

# THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY

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# The Bayeux Tapestry

A History and Description

by Frank Rede Fowke



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## PREFACE.



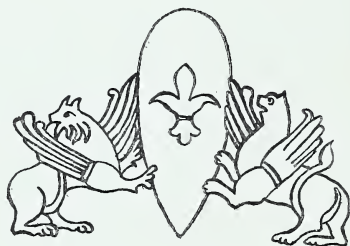
It is nearly a quarter of a century since the following comments on the Bayeux Tapestry were published. Their adoption, unknown to me, by the Conservateur du Dépôt Légal au Ministère de l'Instruction Publique et des Beaux-Arts, M. Jules Comte, as the basis of his "Tapisserie de Bayeux," was a flattering recognition of my labours. My original work, which contained a series of illustrative appendices, was costly, and, being no longer obtainable, it is sought to supply its place. The present volume, confined to a history of the tapestry, and to an explanation of the incidents which it depicts, appears in a more accessible form.

In preparing the plates, advantage has been taken of a method of photographic reproduction recently invented by Count Ostroròg. This

method avoids the employment of a "mesh," and consequently obviates the well-known chequered appearance in the picture which is inseparable from the ordinary "process-block."

FRANK REDE FOWKE.

1898.



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# HISTORY OF THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

HE earliest known mention of this interesting work is made in an inventory of the ornaments of the Cathedral of Bayeux, taken in the year 1476. The preamble of this document is subjoined,<sup>1</sup> together with two entries from the third chapter and one from the fifth, as these passages are frequently cited by those who have written of the tapestry.

<sup>1</sup> Inventaire des joyaulx, capses, reliquiars, ornemens, tentes, paremens, livres, et autres biens appartenans à l'église Nostre-Dame de Bayeux, et en icelle trouvés, veus et visités par venerables et discrettes personnes maistre Guillaume de Castillon, archidiacre des Vetz, et Nicole Michiel Fabriquier, chanoines de ladite église, à ce députez et commis en chapitre general de ladite église, tenu et celebré après la feste de saint Ravent et saint Rasiph, en l'an mil quatre cent septante-six, tres reverend pere en Dieu Mons. Loys de Harecourt, patriarche de Jerusalem, lors évêque, et reverend pere maistre Guillaume de Bailleul, lors doyen de ladite église ; et fut fait ce dit inventaire en mois de septembre par plusieurs journées, à ce presens les procureurs et serviteurs du grand cousteur de ladite église, et maistre Jehan Castel, chappellain de ladite église et notaire apostolique ; et icy est redigé en françois et vulgaire langage pour plus claire et familière désignation desdits joyaulx, ornemens et autres biens, et de leurs circonstances, qu'elle n'eust pu estre faicte en termes

On the 12th May, 1562, the cathedral was pillaged by the Calvinists, who committed the most horrible devastations. During this rising the clergy handed over many of their treasures to the municipal authorities for safe keeping, and M. Pezet has conjectured that the tapestry was placed for safety in the Town-hall, and carried thence by the mob. The Bishop of Bayeux, in

de latinité, et est ce dit inventaire cy-après digéré en ordre, et disigné en distinction en six chapitres. . . .

Ensuivent pour le tiers chapitre les pretieux manteaux et riches chapes trouvés et gardés en triangle qui est assis en costé dextre du pulpitre dessous le crucifix.

*Premièrement* ung mantel duquel, comme on dit, le duc Guillaume estoit vestu quand il épousa la ducesse, tout d'or tirey ; semey de croisettes et florions d'or, et le bort de bas est de or traict à ymages fait tout environ ennobly de fermailles d'or emailles et de camayeux et autres pierres pretieuses, et de present en y a encore sept vingt, et y a sexante dix places vuides ou aultres-foiz avoient esté perles, pierres et fermailles d'or emailles.

*Item.*—Ung autre mantel duquel, comme l'en dit, la ducesse estoit vestue quand elle épousa le duc Guillaume, tout semey de petits ymages d'or tiré à or fraiz pardevant, et pour tout le bort de bas enrichiz de fermailles d'or emailles et de camayeux et autres pierres pretieuses, et de present en y a encore deus cens quatre-vingt-douze, et y a deus cens quatre places vuides ausquelles estoient aultres-foiz pareilles pierres et fermailles d'or emailles. . . .

Ensuivent pour le quint chapitre les tentes, tapis, cortines, paremens des autels et autres draps de saye pour parer le cueur aux festes solonnelles, trouvés et gardés en le vestiaire de ladicte église.

*Item.*—Une tente tres longue et étroite de telle à broderie de ymages et escripteaux faisans representation du conquest d'Angleterre, laquelle est tendue environ la nef de l'église le jour et par les octaves des Reliques. [At this date the feast of the Relics was kept on the 1st July.]

his report upon this occasion, 19th August, 1563, mentions the preservation of some tapestry, and the loss of "*une tapisserie de grande valeur*," which M. Pezet conceives to relate to *the* Bayeux tapestry missing from the time of its abstraction by the populace up to that date. This opinion appears erroneous, for the Bishop states that the missing hangings were used to surround the *choir* on solemn occasions, and that they were composed of cloths of different colours slid upon a cord. Whilst *the* tapestry is correctly described in the inventory as *telle (i.e. toile) à broderie*, and as used to decorate the nave.

Whether or not it was missing in these troublous times, it was soon afterwards in possession of the ecclesiastical authorities, being used as a festal decoration for the nave of the cathedral. Here it remained obscure and forgotten, save by those who lived within the walls of Bayeux, until, in the year 1724, a drawing which had formerly belonged to M. Foucault, Ex-intendant of Normandy, and a collector of antiquities, was presented to M. Lancelot, a member of the Académie des Inscriptions, by the secretary of that institution.

On the 21st July of that year M. Lancelot read a paper upon the drawing, but was ignorant of what it actually represented. He had failed, he said, to discover whether the original was a bas-relief, a sculpture round the choir of a church, upon a tomb, or on a frieze—if a fresco painting, stained glass, or even a piece of tapestry. He saw that it was historical, that it related to William, Duke of Normandy, and the conquest of

England, and conjectured that it formed part of the Conqueror's tomb in the church of St. Étienne de Caen, or of the beautiful windows which are said to have formerly existed in that abbey. Following up these speculations, he caused investigations to be made at Caen, but his researches were entirely without success.

Father Montfaucon, a Benedictine of Saint-Maur, was more fortunate. Upon reading Lancelot's memoir he at once perceived the value of this curious representation, and determined to leave no stone unturned till the original was discovered. In the first volume of his "*Monumens de la Monarchie Française*," which appeared in 1729, he gave a reduction of M. Foucault's drawing in fourteen double plates, and added a double plate, divided into four parts, with the whole of the then-discovered work, drawn to a small scale. He saw that this fragment was but the commencement of a long history, and he therefore wrote to the Benedictines of St. Étienne de Caen and of St. Vigor de Bayeux to inquire if they were acquainted with any such monument. The Reverend Father Mathurin l'Archer, Prior of St. Vigor de Bayeux, answered that the original was a piece of tapestry, preserved in the cathedral, about thirty feet in length (nearly thirty-two English feet), and one foot and a-half broad, and that they had another piece of the same breadth continuing the history, the whole being two hundred and twelve feet long (nearly two hundred and twenty-six English feet). He copied all the inscriptions, and sent them to Montfaucon, who

saw that the entire monument was now discovered.

Montfaucon sent a skilful draughtsman named Antoine Benoît to copy the tapestry, with instructions to reduce it to a given size, but to alter nothing. At the opening of the second volume of his "Monumens de la Monarchie Française," published in 1730, Montfaucon engraved the whole history in this reduced form,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by a commentary upon the Latin inscriptions which throughout explain the intention of the figures represented in the different compartments, and M. Lancelot now composed a second memoir, which was read in 1730. It will be seen that at the time of its discovery by Montfaucon the tapestry was in two pieces, the first ending at the word *Hic* of the inscription, *Hic venit nuntius ad Wilgelmum Ducem*, and the join, in spite of the beautiful manner in which it has been made, may still be detected.<sup>2</sup> At this period, too, the extremities began to suffer, and in order to save the work from destruction, the chapter caused it to be lined.

The interest awakened by the discovery of the tapestry was not confined to France. In 1746 Stukeley wrote of it as "the noblest monument in the world, relating to our old English History." He was followed by the learned antiquary Dr. Ducarel, who gave an account of the tapestry in the appendix to his "Anglo-Norman Antiquities,"

<sup>1</sup> These plates are, however, lamentably inaccurate.

<sup>2</sup> M. Léchaudé-d'Anisy remarks upon the *absence* of any sign of a join.

published in 1767, where he reproduced the drawings given by Montfaucon, and printed an elaborate description which had been drawn up some years previously, during a residence in Normandy, by Mr. Smart Lethieullier. Dr. Ducarel tells us that when he was in Normandy the tapestry was annually hung up on St. John's Day, and that it went exactly round the nave of the cathedral, where it continued for eight days. This mode of decorating the cathedral of Bayeux was a most ancient custom, as we learn from its statutes, which declare that, "Il est bon de savoir que le matin du samedi de Pâques, avant d'appeler les dignitaires et les chanoines au service, on pare le tour de l'église, dans l'intérieur, avec des tapisseries propres, au-dessous desquelles, entre le chœur et l'autel, on place des coussins et des draps de soie les plus beaux qui se trouvent dans l'église. . . . L'église se pare depuis la fête de Pâques jusqu'à le Saint-Michel, en septembre." When not employed as a decoration for the nave, the tapestry was carefully preserved, in a strong wainscot press, in a chapel on the south side of the cathedral.

Before we again hear of it the tapestry had passed through great dangers, and had nearly perished; but, as in 1562, it escaped the revolutionary disorders by little short of a miracle. Kept in the depositories of the cathedral it remained intact, even during the events of the year 1792, until the day when the invasion of France called all her sons to arms. At the first sound of the drum in the town of Bayeux, which had already furnished a numerous contingent, rose the

local battalion. Amidst the tumult of sudden departure, carts were improvised to transport the military equipage. One of these conveyances needed a covering; canvas was wanting; the tapestry was suggested as suitable for the purpose; and the administration pusillanimously ordered its delivery. It was brought and placed on the waggon, which was already *en route*, when M. le Forestier, commissary of police, learning the state of affairs, ran to the District Directory, of which he was a member, and himself issued the order to bring it back. This was no sooner done than he snatched the tapestry from its perilous position, provided some stout canvas to supply its place, and committed the treasured embroidery to the security of his own study.

Some of the citizens, viz. MM. Moisson de Vaux, J. B. G. Delaunay, ex-deputy of the States-General, Bouisset, afterwards professor of literature at the Lyceum of Caen, with Le Brissoys-Surmont, an advocate, as secretary, now formed themselves into a commission for the protection of works of art in the district of Bayeux. They at once demanded the delivery of the tapestry, which they obtained in time to save it from a new danger. For from a letter dated "4 Fructidor an II" (21st August, 1794), we learn that "un zèle plus ardent qu'éclairé avait été sur le point de faire lacérer dans une fête civique cet ouvrage auquel on n'attachait plus d'autre mérite que d'être une bande de toile propre à servir au premier usage."

So jealous was this commission of the safety of the tapestry, that it was not mentioned in their

first catalogue, probably from fear lest it should be wrested from their custody, since in a letter of the "10th Frimaire an XII" (30th November, 1803) they speak of the vigilance with which they had watched over this national monument, and the opposition that their great solicitude had oft-times raised against its removal from the town.

It is not known for certain where the tapestry was kept during the time that it was in the custody of the commission, but as the books of the religious communities suppressed at the time of the revolution were deposited in the college, it is probable that the tapestry found a similar resting-place.

On the "29 Brumaire an XII" (19th November, 1803) the prefect of Calvados informed the commission that Bonaparte, then First Consul of France, desired the exhibition of the tapestry at the Musée Napoléon. To this wish the commission deferred, and it was deposited in the national museum for public inspection.

The First Consul himself went to see it, and affected to be struck with that particular part which represents Harold on his throne at the moment when he was alarmed at the appearance of a meteor which presaged his defeat: affording an opportunity for the inference that the meteor which had then been lately seen in the South of France was the presage of a similar event.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of this exhibition, M. Denon, director-general of the Musée Napoléon, caused an explana-

<sup>1</sup> This meteor was seen in the south of England, 13th November, 1803, and particulars of it are recorded in the "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. lxxiii. part 2, pp. 1077-1120.



tory hand-book to be prepared, entitled "Notice historique sur la Tapisserie brodée de la reine Mathilde, épouse de Guillaume-le-Conquérant."<sup>1</sup>

The exhibition was popular: so much so, that three authors of vaudevilles, much renowned in that day, MM. Barré, Radet et Desfontaines, composed a one-act comedy in prose, entitled, "La Tapisserie de la reine Mathilde," which was produced at the Théâtre du Vaudeville. In this piece Matilda, who had retired to her uncle Roger during the contest, was represented passing her time with her women in embroidering the exploits of her husband, never leaving her work except to put up prayers for his success. It related to passing events, and was of a very light character, as all such pieces are, but contained nevertheless many witty strokes, and some ingenious allusions to the projects of Napoleon.

When the time for the restoration of the tapestry to Bayeux arrived, more than one voice was raised in favour of its retention in Paris; but it was returned, after a hasty copy of it had been made by M. Denon, to the municipality of the town which had preserved it so well throughout all vicissitudes, with the following letter:—

"Paris, le 30 pluviôse, an XII (18th February, 1804).

"Denon, membre de l'Institut National, directeur-général du musée Napoléon, et de la recon-

<sup>1</sup> This notice forms a brochure in 12mo of forty-six pages, of which two other editions exist; one in 4to, with Lancelot's plates, coloured; the other published at Saint-Lô, in 1822, by Élie.

naissance des médailles, au sous-préfet de l'arrondissement de Bayeux.

“CITOYEN,—

“Je vous renvoie la tapisserie brodée par la reine Mathilde, épouse de Guillaume-le-Conquérant. Le premier consul a vu avec intérêt ce précieux monument de notre histoire ; il a applaudi aux soins que les habitants de la ville de Bayeux ont apporté depuis sept siècles et demi à sa conservation. Il m'a chargé de leur témoigner toute sa satisfaction et de leur en confier encore le dépôt. Invitez-les donc, Citoyen, à apporter de nouveaux soins à la conservation de ce fragile monument, qui retrace une des actions le plus mémorables de la nation française, et consacre pareillement le souvenir de la fierté et du courage de nos aïeux. J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer.

“DENON.”

Incited by this letter to renew their zealous precautions on behalf of their trust, the Municipal Council of Bayeux held a deliberation 24th Ventose, an XII (13th March, 1804). At this meeting it was decided that the tapestry should be deposited in the college library, and the director was charged to watch over it with the greatest care, the mayor giving his supervision. Remembering its ancient use, the council further directed “that it be hung in the parish church during fifteen days in the finest part of the year”—a concession to the clergy to which I cannot discover that effect was ever given.

Nor does it seem that the decision to deposit it in the college was adhered to, as it was quickly transferred to the Hôtel de Ville, where the mode of its exhibition to the curious was to wind it from one cylinder on to another, after the manner of a panorama. This barbarous mode of showing it must infallibly have caused its destruction in a very short time; yet it continued with but slight protest under the Empire, the Restoration, and the first years which succeeded the Revolution of 1830.

From the new degree of publicity given to the tapestry by its exhibition in Paris, its origin again became the subject of discussion; and in 1812 the Abbé de la Rue, professor of history in the Academy of Caen, composed a memoir, subsequently translated and annotated by Mr. Francis Douce,<sup>1</sup> in which he contended that the manufacture of the tapestry should have been ascribed to the Empress Matilda, and not to the wife of the Conqueror.

The next notice of the tapestry is comprised in a short letter, dated 4th July, 1816, from Mr. Hudson Gurney, printed in the "*Archæologia*."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Gurney had seen the tapestry at Bayeux in 1814; it was, he says, then kept in the Hôtel of the Prefecture,<sup>3</sup> coiled round a machine like that which lets down the buckets in a well, and was shown to visitors by being drawn out over a table.

<sup>1</sup> "*Archæologia*," vol. xvii. p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. xviii. p. 359.

<sup>3</sup> This is an error; the prefecture is at Caen—Bayeux is a sous-prefecture. The building was the Hôtel de Ville, where the tapestry was deposited in 1804.

Mr. Dawson Turner, writing some two years later, adds that the necessary rolling and unrolling were performed with so little attention, that it would be wholly ruined in the course of half a century if left under its then management. He describes it as injured at the beginning, as very ragged towards the end, where several of the figures had completely disappeared, and adds that the worsted was unravelling in many of the intermediate parts.<sup>1</sup> At this time the tapestry was known as the *Toile de St.-Jean*, which is explained by what Ducarel has said, that it was formerly exhibited upon St. John's Day. Remembering this its ancient use, the clergy, in 1816, claimed its restoration to the cathedral. To this request, however, the Municipal Council refused to accede, alleging that it had been returned to the *inhabitants*, who had never lost sight of it, but had preserved it through the exertions of their representatives. With the civil administration, then, the tapestry still remains.

In the same year that the clergy claimed the tapestry, the Society of Antiquaries of London despatched that excellent and accurate artist, Mr. Charles Stothard, to Bayeux, to make drawings and he brought home two small pieces of the tapestry.<sup>2</sup> Within two years he completed the best copy of the tapestry that had been produced,

<sup>1</sup> "Account of a Tour in Normandy," by Dawson Turner, 2 vols. 8vo, London, 1820, vol. ii. p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> One fragment was, in 1825, seen by M. Allou, of the Société Royale des Antiquaires de France, in the library of Dr. Meyrick. "Les anciennes Tapisseries Historiées," par Achille Jubinal, 2 vols. oblong folio, Paris, 1838-39, vol. i. p. 16.

which will be found in the sixth volume of the "Vetusta Monumenta."

The appearance of the first portion of these drawings gave rise to some remarks<sup>1</sup> (dated 24th February, 1818) by Mr. Amyot, intended to refute the idea that Harold had been sent to Normandy with an offer of the succession to William, which idea the pictures of the tapestry had been supposed to confirm.

These were followed by Mr. C. Stothard's own observations while at Bayeux, pointing out such circumstances as presented themselves to his notice during the minute investigation to which he necessarily subjected the tapestry. Mr. Amyot then took up a defence of the early antiquity of the tapestry, in which he invalidates the objections of the Abbé de la Rue to the opinion which makes the tapestry coeval with the events that it records.

In 1835 the Municipal Council began to occupy themselves with the idea that a permanent resting-place for the tapestry should be provided, and they then decided that it should be removed to that place which it now occupies.

Dr. Bruce saw the tapestry about this time, and says that it was then exhibited in eight lengths up and down the room in which it was kept. I do not know if the learned doctor means that it was cut into eight parts or folded backwards and forwards;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Archæologia," vol. xix. p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> This latter seems to be intended, as the Abbé Laffetay describes it as "se repliant sur elle-même."—*Notice Historique et Descriptive sur la Tapisserie dite de la Reine Mathilde*, 8vo, Bayeux, 1874, p. 17.

but, at any rate, nothing was lost, and the tapestry, as far as it has come down to us, is complete.

At a meeting of the Administrative Council of the Society for the Preservation of French Historical Monuments, held 30th January, 1836, Mr. Spencer Smith announced that he would shortly call the attention of the council to the tapestry of Queen Matilda at Bayeux, and offer recommendations as to the mode of its exhibition to visitors. The tapestry was gaining friends, its dangers seemed past, and men vied with each other who should most contribute to its well-being. But not content with the assurance of its safety, they were anxious to satisfy sceptical minds; and on the 15th February, 1840, we find M. de la Fontenelle,<sup>1</sup> together with several of his fellow-labourers of the "Revue Anglo-Française," about to form a commission of archæologists composed half of English and half of French savants, to give a final opinion as to the age of the tapestry. It does not appear that this commission issued any report, nor is it by any means certain that it was ever really formed.

In 1840 we find, in the "Bulletin Monumental,"<sup>2</sup> a report made by M. Pezet, President of the Civil Tribunal, to the Municipal Council of Bayeux, on behalf of the commission charged to take measures for the safety of the tapestry. In this report he announces that the building erected by the town for the reception of the treasured relic approached

<sup>1</sup> "Bulletin Monumental, publié par la Société Française pour la Conservation des Monuments," 8vo, Paris, Rouen, Caen, 1834, *et seq.* vol. vi. p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* vol. vi. p. 62.

completion, the masons' work was completed, and the wainscoting commenced.

In 1836, Mr. Bolton Corney printed his "Researches and Conjectures on the Bayeux Tapestry," as a brochure of sixteen pages, and, after castigating its critic in the "Gentleman's Magazine" of the following year, issued a second "revised and enlarged" edition in 1838. Not content with extirpating the tradition which ascribed the tapestry to Queen Matilda he discredited the antiquity of the work itself, seeking to show that its execution before 1206 was impossible, by some questionable arguments which invited retort.

In 1841 M. de Caumont communicated to the Institut des Provinces a notice in refutation of Mr. Bolton Corney's remarks, and an extract from this notice was published the following year, entitled "Un Mot sur les Discussions relatives à l'Origine de la Tapisserie de Bayeux."<sup>1</sup>

The Society for the Preservation of French Historical Monuments held a meeting at Caen, 12th May, 1853, at which M. de Caumont reported that the Bayeux Tapestry had received aid to the extent of 5,000 francs<sup>2</sup> (£200).

The tapestry was not shown in a settled and permanent manner in the place which it now occupies until 1842. M. Ed. Lambert, librarian of the town of Bayeux, was named custodian of the tapestry, and he it was who undertook the task of superintending its re-lining; nor did he stop here, for, guided by the holes left by the needles, by the

<sup>1</sup> "Bulletin Monumental," vol. viii. p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. vol. xix. p. 378.

fragments of worsted adhering to the canvas, and by drawings executed at earlier dates, he successfully restored certain portions which had suffered from age or from the friction of the cylindrical method of exhibition.

Since the above date the tapestry has been continuously shown to the public in the same manner as at the present time, and its history during this period of repose would be but a catalogue of savants, artists, and illustrious personages who, from every corner of the world, have made a pilgrimage to Bayeux.

The tapestry was not, however, to pass its old age without some renewal of danger, for in 1871 the Prussians were so near the town as to cause most serious alarm to the authorities for the safety of their precious treasure. The tapestry was taken from its case, so rapidly that many of the sheets of glass under which it was kept were broken; it was then tightly rolled up and packed into a cylindrically-shaped zinc case, the lid of which was soldered down. What next ensued is a secret which the authorities desire to keep; for, though they trust never again to be obliged to resort to a like expedient, they wisely remark that they know not what of danger the future may have in store for the tapestry, nor do they think that the proper moment has arrived to publish their hiding-place.

On the 3rd of August, 1871, the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education authorized Mr. Joseph Cundall to proceed to Bayeux to consult with the authorities and endeavour to obtain



permission to make a full-sized photographic reproduction of the tapestry. He was successful in his mission, and Mr. E. Dossetter, a skilful photographer, was despatched to Bayeux to commence the work, which he completed in the following year.

The local authorities courteously rendered every assistance, M. Marc, the mayor, M. Bertot, the deputy-mayor, and the Abbé Laffetay, the librarian, vieing with each other in their obliging attentions. The work was, however, attended with great difficulty, for, although the custodians finally permitted the removal of the glass, pane by pane, so as to free from distortion the portion of the work under manipulation, they would in nowise consent to the removal of the tapestry from its case. The tapestry is carried first round the exterior and then round the interior of a hollow parallelogram, and the room in which it is shown is lighted by windows at the side and at one end, so that the difficulty of cross lights and dark corners had to be overcome as far as possible; nor this alone, for the brass joints of the glazing came continually in the way of the camera, and great credit is due to Mr. Dossetter for the ingenious devices by which he successfully overcame the difficulties with which he had to contend.

Owing to the difficulties of manipulating a large camera in the comparatively small space of the chamber at Bayeux, the negatives first taken were those used for the illustrations of this work; from these transparencies were made, from which negatives enlarged to both half and the full size of the original were produced. It will therefore be seen that besides the series here given two sets of

large reproductions exist, one the full size of the original and one half that size, both of which were published by the Arundel Society. The Lords of the Committee of Council on Education presented a copy of each of these larger sets to the town of Bayeux, in recognition of the valuable aid and courteous co-operation of the authorities.

A copy of the full-sized reproduction was coloured after the original, and exhibited at the International Exhibition of 1873 (Catalogue No. 2897 *d*). This copy is now preserved in the South Kensington Museum.

The South Kensington Museum purchased at the sale of Mr. Bowyer Nicholls, in 1864, that piece of the tapestry which had been brought away from Bayeux by Mr. Stothard,<sup>1</sup> and it was resolved by the Lords of the Committee of Council on Education that this fragment should be restored to the custodians of the tapestry. The compiler of these notes was then, August, 1872, visiting the town of Bayeux to inspect the tapestry, and was so fortunate as to be charged with the return of the relic.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Stothard has been commonly accused of abstracting this fragment; but I have it, on her authority, that it was not until 1818, the last of the three years in which Mr. Charles Stothard copied the tapestry, that she became his wife and accompanied him to Bayeux. Prior to his marriage he possessed two pieces of the tapestry which, in whatever manner he acquired them, are said to have come from a mass of rags incapable of restoration. One of these pieces he had given, before his marriage, to Mr. Douce, the antiquary, and the other formed part of the collection which, after Mr. Stothard's death in 1821 was purchased by Sir Gregory Page Turner.

MODE OF EXECUTION AND THE MATERIALS  
EMPLOYED.

The Bayeux tapestry consists of a band of linen, probably originally unbleached, and which the lapse of ages has reduced to the colour of brown holland. The present length of this band is 70 mètres 34 centimètres (230 ft.  $9\frac{1}{3}$  in. English measure), and its width 50 centimètres ( $19\frac{2}{3}$  in. English measure). It formerly consisted of a single piece of linen without seam; and although at one time divided into two parts, it has now been cleverly joined together again. In the upper margin a piece of cloth of a slightly inferior quality has been added at some time subsequent to the original manufacture of the tapestry. This additional strip, which is itself of a high antiquity, is joined to the main portion by a seam; it contains no figures, but displays blue stripes, as well as simple, double, and triple crosses; and before a kind of altar, a ladder, of which the sides are terminated by a cross and a little banded standard, the staff of which is surmounted by a cross. The width of this strip is 20 centimètres (nearly 8 in. English measure), and it may have been added to facilitate the exhibition of the main work. The whole tapestry is divided into seventy-two compartments<sup>1</sup> or scenes,

<sup>1</sup> That is, following the subjects; for the different divisions or lengths are indicated by large numbers from 1 to 56 marked on the canvas outside the border. The form of these numbers is such that they cannot be more than a couple of centuries old. They are of no special interest, and were probably added by some custodian of the tapestry for convenience of exhibition.

which are generally separated from one another by conventionally-rendered trees or buildings. The tapestry contains<sup>1</sup> representations of—

623 persons.  
 202 horses and mules.  
 55 dogs.  
 505 various other animals.  
 37 buildings.  
 41 ships and boats.  
 49 trees.

---

1,512 objects.

These figures are worked with a needle in worsteds of eight different colours, viz.: Dark and light blue, red, yellow, dark and light green, black, and dove colour. The intention of most of the compartments is explained by Latin inscriptions placed over them. The letters, like the figures, are stitched in worsted, and are about an inch in height. The drawing of all the objects is rude, nor has any great attention been paid to the representation of things in their natural colours. Thus horses are shown as blue, green, red, and yellow, a circumstance no doubt due to the limited number of colours at the artist's disposal. Working with flat tints, the embroiderers had no means of giving effects of light and shade; and perspective is wholly disregarded. To indicate, therefore, objects at different distances from the spectator, they

<sup>1</sup> "The Bayeux Tapestry, elucidated by Rev. John Collingwood Bruce." 4to. London, 1856. P. 13, note *a*.

employed worsteds of different colours; thus a green horse has his off legs red, whilst those of a yellow horse are worked in blue, and so on.

If the drawing be rude the composition is bold and spirited, and is always rendered with great truth of expression, which is at times, however, exaggerated. The really historical portion of tapestry is for the most part confined to a width of 33 centimètres 5 millimètres ( $13\frac{1}{5}$  in. English measure); the top and bottom forming fantastic borders, containing lions, birds, camels, minotaurs, dragons, sphinxes, some fables of Æsop and Phædrus, scenes of husbandry and of the chase, etc. Occasionally the border is taken into the thread of the story, and it frequently contains allegorical allusions to the scenes enacting within its bounds.

The mode of working has been to cover the figures with worsted threads laid down flat side by side, and then bound at intervals by cross fastenings: seams, joints, and folds being indicated by a species of twist. The faces of persons, their hands and, when bare, their legs also, are simply outlined in red, green, or blue, the features being frequently executed in yellow.

From the above description it will be seen that historical embroidery would be a more accurate title than tapestry for this work; time has, however, consecrated the misnomer, and it is improbable that it will ever bear a different appellation.

In concluding this notice of the tapestry it is fitting to offer some opinion as to its date and

authorship. The chief facts upon which my judgment is based are as follows :

William and his wife were accustomed to recite their gifts to the Church, but neither the Duke on his deathbed nor Matilda in her will mentions the tapestry. This was called "La Grand Telle du Conquest d'Angleterre," when, for the first time, noticed in the inventories of 1369 and of 1476. In the latter document the canons of Bayeux recorded the traditions relating to other objects in their custody, but were silent when dealing with the tapestry, and a like silence was observed by subsequent writers. The date of its festal exhibition obtained for the tapestry the title of "La Toilette de St. Jean," and, when discovered by the Abbé Montfaucon, it was known in Bayeux as "La Toilette du Duc Guillaume." The abbé recorded a tradition, as then current, that it was Queen Matilda "qui la fit faire"; this *on dit* was converted by Lancelot into "qui l'ait tissue elle-même avec ses femmes," and improved by Sir Joseph Ayloffe into "by her own hands and the assistance of the ladies of her court worked in arras and presented to the cathedral at Bajeux" (*sic*) etc., and only after its exhibition in Paris did the tapestry acquire the designation of "Le Tapis de la Reine Mathilde."

To so late a tradition which, if actually current, was confined to a place where nearly everything was ascribed to William and his Duchess, little importance can attach.

Failing tradition, recourse must be had to internal evidence, and here (whilst there is nothing to connect the work with Matilda) the evident

attempt to preserve the characteristics of the principal figures (William and Eadward resembling their portraits on their seals), together with the accurate representation of eleventh century costume and of military details, which would certainly have been wanting at a later date, show it almost contemporary with the incidents depicted. Such words as *Ælfgyva*, *Ceastra* and *Franci* suggest an English origin, but admit of the explanation that the dialect spoken in Bayeux was a mixture of Saxon and Norman, *Ceastra* alone remaining untraced to the Bessin dialect or its source.<sup>1</sup> The prominence given to Odo and to obscurer persons who were subsequently his feudatories (*Turolde*, *Vital*, and *Wadard*), the employment of a worsted characteristic of the Bessin district, the introduction of the local form of wine barrel and of such dialectic peculiarities as *Bagias* and *Wilgelm*, the coincidence of length in the tapestry and the nave which it served to decorate, and the choice of the anniversary of the cathedral's consecration for the date of exhibition, point to the moment of its presentation by Odo, who, as bishop, alone had power to display a profane history in a sacred edifice; these facts taken together afford strong evidence of locality of origin, and suggest the probable donor. Passing the foregoing points in review, I conclude the tapestry to be a contemporary work in which Queen Matilda had no part, and that it was probably ordered for his cathedral by Bishop Odo and made by Norman workpeople at Bayeux.

<sup>1</sup> See remarks on p. 110.





# THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

EDVVARÐ REX :

*King Eadward.*

PLATE I.



ING Eadward the Confessor is seated on a cushioned throne ; his feet resting on a stool of three steps. A simple circlet ornamented with fleurs-de-lys forms his crown, and a similar decoration terminates the sceptre, held in his left hand. The embellishments on his ample robe are probably needlework of gold, for William of Malmesbury<sup>1</sup> informs us that the Lady Eadgyth was wont to embroider his state vestments after this fashion. With his right hand the King emphasizes the remarks that he addresses to two persons of rank standing before him. Of these one is undoubtedly Harold, who is taking leave of his master previous to quitting the court. Mr. Planché<sup>2</sup> has doubted the identity of this personage with Harold, on the

<sup>1</sup> Lib. ii. cap. xiii. p. 51.

<sup>2</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 139.

ground that the Earl is depicted with moustaches in the next compartment, and that here the figure supposed to represent him has none. The copies of the tapestry seen by Mr. Planché must have been inaccurate, as in the original both of Eadward's auditors are moustached.

Three reasons have been assigned as the cause of Harold's departure :

I. That he begged permission to visit Normandy to release from captivity his brother Wulfnoth and his nephew Hakon, who had been given as hostages for Godwine's good conduct to King Eadward, and by him transferred for safe custody to his cousin, Duke William.<sup>1</sup>

II. That Harold, bound on a fishing excursion, was driven by stress of weather upon the shores of Ponthieu.<sup>2</sup>

III. That Harold was commissioned to assure William of his nomination as Eadward's successor to the English throne.<sup>3</sup>

Where authorities are conflicting it is difficult to ascertain the truth, but as the hand of the King seems to touch that of the person who is probably Harold, as if to secure a binding promise or oath, it would appear that the designer of the tapestry accepted the last theory, which tends to strengthen the Norman claim, and to show forth in darker colours the perfidy of Harold ; two points which he appears to have constantly kept in view.

<sup>1</sup> Wace.

<sup>2</sup> Wm. Malm.

<sup>3</sup> Wm. Malm.

VBI: HAROLÐ DVX: ANGLORVM: ET  
 SVI MILITES: EQVITANT: AD  
 BOSHAM:

*Where Harold, a chief of the English, and his  
 knights, ride to Bosham.*

PLATES I., II. AND III.

Harold is called Duke of Wessex and Earl of Kent by contemporary historians; it is evident that the word *Dux* is here used to point him out as one of the chiefs of the English nation, and not as conveying a specific title.

This Bosham, to which they rode, had been the property of the Archbishops of Canterbury till the Earl Godwine, being very desirous to obtain this manor, and meeting the Archbishop in a certain place, advanced towards him with feigned cordiality, exclaiming, *Da mihi Basium*, give me the kiss (*i.e.* the kiss of peace), which, when the Archbishop had done, he interpreted it *Boseham*, and immediately took possession of it, thanking the Archbishop for his generous gift.<sup>1</sup>

Harold, says Dr. Bruce, is represented twice in this group; once lifting up his hand in an attitude of command, and again with his hawk upon his fist to betoken his high rank; a simpler explanation, however, would seem to be that, during the audience which is depicted in the previous

<sup>1</sup> "Mag. Brit." v. 492.

compartment, the mounted attendants have waited without the palace; they are now joined by Harold, who leads the way, his hawk perched on his fist, and his dogs scouring the country before him. It is well known to persons conversant with antiquity, remarks Mr. Ducarel, that the great men of those times had only two ways of being accoutred when they set out upon a journey, either in the habiliments of war, or of the chase. Harold, as going on an errand of peace, we find here represented in the latter. The knight's hawk and hound were cherished by him with a pride and care scarcely inferior to that bestowed on his destrier. Fabulous prices were paid for these birds, and so highly were they esteemed that the ancient statutes forbade any person giving his hawk as a part of his ransom. Amongst the Anglo-Saxons hawking was a favourite pastime, but it was reserved for the Normans to raise falconry to the dignity of a science, and thus we find that nearly all the words appropriated to the sport are old French. Severe and arbitrary laws were enacted by William, for regulating sports and protecting game, which continued to be rigidly enforced during the respective reigns of his several successors. None but persons of rank were allowed to keep hawks; and it was the Forest Charter of King Henry III. which relaxed this oppressive restriction and by which "every freeman was privileged to have eyries of hawks, falcons and eagles, in his own woods, with heronries also."

Though several hawks are introduced in the

course of the tapestry, in no one case is the bird provided with a hood. The hood was introduced from the East about the year 1200, and as, after its introduction, it was considered an essential part of the equipment of the bird, its absence from the tapestry is conclusive evidence of its comparatively early date.<sup>1</sup> We see the jesses (or leather straps attached to the legs by which the bird was held on the hand) and, I think, also, the bewits (leather rings round the legs), but no indication of the long and thick white leather glove upon which the bird was always seated in after days.

The hawks are depicted in the tapestry as of a size that could scarcely have been attained even by the gerfalcon, a bird appropriated to the use of Emperors. The size is no doubt to add importance to the bearers.

Horses were introduced into this island long before the Christian era, and employed for both warlike and domestic purposes. The crossing of the English horses with those of the Romans and subsequently, in the reign of Æthelstan, with those imported from Germany, appears to have improved the breed, for it became so prized abroad that a law was made in 930 prohibiting exportation. About the time of the Conquest a horse cost 30s., a mare or colt 20s., and an untrained mare 60*d.* William took great pains to improve the breed by crosses with the horses of Normandy, Spain and Flanders, and in his reign the horse was first used in agricultural operations.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 31.

It will be observed that three of Harold's dogs wear collars fitted with leash-rings, and that the horses are hog-maned. Harold's horse seems to have some ornament entwined with its mane. Both saddle and stirrups are used, the former being high peaked and apparently made of wood.

It seems likely that the stirrup was a somewhat recent invention, for all the knights in the tapestry do not use them, and the only form of spur that occurs is the pryck.

## ECCLESIA :

### *The Church.*

#### PLATE III.

Harold and an attendant, who is perhaps intended as a representative of the rest,<sup>1</sup> but who is more probably his companion of the introductory scene, enter the church of Bosham, to perform their devotions and seek a blessing on their enterprise. They gaze earnestly towards the interior, and genuflect reverentially as they cross the sacred sill. Harold's show of piety contrasting strongly with the subsequent violation of an oath taken under the most solemn circumstances was here, Dr. Bruce thinks, uppermost in the artist's mind.

Their religious exercises terminated, they adjourn to a neighbouring house, doubtless Harold's, to pass the remaining time of their stay on shore

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 32.

in one of those carouses to which our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were singularly partial. In a solar or large upper hall, the place peculiarly set apart for eating and drinking, is the feast prepared. The tapestry does not show us the form of the table, but we know that it would then consist of a board laid on tressels, and covered with a cloth.<sup>1</sup>

This seems not to be a regular meal, since the large joint of salted meat which in those days formed the chief dish does not appear. It was probably but a hasty collation of bread and baked apples washed down with beer or wine; in bowls and horns of which they are engaged in pledging one another when a messenger announces that all things are ready for their departure. It is, however, possible that the Earl's followers are alone feasting here whilst Harold and his esquire are at their devotions, and that it is Harold's readiness to go on board which the attendant communicates.

Be this as it may, the Earl and his retinue quickly strip off their nether garments and wade to their boat, carrying the hawk and hounds. They are followed by the seamen, oars in hand, one of whom also carries an implement of which, Dr. Bruce states,<sup>2</sup> no satisfactory explanation has been given, and which he conjectures may be a throwstick such as was used by the ancient Egyptian fowlers. It appears to me to be simply the leash, which, having been removed from one of the dogs, is now employed to overcome its reluctance to leave the shore; the bending being

<sup>1</sup> Wright, "Homes of other Days," p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> P. 34.

but the artist's device to express the flexibility of the material.

The border beneath the banquet scene shows two animals engaged in licking their paws, whilst that under Harold's embarkation is illustrated with the fables of the Fox and the Crow and the Wolf and the Lamb.

HIC HAROLD.· MARE NAVIGAVIT.·  
ET VELIS: VENTO: PLENIS VENIT:  
IN TERRA: VVISSONIS COMITIS

*Here Harold set sail upon the sea, and with sails filled by the wind came to the land of Count Guy.*

PLATES IV., V. AND VI.

Harold's party occupy a large boat, a smaller one towing astern. These are shown twice; once as leaving England; and again as arrived at the coast of Ponthieu, of which the above-mentioned Guy was count.

The representation of the Earl's departure is very spirited, the anchor is weighed and the boat rides on the swell, two persons with poles keep her from grounding, another prepares to set sail, and three seamen rest on their oars ready to give way at a moment's notice.

The larger vessel is but an open boat, the bow and stern of which nearly resemble each other, as



in the whaleboats and Maltese galleys of the present day. The single mast, apparently stepped each time that sail was made, is traversed by a yard on which the square sail is set. It is not clear if, like the smaller boat, she is furnished with thwarts for rowers, but the presence of a series of holes, answering to rowlocks, favours the supposition. A paddle over the windward quarter answers the purpose of a rudder. The sides of the vessel, which are very low, are heightened, when under sail, by an artificial bulwark, formed by the shields of the crew, locked one within the other, as we find them in the paintings of Herculaneum, and, as we see in the later scenes of the tapestry, the English were accustomed to form their "Shield-wall" in time of war.

From their form and fittings we may easily, says Lancelot, perceive that these are not fishing boats, which proves that Harold's voyage was not unpremeditated; and Dr. Bruce, supporting this view, remarks that all signs of a gale are wanting.

However this may be, the ship nears the land, a watch has been set at the mast-head, and preparations are made for coming to an anchor. Harold, who has been all this time at the helm, now takes the sheet into his left hand; three of the crew stand by the back-stays, a fourth appears to be slacking the main halliards, a fifth prepares to unship the mast, another man hauls up the boat by its painter, whilst one of his mates is engaged in stowing the sail, and two more are vigorously backing water to keep the vessel from beaching.

## HAROLD ∴

*Harold.*

PLATES VI. and VII.

Harold, in full costume, next approaches the shore in the boat, the anchor is cast, and he prepares to land. He is ready to pay his respects to the lord of the land, but the spear which he carries seems to indicate his distrust of a pleasant reception. The sequel shows that his uneasiness was not ill-grounded, and affords an illustration of the barbarous rights of nations then recognized.

HC: APPREHENDIT: VVIDO:  
HAROLDV:

*Here Guy seizes Harold.*

PLATE VII.

It was the custom, observes Monsieur Thierry, in his "Histoire de la Conquête,"<sup>1</sup> of this maritime country, as of many others in the Middle Ages, to imprison and hold for ransom all strangers thrown upon its coast by a tempest, instead of rendering them any assistance. We here observe the enforcement of this right, for no sooner is Harold's parley from the boat concluded, and he and his attendant have stripped and waded ashore, than they are arrested by a follower of the Count who points to him as authority for his act. What-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. i. p. 295.

ever the nature of the conversation held between Guy and Harold previous to his debarkation may have been, the latter was induced to relinquish his spear and to land, retaining only his saxe; that weapon that was never laid aside, but, half knife, half dagger, was used at meals, laid by the hand when sleeping, and ultimately deposited in the grave of its owner.<sup>1</sup> With this simple weapon Harold and his follower prepare to show fight, but the Count's mounted guard, fully armed with lance, sword, and shield, renders effectual resistance hopeless, and the Earl, together with his crew, is taken captive.

Guy is here represented as plainly dressed, but well armed. A large sword hangs at his side, a basilard or hunting-knife, which a writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine"<sup>2</sup> erroneously conceived to be a horn, is suspended from his saddle, and the pryck spur is on his heel. We may here point out that the Norman horses are depicted in the tapestry as larger than those of the Anglo-Saxons, and that, although the trappings are common to both nations, the uncut mane here falls on the neck, instead of being hogged in the manner already noticed as then customary in England.<sup>3</sup> It will be noticed that throughout the tapestry entire horses are alone represented, the same opinion as to the inefficiency of mares and geldings to perform the more arduous kinds of work appearing to have been then common which still obtains in France.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. lxxiii. p. 11, 37.

<sup>3</sup> "Ladies' Newspaper," 1851-52.

ET DVXIT: EVM AD BELREM: ET  
IBI EVM: TENVIT:

*And led him to Beaurain and there imprisoned  
him.*

PLATES VIII. AND IX.

The author of the Chronicle of Normandy, first printed in the year 1487, states that "He led him to Abbeville," but that writer is too inaccurate in other instances to be entitled to much credit here. Montreuil, not Abbeville, being then the capital of Ponthieu, and the residence of its counts, and finding, as we do, that Beaurain-la-Ville and Beaurain-le-Château (*Castrum de Bello-ramo*) were but some two leagues thence, we may safely identify them with the Belrem to which the Count is here mentioned as conducting his prisoner.<sup>1</sup>

The capture shown in the last plate having been effected, the party turns about and proceeds towards the Count's château. Monsieur Jubinal,<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce,<sup>3</sup> and indeed most of those who have commented upon this picture, consider that the foremost horseman is intended to represent Guy; he has, say they, now that the chances of a fight are over, resumed his cloak, and bears on his fist his hawk, since his progress is now one of peace.

<sup>1</sup> Ducarel, "Ang.-Norm. Antiq." Fol. London, 1767. App. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> "Anciennes Tap. Hist." 2 vols. oblong fol. Paris, 1838-39, vol. i. p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 44.

His bearing is triumphant, his mantle is proudly trussed up on the shoulder, his falcon wears grilletts, or bells, a mark of honour then greatly esteemed, and turns its beak forwards as ready to take flight; whilst Harold's aspect is totally different, since he is stripped of his mantle and his falcon of its grilletts. The bird turning its head towards him appears to typify the unhappy condition of its master.

Before, however, endorsing the above theory it may be well to notice two or three points. The foremost rider wears a moustache and mantle, but is neither armed nor spurred. He who follows is shaven, and has no cloak, but carries the basilard and wears the pryck spur, all which corresponds with Guy's portrait in the preceding scene. The absence of grilletts, if they be absent, for this is not very clearly shown in the tapestry, now simply indicates the inferiority of his rank. To my mind the moustache suffices to identify the foremost figure with Harold. This would reverse the position of the characters. Harold's followers go first, escorted by some of the Count's retainers; then comes the captive Earl; thus placed, he is under the eye of Guy, who brings up the rear with his horsemen. I do not think that I stand quite alone in this view, for it appears to have been that of a writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine."<sup>1</sup>

It may be noticed that whilst the foremost rider carries his falcon, as usual in the tapestry, on the left hand, his right, which in civil life seems to have been the bridle hand, is unoccupied, the reins

<sup>1</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." lxxiii. p. 1138.

hanging on the horse's neck. May not this be a conventional method of denoting that the rider is not going of his free will; since, at a later time, "to ride spurless" appears to have been a phrase almost equivalent to being conducted as a prisoner? <sup>1</sup>

VBI: HAROLD: T VVIDO: PARABOLANT:

*Where Harold and Guy converse.*

PLATES IX. AND X.

Harold's sword seems to have been but just returned to him, for it is shown first in the custody of one of the Count's guards, and then as held in Harold's hand as though he had not had time to gird it on. With one follower, he is introduced into Guy's presence chamber. Here the Count is seated on a throne, exhibiting the customary dog's-head ornament; the inferiority of his rank to that of a king being, seemingly, indicated by the absence of a cushion. His feet rest on a footstool of three degrees; his left hand grasps a huge sword of justice, whilst his right emphasizes his conversation with Harold, who bows slightly on entering, and appears to be expostulating. Their conversation has been supposed to relate to the amount of ransom required, which we find in this instance was very considerable. It may be that Harold's companion was his co-ambassador; that their

<sup>1</sup> "Athenæum," 30th October, 1875.

mission from Eadward was now declared, and permission sought to acquaint Duke William of Normandy with the critical position of his cousin's vassal; but, for reasons which I give later (see p. 44), I incline to suspect here a bare announcement of the advent of the Duke's commissioners.

An armed attendant touches Guy's left arm, and calls his attention to something passing without; probably to the approach of William's messengers. A man in the doorway leans eagerly forward, his antic action, and the singularity of his costume, party-coloured and vandyked, suggested to Mr. Stothard the idea that this personage is intended to represent Guy's fool or jester.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce conceives him an unobserved witness of the interview, and that he has found means to acquaint William with the untoward position of the English. But we shall shortly see that the messenger who came to the Duke was, as his moustache indicates, a Saxon; whilst the jester, if jester he be, is here pourtrayed as clean shaven. They cannot, therefore, be identical, and this man may be, after all, but the messenger who announces the coming of the Norman emissaries.

<sup>1</sup> "Archæologia," vol. ix. p. 189.

VBI: NVNTII: VVILLELMI: DVCIS:  
 VENERVNT: AD VVIDONĒ

*Where Duke William's messengers came to Guy.*

PLATES XI. AND XII.

Two knights are sent by the Duke to treat with Guy; who, as soon as they are dismounted, receives them, and stands with a haughty air, axe in hand, to show, as has been thought, his power of life and death over his captive. The Count is partially habited in his war harness, having a tunic of scale armour beneath his mantle; an armed attendant, who stands behind him, seems to be offering counsel, whilst William's messengers press the object of their mission with great vigour.

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TVROLD

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*Turolde.*

PLATE XI.

While the ambassadors confer with Count Guy, their horses are held by a personage wearing a beard, but whose shaven head sufficiently proclaims his nationality. It is commonly held that the artist intended him for a dwarf, and Miss Agnes Strickland conceives him to have been *the designer of the tapestry*, who modestly introduces his portrait here rather than in a more important scene, but she does



not furnish the grounds on which this singular speculation is based.<sup>1</sup> Over the head of this individual is the word Tuold, and to him it has generally, but as I think incorrectly, been considered as applying. To my opinion it has been objected that if this word had related to the hindermost of William's messengers it would have been placed over his head, in the same way in which we have already seen that Harold was indicated when landing; but the objectors have overlooked the fact that the heads of the Norman knights already touch the running inscription, and that no room is left for the insertion of a name in that position. The artist has, however, been at great pains to prevent any mistake as to whom this word refers, and has taken the unusual course of enclosing it between two lines, attaching these to the back of the person whom the name is intended to indicate. This would seem to be sufficiently clear of itself, but the next compartment shows us that the messengers come on their errand unattended; and the dwarf must consequently be a retainer of the Count of Ponthieu. His name was not likely to be known to the designer of the tapestry, but with those of the messengers he would be doubtless acquainted. Tuold was a common Norman name at the time of the Conquest. Aluredus (*nepos Tuoldi*) grandson or nephew of Tuold, held lands in Lincolnshire during the reigns of Eadward the Confessor and of William. A Tuold was Sheriff of Lincolnshire after the Conquest, and founder of Spalding

<sup>1</sup> "Lives of Queens of Eng." vol. i. p. 59.

Abbey. His niece and heiress was Countess of Chester, and married Ivo Taillebois, the Conqueror's nephew. An Albert and a Richard Fitz-Tuold are mentioned in the Domesday Book. Duke William's governor or tutor was named Tuold—*Tuoldus teneri Ducis pedagogus*—but he was killed shortly after William became Duke of Normandy. Finally, a Gilbert Fitz-Tuold held, at the time of the survey, Watelege, which had previously been held by King Harold. This Gilbert appears to have been a feudatory of Odo.<sup>1</sup> Through the kindness of Monsieur Dubosc, the learned archivist of St. Lô, I saw a charter bearing the ✠ marks of Duke William and of Tuold, *Constable of Bayeux*. To identify him with the Tuold of the tapestry offers, I think, the most satisfactory solution of this difficult point that has been as yet suggested; for it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that a man set to the menial employment of holding the horses of the Count's visitors would be specially referred to by name. The only reason that seems to have suggested the attendant as worthy of remark is his small size; but this, observation will show to have been forced upon the artist. Given the label with the name above his head, and the necessity of raising his feet to the middle distance, to suggest that he was out of earshot of the conference, and the space into which the unimportant servitor had to be compressed, was clearly defined. It is curious if the very care taken by the designer to avoid the

<sup>1</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 141.

possibility of error should have conferred a posthumous glory upon the wrong man.

If my view be correct, William, perceiving the importance of securing Harold's person, sends people of condition to negotiate his release, and that one in whom the inhabitants of Bayeux would take an especial interest, their Constable, alone is named. With him they would be familiar, and it is doubtless his son whose name, as we have seen above, occurs in "Domesday" as an under-tenant of Bishop Odo.

## NVNTII: VVILLELMI

*William's Messengers.*

## PLATES XII. AND XIII.

A writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine"<sup>1</sup> considers these two ambassadors as different from those whose interview with Guy has just been noticed; and to show it, says he, the groups are separated by a species of vaulted edifice. Entreaties and remonstrances having failed to procure Harold's release, William next employs menaces. The two ambassadors are knights, who arrive on the full gallop with the lances couched; appearing to announce that their embassy is of a less amicable character than the former. This view being supported by Dr. Bruce, it is with diffidence that I advance the opinion that the order of time is here inverted, a practice by no means uncommon, and

<sup>1</sup> Vol. lxxiii. p. 1226.

of which, in the case of King Eadward's burial and death-bed (Plates xxxi., xxxii.), we shall find another example in this very work. I believe that we here see, on their journey, the same messengers whose arrival we have already witnessed, whilst the next compartment shows us their dispatch by William at the entreaty of the Saxon who has acted as Harold's envoy. I am by no means certain that this inversion of chronological sequence should not be extended to the scene of Guy's conversation with Harold and that he only has his sword restored when the Duke's envoys are at the gates. It is as if the artist would say Guy was having a conference with Harold when the arrival of the Duke's messengers was announced to him; here you see him receiving the message; this is where they were on the journey; and they were sent by the Duke, as you will see in the next section. The building, on which so much stress has been laid as separating the supposed different embassies, is doubtless but the castle of Beaurain, which the horsemen approach as they proceed on their mission.

† HIC VENIT: NVNTIVS: AD WIL-  
GELMVM DVCEM

*Here the messenger came to Duke William.*

PLATES XIII. AND XIV.

William is seated on a throne, which, with the exception of its having a cushion and the footstool

consisting of but two steps, nearly resembles that of Guy. He receives the suppliant Englishman, for such his moustache proclaims him, with a cheerful expression of countenance, and issues orders to two of his retinue, who turn with alacrity to obey him whilst he yet speaks. We have already seen what duty they were called upon to perform; its results were, however, of considerable importance, and a watchman, who is posted in a tree, looks eagerly forth, shading his eyes with his hand, to retain in sight as long as possible the retreating forms of the messengers.

The envoy approaches William with evident symptoms of awe; his crouching posture was construed into deformity by Montfaucon, who was therefore of opinion that it represented the same dwarf whom we have just seen holding the horses of the Norman ambassadors. This opinion was adopted by Monsieur Léchaudé-D'Anisy, and even Mr. Planché goes so far as to say that the fact of one of the men-at-arms placing his hand on the head of the messenger<sup>1</sup> indicates a familiarity only to be accounted for by the peculiar character of the individual subjected to it.<sup>2</sup> These learned writers appear, however, to have overlooked the fact that the beard and shaven crown which appear as such marked characteristics of the dwarf, are not reproduced here, whilst all those of a Saxon are present.

It is a matter of dispute whether the building

<sup>1</sup> The hand of the man-at-arms is behind, not upon, the Englishman's head. Compare the position of the hands of speakers and listeners in Plates i. vii. x. xi. xxix. xxx. etc.

<sup>2</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 142.

that follows this scene forms a part of it,<sup>1</sup> or belongs to that which succeeds.<sup>2</sup> If it related to the latter, it could be but the castle of Beaurain, which, as we have already seen, was a building of a totally different character; moreover, the sentinels on the walls look towards William on his throne, whilst, had they been concerned with the transactions of the following compartment, they would hardly have turned their backs upon so important and interesting a spectacle as the meeting of their master with the powerful Duke of Normandy. Taking these points into consideration, we must, I think, regard this picture as a representation of William's castle of Rouen.

HIC: WIDO: ADDVXIT HAROLDVMO  
AD VVILGELMVM: NORMAN-  
NORVM: DVCEM

*Here Guy conducted Harold to William  
Duke of the Normans.*

PLATES XIV., XV., AND XVI.

Guy had been himself imprisoned for two years by William, and no doubt rejoiced to have in his power one whose person was of value to his powerful enemy, and who thus offered so delicious an opportunity for revenge. Having dallied with the dangerous luxury as long as he thought pru-

<sup>1</sup> "Gent's Mag." vol. lxxiii. p. 1226.

<sup>2</sup> Jubinal, "Les anciennes Tap. Hist." vol. i. p. 33.

dent, he yielded to William's menaces and the promise of a heavy ransom, and conducted his prisoner to Eu,<sup>1</sup> whither the Duke, with a troop of armed horsemen, was come to receive him.

Eadmer, Roger of Hoveden, and others, have stated that Guy sent Harold to William, but it will be seen that the tapestry supports the assertions of William of Poitiers, Matthew Paris, and William of Malmesbury, that the Count of Ponthieu himself surrendered Harold into William's hands, at the same time receiving the promised ransom. "*Grates retulit condignas, terras dedit amplas ac multum optimas et insuper in pecuniis maxima dona.*" Our friend Guy was far too wary to lose sight of his valuable prisoner before an equally valuable equivalent was forthcoming.

William sits firmly on his horse, and is represented as a strongly and squarely built man—in common with Guy and Harold, he wears the mantle of noble birth. His posture is indicative of decision of character, and we have here, in all probability, no fancy portrait of the Conqueror.<sup>2</sup>

Monsieur Jubinal, adverting to the remarks which he made upon the scene of Harold's journey to Beaurain, observes that his hawk is once more turned as if ready for flight, and that its grillets have been restored.

<sup>1</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiii. p. 1226.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Jubinal, "Les anciennes Tap. Hist." vol. i. p. 33.

HIC: DVX: VVILGELM: CVM HAR-  
 ROLDO: VENIT: AD PALATIUM SVVM

*Here Duke William, together with Harold  
 came to his palace.*

PLATES XVI. AND XVII.

The word *palatium* is ambiguous, and we must turn to William of Poitiers for the information that it was to Rouen that Harold was escorted by William.<sup>1</sup> The tapestry shows us a spacious building, the roof of which is carried by seventeen semi-circular arches. The architectural features of this edifice exactly resemble those represented in manuscripts of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries.<sup>2</sup> From an adjoining tower a watchman perceives the safe return of the Duke and his retinue.

No sooner are they arrived than William gives an audience to his guest, and we see the Duke seated on his throne listening attentively to a moustached person, recognized by common consent as Harold, who apparently introduces a troop of Norman soldiers.

What the subject of this conversation was we have now no means of ascertaining for certain; but, apart from a surmise which I make in the

<sup>1</sup> Willelm is a spelling found on William the Conqueror's coins; but Wilgelm, the form adopted in the legend to this section, is undiscoverable. It, probably, is the Bessin form of Willielm, which is the spelling used by William of Poitiers, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Jubinal, "Les anciennes Tap. Hist." vol. i. p. 33.



following section, it has been variously conjectured as representing—

1. Harold giving an account of his mission from King Eadward, and assuring William of his succession to the crown of England.<sup>1</sup>

2. The announcement of Conan's threatened invasion.

3. Harold undertaking to marry William's daughter and to give his sister in marriage to one of the Norman nobles.<sup>2</sup>

4. Harold praying William to send messengers to England to acquaint his friends with the news of his safe release from the dungeons of Beaurain.<sup>3</sup>

VBI : VNVS : CLERICVS : ET :

ÆLFGÝVA

*Where a certain clerk and Ælfgýva . . . . .*

PLATE XVIII.

We have now reached what is unquestionably the most puzzling representation in the entire tapestry. Who is this lady, with a purely Saxon name, who is here introduced, seemingly at the gate of William's palace, with no apparent reference to anything before or after? As yet, nothing has been detected in the contemporary chronicles which throws the least light upon this subject, and

<sup>1</sup> Léchaudé-D'Anisy, "Description de la Tapiserie de Bayeux," royal 8vo, 1824, p. 352.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 353.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 53.

in the absence of facts, the wildest conjectures have been hazarded.

Many of those who have commented upon this scene seem to have been unaware that *Ælfifu* is a very common English name,<sup>1</sup> and to have fancied that it was a sort of title, meaning queen or princess. Thus Ducarel<sup>2</sup> says that this word seems to have been rather titular than personal, and Dr. Bruce,<sup>3</sup> whilst quoting Thierry<sup>4</sup> as his authority for its signifying *a present from the genii*, appears to concur in Ducarel's opinion. These writers seem to have adopted the idea of Lancelot, who argued, from the double name of Eadward's mother *Ælfifu-Emma*, that *Ælfifu* was equivalent to *Hlæfdige*.

Starting with the erroneous opinion that this word was synonymous with the title of queen, some writers conceive that William's duchess is here portrayed,<sup>5</sup> and that a secretary or officer informs her of the promise of her daughter's hand, which the Duke has just made, to Harold. But this is clearly absurd; for were the term descriptive, it is to a Saxon queen alone that it could apply. The correct titles of Harold, both before and after his coronation, are most carefully given, showing the pains taken by the designer to avoid anachronisms. So accurate an historian

<sup>1</sup> "History of the Norman Conquest of England," by E. A. Freeman, 3 vols. 8vo, London, 1867-69, vol. iii. p. 696.

<sup>2</sup> "Ang.-Norm. Antiq." App. p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> Thierry, "Norm. Conq." p. 41.

<sup>5</sup> Ducarel, "Ang.-Norm. Antiq." App. p. 10.

would never have called the Duchess "*Queen*" before her husband had ascended the English throne.<sup>1</sup>

Several other writers contend that one of William's daughters is here introduced to our notice,<sup>2</sup> but their opinions vary as to the lady's identity.

Mr. H. Gurney<sup>3</sup> thinks that Adeliza is represented; a devotee whose knees are said to have become horny from incessantly kneeling in prayer, and who died affianced, against her will, to Alfonso of Spain. Again another writer cautions us against such a supposition, and insists that it is on the head of her sister Agatha that a secretary lays his hand in token of her betrothment:<sup>4</sup> whilst Monsieur Delauney<sup>5</sup> asserts that it is Adela, another daughter, who was promised to Harold, and subsequently married to Stephen, Count of Blois. We need not, however, enter into their arguments, for none of these ladies could have been the "*Ælfgyva*" of the tapestry. Wace, indeed, speaks of Harold's promised bride as *Ele*; but, making every allowance for the varieties of their names, we can hardly conceive that a person so conversant with the minutest details, as the designer of the tapestry undoubtedly was, should so travesty the name of one of his master's

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> "Researches and Conjectures on the Bayeux Tapestry," by Bolton Corney, 8vo (London, 1838), p. 19; "Archæologia," vol. xvii. p. 101, and vol. xix. p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> "Archæologia," vol. xviii. p. 364.

<sup>4</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiv. p. 314.

<sup>5</sup> "Origine de la Tapisserie de Bayeux, prouvée par elle-même, par H. F. Delauney," royal 8vo, Caen, 1824, p. 74.

daughters. As she was never queen the epithet, on the supposition that it was titular, could not with propriety have been applied to her. Moreover, at the time of Harold's visit to Normandy William's daughters were but children, to whom we cannot suppose that any formal embassy would be sent.

In the opinion of Dr. Bruce,<sup>1</sup> the lady is Ealdgyth, the widow of Gruffydd, King of Wales, and sister to Eadwine and Morkere, Earls of Mercia and Northumberland, whom Harold married<sup>2</sup> shortly after his return to England, as his second wife. Her name, as written by Florence of Worcester, differs little from "Ælfgiva," and as Harold's wife, even the supposed titular signification would be right. Dr. Bruce thinks that the clerk announces Harold's safety to his betrothed, who has been temporarily placed in a nunnery, and that an exhibition of the Earl's perfidy in thus dallying with his English sweetheart, at the time that he was engaging himself to another, is intended.

Harold's sister Eadgyth is here recognized by M. Léchaudé-D'Anisy,<sup>3</sup> who conjectures that she was amongst the hostages sent to Normandy at the time of her father's rebellion, and that she now receives news of her deliverance, whilst Monsieur Thierry<sup>4</sup> thinks that the mysterious woman is but an embroidress, to whom a clerk gives orders to execute the tapestry.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> "Monumenta Historica," 614-642.

<sup>3</sup> D'Anisy, "Desc. de la Tap." pp. 353-4.

<sup>4</sup> Jubinal, "Anciennes Tap. Hist." vol. i. p. 33.

Mr. Planché<sup>1</sup> has pointed out that the inscription is left incomplete, and thinks that this fact, coupled with the occurrence of certain very gross figures in the border, implies a scandal which was so well known at that period as to render a plainer allusion to it perfectly unnecessary, and which, thus introduced, says Mr. Freeman,<sup>2</sup> goes together with Tuold, Vital, and Wadard, to prove the contemporary date and authority of the tapestry.

Mr. Planché goes on to say that there were only two contemporary personages popularly designated Ælfgifu, concerning whom he has been able to trace a scandal as attaching—Firstly, Ælfgifu-Emma, sister of Richard II. Duke of Normandy, the Queen, first of Æthelred, King of England, and secondly of Cnut the Great, and mother by the former sovereign of Eadward the Confessor. According to some historians, she was accused by Godwine, Earl of Kent, and Robert, Archbishop of Canterbury, of being accessory to the murder of her son Ælfred, and also of a disgraceful intimacy with Ælfwine, Bishop of Winchester.

Secondly, Ælfgifu of Northampton, the mistress of Cnut, and the daughter of the Earldorman Ælfhelm, by the noble lady Wulfruna. Florence of Worcester tells us that she palmed off Swend, the son of a certain priest, upon the King as his, a like story being told in the case of Harold Harefoot, with the substitution of a cobbler for a priest as the real father. But having considered these

<sup>1</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 142.

<sup>2</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 699.

cases, Mr. Planché confesses that he is unable to connect them in any way with the picture under discussion.

We now come to the opinions of Mr. Freeman,<sup>1</sup> who, having examined the different views that I have recapitulated, offers certain ideas, which, whilst he owns that they are but guesses, he thinks superior to those of some others in not being absolutely *impossible*. He considers it possible that Ælfgifu, the name assumed by Emma on her marriage with Æthelred, was the name usually adopted by foreign women who married English husbands, and that a reference to the intended marriage of Harold with William's daughter may be here proleptically or sarcastically designed. He states that Ælfgifu was the name of Ælfgar's widow, the mother of Harold's wife, Ealdgyth; that according to some accounts she was of Norman birth, and suggests that she might have been living in or visiting her native land at this time, and that her introduction may have reference to Harold's marriage with her daughter.

It is probable, he continues, that Harold had a sister named Ælfgifu, and she must have been the sister whom Harold promised, as part of his oath, to give in marriage to one of William's nobles. If, as he believes, Harold's voyage was a mere yachting expedition, he may have been accompanied by his sister, and Guy, not pressing his right of wreck on a woman, she may have found her way to Rouen before her brother. But

<sup>1</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 698.

he confesses that whoever we may identify with the "Ælfgyva" of the tapestry, the nature of the transaction depicted is still a mystery.

Where so long a catalogue already exists of conflicting theories, emanating from persons, many of whom are entitled to speak with authority, it may seem hazardous work to add another guess to those I have cited, but I cannot refrain from submitting an idea that has forced itself upon me during the somewhat protracted study that I have given to this subject.

The great difficulty which all seem to experience is the want of connection between this scene and those which immediately precede and follow it. We find depicted Harold, attended by some Norman soldiers, in conversation with William; then the unexplained representation; after which Harold departs as the Duke's ready ally on an expedition into Brittany. Wace has stated that Harold accompanied William on more than one raid into Brittany. In that which is here depicted, occur transactions of which we have no other record; do we then know the full motives which set on foot *this* expedition? Mr. Freeman remarks that the governor of Dol, to which place the Normans first proceed, bears the genuine Celtic name of Rhiwallon, a family which seems to have been also connected with Dinan, the place upon which the Normans next advance, for in a list of the lords of Brittany who went to the crusade of 1096, mention is made of Rivallon de Dinan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pitre-Chevalier, "La Bretagne Ancienne et Moderne," royal 8vo, Paris (1844), p. 178.

Now, the guess that I build on these premisses is, that the interview between the clerk and the lady took a turn which the artist was reluctant to express in words, and has, therefore, suggested by the nude figure in the lower border, which is in exactly the same attitude as the clerk, and perhaps by the erotic emblem of a dove-cote, for such I take the structure to be, on which his left foot rests; that the lady may have been Harold's sister, from her name we are certain that she was his countrywoman, and residing at Dol with the above-mentioned Rhiwallon. Perhaps she accompanied Wulfnoth when he was sent by Eadward into Normandy; or afterwards became a sharer of his exile. If this be the true interpretation, the story will run as follows:

Harold announces to William that violence has been offered to one in whose welfare he is interested, and begs his aid to rescue her whom he had promised as a bride to one of the Duke's nobles. I hold that it is the Normans who have brought the news whom Harold introduces in the preceding scene. We are then shown the cause of his solicitude and the departure of the expedition to seek revenge. As Mr. Freeman remarks,<sup>1</sup> their approach to Dol is not hostile; they come forward to secure the culprit, and it is only when he escapes by a rope from the walls and joins the Duke's enemies at Dinan, that it becomes necessary to assume a hostile demeanour to ensure his capture. The reason of the introduction of this expedition

<sup>1</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 700.



may be, as Dr. Bruce suggests, to illustrate Harold's ingratitude and William's generosity, though the object of the English Earl's anxiety may not be his future spouse. I must own to having done nothing here but romance over a difficulty which competent judges have failed to determine: yet my view has some support from the dragon of the lower border, which is breathing forth its fury in angry flames, if I may regard it as the dragon of Wessex, and as standing for the enraged Harold. The solution I propose would at least make a connected story of these disjointed subjects, and contains besides, as I think, elements of probability.

HIC · VVILLEM: DVX: ET EXERCITVS:  
EIVS: VENERVNT: AD MONTĒ  
MICHAELIS

*Here Duke William and his army came to  
Mont Saint-Michel.*

PLATES XVIII., XIX. AND XX.

The Duke, with his own followers and his English allies, start on their expedition. For the only detailed accounts of this campaign that we possess, we are indebted to William of Poitiers and to the tapestry. From the former we learn that the object of the undertaking was the deliverance of Dol from the besieging army of Conan of Brittany, that Rhiwallon held the city on Duke William's behalf, and that on the approach of the Normans Conan

fled. He tells us that the friendship of the Norman host was but little more advantageous than the hostility of the Bretons, and that Rhiwallon begged the Duke to withdraw his forces ; but of the further progress of the allies he makes no mention, nor does he allude to Rennes or to Dinan. It will be seen, then, how much discrepancy exists between his version and that of the tapestry. Hence Lord Lyttelton assumed that the tapestry was wrong for contradicting the Chronicle, whilst Mr. Planché argued the inaccuracy of William of Poitiers for being at variance with the tapestry. But, as Mr. Freeman<sup>1</sup> points out, there is no distinct contradiction between the two authorities, and the reconciliation of their accounts is easy if we suppose an omission on the part of the historian. Mr. Bolton Corney<sup>2</sup> thinks that the explanation of the seeming discrepancy is that the Norman army on its return halted at Bayeux ; and that the warriors recounted their adventures, the memory of which was preserved by tradition and reproduced in the local handiwork, though it escaped the pages of the chronicler.

A view of Mont Saint-Michel, he continues, is introduced in this episode, but no events occur to require it. This circumstance also admits of explanation ; for the priory of Saint-Vigor, which was re-built by Odo, had received its inmates from Mont Saint-Michel, and the nomination of its abbot was one of the rights of the Bishop of Bayeux.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 700.

<sup>2</sup> Bolton Corney, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> Beziere, H.S.B. p. 129.

It will be noticed that, in the upper border, a figure, seated on what is possibly an episcopal throne, points to the building as if it were worthy of special attention.

ET HIC: TRANSIERVNT: FLUMEN:  
COSNONIS:

*And here they crossed the River Couesnon.*

PLATES XX. AND XXI.

This river, in the department of *Ille-et-Vilaine*, enters Cancale Bay nearly opposite Mont Saint-Michel, after a generally northern course of some fifty odd miles, for the last twenty of which it is navigable. The Couesnon forms the boundary between Normandy and Brittany. The passage of this river, which the changing tides fill with a moving sand, is frequently attended with great danger. Shifting as it does, a knowledge of the locality is not always a safeguard against the treacherous sand, and to add to the insecurity of the wayfarer, thick fogs<sup>1</sup> oftentimes close rapidly around him, so that he is unable to reach a place of security before the rising flood sweeps him to his ruin. Such is the spot in which the Normans find themselves. It is considered safest to cross on foot, and most of the riders have dismounted. One man attempts to ford the stream on horseback, the animal misses its footing and falls, whilst

<sup>1</sup> "Histoire pittoresque du Mont Saint-Michel, par Maximilien Raoul," 8vo, Paris (1833), p. 27.

the unlucky rider is thrown. But despite these disasters order is observed, and great care appears to have been taken to prevent the wetting of arms. We see the soldiers bearing their shields above their heads, nor are their swords allowed to touch the water.

Fishes and eels form the subject of the lower border. The fish conjoined<sup>1</sup> *may* be intended for the sign of the zodiac, *Pisces*, and to indicate the season of the year.

HIC: HAROLD: DVX: TRAHĒBAT:  
EOS: DE ARENA

*Here Harold the Earl dragged them out of the  
Quicksand.*

PLATES XX. AND XXI.

Some of the Norman soldiers were sinking deeply into the moving sands, or were being borne away by the flood, when Harold came to the rescue. He is here represented as a man of unusual stature and strength, and these personal advantages are of great service to his allies in this extremity. One man he catches up upon his back, whilst he drags another by the hand from the source of danger. These feats of bodily prowess, and the ease with which his unaided strength sufficed to sustain the sinking, were well calculated to

<sup>1</sup> It is a curious coincidence that such linked fishes are, in China, emblematic of conjugal fidelity. Could such a significance be traced to mediæval Normandy we might suspect a subtle sarcasm at the expense of *Ælfgyva*.

impress the minds of his companions in days when brute force was so highly esteemed, and that it did so live in their memory the tapestry is witness ; but besides this tribute to the English earl's thews and sinews, it seems that the designer was anxious not to omit the smallest circumstance which displays the strict union that existed, at this time, between Harold and William, in order that the former's subsequent conduct might appear the more disloyal.<sup>1</sup> It may be also that Harold, as vitally interested in the object of the expedition used his utmost exertions to secure its success.

## R E D N E S

*Rennes.*

PLATES XXII. AND XXIII.

In the opinion of some writers,<sup>2</sup> the town of Rennes is here represented as the place to which Conan fled, or as the asylum, at least, of his forces from the pursuit of Duke William's army.<sup>3</sup> Rennes was the capital of Brittany, and the usual residence of Conan ; it might, therefore, be naturally supposed that he would seek shelter there from the invading Normans. Mr. Freeman,<sup>4</sup> however, thinks that a pursuit of Conan to Rennes is not intended, and that it is depicted for no other purpose than to indicate the point reached, in the same manner

<sup>1</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiii. p. 1227.

<sup>2</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiii. p. 1227.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 63.

<sup>4</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 700.

that we have just noticed the introduction of Mont Saint-Michel. In support of this view, it is to be observed that the scale upon which the town is shown, is less than that of Bayeux, Dinan, etc., the transactions connected with which immediately concern the progress of the history, and besides, the tranquillity with which sheep browse upon the fortifications is incompatible with the sustentation of a siege.

ET VENERVNT AD DOL: ET:  
CONAN:—FVGA VERTIT:—

*And they came to Dol and Conan fled.*

PLATES XXI. AND XXII.

Answering those who object that the advance upon Dol, as shown in the tapestry, is at variance with the written account of the expedition, Mr. Freeman remarks that there is nothing in the picture which at all contradicts the description of William of Poitiers, as to what happened at this place. Duke William's approach to the city is clearly not hostile; he himself, and those who immediately surround him, are not even in armour; nor are there any defenders on the walls, such as we shall presently see at Dinan. The inscription which the artist has used to explain his work is simply "*Venerunt ad Dol*," they *came* to Dol; whilst in the other case it is "*Pugnant contra Dinantes*," they *fight* against the men of Dinan.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 700.

On the mound upon which the town is built are two cockatoo-like birds; these seem to greet one another affectionately, and, following out the symbolism which many writers have discovered in the tapestry, would indicate the peaceful meeting of William and Rhiwallon; unless, indeed, they allude to the billing and cooing of the priest and Ælfgyva. Mr. Freeman confesses his inability to offer any explanation of the man who descends from the walls by a cord; but he has been thought to be a messenger sent to inform William of the extremity to which the inhabitants were reduced.<sup>1</sup> My suggestion, as already stated (p. 56), is that we here see the culprit in the Ælfgyva scandal.

At the approach of the Duke, the fame of whose prowess and cruelty had preceded him, Conan raised the siege and sought safety in flight.

HIC MILITES VVILLELMI: DVCIS:  
PVGNANT: CONTRA DINANTES:—  
ET: CVNAN: CLAVES: POR-  
REXIT:—

*Here Duke William's soldiers fight against the men of Dinan, and Conan reached out the keys.*

PLATES XXIII., XXIV. AND XXV.

The story of the siege of Dinan belongs wholly to the tapestry, for here alone is a record of such

<sup>1</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiii. p. 1227.

a transaction to be found. It is strange that William of Poitiers should have omitted all mention of so considerable an exploit; but the difficulty is a good deal lessened if we accept Wace's statement, to which I have already alluded, that Harold and William were companions in more than one of these Breton raids.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Planché<sup>2</sup> has advanced a rather startling proposition with reference to this subject. He thinks that Rennes, and not Dinan, may be the city that Conan is surrendering; since the inscription does not designate another place, but simply informs us that it is the soldiers of Dinan who are fighting against those of Duke William. Forces from Dinan might, he conjectures, have marched to the rescue of the capital, and on the defeat of Conan would be compelled to surrender.

This is ingenious, but I concur with Mr. Freeman that a siege of Dinan is really intended, and not a siege of Rennes.

The representation now under consideration offers an excellent illustration of the mode of warfare in that day. The attention of the defenders is occupied with a furious charge of cavalry, who hold their course to the very gate of the town, discharging missiles against the besieged. These gather to the spot where danger threatens, some venturing forth on to the bridge that crosses the ditch, and return the showers of javelins with right good will.

Two Norman knights, apparently men of consequence, since each has a banner, take advantage

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 701.

<sup>2</sup> "Journ. Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 145.



of the diversion. They dismount, drive their lances into the ground as supports for their shields, and are thus left free to act. Torch in hand, they approach the palisades which surround the town, and, seemingly unperceived by the garrison, succeed in firing them. This incident decides the fate of the day in favour of the Normans, and we see Conan handing over the keys on the point of a lance to a knight, probably Duke William, who receives them in the same way.

This mode of surrendering the keys of a beleaguered city doubtless gave rise to the well-known fabled derivation of the name of Percy. It will be observed that the creatures in the borders which are combative during the attack become very submissive when the city is reduced.

HC: WILLELM: DEDIT: HAROLDO:  
ARMA

*Here William gave arms to Harold.*

PLATE XXV.

That is to say, he arms him after the fashion of knighthood, or knights him, as we should now express it.

Both Duke and Earl are shown armed *cap-à-pie*, and Harold holds in his hand the banner which by virtue of the dignity now bestowed upon him he is entitled to bear. William is seen placing, with

one hand, the helmet on Harold's head, whilst with the other he braces the straps of his hauberk.<sup>1</sup>

The Anglo-Saxon order of chivalry was as strongly marked and as highly esteemed as that of the Normans, from which, however, it differed considerably, the former having the character of a religious ceremony, whilst the latter was regarded as a military distinction. The Saxon candidate for knighthood went through a probationary period of fasting and penance, when, having confessed his sins and received absolution, he was girded with a belt by the officiating priest, who laid the blade of a sword upon his shoulders. This ceremony was necessarily performed on foot, whilst that of the Normans, whose military strength lay in their cavalry, was always performed on horseback.

It has been noticed that the mode of conferring knighthood employed on this occasion is a compromise between the two uses. Both William and Harold are on foot, but the agency of a priest is dispensed with.

The tapestry seems here to corroborate Ordericus Vitalis, who tells us that William rewarded Harold's exertions with presents of splendid arms, horses, etc., in contradiction to Wace, who lays the scene of the ceremony of knighthood at Avranches, before the commencement of the campaign in Brittany.

“ Quant il fu au Duc commenez  
 Qui à Aurences donc estoit  
 Et en Bretagne aler vouloit  
 Là le fist le Duc chevalier

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 66.

Armes et dras li fist baillier  
A lui et à ses compaignons  
Puis l'envoya sus les Bretons."<sup>1</sup>

“When Harold was conducted to the Duke's presence,  
Who at that time was at Avranches,  
And wished to go into Brittany,  
The Duke created him, in that place, a knight ;  
Arms and clothing he caused to be distributed  
To him and his companions,  
And then sent him among the Bretons.”

It is more likely that William would confer such a dignity as a reward of services rendered than as an incentive to prowess. We can only reconcile the conflicting statements if we suppose that this incident occurred after one and before another of those Breton raids of which Wace has spoken ; and that the two authors are thinking of two different expeditions.

HIC VVILLELM VENIT: BAGIAS VBI  
HAROLD: SACRAMENTVM: FECIT:—  
VVILLELMO DVCI:—

*Here William came to Bayeux, where Harold  
made an oath to Duke William.*

PLATES XXVI. AND XXVII.

Wace tells us that to receive the oath William caused a parliament to be called. It is commonly

<sup>1</sup> “Roman de Rou,” t. ii. 262, quoted by Sir S. R. Meyrick,  
“Crit. Inq.” vol. i. p. 4.

said, that it was at Bayeux<sup>1</sup> that he had this great council assembled. He sent for all the holy bodies thither, and put so many of them together as to fill a whole chest, and then covered them with a pall; but Harold neither saw them nor knew of their being there; for nought was shown or told him about it; and over all was a phylactery, called the "bull's-eye," the best that he could select. When Harold placed his hand upon it, the hand trembled and the flesh quivered; but he swore and promised upon his oath to take Ele to wife, to give his sister in marriage to a Norman noble, and to deliver up England to the Duke; thereunto doing all in his power, according to his might and wit, after the death of Eadward, if he should live, so help him God and the holy relics there! Many cried, "God grant it!" and when Harold had kissed the saints and had risen upon his feet, the Duke led him up to the chest and made him stand near it, and took from off the chest the pall that had covered it, and showed Harold upon what holy relics he had sworn; he was sorely alarmed at the sight.

Different writers have given most varying accounts of the time and scene of this celebrated transaction, William of Poitiers placing it at Bonneville, and Orderic at Rouen; whilst the statements of the nature of the oath range from an engagement to surrender the kingdom of England

<sup>1</sup> Bagias, a local orthography, is a crasis of Bajocas and equivalent to Baias, which approaches the style of those monuments in which the town is termed Baiä, Baiæ, and Baiarum.

to William to a simple undertaking to marry one of his daughters.<sup>1</sup>

The version of the story which has been commonly received I have quoted above, but much of it is doubtful, and a part is hardly in accordance with the picture in the tapestry.

Here we see Duke William seated in state upon an elevated throne, whilst the unfortunate Harold stands bare-headed between a reliquary and an altar, on which, with extended hands, he prepares to register his vow. He may have been surprised when he was shown how formidable a collection of saintly bones the wily Duke had collected, but he must have been previously sure that the reliquary, which is of an usual kind, contained some relics;<sup>2</sup> nor is it easy to imagine that any bodies could add to the sanctity of an oath taken upon the body of Christ himself; and if the concealment of the relics be insisted upon, it must be allowed that the Host is plainly exhibited on the altar. William had, indeed, no temptation to employ such an artifice, since, at this time, Harold was completely at his mercy; and later, when, before the battle of Senlac, Harold returned an answer to the Duke's message that his oath was void, he grounds its invalidity not upon its having been obtained fraudulently, but that it was made under compulsion.

The eagles joined by a floriated bar, below the representation of Bayeux, may be intended to indicate the extent to which Harold's oath bound him to William.

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 686, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 68.

HIC HAROLD: DVX:—REVERSVS: EST  
AD ANGLICAM: TERRAM:—

*Here Harold the Earl returned to England.*

PLATES XXVII., XXVIII. AND XXIX.

The oath once extorted, William no longer hinders the departure of his quasi-guest, and the Earl was, no doubt, but too glad to escape from a court where the civilities shown were of so equivocal a nature. No sooner is the ceremony of doing homage completed, than Harold prepares for his re-embarkation. The ship in which he sets sail in no way differs from the others that occur in the tapestry, and on the peculiarities of which I have already offered a few remarks. The crew, from their cleanly shaven faces, are apparently Normans, unless indeed they are Harold's Saxon followers, who have followed the fashion which then obtained in Normandy. The vessel nears the land, and, whilst the seamen are busied in getting the running rigging ready to lower away, a tall personage, whom I conceive to be Harold, leans against the mast and gazes anxiously towards the shore. On the beach is a building, which Dr. Bruce<sup>1</sup> takes to be Harold's palace of Bosham, from the pier or landing-stage of which a watchman descries the travellers' return, whilst by other writers,<sup>2</sup> with whom I agree, this individual

<sup>1</sup> P. 71.

<sup>2</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiii. p. 1227; "Not. Hist. sur la Tap." p. 12.

has been thought to be a woman, rejoicing at the return of her lord. I am somewhat surprised that the learned doctor has not used this conjecture to support his theory, and identified her with Ealdgyth, whom he holds to be the "Ælfiva" of the tapestry, and to have been left by Harold in England in a place of safety when he went forth on his expedition.

Whichever be the sex of the watcher on the gate, others share the anxiety to witness Harold's return, and every window is filled with heads, stretched out to scan the approaching vessel.

ET VENIT: AD: EOVVARDV:—  
REGEM:—

*And came to King Eadward.*

PLATES XXIX. AND XXX.

No sooner is Harold landed, than he starts on horseback for the court of his royal master. He is attended by a mounted squire, whom he appears to be sending forward, doubtless to announce his coming. The Earl, it will be observed, is represented without a moustache; this can scarcely have been due to an unintentional omission on the part of the artist; since the figure (Plate xxviii.), which I identify with Harold, is shaven and the undoubted Harold (Plate xxxii.) appears with an imperfect moustache, I think, as suggested in the case of the ship's crew, that all the English temporarily submitted to the customs of Normandy.

Harold is next shown entering the presence chamber of Eadward. The King's expression of countenance, as he listens to the traveller's account of his adventures, betokens anything but an agreeable reception for the unfortunate Earl. Here the tapestry illustrates the Norman view of the motive which prompted Harold's expedition; for had he simply failed upon an errand of his own, and against the execution of which the King had warned him, Eadward would rather have laughed at him than have taken serious notice of the misadventure.<sup>1</sup> It has been suggested<sup>2</sup> that the man who follows Harold is his esquire, who carries his battle-axe; but the opinion of Dr. Bruce is more plausible, that Harold's entrance is that of a guilty person, and that the axe is borne by one of the King's attendants, and is turned towards the Earl to betoken that he had committed an offence worthy of death. We see that on his journey neither Harold nor his moustached esquire carried such a weapon; that it is held by a shaven man, probably one of Eadward's Norman favourites; and that the man on the King's left hand, who is certainly one of his English guards, bears an axe. This time, however, the edge is turned away from the culprit, to show that, after the rebuke had been administered, the interview terminated in a pardon. The King, it will be noticed, has reversed his sceptre, the emblem of his power, perhaps that Harold, like Esther, might draw near and touch it, and live.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 28.      <sup>2</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiii. p. 1227.

<sup>3</sup> Esther, iv. 11 and v. 2.



HIC PORTATVR: CORPVS: EAD-  
WARDI: REGIS: AD: ECCLESIAM:  
SCI PETRI APLI

*Here King Eadward's body is carried to the church  
of S. Peter the Apostle.*

PLATES XXX. AND XXXI.

The body of the sainted king, his form shrouded from sight, but still uncoffined, is borne, head foremost, on the shoulders of eight of his nobles. The funeral procession is wonderfully simple. No gilded cross, no candles, no censers are visible. Boys ringing bells walk on either side of the bier; behind which follow the two chief ministers of the ceremony, bearing their office books in their hands and surrounded by a group of clergy. One of the clergymen carries a crosier, which in its form closely approximates to that of the Archbishop of Sens in 1067.

Stigand, the Archbishop of Canterbury, does not appear to have officiated. At all events, the foremost of the priests wears a simple cope, and is unadorned with any badge of pontifical rank. It was, perhaps, the friend and bedesman of the deceased, Abbot Eadwine, who performs this last rite for his master.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of the crosier would not invalidate this view, as it was used by abbots as early as the fifth century.

The procession moves to the church of S. Peter,

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 29.

at Westminster, where a sarcophagus was prepared to receive the royal corpse. The recent completion of the edifice is indicated by a young man, erroneously supposed by Lancelot to be a *bell-ringer*, who is still engaged in fixing the weather-cock at the east end.

Over the church hangs a cloud, from which issues a right hand, with the fore and middle fingers extended, in the act of benediction. A similar hand is found upon medals struck on the death of Constantine the Great. This emblem may be simply equivalent to the soul borne heavenwards, as represented on sepulchral monuments, or indicate that the house he had reared to the glory of his God was a fitting resting-place for the departed; it may represent the divine benediction of the deceased, or allude to the consecration of the earlier foundation, which had been attended by great and miraculous manifestations of divine approval. It is recorded<sup>1</sup> that the night before S. Mellitus was to dedicate the monastery erected to S. Peter, a man, clad in strange vesture, cried from hour to hour, offering a rich reward to him who should take him over the river. A fisherman, hearing his cries, ferried him across, and was permitted to witness a vision of angels, S. Peter himself ordering him to let down his net, which doing, he captured a large shoal of fish. The Greek alphabet, thrice written in the sand, was the sign by which he was to make known the truth of his vision to the priests, whom the saint

<sup>1</sup> MS. Lib. Uni. Camb. circa 1245.

commissioned to announce special absolution to the faithful in that edifice.

The representation of Eadward's obsequies, it will be remarked, precedes the pictures of his sickness and death. We have already noticed, in the course of our examination, similar transpositions,<sup>1</sup> but here the arrangement has a peculiar significance. It indicates, not only the haste of the funeral, that the King was, so to say, buried before the breath had well quitted his body, but also that the preliminary portion of the history is terminated, and that we now enter upon a new subject, the right of succession to the vacant throne.

An important element of the title to the crown is Eadward's bequest, and therefore is it that his death bed is chosen for the opening of the section specially devoted to the substantiation of the Norman claim ; to the death of Eadward, Harold's immediate coronation forms a striking sequel, the force of which would have been weakened by the introduction of an intervening scene.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 44.

HC EADVWARDVS: REX IN LECTO:  
ALLOQVIT̄: FIDELES:—

*Here King Eadward, in bed, speaks to his Vassals.*

PLATE XXXII.

The word *fideles* may be rendered vassals, for M. Paul Lacroix says,<sup>1</sup> that to the companions or comites, who, according to Tacitus, attached themselves to the fortunes of the Germanic chiefs, succeeded the Merovingian *Leudes*, who, when assembled, formed the King's council. These leudes were persons of great importance, owing to the number of their retainers, and did not hesitate to declare their opinion even when it was directly opposed to the royal will. The name of *Leudes* was abandoned under the second of the French dynasties, and replaced by that of *Fideles*, which soon became a common designation both of the vassals of the crown and of those of the nobility. M. Delauney, arguing the Norman origin of the tapestry, states that this expression is only met with in French authors, or in the charters of their kings—in those of Henri I., etc., and that in the English charters we read *ministri* in place of *fideles*.<sup>2</sup>

Before turning to the immediate subject of this scene, I may offer a few remarks, extracted from Mr. Wright's "Homes of Other Days,"<sup>3</sup> upon the bed on which the dying king reclines; for, indis-

<sup>1</sup> "Mœurs, Usages et Costumes du Moyen Age," imp. 8vo, Paris, 1871, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> P. 59.

pensable as we now consider this article of furniture, it is probable that what we call bedsteads were then rare, and only possessed by people of rank.

The bed itself seems usually to have consisted merely of a sack (*sæccing*), filled with straw and laid on a bench or board. Hence, the words used commonly to signify a bed were *bænca* (a bench), and *streow* (straw). All, in fact, that had to be done when a bed was wanted, was to take the sack out of the *cyst* or chest, fill it with fresh straw, and lay it on the bench.

In ordinary houses, it is probable that the bench for the bed was placed in a recess at the side of the room, in the manner we still see in Scotland ;<sup>1</sup> and hence the bed was called *cota*, a cot ; *cryb*, a crib or stall ; and *clif* or *clyf* a recess or closet.

Under the head was placed a *bolstar* and a *pyle* (pillow), which was probably also stuffed with straw ; but on one occasion we read of *pulvinar unum de palleo*, that is, a pillow of a sort of rich cloth then made, and which I am inclined to think the tapestry here intends to represent.

The clothes with which the sleeper was covered were *scyte*, a sheet ; *bed-felt*, a coverlet ; and *bed-reaf*, bed-clothes.

Eadward is shown as fully dressed in his royal apparel to receive his sorrowing friends ; we know, however, from a host of authorities, that it was the general custom of the middle ages to go into bed quite naked.

But to come to the subject of this compartment.

<sup>1</sup> " Art Rambles in Shetland," by John T. Reid, small 4to, Edinburgh, 1869, p. 60.

The King had specially summoned the Witan of all England to his court at Westminster, to be present at the consecration of the newly-built church of S. Peter, on the feast of the Holy Innocents.<sup>1</sup> But the day had come that no man can escape, and Eadward drew near to die. His efforts to take part in the ceremony were futile, his part was performed by his wife; and when the news of the completion of the ceremony was brought to him, he sank back on his pillow as if to say, it is finished.

For five days his sickness increased, on the sixth his voice was inaudible, and for two days he lay in a state of complete exhaustion. At last, on Thursday, the 5th January, 1066, he awoke in full possession of his senses and of his speech. In the tapestry we see his nearest kin and the chiefs of his realm grouped around the dying man's bed. According to the biographer cited by Mr. Freeman,<sup>2</sup> on either side are Harold the Earl and Stigand the Archbishop. At the bed's head, supporting the pillows on which his royal master rests, is Robert the Staller, and on the ground, at the foot of the bed, the weeping Lady Eadgyth, apparently kneeling, cherishing in her bosom her husband's feet, chilled by approaching death. One writer<sup>3</sup> has doubted if indeed this woman can be either the Confessor's consort or his mother, since both had been disgraced by him; but we have the authority of the contemporary life of Eadward<sup>4</sup> for the presence of Eadgyth. My own doubt is as to

<sup>1</sup> Fl. Wig. 1065.

<sup>2</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiv. p. 314.

<sup>4</sup> Vita Eadw. 431.

the identity of the ecclesiastic. In both compartments the anonymous cleric is depicted as bald and bearded, whilst Stigand, where he is named (Plate xxx.), is clean-shaved and, but for his tonsure, has plenty of hair. I believe the artist to have withdrawn Stigand from scenes where his presence would reflect upon Eadward, and to have introduced him when Harold's coronation was to be called in question.

We see that the King is raised up in bed, he had seen a vision, and prayed that, unless true, he might be powerless to declare it. Then, to the horror of his auditors, he foretold the sorrows of England, cursed by God, and harried with fire and sword, whilst fiends spread through the land in wild exultation. His prophetic visions related, Eadward gave orders for his burial in the newly-erected minster. He checked the grief of those around him, addressed words of consolation to his sorrowing wife, and begged that his death might not be kept secret, lest he should lose the benefit of his people's prayers. These matters arranged, he reverted to the subject of the succession. Wace tells us that it was forced upon him, for that Harold assembled his kindred and sent for his friends and other people, and entered into the King's chamber, taking with him whomsoever he pleased. An Englishman began to speak first, as Harold had directed him, and said, "Sire, we sorrow greatly that we are about to lose thee ; and we are much alarmed, and fear that great trouble may come upon us. No heir of thine remains who may comfort us after thy death. . . . On

this account the people weep and cry aloud, and say they are ruined, and that they shall never have peace again, if thou failest them. And in this, I trow, they say truly ; for without a king they will have no peace, and a king they cannot have, save through thee. . . . Behold the best of thy people, the noblest of thy friends ; all are come to beseech thee, and thou must grant their prayer before thou goest hence, or thou wilt not see God. All come to implore thee that Harold may be king of this land. We can give thee no better advice, and no better canst thou do." As soon as he had named Harold, all the English in the chamber cried out that he said well, and that the King ought to give heed to him. "Sire!" they said, "if thou dost it not we shall never in our lives have peace." Then the King sat up in his bed, and turned his face to the English there, and said, "Seigniors! you well know and have ofttimes heard that I have given my realm at my death to the Duke of Normandy ; and as I have given it, so have some among you sworn that it shall go." But Harold, who stood by, said, "Whatever thou hast heretofore done, Sire, consent now that I shall be king, and that your land be mine. I wish for no other title, and want no one to do anything more for me." So the King turned round and said, whether of his own free will, says Wace, I know not, "Let the English make either the Duke or Harold king, as they please ; I consent." So he let the barons have their own will.

Surely this account is unsupported by the tapestry ; no packed meeting of Englishmen fills



the chamber of death. Harold, pleading earnestly for the crown, might win from the dying Eadward a reluctant assent, but no pressure could have induced him to exclaim, "To thee, Harold, my brother, I commit my kingdom," and to commend to his care the lady Eadgyth and his Norman favourites. And yet this is the scene that Mr. Freeman, after collating the statements of those who have written on this subject, has brought before our eyes in his graphic description of the Confessor's death-bed. The final moment was now at hand; all earthly matters must give place to the last rites of the Church; the holy viaticum was administered, and then Eadward sank to his rest, his body lying as if in a gentle sleep.

ET HIC: DEFUNCTVS EST

*And here he is dead.*

PLATE XXXII.

Much more joyous<sup>1</sup> was the ceremony of sepulture among the Anglo-Saxons than that of marriage. The house in which the body lay till its burial was a perpetual scene of feasting, singing, dancing, and every species of riot. This was very expensive to the family of the deceased; and in the north it was carried so far, that the corpse was forcibly kept unburied by the visiting friends, until they were certain that they had consumed all the wealth that the departed had left behind him in games

<sup>1</sup> "Ant. Portfol." vol. i. p. 14.

and festivity. In vain did the Church exert itself against such enormities. The custom had prevailed during the times of paganism, and was much too pleasant to be abandoned by the half-Christians of the early centuries. In the picture before us, we see no such indecent revelling, probably because a better state of things obtained at this date, and perhaps also because time was precious. Attendants are engaged in performing the usual offices to the body, in the presence of an ecclesiastic, who bends forward in an attitude of benediction. These offices consisted, firstly, of washing the corpse, after which it was clothed in a straight linen garment, or put into a bag or sack of linen, and then wrapped closely round from head to foot in a strong cloth wrapper; the head and shoulders of the corpse were, however, left uncovered till the time of burial, that such relations and acquaintances as were desirous to do so might take a last view of their deceased friend.<sup>1</sup> To this day we retain, in our way, this old custom, leaving the coffin of the dead unscrewed, unless the body be offensive, till the time of burial. Before the body was put into the sepulchre, the head and shoulders were also closely covered over with the wrapper. When the corpse was brought to the tomb, it was held by two persons, one at the head, and the other at the feet, while the priest perfumed it, or more accurately speaking the sepulchre, with incense; then those two who held the corpse knelt down and laid it in the grave, which while they were performing, the attendant priest prayed and blessed it.

<sup>1</sup> In the case of kings this was done for the further reason that all persons might see that they were actually dead.

Linen of the finest quality was prepared for the obsequies of Eadward; and his best mantle was appropriated to the envelopment of his body. When his tomb was opened about six and thirty years after his interment, the mantle which covered the corpse was found entire; and being removed, his body appeared clothed in the regal vestments, with the ornaments belonging to it, together with the *sudarium* which covered his face and head, in a perfect state. The old mantle was taken away as a precious relic, and the body, with all its other ornaments, was re-wrapped in a mantle of silk. In the year 1688, several pieces of gold-coloured and flowered silk were drawn out of the tomb, which probably were part of the envelopment just mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

This is the only compartment of the tapestry where two scenes are given in one breadth; nor probably is it thus arranged without a special design, to show how hard on each other followed the death and burial of Eadward and the election and coronation of Harold;—hard indeed, since all these events were comprised in the space of forty-eight hours.

There is a species of bird in the lower border,

“Which, like a bird of Paradise,  
Or herald's martlet, has no legs;”

and is, perhaps, emblematic of the soul, stripped of all that rendered it fit to remain an inhabitant of earth, rising heavenwards.

<sup>1</sup> Strutt, “A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England,” 2 vols. 4to, London, 1842, vol. i. p. 66.

HIC DEDERVNT: HAROLDO: CORO ·  
 NĀ: REGIS

*Here they gave the King's crown to Harold.*

PLATES XXXII. AND XXXIII.

No sooner was Eadward dead, than the Witan of the whole realm of England assembled, and they unanimously declared in favour of Harold. The choice of the assembly had to be made known to the king-elect, and we here see that two of its members were sent to offer the crown of England, as the gift of the people of England, to the man whom they had chosen as their king. One bears the official axe; the other bears a crown, and points towards the chamber of the dead; it can scarcely have been brought thence, however, as this crown is arched, whilst that of Eadward, as shown in the tapestry, was a circlet heightened with fleurs-de-lys. Can this difference be intended to indicate that to the regal crown of England Harold never had a right?

The dangers of Tostig's vengeance and William's rivalry, together with the oath extorted from him, may well account for Harold's anxiety as expressed in the tapestry, regarding the crown at once wistfully and anxiously, and half drawing back the hand stretched forth to grasp the glittering gift. There was great danger in accepting, but greater danger still in refusing the crown, the danger of a division of the kingdom. Ambition bade him seize

it. Duty in no way held back his hand. The offered gift was accepted.<sup>1</sup>

It is not difficult throughout the tapestry to discover symbolical representations if we are disposed to search for them, and Dr. Bruce calls attention to Harold's position between the two axes, as illustrating the dangers of his situation.

HIC RESIDET: HAROLD REX:  
ANGLORVM:

*Here is seated Harold, King of the English.*

PLATE XXXIII.

It was in those days usual for a coronation ceremony to be performed during one of the great festivals of the Church. Eadward's death occurred on the last day but one of Christmastide, and, under the circumstances, Harold could not postpone his consecration until Easter. Moreover, as we have just seen, the Witan was assembled at the moment of Eadward's death; to wait for another gathering of the people would have been madness, and therefore was it that the day of the coronation followed at once on that of the election. The coronation of Harold involved the previous burial of Eadward, whose interment must consequently follow at once on the day of his death; and thus we find that on the same day,<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 20 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Friday, 6 Jan. 1066.

probably in the same minster, the double ceremony of Eadward's burial and of Harold's coronation took place.<sup>1</sup>

Strong evidence that the tapestry is nearly contemporary with the events depicted is furnished by the representation of Harold as duly consecrated with the usual ecclesiastical rites, a fact which the Norman writers living nearest to that time allowed, but which those further removed from it distinctly deny, some going so far as to state that Harold placed the crown upon his own head.

In the Domesday Survey, says Dr. Bruce,<sup>2</sup> Harold is mentioned as seldom as possible; and when his name does occur, it is not as king, but as Harold the Earl. The fact of his here being called Rex, he thinks, points to the tapestry having been designed during William's first visit to Normandy, and before he was independent of the goodwill of the Saxon nobles; but this is assuming the interest of William in the work, whilst it is certainly equally possible that its authors had no reasons to disguise facts.

## STIGANT ARCHIEP̄S

*Archbishop Stigand.*

PLATE XXXIII.

The superscription here calls the Archbishop "Stigant," which may be taken as proof that the designer was not an Englishman. At the same

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> P. 80.

time it goes far to establish the early date of the tapestry, since it accords to Stigand a title which, at a later period, when Lanfranc was settled in the see of Canterbury, would not have been accorded to him, whom William of Malmesbury calls "the pretended and false archbishop."

Accounts vary as to the person by whom the ceremony of Harold's consecration was performed. The Norman chronicles for the most part agree that Stigand officiated; Florence of Worcester says, that Ealdred, the Archbishop of York, performed the ceremony; whilst Roger of Wendover declares that the King placed the diadem upon his own head.

In the tapestry Stigand is shown standing by the newly-crowned monarch; but it must be noticed that he is not placing the crown on Harold's head, nor does the inscription state that he did so. All is left vague. This Mr. Freeman<sup>1</sup> considers as due to Norman influence, and that the artist attempted, by the substitution of Stigand for Ealdred, to cast a slur upon the ceremony, the performance of which it was impossible to deny.

## ISTI MIRANT STELLĀ

*These men are dismayed at the Star.*

PLATE XXXIV.

We learn that there appeared a sign in the heavens, of which no man had seen the like.

<sup>1</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 613, *et seq.*

Hardly was the octave of Easter past, when, on the ninth day, a "hairy star" shone over the land with a lurid and fearful glare. Its size equalled the full moon, and its train, at first small, increased to a wonderful length, with three long rays streaming earthwards. It was such a star, says Wace, as is wont to be seen when a kingdom is about to change its king. The appearance of this comet is recorded in nearly every chronicle of the day ;<sup>1</sup> it evidently made the deepest impression throughout Europe ; and it was very generally, even by men who had no special connection either with England or with Normandy, accepted as a presage of the conquest of England.<sup>2</sup>

x The statements as to the term of its duration are conflicting, different accounts stating it at seven, eight, fourteen, fifteen, eighteen, and thirty days, but as it has been now almost certainly identified with Halley's comet, we know from Chinese annals that it was detected on the morning of April 2nd, 1066, in the constellation *Aquarius*, not far from the ecliptic ; moved rapidly eastwards till, approaching the sun's place, it disappeared for some days, and became visible again in the north-western heavens in the evenings. The comet's presence in the morning sky, though mentioned in the "Chronicon Alberici," does not appear to have been generally recognized in Europe. Western writers date the comet's appearance as in Easter week,—Easter Sunday in 1066 fell on April 16th,

<sup>1</sup> Inter alios *v.* Guil. de Jumièges, Math. of West, "Tiberius," B. 1 and 4, B. M.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 640.

x Seen in May 1910



—it was widely observed in the following week, when its distance from the earth was but  $\cdot 17$  of the earth's mean distance from the sun; and it disappeared about June 8th, to return, as it is calculated, in 1910.<sup>1</sup> The quaint representation in the tapestry is especially interesting, as affording the earliest known illustration of these erratic bodies.<sup>2</sup>

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## hAROLD

*Harold.*

PLATE XXXIV.

King Harold is seated on his throne, doubtless in the same palace in which we were first introduced to Eadward. He bends his head eagerly down to listen to a man standing at his right hand. This personage bears a large sword in his left hand, whilst Harold has exchanged his sceptre for a javelin. Lancelot imagines that a messenger here brings the news of the descent of Tostig on the northern coast of England, and to this expedition M. Delauney<sup>3</sup> refers the vessels shown in the border; whilst Dr. Bruce<sup>4</sup> maintains that William's intended invasion is the intelligence announced. Mr. Freeman<sup>5</sup> dissents from these opinions, and believes that this group, immediately following the representation of the comet itself, shows the reception by Harold of the tidings of its

<sup>1</sup> Mr. J. R. Hind in the "Times," 30th Sept., 1881.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 85.      <sup>3</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 76.

<sup>4</sup> P. 78.      <sup>5</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 644.

appearance and of the interpretation of the omen. He points out the indirect connection of Tostig's raid with the subject of the tapestry, and that its introduction here would be completely inappropriate both as to time and subject. He calls attention to the fact, that the story of William's expedition begins in the next compartment, and that the present group ends the story of Eadward's death and Harold's succession. In his opinion, the speaker in this scene is the wise-man who interprets the sign, it being quite possible, he allows, that the border sets forth the nature of his prophecy, thus forming a connecting link between this and the following compartment. As Tostig's expedition is outside the story of the tapestry, the fact that the comet appeared in April, and the building of the Norman fleet occupied the summer of 1066, would induce me to accept Mr. Freeman's view, did not Harold's interlocutor, with his half-drawn sword, seem rather a warrior than a sooth-sayer. I prefer to believe that William ordered the preparation of a flotilla on receipt of the news of Harold's coronation, and that it is the Duke's projected invasion which the messenger declares. If I am right, we have here a further example of chronological inversion.

Perhaps the birds on the housetop allude to the text :—"A bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes, ch. x. 20.

HC: NAVIS: ANGLICA: VENIT. IN  
TERRAM WILLELMI: DVCIS

*Here an English ship came into the territory of  
Duke William.*

PLATES XXXV. AND XXXVI.

This ship carried the news of Eadward's death and of Harold's succession, but whether it was specially sent by any of William's friends in England, or whether it went simply in the ordinary course of communication between two friendly countries, we are not distinctly told.

We know, however, that Eadward, when dying, commended his Norman favourites to Harold's care. Those who were willing to abide in the land as English subjects under Harold's allegiance he prayed him to keep and protect. Those who refused to become the men of the new king he prayed him to dismiss, under his safe-conduct, to their own land, taking with them all the goods which they had acquired by his own favour.<sup>1</sup> And since a shaven messenger brought the news to the Duke, and a shaven man at the helm here issues orders to his English boatmen, we may conceive that one of the strangers whom Harold's clemency had allowed to remain in the land took the earliest opportunity of requiting his kindness by sending the news to their native sovereign.

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. pp. 15 and 257.

HIC: WILLELM DVX: IVSSIT NAVES:  
EDIFICARE:

*Here Duke William gave orders to build ships.*

PLATES XXXVI., XXXVII. AND XXXVIII.

William was hunting in the park of Quevilly, near Rouen, when the messenger from England led him aside and communicated the news of Eadward's death and of Harold's succession. He returned home in a moody silence, upon which none dared to intrude, till William FitzOsbern<sup>1</sup> bid the Duke not to mourn, but arise and be doing; cross the sea, and wrest the kingdom from the usurper.

William was, however, too crafty to spoil his game by indiscreet haste. He sent embassies to Harold, requiring the fulfilment of his oath. Harold answered that the sister whom he had promised in marriage to a Norman noble, and William's daughter whom he had agreed to marry, were both dead, nor without the consent of the Witan could he marry a foreign wife: and further that their consent was necessary to the validity of his oath, which was already nullified by the means used to extort it. Then it was that William threatened invasion and punishment, and set about his preparations vigorously. In the tapestry we have no record of any temporizing; here the messenger's tale is no sooner told than active

<sup>1</sup> William FitzOsbern was the Duke's second cousin.

measures are taken for the invasion of England. William, seated erect upon his ducal throne, wears an air of the greatest indignation, and the bearer of ill tidings, though a noble, approaches him with every symptom of fear. Beside him on the throne sits one whom Lancelot took to be Robert Count of Mortain, but whose tonsure declares him to be Bishop Odo. William confers with his half-brother, and orders are given to a workman to commence building a fleet.

The axe in the hand of this workman is of a peculiar shape, being double-pointed like a pick-axe, with a short handle. Under the name of the cornuted staff, *besague* or *bisacutum*, it was subsequently much used as a military weapon, but at this period seems to have been a double adze, and employed only as a tool.<sup>1</sup>

We see the trees of a forest falling beneath the hatchets of the woodmen, whilst shipwrights, some of whom are shown as bearded men, shape the felled timber into planks and with them construct small vessels. These little craft appear to be carvel-built, and have a row of holes in their sides, apparently as a substitute for rowlocks.

<sup>1</sup> Sir S. R. Meyrick, "Crit. Inq." vol. i. p. 3.

ἩΙC ΤΡΑἩVNT̄: NAVES: AD MARE:—

*Here they drag the ships to the sea.*

PLATES XXXVIII. AND XXXIX.

The small size of the ships is clearly shown by the primitive means employed to launch them. The only mechanical power employed appears to be a pulley fastened to a post fixed in the water. Through this a rope is reeved, by which they are dragged to the sea.

ISTI PORTANT: ARMAS: AD NAVES:  
 ET ἩΙC ΤΡΑἩVNT: CARRVM  
 CVM VINO: ET ARMIS:—

*These men carry the arms to the ships, and here they drag a cart with wine and arms.*

PLATES XL. AND XLI.

For an expedition of such magnitude, it may well be imagined that an ample supply of war material was necessary, and we are here shown men bearing those swords, axes, lances, helmets and hauberks which would be needed on the other side of the water. The hauberks are shown as carried on poles thrust through the sleeves; and the fact that two men are engaged in the transport of each, sufficiently indicates their weight. All is bustle; but in their haste, provision for the inward

man is not neglected, and the picture displays some porters yoked to a waggon loaded with wine casks, while others bear liquor in skins on their shoulders. Wine, indeed, seems to have been all the refreshment of which any great quantity was thought needful ; conquered England was to find the rest.

The barrel on the cart (which by an ingenious arrangement is made to carry rows of lances and helmets as well as wine, and thus do double duty), says M. Delauney, and that carried on the shoulder, resemble the brandy kegs of the Pays d'Auge. The ancient casks which we find in Montfaucon's "Antiquities," and those used in England, are much shorter, which goes, he adds, to prove the Norman origin of the tapestry.<sup>1</sup>

It was not till the month of August that the Norman fleet was ready to sail on its great enterprise, and even then it was detained for a whole month at the mouth of the river Dive by contrary winds. During this delay, however, so great was William's administrative power, that not only were plunder and violence restrained, but regular pay and provisions were supplied to the army.

The numbers of William's army have been variously stated, and cannot be given with certainty. The sum-total is commonly given as sixty thousand.

On the 12th September<sup>2</sup> William sailed with his fleet to S. Valery, situated on the estuary of the Somme, and here, in the territory of his now faithful vassal, Guy of Ponthieu, awaited that south-west

<sup>1</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." royal 8vo, Caen, 1824, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 391.

wind which should at once transport him and his host to the shores of Sussex.

It was not until the 27th September, after the shrine containing the body of S. Valery had been exposed to the devotion of the army, whilst they and their leader knelt in prayer and covered the reliquary with their offerings, that the south wind blew. Then the camp was in a tumult of joy, and William was foremost in urging the embarkation of his followers.

+HIC: WILLELM: DVX IN MAGNO:  
NAVIGIO: MARE TRANSIVIT

*Here Duke William crossed over the sea in a great ship.*

PLATES XLI., XLII., XLIII. AND XLIV.

The word *Navigium* was then in use, and is to be found in the writings of even good authors of that day.<sup>1</sup>

This vessel, the *Mora*, was the gift of William's loving duchess, and exhibited an effigy of her little son Rufus, bearing a banner and raising a bugle to his lips. This figure has been described as shooting an arrow, and as placed at the stem, whilst the tapestry places it at the stern of the vessel.

His orisons concluded, William put himself at the head of his knights, and lost no time in embarking. The evening sky was overcast, and to guide his squadron the Duke exhibited a signal

<sup>1</sup> 'Orig. de la Tap. de Bay.' p. 77.



lamp, whilst he required each ship likewise to display a light. Towards midnight the expedition paused, but was again under way before dawn. The ducal vessel, well built and well found, quickly outsailed her consorts; in this she was no doubt assisted by her lighter freight, for in the tapestry horses are seen in all the ships with the exception of the Mora and two others near her.<sup>1</sup> Alone upon the waters, the Duke was compelled to lay to until, after an anxious interval, the watch at the mast-head cried that he saw a forest of spars covering the waves. The fleet now joined its leader, the fair south wind continued, and the morning light shone on the consecrated banner and on the chequered colours of the Mora's sails, which now replaced the signal lantern as the rallying-point of the armada. Of these sails William of Malmesbury writes:—“*Omnibus itaque ad prætoricæ puppis vermiculatum velum convolantibus.*” The epithet would apply to the sails of all the vessels as depicted in the tapestry; but those of the Duke's ship and of two others near her—possibly those of his brothers—have a different arrangement of colours from any of the others.<sup>2</sup>

England was now quickly sighted, and by nine on the morning of Thursday, 28th September, her future lord had trodden her shores. In landing that fall is said to have occurred which the quick-witted William turned to such good account, declaring that so far from foreshadowing disaster, it but indicated his taking seizin of his new domain.

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, “Norm. Conq.” vol. iii. p. 399.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 400.

## ET VENIT AD PEVENESÆ:—

*And came to Pevensey.*

PLATES XLIV. AND XLV.

*Pevenesæ* is a French word, the *æ* being given for the closed *é*, and is the name which is still given to this little seaport, which authors of that day call *Penvesellum*, *Penevesellum*, *Pevenesellai*, *Capellus* (Capey popularly), *Pevenesellum*, Pevensey.<sup>1</sup>

A glance at the map of Sussex, says Dr. Bruce,<sup>2</sup> will show how fitting a place was Pevensey at which to effect a landing. Beachy Head, projecting considerably to the south, protects this ancient port from the swell occasioned by the south-west wind; the beach also is of a nature which permits vessels of small draught, such as composed the Norman fleet, to be drawn up on it.

No sooner was land reached than the disembarkation of the troops began. Not a blow was struck against them, yet everything was performed with a regularity that betokened the dread of a forcible opposition. First landed the archers, bow in hand; then the mail-clad knights, bearing their long lances and their double-edged swords; whilst in their turn followed armourers, carpenters, smiths, purveyors, and all the numerous retinue of a camp.

<sup>1</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> P. 112.

HIC EXEUNT : CABALLI DE  
NAVIBUS—

*Here the horses go out of the ships.*

PLATES XLV. AND XLVI.

Upon the peculiarities of the English and Norman horses I have commented, and need therefore only call attention to the highly primitive manner in which the horses of the cavalry are landed. The low bulwark renders any process of whipping or hoisting out unnecessary; the animals are simply urged to tumble over the ship's side, and are then led to the shore with a halter.

The horses no doubt occasioned considerable trouble, since the emphasis given by the artist to their transport and disembarkation manifests the impression made upon his mind.

The hawks shown in the upper border as flying over the heads of the disembarking forces may either represent the actual birds brought in the Conqueror's train or be emblematic of the Normans about to seize their human quarry.

ET HIC: MILITES: FESTINAVERVNT:  
 HESTINGA: VT CIBVM.  
 RAPERENTVR:

*And here the knights pushed on to Hastings to  
 find food.*

PLATES XLVI., XLVII. AND XLVIII.

A stroke probably stood originally over the final A of *Hestinga*, indicating a contraction for the accusative case, *Hestingam*, required by the construction.<sup>1</sup> Again, *Raperentur* seems to have been used as a deponent verb, contrary to classical usage, though the same error occurs on a denier struck at Verdun under the Merovingian dynasty.<sup>2</sup>

The inscription at the head of this section of the tapestry reads *Hestinga* for Hastings, not *Hastinga*, as written by Dr. Bruce; it is, however, so named in authors of that day, who also give the orthography variously as *Hastingus*, *Hastingæ*, *Hastingos*, *Astingæ*, *Altingæ*, *Hastings*, and *Hastaing*.<sup>3</sup>

It has been said that the army once landed, the Norman vessels were burned, in order that, all hope of retreat being cut off, a more desperate valour might animate the army of mercenaries. But of such an incident we have here no sign.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 77.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> That they were carefully preserved appears certain from the Conqueror's remark, when the building of Battle Abbey

On the contrary, ranks of ships, carefully drawn up upon the shore, stretch far away towards Beachy Head. Foraging parties set forth to gather in supplies, and, covered by the cavalry, footmen proceed to seize and slay sheep, oxen and pigs. The capture of the ox presents some difficulty, and appears to be attempted with a coil of rope used as a lasso.<sup>1</sup> The deserted houses of the pillaged English, seemingly for the most part but rude wooden structures, form an appropriate background to the scene of rapine. The border above the end of the word *Raperentur* contains the head of an animal, from which issues the stem of a fleur-de-lys-like plant. This is interesting, as it shows that the heraldic bearing of a beast's head *jessant-de-lys* may have another origin than that transfixion by the iron of a lance or partizan, from which it is usually said to be derived. This supposition is strengthened by the fact that some old manuscripts employ the word *vorant-de-lys*, doubtless a corruption of *devorant* (devouring), which appears sufficiently to indicate the derivation of the charge.<sup>2</sup>

was under discussion, that his ships, now no longer required for war, should fetch stone from Caen.

<sup>1</sup> This object has been conjectured to be a circular loaf of bread.

<sup>2</sup> "The British Herald," by T. Robson, 3 vols. 4to, Sunderland, 1830, sub. voc. *Jessant*.

HIC : EST : VVADARD :

*Here is Wadard.*

PLATES XLVIII. AND XLIX.

Under this heading is represented a knight, then so well known that a further description than his name appeared superfluous to the artist, who converses with the captor of a little pack-horse, shown by its small stature and hogged mane to be English bred. Who this *Wadard* was we have now no means of ascertaining with certainty. Mr. Hudson Gurney<sup>1</sup> surmised that he was the Duke's *dapifer*, a title equivalent to seneschal in a royal household,<sup>2</sup> through whom alone, as William of Malmesbury informs us, he could receive or make communications in his parley with the English.

It has been suggested that he was the messenger of that noble Norman Robert, mentioned by William of Poitiers<sup>3</sup> as domiciled in England, and as warning the Duke of the rashness of his enterprise and of Harold's strength and resources.<sup>4</sup> Another opinion is, that Wadard himself was a Norman, resident near Hastings at the time of the invasion, that he assisted his countrymen on their arrival, and that we are thus to account for his abrupt introduction into the tapestry.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Archæologia," vol. xviii. p. 368.

<sup>2</sup> Abbé Migne, "Lex. Infimæ Latinitatis;" Spelman, "Gloss. Archæol." p. 162.

<sup>3</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 413.

<sup>4</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 149.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

Mr. Amyot<sup>1</sup> and Mr. Planché<sup>2</sup> suppose him to be one of Bishop Odo's officers who distinguished himself in this expedition, although no record of the precise nature of the services which he rendered has come down to us. In support of this view it may be mentioned that Sir Henry Ellis, in his "Introduction to Domesday," points out that a person named Wadard was an under-tenant of Bishop Odo, and held land in six counties, and this fact is cited by Mr. Amyot as a proof of the connection of that prelate with the manufacturers of the tapestry. The Abbé de la Rue insists that Wadard is another form of Waard, Weard, or Ward, and that if the word Wadard be here a proper name it is one adopted in allusion to the occupation of the owner as a warder.

ἩC: COQVITVR: CARO ET ἩC:  
MINISTRAVERVNT MINISTRI

*Here meat is cooked and here the servants serve.*

PLATES XLIX. AND L.

We are here introduced to the mysteries of Norman cookery, and can study the mode in which viands were then prepared, as well as the vessels and implements which formed the *batterie de cuisine*. The apparatus employed is even simpler than that represented in the miniatures which

<sup>1</sup> "Archæologia," vol. xix. p. 203.

<sup>2</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 149.

adorn the Household Rules of James II. King of Majorca.<sup>1</sup>

On the left-hand side of the picture two cooks are engaged in boiling meat ; this, on account of its being usually salted, was the general way of cooking it. The appearance of the pots, suspended between two forked sticks, reminds Dr. Bruce<sup>2</sup> of a plan mentioned by Froissart, of boiling an ox in its own hide, a method of dressing food which is traditionally said to have likewise obtained amongst the Sioux Indians,<sup>3</sup> their extemporized skin caldron being slung in a similar way.

On a shelf in the background are fowls, and other descriptions of small provisions, spitted ready for roasting. A bearded personage, perhaps an English baker pressed into the service of the invaders, is engaged in removing, with a large pair of tongs, the bread, cakes, &c. from a stove on which they have been baking, to the trencher on which they are to be served up.

It appears that the cookery was conducted in the open air, and that the victuals were afterwards carried indoors. We here see some of the assistants handing the spits of roasted meats into a house which is doubtless one of the wooden buildings which were so speedily put together by the Normans after their landing. Thus far we can observe the mode of cooking prevalent in the Conqueror's day, but of the gastronomic mysteries of the period we possess but little information. It is probable,

<sup>1</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> "Schoolcraft," part ii. p. 176.



however, that the Normans relished highly-seasoned dishes, as passages of works which have come down to us make mention of garlic, sage, parsley, ditany, wild thyme, and other strong-tasting herbs, as flavouring ingredients.<sup>1</sup>

Having no proper sideboard with them, the serving-men have extemporized one with the shields of the feasting warriors. All things being ready, the dishing-up is announced by a blast upon a horn. It has, indeed, been suggested that the man who places the horn to his lips is but the Duke's taster,<sup>2</sup> who is tasting the wine that is to be served to his master; but it will be noticed, on referring to the feast at Bosham, that when employed as a drinking-vessel the large end of the horn was that from which the liquor was drunk, which appears to sufficiently refute such a supposition.

ḤIC FECERVN̄<sup>†</sup>: PRANDIVM: ET · ḤIC ·  
EPISCOPVS: CIBV̄<sup>̄</sup>: ET: POTV̄<sup>̄</sup>:  
BENEDICIT.

*Here they make a feast, and here the Bishop blesses  
the food and drink.*

PLATES L. AND LI.

Round the convex side of a table, of that classic form which derived its name from the Greek letter sigma, are seated William, Odo, and four other

<sup>1</sup> Wright, "Homes of other Days," pp. 99-104.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 116.

personages. The bishop asks a blessing, the hungry warriors scarce waiting till he has ceased speaking to commence their repast. Who these four guests were we have now no means of ascertaining. He who occupies the place of honour at the Duke's right hand wears a beard and moustache, but few speculations seem to have been made as to his identity.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce says vaguely of him that he was probably William's Nestor, who refused to comply with the tonsured fashion of the day, whilst to Mr. Planché we are indebted for the suggestion that he is identical with the personage who assisted the Normans on their landing.<sup>2</sup> The favoured guest and the knight next him pledge one another in flowing bowls; whilst of the two men on the bishop's left, one calls his attention to something passing without, the other continuing to eat a fish which he tears to pieces with his fingers. On the well-covered table we see knives, but neither forks nor spoons; indeed, the earliest passage, adduced by Ducange, in which mention is made of the use of these implements, belongs to the end of the fourteenth century: *Johannis de Mussis chronicum Placentinum ad annum 1388*. Vol. xvi. col. 583. *Utuntur tatiis, cugiariis, et forcellis argenti, et utuntur scudellis et scudellinis de petra. Anonymi annal. Mediolan. ad an. 1389*. Ibid. col. 812.

<sup>1</sup> It seems to me possible that this is Roger Earl of Beaumont, who accompanied the Conqueror on his expedition, and was an ally of so great importance as to be mentioned third in the Duke's battle-roll, where his surname is specially noted as "*A la barbe*," this surname pointing to a peculiarity which the tapestry reproduces.

<sup>2</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 150.

*Scudellæ xxv. albæ argenti cum diversis operagiis. Forcella, vox Italica, Gallicè fourchette. Ms. thes. sed. Apost. an. 1295. Item unam forcellam ponderis unius uncie.*

M. Delauney<sup>1</sup> is of opinion that the fork was originally but the diminutive of the angon, and that the bundle of skewers in the servant's hand were intended to be used to eat with. He seems to base his opinion on their barbed construction, but I fail to perceive the barbing in the tapestry itself. He adds that the spoon represented in Montfaucon's "Antiquities" does not appear to have been intended to eat with—and we must conclude that food was then conveyed to the mouth with the fingers, as shown in this scene, doubtless aided by such assistance as the knife could afford.

Within the concavity of the table we see a servant, on his knee, presenting a kind of open porringer or mazer-bowl, which, as well as the cup in Odo's hand, is like the chalices held by the statues of ecclesiastics placed round the cathedral of Bayeux. Similar cups occur on the tombs of certain clerics of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the same cathedral, a coincidence brought forward by M. Delauney as pointing to the Bayeusian origin of the work. The dispenser, according to the laws of Ina, served the king with plate and cup during the whole repast, and offered each of them but once to those whom the king admitted to his table; his duty also it was to taste the liquors,

<sup>1</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 79.



Doubtless, as the result of the leaders' consultation, orders are issued to fortify the position occupied by the Norman army. A noble who, banner in hand, directs the operations, is thought by Dr. Bruce<sup>1</sup> to be William himself; but as the inscription which heads this scene immediately follows the name of Rotbert, it would appear that it was he who was charged with this duty.<sup>2</sup>

The implements used by the intrenching party are pick, spade, and shovel. The pick is of a shape still in use in Normandy;<sup>3</sup> the spade is evidently of wood shod with iron. It is peculiar as having a tread for the foot on one side only, and for the ring-shaped handle. The shovel is a paddle-shaped instrument, and is furnished with a handle like a modern spade. The earth seems to have been first loosened with a pick, then dug up with the spade, and the earthwork thrown up with the shovel.

Two of the workmen use their spades to fight with, and thus handled they appear to have been formidable weapons. This picture probably records a then well-known quarrel, with the particulars of which we are unacquainted.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 117.

<sup>2</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiv. p. 18.

<sup>3</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 80.

## CEASTRA

*The Camp.*

PLATES LII. AND LIII.

*Ceastra* for *Castra* has been looked upon as another Saxon form; but M. Delauney points out that it is the same species of orthography as *Eadwardus* for *Adwardus*, which the author of the panegyric of Queen Emma employs; and that in modern French this mode of spelling is retained in *Jean, protégéa*, and in all those words where the soft *g* precedes an *a*.<sup>1</sup>

The main works seem to have consisted of a mound, upon which was erected one of those wooden castles which the Normans had brought with them.

Dr. Bruce<sup>2</sup> is of opinion, that some extensive intrenchments, which are still to be seen in the immediate vicinity of the railway station at Hastings, are the remains of this encampment.

HIC : NVNTIATVM EST : WILLELM<sup>o</sup>  
DE HAROLD :

*Here tidings of Harold are brought to William.*

PLATE LIII.

The Duke, seated, and with his consecrated banner in his hand, receives the visit of an armed

<sup>1</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 80.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 118.

nobleman. This is doubtless Robert the Staller,<sup>1</sup> who communicates the result of the northern campaign of Harold, which was doubtful at the time of William's landing, and counsels him, as a friend, to return home. To which advice the Duke replied, that he would not return unavenged of his enemy.<sup>2</sup>

It was about a week after the landing of the invaders that Harold reached London, where he awaited the gathering of his adherents.

Hugh Margot, a monk of Fécamp,<sup>3</sup> was sent to demand of the King the surrender of his crown. Harold's indignation at this message was restrained by his brother Gyrth,<sup>4</sup> and he returned a simple statement of his rights, offering William rich gifts to depart quietly, or challenging him to fight on the following Saturday. William accepted the latter alternative, and Harold marched from London, but with what force it is impossible, owing to conflicting accounts, to ascertain, and encamped on Friday, the 13th October, upon the heights of Senlac.

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 413.

<sup>2</sup> Will. "Pict." 128.

<sup>3</sup> The Duke's uncle William had also been a Fécamp monk.

<sup>4</sup> "Rom. de Rou," 11,891, *et seq.*

## HIC DOMVS: INCENDITVR:

*Here a house is burnt.*

PLATES LIII. AND LIV.

This representation is, in Mr. Planché's opinion, not to be taken as a simple indication of the horrors of war, but as the record of a particular fact which occurred at the time. He observes that the house is one of some consequence, and argues that, as William strictly forbade plunder, the incendiaries are Harold's soldiers revenging themselves on some important personage, who had declared for, or was suspected of favouring, the invader; and offers the suggestion that it may represent the house of the bearded guest whom we noticed at the Duke's table.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Planché seems not to have observed that the men who fire the building are Normans, and to have forgotten that when Gyrth proposed that he should march against the invaders whilst Harold harried the country, in order that the Normans might be starved into favourable terms, the king flatly refused to burn an English village or an English house, or to do hurt to the folk committed to his government.<sup>2</sup> This is doubtless rather one instance among thousands of the cruel destruction which was fast spread over the country, as far as William's plunderers could reach. Men fled everywhere with such of their goods and cattle as they

<sup>1</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> "Rom. de Rou," 12,080.



could save, and sought for shelter in the churches and churchyards. In this case an unhappy woman, her eyes turned heavenwards, and clasping the hand of her little son, is leaving the basement of the blazing pile; their persecutors do not seem to have had the common humanity to assure themselves that the house was empty before commencing the work of demolition.

A writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine"<sup>1</sup> mentions the compensation made by William to the inhabitants of Dover, and suggests that the woman and child represent a similar act of humanity; but the ravages of William's army in Sussex stand confessed in the Norman writers, and there can be little doubt that they were systematic ravages, done with the settled object of bringing Harold to a battle. The lasting nature of the destruction wrought at this time is shown by the large number of places round about Hastings which are returned in Domesday as "wasta."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Gent.'s Mag." vol. lxxiv. p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. pp. 412, 728.

HIC : MILITE<sup>S</sup> : EXIERVNT : DE  
 HESTENGA : ET : VENERVNT AD  
 PRELIVM : CONTRA : HAROLDVM ·  
 REGE :

*Here the Knights left Hastings, and came to give  
 battle to King Harold.*

PLATES LIV., LV., LVI. AND LVII.

When William's hauberk was brought to him that he might arm for the conflict, it was by accident put on hind part before.<sup>1</sup> His superstitious followers were awe-struck at the ill omen, but the Duke assured them, that as he turned his armour to its right position, so should he be turned from a duke to a king.<sup>2</sup> And now, fully equipped, he prepares to mount his noble Spanish steed, the gift of King Alphonso, led by the aged Walter Giffard,<sup>3</sup> who brought the offering back, when he made the pilgrimage to the shrine of S. James of Compostella. No sooner is the Duke in the saddle than, armed with a mace, he traverses a small wood, which is shown in the tapestry, and places himself at the head of the Norman chivalry issuing from Hastings. Behind him Toustain of Bec<sup>4</sup> bears the consecrated standard, whilst another

<sup>1</sup> "Will. Pict." 131.

<sup>2</sup> "Will. Malms." iii. 242.

<sup>3</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 456.

<sup>4</sup> So says "Ord. Vit." 501 B.—"Rom. de Rou," 12,773, but the tapestry (Plate lxxiii.) seems to make Eustace of Boulogne the standard-bearer. May not Toustain carry the bird-banner and the charge be a rebus of Bec?

knight carries a semicircular flag, charged with a bird within a bordure, which was identified with the danbrog by Herr Worsaae, whilst Mr. French considers it an emblem of the Holy Ghost within a nimbus of rays. This banner Sir Samuel Meyrick conceived to be the celebrated raven of the Danes, which their descendants might still be supposed to venerate. For the valiant men of the Constantine peninsula, the descendants of the Danes of Harold Blaaland, were there under the command of Neal of Saint Saviour, and were the only men in William's host who came to revenge the devastation of their own land by English hands.<sup>1</sup> Wace says, that these men of Bessin were high in favour of their lord ;<sup>2</sup> it may, therefore, be their ancestral banner that is here displayed. In that case, the fact that the artist here knew the correct bearing, whilst elsewhere he has been obliged to call upon his imagination, would be an additional proof that the tapestry had its origin in Bessin, of which Bayeux was the capital.

William's army was ranged in three divisions. On the left were the Bretons,<sup>3</sup> under the Duke's son-in-law Alain Fergant,<sup>4</sup> who marched where the ascent was easiest against the weakest of the English defenders ; on the right the French and other mercenaries, under Roger of Montgomery,<sup>5</sup> were to attack the eastern and north-eastern

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 461.

<sup>2</sup> "Rom. de Rou," 13,486.

<sup>3</sup> "Will. Pict." 133.

<sup>4</sup> "Rom. de Rou," 12,795.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 12,784.

points of the hill; whilst in the centre marched the Normans, the flower of the host, under William himself,<sup>1</sup> who took the dangerous duty of cutting their way to the royal standard. Each division was composed of three kinds of troops. The archers to the front harrying the enemy with showers of missiles; then the heavily-armed infantry, to breach the opposing palisades; the horsemen bringing up the rear, ready to avail themselves of any opening to charge that presented itself.

Some outlined figures in the margin of this part of the work, says Dr. Bruce,<sup>2</sup> doubtless refer to those distressing immoralities which too often attend the march of armies. The learned doctor was probably thinking of the passage—

“Captivos ducit pueros captasque puellas,  
Insuper et viduas et simul omne pecus,”<sup>3</sup>

but seems to have overlooked some important points. The men are moustached, and bear the Saxon axe, whilst the women make no endeavour to shun them. This, to my mind, disproves the relationship between them of conqueror and victim.

We have already seen that it was not the custom at that period to wear a night-dress, and I look upon these representations as intended to indicate the haste with which the English were called upon to arm, and their sorrowful parting with the wives who might so soon be widows.

In the border, over the heads of the standard-

<sup>1</sup> “Will. Pict.” 132.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Bruce, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> “Wid. Amb.” 165.

bearers, is depicted a wolf or fox, which, from behind some bushes, watches a grazing ass. This may allude to the Norman spies watching the host of the English, who are said to have passed the eve of the battle in carousal. Again, the lower edge has a hawk chasing a rabbit, evidently as a comment upon the needlework history.

HIC: VVILLÆLM: DVX INTERROGAT:  
VITAL: SI VIDISSET HAROLDI  
EXERCITV̄

*Here Duke William asks Vital if he had seen  
Harold's army.*

PLATES LVII., LVIII. AND LIX.

The Duke is represented interrogating a mounted warrior, who is named Vital, and who appears to be the chief of a troop of cavalry sent to reconnoitre, respecting the army of Harold. We have here a fourth person known to us but by name, who has not yet been positively identified. No mention of him occurs in the chronicles of the period ;<sup>1</sup> but, as in the case of Wadard and Turolde, we find in the Domesday survey a Vital or Vitalis holding lands under Bishop Odo, and cannot doubt his having been an equally well-known per-

<sup>1</sup> The name occurs as that of a witness in Bishop Odo's Charter for the enlargement of his episcopal palace in 1092, but without any description.

sonage at the time the tapestry was worked.<sup>1</sup> Vital points eagerly in the direction of his scouts, who have their hiding-place upon the brow of a wooded eminence; and in reply to William's inquiry as to the position of Harold, answers that the king stood among the thick ranks which crowned the summit of the hill, for there he had seen the royal standard. Then the Duke vowed his vow, that if God would give him the victory over his perjured foe, he would, on the spot where that standard stood, raise a mighty minster to his honour.

This vow was kept, and the Abbey of Saint Martin of the Place of Battle erected on the heights of Senlac.

It will be noticed that the device of a grazing ass being watched by a fox or wolf is repeated beneath this compartment.

ISTE NVNTIAT: HAROLDVM REGĒ  
DE EXERCITV VVILELMI DVCIS

*One informs King Harold concerning the army of Duke William.*

PLATES LIX. AND LX.

Determined to defend the Hill of Senlac, Harold surrounds it on each accessible side by a threefold palisade, with a triple entrance-gate; an artificial ditch to the south adding to the strength of his

<sup>1</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 151.

position.<sup>1</sup> Spies are sent out to reconnoitre, and some, penetrating into the enemy's camp, are captured and brought before the Duke, who, after making a display of his forces likely to impress their minds, sends them back to their master.

Ignorant of the Norman custom of shaving the back of the head as well as the face, the scouts report the presence of more priests than soldiers in the invading host ; but Harold, better acquainted with the habits of the enemy, tells them that these shaven and shorn men are stalwart warriors.<sup>2</sup> He next rides round his lines and addresses his troops. He tells them of the disasters awaiting the breaking of their ranks, and of the impregnability of their position steadfastly maintained.<sup>3</sup> Scarcely is his harangue concluded when, as we see in the tapestry, a scout, pointing behind him as he runs, descends the acclivity whence he has watched the Normans, and whence his comrade, shading his eyes with his hand and covered by a wood, still observes the approaching enemy ; his tidings told, Harold seeks his standard, dismounts, and committing himself to the care of God, awaits the issue of the day.

<sup>1</sup> " Rom. de Rou," 12,106.

<sup>2</sup> Will. Malms. iii. 239.

<sup>3</sup> " Rom. de Rou," 12,889, *et seq.*

HIC WILLELM: DVX ALLOQVITVR:  
 SVIS: MILITIBVS: VT· PRĒPARARENT  
 SE: VIRILITER ET SAPIENTER:  
 AD PRĒLIVM: CONTRA:  
 ANGLORVM EXERCITV̄:

*Here Duke William exhorts his soldiers to prepare themselves manfully and discreetly for the battle against the army of the English.*

PLATES LX., LXI., LXII., LXIII., LXIV., LXV. AND LXVI.

What Duke William really said to his forces we cannot now with certainty say, but various accounts have come down to us of the speech which heralded this momentous battle. Mr. Freeman,<sup>1</sup> who has compiled his text of William's address from the accounts of William of Poitiers (132), Henry of Huntingdon (M. H. B. 762, 763), and Wace (12,531 *et seq.*) makes the Duke speak as follows:—

“ He came, he said, to maintain his just rights to the English Crown; he came to punish the perjury of Harold and the older crime of Godwine against his kinsman Ælfred. The safety of his soldiers and the honour of their country were in their own hands; defeated, they had no hope, and no retreat; conquerors, the glory of victory and the spoils of England lay before them. But of victory there could be no doubt; God would fight for those who fought for the righteous cause, and

<sup>1</sup> “Norm. Conq.” vol. iii. p. 453.



what people could ever withstand the Normans in war? They were the descendants of the men who had won Neustria from the Frank, and who had reduced the Frankish kings to submit to the most humiliating of treaties. He, their Duke, and they his subjects, had themselves conquered at Mortemer and at Varaville. Were they to yield to the felon English, never renowned in war, whose country had been over and over again harried and subdued by the invading Dane? Let them lift up their banners and march on; let them spare no man in the hostile ranks; they were marching on to certain victory, and the fame of their exploits would resound from one end of heaven to the other."

Mr. Freeman thinks<sup>1</sup> that the word *sapienter* indicates that this oration was delivered at a later period of the day, when, as we shall see, the impetuosity of some of the Duke's followers had imperilled his hopes of victory. Prudence, then, William had cause to urge, but his men appear to have required no incentive to bravery. In the tapestry we behold the Duke on his charger; a ponderous mace is in his right hand, whilst he gesticulates, as he speaks, with his left. So eager are his men for the fray that they wait not the termination of the harangue, but press forward to the battle, one horseman alone turning his head to catch his concluding words. The knights gallop to the conflict preceded, as we see in the picture, by the archers of Louviers and Evreux,

<sup>1</sup> "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 455.

to whose wooden bows and arrows Mr. J. Rouse especially attributes the victory of the Normans. He further states that they were not then used by the English, but this seems to be hardly correct literally; though, as but one archer is shown on the English side in the tapestry, the use of the bow as a weapon of war in our country was then probably rare.

The Norman chivalry moved onwards to assault the English position. We have a long roll of their names, but few of those of the Englishmen who fought at Senlac have come down to us. We know that the main forces of Northumberland and north-western Mercia came not to Harold's muster, but men from Wessex, East Anglia, and Eastern Mercia, his own and his brothers' territories, and from the route of his march, had gathered round him. Here on the heights stood the men of Kent, whose right it was to deal the first blow in the battle, and the men of London, privileged to guard the king's person and the royal standard.<sup>1</sup>

Few of the English were armed with swords and axes. The greater part had but javelins and clubs, whilst some of the irregular levies found no better weapons than forks, sharpened stakes, and rude stone hammers.<sup>2</sup> But even such weapons as these were serviceable, whilst the defence of the firm timber barricades erected on

<sup>1</sup> "Rom. de Rou," 12,957.

<sup>2</sup> See "Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland" vol. x. (Session 1873-74): "Notes of small ornamental Stone Balls found in different parts of Scotland, etc., with remarks on their supposed age and use by John Alexander Smith, M.D.,

the slope of the hill was the point to be maintained. The battle was opened by the Normans at 9 a.m. with a shower of arrows, and the bucklers of the English were stuck full of them as they formed with their interlocking shields that "shield-wall" which was so strong a characteristic of their mode of warfare. The archers fought on foot, though, as we shall presently see, they took horse when it became necessary to pursue a routed enemy. Next, according to Wace, a minstrel, known as *Taillefer*, obtained the Duke's permission to strike the first blow. Singing the songs of Roland and of Charlemagne,<sup>1</sup> he rode towards the foe, whom he hoped to intimidate by the strange manner in which he juggled with his sword; then having run one Englishman through and having cut down another, he himself fell in the van of battle.

It has been much disputed whether or not this incident is represented in the tapestry, and we may, I think, safely say that it is not; for, as Mr. Stothard<sup>2</sup> has pointed out, the weapon which flies over the head of the foremost warrior is not a sword but a mace, to which observation Mr. Planché<sup>3</sup> adds the remark, that it is directed towards the Normans, and has therefore been thrown by an English hand.

F.S.A., Scot., etc." In these remarks Dr. Smith refers to the Bayeux tapestry, and considers that such stone balls were the heads of the maces carried by the English foot-soldiers.

<sup>1</sup> "Rom. de Rou," 13, 151.

<sup>2</sup> "Archæologia," vol. xix. p. 190.

<sup>3</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæ. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 152.

The heavy foot now pressed to the attack and the real struggle began. “*Dieu Aide!*” shouted the Normans as they charged, the English calling upon “God Almighty” and the “Holy Cross” as they thrust back the advancing foe.

In vain the Norman horse came to the charge, in vain were missiles hurled and swords wielded; the invading host was beaten back, and the Bretons on the left broke and fled. But what Norman valour could not achieve was accomplished by the want of discipline on the part of those raw English levies who, having resisted their attack, now yielded to the temptation of pursuit, and who, though throwing the entire Norman left wing for the time into disorder, turned the fate of the day against their own arms.

The borders of this long section of the tapestry contain further allegorical allusions to the incidents of the history.<sup>1</sup> A wolf advances calmly towards a pack of curs which yelp from behind a barrier; a leopard and a fox each bear off a fluttering goose; a wild animal confronts a goat; and then, as greater breadth is required for the representation of the battle itself, these mystic figures gradually

<sup>1</sup> “*Acrior insurgit Normannus tigride foeta,  
Passim procumbit mitior Anglus ove.  
Utque lupus, quem sæva fames ad ovile coegit,  
Parcere non novit innocuis gregibus,  
At non desistit, pecus usque peremerit omne;  
Sic Normannorum non tepet asperitas.*”

*Poème adressé à Adèle, fille de Guillaume le Conquérant, par BAUDRI, Abbé de Bourgueil. 4to, Caen, 1871 (v. 481-486).*

give place to the dead bodies of Norman and Saxon which strew the ground.

HC CECIDERVNT LEVVINE ET:  
GYRD: FRATRES: HAROLDI  
REGIS:

*Here fell Leofwine and Gyrth, the brothers of  
King Harold.*

PLATES LXVII., LXVIII. AND LXIX.

Lewine, in his subscription to the charter of S. Denis, signs Leofvine.<sup>1</sup> In this picture five Englishmen are shown, two of whom are falling dead. Of the other three, one is manfully wielding his axe, another his spear; a third rushes up sword in hand. Mr. Freeman suggests that these may be the five *Wulfnothings* Ælfric, Harold, Gyrth, Leofwine, and Hakon; and adds, "Might not the Abbot, a man of a past generation, use the sword rather than the axe?" It should be noticed that it is only in this section, and again in the group immediately round Harold at the time of his death, that we see, either in the main picture or in the border, the round-shaped shield with the deep boss.<sup>2</sup> At any rate, here, in the centre of the ring of warriors who guarded the royal standard, Harold and his brothers fought on foot, and shared the toils and dangers of the

<sup>1</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. p. 749.

meanest of their soldiers. William, Odo, and Robert pressed on to the attack. William sought out Harold, but had his charger killed under him by the spear of Gyrrh. Rising to his feet, he pressed to the barricade, and, as Guy of Amiens<sup>1</sup> tells us, Gyrrh fell, crushed beneath the stroke of the Duke's mace; but in the tapestry he does not apparently meet his death by the hand of William. Gyrrh did not fall alone; close at his side, and almost at the same moment, Leofwine, fighting sword in hand, was smitten to the earth by an unnamed assailant, and Harold was now left with the fate of England resting on his single arm.<sup>2</sup> This is the story of the tapestry; Wace<sup>3</sup> and Ordericus Vitalis<sup>4</sup> maintaining that Leofwine and Gyrrh survived Harold, though all our historians agree that both of them were slain in the battle.

HIC CECIDERUNT SIMVL: ANGLI ET  
FRANCI: IN PRELIO:

*Here English and French fell at the same time in  
the battle.*

PLATES LXIX., LXX. AND LXXI.

Exception has been taken to the use of the word *Franci*, and it has been stated that the Normans never so designated themselves; but this

<sup>1</sup> "Wid. Amb." 471.

<sup>2</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. pp. 484-486.

<sup>3</sup> "Rom. de Rou," 13,947, *et seq.*

<sup>4</sup> "Ord. Vit." 501, D.

general term is the only word that would comprehend the whole of William's army, composed, as we have seen that it was, of Frenchmen, Bretons, and others.

Unhorsed by Gyrth,<sup>1</sup> William took a horse from a knight of Maine, and returned to the charge. Again he was unhorsed, and again he slew his adversary.<sup>2</sup> He now accepted the charger of Count Eustace of Boulogne, and continued the struggle, obtaining a partial success. The palisades on the side facing the French were partly broken down, still the shield-wall remained firmly behind, and the onslaught was repulsed. Seeing the hopelessness of a direct attack, the Duke ordered the Bretons to renew in semblance their previous flight. The manœuvre was executed, and the undisciplined English on the right, imagining that the day was gained, broke their lines in pursuit.

The stratagem had succeeded, and the Bretons turned. Some of the English made a gallant stand upon a small wooded hill which fronted their position, destroying their immediate assailants, whilst others decoyed their mounted pursuers to a steep ravine, where horse and rider tumbled into the chasm until their corpses were level with the upper earth.

This scene is powerfully rendered in the tapestry, which shows us men and horses hurled together in a confused heap, their agonized bodies contorted in the writhings and pangs of death.

This heroic defence of the English was, how-

<sup>1</sup> "Wid. Amb." 471.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 503-518.

ever, useless to retrieve the error of the pursuit. The Normans had gained a position on the hill, and the shield-wall remained as the only bulwark between the contending armies.

HIC· ODO  $\overline{\text{EPS}}$  : BACVL $\overline{\text{V}}$ · TENENS :  
CONFOR : -TAT PVEROS

*Here Bishop Odo, holding a club, rallies the young troops.*

PLATES LXXI. AND LXXII.

The word *puer* had two significations amongst the Romans ; it sometimes stood for a young man who was not yet come to the age of adolescence, and sometimes for a young slave. As the young people who were not yet admitted into the equestrian order rendered military service to those who had been knighted, they were named knaves, or men-at-arms. This word *pueros* exactly expresses both their youth and their duties, and was no doubt chosen by the designer to obviate injury to the reputation of the older warriors who fought under the Norman standard.<sup>1</sup>

Odo, seeing that William's left wing was thrown into utter confusion by the first flight of the Bretons, and that the Norman centre, disordered by the press of fugitives, was falling back, joined with the Duke in restoring confidence to the routed troops, riding after them mace in hand,

<sup>1</sup> "Orig. de la Tap. de Bay." p. 82.



and calling them back to their duty. The Norman troops rallied, and the too-daring English were cut in pieces. The Bishop's portrait, as shown in the tapestry, differs in some respects from the description given by Wace, who tells us <sup>1</sup>—

Forment y a cejour valu  
Un hauberjon avoit vestu  
Desouz une chemise blanche  
Lé en fu le cors et la manche.

*or*

[De sor une chemise blanche,<sup>2</sup>  
Lé fut li cors, juste la manche.]  
Sor un cheval tout blanc seoit  
Toute la gent la congnoissoit.  
Un baston tenoit en son poing  
Là ou veoit le grand besoing,  
Faisoit les chevaliers torner,  
Et la bataille arrester ;  
Souvent les faisoit assaillir,  
Et souvent les fesoit ferir, &c.

Bravely on that memorable day he behaved,  
A haubergeon had he put on,  
Under a white frock,  
Wide was its body and sleeve.

*or*

[Over a white frock,  
Wide was the body, tight the sleeve.]  
Seated on a milk-white steed,  
Everyone recognized him.  
He held a baton in his clenched hand ;  
Wherever he perceived urgent occasion,  
Thither he made the knights wheel about,

---

<sup>1</sup> "Rom. de Rou," ii. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Mons. Pluquet's alternative reading.

And the line to halt ;  
Often, too, he made them attack,  
Often he made them strike, &c.

In the tapestry the warrior-prelate is shown as clad in full armour, and riding a blue horse ; his mace is in his hand, and his spur on his foot, whilst the white frock of his priesthood is not to be seen, and his sacred office appears for the time forgotten in the excitement of the conflict. At such a moment, though the use of sword and spear were forbidden by the Church, to dash out the brains of an enemy was in Odo's eyes no breach of the duties of a minister of peace. Dr. Bruce<sup>1</sup> contends that the implement carried by Odo is a baton of command, and not a weapon ; but even if armed, the Bishop of Bayeux was not the only ecclesiastical combatant in the battle. On the English side, Ælfwig, abbot of the new minster of Winchester, Harold's uncle, marched with twelve of his monks, wearing coats of mail over their monastic garb, to take their place in the ranks, where, braving the curse of Rome, they fought and fell. Besides these, several churchmen of lower rank were in the field, as also Leofric, Abbot of Peterborough, who returned home sick and wounded.

<sup>1</sup> P. 140.

HIC EST:—WILE<sup>̄</sup>L DVX

*Here is Duke William.*

PLATES LXXII. AND LXXIII.

A report was spread amongst the Normans that their valiant leader was slain.<sup>1</sup> Learning the state of the case, William at once seized the nasal of his helmet and disclosed his features to those around him; whilst the words of the inscription—*Here is Duke William*—may have been the identical exclamation of which he made use as he endeavoured to restore confidence to his dispirited soldiery. The archers once again are seen in the margin creeping towards the front, and with their flank thus protected the cavalry return to the onslaught.

E . . . . TIVS

*Eustace.*

PLATE LXXIII.

According to Benoît<sup>2</sup> de Saint-More, there was at William's side whilst the above-mentioned incident was occurring, Eustace, Count of Boulogne, who, considering the battle lost, strongly urged the Duke to leave the field. There is in the tapestry a figure, on the Duke's left hand, with

<sup>1</sup> Will. Pict. 133.

<sup>2</sup> Benoît, 37,414, 37,421.

outstretched arms, bearing a standard. Above his head, in the upper border, are the letters E TIVS, with a hiatus, formerly occupied by *four* letters. The number of missing letters is determined by the alternations of green and buff in the colours of those remaining. The recovery of three of the letters of the name, the suggestion that the entire word was Eustatius, and that he was the Count of Boulogne, are due to the researches of Mr. Stothard.<sup>1</sup>

M. Planché<sup>2</sup> remarks that the standard held by the count, viz. a plain cross between four roundels, is a near approach to a positive heraldic bearing. Roundels (*boules*) were afterwards the allusive arms of the counts of Boulogne.<sup>3</sup>

ἩIC: FRANCI PVGNANT ET  
 CECIDERVNT QVI ERANT: CVM  
 ἩAROLDO :-

*Here the French fight and those who were with  
 Harold fell.*

PLATES LXXIII., LXXIV. AND LXXV.

Reanimated by the assurance of William's safety, the invaders returned to the charge with greater desperation than before ; but, though all defences except the shield-wall were gone, this was nobly

<sup>1</sup> "Archæologia," vol. xix. p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> "Journal Brit. Archæol. Assoc." vol. xxiii. p. 153.

<sup>3</sup> This may be Eustace's own banner. See note at p. 114.

kept for hours. During this time prodigies of valour were performed on either side.<sup>1</sup> The strain, however, of maintaining the shield-wall was so great that the English resistance gradually slackened, and resolved itself into a series of personal encounters all over the hill, in which man by man the English were despatched.

HIC HAROLD:—REX:—INTERFEC  
TVS: EST

*Here King Harold was slain.*

PLATES LXXVI. AND LXXVII.

The evening was closing in apace, and still a heroic band, headed by Harold, fought gallantly around the English standards. To overcome this dauntless phalanx the Duke bethought him of a device which proved the most successful one employed that day, and which is clearly illustrated in the lower border of the tapestry, where the archers crouch beside their quivers and fire upwards. He ordered the archers to shoot up in the air,<sup>2</sup> by which means he prevented the English, obliged to shield their heads, from wielding their death-dealing axes, whilst they were compelled to expose their bodies to the lances of the Norman knights. One arrow, midst the falling shower, more pregnant with fate than its fellows, now pierced the

<sup>1</sup> "Rom. de Rou," 13,387, *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Hen. of Hunt. M. H. B. 763.

king's right eye. Convulsively he clutched the weapon. The shaft broke in his agonized grasp. His axe fell from his nerveless hand, and in mortal anguish he sank at the foot of the standard. The Dragon was now borne off by a troop of horsemen, and the standard was beaten to the earth. Harold, though disabled, still breathed when Eustace and three others rushed upon his prostrate body.

One stabbed the dying king in the breast; another struck off his head; a third tore the entrails from the corpse, from which a fourth severed the leg. It is but fair to William to state that the perpetrator of this latter outrage is said to have been expelled from the army of the Conqueror.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. French denies the right of the dragons on the English lances to be regarded as standards, and conjectures that they are but ornaments torn from Norman shields. This opinion is not shared by Sir S. R. Meyrick and Mr. Freeman, and indeed two points militate against it; first, that these dragons occurring where the tapestry has been much injured, the outlines of the field may have been frayed away, and secondly, that the pole upon which one of the dragons is hoisted is far stouter than the English javelin. M. Léchaudé-d'Anisy suggests that these may have been inflated skins in derision of William's parentage; but when we know, from other sources, that a dragon-charged banner was used in the fight and the representation of such a banner is found, the surmises appear gratuitous.

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. pp. 499-500.

The border shows the stripping of the dead, and the collection of arms and armour on the battlefield.

ET FVGA: VERTERVNT ANGLI

*And the English fled.*

PLATES LXXVIII. AND LXXIX.

In spite of Harold's death the heavy-armed Thegns and Housecarls still fought on. Quarter was neither asked nor given. No prisoners were made; and the personal following of the king fell to a man.

This desperate valour was, however, not shared by the light-armed and irregular troops, who took to flight, some on foot and some on the horses which had brought their leaders to the field of battle, under cover of the approaching darkness, closely pursued by the conquerors, the archers taking horse to join in the chase. Their knowledge of the locality now stood the vanquished in good stead, and they led the Normans to the steep northern side of the hill, where they fell over the abrupt declivity, and were either suffocated in the morass below or slaughtered by the flying English. This was the last reverse which the invaders experienced on that day, but it was so severe that for centuries afterwards the scene of its occurrence was known as the *malfosse*.<sup>1</sup> The work here begins

<sup>1</sup> Freeman, "Norm. Conq." vol. iii. pp. 500-503.

to be much frayed and worn, and with the flight of the English the tapestry in its present condition ends, nor does it appear to have ever extended to a much greater length.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the tapestry described by Baudri (see above, p. 124, note), the battle is resumed on the morrow, and a town is captured, after which he winds up with a panegyric upon William.



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I.

KING EADWARD.





II.

HAROLD'S RIDE TO BOSHAM.







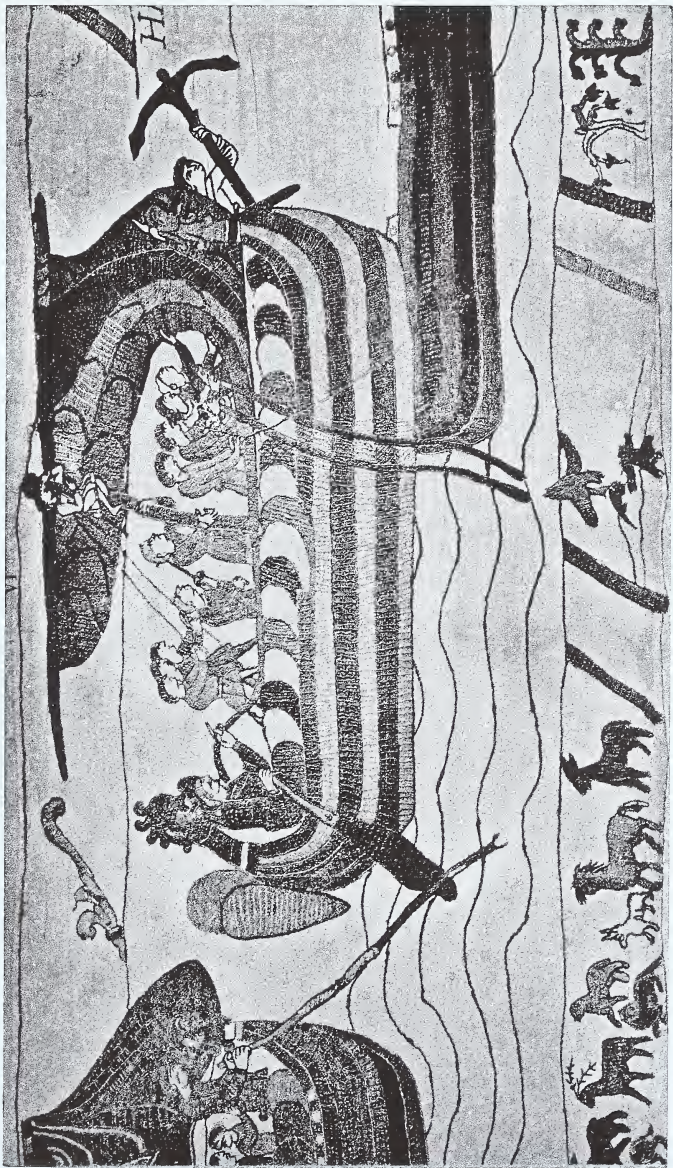


















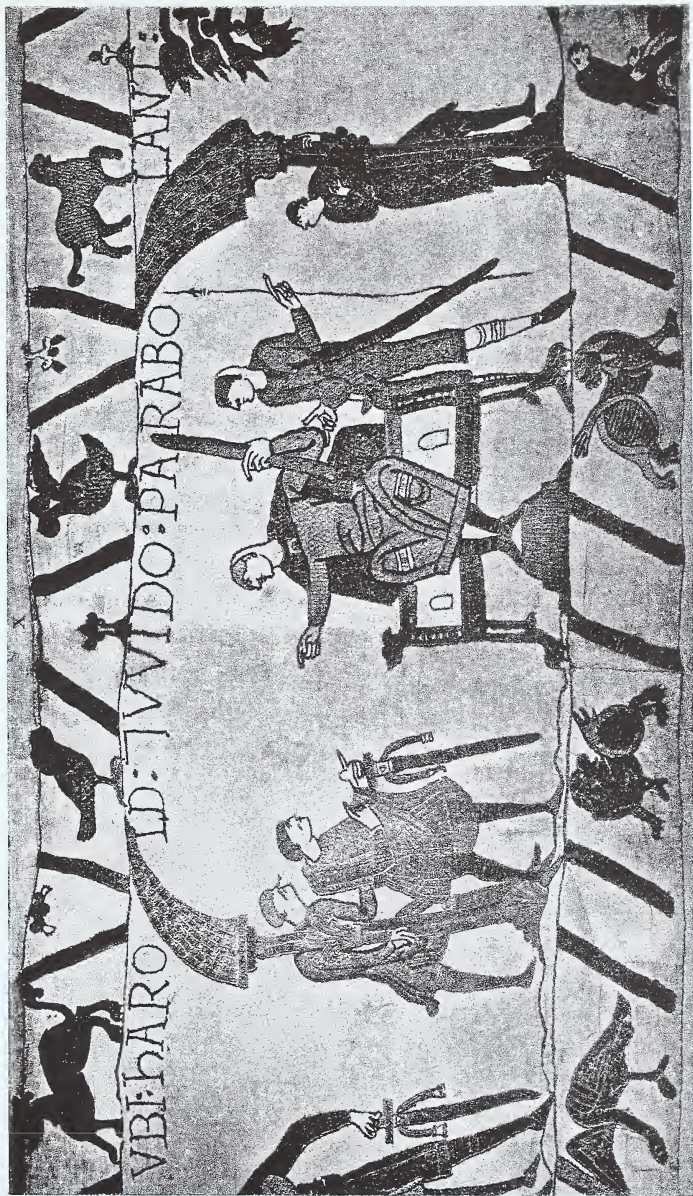








































HAROLD TAKEN BY WILLIAM TO HIS PALACE.





HAROLD BROUGHT BY WILLIAM TO HIS PALACE.











DUKE WILLIAM STARTS FOR MONT SAINT-MICHEL.





THEY CROSS THE RIVER COUESNON.









ONAN: FV GA VER

RE

RENNES.

XXII.

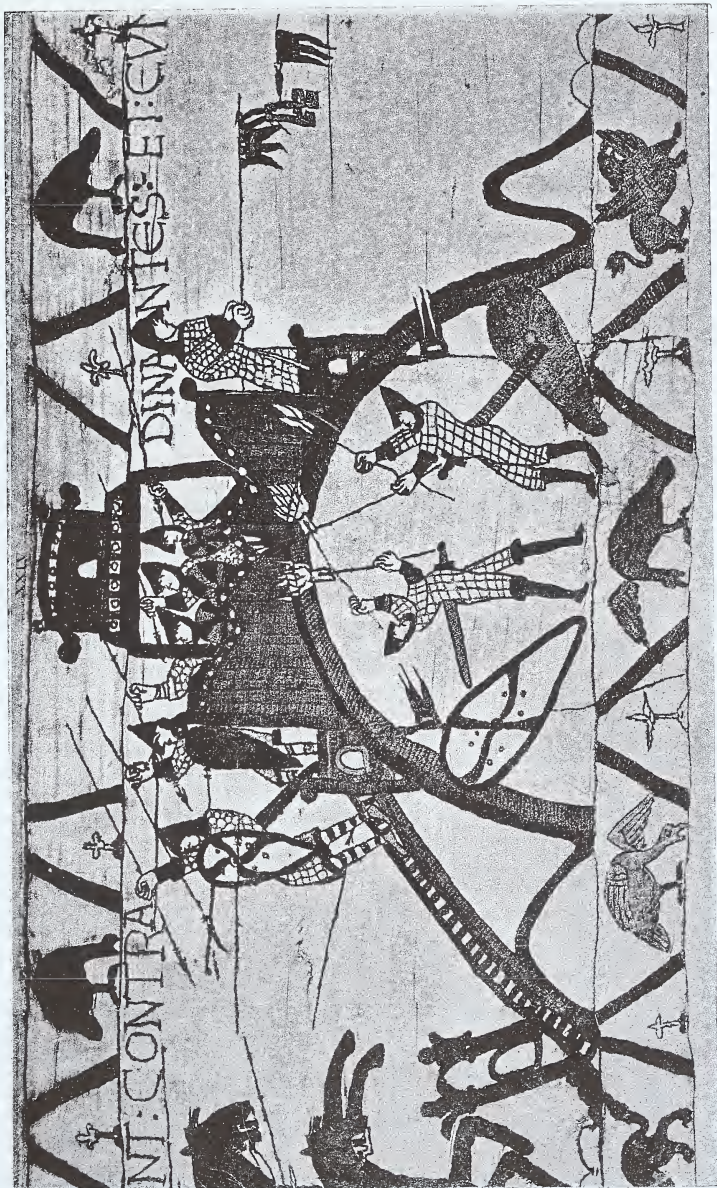






XXIII. SIEGE OF DINAN.













WILLIAM COMES TO BAVEUX.







HAROLD SWEARS ALLEGIANCE TO WILLIAM.









HAROLD COMES TO EADWARD.











EADWARD'S BODY BORNE TO THE CHURCH.



























FELLING TIMBER FOR SHIPS.





BUILDING THE SHIPS.











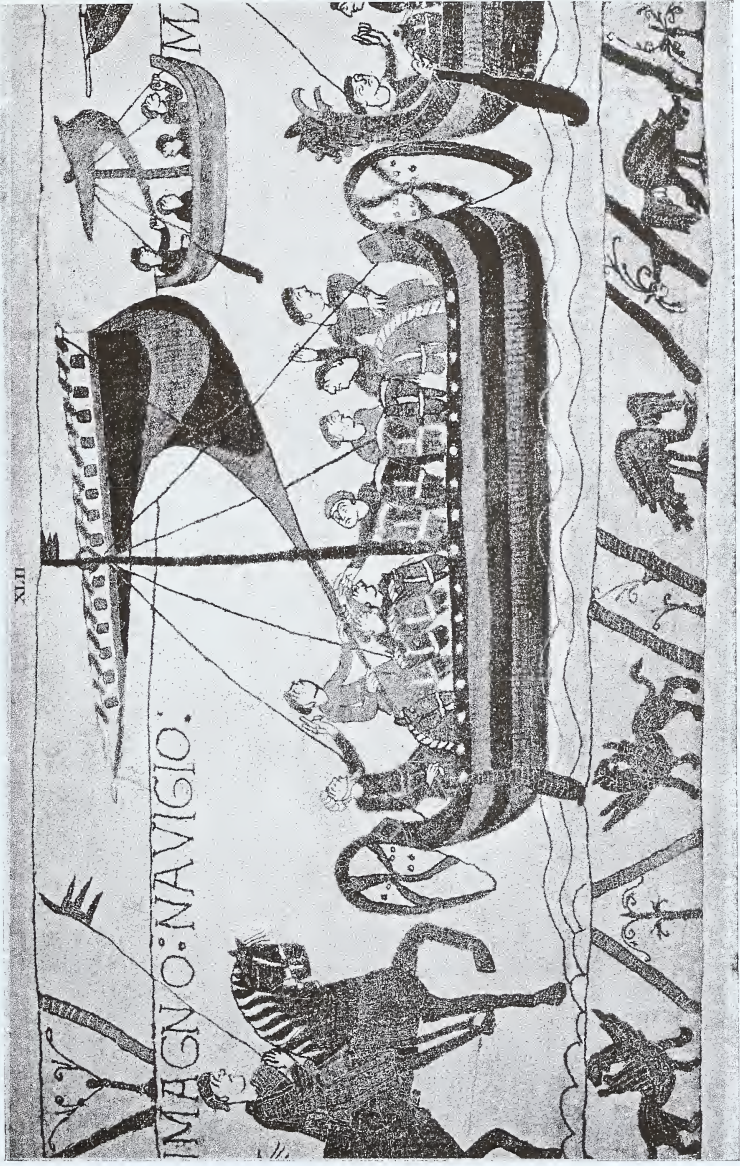


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ALVNT: CARRVM  
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+ HIC: WILLIEM: DVX  
INN







XLII

MAGNO NAVIGIO.









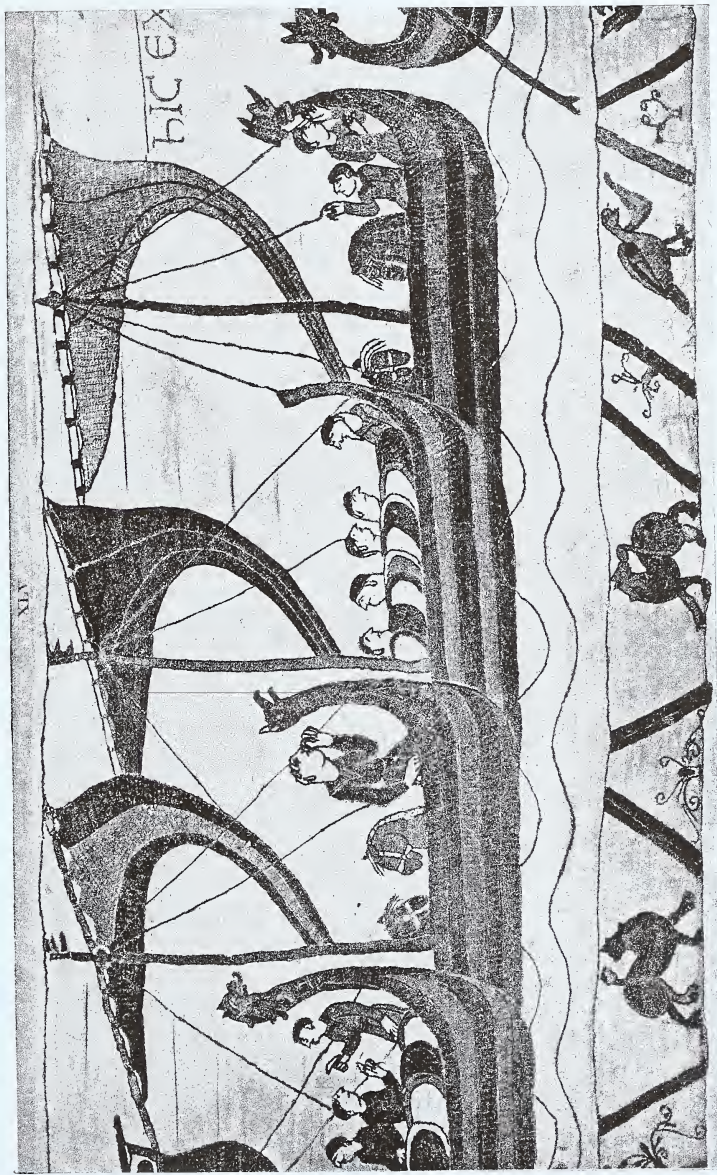


XLIV

XLIV.

DUKE WILLIAM COMES TO PEVENESEY.





ARRIVAL AT PEVENSEY.









XIV

TES: FGS IINA  
VERY ANT: h ESTINGA:  
VT GIE



XLVII.

THE KNIGHTS PUSH ON TO HASTINGS.



LIBVM. RAPERENTVR.:

HIGEST:V



THE KNIGHTS SEIZE CATTLE FOR FOOD.





XLIX.

WADARD. THE MEAT IS COOKED.











THIC EPISCOPVS: CIBV: EI:  
IV: BE: NE DICIT.

ODO: EPS:

WILM.

ROTBERT: SICIV

BISHOP ODO, WILLIAM AND ROBERT.





A RAMPART IS DUG AT HASTINGS.





TIDINGS OF HAROLD BROUGHT TO WILLIAM.





LIV

HIC MILITIE S: EXIERT: D

OMVS IN EN'DIVR:

THE ARMY LEAVES HASTINGS.

LIV.







THE ARMY LEAVES HASTINGS.































WILLIAM'S SOLDIERS.















LXV

LXV.

THE BATTLE.



LXVI



THE BATTLE.

LXVI.





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ԵՐՎՈՒ





LXVIII



LXVIII.

LEOFWINE AND GYRTH ARE KILLED.









ENGLISH AND FRENCH FALL TOGETHER.







ENGLISH AND FRENCH FALL TOGETHER.







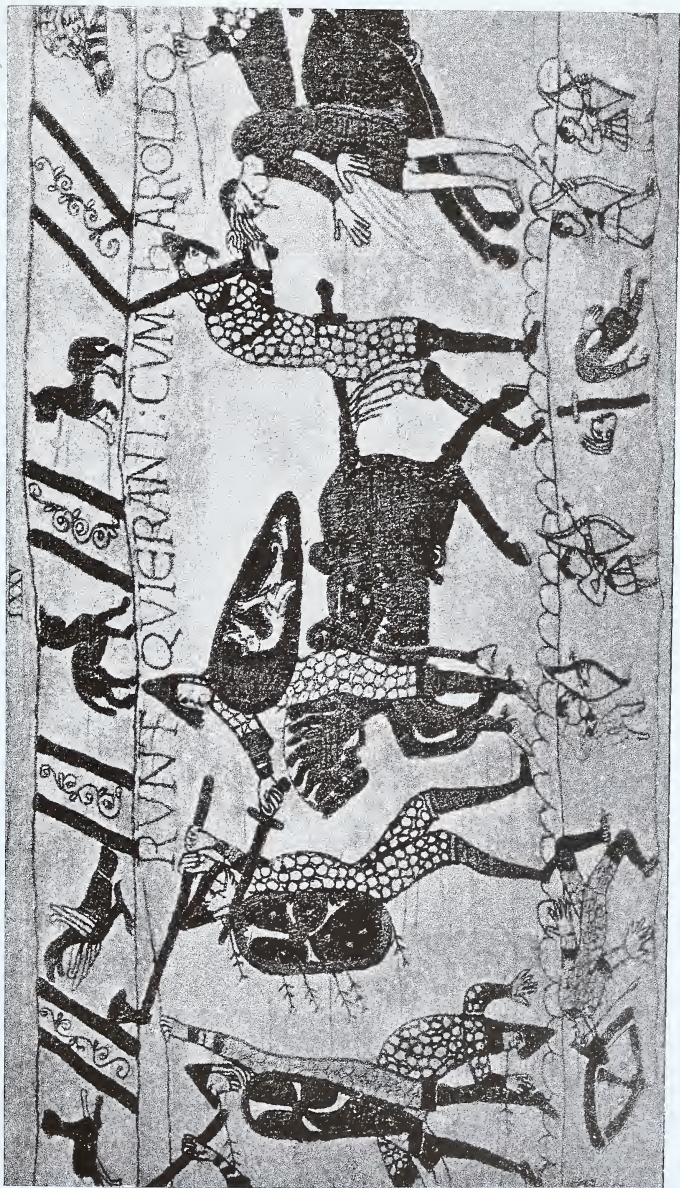
















HAROLD IS SLAIN.

LXXVI.















LXXIX

ANGLI

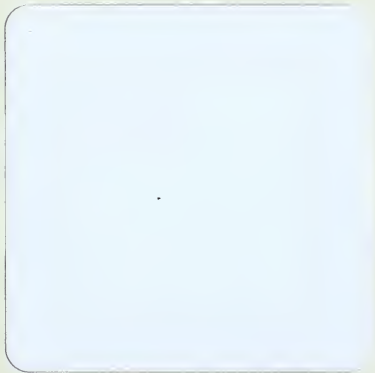












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