

ODO, BISHOP OF BAYEUX AND EARL OF KENT.

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IN the volumes of *Archæologia Cantiana* there occur numerous references to Bishop Odo, half-brother of William the Conqueror ; and his name finds frequent mention in Hasted's *History of Kent*, chiefly in connection with the lands he possessed. Further, throughout the records of the early Norman chroniclers, the Bishop of Bayeux is constantly cited among the outstanding figures in the reigns of William the Conqueror and of his successor William Rufus, as well as in the Duchy of Normandy.

It seems therefore strange that there should be (as I am given to understand) no Life of the Bishop beyond the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. In the following notes I have attempted to collate available data from contemporary writers, aided by later historians of the period during, and subsequent to, the Norman Conquest.

Odo of Bayeux was the son of Herluin of Conteville and Herleva (Arlette), daughter of Fulbert the tanner of Falaise. Herleva had previously given birth to William the Conqueror by Duke Robert of Normandy. Odo's younger brother was Robert, Earl of Morton (Mortain).

Odo was born about 1036, and brought up at the Court of Normandy. In early youth, about 1049, when he was attending the Council of Rheims, his half-brother, William, bestowed on him the Bishopric of Bayeux. He was present, in 1066, at the Conference summoned at Lillebonne, by Duke William after receipt of the news of Harold's succession to the throne of England.

He accompanied Duke William to England, and it is said that, of the 782 ships used by the Conqueror in the invasion of England, no fewer than 100 were furnished by Odo. (*Ordericus Vitalis*,¹ Book III, chapter II.)

He took part in the battle of Hastings, riding by the side of the Conqueror. He is shown in the Bayeux tapestry in the act of exhorting the troops, and many historians record his prowess on that occasion.

“Master Wace, his chronicle of the Norman Conquest” (from the *Roman de Rou*, with notes by Edgar Taylor), 1837, describes the battle as follows:—

“The varlets who were set to guard the harness began to abandon it, as they saw the loss of the Frenchmen when thrown back upon the fosse without power to recover themselves. Being greatly alarmed at the difficulty of restoring order, they began to quit the harness and sought around, not knowing where to find shelter. Then Odo, the good priest, Bishop of Bayeux, galloped up and said to them ‘Stand fast! stand fast! be quiet and move not. Fear nothing, for, if God please, we shall conquer yet.’ So they took courage and rested where they were, and Odo returned, galloping back to where the battle was most fierce, and was of great service on that day. He had put a hauberk on over a white alb; wide in the body with the sleeve tight, and sat on a white horse, so that all might recognize him. In his hand he held a mace and, wherever he saw most need, he led up and stationed the knights, and often urged them on to assault and strike the enemy.”

Palgrave gives the following account:—

“The Normans advanced beyond the English lines, but were driven back and forced into a trench, where horses

¹ Ecclesiastical history of England and Normandy by Ordericus Vitalis, who was born in England 1075; sent to school at Shrewsbury; entered the Abbey of Ouche (Normandy) founded by St. Evroutl in 1085, and was ordained priest in 1107. Beginning with the Christian era, Orderic's narrative covers the period down to the year of his death, 1141. A translation by Thomas Forester is published in Bohn's Library, London, 1854, and a French translation by M. F. Guizot is contained in a work published at Caen in four volumes in 1826. M. Guizot styled Orderic “the founder of French history.”

and riders fell upon each other in fearful confusion. More Normans were slain here than in any other part of the field. The alarm spread; the light troops left in charge of the baggage and the stores thought that all was lost, and were about to take flight, when the fierce Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, the Duke's half-brother, who was better fitted for the shield than for the mitre, succeeded in reassuring them, and then, returning to the field, and rushing into that part where the battle was hottest, he fought as the stoutest of the warriors engaged in the conflict, directing their movements and inciting them to slaughter." (*Hist. of Normandy and of England*, Vol. II, p. 315.)

Shortly afterwards, when William, now King, crossed to Normandy, he invested Odo and William FitzOsbern with powers as joint Regents of the kingdom. Odo's headquarters were in Kent and Essex. William of Poitiers says: "The South, which was, through its neighbourhood and intercourse with Gaul, somewhat less savage than the rest of the island, was put under the milder rule of the Bishop" (quoted by Freeman, vol. iv, p. 72n.).

1066. During the Regency revolts were numerous, and the Kentish insurgents begged for assistance from Eustace, Count of Boulogne, in an attack on Dover Castle. Bishop Odo, who had been absent, returned with all speed and defeated the troops of Eustace with great slaughter. Eustace himself escaped by sea.

Cases of misgovernment and undue hardship soon produced a serious condition in the kingdom, especially in the North and West. It is supposed that the King was not fully informed of the conduct of the Regents; in any case, he did not return to England till December, 1067, after which temporary tranquillity was restored, particularly in Wessex.

1068. After his Coronation, William bestowed on Odo extensive fiefs, including the castles of Dover and Rochester, as well as the Earldom of Kent. He was a member of the Royal Council, which consisted of eleven persons, seven of whom were ecclesiastics: the Archbishop of Canterbury;

the Bishops of Rochester and Bayeux; the Abbots of Battle (in Sussex), St. Augustine's and Ghent; Albert, the Chancellor (or Chaplain) of William the Conqueror; Hugh Montford; Earl Eustace; Richard of Tonbridge (or Fitzgilbert); and Haimo the Viscount.

Hic annotantur tenentes terras in Chent:—

Rex Willielmus.

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|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Archiepiscopus Cantuarensis | 5. Abbatia St. Augustine. |
| Terra militum ejus Monachi | 6. Abbatia de Gand. |
| & hominis ejus. | 7. Hugo de Montford. |
| 2. Episcopus Rofrecensis. | 8. Comes Fustachus. |
| 3. Episcopus Baiocensis. | 9. Ricard de Tonbrige. |
| 4. Abbatia de Batailge. | 10. Haimo vicecomes. |
| | 11. Albertus capellanus. |

(Henshall *Hist. of South Britain*, p. 20n.)

Orderic narrates that "all that Kent he (William) committed to his brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, a prelate distinguished by great liberality and worldly activity." (Bk. iv. c. 1.)

1072. Bishop Odo took part in a Synod assembled at Rouen in 1072, the decrees of which were signed by John, Archbishop of Rouen, Bishop Odo of Bayeux and other venerable Abbots.

1075-6. Odo and Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances, were fighting in 1075 on the side of the King against Ralph, Earl of Norfolk. The Royal forces were victorious, Ralph taking to flight, and the insurrection was quelled.

1077. The Cathedral of Bayeux was consecrated in 1077 in the presence of William the Conqueror, Queen Matilda, Robert, William Rufus and Bishop Odo.

1080. In 1080 it is recorded that Odo took part in various ecclesiastical tribunals, notably as President of a Court dealing with the liberties of Ely, and in the consideration of claims put forward by the Abbey of Bury St. Edmund's.

1081. Odo proceeded in 1081 to Northumberland with an armed force, to take vengeance for the murder of Bishop Walcher of Durham.

Shortly after the King's return to England, a serious rival

to Odo had appeared in the person of Lanfranc,¹ who was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1070, and held that exalted position till the death of the Conqueror. He crowned William Rufus in 1087. From that time forward the power and influence of Odo began to wane, though his earldom and extensive fiefs placed him nominally in a position second only to the king himself.

William of Malmesbury² styles Odo "Totius Angliæ vice dominus sub rege". According to Orderic he was "palatinus Cantiae consul", and witnessed Charters as "Comes Cantiae".

1085. The climax in the struggle between Odo and Lanfranc was reached when the Conqueror arrested his half-brother and placed him in the castle of Rouen.

The story of his arrest is told in great detail by Orderic (Bk. vii. c. 8). It appears that certain sorcerers at Rome had applied their art to discover who would succeed Pope Hildebrand, and found that, after Gregory's death, a prelate named Odo would be Pope. As soon as Odo heard the story, he made light of the authority and wealth which the government of a Western Kingdom conferred, and aspired to the Papal power, which would give him wider sway and raise him above all earthly Princes. He therefore purchased a palace in Rome, distributed magnificent gifts to the Roman senators, and ornamented his house with lavish expense and costly superfluities. He attached to his person a company of distinguished knights, and made prodigal

¹ Florence of Worcester, a monk of that place, who died in 1118, writes of Lanfranc: "The Abbot of Caen, a Lombard by birth, a man of unbounded learning, master of the liberal arts and of the sacred and secular literature, and of the greatest prudence in counsel and administration of worldly affairs".

The Chronicle of Florence of Worcester, translated by Thomas Forester, is contained in a volume of the Bohn Library 1854. According to the testimony of John, another monk of Worcester: "Florence's acute observation and indefatigable industry have rendered this chronicle of chronicles preeminent."

² William of Malmesbury, an English historian who flourished in the twelfth century. He became monk of the Benedictine convent of Malmesbury. His history, entitled "De gestis Regum Anglorum", is translated in Bohn Library, 1847.

promises to them in return for their service. On hearing of these preparations, King William crossed to England and presented himself unexpectedly in the Isle of Wight to Bishop Odo, then on the point of sailing for Normandy with a pompous retinue. The King assembled the great nobles of the realm and addressed them at length, stating that Odo had "grievously oppressed the English, robbing the Churches of their lands and revenues, and had seduced his knights into following him into foreign regions beyond the Alps." He then asked for their advice how to deal with "his brother who had spread disorder through the whole of England by his unjust exactions."

The King ordered his arrest and proceeded to carry out his own sentence. Odo exclaimed: "I am a clerk, and the Lord's Minister; it is not lawful to condemn a Bishop without the judgment of the Pope". The King, advised by Archbishop Lanfranc, replied: "I do not condemn a clerk or a Bishop, but I arrest an Earl whom I myself created, and to whom, as my Vice Regent, I entrusted the government of my realm, it being my will that he render an account of the stewardship I committed to him".

Bishop Odo was conveyed to Normandy and kept in close custody for four years, that is, until the King's death.

A graphic account of Odo's aspirations to the Papacy is given in the "Liber Monasterii de Hyda," edited by E. Edwards, 1866, p. 296:

"Eodem fere tempore Oddo, frater regis et episcopus Baiocensis, comesque Cantiae, in superbia elatus inter cetera praesumptionis suae opera apostolatam Romae affectaverat. Etenim infinitum auri et argenti multitudinem quibusdam Romanis quos muneribus illexerat per occultos nuntios destinavit, sibi que palatium summo decore tantoque edificio et vallo munitum fabricari fecit, ut nulla ei domus in Roma, ut aiunt, possit comparari. Denique ubi plures Norman-Anglorum principes occulta persuasionem et sacramento sibi associavit, ignorante rege, Anglia discedere decrevit, sed manifestata ejus versutia, ab eodem rege in consilium vocatur, devincitur, carceri mancipatur."

Wace in the "Roman de Rou" wrote :—

" Quant li boen Reis avait sailli,
 Par les ataches le saisi,
 Avant le trait tot forz del renc ;
 Jo vos prenc, dist-il, jo vos prenc.
 Vos me faites, dist Odo, tort ;
 Eveske suis e croce port.
 Ne devez metre main en mei.
 Par mon chief li comte de Kent
 E mon baillif e mon servent,
 Ki ne m'a pas conte tenu,
 De mon regne k'il a éu."

(14328.)

In Bk. vii, c. 7, Orderic adds : " In this Prelate we see clearly exemplified what Fulgentius says in his book on Mythology ; ' the man who makes pretensions to which he is not entitled, will sink lower than he is.' The Bishopric of Bayeux, the rich Earldom of Kent and the exercise of royal power in England and Normandy were not enough for one clerk, who aspired to the government of the whole world, moved neither by divine inspiration nor canonical election, but by the impulses of his own insatiable ambition. He lost, therefore, what he already possessed, was left to pine in captivity and has bequeathed a warning to posterity not to be too eager in the pursuit of honours."

On the Conqueror's deathbed, the King replied to the repeated supplications of Robert, Earl of Morton, for the release of Odo :—

" I wonder that your penetration has not discovered the character of the man for whom you intercede. Are you not making petitions for a prelate who has long held religion in contempt, and who is the subtle promoter of fatal dissensions ? Have I not already incarcerated for four years this Bishop who, when he ought to have proved himself exemplary in the just government of England, became a most cruel oppressor of the people and destroyer of the convents of the monks ? In desiring the liberation of this seditious

man, you are ill advised and are bringing on yourself a serious calamity. It is clear that my brother Odo is a man not to be trusted, ambitious, given to fleshly desires and of dire cruelty. He will never be converted from whoredoms and ruinous follies. I satisfied myself of this on several occasions, and I therefore imprisoned not the Bishop, but the tyrannical Earl. There is no doubt that, if he be released, he will disturb the whole country and prove the ruin of thousands. I say this not from hatred, as if I were his enemy, but as the father of my country, watching over the welfare of a Christian people. It would indeed give me inexpressible and heart-felt joy to think that he would conduct himself with chastity and moderation, as becoming a priest and Minister of God." (Orderic, Bk. vii, c. 16.)

At the funeral of the Conqueror at Caen in 1087, there were present all the Bishops and Abbots of Normandy, and among them figured Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, as well as William, Archbishop of Rouen, Gilbert, Bishop of Evreux, etc.

After his release from prison, Odo recovered all his possessions in Normandy and became the counsellor of his nephew, Robert, Duke of Normandy. Orderic, writing of him at this period, says: "This prelate was a person of distinguished eloquence and high spirit; he was liberal and extremely brave; he paid much honour to the Church and protected the clergy resolutely both by word and deed. He endowed the Church with valuable ornaments. . . . Although in certain things Odo lent himself to worldly vanity he did much for the advantage of the Church. . . . Much that was praiseworthy was mixed with his evil deeds, and what he iniquitously amassed was freely bestowed on the Churches and the poor." (Orderic, Bk. viii. c. 1.)

1087. Bishop Odo returned to England and was re-established by King William Rufus in his former Earldom of Kent. But, not content with this, Odo began to plot for the overthrow of the King, with the object of re-uniting England and Normandy under Duke Robert, surnamed Curthose. The problem before many of the Anglo-Norman Barons was a difficult one. If they gave their allegiance to Duke Robert,

they would risk the forfeiture of their revenues and possessions in England ; if, on the other hand, they remained loyal to the King, the Duke would confiscate their patrimonial estates in Normandy. Robert was the elder brother, but William Rufus was King of England, supported by the power of Archbishop Lanfranc.

We find Bishop Odo in attendance at the King's Christmas Court (1087), apparently in full possession of his English Earldom.

The rebellion against the King (Odo being the principal mover) extended from the south coast to Northumberland, and from East Anglia to the Welsh border. But the centre and heart of the movement, as far as concerned Robert Curthose, lay in the south-east of England, where Odo and his immediate supporters had established themselves in strategic positions, such as Rochester and Pevensey. Robert sent Eustace of Boulogne and Robert of Belleme to England, and they were installed by Odo in the Castle of Rochester. King William attacked that place, expecting to find Odo and the main body of the rebel forces, but Odo had gone to Pevensey, where he joined Robert of Morton, in expectation of the arrival of Duke Robert with troops from Normandy. The King thereupon marched on Pevensey, and laid siege to the Castle. On the tardy arrival of Robert's fleet, they were defeated, and Bishop Odo, Robert of Morton and the garrison of Pevensey were reduced by starvation and compelled to surrender. Odo pledged his word that he would procure the surrender of Rochester and would then leave England for ever. A small force was sent with him by William to obtain the submission of Rochester. On their arrival, Eustace of Boulogne and Robert of Belleme, moved rather by the countenance of the Bishop "which ill agreed with the language of the speakers", sallied forth and took the whole party captive. The King laid siege to Rochester, and the defenders were obliged to surrender.

A graphic account is given by Orderic (Bk. viii. c. 2) of the efforts made to obtain a mitigation of the harsh terms imposed by the King on the "perjurers, robbers, plunderers

and execrable traitors". Certain of the nobles on the King's side endeavoured to remonstrate with their sovereign in favour of Odo. They pointed out that he had assisted William the Conqueror in the conquest of England and had stood by him in many straits. They begged for clemency to allow him to depart to his own Diocese in Normandy. The King assented and granted permission to the garrison to leave with their horses and arms. Bishop Odo attempted to persuade the King to abstain from the usual trumpeting in celebration of triumph, but William fell into a great passion asserting that he "would not grant it for ten thousand marks of gold".

As the garrison marched out in sorrow and dejection, while the royal trumpets sounded, cries were raised: "Halters; bring halters (torques) and hang the traitor-Bishop with his accomplices on a gallows". Odo had perforce to hear these reproaches levelled at him, but he was permitted to leave without further molestation.

He was, however, banished the Kingdom. He retired to Bayeux, being deprived of his English revenues, his vast possessions and his palatine Earldom.

1088. Finding Duke Robert "sunk in slothful ease," Bishop Odo endeavoured to increase his power in Normandy. It so happened that Henry, the heir-apparent to the English throne, had been in England to ask the King for possession of his mother's domains. Henry was well received by the King but, on his return to Normandy, it was whispered that he had not only made peace with William, but had entered into a pact to the Norman Duke's disadvantage. Robert had him arrested and took counsel of Bishop Odo. "The Bishop of Bayeux, like a dragon struck to the earth, vomiting flames and full of rage at the haughty treatment he had received from the King, raised all sorts of commotions in Normandy." (Orderic, Bk. viii, c. 4.)

Odo came to Rouen and, in a long speech recorded by Orderic, reproached the Duke for his inertia as follows: "Whoever would worthily govern the State and rule the people of God, among whom there is so much diversity of

conduct, should be both gentle and severe, according to circumstances. He should be gentle as a lamb to the good, the submissive and the humble ; fierce as a lion to the wicked, to the rebellious and the proud. Consider this well, my Lord Duke, that you may well govern this noble Duchy of Normandy, which, by the grace of God, you have inherited from your ancestors. Take courage and act with firmness. You see that miscreants and outlaws are revelling throughout the land, more like Pagans than Christians in their evil courses and, if I may be permitted to say so, equalling the former in the enormity of their crimes. The monks and the widows cry to you, and you sleep. Unutterable delinquencies are frequently reported to you, and you make light of them. It was not thus that holy David and the great Alexander acted ; not thus Julius Cæsar and Severus, the African ; not thus Hannibal the Carthaginian, Scipio Africanus, Cyrus the Persian and Marius the Roman. But I waste time in mentioning barbarians, whose very names are unknown to you. Let us turn to those who are more familiar and belong to our own race. Think of your fathers and forefathers, whose firmness of mind and courage made them formidable to the warlike race of the French. I speak of Rollo, William Long-sword, the three Richards, your grandfather Robert, and lastly, your father William, who was more illustrious than any of his predecessors. I beseech you to emulate their firmness and ability. They inherited the vigour and industry of their ancestors, who by their prodigious exertions became arbiters of the fate of kingdoms, put tyrants under their yoke and subdued barbarous nations. Rouse yourself and, assembling the invincible Norman army, lead it to Le Mans. There a garrison of your own men holds the citadel which your father built, and the entire city, with the venerable Hoel, the Bishop, renders you willing service. Summon all the leading men of Maine to attend you there ; receive graciously those who obey your summons ; but take arms against such as treat it with contempt, and lose no time in besieging their castles if they fail to surrender them. Having secured the submission of

the people of Maine, march against Earl Roger,¹ and rid yourself of him and his sons by expelling them once for all from Normandy. Fear not; trusting in the power of the Lord. Carry yourself manfully, and be guided by the counsels of the wise. Already you have in prison Robert, Earl Roger's eldest son and, if you make a bold effort, such as becomes a brave Prince, it is in your power to expel that disloyal family of Talvas from your Duchy. It is a cursed race. It breeds mischief and contrives it for an inheritance. This is proved by the horrible manner of their death, which comes upon none of them in the ordinary course of nature. . . . Now is your opportunity, most noble Duke, for stripping them of their strongholds with perfect justice, if you will only follow resolutely the example of your magnanimous father. As for him, he was master of all these fortresses as long as he lived, and committed the custody of them to those he thought fit. But this Robert, as soon as he had received the intelligence of the King's death, arrogantly drove the garrisons from your castles and seized them himself. Give careful consideration to what I have said, and, like a good Prince, exert yourself worthily for the peace of holy Mother Church and for the protection of the poor and defenceless, while you are crushing the rebels by the force of your arms. If you break the horns of the leaders who raise their heads against you, the rest will be terrified by the ruin of their associates, and will submit to your commands without demur. Thus the people of God will rejoice in peace and security under the shield of your protection, and will offer devout prayers to the Almighty for your safety. All Orders in your dominions will celebrate divine worship without ceasing, and the law of God will be duly observed in general security." (Orderic, Bk. viii. c. 5.)

1090-1. After this harangue Duke Robert assembled his forces and led them to Le Mans. The Norman troops were under the command of Odo of Bayeux, William Count of Evreux and others. The expedition proved abortive, and nothing was gained in Robert's cause.

¹ Roger of Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury.

1095-6. Robert subsequently put King William in possession of his dominions, receiving from him 10,000 marks of silver, which he had solicited for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It is recorded that the King thereupon crossed to Normandy and "trampled it under foot for five years, that is, all the rest of his life."

In this predicament, Bishop Odo determined to leave Normandy with his nephew Robert, choosing to perform the pilgrimage rather than to submit to the King, his enemy. The Bishop and the Duke conferred with Pope Urban II. at Rome and proceeded to Apulia for the winter.

It appears that this Crusade was a papal, and not a Norman, enterprise. It was conceived by the Pope as a means of making peace between Robert and King William. The Pope's emissary, Gerento, Abbot of Dijon, was successful in his mission. William of Malmesbury writes (Bk. iv. c. 2) that Duke Robert took the Cross "at the admonition of the Pope."

Odo and Gilbert, Bishop of Evreux, were the only companions of Robert to take the Cross.

1097. Odo retired to Palermo, where he died on January 5,¹ 1097, and was buried by Gilbert of Evreux in the Church of St. Mary.

The following epitaph was placed on Odo's tomb :—

"Epitaphium Odonis Epi. Baiocen.
primi huius nominis
fratris Regis Angliae et Dux Normannorum.

Quid Baiocen prodest Mihi pontificatus,
Gloria Laus et Honor quid erant nisi causa Iratus,
Jam tam exhibant de tempestate profundi,

¹ It is recorded in the Regulations of the Cathedral of Bayeux, 1586 :—
"Semper debet celebrari (obitus) hac die, qua expirasse signatur in ordinario."

Harris, in his *History of Kent*, vol. I., London, 1917, p. 419, says :—
"The Rochester monks used to celebrate his (Odo's) anniversary ; but in a way which showed no great respect for this memory ; for they had mass only at the lesser Altar, and only three flags upon the lesser tower (Cust. Roffens)."

Quia jam rescibant epatu pro XI VIII anno,¹
 Et per transibant laqueos et tetrici mundi
 Panormi jacui pauper Domini moriendo.
 Unde memento mei Clerus quem semper amaui
 Pro me funde preces aliquas in odore suavi
 Pro me funde gemitus lachrimas recolendo
 Quam meruit veniam peccatrix foemina flendo
 Interea de morte mea tua respice fata.
 Et speculari quod hic nunquam sit vita beata
 Vita beata Deus in eo sunt gaudia vitae.
 Unde mei fratres at eum properando redditae.
 (Odon de Conteville, par l'Abbé V. Bourrienne.
 Evreux. 1900.)

A paraphrase of the epitaph has been kindly made by Rev. C. E. Woodruff.

- "What profit had I from the bishopric of Bayeux,
 "What was the glory, praise and honour but vexation?
 "They have passed away as a mighty tempest.
 "They record but a bishopric of forty-eight years,
 "And an escape from the snares of a treacherous world.
 "And so, the Lord's poor man—I lay me down to die
 at Palermo.
 "Wherefore let the clergy whom I have always loved
 remember me
 "Offering up for me some prayers of sweet fragrance
 and lamenting for me with groans and tears as
 they bear in mind the pardon the sinful woman
 won by her tears.
 "In the meantime let my death cause you to look to
 your own end. And be sure that here there is no
 such thing as a blessed life. The blessed life is
 God Himself in Whom the joys of life are to be
 found.
 "Wherefore my brethren make haste to return I to
 Him."

¹ Apparently a misreading for XLVIII, Odo having held the Bishopric of Bayeux for 48 years.

Bishop Odo had no less than 184 lordships in Kent,¹ and 255 in other counties. These latter were made up as follows :

Lincoln 76 ; Essex 39 ; Oxfordshire 32 ; Buckinghamshire 30 ; Hertfordshire 23 ; Norfolk 22 ; Northamptonshire 12 ; Bedfordshire 8 ; Warwickshire 6 ; Nottinghamshire 5.

A complete list of the Bishop's holdings in Kent is given in the "Domesday Book of Kent," with translation, notes and appendix, by the Rev. L. B. Larking, James Toovey, 1869.

His seal is published in Hasted's *History of Kent*, I, p. lix, with the remark that "it is not only extremely rare, but very singular, in respect to the figures represented thereon. On one side of it, he appears as an Earl mounted on his war-horse, clad in armour and holding a sword in his right hand, but on the reverse he appears in his character of a Bishop, dressed in his pontifical habit, and as pronouncing the benediction."

Bishop Odo is said to have borne for his coat armour gules on a lion rampant argent, a Bishop's crozier in bend sinister.

The Cathedral of Bayeux, built in 1077, is a conspicuous monument to Odo in Normandy, and perhaps still better known is the so-called Bayeux tapestry, which appears, from internal evidence, to have been executed originally as an ornament for the Cathedral by English workers at the order of Bishop Odo. Freeman, in his *History of the Conquest*, is

¹ As an instance of the scope of Bishop Odo's possessions, the following is a note on the manor of Wickham in the hundred of Downhamford :—

"167 acres of free or chartered land, which Siward occupied under the Saxon government, and which were transferred to Maltravers, with similar privileges, by the Earl of Kent. This district was the immediate possession of Odo, Earl and Bishop, under the Norman dynasty, and was amply supplied with the necessary requisites for the castle of a feudal chieftain. There was a park for him to sport in ; an exalted priest to attend his devotional hours ; mills and saltworks to prepare such provisions as 68 agricultural rustics, a pasture of 300 sheep, fisheries and a wood yielding pannage for 80 bacons, could furnish for the round table of the knightly hall. What is more remarkable is that there were 31 chargers, to accommodate his military train, and three mansions (*masuræ*) in Canterbury, appendages to the manour to receive his followers when they attended him in the city".—Henshall, *Hist. of South Britain*, 1798, p. 20 note.

satisfied that the tapestry is nearly contemporary with the Conquest. It consists of a seamless band of linen, 230 feet long, and some twenty inches wide, embroidered with the needle in worsteds of eight colours, dark and light blue, dark and light green, red, yellow, dove colour and black. There are seventy-two scenes, 623 human figures, 202 horses and mules, 55 dogs, and 505 other animals. Not only sea and battle pieces are shown. Harold appears taking the oath of allegiance to William at Bayeux; Harold being enthroned after the death of the Confessor as King of England; Duke William and Bishop Odo on their voyage to England; their arrival at Pevensey and the battle of Hastings; Odo blessing the food and drink; William sitting in state between Odo and Robert of Morton; Odo wielding the mace, exhorting the troops, etc., etc.

M. Frédéric Pluquet, 1829, wrote :—

“ Je pense que ce monument est contemporain de la conquête ; il n'est pas l'ouvrage ni de la première ni de la seconde Mathilde ; il a été exécuté par les ordres d'Odon, frère de Conquérant, qui l'avait aidé de tous ses moyens. Lui seul avait l'autorité et qualité pour placer un monument profane dans le lieu saint.” (Essai historique sur la ville de Bayeux, p. 81.)

The character of Odo has been variously described. In a chapter on the Norman Lords, Orderic states in Bk. iv, c. 7 : “ What shall I say of Odo, Bishop of Baieux, who was earl palatine, and generally dreaded by the English people, issuing his orders everywhere like a second King ? He had the command of all the earls and barons of the realm, and, with the treasure collected from ancient times, was in possession of Kent. . . . The character of this prelate, if I mistake not, was a compound of vices and virtues, but he was more occupied with worldly affairs than in the exercise of spiritual graces. The monasteries of the saints make great complaint of the injuries they received at the hands of Odo, who, with violence and injustice, robbed them of the funds with which the English had piously endowed them in ancient times.”



Odo blessing meat and drink at Hastings.



Odo seated in state with the Conqueror and Duke Robert.



Odo, mace in hand, exhorting the troops at Hastings.

SCENES FROM THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.

William of Poitiers,¹ in his *Life of William the Conqueror*, speaks eulogistically of Odo's government and discusses the point how far Odo, in regard to his ecclesiastical duties, was qualified for temporal employment :—

“ This Odo, Bishop of Baieux, was well known to be such a person, who could best of any undertake both ecclesiastical and secular businesses. Of his goodness and prudence, the Church of Baieux in the first place gives testimony ; which he with great wisdom did settle and advance ; and, though he was in years but young, yet did he excel the aged in gravity. To all Normandy he was of great use and ornament, his prudence and eloquence manifesting themselves, not only in Synods, wherein the worship of God was handled, but in all other disputes touching worldly affairs. For liberality, none was like him in all the realm of France ; nor was he less praiseworthy for his love of equity. He was no instigator of war, nor could he be drawn thereto, and much feared by soldiers ; but, upon great necessity, his councils in military affairs were of special avail, so far as might be consistent with the safety of religion. To the King, whose brother he was by his mother, his affection was so great that he could not be severed from him, no, not in the camp ; being constant and faithful always to him. The Normans and Britons were most obsequious to him, nor were the English so rough, but that they esteemed him worthy of their fear, reverence and love. . . . He was likewise Earl Palatine and gave laws as a King ; having a power over all other earls and great men of the land ; as also Judiciarius Angliæ, id est, the principal person under the King for administering justice throughout the entire nation, which high and eminent office after him continued till towards the latter end of King Henry III's reign . . . being reputed the wisest man

¹ William of Poitiers was born at Préaux about 1020. He held the Archdeaconry of Lisieux. His book “ *Gesta Guilielmi ducis Normannorum et regis Anglorum* ” was translated by M. F. Guizot and published at Caen, 1826. According to Orderic, “ Guillaume de Poitiers wrote in the style of Sallust. His history is narrated with eloquence and ability.” The period covered by his *Life of the Conqueror* is from 1035 to 1070.

in England." (Quoted by Sir William Dugdale in *The Baronage of England*, 1675-6.)

The same writer, William of Poitiers, speaking of the Regency of England in the King's absence in 1066, states :

" During the time of the King's absence in Normandy Odo and William FitzOsbern administered with ability, both severally and jointly, the portions of the Kingdom entrusted to their care. When necessary, they supported one another promptly, and their wise rule was strengthened by the friendly and sincere understanding which existed between them. They loved one another and were at the same time devoted to the King ; they were animated by a zealous regard for the maintenance of peace among Christian people, and willingly deferred to each other's advice. In accordance with the instructions of the King, they acted with great justice, for the purpose of correcting and conciliating in turn the barbarous and hostile people."¹

William of Malmesbury alludes to Odo as " being of quicker talents than the other² ; he was governor of all England, under the King, after the death of William FitzOsbern. He had wonderful skill in accumulating treasure ; possessed extreme craft in dissembling ; so that, though absent, yet, stuffing the scrips of the pilgrims with letters and money, he had nearly purchased the Roman Papacy from the citizens. . . . His partizans, being intimidated by threats, discovered such quantities of gold, that the heap of precious metal would surpass the belief of the present age ; and, at last, many sackfuls of wrought gold were also taken out of the rivers, which he had secretly buried in certain places."

Freeman, in his *History of the Norman Conquest*, remarks that " Norman ecclesiastical history sets Odo before us in a somewhat fairer light than that in which we see him in English secular history " (c. 8).

¹ M. Guizot, in his translation of William de Poitiers' Life of William the Conqueror, states that the author was unlikely to have eulogized Odo except with King William's approval, and records his opinion that the quarrel between the brothers must have broken out subsequently to the events narrated above.

² Robert Earl of Morton.

In his *History of the Normans*, M. J. Revel says that Bishop Odo deserves a place among the great men of France.

Hernant, in his *Histoire du Diocèse de Bayeux*, wrote at the beginning of the eighteenth century of Odo: "un prélat que sa grande naissance et ses belles qualités ont rendu très célèbre dans notre histoire."

M. Paul de Farcy, in his *Sigillographie de la Normandie*, said: "Parmi les prélats dont l'église de Bayeux a le droit d'être fière, il n'en est pas qui aient occupé dans l'histoire de leur temps une place aussi importante qu'Odon (ou Eudes) de Conteville."

In any analysis of Bishop Odo's life and character, due account should be taken of the rivalry which existed between him and his wise and eminent contemporary, Lanfranc, and of the influence exerted by the latter, largely in opposition to, and generally to the detriment of, the Bishop of Bayeux. The causes of the jealousy, or animosity, felt for Lanfranc by Odo are evident enough. (i.) In 1070 Lanfranc was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury, a preferment which must have been coveted by Odo; (ii.) when Lanfranc came to England in 1072, he made claims against Odo and his vassals for certain lands belonging to Christ Church and other ecclesiastical foundations, which were alleged to have been seized illegally; Lanfranc appealed to the King, who ordered the case to be tried by Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutances. The trial took place on Penenden Heath, near Maidstone, and judgment was to the effect that all cases of a general spiritual character within the royal demesne and the Earldom of Kent, fell within Lanfranc's jurisdiction. The decisions of the Court were afterwards approved by the King, with the consent of the lay magnates. (*Lanfranc*, by A. J. Macdonald, 1926.) (iii.) At Rochester, Odo again appeared in lawsuits, which resulted in various manors being adjudged to Lanfranc. (*Freeman's History*. C. xix.); (iv.) During the revolt of 1075, while King William was for the second time absent in Normandy, Lanfranc was the "guardian of the secular affairs of the country, with control over all its resources for the defence of the kingdom and the conduct of public busi-

ness, together with supervision over the barons and royal officials." (Milo 48, quoted by Macdonald in *Lanfranc*, 1926); (v.) it is generally accepted that the King was advised by Lanfranc in his treatment of Odo after his arrest in the Isle of Wight in 1084. The subsequent imprisonment of the Bishop at Rouen, which he also attributed to the influence of Lanfranc, increased his bitterness towards the powerful Archbishop; (vi.) Lanfranc hastened, on the Conqueror's death, to crown William Rufus, in preference to the elder son, Robert, Duke of Normandy, whose cause had been espoused by Odo; (vii.) after the revolt against William Rufus, Lanfranc was unremitting in his severity towards Odo and the barons who had followed him.

In this constant conflict between two strong men, victory is seen to have rested with Archbishop Lanfranc.

William of Malmesbury described the hate of Odo for Lanfranc as "immortele in eum odium anhelans."

The explanation of the quarrel between William the Conqueror and Bishop Odo is more difficult to understand. G. B. Depping, in his *History of William the Conqueror and his successors*, 1835, follows Master Wace in the theory that Odo was endeavouring to secure the English crown for himself as successor to William, but no proof is adduced of such a pretension. The influence of Lanfranc and the weighty complaints of Odo's rapacity would appear sufficient in themselves to account for the Conqueror's vindictiveness, and it should be remembered that, whereas Odo and Robert were legitimate sons of the union of Herluin and Herleva, William the Conqueror was, in his early days, merely "the Bastard." Furthermore, Odo appears to have been "elegant, well-read, and proud of his distinguished lineage," while William could hardly sign his own name.

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