freedmen. These had all, at one time, been slaves, but had obtained their liberty, either by purchase or by the good-will of their lords. It has been said that they entered at once into the class of Ceorls; but I do not think this was the case. They generally either remained with the lord to whom they had belonged, or else followed some mechanical art, frequently settling in the cities, and dealing in articles of general necessity.

Although the Saxons appeared first in England in the character of mere piratical conquerors, yet there was a very remarkable spirit of order amongst them, a great rever-

ence for law, and an inclination to conduct everything upon fixed principles. They showed better notions of a regularly-formed society than any other of the nations which rose up in Europe after the fall of the Roman empire; and these qualities still distinguish their descendants. In other countries, the land was divided amongst great lords, keeping a great number of mere soldiers, who held whatever estates they did possess from those lords, upon the condition of helping them in arms, in the wars which they were continually waging. Throughout most countries on the Continent, during many centuries, society consisted only of one soldier over another, till you came to the king; and under these soldiers all were villains or slaves. The court of the lord was the only place to which people could apply for justice, and very little of it was to be got there. Laws were formed, not so much by

the consideration of a great many men gathered together to inquire what was the best rule to be laid down, but by customs, or accidental decisions in particular cases, which were collected and written down as rules in after-times.

Very different was the custom with the Saxons. Soon after their arrival in England, they set about dividing the whole people into little separate communities, each of which formed part of a larger community, and that of a still larger. But to give you a better notion of this state of things, I must tell you, as shortly as possible, what these communities were. Every head of a family had great power over his children, his servants, and his slaves, all of whom were considered as forming one family. Ten of these families formed a community called a Tything, and this Tything was responsible to the king and the whole country for the conduct of each

of its members. It might be considered, in some degree, as a little republic in itself; and the heads of the families formed a court of justice, and chose one of their members to be the magistrate presiding in that court, who was called the Borsholder or Tythingman, who called the court together on all necessary occasions. These courts examined from time to time the arms of all the members of the tything, to be sure that they were in a fit condition for war. They settled all disputes that took place in their own district, though not without appeal; and if any crime was committed by one of the tything, they were bound to give him up to justice within thirty-one days. If they did not, the tythingman, and two of the most respectable members, together with three from each of the three neighbouring tythings, were obliged to make oath none of the remaining members of the

tything had taken part in the crime, or had helped the criminal to escape, and that they had done all they could to bring him to justice. Otherwise the tything in general was subjected to a penalty in money, which, according to the Saxon law, was attached to every crime.

As ten families formed a tything, so ten tythings formed a hundred; and this division had likewise its own peculiar court, presided over by a magistrate, called the Hundredary, who was usually a thane or nobleman residing in the hundred and elected by the members thereof. This magistrate was the leader of the hundred in time of war, inspected its arms, appointed the meetings of the hundred court, and was bound to execute the sentences at that court. It was a profitable as well as an honorary office, for one-third of the fines imposed by the hundred court went to the Hundredary, as well as a quantity of grain, which was paid to

him as a due by each member of the hundred. Amongst other duties which he had to perform was, that of destroying foxes and wolves in the hundred, so that the Saxon's lambs and chickens might not suffer. The power of this court was much more extensive than that of the tything. All civil, and many ecclesiastical, affairs were here decided, and the bishop very often sat with the Hundredary. If any man was not satisfied with the decision of the tything court, he could appeal to that of the hundred, which was composed of all the members of each tything, who were not only permitted, but bound, to attend and vote, according to their conscience, upon any matter that was brought before them. As it was the Hundredary's business to inspect the arms of the hundred, all the members of his court came armed; and one of the first ceremonies, on the meeting of the court, was for each individual present to touch the Hundredary's spear with the point of his own spear.

From this inspection of arms, the assembly, which usually took place once a month, was frequently called the wappentac. The next division was the *Trything* or *Lath*, consisting of several hundreds, which likewise had its courts, formed in the same manner as those of the hundreds and tythings. Above all these, was the shire or county, presided over by its earl, who was at first both the military leader and chief magistrate of all the hundreds in the district. He was generally appointed by the king during the monarch's good pleasure, though there are instances of the people having chosen their own earl, and then obtained the king's consent. Step by step, the earls obtained their office for life, and in the end appear to have transmitted it to their sons. As a recompence for the various duties they had to perform, the earls received one-third of all the fines imposed in the shire; and they had also estates

assigned them which were called the earl's lands.

You will see that, in all these arrangements, the Anglo-Saxons showed a spirit of freedom, joined to a love of order, which is very remarkable; and the same love of order is displayed still more plainly by the fact, that voluntary societies were formed exactly upon the same principle as the tythings, by persons who were not compelled by law to belong to any tything. These were the thanes, the bishops, abbots, and priests, whose rank and character enabled them, if they pleased, to remain independent of the tything in which they lived. It may be doubted whether ever such a perfect form of self-government was designed by any other nation; nor does it appear that we have greatly improved upon it. The same regulations which existed for the country, existed to a great degree in the towns, except that which was called the

tythingman in the one case, received the name in the other of the Alderman, Towngrieve, or Portgrieve.

I will not tell you anything about the Anglo-Saxon laws, for you would not be able to understand the subject; but it may entertain as well as instruct you to hear something of the manners and customs of the people from whom the greater part of the English nation are descended. It would appear, from all accounts, that they were a remarkably handsome race, tall, and powerful in frame, generally with a very fair complexion, and beautiful hair. They are reported to have lived to an extreme old age, if not carried off by pestilence, war, or accident; and yet it is strange that they should do so, when we find that they were much addicted, as a nation, to gluttony and drunkenness. They were universally superstitious, and credulous to a most enormous degree;

but in compensation for these vices and follies, they were extremely hospitable, receiving all strangers who came to visit them, into their houses, and to their tables, and feeding them, without grudging or reward, as long as they chose to remain. Quick and passionate, murder was by no means an uncommon occurrence in those days; and the law, which put a price upon the life of every man, no doubt tended to encourage the crime. The number of oaths which they were called upon to take on various occasions, produced a good deal of perjury beyond all doubt; and a great number of other sins were the consequence of the drunken habits which I have already mentioned. Some of the scenes of intoxication that took place are most extraordinary, especially at great festivals, where kings, clergy, nobles, and people, all got drunk together. In every company, they usually drank out of one large bowl, gene-

rally made of wood; and, in order to correct their drunkenness in some degree, one of their kings, named Edgar, made a law that these bowls should be made with metal pegs, at certain distances, adding an express prohibition for any man to drink more than from one peg to another at one draught. I do not believe, however, that this had much effect.

As is natural with a very free people, the Anglo-Saxons were plain and straight-forward in their speech and in their manners; but yet we find many instances of dignified and substantial courtesy, and they were famous for their tenderness and affection towards their friends and relations, especially of the female sex. Although almost all countries were, at that time, in a rude and barbarous state, and the Anglo-Saxons had not attained the same degree of polish, in point of manners, as the Normans had, yet

they considered many things as absolute necessaries which are looked upon in the present day as luxuries, reserved, principally, for the wealthiest amongst us. Amongst these was the warm-bath, which was indulged in continually by people of even moderate fortune, and by the poor at least once a-week. The prevalence of this habit is shown by the fact of its having become an ordinary penance for the commission of any sin, to refrain, for a certain time, from warm-bathing. Indeed, they seem to have been exceedingly cleanly in their persons, and, notwithstanding their warlike habits, to have had very fine and delicate skins. One of the severest mortifications of the flesh which the clergy could enjoin upon a sinner was, to wear woollen next his skin, for the usual under-garment of the Saxons was a linen shirt of as fine a texture as the individual could obtain. Above the shirt was worn a close-fitting tunic, of wool-

len, linen, or silk. Sometimes this garment was without sleeves, but the legs were generally covered with breeches or trousers, at least in the latter part of the Saxon period; and, in place of stockings, bandages were frequently rolled round the legs, from the ancle to the knee. Their feet were covered with shoes, or rather a sort of sandal, fitting closely, and secured by leathern thongs. The upper part was of leather, and the sole of wood. The tunic was secured round the waist by a broad belt or girdle, which, in the higher ranks of society, was richly embroidered, and even ornamented with jewels. On many occasions, and especially when out of the house, the tunic was covered with a large mantle, which descended to the feet before and behind, but was much shorter at the sides. It was generally of white or blue cloth, and was fastened on the right shoulder with a button. In the belt which girt their

tunic was placed the short sword, almost perpendicularly. What covering the men wore upon their heads I do not well know, but it is certain that they sometimes wore veils, which were occasionally richly embroidered with scenes from history. The Saxons, in fact, were very fond of embroidery, and also of ornaments of gold and silver, particularly of gold chains and bracelets. Furs, too, were much used by our ancestors, and the edges of mantles and tunics were often richly worked with gold and silver thread.

The dress of the women varied little from that of the men, except that the garments were much longer, and the bosom bare when the mantle was removed. Both sexes were very proud and careful of their hair, for the beauty of which the Saxons were renowned. The unmarried women generally wore their heads uncovered, and suffered their hair to flow over their shoulders; but when mar-

ried, this natural ornament was gathered up under some kind of cap, which, it would appear, varied much in form at different periods. The men suffered their beards to grow, but, towards the end of the period, shaved the chin, leaving the upper lip untouched.

By all that I have just said, you will see that the Saxons were by no means deficient in a knowledge of the useful arts; and, indeed, in most of them, such as the weaving of linen and woollen cloths, the working of various metals, needlework and embroidery, they far excelled their neighbours the French. Their commerce, also, it would seem, was more extensive than that of any neighbouring nation, and is particularly mentioned by the French and Norman writers of those times. Their principal imports would seem to have been the precious metals, silks, wine, spices, furs, drugs, ropes, and oil; but it is evident that they exported more than they imported,

so that what is called the balance of trade was in favour of England. This is shown by the observation of a foreign writer of those times, who said that it was lucky the English grew so little wine, as other nations had thus something to give them for all the various articles they exported. In ship-building, the Saxons appear to have excelled all the neighbouring states, and excellence in this art rarely exists without a very extensive commerce.

I have told you before that the Saxons were very fond of eating and drinking. People with good appetites have no need of very fine cookery, and in this respect they certainly did not excel. Roasting, boiling, and broiling, seem to have been the principal ways of dressing their meats; and their fondness for salt provisions is perhaps the only thing necessary to be remarked in regard to their food. The variety and goodness of their li-

quors, however, seem to have been much more important considerations with the Saxons, than the preparation of their meat. Though wine was certainly produced in England at this time, yet it was doubtless weak and sour: but a better sort was procured from the Continent; and many other strong drinks were made in the country itself. That which was in most general use was ale, though how it was preserved, before the introduction of the hop, we do not know. Mead, a strong liquor made from honey, was in great favour with the richer classes, and cider was also a common and esteemed beverage. Two famous drinks of the Saxons were produced by the mixture of liquors with various sweet or fragrant ingredients. Pigment was compounded of wine, honey, and several kinds of spice; and Morat, which was very much drunk in the hot season by the higher classes, was made of honey, dissolved in mulberry juice.

The Saxons were fond of music; but that art must have been in a very rude and imperfect state; and I am inclined to believe that their instruments of music were not very many or various, for although a famous historian, named Bede, mentions no less than nine, we do not find that they were in very general use. The harp was the musical instrument of the laity, and the organ of the clergy; the tabour, the flute, and the pipe, pleased the ear of the peasantry, and the trumpet inspired the soldier. Sculpture, we have every reason to believe, though undoubtedly practised, was of a very rude kind; and most of the pictures which the churches of the kingdom contained were brought from Rome. Some, however, were painted in England, and the famous St. Dunstan is said to have excelled his countrymen in the art. Architecture was also in want of great improvement; but I am inclined to believe that such improvement had taken place before the

Norman Conquest. The very fact of the great commerce of the country, leaves it hardly possible to suppose that a devout and superstitious people would not cultivate an art so necessary to the solemn performance of religious ceremonies. The principal buildings throughout the country, the houses, the palaces, and even the monasteries, were, indeed, generally built of wood; but there are accounts of more than one great building of stone, in which we find mentioned tall pillars, high walls, towers, and winding-staircases. It is certain, however, that masons were brought over from France and Italy, to construct those buildings, as well as workers in glass to glaze the windows. Previously to that time, which was towards the end of the seventh century, the windows had been covered with thin linen cloths, to keep out the wind, without excluding the whole light.

The marriages of the Anglo-Saxons were

attended with great and boisterous festivity, and were always celebrated in the house of the bridegroom, who was at the expense of the whole feast. On the morning of the marriage-day he set out on horseback, completely armed, and, accompanied by all his friends, to meet the bride and bring her to his dwelling. She, accompanied by all her relations, proceeded to her future home, where she was solemnly betrothed or pledged to him, and they then proceeded together to the church, where they were married by the priest, a large square piece of cloth or veil being held over their heads during the ceremony by four tall men. On leaving the church, they returned again to the house of the bridegroom, where immense quantities of meat and drink were prepared, and the rest of that day was spent in feasting and revelry. The same scene of eating, drinking, dancing, and singing, began the next morning,

and lasted day after day, until the whole provisions in the house were consumed. To compensate for thus eating the bride and bridegroom out of house and home, each of their friends made them some present before they departed. The clothes of the bride and three of her bridesmaids, and those of the bridegroom and three of his friends, being of a peculiar form and colour, and forbidden to be used by them any more, were usually given away, either to the musicians who attended the festival, or to the priests of the church or chapel where the ceremony took place; and the morning after the marriage, the bridegroom announced to the friends of the bride what gift or dowry he intended to bestow upon her, for which some of his relations present became security.

It is very natural for people to eat and make merry upon a joyful occasion; but the

Saxons never lost any opportunity of indulging their appetite, either for meat or drink; and when a death took place, the house of the deceased, until the body was carried to the grave, was one continued scene of feasting and revelry. Everybody caroused at the dead man's expense, and sang and danced in his honour.

The Anglo-Saxons, as a nation, possessed very few of those elegant and graceful arts which enable men to pass the time unoccupied by business, in tranquil and beneficial pursuits. Few could read, few could write, so that two of the great sources of entertainment were at once cut off. War, the council, the occupations of the farm, were the principal objects of life, with the exception of the attendance upon religious ceremonies, which the priests took care to magnify into great importance. There were many leisure hours, however, which it was neces-

sary to fill up in some manner; but their amusements were as limited as their occupations. Hunting and falconry were two of the principal pastimes; and the care and education of dogs and hawks afforded some entertainment, even at those seasons of the year when the chase could not be pursued. Still there were many vacant moments, for which there was no employment, except in revelry, feasting, and gaming. The latter may, of course, be rather considered as a vice than an amusement; but with the Saxons this vice became a passion; and we find, with the highest and lowest of a people, the greater part of whom had no intellectual pursuits whatsoever, that games of chance were followed with an eagerness approaching to madness. The consequences sometimes were fatal. A man not only gambled away his moveable and hereditary property, but even staked his own person and his liberty,

and on losing, submitted to slavery, and was sold in the public market like a beast.

The vices and the virtues of a barbarous nation are all strongly marked amongst the Anglo-Saxons, but through all, peculiar qualities are apparent, which distinguish them from every other race. There was a vehemence, an earnestness, a perseveringness, a spirit of freedom, a love of social order, a capacity for improvement, a power of bending circumstances to their own will, and triumphing even in defeat, by persistance rather than exertion, which no other nation at the same point of civilization ever displayed; and it is a very curious fact, that when they did not succeed in conquering an enemy, but were, on the contrary, either partially or entirely conquered themselves, they were not absorbed or taken into the conquering nations, but rather received them, as it were into their own body, and gained their quali-

ties and advantages, without losing their own. Such was the case with the Danes and the Normans. There can be little doubt that the mixture of these two nations with the Anglo-Saxons was advantageous rather than otherwise to the latter race; but neither in the one case nor the other was the general character of the English people lost, but the conquerors disappeared, as it were, amongst the conquered; and Englishmen remained Englishmen still. All the same qualities are remarkable in our race to-day that were apparent in our ancestors; and whether in this island, or on the far shores of India or America, with only the difference of cultivation and civilization, the Anglo-Saxon is the same as he was eight hundred years ago.

NORMAN PERIOD.

MANY bloody battles had been fought in England; many severe defeats had been received, either in contests with the Danes, or in the wars of the Saxon princes amongst themselves; but no battle had been so vigorously contested as the battle of Hastings, and no defeat had been followed by such universal consternation. The death of the king and his two brothers left the people without a ruler, and the army without a leader of sufficient renown to restore its courage, after the disaster which had occurred. It is true, that Edgar Atheling was

the undoubted heir to the Saxon throne, and that Morcar and Edwin remained to command the army; but Edgar was feeble and inactive, and although the two earls were men of undoubted courage, and some military experience, what could they be expected to do against the conqueror of Harold, who himself had been victorious against the immense Norwegian army by which they had been totally routed. Nevertheless, Morcar and Edwin, collecting together all the scattered remains of the royal forces, which had not fled to a great distance from the field, retreated in better order than might have been expected from Hastings to London, where anxious and frequent councils were held by the bishops, clergy, and nobles, as to the course which should be pursued in the perilous situation of the country. It was at length determined to proclaim Edgar Atheling king, and to raise fresh forces to

repel the invaders. But amongst a population drained of its best fighting men by two bloody battles within a few short weeks, and filled with consternation by a total defeat, time was required to restore confidence, and rouse the national spirit.

But little time, however, was afforded by the Duke of Normandy, who, knowing that panic would be his best ally, hastened to take advantage of the first impression of his victory. I must now tell you something of the history of this extraordinary man before his invasion of England; for you will find that a great many circumstances united with his natural character and disposition to fit him for the great work he had undertaken. William, called the Conqueror, was the son of Robert, Duke of Normandy, by the daughter of a tanner or skinner of Falaise. He was of the middle height, very strong and robust in frame, with a countenance

that inspired respect, and seemed to demand obedience. He was cautious, thoughtful, and reserved, rarely communicated his plans or intentions to anybody, and admitted none to great intimacy. He seemed to desire respect rather than love; and though he showed himself in many instances lenient and merciful, yet where it was necessary to strike terror, or to punish long protracted resistance, he suffered not remorse or common humanity to interfere. He was of a religious and somewhat gloomy temper, which did not at all displease the monks and priests who ruled so much in those days; but ambition was the principal passion in his heart, and neither religion nor any other consideration had any effect in opposition to that. He was, moreover, of a shrewd, keen, and intelligent mind, and active and energetic in all his habits. His education had been carefully attended to, at least in

all military matters, in order to fit him for the government of Normandy, in which duchy his father soon foresaw he would have an uneasy seat; and from a very early period of his life he had heard of little but wars and battles, for Duke Robert himself, during the greater part of his life, was engaged in hostilities with his own vassals, or with other princes; and the beginning of his son's career was to be attended by the same misfortunes. Robert died during a journey to the Holy Land, when William was a mere lad, receiving education at the court of France. As he was not Robert's son by a lawful marriage, and as Robert had left many near relations, a great number of opponents started up to claim the dukedom as soon as his father was dead; and the King of France himself determined to try if he could not subdue the duchy of Normandy. The States of that duchy, how-

ever—that is to say, the nobles and clergy—had taken an oath of fidelity to William before his father's departure; and the King of France, who was a weak and undecided prince, suffered the boy, whom he had entirely in his power, to return to Normandy, although he intended to take it from him at an after time. Thus William, at a very early age, was forced to defend himself against a number of enemies, which he did, however, with great success, first under his governor, or tutor, the constable of Normandy, and afterwards as his own master. One after the other, he defeated all the claimants to the duchy, and successfully combated the troops of the King of France, who twice invaded his territories. He thus gained great practical experience in war—an art for which his natural abilities fitted him well; and he could certainly have no better school for ruling a refractory people than Normandy

during the first eight or ten years of his sovereignty. At first he showed himself exceedingly generous and merciful towards his enemies, pardoning his adversaries with great good humour when he had subdued them; but he was soon taught that greater severity was necessary, and he had learned to rule with vigour, and even sternness, before he sailed for the shores of England.

In all these wars, and many which had preceded them, the Norman nobles had acquired great military skill; and, though they had been very rapidly civilized after their first invasion of France, and settlement in Normandy, they had lost none of that enterprising character which distinguished them in their barbarous state. Little more than a hundred and fifty years had passed since, by a treaty between Charles the Simple, King of France, and a chief called Rollo, the Duchy of

Normandy, and the homage of Britanny, had been given up to the half-savage Northmen. During that period, the Normans had acquired arts, chivalrous habits, and more polished manners; but they had not had time to lose in the habits of peace those warlike tastes and that strong desire of conquest with which they first set out from the far north. The Saxons, on the contrary, had passed more than six hundred years in England, the greater part of which time, though frequently disturbed by wars amongst themselves, and against the Danes, had been passed in peaceful occupations, and in a settled state; so that William had great advantages, both from his own character and habits, from the character of the people he led to war, and from the habits of the people he went to subdue.

When the victory at Hastings was complete, William offered up thanks to God

upon the field of battle. It is very impious and wicked to thank God for the success of any evil act which he permits for his own wise purposes; but men continually shut their eyes to the nature of their own actions, and therefore it is not surprising, perhaps, that William should think he had as good a title to the throne as Harold. He next had all the dead of his own army carefully buried; and then, after a short pause to rest his troops, he began his march into the interior of the country. In the first place, however, as it was necessary to have some secure port for his ships, and a place of retreat for himself in case of reverse, he seized upon Dover after a very slight resistance, and spent eight days there in fortifying the town, and endeavouring to restore his men to health, as they were suffering from an infectious disease. The important town of Canterbury, and the county of Kent gene-

rally, sent deputies to offer submission to the Conqueror upon certain conditions, which were granted; and William marched on towards London unopposed. The citizens, however, headed by Morcar and Edwin, shut the gates of the metropolis against him, and showed a strong resolution of resisting to the last; but they were unfortunately permitted to make a sally. The troops of the city were routed by the Normans with great slaughter; and the fugitives carried back into the town fresh consternation and bitter wailing for the slain. At the same time, it would seem the clergy fell off from the party of Edgar Atheling, and secretly persuaded the people to submit to the Conqueror. The flames of Southwark, which was burnt by the Normans, tended to increase the terrors of the Londoners; and William proceeded to take measures for cutting off the supplies of the metropolis.

Marching up the course of the river, he crossed the Thames at Wallingford, wasting the district through which he passed, and in the end arrived at Berkhamstead, where it would appear he fixed his head quarters, sending detachments to the very gates of London. The people murmured; the clergy openly caballed in favour of submission; and seeing that it would be impossible to defend a city in such a state, Morcar and Edwin led the large force which still adhered to them out of the capital, and proceeded by rapid marches towards the north. Their departure was the signal for every one to seek their own safety by submission; and the archbishops of Canterbury and York, with two other prelates, some of the principal citizens and magistrates of London, a great number of the nobility, and Edgar Atheling himself, proceeded to Berkhamstead, submitted to the Conqueror, and made him an offer of the Crown.

The most strange event of this extraordinary invasion now took place. William had come into England, claiming the crown as his right by the will of Edward the Confessor; but now, when it was offered to him by prelates, nobles, people, and the heir of the Saxon monarchs, he affected a good deal of hesitation in accepting it; and when he had done so, founded his claim upon election, and not upon the title which he had before put forth.

He did accept the crown, however, but from some suspicions, probably, of the good faith of the Londoners, he showed no great haste to trust himself within the walls of the city. He demanded hostages, and sent a detachment of his forces to take possession of the capital, and build a fortress there to overawe the town, while he himself remained at Berkhamstead, or in its neighbourhood, hunting or hawking in the woods and fields

of Hertfordshire. His coronation was appointed to take place in Westminster Abbey on Christmas-day, 1066, and William repaired in great pomp to the minster at the time appointed. He was attended by a great body of English and Norman nobles; and Aldred, archbishop of York, who, barely twelve months before, had placed the crown on the head of Harold, prepared to perform the same ceremony for the Conqueror. Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury, was not permitted to crown the new king, for after the expulsion of the Norman Robert from the see of Canterbury, Stigand had never been acknowledged as archbishop by the Normans or the Pope. By some strange chance, a foreign bishop was also present, namely, the Bishop of Constance, a place not within the territories of William at all; and he assisted the archbishop in the coronation. Aldred took the oath of the king to

protect the church, to govern the nation equitably, to enact just laws, and cause them to be observed; to put down rapine and injustice, and to do equal right between Normans and Englishmen. He also, before he put the crown on William's head, addressed the Anglo-Saxons in their own language, demanding, if they chose that prince for their king. The Bishop of Constance put the same question to the Normans; and shouts of assent testified the unanimous will of the assembly. William was then enthroned and crowned with the usual ceremonies, amidst the vociferous acclamations of the Saxons.

These rash expressions of joy at having obtained a new master produced very fatal consequences. At some little distance round the Abbey were built a great many houses of wood; and in the open space between these and the church was stationed a large

body of William's guards. The shouts of the multitude within the building, in a tongue which they did not understand, alarmed and enraged the fierce Normans. They fancied that the English within the church were in the act of attacking their prince; and in a fit of stupid fury, without waiting for farther information, they set fire to the wooden houses of the Saxons, producing a tumult within and without the Abbey, which alarmed William himself, and made the Conqueror of Hastings turn pale. By great exertions the tumult was quelled, and the fire extinguished; but the event left a rancorous feeling towards the Normans in the bosoms of the English, which was not easily appeased.

William now being seated on the throne, and in possession of a great part of the country, did all he could to gain the affection of his new subjects. He had met with great difficulties in getting money enough to

carry through his invasion of England; to maintain himself in his conquest required more; and his Norman nobles were looking for honours and rewards. It was necessary, therefore, to obtain gold; but William very prudently resolved to seek it by those means that would give least offence to his new subjects. Harold had collected a great amount of treasure at Winchester, and as there was nobody to assert the rights of the dead prince's family, William seized all his wealth without opposition. This only sufficed, however, to satisfy the Norman nobles, the monks and priests, and the pope; and to supply his further necessities the king, without having recourse to a tax, gently intimated to the most wealthy nobles and bodies of citizens, that some presents would be very acceptable. This mild method of squeezing them was at first successful; and a very considerable sum was gained by

such means. All William's first acts were highly popular. He strictly forbade his Norman soldiers to injure or insult the English. He made vast promises of protection and kindness to his Saxon subjects; and he contented himself with stretching the rights of conquest no farther than seizing the lands of Harold, his brothers, and the English nobles who had fallen in actual warfare against him. This was as little perhaps as could be expected; and the people began to entertain a great opinion of his moderation and equity. He still seemed to entertain some suspicions of the citizens of London; and a few days after his coronation he retired to Barking, in Essex, where all these measures for conciliating the English, and yet rewarding his Norman followers, were taken. The fame of his affability, justice and moderation, spread throughout the whole country; and the great nobles, who had

been previously preparing for resistance, abandoned their intention, and flocked to Barking to make their submission. Amongst these were Edwin and Morcar, who were received with every testimony of esteem. The estates and honours of all who submitted, were preserved to them by the new king; and Edgar Atheling himself was treated with the utmost favour, and received a grant of several large estates at the hands of the usurper. William then made a tour through the greater part of England, showing courtesy and kindness to all, and gaining greatly upon the good opinion of the people; but, not trusting entirely to their affection, he caused several strong castles to be built at every point of importance, and garrisoned them with his Norman forces.

Having thus by conciliating regard, and guarding against surprise, done as much as he could in so short a time to secure the

kingdom he had conquered, William returned for a time to Normandy, taking with him Edgar Atheling, the Earls, Edwin and Morcar, and Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury. They went not indeed in the painful position of prisoners, but rather as guests, who might at any moment become hostages; and the very splendour which they felt themselves bound to display in the court of their conqueror, and which we are told excited the wonder and admiration of the Normans, must have been very distasteful to their feelings.

It would, undoubtedly, have been more prudent for William to remain in his new dominions, till his power was secured; and it is generally supposed that his object in visiting Normandy, was to display himself in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen, as a great conqueror and a magnificent king. Others have indeed supposed that he wished

to try the fidelity of the English before he confided fully in them; and the trial was at all events very severe. On his departure, he left the government in the hands of his brother Odo, of Bayeux, and of William Fitzosborne, one of the most celebrated leaders in his army; but if his charge to them, like that which he had before given to his principal officers, was to treat his English subjects with equity and kindness, the regents sadly betrayed their trust. The Norman soldiery in general, no longer overawed by the presence of their monarch, assumed all the insolence of conquerors, and oppressed and maltreated the Saxons throughout the whole kingdom. No redress was to be obtained from the regents, who encouraged the soldiery in trampling the natives of the land under foot; and the spirit of revolt began to show itself in many places. The men of Kent broke out into open resistance; and calling to their aid Eustace, Count

of Boulogne, then at enmity with William, they besieged Dover castle, but were repulsed with loss, and abandoned by their confederate.

The revolt in Herefordshire was even more serious. The Normans plundered the estates and maltreated the peasantry of a Saxon earl, known by the name of Edric the Forester. Edric attacked and drove them forth, and on their renewing their insolent attempts, called to his aid two of the Welsh princes, and retaliated upon the Normans in Herefordshire the cruelties they had inflicted upon the Saxons. Murmurs and discontent spread throughout the whole land; and a general rising for the purpose of massacreing the Normans was upon the eve of taking place, when William, warned of the state of England, suddenly appeared at Winchelsea, and proceeded with all speed to London. Here he was immediately surrounded by the Saxon nobles and

prelates, all eagerly preferring their complaints against the regents William listened with mildness and affability, promised redress, and granted several petitions, so that tranquillity was for the time restored.

This peaceful state continued but for a very short period, the king's want of money becoming pressing, and no resource being open for supplying his treasury. In these circumstances, he revived the odious tax called Danegelt, and in a very few weeks resistance appeared in various parts of the country. Exeter was the first city which rose against the king, the people being encouraged to revolt by Githa, the mother of Harold, who had amassed considerable treasures in the town. The citizens called all the neighbouring country to their aid, repaired their walls, laid up large stores, and prepared to defend themselves manfully. But the rapid movements of the king speedily

suppressed the revolt; for marching at once to Exeter, in the midst of winter, he laid siege to that town, and forced it to surrender, after a siege of eighteen days. Githa escaped to Flanders, carrying her wealth with her; and William marched through Devonshire and Cornwall, suppressing all tendency to tumult, and pacifying the whole country through which he passed.

He was not destined to know peace, however; for hardly was one conspiracy suppressed before another broke forth. It is true, with the vain expectation of tranquillity in which men indulge even when they have acquired anything wrongfully, William fancied, when the revolt in Devonshire was suppressed, that he might indulge in some little repose; and his queen, Matilda, was brought over to England, for the purpose of being crowned, which ceremony was performed on Whit Sunday, by the Archbishop of York. Her

to meddle with the more powerful of the Saxon nobles. Edwin and Morcar, the two most popular and wealthy of the English earls, were left in possession of their offices and property; and William courted them for some time, with every appearance of regard. He even promised Edwin to bestow upon him one of his daughters in marriage; but, when the young nobleman claimed the fulfilment of this engagement, William refused to keep his word; and Edwin retired with his brother into the north, in order to prepare for taking arms against the usurper. The whole provinces north of the Humber were ready for revolt. York was eager in the Saxon cause. The Kings of Denmark and Scotland allied themselves with the insurgents, and an attack upon the Normans from the side of Wales was concerted with the prince of that country, nearly allied to Edwin and Morcar. This was the most

formidable conspiracy which William had yet met with; and the historians tell us that his good fortune did not desert him. My belief is, however, that fortune has very little to do with war. Something, indeed, must depend upon accident, but in war, as in most other things, a man's success is generally brought about by vigour, determination, judgment, and promptitude. As soon as William heard that the two Earls were in arms in the north, he put himself at the head of his forces, marched against them with the utmost rapidity, and coming upon them before they were fully prepared, left them no choice but to fight with insufficient forces, to fly the kingdom, or to throw themselves upon his mercy. They chose the latter course; and William, in order to conciliate the great body of the people, pardoned the two Earls, but very unwisely punished a great number of the inferior

Saxons. Many were imprisoned; and the city of York was forced to pay a large fine, and receive a garrison of Norman soldiers.

This treatment of their followers showed Edwin and Morcar that their own punishment was only delayed from motives of policy; and, wise betimes, they fled to the court of Malcolm, King of Scotland, who had made his peace with William, but who received them with the greatest kindness. Edgar Atheling, and other great nobles of the country, now thoroughly convinced that it was the plan of William to oppress, and not to rule, the Saxon people, followed the example of the two Earls, and the young Saxon prince reached Scotland in safety, with his sisters, Margaret and Christina. Their reception by the King of Scotland was as kind as that which he had given to Edwin and Morcar; and, captivated by the beauty and grace of the Princess Margaret,

he united himself to her by marriage, from which connexion sprang Matilda, whose descendant, Henry II., King of England, thus united the blood of the Saxon and the Norman races. It is probable that William rejoiced at the voluntary exile of so many whom he had just cause to fear; but every step which tyranny takes for its own security is accompanied by some certain danger. A number of the Saxon nobles fled to Denmark, and their representations possessed Swein, the Danish king, with a hope of conquering England. Any rule, in fact, seemed to the unfortunate Saxons preferable to that of the Norman; and the Northumbrians, who were principally of Danish extraction, longed for the presence of their kindred race to free them from the hated sway of the Conqueror. Enemies, in short, surrounded William on every side; and while the Northumbrians prepared for a

fresh revolt, and the fleets of Denmark were collecting for the meditated invasion, the sons of Harold, who had taken refuge in Ireland, landed with a force supplied to them by Dermot, king of that country, and ravaged the shores of the Bristol Channel, after slaying a saxon nobleman, who, to show his zeal for his new master, marched against the sons of his former king. A second expedition, which they made not long after, proved less fortunate, for, having landed in Devonshire, they were encountered twice in one day by a body of the Normans, and defeated on both occasions with terrible loss.

It would be endless to tell you all the conspiracies that succeeded one another, which, indeed, only served to show the increasing animosity between the Normans and the English. I must content myself, therefore, with giving you some account of the invasion of the Danes, and the rising of Northum-

berland, though all the authors I have read differ very greatly as to many of the particulars. The Northumbrians, as we have seen, were always a very turbulent race; and William, having received intimation that they were preparing to revolt, resolved to bridle them by severe measures. He accordingly sent into Northumberland one of the fiercest and most oppressive of his Norman followers. This was Robert Cummin, who took up his abode at Durham with a very considerable body of Norman cavalry, and, it would appear, began speedily to show his disposition, if not the commands he had received. The organization of Northumbrians, however, was more complete than he had believed. The Danish fleet was preparing to sail. The citizens of York were on the eve of revolt; and on the 29th of January, 1069, Cummin was surprised and slain, with more than seven hundred of

his followers. Almost at the same time York Castle was besieged by the citizens. Robert Fitz-Richard, the governor of the city, was killed in the insurrection; and the Danish fleet, of three hundred ships, appeared in the Humber, commanded by Osborn, brother of the King of Denmark. Joining the English insurgents, who had called them to their shores, the Danes immediately proceeded to assist in the siege of York Castle, which was filled with Normans, who had taken refuge there at the first outbreak of the insurrection, and who were resolutely prepared to defend themselves in hopes of relief from William. In order, however, to deprive the enemy of the cover afforded to an attacking force by the houses of the suburb, the Normans set fire to them. The flames spread to the town; and the people, enraged to fury at what they considered a mere act of barbarous vengeance,

rushed tumultuously to the attack of the castle, and carried it by assault. The whole garrison, consisting of three thousand warlike Normans, were put to the sword by the Danes and Saxons, with the exception of four persons, consisting of the governor, his wife, and two children, who were spared, notwithstanding the rage of the people. The united army of the Northumbrians and the Danes had been joined by Edgar Atheling, a noble Saxon named Cospatric, and another of the name of Woltheof; and the custody of York Castle was committed to the latter. Insurrections, at the same time, had taken place in other parts of the country; and had the nation but shown itself united at this moment, the power of the Norman Conqueror would probably have been at an end. Such, however, was not the case; and no general rising took place. The situation of William, however, was still perilous in the

extreme If he marched at once to the north, where his presence was urgently needed, he left his southern territories undefended, and open to any attempt of his enemies. If he left the Danes and Northumbrians to establish their power firmly in the north, a rallying point would be there created for all the malcontents throughout the land His proceedings were thus rendered much slower than usual, and it was not till after York had been for some time in the hands of the enemy, that William ventured to lead his troops against the Danes His wrath was not appeased at all by delay, however, and when he began his march, he swore by God's splendour, which was his common oath, that he would lay the whole of Northumberland waste, and extirpate the inhabitants Had the Danes remained true to their allies, he would have found it difficult to execute his threat, and know-

ing that such must be the case, William had recourse to other means than arms to rid himself of the most formidable of his opponents. Secret negotiations took place between the Danish commander and the Norman prince; and the unfortunate Saxons were sacrificed to the greedy avarice of the one, and the cunning of the other. Osborn received a large sum of money to retire to his native land, and the Northumbrians were *left* to contend alone with a merciless sovereign. The first act of William was directed to recover York; but the Saxons, despairing of clemency, defended the castle with the most gallant determination. Waltheof, the commander, displayed a degree of courage, determination, and skill, in resisting all William's efforts, which won even the admiration of the Conqueror; and the siege was protracted so long, that the king almost despaired of success. Famine, however, did

the work which the Norman sword could not accomplish; and the gallant Waltheof was at length forced to surrender. What terms he made we do not know; but the esteem and admiration of the king for his gallant opponent were marked by the honours and favours which he showered upon him. Not contented with pardoning his armed resistance, William loaded him with honours, and bestowed upon him the hand of his niece, Judith, which, though intended undoubtedly as the greatest boon he could bestow, proved a curse, instead of a blessing, to the unfortunate Waltheof.

Faithful to his vindictive oath, William, as soon as the spring of 1070 had fully set in, marched northward as far as the town of Hexham, wasting the whole country with fire and sword. The most frightful excesses and barbarities were committed by his troops. No age, rank, or sex was spared; and

in the space of a very few months, more than a hundred thousand persons perished, either by famine or the sword. The houses, and even the churches, were burnt to the ground, and the whole country, between York and Durham, was reduced to a wilderness, in which state it continued for more than nine years. This terrible execution over, William returned to the south, but with no feelings of love and affection for his English subjects, whom he seems henceforth to have looked upon as enemies, only to be kept down by rigour and oppression. Every Saxon was removed from the offices he held, with the exception only of Waltheof and Cospatric, the former of whom continued for some time high in the king's favour; while the latter obtained the earldom of Northumberland by supplying the king's necessities with a large sum of money. Even the higher clergy were not exempted from the

general fate of their countrymen. Legates were obtained from Rome, which had always been favourable to the Norman Conqueror; and they certainly performed his will with all due diligence and obedience. The Saxon bishops and abbots were removed to make way for Normans; and, with or without the sanction of the head of the church, many of the monasteries were stripped of the wealth they contained, upon pretences which were easily found in times so full of trouble and insurrection.

Numerous other revolts took place, but William was still successful; and, in one which occurred in the Isle of Ely, the gallant Earl Morcar was delivered up in a treacherous manner by those in whom he placed the greatest trust. Edwin, his brother, a nobleman beloved by the whole English nation, was betrayed still more vilely, by three brothers, his most intimate friends. In order, it would seem, to gain the favour

of William, these infamous traitors attacked the young earl as he was flying to Scotland, and put him to death, with twenty of his followers. Having completed the murder, they cut off their victim's head, and carried it to William, doubtless expecting great honours and rewards; but even the stern Norman was moved at the lamentable sight, and shed tears over his fallen enemy. Instead of receiving reward, the traitors were banished from the realm for ever; but the momentary impulse of generosity had no permanent effect; and the Norman showed himself no less cruel, exacting, and oppressive than before. Those whom he had power to oppress he did not fail to trample on; and those whom he feared to trample on, he strove to conciliate. None of the Saxons, however, were in the latter case; and all suffered, sooner or later, from his suspicious and vindictive character.

Malcolm, King of Scotland, had, as we have seen, shown on all occasions the greatest kindness and friendship for the unfortunate Saxon exiles. In the latter revolts, too, he had taken a more active part; and at length, issuing forth from Cumberland, he ravaged the neighbouring parts of William's dominions, with a degree of barbarity not less than the king had showed himself. To put a stop to these incursions, as soon as the various Saxon partisans in the south were subdued, William marched his army into the Scottish territory, and prepared to take vengeance upon Malcolm. The King of Scotland was not unprepared to receive him, and even advanced, it is said, with a considerable force, to give him battle. Each, however, had some reverence for his opponent's power and military capacity, and after the two armies had remained in each other's presence for several days, a treaty of peace was con-

cluded between the two monarchs, in virtue of which Malcolm did homage to William for the lands he possessed within the English pale; and William agreed to receive Edgar Atheling into favour, and allow him a pension suitable to his rank.

Upon what pretence we do not exactly know—perhaps on account of the feeble resistance he had offered to the King of Scotland—Earl Cospatric, on William's return from the north, was deprived of Northumberland, which was bestowed upon his old companion in arms, Waltheof. This act of justice or injustice performed, William, looking upon his English territories as safe, determined to visit his continental dominions, in order to suppress a revolt which had taken place amongst the people of Maine, instigated to rebellion by Fulke, Count of Anjou, who had, it would seem, some claim upon the territory. Leaving the greater part of his Nor-

mans in England, to enjoy a short period of repose, William composed the army which he now led into Normandy almost entirely of Saxons, who might be dangerous if left behind, and who, under his own eye, could be ruled with greater ease. This policy proved very successful. The Saxons, mingled with the Normans, fought with the utmost bravery on behalf of the sovereign whom they now served, and the people of Maine were soon reduced to obedience; but while thus successful on the Continent, new and unexpected dangers were arising in the country William had left behind. The Saxons, it is true, remained in subjection, but the very Normans, on whom he had relied with the most implicit confidence, whom he had loaded with favours, and pampered in their insolence, now prepared to hurl him from the throne to which they had aided to raise him. The chief conspirators were Roger, Earl of

Hereford, and Ralph, Earl of Norfolk, who had proposed an alliance between their two families, by the marriage of the latter to the sister of the former. William, probably unwilling to see two such powerful families united, refused his consent to the marriage; and, proceeding with contemptuous scorn of the King's will, the two barons completed the marriage, and invited a large party of their friends and connexions to the wedding feast. Amongst others was Waltheof, Earl of Northumberland, who had married, as I have told you, Judith, the niece of the Conqueror. This wretched woman had always abhorred her Saxon husband, who had probably been forced upon her, according to the custom of the times, by the will of her powerful uncle. Unfortunately giving way to the habits of his nation, Waltheof drank more wine than a reasonable man should do, and when all the guests were more or less intoxicated,

a conspiracy was proposed by the two Earls, for the purpose of depriving William of his crown. Abuse of every kind was showered upon him by his Norman favourites. He was called tyrannous, oppressive; and the meanness of his birth, by his mother's side, was not forgotten. It was arranged that the Danes, the Welsh, and the discontented English should all be called upon to co-operate in his overthrow; and the Normans rose from the feast to prepare for the execution of their design, while the unhappy Waltheof awoke from his drunkenness to regret and apprehension. After pondering for some time upon his luckless fate, the gallant Englishman, the bravest and noblest of his race left in the land, communicated the fact of the conspiracy to his wife, whose fidelity and affection he did not doubt, and then revealed the whole to Lanfranc, now Archbishop of Canterbury, a foreigner, it is true, but a

noble and high-minded man. Lanfranc gave him the advice which might be expected from his character. He counselled him to hasten immediately to Normandy, and, casting himself upon the mercy of the King, to reveal to him all he knew of the treasonable designs against him.

Waltheof followed the advice he had received; but his faithless wife, Judith, had been beforehand with him; and a messenger from her had already conveyed to William not only news of the conspiracy, but of her husband's share in the guilt. William received him and heard his confession with less wrath than might have been expected. It is even asserted that he promised him pardon; but he detained him near him, and at once set out to England, to strike at the leaders of the conspiracy. They had been speedily informed of Waltheof's journey to Normandy; and, concluding that he had

gone to confess his crime, they foolishly took arms before their preparations were complete. Even before William's return, their attempt had been rendered hopeless by the vigour and decision of those whom the Conqueror had left as regents. The Earl of Hereford was defeated, and taken by the Norman forces in Worcestershire; and the Earl of Norfolk, after losing a battle near Cambridge, against Odo, the King's brother, retreated into the castle of Norwich, where he was immediately besieged. Dreading the king's wrath if he fell into his hands whilst his rage was still at its height, the Earl contrived to effect his escape. His young wife, who remained in the castle, defended it for several days, and then surrendered, upon condition of being permitted to join her husband.

Shortly after these events had taken place, William himself reached England, and proceeded to crush out the last sparks of the

conspiracy. Cruelty and injustice marked the whole of his course at this time; and, indeed, each year as he grew older, his temper seemed to become more and more harsh and revengeful. Marching into the west, he caused a number of persons to be seized, of whom some were hanged, some had their eyes put out, and many had their hands cut off. An infinite number of others were banished and outlawed; the conspiracy served as a pretext for oppressing the Saxons, and the work of pillage began again amongst those of that race who still remained possessed of wealth or property. William's total want of equity was shown in his treatment of the three principal conspirators. The Earl of Hereford, with whom it originated, though not absolutely pardoned, was treated with great lenity, and only condemned to imprisonment. Ralph, Earl of Norfolk, was, for the time, out of the king's reach;

but Waltheof was near at hand, and though the least guilty, was the most severely dealt with. He was brave, generous, and noble, beloved by the whole people, and even esteemed and admired by the better sort of the Normans. On the other hand, however, he was possessed of great wealth and large estates, which the Norman courtiers, and, perhaps, the king himself, longed to seize; and he had a wife, who, desirous of marrying another, saw no means of doing so, except by procuring his death. All the influence of the courtiers and of Judith was employed to rouse the anger of William against him, and at length he was brought to trial at Winchester. He denied that he had ever joined in the conspiracy, but acknowledged that he had heard and concealed for a few days the plans of the rebels. His contrition and confession might very well have atoned for this offence; but his Norman judges, after a

good deal of hesitation, condemned him to death. Either William's knowledge of his innocence, or the promise of pardon which he is said to have made, rendered him unwilling to execute the sentence, and he kept him in prison for some months, during which time, the Norman courtiers, especially Ives de Tailbois, and Judith, the prisoner's wife, laboured by every art to procure his death. They were at length successful; and in April, 1075, the king ordered him to be beheaded. This cruel command was executed immediately, just outside the gates of Winchester, and his body was buried with every mark of indignity at the foot of the scaffold. The Normans, though they had taken his life, could not deprive him of the love and admiration of his countrymen, who looked upon him as the greatest and best as well as the last of the old Saxon nobles. The monks of Croyland obtained leave to remove his

body to their abbey; and the superstitious veneration of the Saxons soon found out that miracles were worked at the tomb of Waltheof. This greatly offended the king, and the abbot of Croyland was expelled by his orders; but Ingulphus, the historian, who was placed in his stead, though a friend and favourite of William, did not fail to perpetuate the story of the miracles, and mention them in his history.

From this moment, the Saxons were entirely and utterly depressed, and no safety was to be found by any of the race possessed of landed property, without claiming the protection, and becoming, as it were, the dependent of some powerful Norman lord.

After the death of Waltheof, only one of the chief conspirators remained to be dealt with, namely, Ralph, Earl of Norfolk, who, although the Earl of Hereford was undoubtedly the person who had first instigated the

others to rebellion, had rendered himself more criminal by his pertinacious efforts to carry out the objects of the conspiracy. He was a bold and daring young nobleman, of great power and wealth, possessing large estates in Britanny; and, having by some means established very intimate connexions with the Duke of Britanny, the King of France, and the King of Denmark, when forced to fly from the castle of Norwich, he had first visited Britanny; then proceeded, it would seem, to Denmark. His object was to obtain assistance from the king of that country, in which he was not very successful. He then returned to his own territories, where he strengthened himself in his city of Dol, a strong and important place in those days, surrounded by marshes which rendered it unapproachable, except by some narrow causeways. William was not ignorant of all these proceedings, and

as soon as he had completely crushed all tendency to revolt in England, he hurried back to the continent in order to attack the rebel earl, swearing he would not raise the siege of Dol till he had his enemy in his power. This rash oath he was unable to keep. The earl and his faithful wife set his efforts at defiance, and, well knowing that assistance was not remote, resolved to endure the last extremity before they surrendered. In the meantime, the Duke of Britanny was collecting troops to support his friend and vassal; and the King of France, jealous of William's great power, was marching with a considerable army to the assistance of the besieged. The King of England now saw himself in a very dangerous position, with a resolute adversary and a strong fortress in his front, and two powerful armies, now united, menacing his rear. Mortified and humiliated, he was forced to raise the

siege in haste, and fly rather than retreat, leaving behind him his tents and baggage, which fell into the hands of the enemy. A number of his men were also killed in the retreat; and the short campaign ended in a treaty of peace, which William gladly accepted, giving the hand of his daughter Constance to the Duke of Britanny. A short period of repose succeeded, for all external enemies were now either crushed or pacified; but the king was destined next to encounter dangers and difficulties from one of the members of his own family, whose ambition was as great as his own, but unaccompanied by his prudence and perseverance.

It would seem, that in a previous treaty with the King of France, William had promised to bestow his continental dominions upon his son Robert, without specifying, however, whether he was to receive them

before or after his father's death; Robert chose to put the former meaning upon the engagement, and frequently pressed his father to yield him up Normandy and Maine. William, however, merely replied with a jest, saying that he never stripped till he went to bed; and day by day, the young prince became more irritated, till a foolish quarrel with his two younger brothers threw him into actual rebellion. It would seem that he was of an impetuous and hasty disposition, and sometimes inclined to domineer over William and Henry, the two younger sons of the Conqueror. They retaliated in the spirit of boyish mischief, and one day, while Robert was walking with some friends in the court of the castle of L'Aigle, in Normandy, the two young princes threw a jug of water over him from one of the upper windows. Robert, who was in an irritable mood, took fire at this foolish trick, and rushed upstairs

with his drawn sword in his hand, vowing to put his brothers to death. The attendants endeavoured to stop him, and a tumult ensued, which brought the king to the spot; but even then it was with difficulty that bloodshed was prevented. Robert, still indignant, refused to be reconciled to his brothers, and secretly quitted L'Aigle that night with a number of young nobles who had attached themselves to his fortunes. He now threw off all restraint, and attempted to seize the Castle of Rouen, but was frustrated by Roger d'Ivry, the governor. Orders were immediately given by William to arrest the prince and his accomplices; but this was not so easily done; and, retiring to the little town of Neufchatel, between the rivers Seine and Somme, Robert continued to carry on a sort of desultory warfare against his father's officers in Normandy, till William took the field against him himself. Robert proved no con-

temptible enemy, for his standard was joined by a number of the young Norman nobles, and was secretly assisted by the King of France. William's skill and experience, however, prevailed; and the young prince was driven from place to place, till, finding that he should be forced to fly from Normandy, he applied to the French sovereign for some strong town in which he could take refuge. That king gave him up a place called Gerberoy, beyond the frontiers of Normandy, but thither William pursued him with an army composed entirely of Saxons. In this expedition, William had nearly lost his life by his son's hand. Robert, who was a prince of the most undaunted courage, sallied forth to attack the troops of the king as they advanced; and seeing one knight on the part of the enemy distinguishing himself by daring valour, he hastened to encounter him, unhorsed him with his lance, and

wounded him in the arm. Stretched upon the ground, his adversary raised that part of his helmet which covered the face, and Robert beheld with horror and consternation the features of his father. Struck with remorse and shame, the young prince sprang from his horse, and besought pardon on his knees. William, however, mortified and enraged, called down a bitter malediction on his son's head, and, springing on the fresh horse which Robert offered him, galloped away to have his wound dressed. It would appear that the result of the encounter was altogether unfavourable to the king, for it is certain that he was obliged to abandon the siege, and retreat in a disorderly manner.

The feelings of remorse which this event had produced, however, were permanent in the breast of Robert; and, from that moment, he earnestly sought a reconciliation with his

father, which, however, was with difficulty obtained. The intercessions of Matilda, however, and other sincere friends of the king and the prince, were at length successful; and Robert was not only received, but trusted by his father. The unnatural war between parent and child had lasted more than two years; and William's long absence from his acquired kingdom, had given an opportunity to his enemies, which they had taken some advantage of. Malcolm, King of Scotland, had broken the treaty of peace existing between the two crowns, had invaded and plundered Northumberland, had carried off immense booty, and an infinite number of prisoners, who were reduced to slavery in Scotland. On the other hand, Walcher, Bishop of Durham, who had been created Earl of Northumberland, had brutally oppressed the Saxons in the north, and countenanced two of his favourites in the mur-

der of an English Thane, named Leulph. The friends and relations of the murdered man, joining with other Northumbrians, had risen upon the bishop, and slain him at Gateshead, together with a hundred of his creatures, all Normans or Flemings. To punish the Northumbrians, and retaliate upon the King of Scotland the ravages he had committed, Robert was sent to the north with a considerable force, immediately after the king's return to England. We do not find, however, that Robert performed anything worthy of notice in this expedition, except the building of a strong castle near the spot where the bishop was murdered, to which he gave the name of New Castle, which was soon surrounded by one of the most flourishing towns in England.

Several years were now passed in comparative tranquillity, marked only by another

trait of William's ruthless disposition. His brother, Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, and Earl of Kent, had served him faithfully, and been largely rewarded. But of the same ambitious and grasping character as the king himself, he was not content with the advancement he had obtained, and had gathered together large sums of money and numerous followers, by the influence of which, he hoped to be elected pope. To carry on his schemes securely, he proposed to visit Rome, and was just about to embark from the Isle of Wight, when the king, unwilling to see so much treasure placed out of his reach, ordered his brother to be arrested, and kept him a prisoner in the Castle of Rouen for the rest of his own life. All Odo's treasures were seized; and the fruits of a long life of rapine and oppression went to a greater robber than himself.

Avarice, indeed, appeared by this time to

have become a stronger passion with William than even ambition; and the only feeling that seemed to equal the desire of gold in his mind was the love of hunting. To gratify the latter, he completely depopulated an immense tract of country in Hampshire, pulling down the houses and churches, and taking possession of all the lands, without a fair compensation to the owners. Thirty-six parish churches were thus demolished, and the whole country converted into one vast forest, which was afterwards called the New Forest, a name that it retains to the present day. Another act which he performed towards the close of his life and reign, is much more to his honour. This was the making of a general survey of the whole of England; but I must explain to you more exactly what I mean, and how it was done. William sent commissioners into every county, with orders to ascertain exactly by

information on oath, the name of each town and village in the county; how many manors the county contained; how many hides of land were in each manor; how much was arable, woodland, and meadow; how many mills and fish-ponds there were; who was the lord of every part of the country and of every village and town; and how many freemen and serfs were on each property. Besides all this, the commissioners were required to report the names of those who had held the estates in the reign of Edward the Confessor, what amount of taxes they had then paid, and what was actually paid at the time of the survey. This examination was, upon the whole, very accurately made; and the whole information was written down, forming what is called the Doomsday-book, which is still preserved.

In 1083, William lost his wife, Matilda, who gained the reputation of a saint, and

even our best writers praise her highly. Yet I cannot help thinking that she committed a great fault during the wars between her husband and her son. It cannot, perhaps, be said, that she encouraged Robert in resistance to his father; but she certainly supplied him with money to carry on the war. William, however, regretted her deeply, and seemed, after her death, to take no pleasure in any of his former amusements.

The rest of William's life was busy and troublous. The first cause of alarm which affected the king, was the immense preparation of Canute, King of Denmark, who, in league with the Count of Flanders, prepared to invade England with the largest fleet which had ever yet taken the sea. To meet this danger, William called over immense numbers of Normans, and also bands of adventurers from other parts of Europe, whom he suffered to live at free quarters for many

months upon the sea-coast of England, plundering and oppressing the people in a very barbarous and cruel manner. To pay them, he inflicted a severe tax upon the English, who were already reduced to the lowest state of poverty by his exactions. Mighty preparations, indeed, often end in nothing; and William was soon delivered from his fear of Canute, whose fleet was so long detained in port by contrary winds, that quarrels broke out amongst his chief officers, which compelled him to abandon his intention, and dismiss his army.

Peace at this time existed between William and the King of France; but the Norman had not forgotten the neighbouring monarch's conduct towards his son, Robert; and the French sovereign lost no opportunity of stirring up troubles in Normandy. William determined to have revenge; and as soon as all danger of invasion was passed,

he called the nobles and prelates of the kingdom together, forced a large sum of money from them, and sailed for Normandy, whence he was never to return. His first proceedings were to suppress some turbulent nobles, who had disturbed the peace of the duchy; and then, it would appear, he was making preparations for attacking France, when he fell sick at Rouen. William had by this time become exceedingly fat, and a coarse joke of the King of France upon his large stomach being reported to him, irritated him almost to frenzy. He vowed that, as soon as he was well, he would light up a thousand bonfires in France in honour of his recovery; and he accordingly marched the moment he could leave his bed, to execute his threat. It was now harvest time and very hot; and William advanced up the river Seine, ravaging and desolating the whole country as

he passed. The town of Mantes made some resistance, but was speedily taken; and to fulfil his word to the letter, he ordered it to be burnt, without giving all the people time to escape. He himself stood near to see the barbarous command executed; but violent passions indulged, almost always bring their own punishment. He was not in a good state of health. The violent heat of the burning houses, and the excitement, brought on fever; and he felt himself obliged to return to Rouen. On the way, his illness was increased by a severe bruise which he received from the starting of his horse; and his farther journey was made in a litter, that is to say, a sort of bed, either carried on men's shoulders, or slung between two horses. Becoming worse and worse, he soon found death approaching; but he bore the prospect with the utmost calmness and fortitude, conversed with his nobles, on the

emptiness of human greatness, and made his will, by which he left his continental dominions to his eldest son, Robert; the throne of England to his second son, William; and a large sum of money to his youngest son Henry. A fourth son, named Richard, died during his father's life, from an accident he met with in hunting. Some remorse seems to have touched the king in his last moments; for, besides ordering large sums of money to be given to the clergy, which men in those days thought could wipe away sins, he directed all the state prisoners to be set at liberty, which was an act of penitence doubtless more pleasing to the Almighty. All this being done, he died at the abbey of St. Gervais, near Rouen, on the 9th of September. He was an ambitious, avaricious, cruel, and remorseless prince—a brave, skilful, and successful soldier—a cunning, clear-sighted, and provident politician

—a chaste, sober, and abstemious man. His person I have already described to you; and I will only add, to show you his great strength, that practised as all the Normans were in archery, no one could draw William's bow but himself.

By his wife, Matilda, William had four sons and five daughters. One son, as I have told you, died young; one daughter went into a convent; another, named Alice, died in youth; Agatha was betrothed to Alphonso, King of Spain, but died on her way to that country; Constance was married to the Duke of Britanny; and Adela was married to Stephen, Count of Blois. A sixth daughter is mentioned by some authors under the name of Gundreda, and is said to have been married to the Earl of Surrey, and to have died in childbirth shortly after; but little is known of her existence, nor is it certain that there ever was such a person. Thus William left

at his death three sons, Robert, William, and Henry, of each of whom I shall have to tell you more; two daughters married, the Duchess of Britanny and the Countess of Blois, and one shut up in a nunnery.

Some curious events followed the death of William, which I must mention, as they show far more than all the king's discourses on his deathbed, the vanity of earthly greatness. William had but one son with him at his death; for the eldest, who had again quarrelled with his father, was absent, some say in France, some say in Germany; and the second he had sent over to England as soon as he found himself dying. He was surrounded by the nobles on whom he had conferred wealth and honours, who had been his companions in war, and his counsellors in peace, many of whom he had raised from a very low estate to the highest prosperity, and for whom he had plundered and op-

pressed a conquered people. Benefits conferred upon the unworthy, however, never produce affection or gratitude; and hardly was the breath out of the body of William, when almost all his nobles abandoned the corpse, treating the memory of a monarch who had done so much for them with scorn and neglect. The funeral was conducted by his son, Henry; but the body was attended to Caen, where he had directed it to be buried, by very few persons. William had built the church himself, and the grave had been opened without opposition; but, just at the moment that the corpse was about to be lowered into the tomb, a Norman nobleman, of the name of FitzArthur, stood forth, and forbade the burial of the king in that ground. This extraordinary proceeding he justified by showing that the land was his, and that William had taken it for the purpose of erecting a church without paying

anything for it. All the Norman lords present were interested in the maintenance of FitzArthur's right; and the funeral was accordingly stopped for the time. Prince Henry, however, after some investigation, agreed to pay sixty shillings for the right of burying his father's body there, with a promise that the land on which the church stood should be subsequently paid for. The funeral then proceeded; and the grave closed over the Conqueror.

WILLIAM RUFUS.

From the death-bed of his father, William the Second, son of the Norman Conqueror, was sent over to England, in order to forestall any efforts of his brother Robert, and seize the crown of England, according to

his father's will. He was a strong and powerful man, with fiery red hair, which obtained for him the name of Rufus, or the red, and a very fierce and forbidding expression of countenance. With all the ambition, rapacity, and cruelty of his father, he was greatly inferior to him in talents and good sense, and had a great many vices which William I. had not. On his arrival in England, his position was a very dangerous one. The English hated him for his Norman race, and for the general character he had acquired of cruelty, treachery, and violence. The Normans, who knew his character still better, were not at all disposed to look upon him with a more favourable eye, and it was, therefore, not at all improbable that great opposition would be made to his recognition as king of England. All this, however, had been foreseen both by the young prince and his father; and William Rufus came fur-

nished with a letter from his father to Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, a prelate beloved by all parties in the land. Immediate measures were taken to gain both the Saxon populace and the Norman nobles; and Lanfranc exerted himself with the greatest earnestness to see the will of his late sovereign carried into execution. William Rufus, on his part, had recourse to dissimulation, and contrived to persuade the great mass of the Saxons that it was his intention to rule in a very different spirit from his father. At the same time, the influence of the Archbishop was exerted upon the Norman nobility with so much success, that a great many of the principal leaders were brought over to the party of the young king. Knowing well that wealth and power were, in those times, at least much more important than right, William's first task was to seize his father's treasures at Winchester, and his

next to obtain possession of all the strong places on the coast, where it was probable that his brother Robert might attempt a landing. These precautions probably decided the conduct of the nobles and prelates; and, eighteen days after his father's death, he was crowned King of England, at Westminster, in the presence of the archbishops, eight bishops, and a great number of the nobility. In Winchester he found an immense mass of treasure; the gold and silver plate and jewels being, we are told, much more considerable in value than the money, and the money amounting to a sum, equal in what it would purchase, to nine hundred thousand pounds of our coin. A portion of this large sum was distributed, according to his father's will, to churches, monasteries, and the poor; and for a short time William Rufus courted popularity, and seemed disposed to conciliate the affections of his

There was much need of so doing, indeed, for there were many good reasons why the Normans of England should be discontented with the separation of England and Normandy, as most of them possessed estates in both countries, and it was not likely that they should long be suffered to keep their property on the two sides of the Channel. Thus the reign of the new king was soon marked by a conspiracy against him. The leaders of this enterprise were his uncle, Odo, bishop of Bayeux; Robert, Count of Montague, another uncle; Eustus, Count of Boulogne; and Robert of Belesme. Odo, who had a personal enmity towards Lanfranc, however, was the great mover of the whole. He had been set at liberty immediately after William's death, and, returning to England, recovered his county of Kent. His wealth, indeed, was gone; but he still possessed much influence, which he now ex-

erted in the most eager manner to overthrow one nephew and place the other on the throne. A great number of the Norman nobles were speedily gained over to the cause; and a formidable insurrection was prepared in favour of Robert, which probably would have proved successful, had that prince possessed activity and skill equal to his courage and daring. All the plans of the conspirators were kept very secret for some time, though the Bishop of Bayeux lost no opportunity of gaining adherents for Robert, and painting William in the blackest colours. At length, however, Robert's consent having been obtained, with a promise that he would invade England, his partisans immediately threw off the mask, and gained possession of a great many strong places in the kingdom, where they laid in stores, and fortified themselves to resist the royal authority. Robert, however, was indolent by disposition, and

habitually a spendthrift. He had no money to pay a large army, and though by the sale of the district of Cotentin to his brother Henry he had obtained the sum of three thousand pounds, that was not sufficient to carry on a war. His courage probably would have induced him to join his friends in England even with a very few followers, but his natural indolence made him delay till it was too late.

In the meantime, the object of the conspirators having become apparent, William and Lanfranc exerted themselves vigorously and actively to frustrate their designs. The prelate, who, though a foreigner, had rendered himself highly popular in England, used all his eloquence and all his influence to win the Saxons to the cause of William, and so successfully did he exert himself, that the young king was soon at the head of an army of thirty thousand men, in which

Normans and English were blended together. Several of the conspirators also were induced by the exhortations of Lanfranc to abandon the enterprise in which they had engaged; and their defection diminished the hopes and shook the firmness of the party. A fleet was fitted out to encounter Robert, if he should attempt to cross the sea; and with a degree of celerity which resembled the activity of his father, William applied himself to reduce the conspirators one by one, before they had time to unite and co-operate. The first person attacked was the Bishop of Bayeux, against whom, as the soul of the party, the young king marched at once. Tunbridge, Pevensey, and Rochester were in the hands of the prelate, the latter having been well fortified, garrisoned, and provisioned by the Count of Boulogne. Odo himself was in Pevensey, where, not expecting to be attacked so

speedily, he had made very little preparation for defence. Thus, when furiously assailed by his nephew, the town made very slight resistance, and he himself was taken with a great number of his followers. Threatened with a renewal of the imprisonment from which he had so lately escaped, the bishop agreed with his nephew to obtain the surrender of Rochester Castle, on condition that he should be set at liberty. He was consequently brought to the gates of the fortress, in order to negotiate, as he pretended, with the Count of Boulogne, for the surrender of the place; but the cunning prelate, while affecting to urge submission, contrived to give the count, while he was speaking with him, a hint of what to do; and consequently, instead of surrendering the castle, the Normans, with whom it was filled, seized upon the bishop and affected to make him a prisoner. The gates were

then shut against William, and a siege of six weeks succeeded, during which the army of the king made so little progress as to afford but small prospect of ultimate success. An infectious disease, however, broke out amongst the garrison, and when least expected, negotiations were opened for a surrender. Many of the principal Norman nobles who had joined the conspiracy were at this time in Rochester, and considerable difficulty was made in regard to the terms to be granted. Afraid, however, of driving them to despair, William at length consented to suffer them to depart for Normandy, contenting himself with the confiscation of their English estates.

Robert, in the meantime, would seem to have made but small efforts to assist his friends in England; and an insignificant fleet which he sent over to their support, with a few troops, was encountered by

the superior naval force of William, and totally defeated. In order to gain the Saxons to his cause at the moment of peril, William had been liberal of promises. He bound himself to revive the ancient laws of the land, to mitigate the severe forest laws which had been enacted by his father, and even, it is said, to restore some of the estates of which the Saxons had been unjustly deprived; but, as soon as the conspiracy was crushed, and he found himself firmly seated on the throne, his engagements were forgotten, and the people treated with greater severity than ever.

I have said that William Rufus was as rapacious as his father; but he was not as careful of his money when he had obtained it. On the contrary, he was profuse and extravagant to the highest excess, squandering the sums he had extorted from the people upon favourites of the most unworthy

character, and lavishing upon dress, feasting, and revelry, nearly as much as his father consumed in his wars. This was one cause of the constant oppression of his subjects, especially those of Saxon race; and they very often had bitter cause to regret that they had listened to the counsels of Lanfranc, and supported such a prince upon the throne. The good archbishop, however, was bitterly grieved at the conduct of the king, and ventured mildly to remonstrate on the breach of all his promises. William replied in an angry and contemptuous tone, and never after regarded Lanfranc with any favour. The prelate had not long, however, to endure his wrath for death soon after removed him from scenes which it would have been terribly painful for him to witness.

At every principle of truth, justice, and even religion, William Rufus scoffed openly; and one of his first acts, after suppressing

the insurrection in England, was to propose to his nobles the invasion of Normandy. Now Robert might have some pretensions to the throne of England; but William could put forth no claim whatever to the coronet of Normandy. His father's will had assigned it to Robert; and, indeed, by this time, the law of primogeniture, as it is called, by which the eldest son succeeds to the territories of his father, was fully established in Normandy. No consideration of right, however, had the least effect upon William Rufus; and after having prepared the way, by tampering with several of Robert's principal nobles and officers, he invaded his brother's territories with a considerable force. The moment he chose was one very favourable to his design, for the people of Maine, a province which formed part of Robert's dominions, had just broken into open revolt; and immediately

after the landing of the King of England, St. Valeri, Aumale, and several other towns, were placed in his hands by their faithless governors. Robert, it would seem, was taken quite unprepared; and his only resource was to apply to Philip, King of France, for assistance. Philip immediately took the field in his defence, and marched with an army to support him; but William took the surest means of overcoming the King of France's opposition, and, by offering him a large bribe to withdraw, deprived Robert of his assistance. Thus left destitute of foreign aid, Robert's sole resource was his brother Henry; and although the Duke had not behaved well to his younger brother in regard to Cotentin, which he had seized unjustly, the young prince came to his assistance, and by one bold act saved the capital of Normandy, and paved the way for a treaty of peace. William's intrigues with

the Norman nobles had extended even to Rouen itself. A conspiracy was formed amongst the citizens, headed by a nobleman, named Couan, who agreed to deliver the town into the hands of William; but the secret was not so well kept as to remain concealed from Henry, who suddenly entering the town when least expected, caught Couan upon one of the towers, and hurled him headlong to the bottom without form of trial. The loss of their chief completely disconcerted the other conspirators; and the barons on both sides interfering, a treaty was concluded between Robert and William, in which the interests of Henry were totally overlooked. It was agreed that the King should keep all that part of Normandy of which he had obtained possession, in return for which fatal concession he agreed to restore Robert's friends to the estates in England of which they had been deprived, and

to assist the Duke in suppressing the revolt of Maine. In the same treaty, however, it was stipulated, that if either of the two should die without children, the other should succeed to all his dominions.

Henry, indignant at the injustice with which he was treated, and finding that Robert had no intention of putting him in possession of Cotentin, suddenly seized upon the strong fortress of Mont St. Michel, and strengthened himself therein against his brother; but Robert called William to his aid with the ingratitude which is always found in a weak and selfish character. William did not refuse the assistance sought, and hurried in person to assist in oppressing his youngest brother; but the King of England had well nigh lost his life by a singular adventure, which happened to him in the course of the siege of St. Michel. When the place had been invested several days,

William Rufus rode out unattended to some distance from the camp, when he observed two men, or as some say more, riding from the town, as if to reconnoitre the besieging army. Confident in his strength, and skill, and knightly armour, and seeing that these were two of Henry's common soldiers, the king charged them, with the intention of making one of them a prisoner, in order to obtain intelligence of the state of Mont St. Michel. The man towards whom he rode was not at all disposed to suffer himself to be attacked with impunity by a single adversary, and, couching his spear, he met the king in full course. The lance of the trooper entering the chest of William's horse, killed it on the spot, and hurled the king to the ground with his foot caught in the stirrup. The victorious soldier at once leapt out of the saddle, and was about to dispatch his fallen enemy with his dagger, when William

to save his life, exclaimed, "Hold, hold, I am the King of England!" Had the men done their duty, they would have carried William as a prisoner into Mont St. Michel; but either from hope of reward, or from the surprise and confusion of the moment, they assisted the king to rise; and the man who had overthrown him, mounted him on his own horse. Pleased equally with his valour and his submission, William invited his late adversary to accompany him to the camp, saying, "Thou shalt be my soldier for the future!"

The position of Mont St. Michel, surrounded by the sea on all sides but one, where it is joined to the land by a narrow causeway, over which the sea flows twice every day, rendered it necessary to carry on the siege by blockade, that is to say, by cutting off all provisions. A want of water soon began to be felt in the fortress; but Henry, know-

ing the character of his brother Robert, sent to beg a supply, saying, it would be more glorious for his adversaries to subdue him by arms than thirst. Robert immediately sent him a tun of wine, and gave him permission to send out each day to obtain as much water as he wanted. William was very angry with this concession, and withdrew with his troops, leaving Robert to carry on the siege alone. The blockade, however, had been made secure; and, after suffering terribly from a want of provisions, Henry was obliged to surrender, upon condition of being permitted to depart in peace with his friends. He afterwards wandered about for some time, abandoned by all but his chaplain and a few faithful attendants, living the life of a private person. In the meantime, William Rufus had returned to England, where his presence was much needed, for the King of Scotland had made a plundering incursion into the Nor-

man territories, and swept the northern part of the land of a great quantity of valuable property. To revenge this insult, William gathered together an army and a fleet, and, engaging his brother Robert to join him, invaded Scotland; but his army suffering greatly on the march, and a number of his ships being lost, he was glad to accept of a treaty of peace, not very favourable to himself. Returning into England, William was taken ill in the neighbourhood of Gloucester, and showed great terror at the approach of death. He pretended to repent, and made infinite promises of amendment; but as fear is not true repentance, no sooner was he out of danger than he returned to all the same practices which had already disgraced his reign and life. His oppressive exactions were as great as ever, his licentious conduct unchecked, and his violence and cruelty intolerable. His government was frequently

troubled by the incursions of the Scots, in one of which, their king, Malcolm, was killed, and also by irruptions of the Welsh, an account of which would not interest you much. But William's greediness and ambition added to his own troubles, and greatly favoured his Welsh and Scottish enemies, by withdrawing him frequently from his kingdom, in order to encroach upon his brother's territories in Normandy. On one occasion, while pursuing his wicked schemes against Robert, a number of Norman nobles, headed by Robert de Mowbray, Earl of Northumberland, one of the bravest and most skilful of the Norman warriors, entered into a conspiracy against the king, which soon appeared so formidable, that William was obliged to march against them in person. He was, as usual, successful; and all the conspirators fell into his power. Little mercy was shown to them; and William was again about to invade

Normandy, when an event occurred, which placed that duchy in his possession without the trouble of fighting for it.

At this time, the first crusade took place; but I must explain to you what that means. The city of Jerusalem had a great many years ago been taken by the Mahometans, or followers of Mahomet, a false prophet who rose up in the East. The Christians had been taught to look upon it as a duty to make pilgrimages to the spot, where our Saviour had suffered; and they continued to go in great numbers to Jerusalem long after the Mahometans had taken that city. They were subjected to great exactions and cruelties, however, and just about this time the pope was induced by one of these pilgrims to persuade the princes and noblemen of Europe, by every means in his power, to raise a large army and march towards Jerusalem, in order to retake it from the infidels. The

preaching of the pope himself and the clergy had so great an effect upon the people, that they became quite wild with the desire of reconquering Jerusalem; and every person who pledged himself to join in the expedition, sewed a cross upon his garments, from which sign they were called Crusaders, and the enterprise a Crusade. Amongst those who were the most zealous in the cause was Robert, Duke of Normandy; but having no money to fit out himself and followers for the expedition, and being unwilling to exact the amount from his vassals and subjects, he offered to pledge the Duchy of Normandy to his brother William, for a sufficient sum to enable him to execute his purpose. William gladly availed himself of the offer, and having none of the scruples of Robert in regard to oppressing his subjects, he forced the nobles and ecclesiastics to raise the money, and thus got possession of Normandy

without the slightest intention of ever giving it up to his brother again, even if the sum he lent should be paid. But with ambition, as with avarice, the more a man gets, the more he desires; and William had no sooner obtained a hold upon Normandy, than he strove to get possession of part of France also, which caused a war between him and the king of that country. He also carried on continual wars with the Welsh, and sent an army into Scotland; but his principal attention was directed to Normandy; and after spending some time in England, he was again called over to the continent by intelligence that Heli, Lord of la Fléche, had risen in Maine, had taken the town of Le Mans, and was besieging the citadel. William was hunting in the New Forest when this news was brought him, and instantly turning his horse's head, he rode towards the sea-shore, telling all his attendants to follow

him. Without losing a moment, he embarked for Normandy in the midst of a tempest, which so much alarmed the master of the vessel, that he remonstrated with the king upon the rashness of putting to sea in such weather. William, however, ordered him instantly to set sail, saying, with a scoff, "Didst thou ever hear of a king that was drowned?" His determined conduct, and the rapidity of his movements, were followed by success. He landed safely in Normandy, surprised the troops of Heli de la Fléche, relieved the citadel of Le Mans, and took the insurgent leader prisoner. What followed is differently related by different historians, as, indeed, is part of what I have just told you. The generally received story, however, is, that William set Heli de la Fléche at liberty, which so much touched that nobleman, that he offered to serve him with all his power. The king rejected his offers

rudely; and the other, furious at the insulting manner of the conqueror, retired, threatening revenge. William, instead of ordering his apprehension at once, called after him to do his worst; and Heli immediately on arriving in Normady levied troops, and recommenced the war. William followed him with great speed, desolated his territories, and forced him to take refuge in a strong castle on the borders of Touraine. Some writers, however, say that Heli de la Fléche was made prisoner upon another occasion, and that the taking of Le Mans occurred after his liberation. However that may be, William returned to England, and was carrying on a negotiation with the Duke of Guyenne, who was about to join the Crusaders, for the purpose of obtaining his Duchy in the same manner as he had obtained that of Normandy; but while the money required was being prepared, William proceeded to hunt in the New Forest with

several of his most intimate friends and companions. Amongst these was a gentleman named Walter Tyrrel, a Frenchman by birth, and one greatly renowned for his strength, courage, and skill in arms. While dining at Charingham before going out to hunt in the evening, William is said to have ordered a sheaf of arrows to be brought him, and picking out six of them with his own hand, gave them to Tyrrel, saying, "You are a good marksman, and will know how to use them."

They then proceeded to the chase, which lasted till the evening, when the king, having wounded a stag, was following it eagerly, shading his eyes with his hand, the sun being low. At that moment, however, he received an arrow in his breast, and fell dead without speaking a word. It is generally believed that his death was accidental, and that the arrow came from the hand of Walter Tyrrel.

Some people say it glanced from the bough of a tree; others, that the French knight was shooting at the same or another stag, and by chance hit the king; but many persons have believed that the arrow was shot at William intentionally; and it is certain that nobody showed any regret. Tyrrel was suffered to ride away quietly, and escape to France, though William was surrounded by a number of attendants.

Few mourned, and many rejoiced, at the death of one whose life had proved even more oppressive than that of his father. That William possessed great military talent, there can be no doubt. That he was active, vigilant, resolute, and brave is shown by the history of his whole reign; and that he possessed some of the qualities displayed by William the Conqueror in his political career, we may also infer from many of his actions; but that he was a more skilful general, or as

shrewd a politician, there is no reason to suppose. If he was inferior to his father in talents, he carried all the vices of William I. to excess, and added a great number of others which did not disgrace the Conqueror. He was, according to all accounts, licentious, luxurious, given to feasting and revelry, extravagant in all his expenses, and fond of encouraging in others the same vices which stained his own character. That he was faithless, treacherous, cruel, and ambitious, all his actions show; and it is not difficult to believe the statements of the clergy, although they were professedly his enemies, when they assert that he was totally destitute of religious as well as all other principles. They assure us, that except during a paroxysm of sickness, he openly scoffed at all religion, seeming even inclined to deny the existence of a God; nor is this at all incon-

sistent with his actions, nor with the bold, self-sufficient, and yet frivolous character of his mind. In dress, he was one of the most extravagant princes that ever sat upon the throne of England, bestowing great care upon his apparel, and rendering the garb of his court not only splendid, but even effeminate. Scenes of the most disgusting profligacy are said to have taken place during his reign, and in many of these the king mingled himself.

The luxury of his court and reckless profusion required constant supplies of money, as well as his continual wars; and William scrupled not at any means by which these supplies could be obtained. He had a passion for building, also, in the gratification of which he expended large sums of money; but this would have been a very harmless indulgence, had it not been that the times he chose for executing large works, at the public

expense, were those of a general scarcity, and when his people were sorely embarrassed with the most oppressive taxation ever yet known in England. One very useful work he undertook, which did him much honour—namely, the rebuilding of London Bridge, after it had been carried away by a flood. The building of Westminster Hall is also to be attributed to William Rufus; and its immense size and beautiful structure excited the admiration of all who beheld it. It would seem, however, that the king had designed that the building should be much more extensive, for, when he beheld it nearly completed, on his return from Normandy, he expressed his disappointment, by saying that the hall was but a bed-chamber in comparison with what he had intended. He made several considerable additions to the Tower of London also, and raised strong castles in many parts of his dominions. The general opinion of his own time

was, that he undertook the erection of these buildings for the purpose of raising money, demanding more than was needful for the object he had in view; but when you come to read these old books for yourselves, as you will most likely do some day, it will be necessary for you to remark, that all the histories of these times were written by monks and priests, and that whenever anybody offended or injured them, they never ceased to attribute to him every possible bad quality. That William had offended the priesthood very greatly, and treated them with wrong and injustice, seeking solely to gratify his covetousness, there can be no doubt; for we find he held in his hands, and applied to his own uses, at the time of his death, the revenues of one archbishopric, two bishopries, twelve rich abbeys, and a number of other benefices. In the reign of William Rufus, England was visited by several great calami-

ties. The city of London was nearly totally destroyed by fire. In 1098, a terrible scarcity affected the land, which lasted for some months, and many persons died of hunger. Terrible gales of wind took place, one of which blew down more than six hundred houses, and several churches; and the sea, rising enormously in the British Channel, inundated an immense extent of country on the coast of Kent, drowning a multitude of people, and many herds of cattle. It is said that, at this time, a large tract of land, formerly belonging to Earl Godwin, either an island or a peninsula, was covered by the sea, and never again regained. To this is attributed the existence of the famous Goodwin Sands, so dangerous to mariners, but beyond the mere name which is attached to those shoals, time out of mind, there is no certainty as to where the Kentish estates of Earl Godwin lay. The monks and priests

did not fail to attribute these extraordinary events to the anger of Heaven at the vices of William and the wickedness of the Norman courtiers; and it must be admitted that if the accounts we have received are correct, the Normans had greatly degenerated since the Conquest, and had become womanly in manners and appearance, dissolute and voluptuous in their habits, and unworthy to hold the territory which had been acquired by the valour of their ancestors.

The death of William Rufus would have seemed to open to the Saxons the last opportunity that was ever likely to occur of asserting their national independence, and shaking off the Norman yoke. The conquering people had been enfeebled by luxury, were likely to be divided amongst themselves in regard to the succession to the crown, and being taken totally unprepared by the death of the king, while his brother Robert was

absent with the forces of the Crusade, might have been easily overpowered by a united nation, had the Saxons not been deprived of all courage and hope by the long oppression under which they had groaned. More than thirty years of the iron rule of the Conqueror and his son, conspiracies suppressed, their bravest nobles exiled, imprisoned, and slain; and the possessions of the wealthiest amongst them confiscated to the use of their oppressors, had so completely depressed the courage of the once resolute and unconquerable Saxons, that they do not seem even to have dreamed of rising against their tyrants, and placing a prince of their own upon the vacant throne. This was the more extraordinary, as Edgar Atheling had shown in his latter years a degree of courage, conduct, and resolution which he had never displayed in his youth, and proved that the blood royal of the Saxon kings still had vigour sufficient

to conduct a people to conquest. Only three years before, as the General of William Rufus, he had led an army into Scotland, defeated the forces gathered together to oppose him, and placed his nephew Edgar upon the throne of his ancestors. Nevertheless, the Saxons seem not to have shown the slightest symptom of rising, nor any intention to conspire against the power of the Normans, so that the crown of England was left entirely at the disposal of the latter.

Between the two surviving sons of William the Conqueror the choice was in some degree difficult. There was no fixed rule, indeed, for the succession to the throne; but the common custom of countries in which what is called the feudal system prevailed, gave the right of inheritance to the eldest son of a dead person, or to the heir-male of that eldest son. Had this rule been followed, Robert had an indisputable claim. His

treaty, too, with William Rufus, by which the survivor was to succeed the other in his dominions, confirmed this right, and four and twenty barons of England and Normandy had sworn to maintain it.

But, on the other hand, while Robert was afar, no one knew where, Henry was upon the spot. Without being less brave than either of his brothers, long adversity had given him experience, prudence, and determination. He was quick, active, and persevering also; careful of concealing his thoughts and purposes, and more learned than most European princes at that time.

Henry was hunting in another part of the New Forest at the moment when his brother William was slain; and no sooner did the news reach him, than without waiting to see any honours paid to the corpse of William Rufus, which was carried to Winchester in a cart, he put spurs to his horse, and gal-

loped to that city, where the treasures of the kingdom were usually kept, and amongst them the crown and sceptre. Immediately on arriving in Winchester, Henry hastened to the treasury, and demanded the keys from the under-keepers; but almost at the same moment, William de Breteuil, the chief keeper of the treasure, presented himself, having ridden from the New Forest nearly as fast as Henry. He instantly interposed, declaring that the treasure belonged of right to Robert of Normandy; that he and a number of other nobles had guaranteed the succession on the death of William, and that he would not suffer the keys to be given up on any account till that prince's arrival. Henry, with a bold prudence, knowing well that the possession of the treasure was absolutely necessary to the success of his attempt upon the throne, drew his sword, swearing he would put to death any one

who opposed him. As William de Breteuil was as resolute, it is probable that blows would have been struck, but every moment there was some fresh arrival at the door of the treasury, either of nobles hurrying in from the New Forest, or of the townspeople of Winchester. The majority of the nobles were probably disposed to support the claims of Robert, not alone from a sense of justice, but from a knowledge of his easy and good-tempered character, which would prove no check to their turbulence, their rapacity, or their licentiousness. The lower orders of people, however, were in favour of Henry, and while the barons, after having interposed to prevent bloodshed, retired into a room in the building to consider what was to be done, the multitude beneath the windows overawed their consultations by vociferating the name of Henry. To resist the will of the people thus expressed might

have been dangerous to the opponents of Henry; several of those who were present at the little council supported his interests warmly; and, in the end, it was determined to give him possession of the late king's treasure, and place him on the throne. No sooner had the prince received the means of gaining support, than he hastened to London to make the best use of his time; and so liberal was he of the wealth he had acquired, and of promises to all parties, that three days after his brother's death, he was crowned at Westminster by the Bishop of London without any opposition. Henry was too wise and provident, however, to be lulled into security by a temporary calm; and feeling sure that some efforts would be made to unseat him by Robert himself, or the barons of his party, he applied himself diligently to gain the affections of all classes, and to secure a powerful party for the time

of need. We do not know well the exact order of the steps he took, but one of the first, by the advice of his council, was to seize his brother's favourite, the chief justiciary, Ralph Flambard, Bishop of Durham, a man of low birth and abandoned character, who was detested by the whole people of the country for the oppressions and exactions which he had exercised under William. Henry farther purified the court by banishing from it a number of William's dissolute associates, who principally took refuge in Normandy, whither Flambard also contrived to escape. To gain the affection of his Anglo-Saxon subjects, on whom it would seem he principally relied, the king married Matilda, daughter of Malcolm, late King of Scotland, by the sister of Edgar Atheling. At the same time he ordered all prisoners of state to be set free, and remitted arrears of money due to the crown. He also abolished

the Curfew, a law by which all the people of the country were forced to extinguish their fires at a certain hour; and having most wisely and judiciously freed his barons from some of the most oppressive claims of the crown, the nature of which you would not very well understand without long explanations, he solemnly confirmed the laws of Edward the Confessor, an act which, we are assured, was as agreeable to the Normans as to the English. At the same time he recalled from exile Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was universally beloved, by both clergy and people.

These prudent steps, by which you may judge of many others which he took in the same direction, gained Henry great popularity with the clergy, with the Saxon race, and with the inferior Norman barons; but nevertheless, there was a strong party arrayed against him, both in England and

in Normandy. That he dealt unjustly with his brother Robert, as Robert on former occasions had dealt unjustly by him, there can be no doubt; and his want of a fair and reasonable title to the crown was of course the cause of difficulties and dangers. Many of the greatest and most powerful Norman nobles had sworn to see executed the treaty between William Rufus and Robert, by which it had been agreed that the survivor was to succeed to the dominions of the other; and they generally adhered to their oath, and were inclined to maintain the cause of Robert. A number of other barons, who had not sworn, were either convinced of the justice of Robert's title to the crown, or desirous of living under a mild and indolent prince, whose authority would be very little felt. This made up a formidable party in England; and then, again, in Normandy, were all the banished favourites

of William Rufus, with the bold and infamous Ralph Flambard at their head, and a great number of the nobles of that duchy, who remembered with pleasure the easy government of Robert, and feared the more vigorous rule of Henry.

Hardly had the third son of the Conqueror seized upon the crown of England a month, when Robert unexpectedly appeared in Normandy, after having greatly distinguished himself in arms at the battle of Doryleum, in Asia Minor. He was instantly surrounded, not only by the friends of William Rufus, but by the principal nobles of the Duchy, who, with one voice, urged him to invade England, and cast Henry from the throne. An invitation to the same effect, from six of the principal barons of England, followed very speedily; and, thus encouraged, Robert spent the winter in preparations for recovering his birthright, and

landed at Portsmouth in the middle of 1101.

In the meantime, Henry had not been inactive. He had raised forces. He had studiously conciliated the people, and he had fitted out a fleet to protect his coast. Anselm had exerted himself to the utmost; and finding that many of the English doubted Henry's promises and feared they would be no better kept than those of William Rufus, the archbishop became the surety that they should be punctually performed, and menaced the wavering with the thunders of the Church, if they abandoned the party which they had at first espoused. No sooner was Robert ready to take the field, however, than a number of Henry's adherents abandoned him. The greater part of his fleet went over to his opponent; and by the time that his elder brother put to sea, the king's army was reduced to the Anglo-Saxon levies, with a very

thin sprinkling of the Norman nobility. Anslem's exertions kept the English firm, however, and increased their number, so that when Robert landed at Portsmouth, and had been joined by all his adherents in England, the forces of the two brothers were very nearly equal. Henry, from false information of Robert's course, had advanced to Pevensey to meet him on the shore; but as soon as he heard of his landing, he proceeded by rapid marches to Portsmouth, and there the two armies remained in presence for several days without striking a blow. The forces, as I have told you, were very nearly equal; but Henry could not help recollecting the result of the battle of Hastings, and doubting the issue of a battle where the Saxons, after so long a depression, were pitted against the Normans. Robert, on the other hand, having been promised by his adherents a much more general demonstration in his favour

...n had really taken place, was somewhat ...aken in his confidence. ... nobles on both parts shar... in the doubt of their ...aders; and a negotiation was commenced, which ended in a treaty of peace. Robert, in consideration of his brother having been actually crowned, and of his having been born upon the English soil, resigned his claim to the throne of England; and Henry, on his part, agreed to withdraw all his garrisons from Normandy, and grant his brother a pension of three thousand marks. The dissensions which their rival claims had occasioned were to be forgotten; and the barons on both sides were to be restored to all their honours and possessions, while, at the same time, it was agreed that if either of the princes died without children, the other was to succeed to his dominions.

Robert's easy good humour was remarkably shown on this occasion. Both armies

were immediately dismissed on the conclusion of the treaty; but the Duke of Normandy seemed to forget all resentment, and passed a couple of months at his brother's court in festivity and amusement, as if there had never been the slightest dispute between them. That Henry was not so easily appeasable, was shown shortly after, for within a very short space of time all the principal nobles of England, who had taken part with Robert, were deprived of their estates, and driven into Normandy, pretexts never being wanting where men are determined to commit unjust actions. The only one who seems to have resisted, was Robert Montgomery, Lord of Bellesme, and Earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel. He had afforded the king a fair excuse for dealing severely with him, by speaking indiscreetly and even treasonably, and by fortifying the various strong posts he possessed. He was in the first instance

summoned to the king's court and accused of treason; but retiring into Shropshire, he prepared to resist in arms, depending on the assistance of several persons, who fell from him in the hour of need. Henry then marched against him, first besieging and taking Arundel Castle, and then entering into Shropshire. Within a month, the king made himself master of Bridgenorth, Shrewsbury, and every other strong place the earl possessed; and Montgomery himself was forced to fly to Normandy, where he had very large estates.

The ill treatment which his friends received at the hands of his brother greatly exasperated Robert of Normandy; and in order both to plead their cause, and also to obtain payment of his own pension, which was in arrear, he came over to England without taking the precaution of obtaining a safe-conduct. Henry received him with every appearance of friendship, but evaded

all his demands, and caused him to be so strictly watched, that what between the dangerous situation in which he had placed himself, and the cajolery of his brother, Robert was induced to give up his pension, glad to get back to Normandy on any conditions.

This did not content the ambitious king. The easy rule of his brother and, beyond all doubt, suggestions from England, encouraged the turbulent spirit of the nobles of Normandy, till the duchy was in a flame from one end to the other. Almost as a natural consequence, overtures were made to Henry, whose ambitious spirit was well understood; and he was invited to invade his brother's territories by that brother's discontented subjects. On the specious pretence of acting as a mediator between Robert and his vassals, the King of England visited Normandy with a considerable force,

and was immediately surrounded by the nobles of the country, whose favour he took care to cultivate, while his demeanour towards his brother was haughty and menacing. Even from this expedition he reaped an immediate advantage, for the weak and good-natured duke ceded to him the county of Evreux; but in the following year Henry sought a greater object, and boldly invaded the duchy without right or excuse. After capturing several towns, and being frustrated at Falaise by unexpected resistance, he returned to England, where he was once more visited by his brother Robert, who sought by negotiation to avert the storm which was preparing against him. He was disappointed in all his hopes, however, and returned to Normandy, to make ready for defence, in which he was eagerly aided by Edgar Atheling, the last of the Saxon princes. So strange were the changes of those times,

that we now see the heir of the Saxon throne fighting zealously for the heir of the Norman, who overthrew it, against his niece's husband, who, on the other hand, was supported almost entirely by the Saxon population of England.

As soon as he could gather his troops together in the succeeding year, Henry sailed for the coast of Normandy, and advanced to the attack of the small town of Tinchebray. Robert in the meantime had collected a much larger force than his brother had thought it possible for him to raise, and as soon as he knew Henry's movements, he marched to encounter him under the walls of Tinchebray. The battle was for some time obstinately contested, for Robert was not deficient in military skill, and renowned for personal courage. But his Norman horse fled early in the battle; his infantry could not resist the determined

efforts of the English; and, scorning to turn his back upon the enemy, he made one last effort to retrieve the day when all was in confusion, and was taken, with Edgar Atheling, the Count of Mortagne, and several other Norman noblemen. A great number of his followers were slaughtered; and four hundred knights, as well as ten thousand men, were made prisoners in the battle or the pursuit.

This victory put Henry in possession of Normandy; but he used his success cruelly, dooming his brother, and the Count of Mortagne, to perpetual imprisonment. Edgar Atheling, either from a respect for the feelings of the English, or on account of his advanced age, or of his utter want of power and influence, Henry speedily set at liberty; and, retiring to a distance from courts and armies, that unfortunate prince, who seems never to have been either feared or loved

by any of the various monarchs who had usurped his rights and received his submission, died of old age in a very remote part of England. There was still one whom Henry feared, however, namely William, the infant son of his brother Robert. This poor boy, whose misfortunes, beginning in the cradle, were to end but in the grave, had been found at Falaise, and, in the hurry of the events which were occurring, had been placed under the guardianship of Helie de St. Saen, who had married an illegitimate daughter of the captive Duke. As soon as Henry had time to consider what might be the consequences of this boy's remaining at liberty, he determined to keep him under his own eye; and knowing the boldness, vigilance, and determination of his noble guardian, he watched his opportunity, when Helie was absent from his castle, and sent a large body of horse to surprise St. Scaif, and seize

the young prince. The servants who had been left in the castle, however, were not without careful directions as to their conduct. The approach of so large a force was descried, and instant flight saved William from the power of his uncle. Helie, faithful to his trust, resolutely refused to give him up. His estates were confiscated; but that noble-minded man remained firm to the last, and resolved rather to wander in poverty with his charge from court to court, than give him up to a monarch, who, in so many instances, had proved himself faithless and remorseless.

With the sole abatement of his nephew's escape from his power, Henry now saw himself prosperous in all worldly things; and his pride and happiness were increased, by the Emperor demanding in marriage his only daughter by the queen, named Matilda. It is true that the princess was only eight

years of age; but it was the custom in those times to agree upon marriages when the parties were very young; and a part of the ceremony was often performed, binding them to each other for life. The princess was accordingly sent to be educated at the court of her future husband, with a large dowry, raised by a severe tax upon the English people.

From the year 1109 to 1118, Henry enjoyed great tranquillity, interrupted only by negotiations amongst the princes whose territories touched upon Normandy, for the restoration to Prince William of his father's dominions. The two principal persons who supported the cause of the young prince, were the King of France, and Fulke, Count of Anjou. The latter had treated the young exile with the greatest kindness; had received him with Helie de St. Sean into his court, and had even promised him his daughter

in marriage. The County of Maine too, and some towns of Normandy, boldly espoused the cause of their legitimate prince's son; and the prospect of a war became every day more clear, till Henry, going over to his continental dominions, effected, partly by force and partly by intrigue, a complete change in the policy of his neighbours. He first treated with Fulke of Anjou, and held out various temptations to him to induce him to break his engagements with his unfortunate nephew. One inducement proved successful: Henry offered to unite his only lawful son, Prince William of England, to one of the daughters of the Count of Anjou. This tempting proposal overcame Fulke's scruples; and a strict alliance was concluded between him and the King of England. His next step was to deprive his unfortunate nephew of the support and assistance of the King of France; and this he likewise effected in a personal

interview. Abandoned by all the princes who had promised to assist him, poor William was obliged to fly to the court of Baldwin, Count of Flanders, still accompanied by his faithful friend and guardian, Helie de St. Sean, while Henry, successful in all his undertakings, returned to England to forget his promises. In order to secure to his own son, Prince William, the inheritance of a crown which he was never destined to possess, he caused all his barons and clergy to take an oath of fidelity to the young prince, whose days were already numbered. He strove to get his nephew into his hands, by promising him honours and estates in England; but Robert's son was not to be entrapped by the shameless persecutor of his father. To occupy the King of France, Henry assisted and encouraged Thibalt, Count of Blois, the son of his sister Adela, in resisting the authority of his sovereign, Louis the

Fat, which so much enraged that monarch, that he again espoused the cause of Prince William of Normandy, and entered into negotiations with two other princes, the Count of Anjou and the Count of Flanders, to gain their assistance in recovering the Duchy. A number of the Norman barons joined the new confederacy against the King of England; but there is only one of them whom I need mention here—namely, the Count of Breteuil, who had married Juliana, one of Henry's illegitimate daughters. This lady took so fierce a part with her husband against her own father, that she is said to have discharged a cross-bow at the king with her own hands.

Thus storms were gathering round Henry, collected by his own acts; but the cunning King, combining art with boldness, hastened to apply himself to avert the danger; and the course he pursued I will relate. I

have told you that he had promised the Count of Anjou to unite his only son, William, with the daughter of that prince; but as soon as he had succeeded in his object, Henry had forgotten the promise, and the marriage had never taken place. This was one of the causes of the Count's enmity; and Henry proceeded to remove it, by contracting his son to the daughter of the Count, as he had engaged to do. This, of course, detached Fulke of Anjou from the league. The Count of Flanders died of a wound received in a skirmish. Most of the Norman Barons who had joined the party of their lawful prince were bought off; and Henry, having no one now to contend with but his unfortunate nephew, supported by the King of France, for whom, it would seem, he had a great contempt, marched to attack the French force, which was advancing to seize upon the castle of Noyon.

The troops on both sides were very few,

so that the battle of Brenneville, as it is called, which followed, can hardly be termed more than a skirmish. There were, however, two kings and two princes in the field; and almost every soldier, on either part, was either a nobleman of high rank and power, or a knight of great distinction. Issuing out of a wood, as he proceeded towards Noyon, Henry came suddenly into the presence of the King of France, whose vanguard, or first troop, was commanded by Prince William of Normandy. The young prince instantly charged his uncle's forces with such vigour and determination, that he cut his way straight through to the person of the King of England. For a few minutes all was confusion in the ranks of the English army. Henry himself was assailed by a French knight, named William Crispin, and was only saved by the goodness of his armour, for he received two blows on the head, which covered him with blood; but the King of

France, a slow and unwieldy man, did not second the brave Prince of Normandy as he ought to have done. The English troops rallied, before those who attacked them received proper support. A great number of the French were slain and taken prisoners. Prince William's horse was killed, and he himself made his escape with difficulty. In the end, the forces commanded by the King of France in person were actually engaged; but it was now too late; and in a few minutes everything was confusion amongst them. Louis the Fat himself fled alone from the field, lost his way in a wood, and was obliged to have recourse to a countryman to guide him to a place of shelter.

Some skirmishes of no great importance followed, but the Pope being at that time in France, he exerted himself with great zeal to bring about a peace between the two monarchs, and in the end was successful. The

terms of a treaty were arranged; and Henry once more set sail for England on the twenty-fifth of November, a stormy time of the year, after having endeavoured by every means in his power to secure the succession of Normandy, as well as England, to his beloved son William. All those Norman noblemen who had fought upon his side he had loaded with rewards and honours; and he now invited a great number of them to accompany him to England, and receive farther marks of his gratitude and esteem. The voyage bore more the appearance of a party of pleasure than anything else; and the vessels were filled with all that was noble, in point of rank, in the English and Norman dominions of the King.

I must tell you that the court of Henry was notoriously corrupt, and that the son whom he loved so well, and in whom he took such

pride, though bold and brave, was dissolute and unprincipled, and surrounded at all times by favourites and companions notorious for vices, and strongly suspected of abominable crimes. The king set sail a few hours after mid-day, and reached the shores of England in perfect safety. Prince William, however, was detained somewhat longer, though we do not know upon what occasion. One of the finest ships in the king's service, called the *White Ship*, had been placed at the prince's disposal, with a strong and experienced crew; and he had filled it with a company of gay and debauched young noblemen, and many of the ladies of the court. Amongst the rest was his illegitimate brother Richard, his illegitimate sister Matilda, Countess of Perche, and his first cousin Lucy, his father's niece. The commander of the vessel assured the prince that he would speedily overtake the king's

fleet, and reach England first; and William, to spend the afternoon pleasantly, ordered three barrels of wine to be broached amongst the crew. Drinking and merriment followed; and when the ship put to sea from the harbour of Barfleur, it would seem most of the crew and the passengers were drunk. The commander, Fitz-Stephen, eager to overtake the king, according to his promise, set all sail, and kept too close to the shore. The ill-fated *White Ship* had proceeded but a very short way, when she suddenly struck upon a sunken rock, called the Catte-raze, stove in several of her planks, and began to fill. There were at this time three hundred persons on board; but the first care of the commander was of course for the prince. The only boat in the ship was immediately let down; and William, with a few attendants, springing in, pushed off from the vessel. As the prince was rowing away towards the land,

however, the agonized shrieks of the Countess of Perche reached his ear, and he insisted on returning to take her on board. This generous determination, which is the only good thing recorded of him, proved the young prince's destruction. The moment his little bark came near the sinking vessel, a multitude jumped into it, and it instantly sank. The *White Ship* itself quietly settled down in the water, and all on board were drowned, with the exception of one man named Berthold, or Bertould, a butcher of Rouen, who, climbing up to the top of the mast, which remained above water till the vessel went to pieces, clung there all night, and was taken off by some Norman fishermen on the following morning. It was from this man's account alone that the fate of the *White Ship* was ever ascertained.

For three days, nobody dared to communicate to Henry the loss of his only son; and

when at length the fatal secret was told, a boy of tender years was selected to be his informant. The first shock was dreadful; and Henry fainted away on the spot. Tears and lamentations succeeded; but his chief passion was ambition, and as soon as he had somewhat recovered from the blow, he proceeded to take advantage of the opportunities afforded him by the death of so many great persons as had perished with his son. Several had left vacant offices at the court and in the kingdom. Others had left sisters or daughters as heiresses, whom the king, according to the law of that time, could bestow in marriage upon any one he pleased; and Henry took care to reward all his principal supporters, by the good things thus put at his disposal. There was now no male heir to the crown; and his only legitimate daughter, Matilda, was absent in the dominions of her husband the Emperor;

but Henry's wife, the niece of Edgar Atheling, had died in the month of May, 1118, and he resolved now to marry again, in the hope of having a son to succeed him. With such haste did he proceed, that his son William had not been dead much more than two months, when he married Adelais, daughter of the Count of Louvain, a lady of great beauty, very much younger than himself. This marriage, however, proved childless; and the king's whole hopes and affections turned to his daughter, the Empress Matilda. Though she had been some years actually married to the Emperor, Matilda had no children; but being only nineteen years of age at the death of her brother, there was every probability of her still having an heir. Nevertheless, the Norman barons who had sworn fealty to Prince William of England, being now freed from their oaths by the loss of that prince, began once

more to look to his cousin, William of Normandy; and a conspiracy was secretly formed, and carried on for some months, with greater prudence and discretion than had ever before been the case during the reign of Henry. Into this, also, entered the Count of Anjou; and to give it greater solidity, he again engaged his daughter, Sybilla, to the young Prince of Normandy. Henry's good fortune, however, did not fail him. He discovered what was taking place, hastily entered the duchy, and suppressed the revolt of the barons with very little difficulty, some of them being overcome by force of arms, and three of the most powerful falling into his hands by accident. The Count of Anjou finding himself deprived of his allies, hastened to conclude a peace with the King of England, once more sacrificing the unfortunate William of Normandy, and breaking off his proposed marriage with Sybilla.

The King of France, indeed, proved a better friend to William, receiving him into his court with great kindness, and bestowing on him the hand of his sister-in-law, with whom he gave him three French counties, and a territory called the French Vexin. On the death of Charles the Good, Count of Flanders, too, who was murdered in 1127, the French king invested William with that rich and important territory, on which, indeed, he had some claims, though not the most distinct; and Henry saw himself once more in danger of losing Normandy by the united efforts of the King of France, the Count of Flanders, and the Count of Anjou.

An event had occurred in 1125, which afforded Henry the means of again detaching Fulke of Anjou from the confederates. The Emperor Henry V. died; and the Empress Matilda returned to her father's court in 1126. Henry's great aim, now that his

son was dead, was to secure the succession of the throne to his daughter Matilda; and, bringing her to England at Christmas, he called a general assembly of the nobility, and invited them to take an oath of fidelity to his daughter. This was readily complied with; and so eager were the English nobles to perform the will of the king, that a severe contest took place between Robert, Earl of Gloucester, and Stephen, Count of Boulogne as to which should first take the oath. The former was an illegitimate son of Henry whom he had created Earl of Gloucester and married to the heiress of that county The latter was the king's nephew, being the second son of Stephen, Count of Blois, by Adela, daughter of William the Conqueror Stephen was deeply indebted to Henry in every respect; for, possessing little or nothing as the second son of the Count of Blois, the King of England had bestowed

upon him the county of Mortagne, in Normandy, a large estate in England, and the hand of his wife's niece, Matilda, heiress of the county of Boulogne, and several other territories. You will see hereafter how ungratefully this Stephen behaved, and how little he regarded the oath he was now so eager to take.

In order permanently to secure the Counts of Anjou in the interest of himself and his daughter, Henry now proposed a marriage between the Empress his daughter and the heir of that county. This offer was joyfully accepted by Fulke, though his eldest son was at that time not more than fifteen years of age. Matilda, it would seem, did not much relish marrying a boy, nor was she inclined to receive for her second husband a mere Count, when she had been the wife of an Emperor. But Henry overruled her objections, and sent her over into Normandy, under

the charge of her brother, Robert of Gloucester; and, following shortly after, he saw the marriage concluded according to his will.

About the same time Henry was freed from his fears of his nephew, by the death of that unfortunate prince. It would seem that William might have enjoyed undisputed possession of Flanders, had not his uncle stirred up a claimant to the county in the person of Thierry, Langrave of Alsace, and excited some of the towns in Flanders to revolt. Alost was one of the first to raise the standard of rebellion against their new prince, and upon it William marched in the first place; but the citizens showed a determined resistance; and, in the meanwhile, Thierry of Alsace hastened to their relief. William, instead of waiting his coming, advanced to meet him as soon as he heard of his approach, attacked him at once, and, after a short but sharp struggle, routed his forces

completely. He then returned to pursue the siege of Alost; but, in a sally made by the garrison immediately after, he was wounded in the thumb, while turning aside the point of a lance with his hand; and from the consequences of this insignificant injury, he died five days after, in the Abbey of St. Bertin. On his death-bed, he wrote a letter to his uncle Henry, expressing regret for having occasioned him so many embarrassments during his life-time, and beseeching him to receive into his favour the faithful Helie de St. Saen.

From the period of his nephew's death till the end of his own days, Henry enjoyed almost uninterrupted peace. Peace of mind, indeed, he could not have, knowing that he had obtained his dominions by the usurpation of his brother's rights, and, to retain them, kept that brother in perpetual imprisonment. It is said that conscience sometimes terribly tormented him; but conces-

sions to the Church of Rome, and the foundation of monasteries and abbeys, he was taught to think would be sufficient atonement, and thus he quieted the reproaches of his own heart.

Henry, however, had another source of uneasiness. For five years after her second marriage, the Empress Matilda remained without children; but at length, in March, 1123, a son was born to her in Le Mans; and, with the greatest joy and satisfaction, Henry called his nobles and prelates together, and once more made them swear fidelity to his daughter and to his grandson. He lived to see two more sons added to his daughter's family, and also to hear of the death of his unhappy brother Robert, who died in Cardiff Castle, in 1134. It is said that the unfortunate prince starved himself to death, on account of Henry having sent him a gown to wear which he himself had torn in at-

tempting to put it on. This story is very improbable, however, and appears still more so when we consider that, at the time of Robert's death, Henry had been for more than two years in Normandy.

Though considerably younger than Robert, Henry did not long survive him; for in the following year, towards the end of November, he was seized with illness, after having taken violent exercise in hunting during the morning, and supped somewhat too largely upon lampreys. Violent fever succeeded; and he died on the first or second of December, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.

Thus ended the direct male line of William the Conqueror, in the person of his third son. Of all the Norman house, Henry was the most distinguished by his powers of mind. He had also had the advantage of a

high education, was a lover of literature and the arts, and did much for the revival of learning in England. He had great activity, both of body and mind, though he had none of that restlessness which often hurries men into the commission of foolish actions; and his prudence was often a check upon his valour. That he was personally courageous there can be no doubt, though some of his courtiers, we are told, affected to think the contrary, because his courage was not of a hot and impetuous kind, and because, when he discovered that several of his domestic attendants had entered into a conspiracy against him, he slept in his armour, and filled his apartments with those on whom he could rely. He was cruel, ambitious, avaricious; but it must also be remarked, that he had been treated with cruel injustice himself, during all the early part of his life, by

the very man towards whom he was most culpable afterwards. He had a good many other vices, which I need not tell you about; but he was undoubtedly the best and wisest monarch of the Norman line.

THE END.

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